

Graphic novel on space gardens

Exo-biologist Wieger Wamelink has been researching the possibilities for agriculture on Mars for a decade. Now he has a graphic novel on the topic.

The book *ExoGARDENS*, which he created in partnership with the artist Anna Vershinina, is the result of the BAD Award the two won last year. BAD, which stands for Bio Art and Design, aims to bridge the gap between art and the biosciences.

Vershinina is a scientist as well as an artist; she is studying for a PhD in Regenerative Architecture and BioDesign at Leuven. The two developed ExoGARDEN, a modular system for vertical agriculture. This consisted of an installation of stacked 3D-printed flowerpots for growing vegetables in.

The plan got them one of the three available prizes of 25,000 euros. That money was used to build the installation, which has been on view since the end of last year in the MU Hybrid Art House in the Strijp S district of

Eindhoven. But their collaboration didn't end there. 'We soon had the idea of creating a graphic novel as well,' says Wamelink.

Dystopian world

Wamelink is a fan of graphic novels and collects them. 'I have several thousand. I knew Anna did art in this style. So we came up with a scenario about a dystopian world in the near future in which our design is used to grow food.' Wamelink himself features in the story.

An interesting aspect of the book is that AI was used to create the drawings. Images from the book are projected on the wall behind the installation in MU Art House. Until now, the book was only on sale at the Art House. But the exhibition is ending soon, so Wamelink has decided to sell the book through his website and to publicize its existence. 'It has been out for a while, but no one knew about it.' РК



Settlement on Antarctica, an illustration from *ExoGARDENS*, made using AI.