

Prologue

At the start of the 3rd grade at the Royal Academy of Art, I stumbled upon the essay *Notes on metamodernism* (2010) by Timothy Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker. I'm not even sure anymore how I came across it — but all of a sudden it was there and it hasn't left me since.

After reading *Notes on metamodernism* I saw this paradigm everywhere — in politics, in art, in literature and in my own art. I could not *not* see it anymore. 'Discovering' this essay has helped me tremendously with theorizing my own work. I've always sensed that I intrinsically knew what my art is about — but I never really succeeded in constructing a theoretical framework for myself. This made it hard to explain myself and my work to others. Until *Notes on metamodernism* appeared.

After reading it for the first time I didn't realize yet how important this essay would become for me. It was a pretty tough read — because I lacked a lot of knowledge. The essay disappeared somewhere on a stack of papers in my studio, but the concept of metamodernism didn't leave me.

During the 3rd year at the academy and the following summer, I read numerous books about a wide variety of subjects. It wasn't a very conscious process — one book led to another and so on. Somewhere along the line I started to grasp more and more what metamodernism entails — and simultaneously I started to become increasingly able to explain my work to myself and subsequently to others. Slowly everything fell into place.

When it was time, at the end of the 3rd year, to choose a subject for my graduation thesis — it was not a difficult decision to make.

I've decided to build my thesis in the form of a bundle of essays for a couple of reasons. First of all, I really like to write essays — because it's such an awesome way to pour my personal visions about contemporary society, into a remix with cultural, philosophical and scientific theories. Almost everything is possible in an essay — and I like having possibilities. Therefore it's a great avenue for my thoughts.

Second, by choosing to write a number of essays, all somehow concerning metamodernism, I left it quit open for exploration — instead of constraining myself by a hypothesis I gave myself the opportunity to get side-tracked.

To give an example: when I started writing the first essay, *Metamodernism; A Structure of Feeling*, I didn't have a clue about the second essay yet, but during writing, it got increasingly clear to me what it should be about. However, when I started writing the second essay, *Metamodernism; & Contemporary Art*, I was convinced the third essay would be about my own work in connection to metamodernism. However, during writing I realized I should allow myself to get side-tracked — because another subject emerged that needed attention first.

Another side-track was the decision to make a visual essay as (limited) edition to accompany the largely theoretical text. This visual essay is limited for pure practical reasons — adding the visual essay to every copy I'll make of my thesis, would be a very costly endeavor.

And so my thesis evolved into this book. I hope you'll enjoy reading it as much as I did writing it. It has been a struggle — but a pleasant one.