

# Prologue

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At the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 hypotheses; 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.

Sincerely yours,

Melissa Couzijn