

The Gatewatcher

Many complaints have been voiced recently about instances of violence against homosexuals and lesbians here, in Amsterdam. Amsterdam in particular and the Netherlands in general are considered places "tolerant" toward other identities which do not conform to the established gender order. The question thus arises, is it some aspect of external appearance that triggers a sense of threat?

It is my purpose to expose and to check through art works layer of threat, which is supposed to be present or is conceived to exist in the appearance of the other.

The exhibition "**The Gatewatcher**" explores the boundaries of gender in Western culture. In the exhibition contemporary art works introduce questions about the definition of sexual identity and why a blurring of its boundaries invokes a sense of threat. What is the place of external signs associated with a given sexual definition in today's society? Why is a rejection, or even a violent response, invoked when boundaries are crossed? Is it dress, bodily gestures or other features identified with the *other* that scare us? Engagement with the boundaries of gender does not rank high on the agenda in comparison to pressing existential concerns. Nevertheless, it touches upon questions of morality, religion and law, which have social and cultural implications on our everyday life.

The exhibition features seven artists from various countries whose works cross prevalent gender boundaries, using external features of the other sex, such as dress code or behavioral code, to create sculpture, photographs and video works.

As someone living in-between two cultures, between two nationalities, I have been experiencing the *other* as a changing and existing feature in everyone. That which is customary in one culture, is exotic in the other. This project is dynamic and aims to advance new ideas in contemporary art discourse.