**Attachment 1
Biographies of the artists and explanations of the art works**

 **MIKE BOUCHET** (°1970, US) uses a wide range of art forms (such as photographs, installations, sculptures and actions) to criticise political, cultural and economic systems and to define the role of the artist in society. While simultaneously deadly serious and hilarious, his work treads (and sometimes crosses) the thin line between art and life, fantasy and reality. The fine print and crafty details of our global consumer society are perhaps mind-boggling, but Mike Bouchet has learned to embrace them in his work. The artist has been researching consumer culture and its endless stream of products and images throughout his career. Another of the artist's favourite subject is urbanity/urbanisation, as seen in his floating house installation *Watershed* (Venice Biennale, 2009), a utopian attempt to promote the urban housing opportunities of water. His work has been exhibited at the Berlin Biennale (2006), Manifesta (2016) and in M HKA (Sanguine, 2018).
 *“Baroque is the total seduction of the viewer, by any means possible.’ (Mike Bouchet)*

 ***Energy Fog*, 2018 (new creation)**

Mike Bouchet is fascinated by the frequent use of smells in our society. Smells can be very intimate (e.g. associated with childhood memories or a loved one) but are also used to sell cars, for example, by implementing the 'new car' fragrance. Smell plays strongly on our subconscious mind, and can thus be used as an invisible director. Here, Bouchet 'overwhelms' us with the strong and highly artificial scent of Red Bull in the middle of a wooded area of the Middelheim Museum. Our noses are literally and figuratively pressed into the specific and confusing relationship between the natural and the artificial in the museum park. Bouchet sees the intertwinement of entertainment, experience and consumption in our present time as an outgrowth of the Baroque and the experiential art experience. At the same time, the bulls on the Red Bull cans symbolise taurine, the amino acid that provides the body with power and energy, but also refers to the animal as a symbol of masculine strength and fertility. And the bull irrevocably reminds us of the Minotaur, the half man, half bull, of Greek mythology and a recurring figure in the Baroque.

Commissioned advertising is full of hidden seducers. In that respect, Mike Bouchet's work is an interpretation of the Baroque 'art on commission' link. Many Baroque artists worked under the patronage of Church and sovereign. The Baroque artist wanted - much as the advertiser now - to seduce the public, but that is only possible if the public wants to be seduced and knows when it is being seduced. Otherwise, we are primarily being manipulated.

**MONSTER CHETWYND** (°1973, UK) interweaves interactive performances, sculpture, painting, installation and video into an oeuvre that contains elements of folk games, popular culture and surrealistic cinema. In her anarchist performances, we are confronted with a colourful parade of cultural references: from Dante to Karl Marx, from travesty acts to Star Wars. The artist constantly changes her stage name from Spartacus Chetwynd (2006-2013) to Marvin Gaye Chetwynd (2013-2018) to the current Monster Chetwynd. In her own words, she wants her work to be especially direct, romantic and engaged, which is why she often works with temporal and DIY materials such as found objects, photocopies, cardboard, paint and tape. Her performances and installations can be read as a rework of iconic moments from our shared cultural history. She often collaborates with her 'performance group' (colleague artists and friends), where spontaneity and improvisation are key concepts in her idiosyncratic oeuvre that steadily finds its way in museums, the public space and children's performances. Her work has been exhibited in New Museum (2012), Tate Britain (2013) and Bonner Kunstverein (2016).

***Folding House 2*, 2018 (Middelheim Museum version)***Folding House 2* is a new, weather-resistant version of *Folding House*, one of Chetwynd's largest sculptural installations. The work consists of a nomadic house, on the one hand a structure in recycled material that can be quickly assembled and transported and, on the other hand, some simple, futuristic-looking means of transport. In Baroque terms, the construction could also be a conservatory, a writer's hut or a ruin. The artist created the sculpture with found windows and the simplest metal framework structure. The cyclical movement of energy and recovered material use is especially essential for Chetwynd in both the sculpture and the accompanying performance *Free Energy Workshop*. The idea that led to the creation of this sculpture arose following a visit to the Rietveld Shröder House, where a system of sliding panels blurs the boundaries between inside and outside. We also witness the flexibility this creates mirrored in the accompanying moving, dysfunctional objects on wheels. Another of the artist's references is the playground, as a blank canvas for different forms of play and fantasy. In this respect, Chetwynd also sometimes compares the sculpture with an empty stage as a platform for play or performances. (at 1/6 in Antwerpen Centraal Station, then in the Middelheim Museum).

***Free Energy Workshop*, 2010 -2018 (performance)**
The *Free Energy Workshop* is an activist performance with a mechanical ballet, live music accompaniment and technical eco-enthusiasts! It is designed to be incoherent and multi-layered in the hope that the nervous energy that builds up during the performance can become a poetic metaphor. The concept is that energy is not created and is always passed on: by eating oatmeal, we can cycle and that drives a dynamo. Chetwynd questions the bystanders about the cycle of energy and the theorems of Nicola Tesla, in an imaginative and immersive spectacle with props and costumes made by the artist and her extensive entourage. (at 1/6 in Antwerpen Centraal Station)

***Pomegranate Promenade*, 2018 (new creation)**
Chetwynd developed a new performance especially for the *Experience Traps* exhibition according to the structure of a promenade, in which spectators in a Zorb (a large transparent plastic ball) are led by costumed artists along a tour of mini 'experience traps'. Stroll along the traditional paths of the former theatre gardens, where you are overwhelmed by Baroque stories and figures of epic proportions. The artist lets the spectator's imagination roam the avenues and wooded paths of Arcadia and Eden, while their body is controlled by Chetwynd and her colourful accomplices. (on 11/8, in the Middelheim Museum).

 **JEREMY DELLER** (°1966, UK) is a conceptual video and installation artist. He examines, inter alia, the function of cultural markers, such as uniforms, slogans or inscriptions – as symbols of identity and 'belonging' - in the public space. He is critical of our society, but never without humour. Much of his work begins with his collaboration with an audience and he deliberately undermines his own position as an artist with a significant artistic ego. He works as a curator, archivist, anthropologist, researcher and independent artist. Deller is mainly interested in the hidden social history of the mainstream audience. In his recent projects, Deller emphasises the cultural landscape of a specific place. He attempts to make sense of Anglo-Saxon culture by responding to local customs and histories, for example Stonehenge or The Battle of Orgreave. His work has been exhibited in Tate Britain (2001), Manifesta (2004) and New Museum (2009), among other places.

 ***Sacrilege*, 2012 (on loan)**

*Sacrilege* is, as a briefly visible 'object', perhaps an atypical work for this artist who is more famous for performances and long-term participatory projects he organises. The artist has long wanted to create an interaction between an audience and a large monumental work (*Sacrilege* measures 30m by 30m). Stonehenge is still a magnet for visitors. Unfortunately, the site has become a *tourist trap*, where the visitor is forced to follow a set route (which also leads past the gift shop). Since 1977, the site can only be viewed from a distance and you do not comprehend how large the stones really are. It is a cultural and spiritual world heritage that has been turned into a product, sold in our experience economy. For Deller, the social aspect of Stonehenge is crucial: it has been a place for meetings, ceremonies and festivities for centuries. With this 'sacrilege' he wanted to achieve an unexpectedly beautiful (or pleasant) project and experience.

 **SPENCER FINCH** (°1962, US) is best known for his ethereal lighting installations that demonstrate his knowledge of natural phenomena. His research into the nature of light, colour, memory and perception is expressed in drawings, video, photographs and spatial installations, which he uses to bring elusive concepts such as memory and perception to an audience's attention. The most famous example of this is his installation for the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York.

After measuring the light that naturally exists at a specific place and time using a colorimeter, Finch reconstructs the brightness of the location in an artificial way. For example, *Moonlight (Luna County, New Mexico, 13 July 2003)* replicates the exact light of the full moon that shone on 13 July 2003 in the desert of Luna County, New Mexico. His work speaks to both a scientific approach and a poetic sensitivity. He filters our observations through the lens of nature, history, literature and personal experience. His work has been featured in The High Line New York (2009), Venice Biennale (2014) and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (2015).

***Mars (Sunrise),* 2018 (new creation)**

This work is about a light condition that no one has ever seen. Based on measurements taken during the Pathfinder's unmanned mission to Mars, Spencer Finch accurately translated that data to produce the colour of that light to depict a sunrise on Mars. The artist creates a pattern of coloured light foils on the windows of the Gloriette building in the Middelheim Museum. The daylight is filtered precisely to match the CIE reading from the data from NASA. Despite the multicoloured pattern of filters on the glass, the overall light colour has a red-brownish hue due to the atmosphere and the reflection of the landscape on Mars.

According to the artist, the (perception of the) sun is probably the only thing that has never changed in history. Light is one of the most expressive forms of expressions employed by Baroque artists and is part of the naturalistic vocabulary, as used in Baroque landscape paintings. But light is also both a natural and a supernatural phenomenon that expresses the intervention of the divine.

 **WILLIAM FORSYTHE** (°1949, US) is a choreographer, known for his memorable productions with the Forsythe Company, and as the leader of the Frankfurt Ballet. He starts with the movement patterns typical in classical academic ballet, which he unravels and combines into new structures. His virtuoso technique is typical for his productions, interactions with objects in the scene, lighting design, electronic music and improvisation. For the last 10 years, Forsythe has been producing 'choreographic objects'. In doing so, he forces the viewer to become aware of his relationship to the work of art, through the suggestion or invitation of a physical interaction. His work has been exhibited in the MMK Frankfurt (2015), the Tate Modern (2009) and at the Venice Biennale (2009).
Forsythe was the first artist to accept the invitation to Experience Traps and also invited two other artists for the exhibition: Ryoji Ikeda and Spencer Finch.

 ***Debut,* 2018 (new creation)
*Circuit (hexagonal),* 2018 (new creation)
*Backwards (13, 5, 23, 7),* 2018 (new creation)
*Inversion*, 2018 (new creation)
*Towards The Diagnostic Gaze*, 2013 (Middelheim Museum version)
*Lectures From Improvisation Technologies*, 2011 (on loan)** *“In all cases, physical engagement is the means to understanding the actions to which each choreographic system refers. This is regarded as the first principle of the choreographic objects themselves.” (William Forsythe)*

In these 'choreographic objects', Forsythe works with instructions that influence or direct the behaviour of the spectator. He assigns tasks to the spectators for which they require both a mental and physical commitment. The instructions are often 'entanglements' that have a physical impact on the visitor's body. But, in his own view, it is not Forsythe nor the choreographic objects, but the spectator himself who imposes a choreography.

In the *Lectures From Improvisation Technologies*, Forsythe explains a number of basic rules of choreography. The artist also gives instructions here again, but more from the role of a teacher. The work seems to divide movement into the lines of a drawing or letters of a text and thus contributes to the 'visual literacy' of the spectators.

*“In the best case my works does not intend to choreograph the visitors; in fact the visitors choreograph themselves.” (William Forsythe)*

***Underall II / III*, 2018 (new creation)**

One of Forsythe's favourite themes is 'destabilisation', something that is avoided in classical ballet, but is now common fare in contemporary dance. *Underall II / III* is also a choreographic object and challenges the spectator to find and maintain his balance. To the artist, it is a metaphor for the turbulence of our current society, and our cognitive ability in dealing with it.

**GELITIN** (collective since 1993, AUT) is a collective consisting of four visual artists: Tobias Urban, Wolfgang Ganter, Florian Reither and Ali Janka. They changed the original name Gelatin, to Gelitin in 2005. Their work consists of installations in the tradition of 'relational aesthetics'. According to this theory, it is assumed that art must function as a social adhesive on a micro level because, within our Western individualistic society, people alienate themselves from each other. Gelitin garners inspiration from the Baroque: *“With us, everything revolves and unfolds as in the Baroque”*. Humour is never far away in their often participatory and/or performative works. They have exhibited at the Venice Biennale (2001), the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2005) and in the Fondazione Prada (2017).

***sculpture for sculpture park*, 2018 (new creation)**

*"Allowing ourselves to be engulfed by the earth has always fascinated us. But the clay pit in the Middelheim Museum is different: this is about the creation of a form. Everyone gives the previous form a new form." (Gelitin)*

Gelitin creates a temporary interactive clay pit for the museum. You may come play or work in this clay pit, as long as you leave the clay in the pit, and the next visitor is not denied his chance of creation. For the artists, the possibility to use their bodies is crucial and is a recurring theme in their work, which starts with taking off your shoes. Lockers are provided to deposit your clothes and you can rinse the excess clay from your body in the shower cabin.

*“Getting "immersed " always interested us, because you start to feel different as soon as you put your shoes off.” (Gelitin)*

 ***Arc de Triomphe,* 2003-2017 (on loan)**

Usually a triumphal arch is an architectural mark of honour, as a representation of power and victory, but Gelitin knows how to sabotage the phallic metaphor of power. They subject the monument to a highly relativistic and even disconcerting approach: here no idealised bodies, but the awkward, grotesque nature of human existence. As a contemporary memento mori, this triumphal arch bears witness to a conscious anti-aesthetic and is made from perishable materials such as plasticine and scrap wood. It also fits in with the tradition of Viennese art and cultural history, where Freud and his theories on the psychological aspects of sexuality have made his mark (e.g. his theories regarding shame). But the work may also be interpreted as a critical commentary on the numerous female nudes in the Middelheim Museum's collection (and countless other collections), or on the art world as a closed, purely self-serving circuit. *Arc De Triomphe* is not only a reflection on the male body, but also on the mental acrobatic contortions artists make to gain attention, but also those of a museum to draw attention to themselves. The yoga pose is also a nod to the 'special experience' that museums want to offer their visitors by organising yoga courses or jogging in the museum.

Its placement in the Middelheim Museum in juxtaposition to an existing stone arch in the park, produces a trompe-l'oeil or a perspective that lends depth and emphasises the continuity of the space.

**RYOJI IKEDA** (°1966, JP) is a visual artist, DJ, VJ and composer He works with the essential properties of sound and images, by using light and tones with mathematical precision. In turn, it produces a specific, ultra-sleek aesthetic. Ikeda's music consists mainly of sound in various 'rough states' such as sine tones and noise. He processes frequencies at the edge of the range of human hearing. This means that you can only hear the sound just as it disappears. He is a master in the development of immersive installations and live performances in which he successfully manipulates sound, image, physics and mathematics consistently and comprehensively. His work has been featured in, among other places, the Hamburger Bahnhof (2012), The Whitechapel Gallery (2015) and Centre Pompidou (2018).

 ***A (6ch version),* 2018 (on loan)**

In music, *A* stands for notes La and A4 for the diapason or pitch. Today, it has been internationally standardised for instrument building at 440Hz but, until the 19th century, that pitch had yet to be standardised. So, a La did not sound the same at different moments in time, nor at different places in the same time. The pitch of Handel's tuning fork (1751) from the Baroque era is 422.5 Hz. The fork used by Steinway & Sons to tune pianos in London from 1879 is 454.7 Hz. Therefore, A has never been precisely defined and still varies according to orchestra and/or country.

In the work *A (6ch version)*, you can hear a series of historical A base pitches that are divided over six points in the space via loudspeakers. The sound fills the entire space, without you being able to say exactly where it comes from. The sound patterns also vary depending on where you are in the space. Simultaneously, spectators and participants wander through an invisible “*sound ocean of the history of standardising the criteria in music.”*

**BERTRAND LAVIER** (°1949, FR) has been studying the relationship between painting and sculpture, the figurative and the abstract, life and art since the late 1960s. In order to shape his ideas, Lavier has devised a series of strategies to test our intellectual baggage and puncture our visual habits. His most famous intervention is to decorate ordinary utensils with a *paste-like* paint, which he calls 'the Van Gogh test'. Thus, an everyday object becomes art, a painted image of itself. The representation of reality happens, paradoxically enough, only when the original object has disappeared from our sight. Another strategy he pursues is stacking 2 objects in an absurd and associative way: the 'superpositions'. His work has been on display at Documenta Kassel (1982), Venice Biennale (1997) and Centre Pompidou (2012).

 ***Honda,* 2018 (Middelheim Museum version)**

The superposition of 2 existing objects make this sculpture a telltale work by Bertrand Lavier. To generate the feeling that something is not right, he destabilises our perception, with sculptures that appear eerily 'normal'. By placing an everyday garden instrument on a pedestal, he immobilises the tool and deprives it of its function. And by making this brush cutter inaccessible and unusable, he comments on our futile desire to keep nature under control.

 ***Fountain*, 2018 (Middelheim Museum version)**

With this disobedient bundle of garden hoses, Bertrand Lavier wanted to 'create a cheerful, optimistic work'. The fountain does not adopt a beautiful water goddess or a muscled sea god as its central figure, but rather a bundle of mass-produced, multi-coloured garden hoses with mismatching nozzles. For the artist, this work was created in the same spirit as the 'superpositions' through the typical unexpected combination of objects and techniques. This method aims to examine the traditional distinction between works of art, the ready-made and the everyday.  *Fountain* premiered in 2009 in the Baroque garden of the Villa Medici in Rome, later adorning the garden of Versailles (2009) and the garden of the Serpentine Sackler Gallery (2014) in London.

**LOUISE LAWLER (°1947, US)** started her career in the 1980s mainly with photographic works of art by other artists. She was interested in the way art was exhibited in private and public collections. Together with artists like Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger, she belongs to the 'Pictures Generation'. She later even took pictures of her own photographs in museums. She likes to play the art world against itself, but denounces in a gentle way. Lawler challenges the *powers that be* in the art world and criticises the glorification of art objects and the marketing of (usually male) artists. Her work has been exhibited in the MOMA (1987), at Documenta Kassel (2007) and the Stedelijk Museum (2010).

 ***Birdcalls*, 1972-1981 (on loan)**

In this sound art, Louise Lawler emphasises the issue of the dominance of the art world by white, Western men. The work lasts several minutes and we hear the artist herself transform the names her fellow artists, including Vito Acconci, Dan Graham, Ed Ruscha and Lawrence Weiner into bird sounds. Each name becomes a unique sound that responds to the phonetic character or the syllables of the name. Some names are often repeated and some are difficult to understand. An interesting aspect of the work is its presentation: it has been exhibited in a gallery context, but it was also published on an audio cassette by Tellus, an audio magazine you could order via post. Sound is the ideal medium to move freely through space, can be easily disseminated through networks and even outside the art world.

These artificial bird calls could also be found in the Baroque garden, where automatons could imitate certain bird sounds by utilising air pressure. The location where the work is exhibited, namely *Het Huis* (The House) of Robbrecht and Daem architects is a metal construction, with certain parts left as an open grid. The pavilion has often been associated by artists with a birdcage and offers the perfect location for this work.

**BRUCE NAUMAN (°1941, US)** has been pioneering in the field of electronic media, installations, video art, sculpture and neon works since the 1960s. Being human is central to Nauman's work, which he examines in a rigorous and systematic way. He does this with special attention to the organisation and control of (social) behaviour, empathy and attention, as well as the relationship of the human body with its environment. Even today, Nauman remains one of the most influential American artists and his work remains particularly relevant. His provocative approach remains an eye-opener: Nauman's wry humour and fascination with obsessive behaviour and frustration capture our zeitgeist of camera surveillance, social media excesses, experience economy, positioning and framing excellently. They act as an indictment against naivety and force introspection. Nauman is not interested in offering comfort, but the contrary. His work has been awarded numerous prizes and tributes and has been displayed in Kunsthaus Zurich (1995), Tate Modern (2004) and the Venice Biennale (2009).

 ***Diamond Shaped Room with Yellow Light*, 1986-1990/2018 (Middelheim Museum version)**

 *"The bright yellow light can dazzle you just as you enter. Colour and form are confusing. You don't want to stay in this room for very long." (Bruce Nauman)*

The *Diamond Shaped Room with Yellow Light* consists of 2 triangular concrete spaces separated by a central wall. A bright yellow light consumes the space, an element that often recurs in the artist's work. Nauman describes the space of this sculpture as inhospitable. But he places the work in such a striking location, namely in the middle of a path in the museum park, that you are spurred to enter the work. A conflicting situation awaits you: the effort you must make to enter the work is 'rewarded' with a disorienting experience. On the other hand, perhaps someone did the same. Yet real contact seems impossible. The environment is tightly controlled by the artist. He asks for our cooperation, but then allows precious little input from the visitor. The work seems like a trap, an *Experience Trap*. In this way, he confronts us with our hopes and expectations, and with the influence that we think we have or should have. The relationship of the human body to its environment, and the control of (social) behaviour are themes that are addressed in many of his works, and *Diamond Shaped Room* is directly related to other important works from the oeuvre (corridor pieces, etc.). But rarely can the viewer enter the work itself, and he/she is so intensely and experimentally immersed in the intentions and fascinations of the artist, as is the case here.

**RECETAS URBANAS**, since 2003, collective around the architect Santiago Cirugeda (°1971, ES)

The collective of architects and activists was founded in 2003 in Seville by architect Santiago Cirugeda. It has been demanding parts of the public space for twenty years, which they fill with participatory construction projects, always based on the necessity of residents/users. These are often cheap mobile constructions made of recycled material. The users themselves play a decisive role: from the design, to the building and maintenance thereafter. With the help of these "recipes for the city", citizens take matters into their own hands and assume their own urban responsibility. Such projects involve intensive periods of legal research, participation and technical preparations in a process of extensive consultation, general input and cooperation. Their projects have been exhibited in numerous cities in Spain, the Venice Biennale (2016) and at Art Basel (2018).

 ***Montaña Verde*, 2018 (new creation)**

At the invitation of the Middelheim Museum and the Green Service of the City of Antwerp, Recetas Urbanas created a green sculpture on the De Coninckplein in Antwerp. The project fits within the Experience Traps exhibition as an investigation into the possibilities and limitations of urban beautification projects and arc motifs, as well as from an interest in the plant species that were cultivated and used in the Baroque for their nutritious or healing qualities. In Rubens' time, city beautification projects were intended to present the city at its most beautiful. Architect Santiago Cirugeda and his colleagues want to 'get to know the heart of the Antwerp resident'. This artist also seeks to 'seduce', however, if the neighbourhood does not go along with this green romance, De Coninckplein will remain grey.

And unlike Rubens - who held all the strings of the project firmly in hand - Recetas Urbanas, in this hyper-diverse society, is searching for models of participation and expression in order to find out together with the residents whether they can contribute to the green quality of a town, and if so, how much.

**MONIKA SOSNOWSKA** (°1972, PL) initially studied painting but her paintings evolved into sculptural installations. Yet she sees her work as 3D paintings and views space as a medium to which she specifically tailors her works. In order to shape her spaces, Sosnowska acts as if she is assembling a rebus: she uses architectural elements such as doors, windows, floors, stairs and closures in select compositions, but strips these elements of their functional or formal properties. Her architectural structures seek a new dynamic abstraction and their impact is not only metaphorical but also directly influences our senses and emotion. In her largely form-based approach, there is always a subcutaneous tension tangible within the context of the work and the possible meanings.

*"I am especially interested in the moments when architectural space begins to take on the characteristics of mental space." (Monika Sosnowksa)*

The physical and mental references to modernism and East Block architecture are never far away. By transforming the physical space into a mental space, she plays with the conventions of the viewer's perception. Her work has been exhibited in the Serpentine Gallery (2005), MOMA (2006) and the Venice Biennale (2007), among other places.

 ***Stairs*, 2018 (new creation)**

***Fence*, 2010 (on loan)**

The work *Stairs* is a twisted metal staircase sculpture that you discover in an open area in the forest, as an abstract flower or as the cosmic rays of a black sun. It appears to be a silent witness of a forgotten civilization or a different culture. This contemporary ruin transposes the mind of the spectator to another time and the absence of any other traces is alienating. The most important characteristic for the Baroque in the ruin's theme is the passage of time and the people who disappear. The reference to the transience of time is an oft-revisited theme in Baroque works: "memento mori" - remember that you are mortal.

We see the same theme and interpretation in the sculpture *Fence*. Both are works in which the artist evokes something mysterious from the cold material. The works are a relic of something familiar, from something we recognise – but that is not embodied in reality, only in our memory. Our ability to process the present as a clear point in history is disrupted. We think we understand the present as a continuation of time and history that we understand only vaguely. The present repeats itself infinitely as a continuous process of disappearance.

 ***Untitled*, 2008 / 2018 (Middelheim Museum version)**

Despite the 'hard' materials such as steel and concrete from which it was made, this work has a poetic character. It appears as a stilled, frozen fountain whose tight contours contrast with the classical sculptures that surround the work. The brutish materials seem to be plucked from a construction site. On the other hand, this immobile fountain also holds the suggestion of movement, thanks to the still visible liquid property of concrete, and causes disruption in an idyllic piece of the museum park (one which seems to react to the omnipresent images with a considerable sense of drama). Just as with *Fence* and *Stairs*, the work can be interpreted as a ruin or a sign of the times. The sculptures tower and wring and open new perspectives and routes with their dysfunctionality.

 **ADRIEN TIRTIAUX** (°1980, BE) is trained as an architect. He often uses interaction and/or public participation to realise or complete his projects. He works as both an autonomous artist and in the collective HOTEL CHARLEROI that he founded in 2009. With his installations and constructions, he attempts to establish a relationship with the environment and to intervene on its behalf. His sculptures often take architectural forms, he tries not to make a functional intervention but to achieve a potential new (mental) connection. His work has been exhibited at Manifesta (2008), IKOB (2014) and Martha Herford (2017).

 ***Heaven and Earth,* 2018 (new creation)**

The sculpture *Heaven and Earth* was created by pouring concrete into an excavated pit or mould so that the texture of the earth remains visible and becomes part of the work. Tirtiaux chose not to design a sculpture, but to allow it to emerge as a result of the connection between the earth and the view towards the heavens. It was this spatial relationship that interested the artist in Baroque architecture. As a result of the Copernican revolution, a new fascination with the feeling of infinity arose at that time. In 1514, the astronomer Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) introduced heliocentrism: the earth revolving around the sun. This in turn piqued artists' interest in space, time and light. Somewhere, this sculpture certainly also refers to the myth of the round pantheon-like room in the house of Peter Paul Rubens, for which no physical evidence has ever been found.

*“Baroque compositions are exemplary for those like me, who like to reflect on systems of power through architecture and urbanism. In designs such as St Peter’s Square in Rome or the Viennese Belvedere, the control ambitioned by the Church or the State is expressed by a centralized and enclosed space, yet open to the infinite through dramatized openings on the city and the sky. This is the kind of spatial articulation that I’m interested in when I conceive an exhibition or a site-specific installation.” (Adrien Tirtiaux)*

**DENNIS TYFUS** (°1978, BE) produces drawings, no choice tattoos, paintings, screen prints, posters, record covers, music at a frenetic pace, which he distributes through his own label *Ultra Eczema*. He is more interested in works of art that do not look like traditional works of art and that can circulate more freely. Tyfus needs variety: boundaries, fear and limitations are, in his opinion, the greatest enemy of art. His unique style is impossible to pin down but is characterised by a self-organising attitude both in relation to the contemporary art world and in relation to popular culture. His work can be seen in BePart (2010), The Zone (2014) and M HKA (2016).

*"There are so many things that make Baroque attractive: its luxuriance and movement, its unique gardens, the architecture in which it nestles, the greed as well, especially when I tap a fork against a plate in the morning. Then she wags and drools that it is a sweet delight. The fact that she hears about eight times as well as most people also means that we should not play the music to which she is so attached - Jean-Baptiste Lully, to name but one - too loudly..." (Dennis Tyfus)*

***De Nor*, 2018 (new creation)**

Dennis Tyfus regularly collaborates with an amalgamation of artists and musicians from a fixed place in the city, which moves according to the availability of a particular building. In places such as *Gunther* or around *city limits,* intense collaborative projects with famous national/international or totally unknown artists take shape in meetings, performances and concerts. Dennis Tyfus sees this aspect as inherently linked to his artistic practice. *De Nor* is one of those places of encounter, which has been organised within an institutional context for the first time. *De Nor* is a travelling theatre with a bar that will take up temporary residence on the border of the Middelheim Museum and the public space. It is a theatre where several of Tyfus' activities merge: music, paintings, drawings, marathon dance performances. etc. Dennis Tyfus provides/improvises an offering in *De Nor* on Friday evenings during the exhibition period of *Experience Traps*. At other times, *De Nor* is a sculpture, a platform that invites activity or encounter.

 **ANDRA URSUTA** (°1979, RO) fashions installations and sculptures that are a personal homage to history and her youth in Romania - coloured by occult folk traditions and nationalist propaganda. She processes these stories in a personal, anarchistic way in her work. Although the subjects she examines, such as domestic violence, nuclear bombs, ethnic cleansing and violence against women are often dark and morbid, she always manages to offer an ironic twist. She exposes subcutaneous systems of power and control that invisibly survive the test of time. Her work has been exhibited in MOMA PS1 (2013), Kunsthalle Basel (2015) and New Museum (2016).

 *"What intrigues me most about the Baroque is its artificiality; an ultra-ordered picture of the world that was imposed on the real world. Underneath it, all manner of things bubbled up: follies and excess. Baroque art is about man's impotence to satisfy his imagination. There is a lot of darkness in Baroque. It is no coincidence that scientific concepts like the vacuum (a space with no matter and pressure) originate from the Baroque period." (Andra Ursuta)*

 ***Scarecrow*, 2015 (on loan)**Painted in pistol grey, *Scarecrow* is a political commentary on the assembly of an emblematic stuffed toy eagle on a basketball pole. The eagle spreads its wings and evokes associations with national symbolism (e.g. on flags) with the form language of sport and play, but this game cannot be played. The sculpture rather intends to activate our mind through its quirky combination of symbols and meanings.

 *“Scarecrow resembles the goal post of an unknown urban sport (it has been described as a basketball hoop for a game that cannot be won, because it can't be played), a billboard, and also a barrier that simultaneously attracts and blocks outsiders. Despite its current political overtones, I think it resonates with the notion of landscape as social platform, or even as a tool for social control.” (Andra Ursuta)*

 ***Natural Born Artist*, 2012 (on loan)**Like *Scarecrow*, this sculpture is a toy stripped of its functionality. It is a trompe-l'oeil, the illusion of something that is not there in reality. A pair of double swing seats with gaping toilet-like openings hangs from an abstract construction made of rough concrete elements, like the fragments of an Eastern European monument. A child's harness that should be soft, cheerful and inviting is hard and forbidding. The sculpture is no longer a utensil; you cannot participate. As a spectator you are simultaneously in the physical and the mental space of the work, without ever coinciding with it. This swing evokes the unhindered outpouring of something other than imagination: " a burst of excretory forces", in the words of Georges Bataille, which the theoretician would rather call "the origin of art".

 ***Nose Job*, 2013 (on loan)**In a perfectly ordinary wheelbarrow, lies a gigantic white marble nose. The broken off nose is reminiscent of the remains of an antique statue or a splinter of a battered socialist monument at the end of the 1980s. *Nose Job* is a mobile sculpture that speaks of the continual rewriting of history through gestures of iconoclasm and destruction. Its positioning in this part of the garden of the Middelheim Museum, whose construction is inspired by the Rubens Garden, also exposes Rubens' love for ancient Roman sculptures that he collected and traded (according to myth, he even had a pantheon-like round room in his house).

 **ULLA VON BRANDENBURG** (°1974, DE) is inspired by literature, theatre and psychoanalysis, but also through play, magic and spirituality. In her work, she weaves all these elements and works consistently with the elements and codes of the theatre. She continually draws inspiration from the way in which theatre and performance art have brought cultural and social issues to the fore throughout the ages, in order to investigate the unspoken rules of our contemporary society. Her work haunts you: the people, objects and locations that appear in her silvery 16mm films, installations and faded watercolours seem to infect your thoughts. Ulla breathes new life into ancient theatrical forms such as the tableau vivant, the Greek tragedy or the absurdist theatre of Samuel Beckett. All her works dispatch the viewer to a sphere of theatrical tension between illusion and reality. Her work has been displayed in Tate Modern (2007), the Venice Biennale (2009) and in Palais de Tokyo (2012).

 ***Le Soleil te regarde*, 2018 (new creation)**

Sculpture:

Like the Baroque garden, the theatre uses devices such as a perspective and trompe-l'oeil to create illusions. The outdoor sculpture theatre of von Brandenburg is a personal and abstract encounter between the sea and the sky in a typical and refined use of material such as textiles and planks. An ingenious theatre machine allows the spectator to manipulate the sea. This is a personal interpretation of Baroque theatre where, according to the artist, sailors were the one who, once on land, manipulated the ropes and canvases.

*“Obviously, because theatre is a way of travelling with the mind, we should remember that it was*

*the sailors who, with their knowledge of machinery, worked in the theatres when they were on land. I would like to create a scene made of sails, half theatre, half boat, landed far from the sea on a grassy place, on which the stage backdrops are like the sails of a ship.” (Ulla von Brandenburg)*

Performance:

The performance by Ulla von Brandenburg and Benoît Resillot was created for the sculpture theatre in the Middelheim Museum and is based on the book *‘Les États et Empires de la Lune’* by the French writer Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac ([1619](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/1619) –[1655](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/1655)). This 17th century libertine developed an extraordinary imagination, influenced by the philosophical and scientific discoveries of his time. The language he writes is continually reinvented, the senses and sounds are constantly being renewed; he finds his freedom and open mind in constant motion. Von Brandenburg and Resillot make this Baroque dreamer the permanent inhabitant of this sculpture theatre in a phantom story with strange memories of a journey to the moon, laced with Latin hymns, improvisation but always remains true to the theatrical principles of the Baroque (such as only utilising the front stage).