

F A R E W E L L

Ghislain Amar & Sophie Bates (A two person exhibition)
Opening: Friday 12th December 2025 (sunset til 9pm)
Location: BUISNESS, Hillelaan 49d, Rotterdam, 3072 JE
Exhibition runs: One weekend only – evening 12th, 13th, 14th (sunset till late)

This text is written by one of the artists themselves. As a disclosure, it will be a biased, fairly odd press release.

***Sophie:** would u be into making a show together in buisness b4 you give it up.*

***Ghislain:** Maybe finally we could do a project with both our works and see how they connect. I think it's a great idea.*

A shared interest in capturing the immediate world around us through a lens. Linking aesthetic ways of being in space and time (in Rotterdam and elsewhere). I've started to call it *Aesthetics of Life*¹. The exhibition marks an end of an era, or a chapter. We grew up in Rotterdam. My brain has been growing here. New studies show 32 is the age it stops. That's my current age. I can't understand my memories without feeling like I was a different person back then. In our lives we experience many new chapters and saying farewell to something, someone or somewhere is commonplace. When things end, we look back with new eyes. As we continue learning, growing in this world, sometimes we just want to feel it's enough.

Is *life* enough of a subject for art? A familiar question to myself and Ghislain. Sometimes G says he doesn't think he has a subject. I think he is a process driven artist, as much as he loves to adore certain images. There's always an act, a mission, actually an obsession or a strong impulse to follow something new. Our practices have always had something in common. Did we influence each other since we met, or did he allow me to think maybe 'my life' was enough too.

The reckoning of being public and seeking validation through expression already screams anxiety, but it is a space to make, create and see things and show them to others. To connect. Apparently we need to share, overshare, document, record, let go, express - it's a way to cope, to process and to figure things out. Reserve, preserve and hold judgement. If we were to stay quiet who would we be? The refusal of it all is a life we chose to live and it's not doing too much harm.

Some practices come directly from love itself. They are not preconceived projects with budgets laid out. They occur organically. Sometimes I've questioned myself, is it even art? What makes it art? When we take one piece out of its context, it may be hard to convince someone that it's meaningful. Perhaps, it's not meaningful to them. But what about practices, what about non-conceptualised practices that arise from life? Do we call it documentary in art? What is the difference when I pre-conceive an idea and then stage it or question or interrogate it? When I enter a room not knowing I'm creating an artwork. Well actually, there's no difference to documentary. I already know, I just don't enter with a preconceived end goal. I am open. I am investigating. Does that still make me the author? The creator. Unknowns are important, not knowing makes sense when what we are doing is searching for answers. Making art can be a way of seeing and being in the world. It's not switched on and off, it's constant, it's a mindset. It's not productive. At its core it's anti-capitalist, it's time and resources wasted. But then there is an art market.

¹ How groups of people in certain places gather and homogenise in visual style, encompassing daily routines, environments, food, fashion, and even moral choices, focusing on how they perceive, create, and find value in the ordinary to achieve a richer, more meaningful existence, though it can also veer into pessimistic interpretations of life's inherent emptiness or absurdity.

The friends I studied fine art with on my bachelor's degree, who did not choose art as a career, have decent paid capitalist jobs, and have made room for creative side hustles (jewellery making, marble lamps, bespoke candles, commissioned portraits) and are all driven by making money too. They operate in the realm of capitalist consumables, they see a gap and try to fill it. What is the unmet need? Fill it like it's never been filled before.

Being an artist as opposed to being a filmmaker or a photographer means we have to deal with space, space that is versatile, manipulated and primed. It is a blank space and we try to do something new or inventive in it. I don't always do this, but I've always admired Ghislain's drive for newness as an artist.

GHISLAIN AMAR – *FAREWELL ROTTERDAM* (35mm slideshow, in two-parts 2025)

Part 1

(Side A), 80 slides

Part 2

(B-sides highschool scrap book year book photo album friends strangers hometown picture party goodbye), 43 slides

Each carousel is played one after each other. Part 1 is played 4 times more than Part 2

Ghislain's work for **Farewell** is a large-scale 35mm slideshow installation, projected each evening in the darkened space. The carousel works on a timer and Part 1 will loop in the space. Visitors may also request access to the **“B-sides”**: *The bonus tracks carousel*.

When Ghislain first started doing photography, he began shooting slides on the advice of someone in a photo shop. He picked up a cheap, pretty terrible projector at a flea market and would invite friends over to show his slides. He has fond memories of doing this, not knowing what it would bring or why he was doing it. Looking back he realises that people enjoyed it, and he began curating a series of images, thinking of it as a bit of a performance.

SOPHIE BATES – *Enterrement de Vie de Jeune Fille* (HD-handycam, 1.03:2, 27 mins, soft-focus projection on kefir windows)

Enterrement de Vie de Jeune Fille is a study of my female friends from school on a hen weekend (A Bachelorette Party) in the UK. As much as I am an artist on this trip, I am very much part of the antics, the recording process is secondary to having fun. The film brings you right into the antics of the ‘hen do’, the house tour, the logistics, the getting drunk and the interactions of the female friends. Happy Hen!