

# Globespotters

Travel News, From Those in the Know

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## Photographic Stories of the Street, at Street Level

By JOEL WEICKGENANT



Courtesy of Dream Amsterdam Foundation

'Chronograph Choreography,' by Peter Funch (2009).

**AMSTERDAM** | A photographic exhibition of large scale and forward-looking ambition is set to take over the Museumplein on Friday.

The Danish photographer [Peter Funch](#) has used digital technology to push the narrative structure of photography. Funch composes his images by culling characters from thousands of photographs to create a single, time-bending composite of a street corner or an avenue.

Gallery-goers might remember his first major collection of work in this vein: "[Babel Tales](#)," set in Manhattan. The images in the new series, "Amsterdam Stories," chronicle six weeks of this city's public spaces; the exhibit itself will be presented as a public installation, surrounded by some of Amsterdam's most important museums, but accessible to, and interacting with, the crowds.

Funch talked about his work earlier this week. Here are a few excerpts from that interview.



Courtesy of Dream Amsterdam Foundation

'Revolutionary Road' by Peter Funch (2009).

**Globespotters:** What are the similarities between this work and what you did in New York with "Babel Tales"? And how do you put these images together?

**Funch:** It's kind of the same idea about making people have relationships. They all have something in common. The big difference is that this is the full circle, pictures about the people to the people. People can go see themselves in the pictures.

The idea is, I'm shooting on a street corner 10, 15 days, the same spot every day. Shooting the people passing by. Then I categorize people for what they look like, what they wear, what they're doing. I take one category of people and put it in one image. I don't move around people. They're put exactly where they are in the picture. Making the categories of small details that tell something about people at a specific location, or a way of human behavior.

**GS:** How do you pick the locations?

**Funch:** I pick locations, first, if they attract a lot of people. Does the location have some kind of history, does it give people a certain behavior? Does the location have some aesthetic value? Does it frame good?

Here I was working with my sister, and we focused on quite a lot of locations. The weather is very different in Holland, it's not consistent like it is in the United States. You'll have four hours of good weather here and then it's raining. So we're working on up to eight photos at one time. We put everything down in a manual: this is where we shoot when it's raining, this is where we shoot when it's cloudy, this is where we shoot when it's sunny. It was extremely organized.

**GS:** Your background is in photojournalism. How did you move into this kind of more artistic work?

**Funch:** I was working on a newspaper in Denmark. I seemed to bump into the same wall all the time about making the objective story, not interfering too much about what to do and what to tell. And I had so many ideas about things I wanted to do, stage people and do things. Somehow I started showing at galleries. It seemed to fit so much, the way of telling a story to a gallery. You can be much more abstract, you don't have to rely on true forms, objectivity and subjectivity.

In my head I was moving photography to something that was like a short film in a photo. And it also had that story about the people. I've always been fascinated about making documents about how we are. How we behave as humans.

We as viewers, we are so much more used to storytelling now, complicated storytelling. All these films where you have many stories that are crossing each other. And at some point they meet, and the essence of that meeting tells the whole story. And that kind of inspired me to do the photos, take that narrative way of telling a story, put that into a photo.

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