

# LUSTWARANDE

## Platform for Contemporary Sculpture

For immediate release

LUSTWARANDE 2023 - EARTHEATERS

27.08 - 22.10.2023

park De Oude Warande, Tilburg, Netherlands

Now that our lives are increasingly dictated by algorithms, while migration and famine are on the rise and very few people doubt the severity of the climate crisis, the realisation that we have entered a new era has descended upon us as a collective.

We are at the beginning of a geological period in which human actions have so much impact on the earth that all organisms, including humans themselves, are suffering the consequences. This new epoch, according to the philosopher Bruno Latour, who refers to it as the Anthropocene, calls for a reconsideration of humankind's distorted relationship with the planet. He explains this in *Facing Gaia* (2017), his stimulating collection of lectures. For Latour, the traditional dividing lines and oppositions between humans and animals, between culture and nature, no longer apply. His *Parliament of Things* is a remarkable example: in this parliament not only humans are represented, but also animals, plants and things.

In his book *Humankind* (2019), the Australian philosopher Timothy Morton goes a step further and asks: isn't it time for a critical examination of the concept of being human? Based on the awareness that the human body is composed of microbes, we might wonder if humans are not in fact symbiotic creatures. Like Latour, Morton no longer sees humans as the central point but as part of a complex and all-encompassing system that is made up of both living entities (humans, animals, plants) and non-living entities (earth, water, stone, fire, gas, temperature and digital data). This philosophical perspective is known as post-humanism.

Anthropocene thinking has much in common with the conceptual framework of a group of feminist philosophers that includes Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, Mel Y Chen and Stacy Alaimo. In her essay *Trans-corporeality* (2012), Alaimo put forward the term trans-corporeal, by which she refers to the fluidity and entanglement between living and non-living bodies. What is called for is a re-assessment of the idea of the body as an inert, self-contained entity. This term appeals to the imagination when we consider, for example, the fact that increasing quantities of microplastics are being absorbed into the human body. Living and non-living components are fusing irreversibly because of materials that we continuously dump into our environment, such as oil, plastic, hormones and chemicals. Every body, living or non-living, is subject to these toxic, invasive influences that cause it to evolve and mutate. The term 'trans-corporeal' not only relates to living creatures but also to larger systems such as climate change, and the increase in

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epidemics and environmental diseases can also be viewed from the trans-corporeal perspective.

Popular culture overwhelms us with ominous images of the future, ignoring the fact that this new era is not necessarily negative. It can also be seen as a point of origin for new constructions, from which we can learn lessons. The title *Eartheaters* refers to the increasing tendency to no longer exploit the planet mercilessly, but to adapt and feed ourselves to the rhythm of the earth. Eartheaters are one with the earth. The anthropologist Anna Tsing describes species that are able to grow in the most inhospitable industrial ruins as 'third nature' (*Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, 2017). In spite of – or as a result of – catastrophe, unexpected paths are emerging. Resilient entities are coming out of the shadows.

Art plays a prominent role in this knowledge process. The exhibition *Eartheaters* focuses on a young generation of international artists in whose work this post-humanist thinking occupies a central position. This post-humanist theme has, of course, been around for some time, with precursors going back to the 1970s, inspired by the thinking of the Club of Rome. Back in the late 1960s, this organisation was already expressing concern about the future of the world. The artists presented in *Eartheaters* reflect upon how art can relate to the new ecological reality. How can the boundaries of the terms 'nature' and 'living' be expanded? The artists want to deconstruct our deadlocked relationship with the world by creating mutated landscapes and creatures. Imagination, dark as it may sometimes seem at first glance, can truly shift and sharpen our perception of reality. It is not only their ideas that unite these artists, but also their work. Their oeuvres are characterised by an alienating but always fascinating visual idiom, in which materiality, recycling, technology, transformation, unpredictability and the fusion of the analogue and the digital play a key role.

*Eartheaters* brings together ten of these young, international artists. By presenting their new works in the 'natural surroundings' of the Oude Warande, art and the environment become closely entwined. The sculptures and installations are physical entities that merge seamlessly with the landscape in which they are presented. Within the context of the exhibition's theme, the relationship between the works and their surroundings is firmly underscored: a world in which nature and culture, organism and thing, physical and digital, are one entity.

Artists:

Leyla Aydoslu (DE, 1987)  
Matea Bakula (BA, 1990)  
Olivia Bax (SG, 1988)  
Giulia Cenci (IT, 1988)  
Léa de Cacqueray (FR, 1996)  
Nicolas Deshayes (FR, 1983)  
Jonathan van Doornum (NL, 1987)  
Tiril Hasselknippe (NO, 1984)  
Jan Hüskes (DE, 1991)  
Yein Lee (KR, 1988)

Curators: Chris Driessen (artistic director) & Isabelle Andriessen (artist)