

Ross Racine

Large waves of Jewish immigrants, entering North America with other Europeans at the turn of the twentieth century, first settled in downtown areas where they started their families and their businesses. After World War II, their children and subsequent generations participated in the migration to the suburbs, like those surrounding the Sherman Campus where the Koffler Centre of the Arts is now located. Here it was thought that a spacious house, a safe neighborhood and a healthy environment would replace the more crowded and increasingly distressed city core neighbourhoods being occupied by new waves of arrivals. Ross Racine digitally renders bird's eye views of suburban tracts, orderly and prosperous at first glance. Closer observation unveils homogeneity and limited choice, where house design and landscaping are deployed like building blocks.

Artist Statement

Drawn freehand directly on the computer and printed with an inkjet printer, my drawings do not contain photographs or scanned material. As an inherently hybrid process combining the languages of drawing and computer imaging, my practice brings together the opposite notions of handmade and technological, of organic and mechanical, of physical and virtual. Combining technology with subjectivity, the work draws the viewer to an awareness of the devices of image construction and to the complexities of fiction.

The subjects of my work may be interpreted as models for planned communities or as aerial views of fictional suburbs, referring to the dual role of the computer as a tool for urban planning as well as image capture. Encouraging a reflective attitude by its perpendicular, distant viewpoint, the aerial view is used here to comment on society's occupation and transformation of the natural landscape. In addition, the obviously invented nature of these suburbs exaggerates existing situations and drives the subject matter into the investigative domain of science fiction. Beyond the suburban example, these digital drawings are a way of thinking about design, the city, and society as a whole.