



Helena Stiasny
SUBURBAN TALES



Suburban Tales

By: Helena Stiasny

„Belgian suburbia seem to be a surreal place. Dozens of small houses, all shutters sealed, but the tiny gardens flourish. Not a single imperfection in the picture. Enigmatic remnants of the mines turned into houses of high culture. Puzzling veiled figures walk or drive by.

As an outsider thrown into the neighborhood for a limited time I capture the sequence of emotions running through my head during my stay. From the sadness and anger to curiosity and fascination. Suburban Tales is a collection of images inspired by the surroundings, where the real and everyday is interwoven with the fantastic imageries and the symbolic.

Perhaps it is more a landscape of the inner world than anything else, evoked by the ordinary but unusual surroundings and time to reflect on them.”

The Hyperreal Uncanny of Helena Stiasny's Suburban Tales

by Curator: Danny Weckx

In *Suburban Tales*, Helena Stiasny transforms the sterile neatness of Belgian suburbia into a stage for introspection, projection, and estrangement. Her paintings and drawings do not merely depict what she sees—they perform a psychological excavation, one in which the artist's own body, memory, and emotions are cast into the scene. The nude figure that recurs throughout the canvases is unmistakably Stiasny herself: not as muse, but as witness, trespasser, and narrator of her own displacement.

During her residency at Le Charbonnage in Genk—a site once steeped in coal and labor, now a cultural sanctuary—Stiasny immersed herself in the contradictory landscape of Flemish suburbia. Houses with shutters always closed. Perfect hedges. No visible chaos, no visible warmth. These surroundings appear in her paintings as both absurd and alluring. In one scene, she stands naked next to a bicycle, isolated and unsheltered in a sunlit silence. In another, her body is stretched across a pastel lawn like a collapsed monument. These are not eroticized nudes, but precise and performative disruptions—acts of placing the self where it doesn't belong, or isn't meant to be seen.

The suburb in Stiasny's work is not neutral terrain. It is a place of scrutiny and repetition, where surfaces gleam with artificial perfection while bodies reveal the opposite: vulnerability, awkwardness, resistance. Her palette is paradoxical—bright, synthetic, yet heavy with atmosphere. Time slows. Shadows lengthen unnaturally. A woman walks barefoot under the gaze of an unseen other. A child gazes at jewels with unsettling intensity. Stiasny renders these scenes with a painterly sharpness that borders on the surreal, but it is a surrealism rooted in the real—specifically, the domestic and cultural reality of a woman moving through unfamiliar space.

Alongside the paintings, the works on paper created during her residency extend and fragment this narrative. They are faster, looser, yet equally saturated with coded emotion. In them, Stiasny passes veiled figures; women smile from red cars, waving through the silence; a hybrid self portrait—part beast, part girl—emerge in black ink. These drawings serve as both personal journal and visual mythology: a place where Stiasny's interior states mutate into suburban fables, where the absurdity of modern life and gender politics are staged in vibrant, at times grotesque, allegory.

At the core of *Suburban Tales* is a tension between control and collapse. Stiasny's suburbia is choreographed, clean, and closed—yet her body resists that script. She does not plead for empathy, nor offer narrative closure. Instead, she situates herself—as artist and woman—as a disruptive presence. Through this gesture, *Suburban Tales* becomes not only a portrait of place, but a reckoning with the cultural aesthetics of normality, whiteness, femininity, and power.

What Helena Stiasny achieves in this body of work is a feminist cartography of displacement: mapping not geography, but the fragile, coded boundaries of where a body can and cannot belong. Her work whispers and provokes, seduces and unsettles—and it stays with you, like the lingering silence of a suburban afternoon that feels just a little too still.



Descent

acrylic on canvas
210 × 100 cm, 2025
Price: € 7500

Poplar seeds / Pyłki topoli
acrylic on canvas
140 × 100 cm, 2025
Price: € 5950





Treasure / Skarby

acrylic on canvas, 55 × 46, 2025

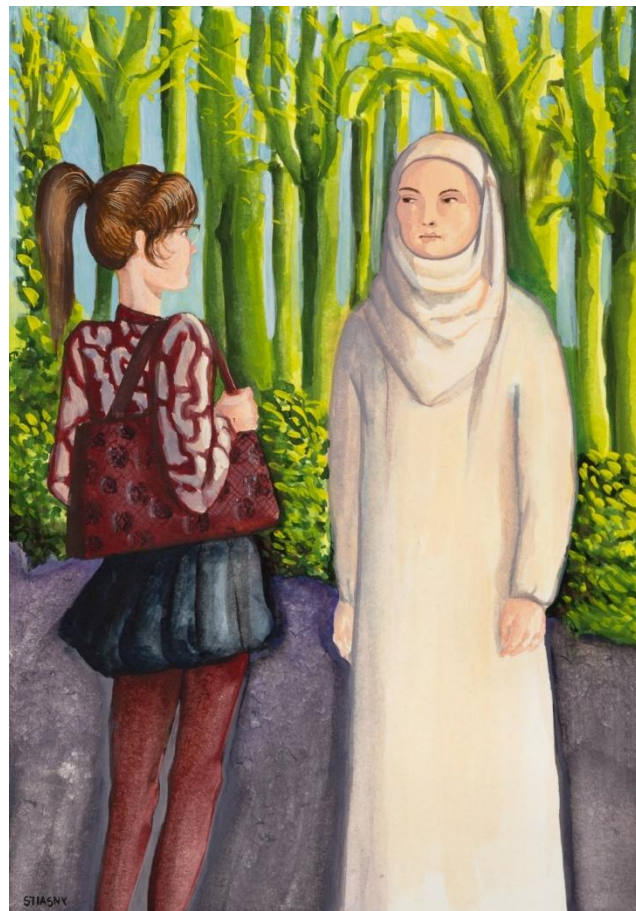
Price: € 2450



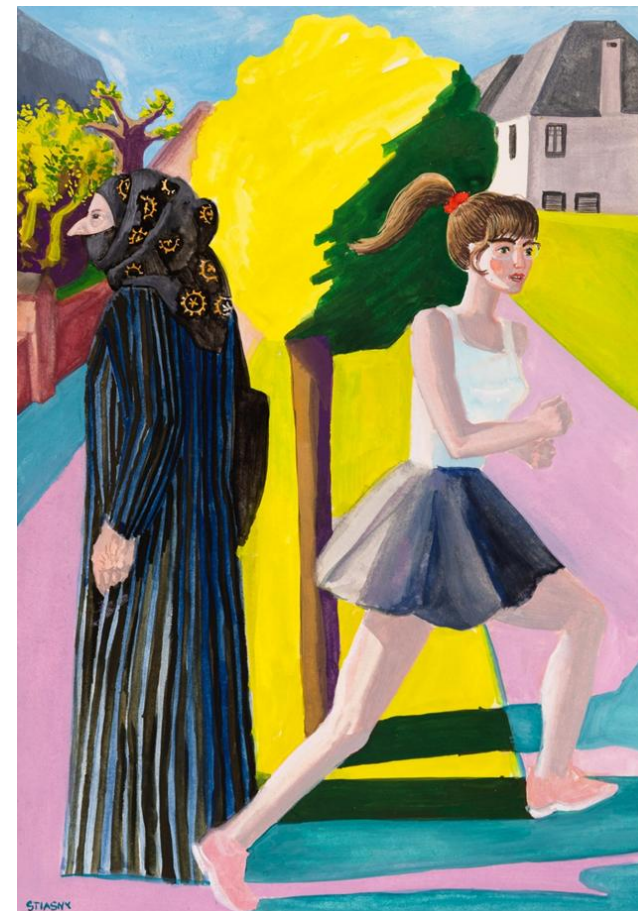
WORKS ON PAPER



Suburban girls / Podmiejskie dziewczyny
gouache on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



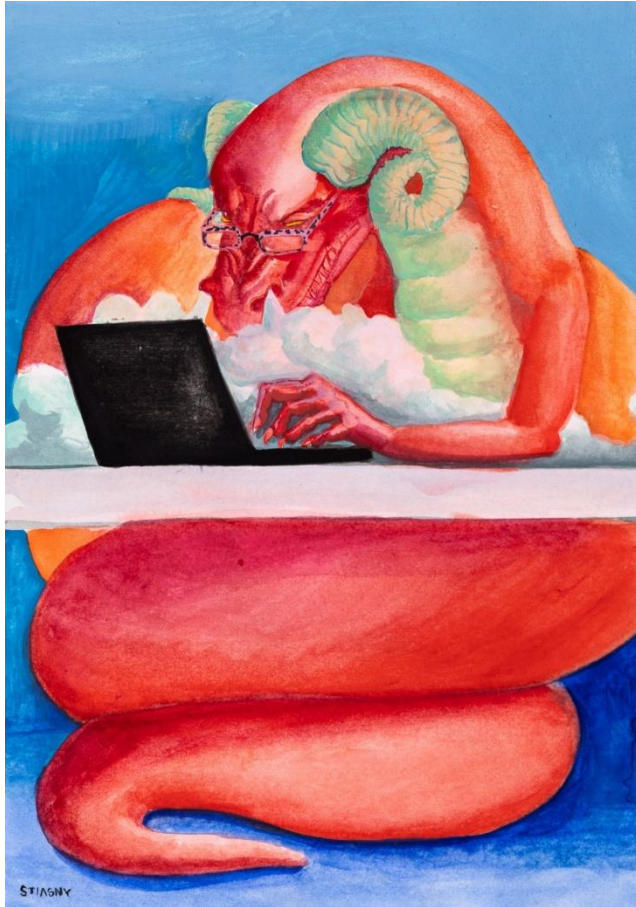
Encounter / Spotkanie
gouache on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



Run / Bieg
gouache on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



*Self-Portrait at Le
Charbonnage II / Autoportret
w Le Charbonnage II*
gouache on paper, 21 × 29,7
cm, 2025
Price: €795



Mother / Matka

gouache and watercolour on paper,
29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



***Self-Portrait as an Basilisk /
Autoportret jako bazyliżek***

acrylic ink on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



***Self-Portrait as an Evil Sorceress /
Autoportret jako czarnoksiężniczka***

gouache on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



Matron / Matrona
gouache on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 2025
Price: €795



Red Dragon / Czerwony smok
gouache on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 2025
Price: €795

*Self-Portrait at Le
Charbonnage /
Autoportret w Le
Charbonnage*

gouache on paper, 21 x
29,7 cm, 2025
Price: €795





Self-Portrait as Cocker Spaniel / Autoportret jako Cocker Spaniel
 gouache and watercolour on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 2025
 Price: €795



Turkish Wedding / Turecki ślub
 gouache and on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 2025
 Price: €795



*Amazon's Tenderness /
Czulość Amazonki*
gouache and watercolour on paper,
29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



Avalanche
gouache and watercolour on paper,
29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



*Charity ball attendee as a Minoan-style
priestess / Uczestniczka balu
charytatywnego w stylu minojskiej
kapłanki*
gauche on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795



*Stone Goddesses Create a Woman after Hopi Pueblo Myth /
Kamienne boginie tworzą kobietę, za mitem Hopi Pueblo*
gauche and watercolour on paper, 21 X 29,7 cm, 2025
Price: €795



*Self-Portrait as Knightess or The Revelation /
Autoportret jako rycerka albo Moment zrozumienia*

gouache on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025

Price: €795 (currently on view in MAD Art Gallery Warsaw)

Flying South / Odlatuję na południe
gouache on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm, 2025
Price: €795 (currently on view in MAD Art
Gallery Warsaw)



Helena Stiasny (b.1997, Warsaw) – polish artist and paintress.

Stiasny's major interest is the status of women in the contemporary world. She searches for modes of depiction in which the woman is not the object of someone else's desire but retains her status as the main character and remains in control of her first-person narrative. Stiasny enters into a dialogue with classical themes in search for the subjectivity and agency of female figures. Permeated by both archetypal imagery and deeply personal symbolism Stiasny's works mythologize the intimate life of subjective femininity and address the problem of confronting one's own body and its cultural representation at the crossroads of girlhood and womanhood. It is her commentary on the situation of young women in a patriarchal society that offers a very personal account and, at the same time, presents a universal testimony of women of her generation.



Artist, painter and illustrator, born in 1997 in Warsaw. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, she received her master's degree with distinction in 2020.

In 2022, 2023, and 2024 she was listed among the top 15 artists in the Compass of Young Art (Kompas Młodej Sztuki) ranking. She was distinguished during the 16th Autumn Art Salon (Jesienny Salon Sztuki) LOOSTRO 2023 at BWA Ostrowiec. She was awarded for painting in the VeniceLands ArtPrize 2019 contest in Italy. She has had individual exhibitions at venues such as the Annika Nuttall Gallery in Aarhus, Denmark (2025), the Van Rij Gallery in Warsaw (2024), the Sarah Kravitz Gallery in London (2023) and the Starak Family Foundation in Warsaw (2022). She participated in the exhibition Woman Art Power at the Mazovian Centre for Contemporary Art "Elektrownia" in Radom (2022). Her work has been shown internationally, including exhibitions in Paris (Institut Polonais de Paris, 2024), London (Every Woman Biennial, 2021), Bishkek (Gapar Aitiev Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, 2019), and Ponzano Veneto (VeniceLands ArtPrize, 2019). Participant of prestigious Kowitz & Kravitz Residency in East Sussex, UK (2024). Her works were displayed alongside Tamara de Lempicka's drawings during the Blue Dress. Helena Stiasny & Tamara de Lempicka exhibition at the Van Rij Gallery, Metropolitan Warszawa (2024). Her painting was displayed at the Royal Castle in Warsaw during the Helena Stiasny & Lucas Cranach the Elder. The Herstory of Eve (Helena Stiasny & Lucas Cranach Starszy. Herstory Ewy) exhibition (2023). Her paintings are part of art collections such as mBank's collection, Leif Djurhuus Collection, Beck Risvig Collection, Kowitz Family Foundation and Borowik Collection.

Under the pseudonym Ala Bankroft, she illustrated the Polish book I Saw a Beautiful Woodpecker (Widziałem Pięknego dzięcioła), which has been translated into seven languages. The book received several accolades, including a distinction for debut in the Opera Prima category of the Bologna Ragazzi Award (2020) and the special prize of the Premio Andersen jury (2022), the most prestigious Italian distinction in children's literature. Illustrations from the book were displayed at the Masters of Polish Illustration exhibition organised by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Suncheon, South Korea (2022).



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