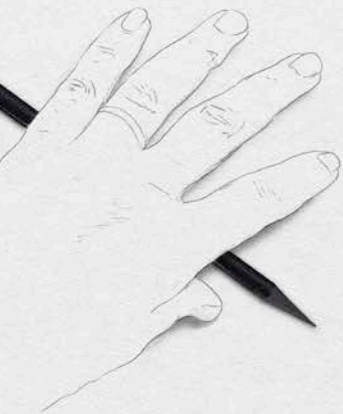
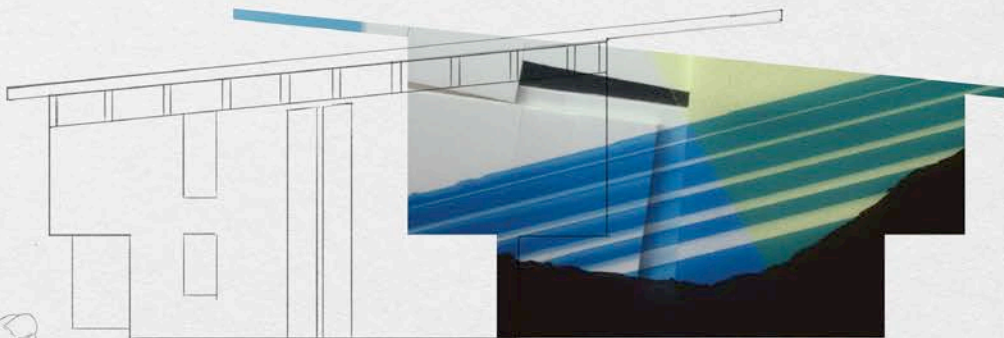


# DAS RETIRÉE

or the last house of my father



A film by JULIE PFLEIDERER

**RUNTIME** 43 min

**GENRE** Experimental Documentary

**COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION** Belgium

**COUNTRY OF COPRODUCTION** Germany, The Netherlands

**YEAR** 2022

**LANGUAGE** German

**SUBTITLES** English, French, Dutch

**TAGLINE**

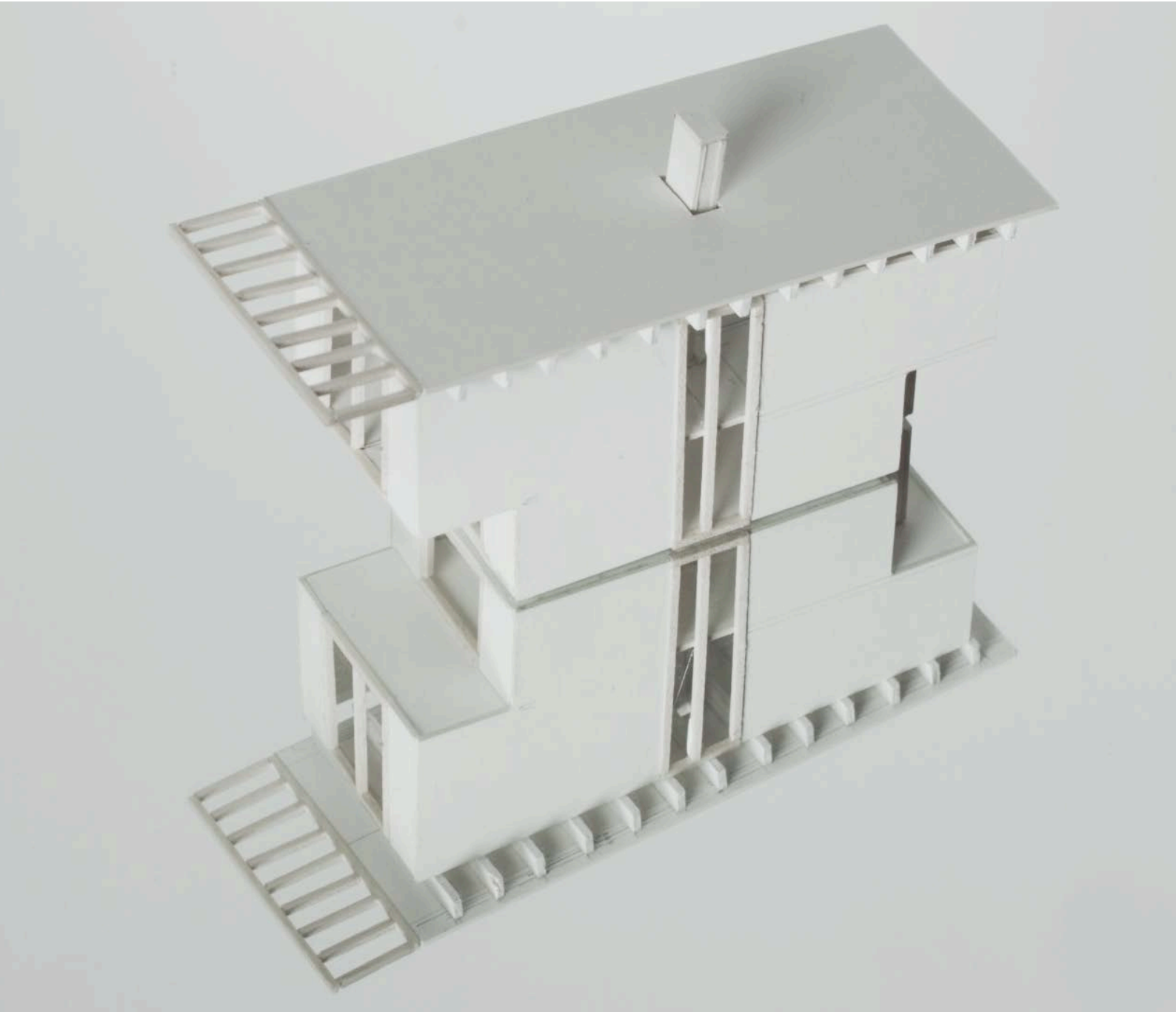
A film as a space for impossible conversations.

**SHORT SYNOPSIS (EN)**

If you were to design your dream house now that you're at the end of your life, what would it look like ? This question from the filmmaker to her father, retired architect Karlhans Pfeleiderer, is the starting point of *Das Retirée* or the last house of my father. Slowly but surely, the house takes form, first drawn on shifting layers of transparent paper, then glued into a scale model. Between the words and the gestures, the film of the daughter becomes the father's last house, a space in which unspoken words, unfulfilled desires can appear, disclosing coping-mechanisms that have survived several generations.

**TRAILER**

<https://vimeo.com/706052743>

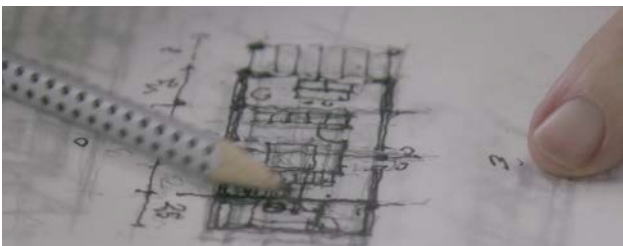


As a director with a background in theatre, I love looking at film as a performative tool. The idea for *Das Retirée* took shape a couple of years ago, when my father's ageing became more pronounced. One day, after a minor operation, we reminisced at his bedside about this small house my father designed, but never realised.

It was around this time that the idea of a safe space entered my work. In 2018 I directed *SAFE*, a performance concert made in collaboration with the composer Oxana Omelchuk and the Belgian contemporary music ensemble Ictus. The performance revolved around hypersensitivity towards all kinds of environmental influences. *SAFE* offered an immersive journey for the senses, starting as a live concert and evolving into a sophisticated live radio play.

Thinking about safe spaces brought me back to my childhood. As a child I was loud and curious. I shared my father's spatial fascination, but knew early on that I was more interested in how people relate to their context, than in the architecture itself. From an early age, my father nourished my interest in theatrical spaces and stories. This forged a strong connection between us.

For different reasons both my parents were forced to take care of themselves from a young age. They both developed a warm but also critical relation to their surroundings, setting high standards for their environment. My father was born in Stuttgart in 1937, four years after the Reichstag fire. His parents got divorced when he was young, which was quite rare at the time. My grandfather, who was the director of a paper company, took it for granted that his son would follow in his footsteps. But after the Second World War my father decided to become an architect to support the reconstruction efforts. When he refused to take over his father's paper company and chose to study architecture instead, my father was told that he no longer belonged to the family and was disinherited.



These last few years I realised that I am more like my father than my mother. My father is 43 years older than me. He is stubborn and generous. Life at home was disciplined and there was no confusion about who was in control. Behind his urge for control, my father hides a remarkable sensitivity. He has incredible stamina and a strong will, yet he craves recognition.

*Das Retirée* is a way for me to deal with my father's increasing vulnerability. To deal with the lines that become blurry, the smudging of the layers of what we can and cannot see. Hoping to ensure space for this vulnerability, every shoot is guided by certain rules that orchestrate our dialogue. These are made to create a certain degree of equality, and enable my father and me to become possible co-authors. The film is a tool to break through our German reservedness; our difficulty to talk about feelings. It's an attempt to construct our shared story out of lived and un-lived visions of togetherness and what we think we will leave behind.



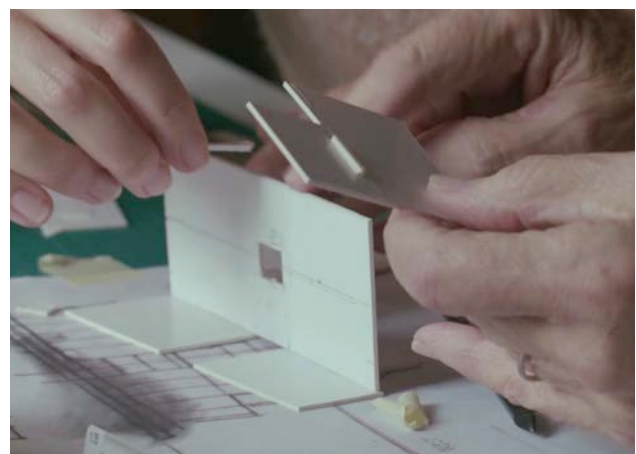
Text by **PIETER VAN BOGAERT**

Julie Pfleiderer's *Das Retirée*, or the last house of my father is a film about a house, but it could also be about a father or about a daughter too. It is about an architect, but also about a filmmaker. It is about a space, a person, a profession that folds or unfolds like a story.

A film and a space - it depends on how you look at it. *Das Retirée* plays with proportions. It scales and rescales. Small things, fragments of things, details: they all come in different sizes. The hand of the daughter (who is also the filmmaker), her fingers going through her hair, lead the viewer towards the first grey hairs that become visible only because of the extreme close-up or the scale of the image. It is a detail, but it counts. It's a direction. The hand of the father (who is twice her age - you see the difference, it's a man's hand because of the hairs on it, it's an old hand because of the colour of its skin) copies his own drawings (you assume, because he is the architect). A hand, a pencil, a piece of paper - small things that stand for a bigger whole. They fill the screen of which the size depends on where you are (behind a computer? in a theatre?). Voices join in and open up the space (does a voice have a size?). One voice is firmer than the other (that too has to do with age: voices - like arguments - tend to become stronger at first, while growing up, but then start to fade while ageing). The voices start a conversation about small things, small gestures, that distance themselves from grand visions. That's how one ends up with a compact house. A house of one's own.

(Actually, it starts with a room. The only room in the house with a door. A tiny room for that matter, with a view on a big plum tree. That is where it begins. That used to be the first image, the first *Retirée*. A room so small you could only enjoy it on your own. It used to be the room of the daughter before becoming the room of the father and before becoming a house.)

Scales change. They rescale during the planning phase (or the script, the pitch, for the filmmaker) and throughout the making of the film. They grow from, let's say, 1:1000, to, inevitably, 1:1.

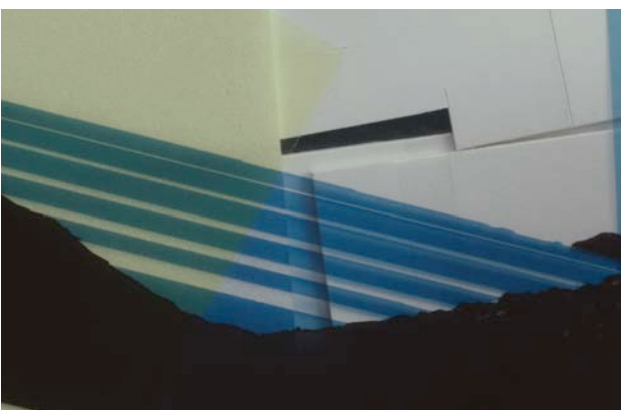
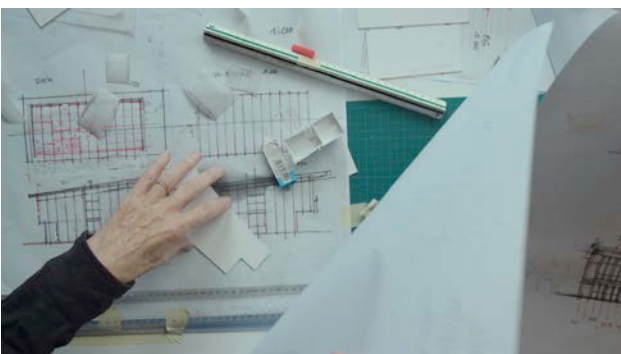


One on one: that's real, like when building a house. One to one: that's for real, like when building a conversation. One and one. A house and a conversation. Looking for what is missing (at first) and discovering what is there (when things are filled in). A house and a conversation.

Like a scale model: how things, elements, fit in and with each other. Then comes the fear of failure: we all know that when starting something new. But we all deal with it differently. What is there to build on fear? A house and a conversation. That's two times working with the things you have, the things you know. It starts with the everyday, the things around you, nothing special. It is what it is. One on one. One to one. One and one. Tiny things. Small changes. The first grey hairs. Eyebrows that have to be trimmed. The things that are left unspoken, but that are definitely there. The in between things. In between them. In between words and gestures. That's what takes a small film, a small conversation, a small house, (an in between film, conversation, house) to another level – where the personal touches on the universal.

Scales disappear. They vanish when the model becomes a house, when the conversation becomes a film. That is where things open up. Where the outside world comes in: the view through the window (with or without the old plum tree), the film crew (with or without their faces), the words (with or without voices). It is where things get digested. Where they get a flavour and become real. Where they become part of a process and turn into something else.

That's what makes her film his last house.



**A FILM BY** Julie Pfeiderer  
**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY** Julie Pfeiderer  
**IN COLLABORATION WITH** Luca Mattei  
**ORIGIN OF THE DIRECTOR** Germany

**DELEGATE PRODUCER** Steven Dhoedt  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY** Visualantics  
**COPRODUCERS** Daan Milius & Hans van Hezik  
for Video Power

**CAST** Karlhans Pfeiderer, Julie Pfeiderer  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Thomas Schira  
**EDITOR** Luca Mattei  
**SOUND RECORDING** Jörg Kidrowski & Julia Hübner  
**SOUND DESIGN** Simonluca Laitempergher  
**ORIGINAL MUSIC** Simonluca Laitempergher, Paul Craenen  
**SCALE MODELS** Jochen Schmitt-Thelen



Julie Pfeiderer & Karlhans Pfeiderer

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Image, Flanders Tax Shelter, Mondriaan Fund, Provincie  
Limburg, Gemeente Maastricht

**WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF** Tax Shelter of the Federal  
Government of Belgium

**SHOOTING FORMAT** HD

**AUDIO** Stereo/ 5.1

**COLOUR**

**FRAMERATE** 25p

Julie Pfeiderer is a German multimedia artist working across the boundaries of performance and experimental film. In her work Julie explores the border of documentary and fiction. She is attracted by the space where fiction becomes truth and truth starts to be fictional. Julie enjoys collaborative processes in which friction is created through permanent differentiation.

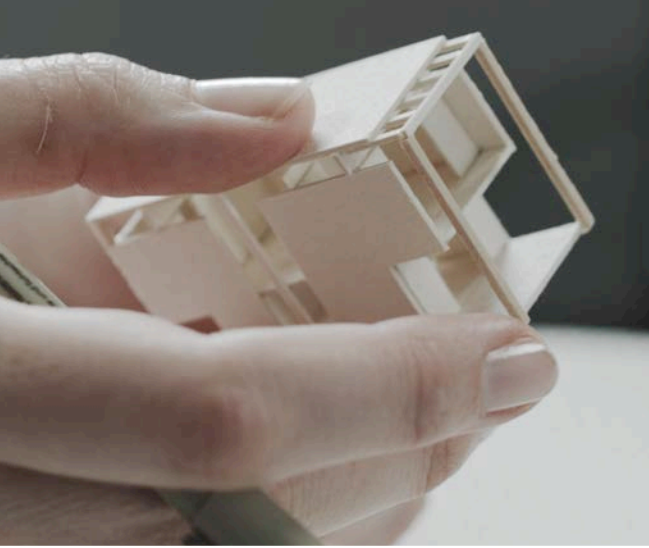


After working as director's assistant at Cologne's Schauspielhaus and for Matthias Lilienthal at Theater der Welt, Julie got a diploma in theatre directing at Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch in Berlin. She took part in the post master program A.PASS - Advanced Performance Training in Antwerp (BE) in 2009, at SIC SoundImageCulture film program in Brussels (BE) in 2011 and at Uniondocs NYC (US) in 2019.

Julie Pfeiderer has staged theatre and performance productions in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium: at HAU Berlin (DE), Freischwimmer Festival Sophiensaele Berlin (DE), Kampnagel Hamburg (DE), Gessnerallee Zurich (CH), Vienna's Schauspielhaus (AU), Staatstheater Mainz (DE), Schauspielhaus Wuppertal (DE), Troubleyn//Jan Fabre, Antwerp (BE), Kaaithater Brussels (BE) and Steirischer Herbst Graz (A) "Theater Heute" - magazine nominated her as most talented young director in 2007 and 2008 for her productions of "Kopftot" and "R. Destillat". Her last show SAFE in collaboration with composer Oxana Omelchuk and Ictus Ensemble toured Belgium, Germany and Austria from 2019 to 2021.

Since 2012 she has also directed video essays for fashion brands like Zara, Jean- Paul Lespagnard, Massimo Dutti, Emporio Armani, Galerie des Galeries/Galeries Lafayette Paris, Carine Gilson and Wildling Shoes. In 2014 Julie won the Special Jury Award for Experimental Short Film at New Orleans Film Festival for her film "Infinite Jetzt". Julie also directs films for visual artist Germaine Kruij, visual artist Marcel Buehler and Belgian Norwegian dance company Fieldworks. In 2016 her architecture film ACTUAL SIZE REAL TIME #1 PARTIAL VIEWS in collaboration with architect Miriam Rohde, was shown in the context of the Venice Architecture Biennale, Italy.

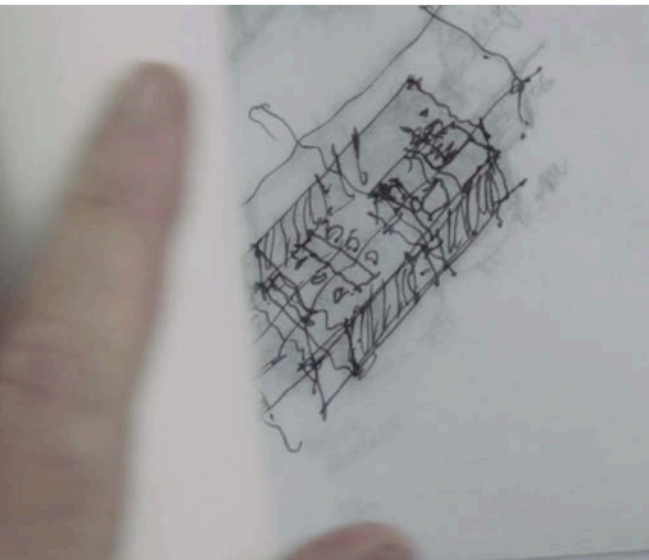
In 2021 and 2022 Julie was guest lecturer at KU Leuven and EPFL Lausanne about film and architecture. Julie Pfeiderer was a fellow at Villa Aurora Los Angeles USA in 2018 and at Museum Insel Hombroich in 2021. Julie Pfeiderer lives and works in Berlin and Brussels.



**INFINITE JETZT**

(2014, 19min.)

- 2014 Film festival New Orleans, Special Jury Award for Experimental Short Film, New Orleans, USA
- 2015 Instants vidéo numériques et poétiques, Marseille, France
- Si:n, festival of video art and performance, Ramallah, Palestine
- Shortlisted for Visions du Réel, Nyon, Switzerland



**ACTUAL SIZE REAL TIME #1 PARTIAL VIEWS**

(2016, 7min.)

- 2016 Architecture Film in collaboration with Miriam Rohde for Project Space St'Anna, Venice, Italy



For screeners, distribution and more info,  
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