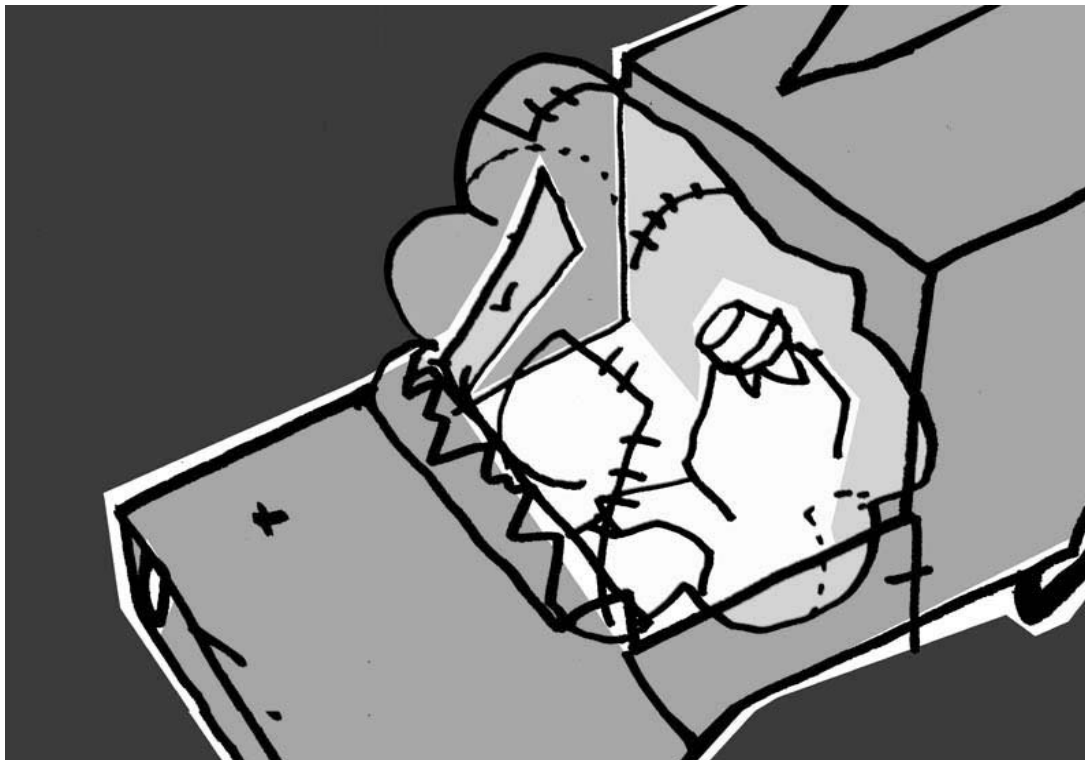


This booklet shows images, texts and video stills taken from an exhibition about the villa parks in Hilversum. The exhibition took place in an underground space in the Dudok centrum in Hilversum which was scarcely lit using blacklights, three video monitors and a large screen onto which slides were projected. The first video was a fiction playing in Hilversum in the year 2030. The second one showed "remixes" applying previous LeZoom projects to Hilversum. The third one showed the urban fabric, the traffic system and the green structure of Hilversum gradually dispersing, merging and finally losing all traces of organization.

21062000

LE ZOOM

HilverZoom 2030



2

Rain was hitting my face. There was a steady pulse of pain mid-way down my spine. I wanted to brush the hair out of my eyes, but I couldn't move. Something was all over me. It took a few minutes to figure out what it was, to grab a piece of broken glass with my left hand. There was a sharp, hissing noise as I broke through the tough plastic. While the airbag was deflating, I tried to move my limbs one by one. Just the pain in my back, everything else seemed fine. Carefully, I turned my head and had a first look around.



3

A violent storm was shaking huge trees. In the distance, I could see a house. There was no road, just a vague track. My car was a complete mess. I had crashed into a tree that had probably been uprooted by the storm that just hit. There was a blue heap of shattered safety glass on the dashboard. I shoved it away and checked the instruments. Nothing worked. I was in the middle of some forest, my phone and GPS were fucked and I probably couldn't even open the safe. It seemed like my time as a freelance driver for SpeedX was over. If I had been on a regular contract, the insurance would probably pay for a new car. More importantly, they would have paid for the claims of the client who didn't receive his Code Red Priority Mail in time. Temps like me are expected to have their own insurance. They don't.



4

I managed to pull myself out of the wreck. The storm had lost a bit of its force and the rain was turning into a soft drizzle. The smell of wet soil filled the air, and for a while I was aimlessly limping around, trying to figure out where I was. Obviously this was some sort of community. Could be anywhere, though. Germany, maybe France. I tried to remember. Most delivery destinations are in communities. People living there don't go out to buy stuff - they have it brought to their front doors by companies like SpeedX. I could never live out here. It's beautiful, it's quiet, surrounded by nature - but it lacks intensity. A lot of my old friends from the computer business live in communities, and they don't mind. Their social life is on the web anyway. But me, I've always been different. Maybe that's why I quit the computer stuff and became a messenger. Maybe...



5

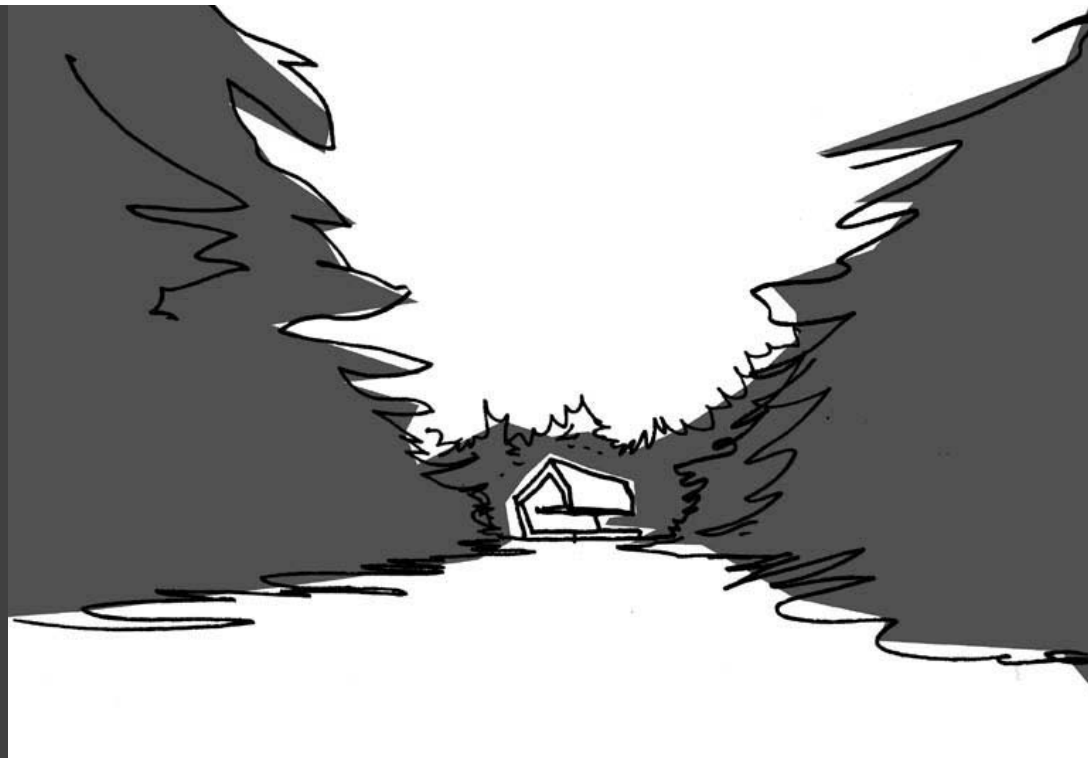
But then I remembered Pete, and after that everything else. Pete was a bike messenger I had met in a bar. I came from Frankfurt and I had to make a delivery at Hilversum, The Netherlands. Large parts of the highways around Hilversum were underground, and at my exit there was a shopping mall, bars and a train station, everything underground. I had stopped for coffee, and Pete had told me a bit how the place worked. It's always smart to talk to the locals before you enter a community. All of them have different rules - sometimes it's a non smoking forest, sometimes you're not allowed to drive faster than twenty miles an hour, and sometimes you can't drive at all because it's an eco zone. These rules change all the time, and normally SpeedX doesn't bother to update the map files... So I knew where I was. But that didn't really help as long as I couldn't remember the delivery address. And people in the communities tend not to have an address: all you get is coordinates. I had never found the place without GPS. And even if I did, it would have taken some serious hacking to open the safe which had been activated by the impact.



6

I must have been pretty absorbed with all these questions because I didn't even notice the girl. I still don't know how long she had been standing there watching me, wearing one of those glowing light jackets that were in during college. Nowadays, you don't see them any more. But they are useful in places like this, where there are no streetlights.

I guess I'm a guy that likes to do things according to the book. So I should have asked her politely if I could use her phone. I should have called SpeedX, and they would have sent backup right away. I still wonder sometimes why I didn't consider any of this when she told me that I looked like I could use a cup of coffee. Maybe, it was the shock of the accident. Maybe, it was because she reminded me of Helena. Maybe, I just figured that I'd lose my job anyway and that I might as well start my new life right there. I disconnected the safe from my otherwise useless car and followed her through the undergrowth.



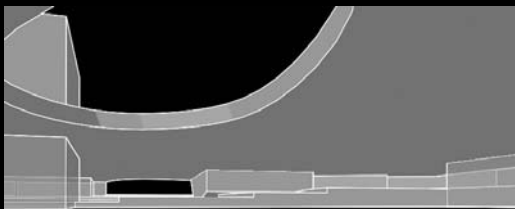
7

After ten minutes or so we arrived at the house. An orange house. We stepped up onto an elevated terrace. I dropped the safe and I sank down on a huge sofa. I was completely exhausted and the pain in my back was getting worse. Within a few seconds I was sound asleep. The first thing I realized when I woke up was that there was something strange about the terrace. It was covered by the rest of the house which was cantilevering over it. But apart from that, there was no facade, there was no glass, nothing. And still it was warm and dry and cozy while a harsh wind was splashing around little clouds of rain out there in the forest. And while I could hardly hear the storm, I could clearly hear someone talking upstairs. I stood up to figure out how this ingenious climate system worked.



8

9

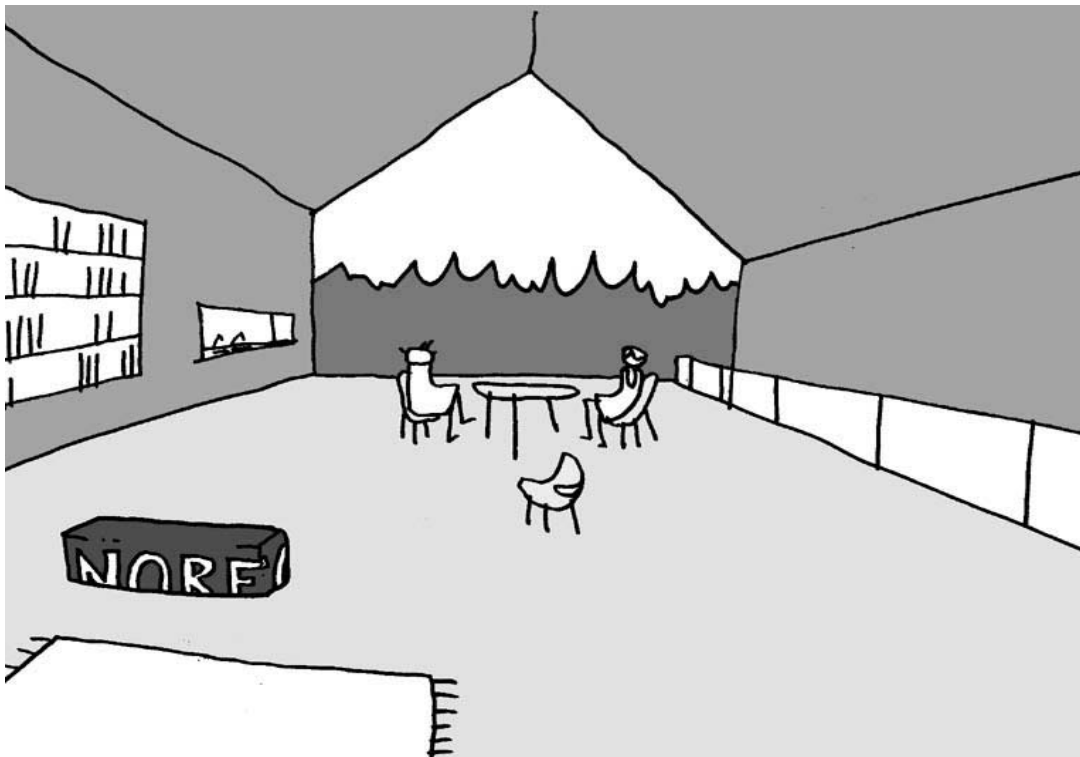


underground remixed

l.e.j. remixed

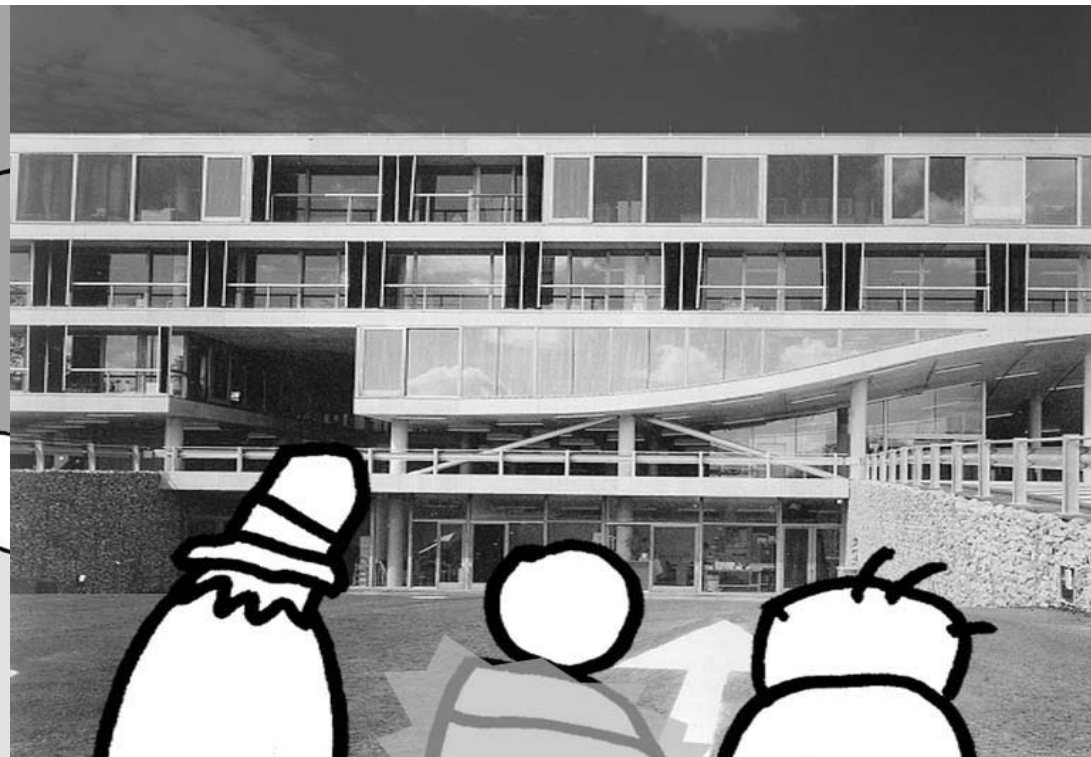


f house remixed



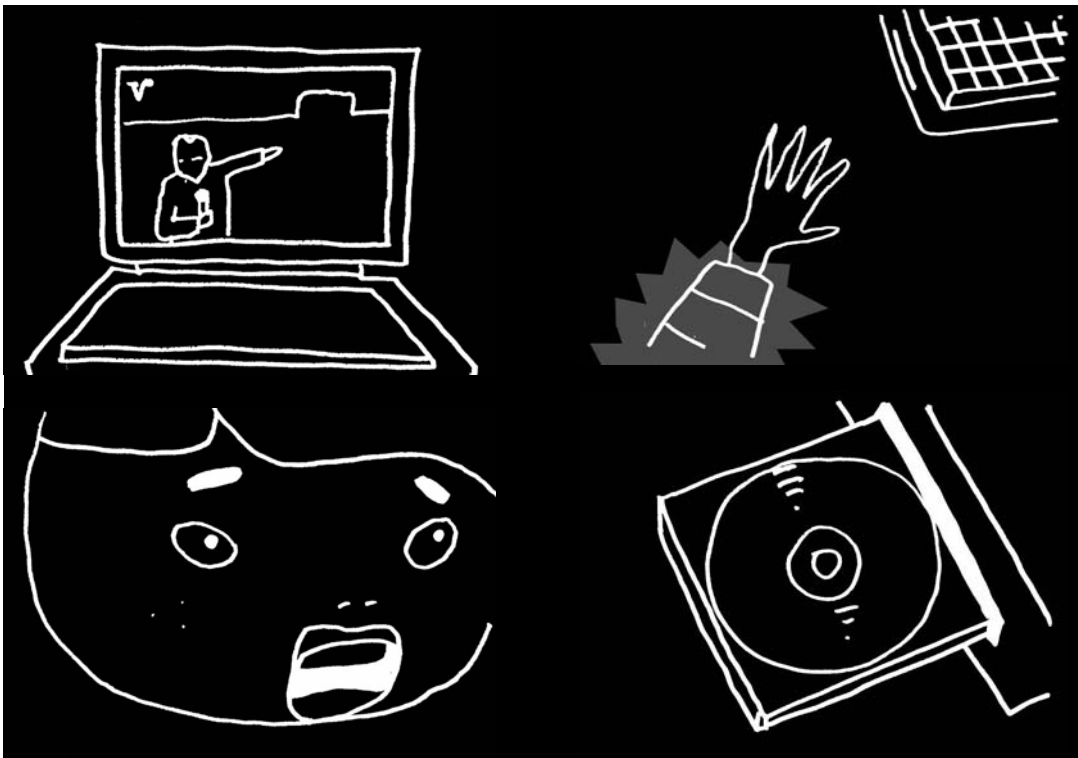
10

Then, I realized I should probably make my phone call. I climbed a steep stair along the back wall and found myself in an elongated room, stylishly furnished, a living room. On the far end, there was a small kitchen. The girl and a middle - aged man were sitting at a table. Before I knew it I was sitting in front of an huge cup of coffee, a piece of bread with butter and chocolate chips. The girl's name was Katja, and that the guy was called Martin or Martayn or something. While he was explaining the architecture of the house to me - the house he had designed himself - I was admiring his library. Not many people still like books nowadays - this guy was one of them. There was a lot about art and architecture, but also political stuff that reminded me of my father. I just had to give Martin the keywords and he'd escape into elaborations on Kropotkin, Hakim Bey, cyber anarchism and media pirates.



11

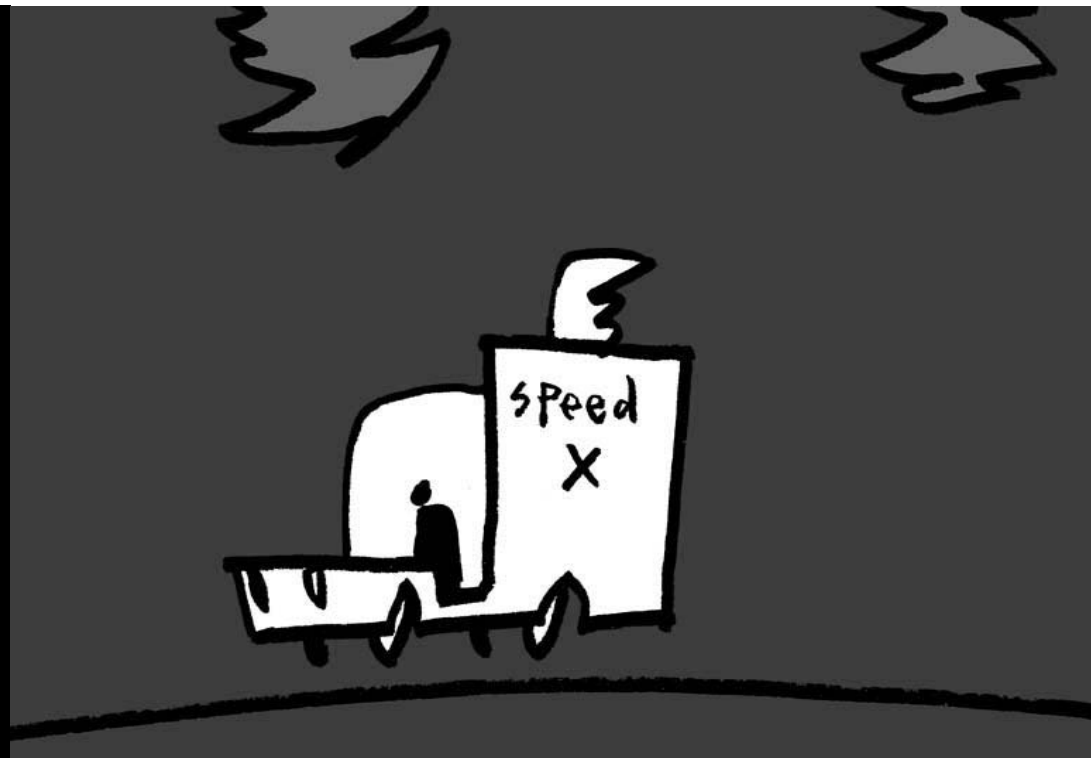
I never called SpeedX. Katja set up a web connection with a friend of hers who cracked my safe within thirty-five minutes. There was an old-fashioned CD in it. It took a few more phone calls to find somebody who owned a player. We had to go to a place that was called the Villa. In spite of the name it was a humongous structure. Martin told me that it had initially been built for a big media company, but unlike other offices, it hadn't been demolished after the installation of the Wireless Web, because it was considered a major work by an important group of hyperstyle architects. Now, it was inhabited by squatters, an island of collectivity amidst the sprawl of forest communities. You could get everything there if you had the right connections, and Katja did.



12

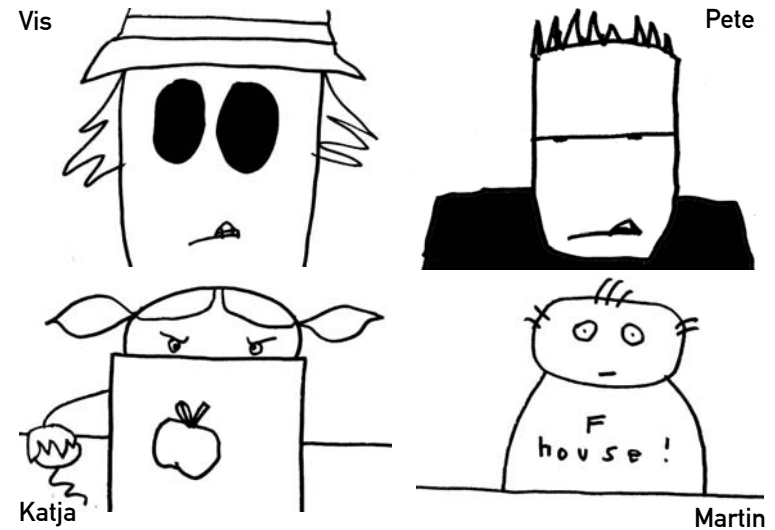
The squatter woman helped us to insert the CD into her beautiful old Apple laptop. Then she left the room. Katja and I were staring at the greenish screen. It took forever to open the file. It was a movie. To me, it seemed meaningless - some sort of twentieth century documentary soap, badly made, boring. But then I glanced at Katja and realized that she had gone pale. She hit a few buttons, the movie stopped and the lid of the CD player opened up again. Her voice sounded strange. She told me that this was some pretty heavy stuff and that we had to get the hell out of there, that she would explain everything later.

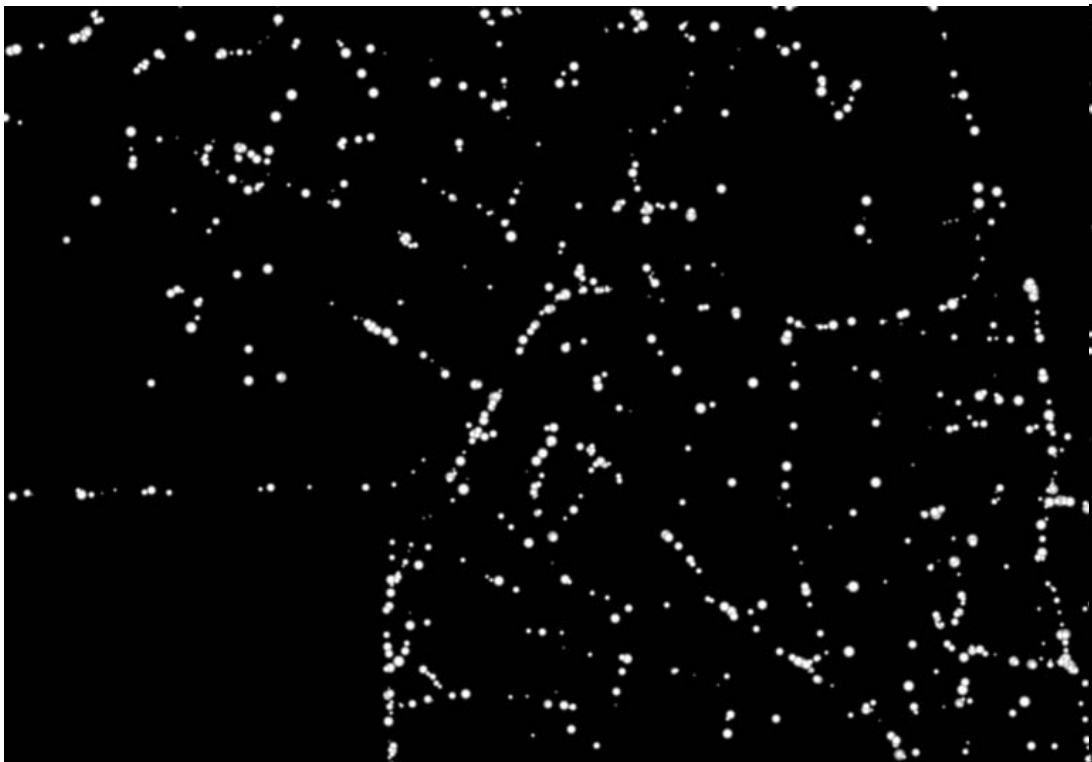
After that, everything was different.



13

cast (in order of appearance):



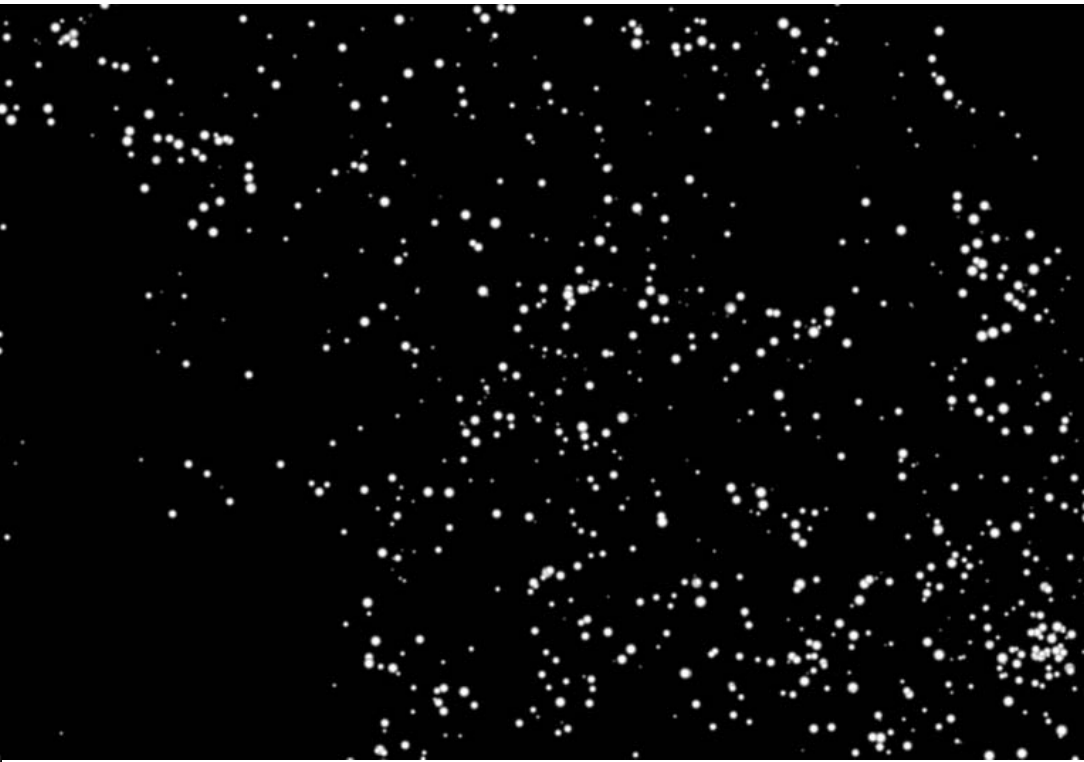


14

After our first visit to the villaparks in Hilversum, we were impressed: First of all it struck us that the quality of living exceeds that of the well-known Dutch models of suburbanization to an extent that seems to compensate amply for the relatively low density. The conventional suburb sacrifices a part of the territory in order to protect another one. Instead of this opposition we found a fusion whereby housing and nature have been completely integrated. Another thing that fascinated us was a - maybe only apparent - weakness of the territorial definitions. The unpaved roads look only slightly different from the undergrowth, the houses are far away from each other and the trees provide them with an amount of privacy that makes fences almost unnecessary. Somehow, this informal atmosphere still recalls the roots of the villaparks that originated from nineteenth century temporary settlements - trailer parks "avant la lettre".

We soon realized that we were projecting our own fascinations onto an environment that maybe provided us with the appropriate clues, but that worked quite differently from the way it looked. The villaparks may seem de-territorialized and unsystematic, but their layout is certainly as far away from camping anarchism as any other suburban subdivision.

Kropotkin's rural anarchism, Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City, MVRDV's Light Urbanism are just a few of many utopian visions that have accompanied and propelled suburbanization. The saddest mutilations of these visions occur maybe not even in the developer suburbs but in the city extensions of a bureaucratic "garden-city" modernism: those areas lack both the hyperactivity of the intensive



15

city and the splendor of the extensive suburb and often fail to replace those qualities by another one.

Hilversum seems to be in a deadlock: It is surrounded by protected forests where no constructions are allowed. Yet, the pressure on the villaparks might lead to further densification which might deprive them from the very qualities that make them so attractive now. Would it not be a better solution to make them bigger? Could we imagine an inhabited nature reserve? Extrapolating present - day technology we could imagine settlements almost without physical infrastructure and boundaries. The disappearance of both typology and morphology: the right network provided, an office, a living room or a club could all just be rooms in a forest...

Le Zoom Credits:

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Many thanks! Without you there would be nothing here. We love you all!

Valery Didelon, Christelle Gualdi, Urs Primas, Ed Ravensbergen