

# A ROOM WITH A VIEW

- Menno Aden

Through challenging camera angles Menno Aden abstracts most familiar actual living environments and public interiors into "flattened two-dimensional scale models. A camera that the artist installed on the ceiling of various rooms takes pictures downwards of the interiors. The resulting images lay out space in symmetrical compositions that look like assemblages stripped off any kind of objectivity. The views into private homes and secret retreats bring up associations of the ubiquitous observation camera. The notion of surveillance is systematically played out by the artist to hint at society's voyeuristic urge that popular culture has made mainstream.

*Miriam Nöske*

## A Room With a View (From Above)

Photographer Menno Aden likes to look down on his subjects, but in the least pretentious way possible. To him, it's just another way of seeing someone's personality.

"For me as an artist, watching from a higher position on a small space is interesting because I can see someone's 'compressed personality,'" Aden wrote via email.

"I started photographing rooms of friends in Berlin, to make portraits of them without actually seeing them. Many of them had—or still have—an unpretentious life, which is quite typical in Berlin since rents have been quite low." Shooting from above, however, can make even the most obvious candidate for a Hoarders episode look neat and organized.

"This happens because all the things on the floor such as the furniture flatten into two dimensions," explained Aden. "I knew about it and I wanted this organized look over chaotic spaces because it makes the viewer feel elevated—sublime—but to be honest I didn't know that an untidy room would look so organized, too." Aden admits he is often scouting rooms and other types of spaces constantly. "When I find a good one [space] I walk through a room, stare at the floor, and note the furniture or the structure of a room."



"If a room interests me, I'm making plans where I'll put the camera and check the height and material of the ceiling," wrote Aden. From there, the process begins with Aden taking wide-angle images to get an overview of the room. If he's still interested in the aesthetic, he elevates his camera sometimes with a monopod or tripod. The camera is often controlled remotely. He takes about 150 pictures from the elevated position and then begins his post-production processing and final editing. Aden isn't limited to private spaces. He has taken images of stores, in elevators, and also in basements and parking garages, which are some of his most abstract work.

About the garages, Aden explained: "One day I stumbled upon the basement garage of a supermarket where I was buying some food. I noticed the dirty and oily traces cars make that went over some lines in the parking lots. I took some test pictures and liked the lines—they remind me of calligraphy ... so I started to do a series that could easily redefine the term 'oil-paintings.'" *David Rosenberg for Slate, Washington Post (2013/01/14)*

This is a first for this style of indoor photography. Usually you see nice clean HDR shots of rooms or office space for real estate agents. Menno Aden takes a whole different approach on this genre, one many people never really see. Using a camera mounted to the middle of the ceiling, Menno captures a view of locations never really seen before. This gives the images a unique perspective on an ordinary living space or storefront. I think this would be a pretty cool way to start getting a better idea for planning room layouts. Definitely a different look that I haven't seen before.

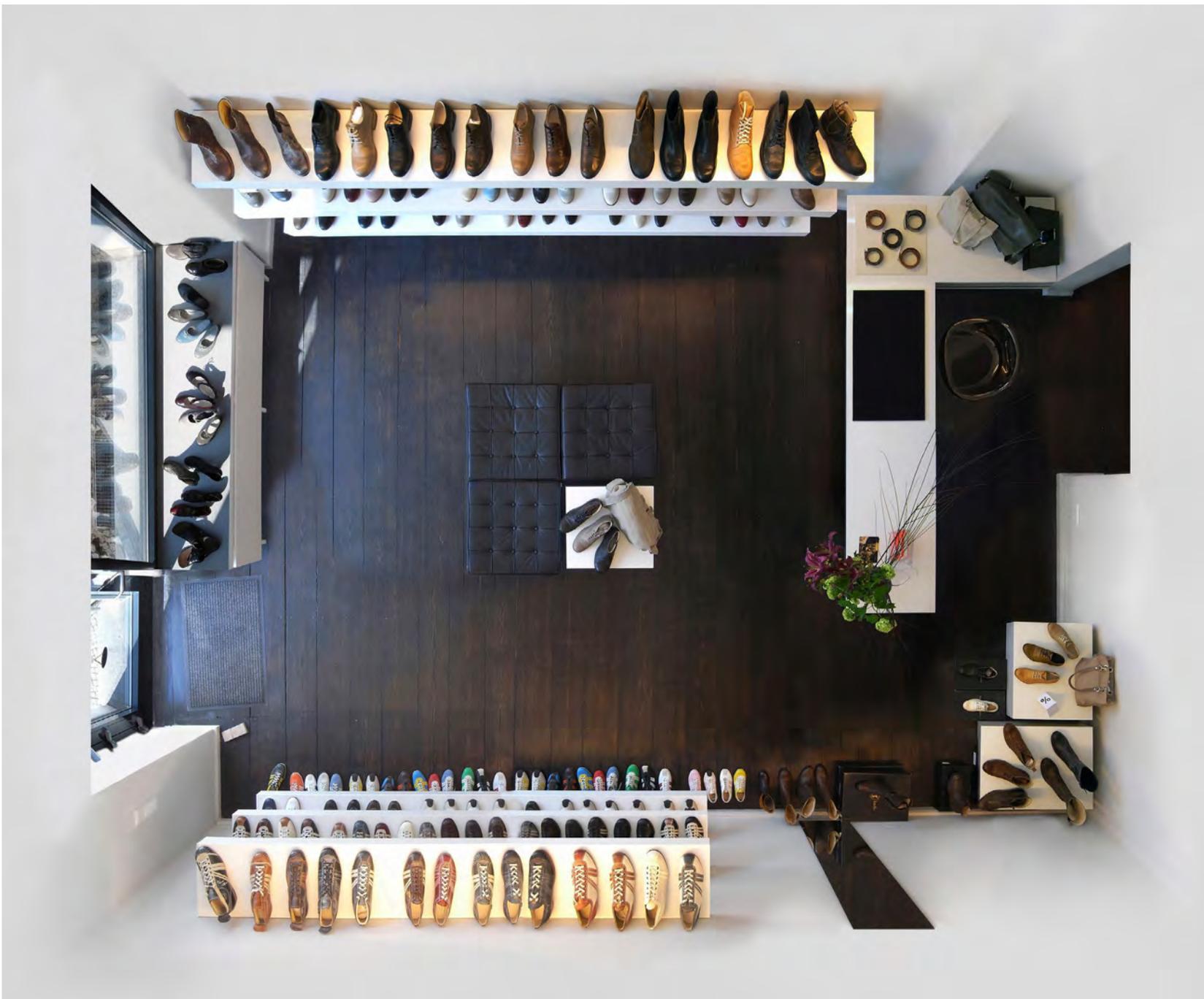
*John Tender*

**Untitled (G.S. II)**  
2006, 70 x 50 cm  
(27 x 20 in.)





Untitled (G.S. I)  
2006, 70 x 50 cm  
(27 x 20 in.)



**Untitled (Shoe Shop)**  
2009, 100 x 118 cm  
(39 x 47 in.)



Untitled (Corner Shop II)  
2017, 120 x 100 cm  
(47 x 39 in.)

**Untitled (Subway)**  
2010, 50 x 200 cm  
(20 x 79 in.)



**Untitled (Bar)**  
2011, 90 x 160 cm  
(35 x 63 in.)

