



After almost twenty-five years of visual art projects in varying segments of public space, Fundament Foundation puts an end to this nomadic existence and opts for a permanent location, a 'home': park De Oude Warande in Tilburg. These Baroque woodlands are best suited for the presentation of contemporary sculpture and generate by far the largest audience. This means that from now on exhibitions at this location will be staged on an annual basis, with the aim to develop this important cultural heritage into an internationally recognized platform for contemporary sculpture. Substantial preliminary work has already been done; between 2000 and 2015 the first five editions of the international exhibition *Lustwarande* took place at De Oude Warande. In 2009 Fundament Foundation realised *Grotto*, a pavilion for the center of the park, designed by Australian artist Callum Morton, on the occasion of which the exhibition *Stardust* took place. *Lustwarande* has proven to be one of the most significant outdoors exhibitions in the Netherlands, attracting a very large audience and generating raving press reactions at home and abroad. The exhibition is therefore considered as a fixed value within the Dutch visual art landscape.

The sixth edition of *Lustwarande* is scheduled for the summer of 2019. Prior to this, exhibitions and other projects will take place, which will be smaller in scope and will have a stricter theme. *Luster – Clay in Sculpture Today* is the first manifestation of this new policy. This exhibition, which will take place from 17 September to 30 October 2016, will be in line with the renewed interest in the use of clay and ceramics in contemporary art, but will go a step further by challenging artists to create new works for the public space of De Oude Warande.

Luster will present new works by eleven international artists: Caroline Coolen (BE) - Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel (GB/FR) - Alexandra Engelfriet (NL) - Guido Geelen (NL) - Cameron Jamie (USA) - Markus Karstieß (DE) - Marien Schouten (NL) - Johan Tahon (BE) - Gert & Uwe Tobias (DE) - Anne Wenzel (DE) - Jesse Wine (GB)

In recent years the number of exhibitions exclusively focusing on the use of ceramics in contemporary art is remarkable. Where did this growing interest come from? Perhaps it is too soon to answer this question unequivocally. Viewed superficially, it could be accounted for by the return to the small-scale, the collective and to nature, to the rediscovery of the original, the primal, to an urge for sustainability, reduced consumption, organic and paleo trends, guerrilla gardening and urban farming, slow food and the revival of baking and knitting, all of which, seen within a wider context, as part of an active contribution to a better lifestyle, environment and relationship with the earth. Viewed in this light, it is a dialectic reaction to the digital revolution and other technological advances, rooted in an ever-spreading conservatism, a holding position, a reconsideration of our ethical values, based on the realization that our earth's resources are not inexhaustible. A re-exploration of the traditional craft, with which working with clay is inextricably linked, is a perfect fit for this way of thinking.

Seen from a philosophical-sociological perspective, more specifically, in the light of Bruno Latour's constructivist ideas, a more nuanced view can be formulated. Increasing numbers of researchers, including artists, are working within different disciplines to redefine the concept of nature. Within this redefinition, nature is considered as an ecosystem of which people and technology are integral parts. In this so-called Anthropocene era, proposed as a working concept at the turn of the new millennium, the earth and its atmosphere suffer the impact of human activity, and so the notion of an antithesis between culture and nature is no longer valid, thus calling into question the basis of modernity. Based on this understanding, new forms of knowledge are developing, with a new world vision gradually arising, in which the traditional divisions between nature and culture, object and subject will dissolve. Collaboration between the sciences and the humanities, including the arts, lies at the heart of this development.

In the Anthropocene era, the connection between humans and the earth must be acknowledged once again, not as a nostalgic return to nature, an idea propagated since the Romantic movement, but as a continuing evolution of organisms, objects and matter, which are connected to one another within complex networks. An open vision of art as a sensitive, aesthetic, narrative and performative form of knowledge can teach us how to deal with this enormous challenge. Within the forms and genres where art finds expression, ceramics occupy a special position. As an earthy material that artists manipulate with their bare hands, clay connects the body directly to the earth, in the sense of both the globe and of the soil, mud and land. In a way, ceramic works revitalize the shared connection between different sorts of matter, organic and inorganic, a notion that has largely been lost in the ongoing decoupling process between humans and nature, as a result of technological processes and the ubiquity of urban infrastructure.

Luster – Clay in Sculpture Today connects to the renewed interest in the use of clay and ceramics in contemporary art, but goes a step farther by commissioning artists to create works involving clay and ceramics in the public space. This brings the works closer to their origins in two different ways. Firstly, the development of ceramic art resulted from uses of ceramics in the public space, such as exterior cladding, as employed in the new architecture of the late 19th century. Secondly, the presentation of these works in the natural context of De Oude Warande means that these new works in clay and ceramic are directly connected to the earth, from which they derive their materiality. The artists are challenged to adapt their usual practice to the possibilities – and impossibilities – of this public natural environment. This connection to origin and surroundings is a complex relationship; the works will ultimately harmonize with their context, but at the same time conflict with it. And it does not matter whether it is a figure or an abstract stack, a head or a vase in the form of a body, a totem or a spirit, unfired clay or stoneware. Regardless of their meaning, whether they are marked by glazes or lustrous finishes, these works generate new insights, enriching the world and lending our lives more luster.

Participating artists

The exhibition focuses on a selection of artists within whose bodies of work clay has long – if not always – occupied a prominent position, based on the issue of what their new works, created for the public space, might mean for our understanding of the world today. This selection explores various aspects of contemporary ceramic sculpture: the meaning of scale (from miniature to monumental), processing (from rough to glazed and ready-made), the esthetics of color and finish (the material itself and the addition of pigments and lusters), and the functions of order, earth, ritual, and myth.



Access: Bredaseweg 441 (carpark Auberge du Bonheur)

Tilburg – The Netherlands

Press preview: 16 September from 2 – 5 pm

Opening: 17 September at 3 pm

Opening hours: Mon - Sun from dawn till dusk

Info-unit hours: Mon – Sun from 11.30 am – 4.30 pm

Requested admission: 5 € (adults) / 4 € (students) / up to 18 years free

www.luster16.nl

For press images: info@fundamentfoundation.nl