

Forbidden City / Platitude vzw aka Verbooden Stadt

Geuzenstraat 23

2000 Antwerpen

MICHAL LUFT

7.3 - 16.3

FROM A DISTANCE

Through the vitrine, an artificial fire burns endlessly. Six screens mimic the warmth of flames, while they consume nothing—no wood, no material, no memory. The fire here is a moving image, but it's not actually moving—a marker of absence, a simulation of consumed warmth. Instead of storefronts showcasing images of homes, this imagined *REAL ESTATE* agency presents only fire—stable, controlled, barren of danger. The domestic fire, once the heart of the home, transforms into an advertisement for a sense of intimacy, a promise that will never be fulfilled, because how can warmth be felt when it is made of LED.

At the center of the space, an overturned table becomes an open grave. A negative space emerged between the legs of the table; “housing” stones placed upon it. Self-made monuments that mimic generic objects while being unique artifacts. In ritualistic labour, the artist “returns” to the Jewish tradition of placing stones on a grave, marking an attempt at preservation within impermanence. These are not stones taken from land, but objects that have been shaped, fired in a kiln, and transformed. Luft grapples with the notion of homeliness through acts of commemoration—not only of a physical structure but of the very idea of home, the memory of places that have changed beyond recognition, that have become unattainable. A funeral for a non-existing home unfolds in the space that sells immovable property.

The image of the lonely, bizarre, monumental-but-tiny hedge stands as a rigid, sculpted form. It is seemingly meant to mark a boundary or commemorate something. Unlike traditional monuments, it lacks inscription or clear significance. It has been carefully shaped, maintained, and made to appear necessary, but remains an empty signifier—an anonymous presence in the landscape. The evergreen loner is captured in a conscious photographic action by Luft; via her camera, she both idolizes and questions what we recognize as significant. It is striking. I look, and I think how landscapes — like homes — can be crafted and made to seem “authentic” but are so bluntly artificial. Is this a reason to leave these landscapes, or homes, behind?

The exhibition moves between distance and proximity. Home exists as both a fixed place and a shifting idea. Home as a dream and place of departure. Luft looks at home from afar, and within the distance, stages a quiet farewell ritual. The exhibition space resists the artificial, institutionalized mechanisms of memory in favor of something more personal, fragile, and *real* (is it even possible?). What remains when a home is no longer a home?

Amit Leblang, March 2025