

Exhibition text EN

## **'RADIANT CITY' – Anne Van Boxelaere**

The exhibition RADIANT CITY presents Anne Van Boxelaere's recent work from her series **'Agreement'**, a reflection on the tension between humanity and system, between beauty and control. The title of the exhibition refers to Le Corbusier's *'Ville Radieuse'* (*'Radiant City'*), an unrealised modernist urban design from 1930. This visionary plan, intended as a 'radiant city' for modern humanity, stands as a symbol of an intensified rational and controlling state apparatus. A nightmarish vision in which order, discipline, and cold efficiency prevail over human warmth and vitality. Le Corbusier's colleague Hugo Häring described it as a future vision "organised like a Prussian military world: orderly, aligned, disciplined, but cold."

Anne Van Boxelaere deliberately chooses this title as a counterpoint. Where *Radiant City* suggests a promise of progress and harmony, she reveals the underlying inhumanity: a world in which systems and rules take precedence, and where beauty and connection disappear into the whirlwind of bureaucracy and administration.

### **'Agreement': Constructions of Compromises and Contradictions**

In the *Agreement* series, Van Boxelaere explores social constructs through the metaphor of sports fields – places of encounter, compromise, and accommodation. These fields are not static spaces but dynamic sites where rules, agreements, and unwritten codes converge. The colour palettes, inspired by urban environments, underscore this tension: sharp, garish hues fade into muted pastels, and figuration dissolves into abstraction. The result is a visual paradox in which order and chaos, control and freedom, beauty and alienation intersect.

Her working method is steeped in criticism of visual pollution and the infiltration of advertising language into our daily reality. As Geert Van der Speeten wrote in *De Standaard*, Van Boxelaere allows advertising brochures to seep into her work, exposing the mechanisms that shape our perception of reality. Sébastien Hendrickx described in *De Witte Raaf* how the underlayer of her collages consists of layers of pages from advertising brochures, gently sanded down and worked over with acrylic paint and gesso. This process transforms strident images into subtle, almost ethereal compositions – a metaphor for how our environment, once loud and intrusive, fades over time into a silent memory.

Van Boxelaere's work is a passionate observation of a world that feels both schizophrenic and oppressive. The pace of life, the consumption of the planet, the impossibility of retaining control – these are themes that recur in her figurative and abstract works. Yet there is also room for moments of beauty, connection, or silence that briefly interrupt the madness. Sometimes these moments can be articulated concretely; in other cases, silence speaks for itself.

Anne Van Boxelaere's *RADIANT CITY* is not an indictment but an open window onto the tensions of our time. Her work confronts us with the question: How do we preserve our humanity in a world increasingly organised by systems, rules, and unspoken codes? Or, as she herself suggests: How do we find beauty and connection in the chasm between order and chaos?

The *Agreement* series invites reflection – not only on the world around us, but also on the agreements we ourselves make, consciously or unconsciously, to keep that world bearable.