Nederlands

Fotomuseum

Nederlands Fotomuseum shows Li Yi-Fan's acclaimed installation as the first venue after the Venice Biennale



Still from Screen Melancholy, 2026 © Li Yi-Fan

Rotterdam, 7 October 2026

The Nederlands Fotomuseum presents, as the first venue after the Venice Biennale, Li Yi-Fan's celebrated installation *Screen Melancholy* from the Taiwan pavilion. The new work takes visitors on a sharp, artistic exploration of the construction of images themselves: from the origins of concepts such as models, masks, keyframes and noise to the power dynamics behind today's AI-generated imagery. The installation can be seen at the museum from 22 January through 11 April 2027.

From screen to sculpture
Li Yi-Fan (Taipei, 1989), from 2024 until 2026 artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, has developed a distinctive practice over the past decade, characterized by playful tension and a sense of strange unease. *Screen Melancholy* marks an impressive new step in his work.

In the installation, a vaguely familiar figure–a virtual puppet–leads the visitor into the inside of the screen, and with it, behind the image. On a large LED screen, this digital figure, acting as a kind of filmmaker, directs an hour-long performance of speaking organs and digital actors that it controls like marionettes. The action unfolds within a digitally reconstructed version of the exhibition space in Venice, placing visitors within the image on multiple levels at once within the image itself, but also within this much-debated international stage for art: both viewer and extra in an image-within-an-image that keeps repeating itself.

This overtly digital work thus leans, at the same time, toward the analogue and the theatrical. The monumental exhibition space also houses large 3D-printed sculptures, modelled on parts of the artist's own body: monumental hands, feet, and sections of legs and arms invite visitors to take an intimate seat on these enlarged body parts within the industrial museum building.

Ultimately, a human body sits on an imitation of itself, watching a performance by digital puppets that likewise mimic its form; the boundaries between 'real' and 'virtual' blur, and the repetition continues on. What, then, is still the difference between human and image?

Nederlands Fotomuseum in the world today
With the exhibition by Li Yi-Fan, the museum signals an updated direction: a more international programme that places photography and images at the centre of art, technology, media and society. Dutch photography is considered part of a global, contemporary reality in which the boundaries between disciplines, regions and identities are fluid and open to multiple perspectives. Following its premiere in May 2026 at the Palazzo delle Prigioni in Venice, the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam is the first venue to present the installation in its entirety. It also marks the museum's first international collaboration in some time.

"We are delighted to present this remarkable exhibition in Rotterdam so soon after Venice. Screen Melancholy, an exploration of images, screens and digital displays that is as perceptive as it is wondrous, also offers a glimpse of the updated direction of the Nederlands Fotomuseum. We will explore what photography is and means today in diverse and new ways, connecting our collection and programme, knowledge sharing and critical looking, documentary practice and visual culture, Rotterdam and the world, and Dutch photography with wider developments in art, technology and media."
Zippora Elders, General and Artistic Director

Over the coming years, the Nederlands Fotomuseum will carefully develop and strengthen its role as a centre of expertise, drawing on its collection of 6.5 million objects and its unique research capabilities. This work will be organically connected with exhibitions developed collaboratively by the museum's own team, alongside more in-depth content on photographic history and theory within the permanent displays. The Nederlands Fotomuseum is developing a dynamic, interdisciplinary programme that brings critical perspectives on the past into dialogue with contemporary developments.

Exhibition: *Li Yi-Fan. Screen Melancholy*
Location: Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam
Dates: 22 January through 11 April 2027

Press contacts

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The press preview will take place on 21 January. Register via Hester Gersonius.