

Museum van Bommel van Dam presents *Grey! Art on Aging:*

Perspectives on growing older in an aging society



Diana Blok
Mother I, 1996
© Diana Blok. Collection Museum Arnhem

In a society obsessed with the pursuit of eternal youth, museum van Bommel van Dam presents the first major exhibition devoted to aging. From 24 January to 14 June 2026 the art museum in Venlo will stage the group exhibition *Grey! Art on Aging*. Through the work of international contemporary artists, the exhibition explores how we see and experience growing older in an aging society - from ageism and cultural representation to the beauty of the changing body and the relationships between generations. Featuring photographs, videos, paintings, installations and drawings by renowned artists including melanie bonajo, Maria Lassnig, Joan Semmel and Fiona Tan, *Grey!* offers a rich reflection on one of the defining challenges of our time.



Photograph by Isadora Kosofsky
from the series 'Senior Love Triangle'

International line-up of artists

Participating artists include Tyna Adebawale (Nigeria, 1982), Diana Blok (Uruguay, 1952), melanie bonajo (Netherlands, 1978), Marrie Bot (Netherlands, 1946), Jan van Herwijnen (Netherlands, 1889-1965), Wen Hui (China, 1960), Isadora Kosofsky (United States, 1993), Marcos Kueh (Malaysia, 1995), Maria Lassnig (Austria, 1919-2014), Lique Schoot (Netherlands, 1969), Sjoerd Schunselaar (Netherlands, 1990), Joan Semmel (United States, 1932), Lily van der Stokker (Netherlands, 1954) and Fiona Tan (Indonesia, 1966).



Tyna Adebawale, *After Idibah Street*, 2025
Courtesy the Artist and Ellen de Bruijne Projects

Aging

In today's society, we speak more often about anti-aging than about the wisdom that comes with age. Thanks to advances in healthcare, people are living longer; by 2040 one in four people in the Netherlands will be aged 65 or over. At the same time, one in three older people - a label that is uncomfortable in itself - experience age discrimination, also known as ageism. In Limburg, the region where the museum is based and where the population is aging rapidly, the challenges for healthcare, employment and wellbeing are considerable. Yet the province is equally known for its strong sense of community, social cohesion and active volunteer culture. With *Grey! Art on Aging*, museum van Bommel van Dam connects to this regional reality, bringing together local organisations, residents and visitors in an extensive interactive programme to reflect on aging, ageism and solidarity between generations.



Photograph by Isadora Kosofsky
from the series 'Senior Love Triangle'

Two generations of curators

Grey! Art on Aging has been jointly curated by two curators from different generations, ensuring a dynamic and multi-layered approach to the theme. Sjoers Bindels (1991), Curator of Contemporary Art at museum van Bommel van Dam, and guest curator and writer Mirjam Westen (1956) have structured the exhibition around three main themes: ageism, the changing body, and intergenerational relationships.



Joan Semmel
Long Reach, 2017
Courtesy of the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

Ageism and representation

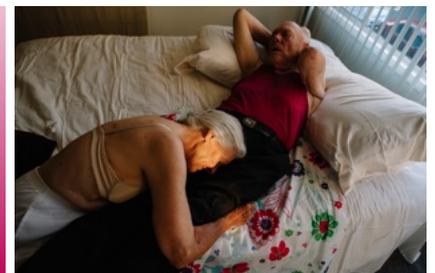
From a young age, we are confronted with negative ideas and misconceptions about growing older. These stereotypes influence our thoughts, feelings and even our behaviour towards older people - and towards our own aging process. Artists in the exhibition challenge these dominant perceptions, questioning how we look at the aging body and mind. Limburg-born artist melanie bonajo (Netherlands, 1978) questions notions of progress in *Progress vs Regress* (2016), a film in which a group of centenarians reflect on their lives and the technological changes they have witnessed - from the contraceptive pill to the selfie stick. The work reveals both the sense of alienation some older people feel in a rapidly changing world and the question of what 'progress' truly means. Documentary photographer Isadora Kosofsky (United States, 1993) challenges social conventions with her project *Senior Love Triangle* (2019), an intimate portrait of three octogenarians in a romantic triangle that serves as a shield against loneliness.



melanie bonajo
Progress vs. Regress, 2016
Courtesy the artist & AKINCI
(still: "I don't feel that old")



melanie bonajo
Progress vs. Regress, 2016
Courtesy the artist & AKINCI
(still: "charming")



Photograph by Isadora Kosofsky
from the series 'Senior Love Triangle'

The changing body

Our relationship with the aging body is increasingly complex. Reflecting this, the exhibition not only addresses the pressure of anti-aging culture but also reveals the beauty and vulnerability of the body in relation to the passing of time. For decades, Joan Semmel (United States, 1932) has painted her own body, challenging the male gaze and the objectification of the female form. Rather than concealing aging, she celebrates it in all its reality. Maria Lassnig (Austria, 1919-2014), a pioneer of body awareness painting, sought to depict the body from the inside out - painting not what she saw, but what she felt. In her later works she visualised the experiences that accompany aging, from physical discomfort to the nearness of death.



Joan Semmel, *Crossed Arms*, 2018
 Courtesy of the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels



Maria Lassnig
Der Verstand hat Angst / Der Arzt sagt: Die Welt loslassen
 (The Mind is Fearful / The Doctor Says to Let the World Go), ca.
 2000-2005.
 © Maria Lassnig Foundation / c/o Pictoright Amsterdam 2025

Relationships between generations

What role do ancestors play in our lives? *Grey!* also explores relationships between generations, both in life and beyond. The participating artists show how different cultures view older people and how ancestral connections shape identity and cultural history. Tyna Adebawale (Nigeria, 1982) draws inspiration from the Uneme community in which she grew up, where several women may collectively raise a child. Her work explores how such intergenerational caregiving and the transmission of knowledge foster resilience and identity within a community. Performance artist Wen Hui (China, 1960) pays tribute to her forgotten great-aunt in her video installation *Dance with Third Grandma* (2015), in which dance and movement become a means of unlocking hidden stories.



Tyna Adebawale
After Ojirami Dam, 2025
 Courtesy the Artist and Ellen de Bruijne Projects



Wen Hui
Dance with Third Grandma, 2015
 Thanks for Third Grandma and her family. Photo by Li Xinmin



Sam Jinks, *Tattooed Woman*,
 2007
 Stiftung Kunstsammlung
 Henning J. Claassen

Beyond the museum walls

Grey! extends beyond the gallery space. Through an extensive public and participatory programme, residents of Venlo of all ages and backgrounds are invited to engage in conversations about ageism, good ancestry and generational exchange. Community groups and local organisations will explore the future of their neighbourhoods, while older residents are paired with young filmmakers for the mini-documentary series *Beeldbrekers (Image Breakers)*. In collaboration with scientists, philosophers, authors and artists, a series of symposia will also take place for professionals in elder care, policymakers and other interested audiences. The museum's auditorium - temporarily renamed the OUDitorium - will serve as a space for interaction, reflection and creative exchange. Can we together shift the narrative around aging and write a new story, one centred on encounter, connection and imagination?



Fiona Tan
Rise and Fall, 2009
© Fiona Tan / c/o Pictoright Amsterdam 2025
Courtesy Fiona Tan and Frith Street Gallery, London

Grey! is made possible with support from the Municipality of Venlo, the Province of Limburg, Mondriaan Fund, VSB Fund, the Culture Fund, Fonds Sluyterman van Loo and VENLOKLEURT. The public and participation programme is being developed in collaboration with a large number of partners, including future ecologist Marjolein Pijnappels, Rumah Films, Inluzio Sociale Basis, Assist Jeugdwerk and Stichting S.O.B. Venlo.

About [museum van Bommel van Dam](#)

Housed in the beautifully renovated former main post office at the Keulsepoort in Venlo, museum van Bommel van Dam is the leading museum for modern and contemporary art in North Limburg. Its collection is rooted in the art holdings of Maarten and Reina van Bommel-van Dam and today encompasses a broad range of post-war and contemporary art. The museum presents a vibrant programme of exhibitions and public activities that reflect the diversity and vitality of the contemporary art world.

[museum van Bommel van Dam](#)

Keulsepoort 1 | 5911 BX | Venlo

From 24 January to 14 June 2026

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tickets via: www.vanbommelvandam.nl

Not for publication

Press preview: Friday 23 January 2026 from 1:00 p

rsvp via: arabella@coebergh.nl



www.vanbommelvandam.nl

--
Not for publication: for more information, rights-free images and interview requests, please contact Coebergh Communicatie & PR, Arabella Coebergh, Leidsegracht 38-40, 1016 CM Amsterdam, T +316 24276460 and E arabella@coebergh.nl
N.B.

If you NO longer wish to receive our information, please click [here](#).