

MIK VAN BARSELA

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INTRO

NL

Het thema psyché vormt in mijn werk een sterke basis. Hierbij vertrek ik onder andere vanuit mijn eigen ervaringen als patiënt binnen de psychiatrische wereld, maar benader ik het thema ook vanuit een geschiedkundige, sociologische en culturele invalshoek. Hierbij wordt dus ook de zuiver psychoanalytische opvatting van de menselijke psyché overschreden. Vanuit een cultureel perspectief stel ik mij dan weer kritisch tegenover de zogenaamde ‘lage en hoge cultuur’: als een creatieveling met een psychiatrisch verleden en tegelijkertijd met een Masterdiploma in de beeldende kunsten op zak, bevind ik mij in de interessante positie van zowel de culturele ‘Outsider’ als de ‘Insider’, waar ik gretig het hokjesdenken in de (kunst)wereld mee doorprik.

In mijn praktijk speel ik dan ook vaak met lokale volkse cultuuruitingen uit mijn eigen land die tot de zogenaamde ‘lage cultuur’ behoren: de reuzen bij reuzenstoeten, volkse figuren als de dorpsgek, poppentheaters, de kitscherige biscuit ‘postuurkes’ op grootmoeders schouw, het zowel lokale als universele karakter van het Vlaamse landschap – met haar fermettes, knutselachtige koterijen en lintbebouwing.

En als een ware bricoleur hanteer ik verschillende media - vaak ook door elkaar - waaronder: schilderen, sculptuur, installatie, film, miniatuur, readymades, performance... en wissel ik op speelse wijze af tussen de rollen Kunstenaar met een grote K en zondagsschilder/outsiderkunstenaar.

EN

The theme psyche forms a strong base in my work. Among other things I depart from my own experiences as a patient in the psychiatric system, but also approach the theme from a historic, sociological and cultural angle. Hereby it exceeds the purely psychoanalytical view of the human psyche. From a cultural stance I am critical towards the so called ‘low and high culture’: as a creative with a psychiatric past and at the same time a Master’s degree in visual arts, I find myself in an interesting position: I am both a cultural ‘outsider’ and an ‘insider’, a position I happily use to puncture the box thing that is all too apparent inside the (art)world.

In my practice I often play with local folkloristic cultural expressions of my own country (Belgium) – that belong to the so called ‘low culture’: the giants in giant parades, folkloristic figures like the village idiot, puppet theatres, kitschy decorative figurines that are on display on grandmother’s fireplace, the both local and universal character of the Flemish landscape – with Fermettes, crooked extensions behind houses and ribbon development.

As a true tinkerer I use all kinds of media - often mixed with each other – under which: painting, sculpting, installation, filmmaking, miniatures, readymades, performance,... and like to playfully change I between the “high artist on his ivory tower” and a Sunday painter.











Dorpsstraat (2024) cardboard, paper, acrylic paint, colored pencils, tape, styrofoam and plastic



Kerkstraat (2024) cardboard, paper, acrylic paint, colored pencils, marker, tape, styrofoam and plastic



Den Hoeck (2024) cardboard, paper, acrylic paint, colored pencils, marker, tape, styrofoam and plastic

De Dorpsgek [The Village Idiot] (2024) filmstills



In *The Village Idiot* we are invited by Bob - the local village idiot played by myself- to spend the day with him. Departing from my own physical vulnerability and psychosis, as well as the strange world of (interactive) children's tv and the 'tinkered look' of sets from Belgian low budget tv productions,, i created a film that both criticizes and plays with the stereotypical representation of psychotic people in art and media.

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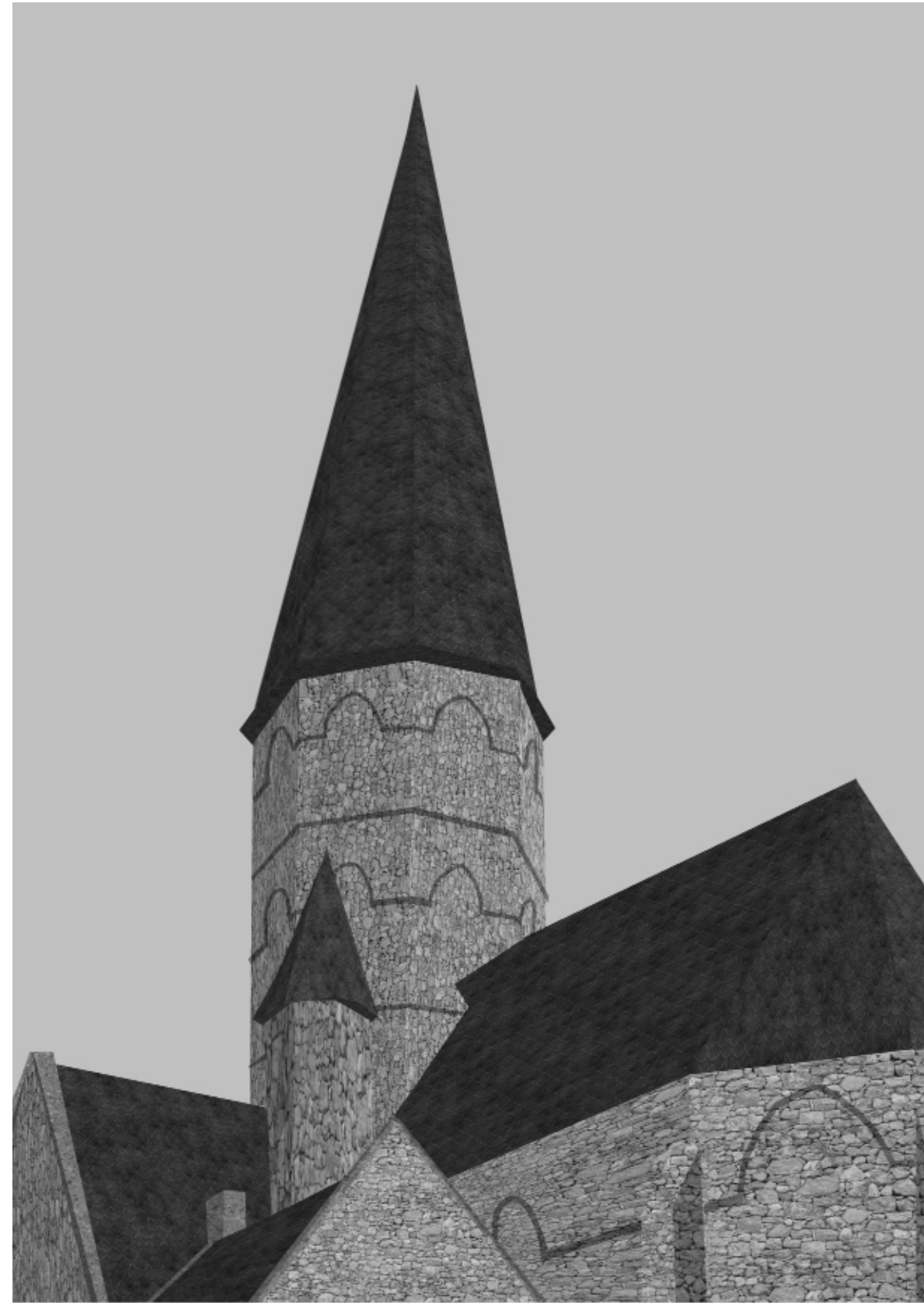
The Spectators (2023) painting (oil on canvas)

Kerkstraat [Church street] (2023) Post card



Old postcards are a way to travel back to an earlier time period of a certain place, however they can only take us back to a certain extent. In Church Street we travel back in time to a street in my village. Even though we have moved beyond the stage of a typical sepia tinted postcard, we still can't fully enter the image: the houses are inaccessible and so is the past.

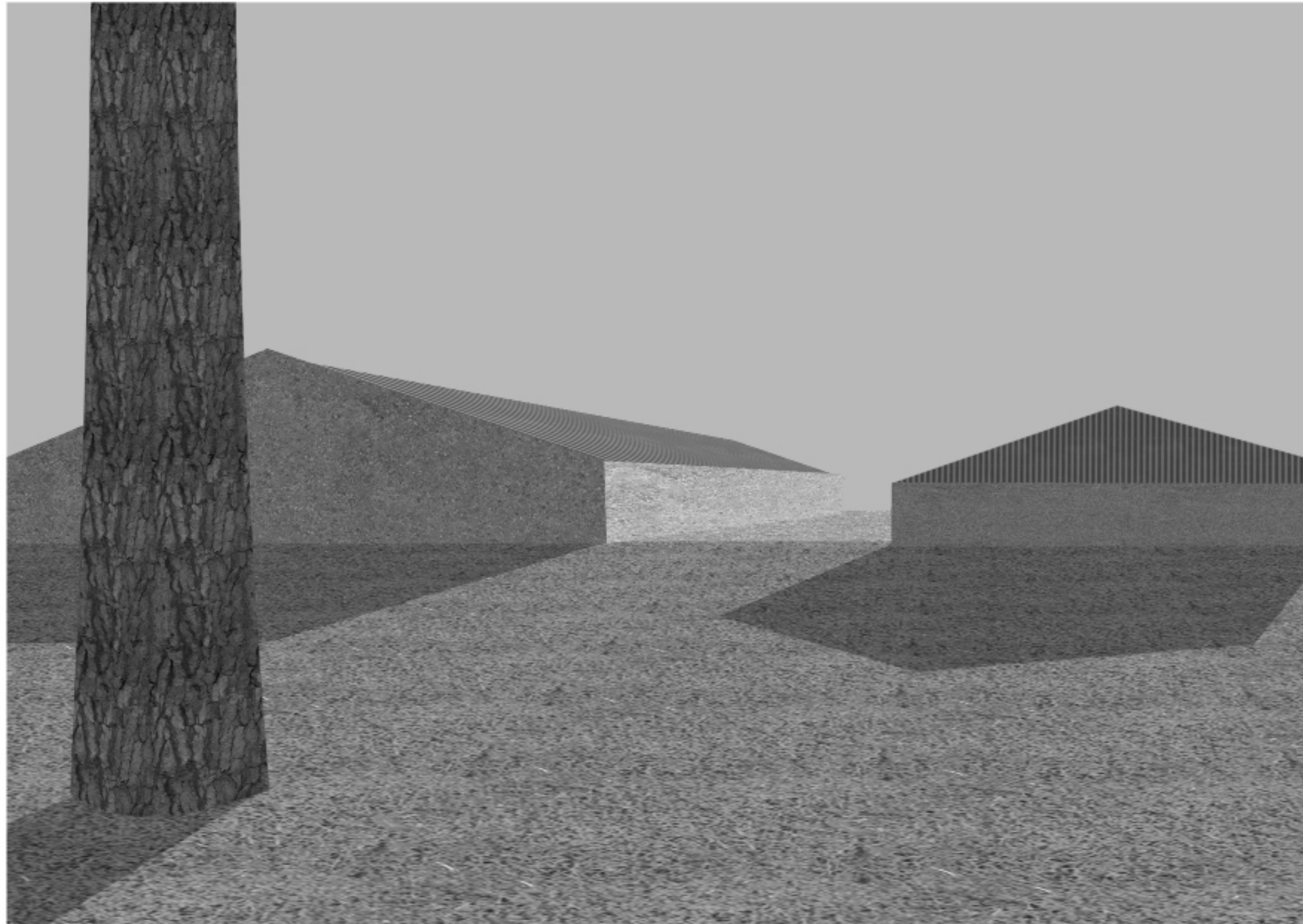
Toren [Tower] (2023) Digital composition after an etch of local artist Juliaan Severin. (297 x 210 mm)



Etchings of the village's church are a decoration often seen in interiors of (elderly) people in the countryside. However, once such etchings are shown outside of the borders of the village in question, it loses the spiritual meaning that originally connected it with its owner, and it becomes an image of an anonymous tower.

Morning sun inbetween the stables [ochtendzon tussen de stallen] (2023)

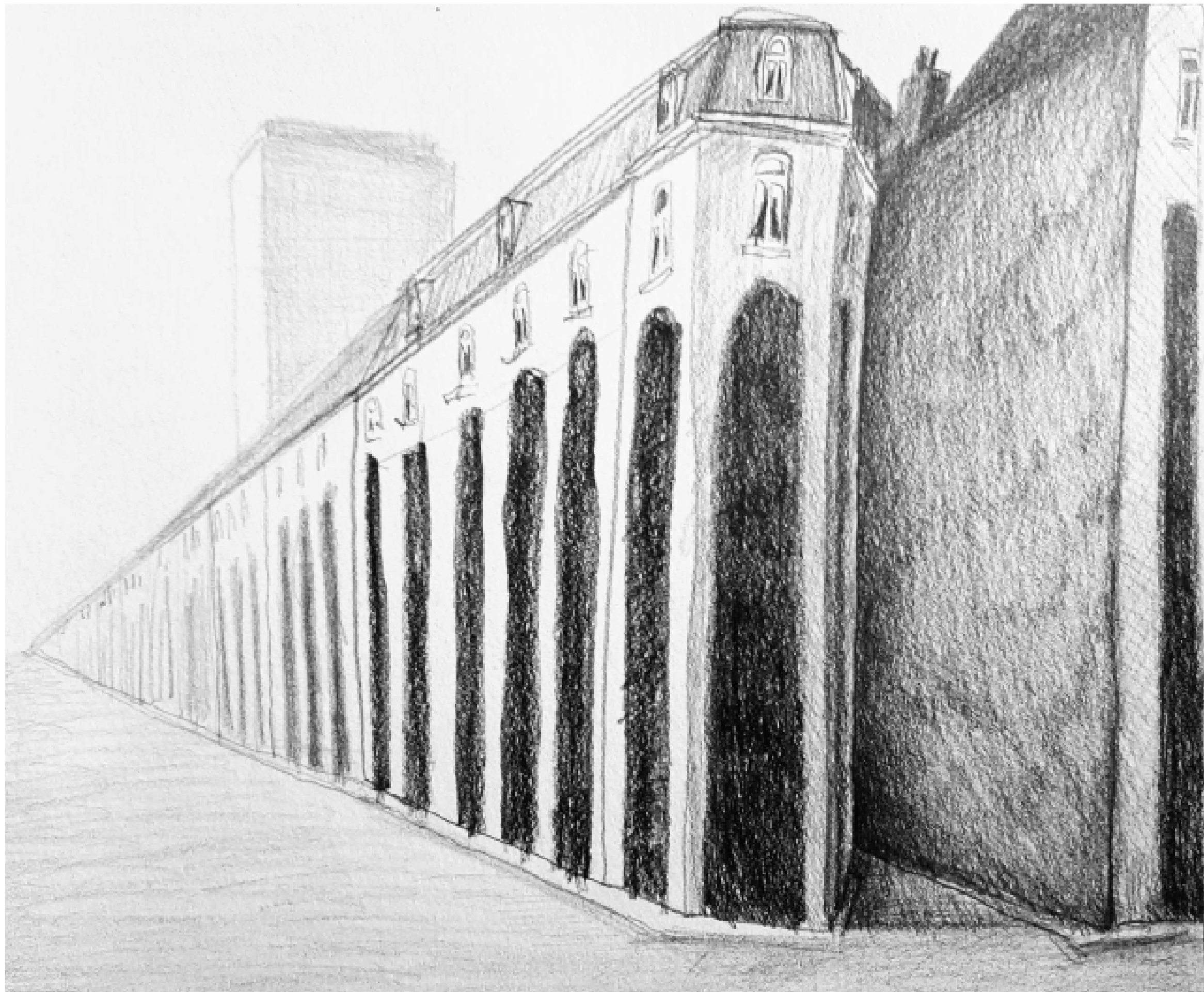
Digital composition after oil painting of Juliaan Severin



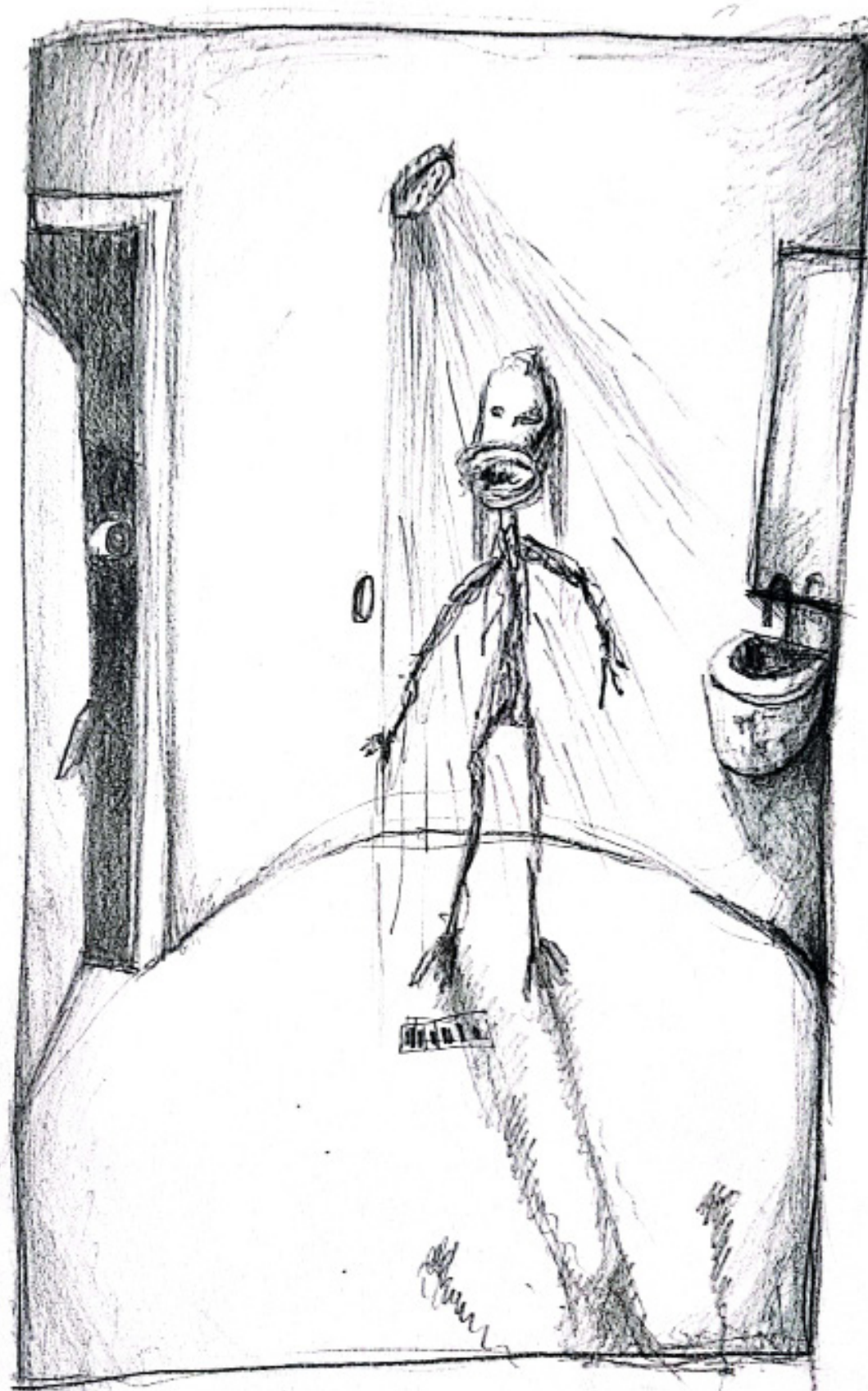
Juliaan Severin, a local artist, painted Hollebeekhoeve - a local family business - in the 1950's, back when it still was a small and cute farm with shaky stables and chickens running around on the cobblestoned courtyard. Through the years Hollebeekhoeve grew, and eventually became an industrial farm, not resembling the little farm it began as anymore at all. In this digital composition I created a soulless version of Juliaan Severin's original oil painting, giving it the look of 'corporate art' seen in office buildings.



The Sickness In Town (2023) drawing from an A3 sketchbook, Pencil on paper, 297 x 210 mm



The City (2023) drawing from an A3 sketchbook, Pencil on paper, 297 x 210 mm



THE SHOWER

The Shower (2023) drawing from an A3 sketchbook, Pencil on paper, 297 x 210 mm

Barbie skeleton (2022) Mixed media

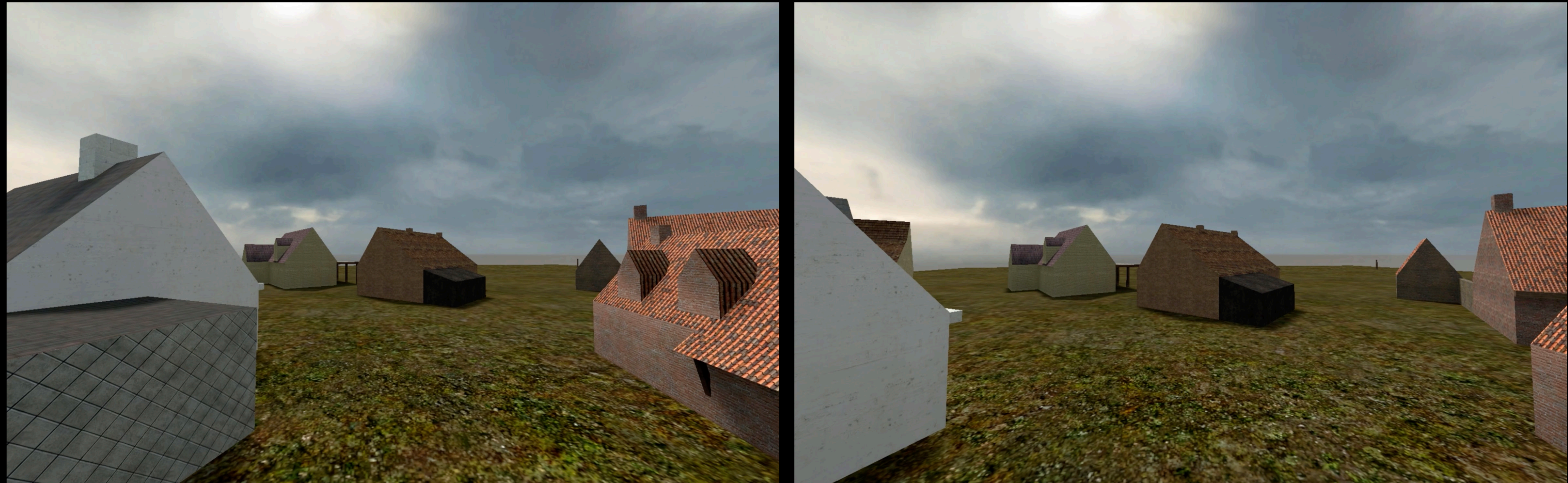


Through the years Barbie has reached a true celebrity status, and has conquered the hearts of millions of children all across the globe. When in fact she is just a piece of casted plastic shaped as a human being. We are sold identities in the form of mass produced objects we relate to. In Barbie Skeleton she becomes an actual mortal being, in a post mortem state.

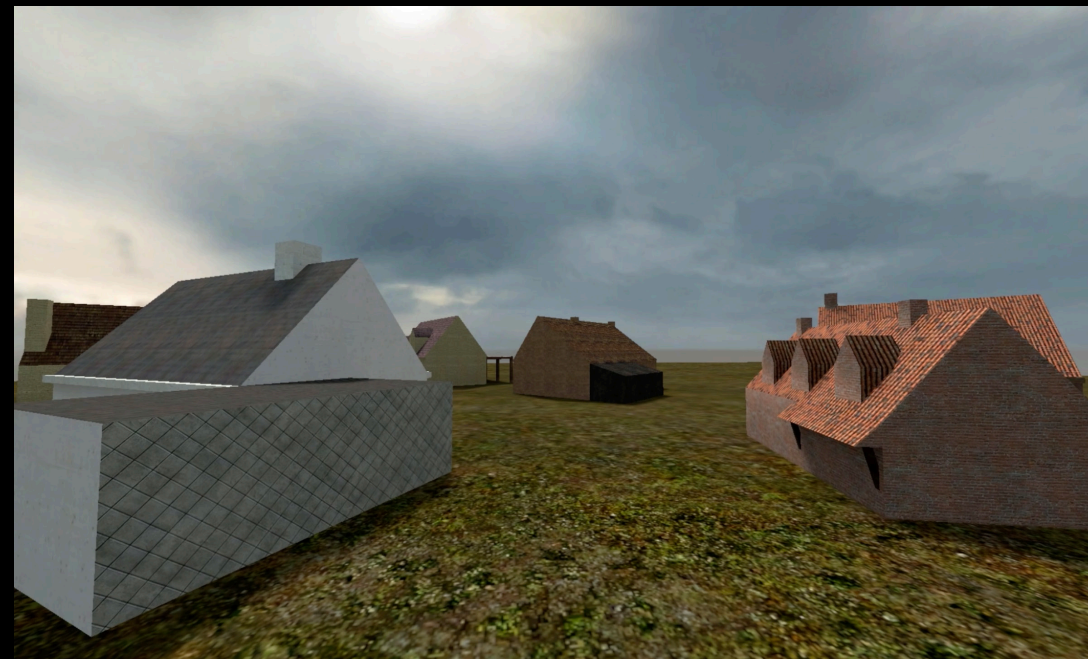


Domestic Ballets (2021) Painting, acrylic on canvas

Fermette [Farmette] (2022) filmstills of video installation



A fermette is a typical farmstyle house in the Flemish/Belgian countryside. Mostly built during the 80's in the style of a traditional farmhouse, but with the comfort and luxury of a post-industrial time period. The heart of the farm is removed (stables, fields, life stock) and they have become status symbols rather than residences for working class people working hard physical labor.



Inner Action (2022) Installation



Alternately 10 faces are projected on a disembodied styrofoam head, all bumbling in an unintelligible way.
The projector and the projected seem to have a personal exchange, excluding the viewer.

Space (2022) video installation



In *Space* I made 3D recreations of old interiors I found on real estate websites. I consciously choose not to use a modern top notch program like Sketchup because I think those are too polished. Instead I made the spaces in Valve Hammer Editor, a very old and outdated program from 2004 to design video game maps; the textures are all grimy and low resolution and the lighting options are limited. Like architectural firms upscale their 3D renders of brand new buildings to have a dreamy and perfect character, i ‘downscaled’ the 3D renders to show the lived-in and sometimes decrepit state of these kinds of spaces.

Dirty wallpaper because of a moisture problem and years of inside smoking, a stain on fixed carpet, an outbuilding as a result of DIY tinkering from the previous owners. All characteristics typically seen in ‘second hand houses’





TENTOONSTELLINGEN

solotentoonstelling

Inside Outsider, solotentoonstelling
Kavka Oudaan, 2022

groepstentoonstelling

Steeds Buiten, Croxhapox 2024
Pornstar Martine, Katapultt, 2024
Annual Report, Muntcentrum 2022

andere projecten

Waarom ben ik geen vogel? (collectief project met kunstenaars in de marge)
VZW With.

Babylon, (Stemacteur in film)
Mose Kaz, 2023

OOPLEIDINGEN

Master Vrije Kunsten (grote onderscheiding)
LUCA, School of Arts, Gent, 2024