

# influence

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# “L’exactitude n’est pas la vérité”

—Henri Matisse

Inspired by a shared interest in the striking dress codes of various social groups, the Rotterdam-based photographic team of Ari Versluis and Ellie Uyttenbroek have been systematically hamstringing such permutations of received identity for eight years. They call their series *Exactitudes*, a contraction of “exact” and “attitudes.” It’s August Sander and Eugène Atget turned on their heads by Bernd and Hilla Becher—a direct assault on the mythic formula that photography plus the street equals authenticity. By dragging the repertory of the street kicking and screaming to a studio backdrop, the series offers a purposely absurd response to the sentimentality of Jamel Shabazz and the beloved and utterly bogus spontaneity of the photo booth. It’s a perfect fit for an age that’s made the “cool hunt” a corporate pursuit. Of course the photos are starchy and obdurately posed and ever so consciously styled, because there can be no meaningful limit to the cross-contamination between those notions of authenticity and supreme self-awareness.

#### BECHER, Bernd and Hilla

Bernd and Hilla Becher have widely influenced contemporary photography with their serial photographs of industrial structures and landscapes. Working over the course of several decades and throughout many different countries, they have always stuck to only a handful of subjects, such as blast furnaces, water towers, or building facades. The rigorously consistent extended series they refer to as “typologies” were among the first bodies of photographic work to synthesize Atget’s notion of the photographic vernacular with the Conceptual armatures that came to prominence in the art of the 1960s. As instructors at the Staatliche Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, they taught artists including Andreas Gursky, Thomas Ruff, and Thomas Struth.

#### SHABAZZ, Jamel

Born in Red Hook, Brooklyn, in 1960, Jamel Shabazz was one of the first photographers to document the burgeoning hip-hop movement during the early eighties. His work has appeared in publications including *Vibe*, *Spin*, *Trace*, and *The Source*, and in such exhibitions as *Hip-Hop Nation: Roots, Rhymes, and Rage* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. In 2001 powerHouse Books published his collection *Back in the Days*, which follows the hip-hop scene in the boroughs of New York from 1980 to 1989.

(p. 71) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Dreads, Rotterdam, 1998.*

(p. 72) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Students, Beijing, 1999.*

(p. 73) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Teknohippies, Rotterdam, 2002.*

(p. 74 top-left) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Mister Wang, Beijing, 1999.*

(p. 74 top-right) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Fly Girls, Rotterdam, 2002.*

(p. 74 bottom-left) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Casual Queers, Rotterdam, 1998.*

(p. 74 bottom-right) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Skins, Rotterdam, 2002.*

(p. 75 top-left) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Moroccies, Rotterdam, 1997.*

(p. 75 top-right) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Chillers, Rotterdam, 1999.*

(p. 75 bottom-left) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Ecopunks, Rotterdam, 2002.*

(p. 75 bottom-right) **VERSLUIS, Ari, and UYTENBROEK, Ellie**  
*Homeboys, Rotterdam, 2002.*

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