

Beste juryleden,

Hierbij stel ik mij kandidaat om een selectie van mijn schilderijen te tonen tijdens de Brussels Art Contest.

In 2025 realiseerde ik de reeks *Barbie and Cowboys on Canvas*. In deze serie gebruik ik het schilderkunstige medium om de cowboy als figuur in transitie af te beelden. Vanuit dit uitgangspunt onderzoek ik thema's zoals gender, rolpatronen en zelfbeeld. Door middel van schilderkunst ontstaat een spanningsveld tussen traditionele en hedendaagse beeldvorming, wat heeft geleid tot een reeks werken die ik graag aan een breder publiek wil presenteren.

De werken kunnen zowel als samenhangende reeks als afzonderlijk worden tentoongesteld en behouden daarbij hun autonome karakter. Afhankelijk van de beschikbare tentoonstellingsruimte kan worden bekeken hoeveel werken worden opgenomen in de presentatie.

Met veel enthousiasme dien ik daarom mijn kandidatuur in voor deelname aan de Brussels Art Contest.

In bijlage vindt u het inschrijvingsformulier, mijn cv, afbeeldingen van de schilderijen, een begeleidende tekst van curator Sophie Fitze en foto van mijzelf. Deze documenten bieden samen inzicht in zowel de beeldende als de conceptuele aspecten van de reeks.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Elias Driesen



Inschrijvingsformulier ArtContest 2026

Terug te sturen met het deelnemingsdossier vóór **01 juni 2026**.

Artcontest V.Z.W
Eendrachtstraat 21
1050 Brussel
(niet aanbellen a.u.b.)

Nam, Voornam : Elias Driesen.....

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Hierbij verklaar ik kennis te hebben genomen van het reglement van de wedstrijd 2026, opgesteld door Artcontest vzw en het eens te zijn met alle bepalingen.

Handtekening :

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'E' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

curriculum vitae

Education

2024, Odisee, Educational BA in Arts

2021, LUCA School of Arts, MA Fine Arts

2019, LUCASchool of Arts, BA Fine Arts

Exhibitions

2026, "Metamorphoses", group show, Galerie P, Oostende (BE) – [interviewvideo from 1 min. 55 sec.](#)

2025, "Barbie and cowboys on canvas", Solo, Rez Gauche, Brussels / BE

2025, "screens", solo, Brussels / BE

2024, "possibly touching", Duo with Nello Margodt, croxhapox, Gent / BE

2024, "jongens die proberen te wenen", Solo, Lucy Peaks, Brussels / BE

2024, "Atelier in Beeld", Kunstwerkt, Open Studio, [Publication in Kunstletters](#)

2024, "Eating Shadows", Het Archief, Duo with Jonas Callebaert, Rotterdam / NL

2023-2024, "keeping up with the sample tracks, I would be a jacket", Duo with Nello Margodt, Brussels / BE

2023, "little struggle #1", Solo, Brussels / BE

2022, "Making sense of wat we do", Duo with Francisco Correia, Brussels / BE

2021 "Graduation show 2021", LUCA School of Arts, Group, Brussels / BE

2021 "Portraits #1", Veduta vzw, Group, Brussels / BE, [Publication in BRUZZ](#)

2021 "Ohm", Former Project Space, Duo with Bryn Verbeken, Brussels / BE

2020, "eén vreugde verdrijft duizend zielen", APART, Group, Brussels / BE

2020, "A conversation about life and death", pleaseaddcolor, Group, Brussels / BE

2019, "Broeiplaats XL midzomer", Broeiplaats (residency), Group, Brussels / BE

2019, "The nail in the wall", Group, Brussels / BE

2019, "A quick lift of a hat, a cat, a Rat and Finally a Person", Group, Brussels / BE

2019, "Desolation Nation", Curating the young, Group, Destelheide / BE

2019, "Curating the Young in het Depot", Curating the young, Group, Leuven / BE

2019, ["Carte de Visite 2019"](#), Carte de Visite, Group, Espace Vanderborcht, Brussels / BE

2018, "INTO OR TO", Stelplaats, Leuven / BE, Publication in Mijn Leuven

2018, "YOUtopia", Installation in public space, Leuven / BE

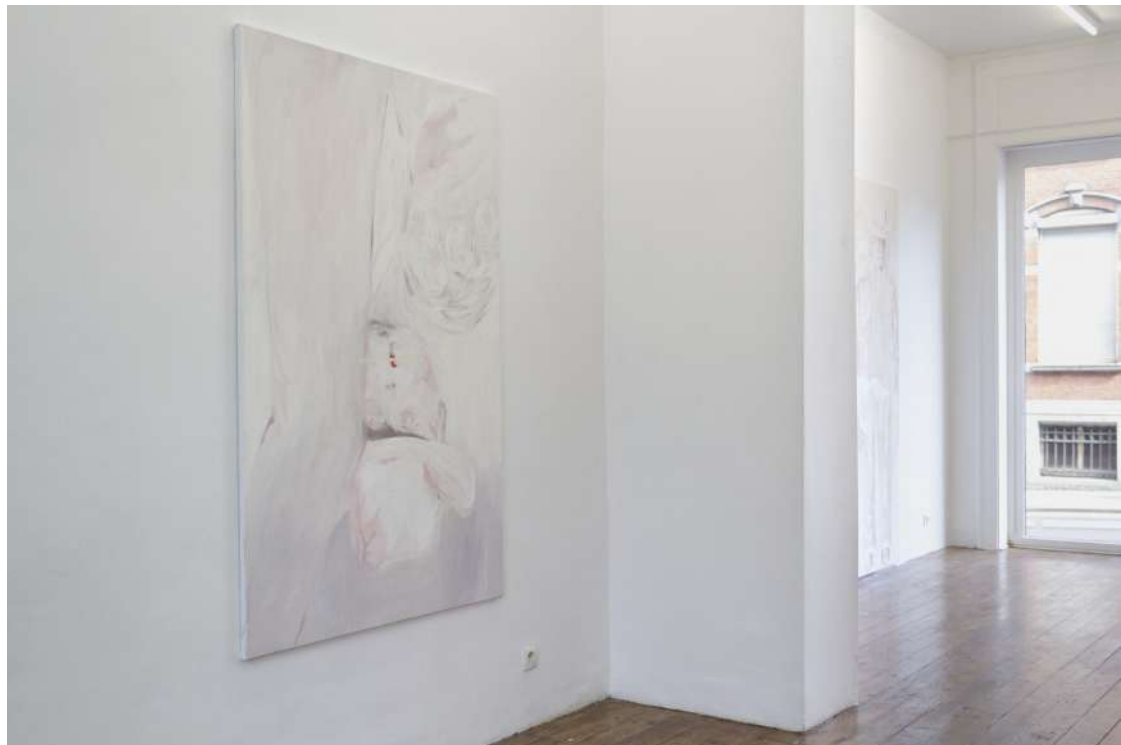
2018, "BILBO INVITES", Groef, Leuven / BE

Barbie and cowboys on canvas



Oilpaint on canvas 170 x 110 cm





Oilpaint on canvas 170 x 110 cm





Oilpaint on canvas 110 x 170 cm



Oilpaint on canvas 100 x 240 cm







Oilpaint on canvas 100 x 240 cm





photographs by Julien Jonas

Barbies and cowboys on canvas

The cowboy, that persistent emblem of Western masculinity, chiseled from the attitude of few words, recklessness, and born to the back of a horse. In the popular imagination, he does not bend, and certainly does not break. And yet here, in shades of washed-out rose, grey, and white, the cowboy blurs and dissolves, nearly turning into a ghost. He hovers on the canvas as a remnant of a figure we have so eagerly tried to reshape in our collective vocabulary, a spectral cliché of masculinity that refuses to vanish completely.

My grandfather loved the old Western movies, highlights of Hollywood's Golden Age. As a child growing up close to him, I was introduced to the world of the Wild West, the prairie, the vast lands where, from time to time, a tumbleweed rolls through the empty streets of wooden settlements, where they meet in the saloon to drink or to start a gunfight. The cowboy was always the hero, usually with a melancholy edge, a lonely figure. They moved with a stenciled ease in their uniforms: the hat, the boots, the tight-fitting trousers. I remember how strange this world felt to me – these men and their attitudes, over-articulated in almost symbolic orders of poses. Observe one, and you knew them all. Even though my grandfather would sometimes laugh heartily, I found little to laugh about.

Only recently did I watch *Brokeback Mountain*, twenty years after its great success. A classic. Perhaps the film, quietly archived in the back of cultural memory, was always filed for me under a rubric: the unraveling of the cowboy myth, the deconstruction of gender norms. Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal, not without stepping into other clichés (the same as this text might do), manifested the image of the tragically gay love story, foregrounding the brutality of society's norms. Sobbing boys, fighting their desires and themselves, breaking through concrete walls of suppressed emotions and the inability to speak, act, and be as they feel. It is only the first version of the many new embodiments this archetype has undergone ever since.

The ideals of Western culture (historically questionable not only because of the role models they postulate) became infantilised figures, characters we can slip into like costumes, or deny altogether. The cowboy, red-eyed and wasted, seems exhausted by his role. Tired of being what the world expects him to be, he might whisper: Let's leave it behind. Let's leave this stage. Let's disappear. Thus, are we witnessing the transformation of a heroic archetype into its tragicomic dissolution, or into a moment of humanization (the two are not mutually exclusive)?

An archetype is a blueprint, a primal image or symbol that surfaces across countless forms of representation. Archetypal figures inscribe themselves into our collective consciousness. Carried across generations, they appear as myths and literary motifs, as well as stereotypes and everyday clichés. Here they are painted as

though they were wax figures: stiff, tall, doll-like. Do they invite us to identify with them? Perhaps not. They seem to refuse that moment and yet their exposed fragility, their hollowness, their ghostliness leave us in a liminal space of negotiation.

Barbies and cowboys on canvas, they are slowly colliding. Is it parody or confession, critique or self-examination? Is the gesture one of mockery, or of tenderness? Perhaps it is an attempt to deconstruct, to re-stage, to ask again what it means to inhabit these forms that both shaped us and continue to haunt us.

Text by Sophie Fitze

