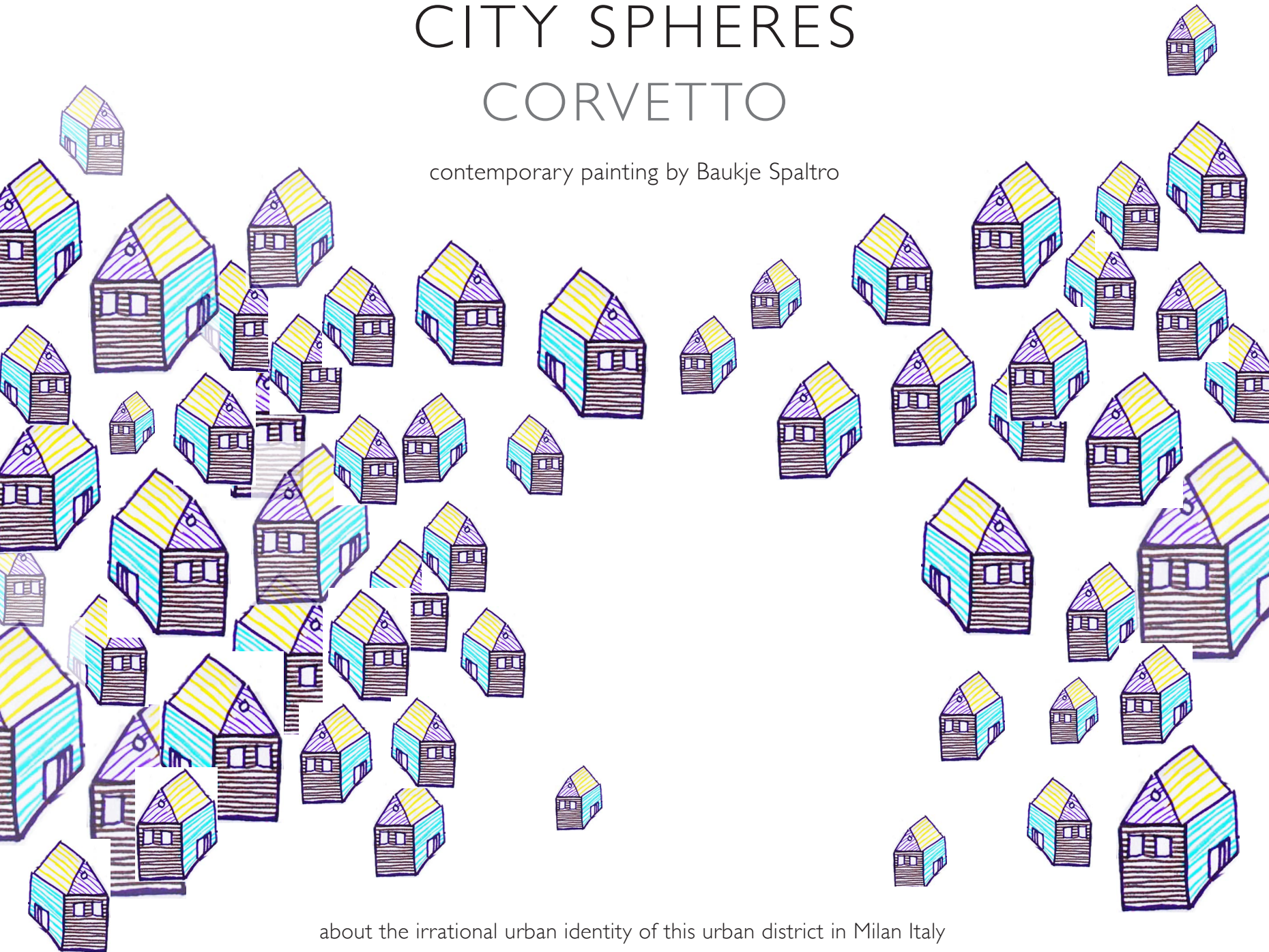


# CITY SPHERES

## CORVETTO

contemporary painting by Baukje Spaltro



about the irrational urban identity of this urban district in Milan Italy

CITY SPHERES:  
**ILLUMINATING URBAN REALITIES THROUGH ART**

Baukje Spaltro, a Dutch-Italian artist residing in the vibrant city of Amsterdam, began her journey as an artist with formal education in painting at the HKU (Utrecht, Netherlands) and the Accademia di Belle Arti Brera (Milan, Italy). However, her artistic evolution goes beyond academic realms, delving into the profound realm of the 'sense of a place' within European urban landscapes.

Since 2015, Spaltro has been crafting her magnum opus, the 'City Spheres' project. This ambitious venture is a testament to her fascination with the concept of 'genius loci,' inspired by the Roman idea of the spirit of a place and philosopher Peter Sloterdijk's musings. Through her painted installations, Spaltro redefines the city as a dynamic, self-constructed local society, where every street corner, alleyway, and neighborhood has a unique soul waiting to be unveiled.

What sets Spaltro's work apart is her nuanced approach to color. The moment, the place, and the interplay of natural light become pivotal elements in her artistic arsenal. The result is a mesmerizing symphony of fluorescent and tonal colors that dance across her canvases, creating a visual language that speaks directly to the observer's intuition.

In her own words, "Color unfolds the soul of a district." This statement encapsulates the essence of Spaltro's artistic philosophy. Her deliberate use of fluorescent surfaces disrupts conventional thinking, challenging viewers to engage in a more intuitive perception of their surroundings. The city, under her brush, transforms into a canvas of emotions, memories, and untold stories.

One of Spaltro's notable works is the piece titled 'Entrata Corso Lodi' (Entrance Lodi Course), part of the ongoing *City Sphere Corvetto* series (2022-2024). Executed on a 50×45 cm linen canvas, this artwork captures the essence of the entrance road to the Corvetto area in Milan, Italy.

The juxtaposition of underlayer fluorescent acrylics and tonal oil paint creates a striking visual narrative. It unfolds the dichotomy of a district aspiring to become the greenest in Europe, overshadowed by the grim reality visible from its entrance road – a landscape dominated by demolished buildings, remnants of nature, and a maze of energy cables.



Corvetto area, Milan Italy

In *Bürgersteig I*, *Reichenbergerstraße* (sidewalk), a piece from the *City Sphere SO36* series (2019-2022), Spaltro delves into the urban fabric of Kreuzberg, Berlin. The technique, consistent with her signature style, involves underlayer fluorescent acrylics and markers, overlaid with tonal oil paint on linen. The artwork, measuring 75×55 cm, brings to life the concept of a 'platform for the citizens' – a literal translation of 'Bürgersteig' in German. Through various iterations of this main street, Spaltro captures the illuminating and connecting role of the road in the SO36 district, emphasizing the integral role of urban spaces in fostering a sense of community.

Spaltro's work is not just an exploration of urban landscapes; it's a contemplation on the evolving relationship between individuals and their surroundings. Her spartan yet conversational tone allows her art to communicate directly with the observer, inviting them to reflect on the intricate tapestry of the city life often overlooked in the hustle and bustle.

As Baukje Spaltro continues to captivate art enthusiasts with her *City Spheres* project, she invites us to see beyond the concrete and steel, urging us to embrace the vibrant, pulsating heart that beats within the urban spaces we inhabit. Through her masterful use of color, she invites us to experience the soul of each district and, in doing so, discover a deeper connection with the cities we call home.

Ann Williams, art critic  
New York 12.2023





City Sphere Corvetto 2x10 m Viafarini Work Milano 2022

left: Voci di Corvetto *Corvetto' voices* / right: City Sphere Corvetto cloud installation





City Sphere Corvetto **cloud installation** 2 x 4.5 m Viafarini Work Milan 2022



Colour card of Corvetto  
24 x 18 cm

### City Sphere Corvetto series 2022-2024

The first work she always paints in the urban area is the colour card.  
A little canvas of neon colours was chosen on the spot. These colours are then used as underground for every work of the Corvetto series, about the genius loci of the Corvetto area, in Milan.

End of 2022 she worked for one month at Viafarini.work in Milan, where she created the cloud-shaped painted installation City Sphere Corvetto.

From 2023 she created studio works about Corvetto in her studio in Amsterdam.  
All the works by Spaltro are made in a mixed oil technique on linen.

This Corvetto series is the tenth series of the City Sphere project and is accompanied with a Manifesto.

#### *City Sphere Manifesto*

THE ARTISTS VIEW as invitation into the irrational space.

THE GENIUS LOCI as the local identity of an urban space.

FLUORISING COLOURS influence our perception of the outside and inside world.

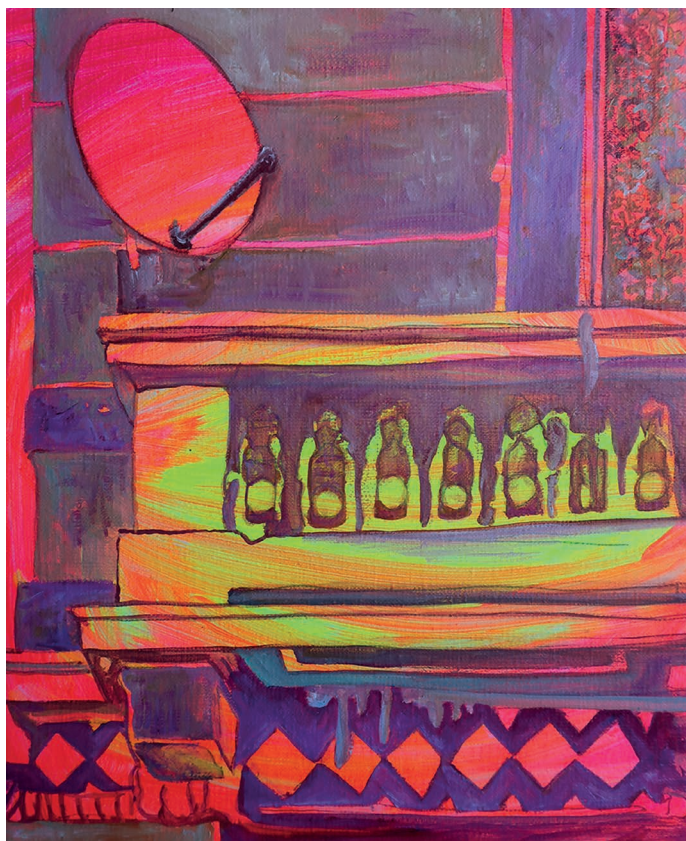
MORE AWARE about an urban space.

THE VALUE of visual art combined with social intelligence for inclusive cities

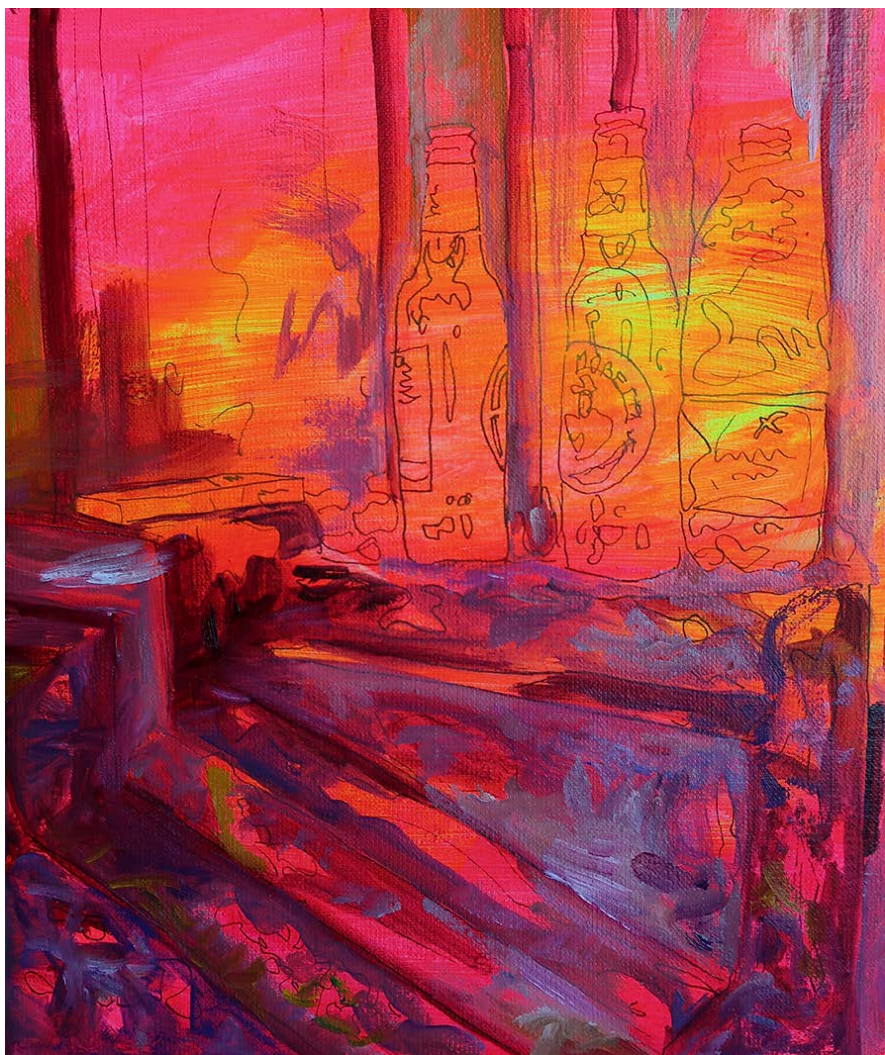


Altovolante *'high flying'*  
Piazza Corvetto 25 x 30 cm

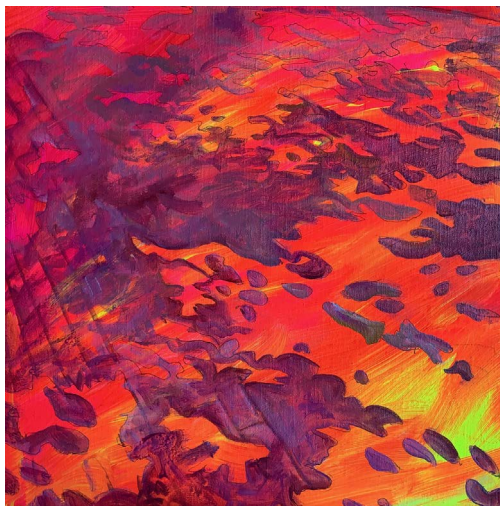




Antenna Antenna  
Corso Lodi 30x25 cm



Ora di Pranzo *lunch time*  
Piazza Gabriele Rosa  
30x25 cm



Ombre *shadows*  
 San Luigi Gambalòita (Corso Lodi)  
 55 x 35 cm



Messaggio inutile *useless message*  
 Via Marco D'Agrate  
 25 x 30 cm





Case bianche white houses  
Via Pismonte 60 x 45 cm

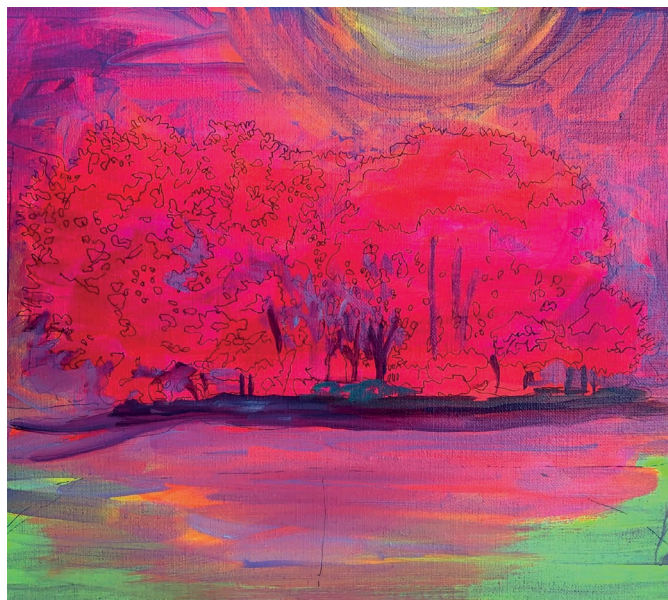


Sotto la superficie (Trapano) *below the Surface (drill)*  
Via Gargano  
13x25 cm

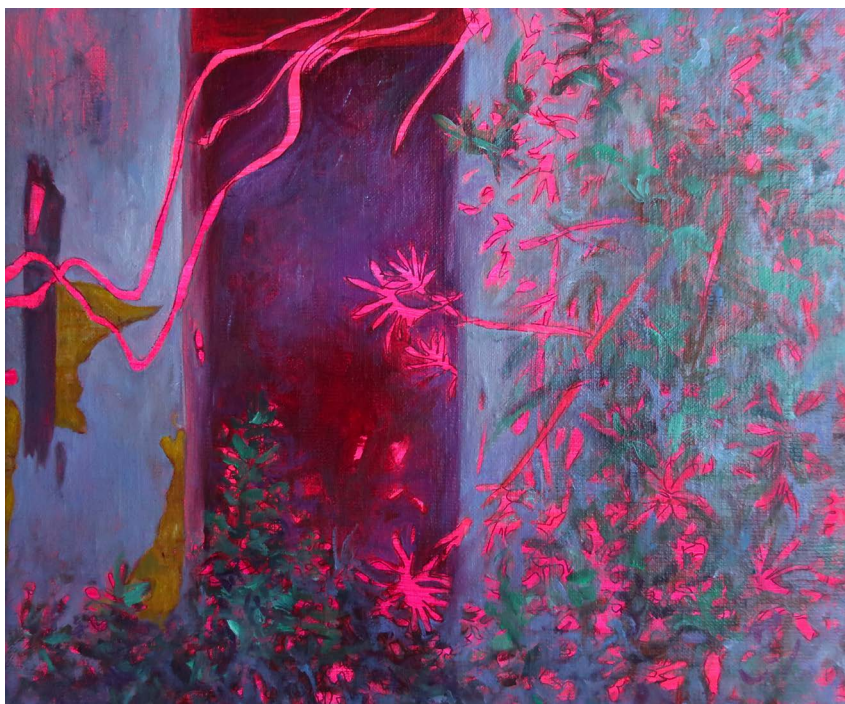


Il tempo non si ferma *Time doesn't stop*  
Via Riva di Trento  
20x18 cm





Bosco I 'Woods I'  
Piazza Geremia Bonomelli  
35x40 cm



Cascina scomparsa *disappeared farmhouse*  
Via Riva di Trento 25 x 30 cm

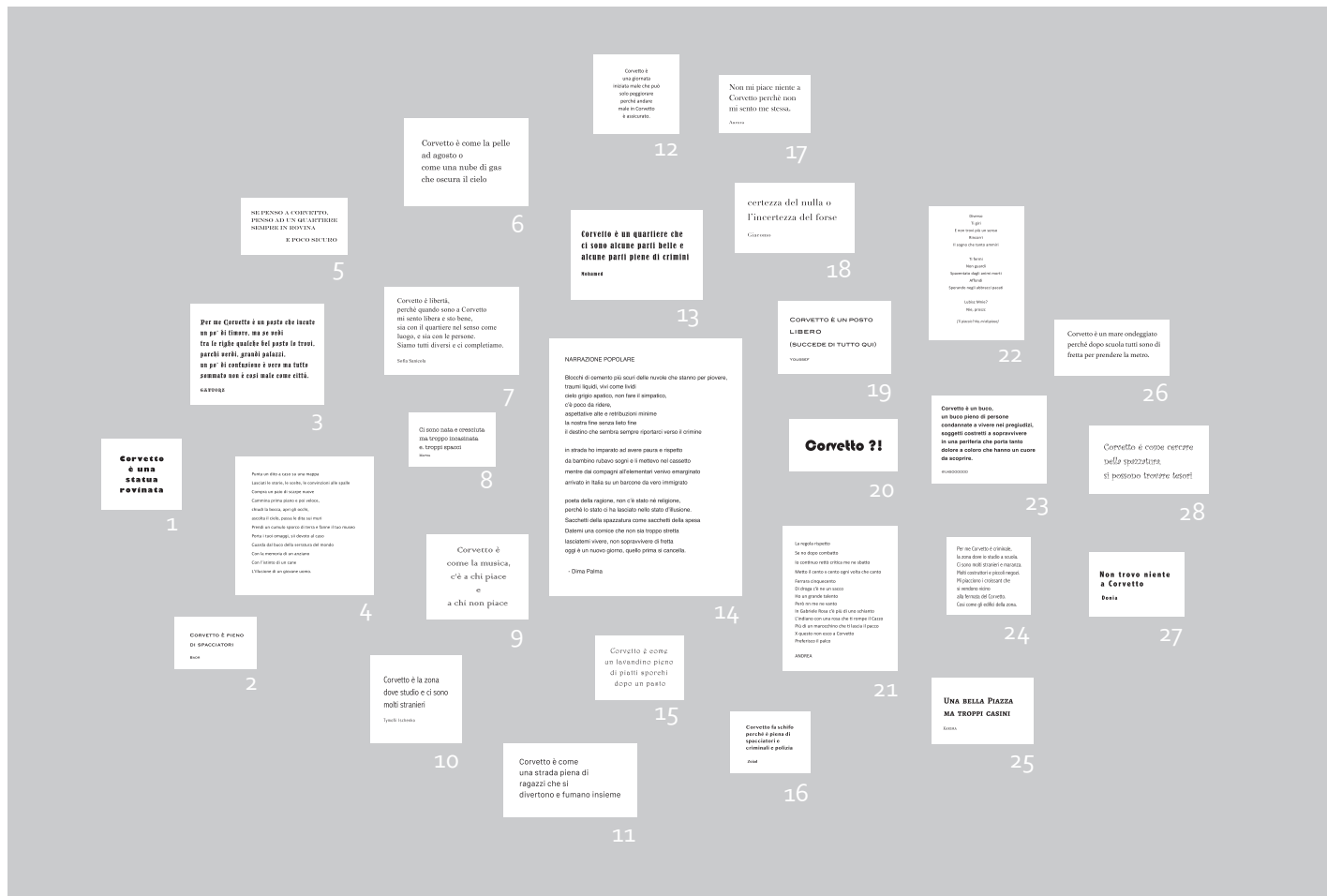


Erba rossa, tutti fuori *red grass, everybody out*  
Viale Enrico Martini  
35x40 cm





**Voci di Corvetto** *Voices of Corvetto - a printed rapsong on a flag* 1.45 x 2 m  
 co-production of Baukje Spaltro, Gigi Tufariello (XYZ Corvetto), Dora Casadio (Viafarini), Dima, IPSOS and youngsters of Corvetto  
 Arti et Amicitiae Amsterdam 2023



Voci di Corvetto Voices of Corvetto - a printed rapsong on a Flag 1.45 x 2 m 02.2023  
co-production of Baukje Spaltro , Gigi Tufariello (XYZ Corvetto), Dora Casadio (Viafarini), Dima, IPSOS and youngsters of Corvetto

23

Corvetto is a hole, a hole full of people condemned to live in prejudices, subjects forced to survive in a suburb that brings so much pain to those who have a heart to discover:

@U45000000

25

A beautiful square but too much mess

26

Corvetto is a wavy sea because after school everyone is in a hurry to take the subway.

27

I can't find anything in Corvetto  
Donia

24

For me Corvetto is criminal, the area where I study at school. There are many foreigners and maranza\*. Many builders and small shops. I like the croissants that are sold near the Corvetto metro stop. As well as the buildings in the area.

\* Milanese youth slang: classic street kids who go around in large groups, come from the city suburbs and pose as bullies.

28

Corvetto is like searching in the trash, you can find treasures

1

Corvetto is a  
ruined statue

2

Corvetto is full  
of drug dealers

*Badr*

3

For me Corvetto is a place that  
inspires a bit of fear, but if you look  
between the lines you'll find some nice  
places, green parks, large buildings, a  
bit of confusion it's true but all in all it's  
not that bad as city.

*CATTORZ*

4

Point a finger at random on a map  
Leave the stories, the choices, the beliefs behind  
Buy a new pair of shoes  
Walk first slowly and then quickly,  
close your mouth, open your eyes,  
listen to the sky, run your fingers on the walls  
Take a dirty mound of dirt and make it your  
museum  
Pay your respects, be devoted to chance  
Look through the keyhole of the world  
With the memory of an elder  
With the instinct of a dog  
The illusion of a young man.

5

If I think of Corvetto,  
I think of a neighborhood always in ruins  
and unsafe

6

Corvetto is like your skin  
in August or  
like a gas cloud  
that darkens the sky

7

Corvetto is freedom,  
because when I'm in Corvetto I feel  
free and I'm fine,  
both with the neighborhood in the  
sense of place, and with the people.  
We are all different  
and we complement each other.

*Sophia Sanicola*

8

I was born and raised there  
but too messy and too many dealings

*Marwa*

9

Corvetto is like music,  
there are those who like it  
and those who don't

10

Corvetto is the area where I study and  
there are many foreigners

*Tymofii Ischenko (Ukrainian refugee)*

11

Corvette is like  
a road full of  
kids having fun  
and smoking together

12

Corvetto is a day that started badly  
that can only get worse  
because going wrong in Corvetto  
is guaranteed.

13

Corvetto is a neighborhood that there  
are some beautiful parts and some  
crime filled parts

*Muhammad*

16

Corvetto sucks because it's full of drug  
dealers and  
criminals and police

*Zeiad*

22

Different  
You turn around  
And you no longer find meaning  
Chase  
The dream you admire so much

You stop  
You don't look  
Scared of dead souls  
You lunge  
Hoping for peaceful hugs

You fancy me?  
No, I'm sorry

15

Corvetto is like  
a full sink  
of dirty dishes  
after a meal

14

POPULAR NARRATIVE

Concrete blocks darker than the clouds about to rain,  
liquid trauma, alive as bruises  
apathetic gray sky, don't be nice,  
there's little to laugh about,  
high expectations and minimum wages  
our end without a happy ending  
the fate that always seems to lead us back to crime

in the street I learned to be afraid and respected  
as a child I stole dreams and put them in the drawer  
while from classmates to elementary school I was marginalized  
arrived in Italy on a boat as a true immigrant

poet of reason, there was no state or religion,  
because the state has left us  
in a state of illusion.

Garbage bags like grocery bags  
Give me a frame that's not too tight  
let me live, don't survive in a hurry  
today is a new day, the one before is cancelled.

*Dima Palma*

21

The respect rule  
If not, I'll fight later  
I continue straight criticism I don't care  
I put a hundred x hundred every time I sing  
Ferrara five hundred  
There's a lot of drugs  
I have great talent  
But I'm not proud of it  
In Gabriele Rosa there is more than a crash  
The Indian with a rose that breaks your dick  
More than a Moroccan who leaves you the  
package  
For this I don't go out to Corvetto  
I prefer the stage

*ANDREA*

17

I don't like anything in Corvetto be-  
cause I don't feel like myself.

*Aurora*

19

Corvetto is a free seat(everything happens here)

*Youssef*

18

certainty of nothing or  
the uncertainty of maybe

*Giacomo (adult)*

20

Corvetto ?!



City Sphere Corvetto 2023+2024 studio works



Cavalcavia 'Ride road'  
Piazzale Corvetto  
40 x 50 cm  
studio work



Cavalca & Via *'Ride & Go'* Piazzale Corvetto  
100 x 120 cm  
studio work

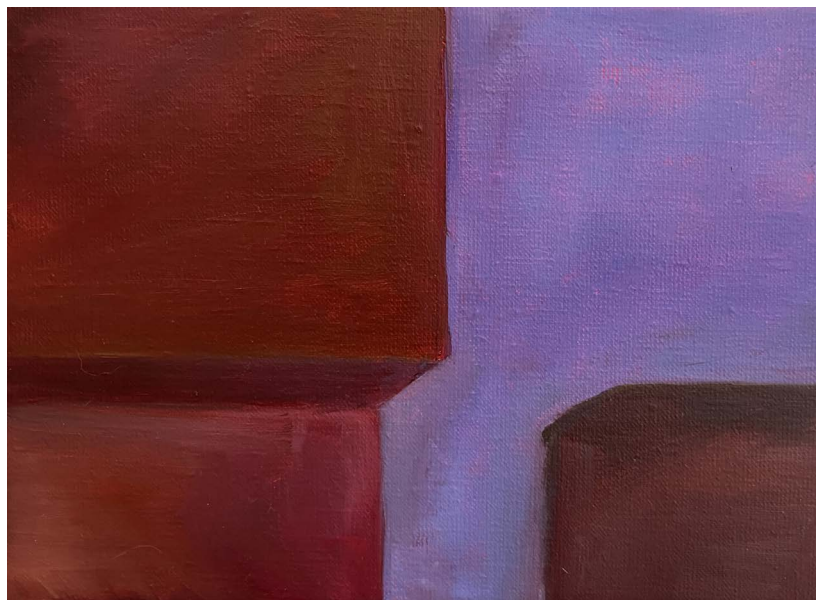


Entrata '*Entrance*'  
Corso Lodi  
50 x 45 cm  
studio work





il Passato *'the Past'*  
Via Riva del trento  
100x80 cm  
studio work



Affari I 'Business I'  
25 x 18 cm  
studiowork



Affari 2 'Business 2'  
50x45 cm  
studio work





Coriandoli 'Confetti'  
Piazzale Corvetto  
45 x 45 cm  
studio work



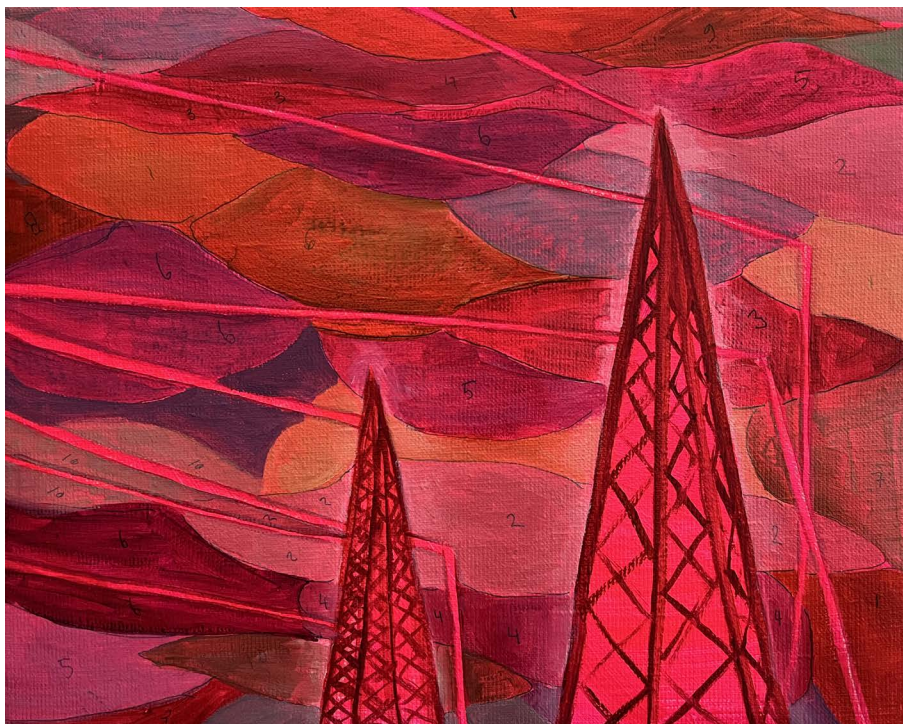
Bosco 2 'Woods 2'  
 Piazza Geremia Bonomelli 25 x 30 cm  
 studio work



Bosco 3 'Woods 3'  
 Piazza Geremia Bonomelli 25 x 30 cm  
 studio work



Bosco 4 'Woods 4'  
 Piazza Geremia Bonomelli 25 x 30 cm  
 studio work

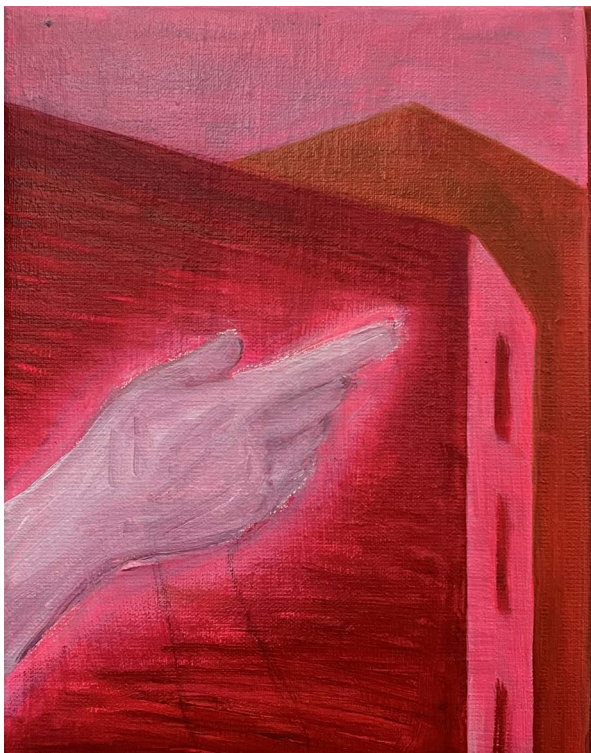


Le Damigelle di Corvetto bozza 'Corvetto's bridesmaids draft'  
Via Marco D'Agrate  
25 x 30 cm  
studio work





M - il vuoto 'M- the void' Via Bessarione  
100 x 80 cm  
studio work

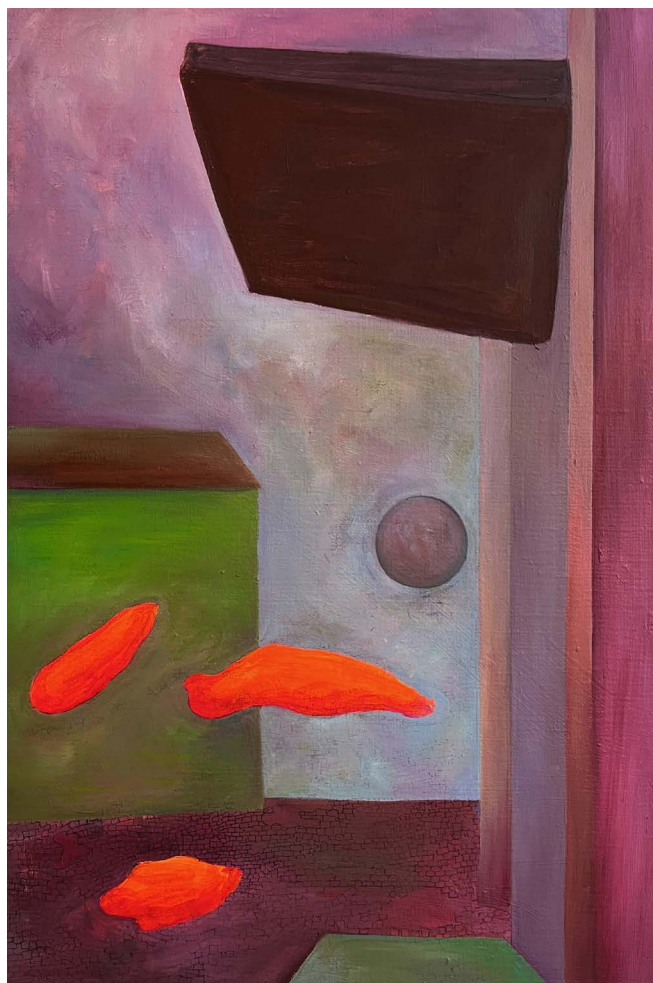


Sguardo 'Gaze'  
Via S. Dionigi 25 x 18 cm

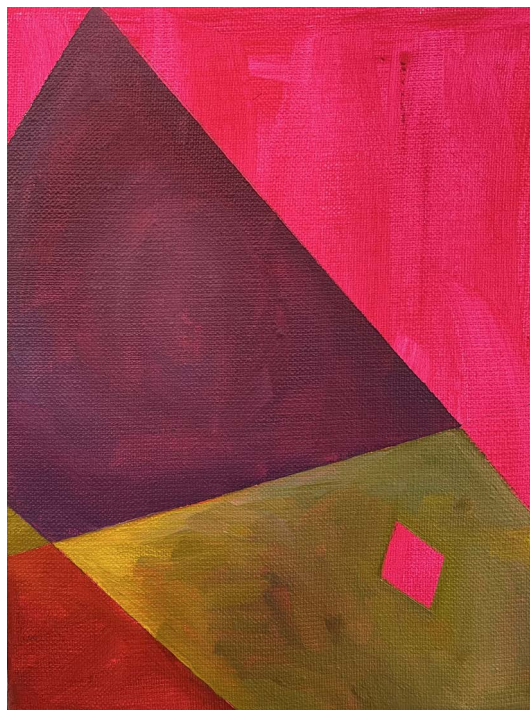
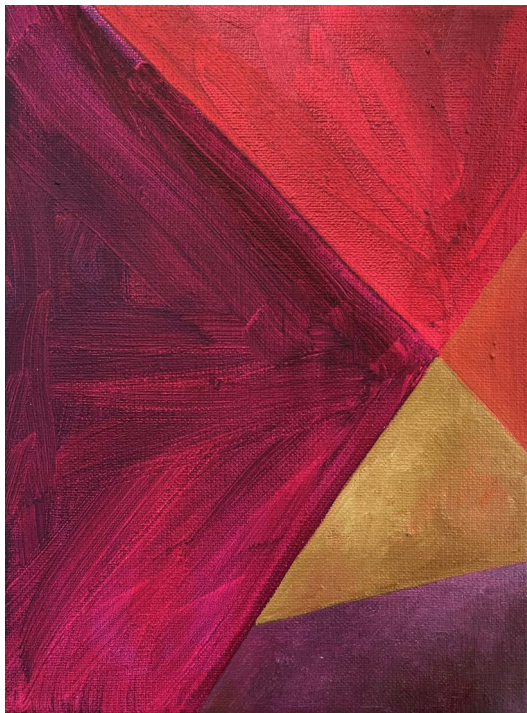


Salvo bozza 'Salvo's sketch'  
Via S. Dionigi  
25 x 18 cm  
studiowork





L'ora di Salvo *'Salvo's hour'*  
Via Polesine  
60 x 45 cm  
studio work



Colori sparsi bozza *'Scattered colors draft'*  
 Corvetto  
 2x 24x18 cm cm  
 studio work

City Sphere SO36 Kreuzberg Berlin Germany 2019.09



City Sphere SO36 SOMA Art Space Berlin ca. 200 x 400 cm





Bürgersteig I, Reichenbergerstraße 75 x 55 cm 2021 studiowork  
Sidewalk I, Reichenbergerstraße



Bürgersteig 4, weis 'Sidewalk 4, white' 80 x 60 cm 2022 studiowork

## BIO

Baukje Spaltro is an Italian Dutch artist, born in Milan (1967) and working since 1988 in Amsterdam. She studied painting at the HKU (Utrecht School of the Arts NL 1991), painting at the Amsterdam Institute of Painting in 1994 and a master in 1996 at the Accademia Belle Arti di Brera in Milan (Italy).

Since 2015 Spaltro she works on the ongoing project City Spheres.

Creating painted City Spheres installations redefining the urban space as a self-constructed local society. She is inspired by the Roman genius loci, like the sense of a place, and the trilogy Spheres by philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. On the canvas she researches with unique colour combinations the genius loci of European urban areas. Creating imaginary urban landscapes, from a social involvement and urgency, catching the effects of gentrification on the local identity. Visualizing the genius loci as a statement and as part of the urban identity. The moment, the place, and the daylight determine her colour combinations of fluorescent and tonal colours. The fluorescent surfaces boycott effective thinking and force an intuitive perception. Colour unfolds the invisible soul of a district that beats like a human heart.

Since 2015 Spaltro has created and exhibited ten City Spheres in European urban areas of Den Helder (NL), Amsterdam (3 districts, NL), Arnhem (NL), Berlin (D), Haarlem (NL), Milan (2 districts, I) and Turku (Fin). Currently she is working on larger Corvetto paintings and a City Spheres Manifesto.

In 2018 she created the InsideOUT Panorama with a community of 200 Frysian (ex)mental patients made for the Leeuwarden Cultural Capital of Europe 2018. In 2022 she presented two City Sphere series at the famous venue De Vishal (Haarlem NL).

More about her work on [www.baukjespaltro.com](http://www.baukjespaltro.com):

City Sphere series (under city spheres)

a film about City Spheres (under films)

the catalogue (inder pdf)







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