



Oey Tjeng Sit in Amsterdam (1980) foto: Peter Elenbaas



This February, Stevenson Amsterdam will be participating in Art Rotterdam for the second time. Echoing its first presentation at the fair, which featured works by Viviane Sassen and Cian-Yu Bai, the gallery will be once more emphasizing works by two artists with strong ties to the Amsterdam art ecosystem. Stevenson is pleased to present a selection of works on paper by Moshekwa Langa, as well as assemblages by Oey Tjeng Sit that haven't been on display in over four decades. Langa's first survey exhibition in the Netherlands, titled *Omweg*, took place at Kunstmuseum Den Haag in 2022, where Oey's last exhibition in the Netherlands took place, in 2003. Albeit different artists of different generations, there are overlaps to be found in their journeys in the country.

Oey Tjeng Sit (1917–1987) was an Amsterdam-based artist of Chinese-Javanese (Indonesian) heritage, who came to the Netherlands in 1938 to pursue his studies. However, contrary to what may be expected in the context of this newsletter, Oey

didn't immigrate for his art practice, but rather for his pharmaceutical education. Meddling in these studies for 21 years until he graduated, he grew uninterested in Western medicine, and got distracted and intrigued by the artistic European avant-garde movements of the early 20th century. Between 1958 and 1980, the artist ran his pharmacy "Apotheek Oey" a stone's throw away from Stevenson's Amsterdam location. As his window displays were continuously occupied with art performances and installations, he made a name for himself as "the nester of window-art" - and as the odd one out in the pharmaceutical spheres. On a continuous crossroad of disciplines, cultures, and artistic influences, he drew, sketched, and used frottage techniques on the canal's street cobbles outside. Oey created dozens of works on paper, lithographs, and collages in his signature black, white, beige and *Gauloises*-blue tones. His practice also included elaborate installations and poetic interventions, and he published his own artbooks that catapulted him into the local cultural scene of writers and artists. Due to his preference for vanitas in his materials, notably the newspaper, not many works on paper withstood the test of time.

The early post-colonial artist had his first institutional solo exhibition at Museum de Lakenhal later in life, in 1980, which title $2x2=5$ initially brought our attention to his practice in 2021. Oey stated: "2x2 leads more often to 5 than to 4." It was a sentiment which resonated with our then newly established gallery space that has since been steadily growing its roots. Coincidentally, just as we came to know of Oey's legacy and his hidden presence in (inter)national collections, the artist's son had self-published a book on his family history (René Oey, *Apotheek Oey*, Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Vita, 2020). Putting the pieces together, we're pleased to present his return to a Dutch artfair, with friendly support of the artist's family.