

Artists

Anastasia Eggers, Pia Jacques de Dixmude, Collectif dallas, Karolina Michalik,
Claire Chassot, Ines Marita Schärer & Caroline Profanter, Jonathan De Maeyer,
Ciel Grommen & Maximiliaan Royakkers, Mona Thijs, Yacynth Pos, Ioana Lupascu

Curators

Ils Huygens and Annelies Thoelen

Scenography

Claire Chassot, Ioana Lupascu & Maximiliaan Royakkers

With support of

Flemish Government, Vocatio fonds, Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie NL,
Boerenbond and other crowdfunders

Photography cover

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House for Contemporary
Art, Design & Architecture



Seasonal Neighbours

30.01.22 – 17.04.22

Our Invisible Hands

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Vleugel 58

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Our Invisible Hands explores the impact of temporary labour in the agricultural sector, including the various roles of all those who work in rural areas. Members of the Seasonal Neighbours collective took jobs as seasonal workers and used their various experiences as starting point for their artistic projects centring on being bound by the seasons and living together in the European countryside.

Hyperlocal contexts

Our Invisible Hands comprises projects on contemporary life in rural regions of Flanders, the Netherlands and other places, where these various projects were also locally developed. The countryside's hyperlocal contexts in fact constitute the point of departure of many of the works. Collectif Dallas, in *Sacred Fire Pot* ①, investigates the provisional nature of frost prevention systems, such as the use of 'fire pots' in orchards. These appear in the fields for a brief time only. After having a key role on cold winter nights, they are put in storage for most of the year. The disassembled fire pot in Z33 patiently sits waiting in the dark, until it is time, as of the weekend of 21 March, to perform its ritual all over again. In *Playlist van de pluk* (*Harvest*

playlist) ②, Mona Thijs broadcasts a radio programme on Radio VRW about the poetry of multilingualism and music as universal means of communication. Pia Jacques de Dixmude, finally, aims to send 'witloof' (Belgian endive) as a present to her seasonal colleague Nook, who currently resides in Thailand again. *Sending Roots: Witloof in Transit* ③ is a study about the limits of international transport of human beings and other living organisms.

Temporary neighbours

The exhibition focuses on temporary forms of communal life in the countryside. Several projects explore ways of shaping relationships with temporary neighbours. Anastasia Eggers, in *Bread and Salt* ⑤, invites local residents to

reflect on the situation of their provisional neighbours. She has them select symbolic objects which can be offered as welcome presents in the 2022 harvest season. Based on a scale model of an archetypical street in rural Flanders, Maximiliaan Royackers & Ciel Grommen studied alternative scenarios for the housing of migrant labourers. For their *Houses for a Seasonal Neighbourhood* ⑥, they found inspiration in Rumanian rural housing culture and conversations with architects, migrant labourers and farmers about the spatial translation of collectivity and individuality. In the video *It was the shade and the orchard* ⑦, Claire Chassot uses the basket as ultimate picking artefact and various characteristic rhythms and movements in a glasshouse as starting points for a performance by dancer Joséphine Tilloy. In this way, she invokes the invisible growth of plants, the movements and daily rituals of seasonal workers and the wanderings of pollinators.

Individual experiences

The worldview and identity of seasonal workers are of course affected by their seasonal labour and migration to other places to work. *Seasonal Neighbours* examines how these individual experiences can be represented. Jonathan De Maeyer, in *Showing the room and telling someone* ⑧, concentrates on ways of telling the story of fruit pickers in the landscape. Specifically, he explores the personal impact of work in the fields and our nostalgically coloured images of fruit picking. Karolina Michalik is interested in the folkloristic representation of Polish rural identity in relation to political restoration. In *Chłopi (boys)* ⑨ she presents the metal skeleton of a 'Wieniec' to be

featured in the presidential contest of harvest wreaths in 2022. Finally, Yacinth Pos & Ioana Lupascu, in *Seeds at the table* ⑩, engage in a conversation about work, cooking and personal stories about the seasonal workers' sites of origin (Rumania) and their destination (Netherlands). Yacinth Pos developed an informal book of recipes and a dinner intervention based on edible local weeds and a dialogue with seasonal workers living nearby. Ioana Lupascu created an audio walk – part fiction, part fact – on how seasonal labour is a factor in shaping the landscape, architecture, customs, food and conversations in Tibucani, the village where she spent summers during her childhood.

Human beings and crops

Working to the rhythm of the seasons makes it clear how human beings and crops are mutually dependent. Caroline Profanter & Ines Marita Schärer translated the sonic environment of workers and plants in a spatial setting in Z33. Through their audio-installation *Seeding noise* ⑫ they represent the sound of resistance against the inescapable synchronization imposed by monoculture. The project culminates in a concert in a strawberry greenhouse. In *The Eggplant Relay* ⑪ Anastasia Eggers tells the story of the decline of the ecological seasons through the emergence of greenhouse growing. Each year in Spain and the Netherlands, eggplants are successively cultivated according to the rhythm of economic laws, which has particular logistical implications for seasonal workers and distribution networks. implicaties voor seizoenarbeiders en distributienetwerken.