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After four editions the international sculpture exhibition *Lustwarande* in Baroque woodlands De Oude Warande in Tilburg has proven to be one of the most important outdoors exhibitions in the Netherlands. From 29 August to 25 October, the fifth edition takes place, *Lustwarande '15 – Rapture & Pain*. Again this edition will present a cutout of the developments in international contemporary sculpture. Overall theme is the social critique conveyed by the works, relating them to the zeitgeist. Social critique extends on a gliding scale, with pessimism and optimism at its extremes. Seventeen artists from different countries present mostly new work, specially created on the occasion of *Lustwarande '15*. Of one of these, Maria Roosen, the solo show *Looking Back* is on view at PARK – Platform for Visual Arts in Tilburg.

Lustwarande

De Oude Warande was commissioned in 1712 by the German prince Wilhelm von Hessen-Kassel, lord of Tilburg and Goirle. He had De Oude Warande designed after the latest garden fashion, Baroque. The basis of the design is a star-shaped forest, with the paths in each of the four quadrants laid out in four different geometric forms, creating a maze. Pleasure gardens of this kind were usually adorned with sculptures of mythological figures, grottos, fountains and ponds. No source has been found documenting such decoration at De Oude Warande. Since 2000 Fundament Foundation has set out to complete the park every three to four years with a cutting edge presentation of contemporary sculpture. *Lustwarande* is free of charge and attracts over 100,000 visitors.

Lustwarande '15 – Rapture & Pain

Like previous editions, *Lustwarande '15 – Rapture & Pain* shows a range of works that illustrate developments in international contemporary sculpture in the broadest sense of the word. Although sculpture regained its status and general appreciation during the first decade of the 21st century, as demonstrated by exhibitions all over the world and by the fact that increasing numbers of artists, including many fresh, young talents, are incorporating sculpture within their oeuvres, it should also be noted that no significant new developments have taken place within the genre since the early years of the current decade; all conceivable forms of sculpture have been widely explored and frequently applied within the continuing exploration of community art and relational aesthetics, of ephemeral sculpture, culminating in Hypermaterialism, of Minimal Art and conceptual sculpture, of kinetic sculpture and, finally, expanded sculpture (all manifestations of temporary, moving, non-fixed sculpture, including performance) – in short, within the (re)examination of Modernism (reloading Modernism/Altermodernism, Nicolas Bourriaud, 2005).

So *Lustwarande '15* does not so much claim to present new tendencies but, now that the effects of the financial crisis are also being felt within the cultural world, so art has had to cede a considerable amount of territory, and the exhibition will primarily be about the relationship between contemporary sculpture, time and the zeitgeist. Social criticism and commentary through aesthetics in art are nothing new, but a renewed focus on these aspects may have a revitalising effect within our changing social frameworks. The direct connection with the world in which art is created is, after all, what gives art its ultimate raison d'être. Without presupposing that contemporary art in general and contemporary sculpture in particular react directly and explicitly to the changing social climate, a current analysis of its social roots could regain territory for art and, ultimately, yield societal gain.

It seems at first that such a perspective, in which the focus is no longer primarily on formal aspects or on specific characteristics of the content, could result only in an extremely kaleidoscopic scenario. Formal features and intrinsic themes and issues – identity, the fragmented body, history and art history, globalisation, conflict and migration, ecology and sustainability – seem to tumble over one another. It is, however, the social criticism inherent to each of the individual works that ultimately unites them. This social criticism is not unequivocal or

unanimous, but operates on a continuum, with pessimism and opposition, doubts and confidence about the future, at its extremes.

Rapture & Pain deals with contemporary notions of progress, in which expressions of hope, ecstasy and utopia alternate with manifestations of doubt, fear and decline. The values involved are seldom absolute opposites. The various expressions of social criticism are more likely located around the broad middle spectrum, where they both diverge and converge, just as rapture and pain are often extensions of each other.

Participating artists

Atelier van Lieshout (NL) - Kevin van Braak (NL) - Tim Breukers (NL) – Tom Burr (USA) - Feipel & Bechameil (LUX/F) - Roger Hiorns (GB) - Folkert de Jong (NL) - Juliana Cerqueira Leite (USA) - Gabriel Lester (NL) - Wilhelm Mundt (D) - Jan van Oost (B) – Arne Quinze (B) - Ugo Rondinone (CH) – Maria Roosen (NL)* – Daniel Roth (D) - Eva Rothschild (IRL) - William Tucker (GB/USA)

* at PARK – Platform For Visual Arts – Wilhelminapark 53 Tilburg

curator: Chris Driessen

The works of art

While the oeuvres of the selected artists appear at first to represent only a cross-section of the broad, contemporary sculptural spectrum, in which similarities and contrasts may definitely be noted, but one single uniting theme seems to be lacking, all these oeuvres, upon further reflection, prove to fit within the thematic framework outlined above and can easily be distributed along a continuum of reflections regarding the progress of humankind and society, ranging from reasonable doubt to inspirational optimism. The distinction between figuration and abstraction in the various oeuvres proves irrelevant when seen from this perspective. What really matters are reflections on societal progress, varying from expressions of decline to progress, and all points between, in a visual idiom which, whether figurative or abstract, cannot be interpreted without ambiguity. Equally, many of the artists apply the post-medium condition to their oeuvre, no longer restricting themselves to one or a couple of specific mediums, but using several, from sculpture, film, text, light and sound to performance.

The immediately recognisable signature of the works of Atelier van Lieshout, with their abrasive balancing act on the line between utopia and dystopia, bears no resemblance to the far more aesthetic work of Tom Burr, who reflects on minimalism, social space, design and identity, and is also very distinct from the conceptual and social installations of the relatively young artist Kevin van Braak. And yet the work of these artists converges at the level of social criticism, with various questions being asked and positions being taken, extending from hope and courage, through pragmatism, to doubt and melancholy.

Social criticism unites all the selected artists, including those whose work appears at first sight to be purely aesthetic, such as Roger Hiorns, for example (transformative, ephemeral sculpture, Hypermaterialism), Wilhelm Mundt (beauty of decay, durability), Maria Roosen (harmonisation of forms and genders) and Tim Breukers and Eva Rothschild (delight in pure composition and re-examination of the meaning of form). Their works are connected in an ambiguous and metaphorical way to the complexity of the present day, and the pointer does not necessarily swing all the way to either hope or doubt. Even the oeuvre of the oldest participating artist, William Tucker, who defies the dividing line between figuration and abstraction, is interwoven with basic human emotions like love, longing and pain.

The highly figurative works of artists like Folkert de Jong and Jan van Oost focus less on explicit social criticism than on reflections on (art) history (De Jong) and on life and death (Van Oost), but in these oeuvres, too, thoughts on the human condition are overwhelmingly present.

Social criticism also applies within the works of a number of selected artists who are representatives of “expanded sculpture”: the installations of Feipel & Bechameil, with their architectural slant, and the performances and sculptures of Juliana Cerqueira Leite. The form of the criticism veers from melancholy (Feipel & Bechameil) to emancipation versus individual intimacy (Leite). In the conceptual sculptures of artists like Roger Hiorns and Daniel Roth, the terrain of actual social space shifts to a fictional social space, which constantly transforms, thereby prompting questions about our modern society, rather than assuming positions.

However, not all the works with a social character depict a holding pattern. The more sculpturally oriented works of Gabriel Lester or Arne Quinze are expressions of optimism with an emphasis on the positive mutual relationship between the artist as creator of social space and the participatory nature of those who experience (rather than merely view) the art. This artistic approach involves explicit social engagement.

Finally, most of the oeuvre of Ugo Rondinone, too, a returning participant in *Lustwarande*, is characterised by subtly expressed social criticism. While Rondinone generally presents a rather introverted, emotional and fragile perspective on the social world, this artist's new work for *Lustwarande '15*, reveals him as a representative of what might be called neo-primitivism: a sculptural artistic idiom that appears to be derived from the time when sculpture began. Rondinone's work evokes a spirituality of the first order and this work, so iconic of *Lustwarande '15*, can be interpreted as a hopeful expression of what the future may bring.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Opening hours: daily from sunrise til sunset

Opening hours box office: 11.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Entrance: Bredaseweg 441 (carpark Auberge du Bonheur) Tilburg

Free admission

Information guide with map: € 10 **Students:** 5 €

With donation: € 12,50 / 7,50

www.lustwarande15.nl

For further press information and photographs: info@fundamentfoundation.nl

