

Wapke Feenstra lives and works in Rotterdam NL.

[www.wapke.nl](http://www.wapke.nl)

*I am interested in the relationship between contemporary art and the countryside. It also allows me to establish connections beyond the actual site and go into "intercultural-relations", "de-colonisation", "climate-change" and other urgent contemporary abstraction. It is clear that nowadays the urban and rural are strong intertwined by media-communication and global economy. But what about the culture?*

WAPKE FEENSTRA tends to intervene in existing visual experiential ecologies, in order to coax out new or current readings. In order to create. The work addresses the evolving relationship between the rural and the urban, looking at different forms of production, pre-conceptions and power relationships. Cooperative projects in various communities and villages around the world bring a new dynamism to solidified notions of local resources and rural production capacity, agriculture and culture, internal and external perception.

*My work is part of Myvillages, a group of three female artist (founded in 2003 with Kathrin Böhm (UK/DE) and Antje Schiffers (DE)). We all have rural roots. We learned in the nineties that contemporary art is mainly shown in the city and it looks like the art market loves metropolises or countries where booming financial centres are situated. Why do we tend to prefer the urban perspective as a leading point of view in the reflection and critic in contemporary art? The village and the land cannot be such outlandish topics as farming, forestry, water management, energy generation and raw material extraction primarily takes place there. Within the landscape.*

Rural landscapes are popular projection-screens for longings and fear. Landscape as genre and reality can channel indefinable feelings and narrate our relationship with our environment. Our transition from an agriculture and mining economy to a service and – above all – non-land-based-economy has now fixed our view of the agricultural landscape. Can we tackle this frozen gaze on the countryside? We can redefine the semiotics of the countryside? Can we at least create new landmarks together? By creating moments of memory – within and about landscape by bringing the history, the land and the experiences together in an encounter and then retelling the story in works; images, events, exhibitions, narratives and objects. It is all inclusive contemporary art, based on performative events which invests experiences with a cultural and immediate dimension and creates another image of the surroundings here and now. A new landscape unfolds.

*My works are multidisciplinary co-creations, which can last an hour or more than 20 years, they respond to and also mirror the dispersed spatial structure and social relationships that are a significant part of living today (in the countryside and in the city). I am working within this elusive conditions.*

## FACTS

Wapke Feenstra finished in 1991 a post-graduate in Visual Arts at the Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht NL and was in 1993 a winner of the Prix de Rome at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam. During Manifesta 1 (Rotterdam 1996) she was one of the initiators of the platform NEStWORK and

from 1998 she started up the first digital story collection called Verhalen van Dordrecht, which was run by citizens till 2011.

Wapke Feenstra's work is spatial and can pop up as e.g. a travelbook (The Best Place), a digital tree collection (see the webxylotreek) or as a series of prints in a museum collection (SPOT, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam NL). Or a dinner table at Lawson Park, Grizedale Arts UK or as wallpiece with film and geological stones.

Feenstra founded Myvillages in 2003, with the aim to make space for rural production, village community items and images of farming in the contemporary conceptual art. Since 2007 Myvillages cooperates in International Village Shop, a rural trade network. Their Shop was set up in rural villages and in exhibitions in e.g. Royal Academy & Tate Britain, London (2008, 2010); Kunstverein Springhornhof in Germany (2010 & from 2017 ongoing); and the Swiss Kunstmuseum Thurgau in Ittingen (2012 & 2013). The Shop brings rural places and their narratives to the public.

Landscape and Images of Farming is a focus in Feenstra's work. In the project Former Farmland (at Ars Electronica, Linz 2008 and Edith Russ Haus, Oldenburg 2009) visitors walk a route and explore how memories on a two-dimensional photographic screen can redefine and question the urban sites that people encounter.

Moving Landscape is a project in the north-east of Belgium; it is a visual roam of landuse and primary industries. Beside photography Feenstra's animated drawings show the geological history of soil or mining resources in the moving landscape. (FLACC, Genk 2010 and Z33, Hasselt, 2011). Recent projects include the Russian self-made-villageportrait Made in Zvizzchi as part of the Archstoyanie Festival and 5th Moscow Biennale (2013). From 2012 Feenstra works with young Farmers & Ranchers (a coproduction of M12, Byers CO, USA and Myvillages), this long term project includes screenings and shows in e.g. the Fries Museum in the Netherlands (2014-15) and at NPO2 (2015).

Under the umbrella of Myvillages, Feenstra co-initiated several long-term collaborative projects such as the Bibliobox (from 2005) and Images of Farming (from 2007). And in 2010 they started to fill a year-long a pantry with food, drinks and local knowledge to host 8000 guests in Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin (2011). The Vorratskammer (Pantry) book was launched in 2012. In 2014 Myvillages won the Create Art in London with their project Compagny: Movements, Deals and Drinks (2014-15). In the International Village Show in the Museum of Contemporary Art (GfZK) in Leipzig, Germany, they will research, represent and bring together their recent works in villages and changing landscapes (2014-2016). The International Village Show book is available over [www.jovis.de](http://www.jovis.de)

Other books by Feenstra and/or Myvillages are available over [www.japsambooks.nl](http://www.japsambooks.nl)