

# BEAU FORT 21

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DIE VERDAMMTE SPIELEREI  
SAÂDANE AFIF  
NELAERTS  
GERT VERHOEVEN

27 May – 7 November 2021  
Art Triennial by the Sea

EN

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## INTRODUCTION

From 27 May until 7 November 2021, the Belgian Coast will host the seventh edition of Beaufort. Once again, the Triennial will bring you contemporary art with a view of the sea. And like in 2018, Heidi Ballet will be taking on the role of curator. Her selection of artworks illustrates the impact of water on the history of our coastline.

And for the very first time, all ten seaside resorts will be taking part. All in all, twenty-one works of art will be on display across the promenade, in the dunes, on the beach and in the hinterland. Even the bottom of the sea will form part of the public space, a first in Beaufort's history!

The contemporary art by the sea Triennial is a free event that is open to everyone and is aimed at lovers of culture, residents, domestic and foreign tourists and people with a second residence at the Belgian Coast.

With its selection of qualitative works that can also be integrated into the public space in the long term, the arts project gives the Belgian Coast an international cachet. What's more, the past six editions of Beaufort have yielded a permanent sculpture park numbering some thirty works, dotted all along the coastline.

As the Beaufort sculpture park is a popular cultural attraction all year round, the festival contributes to the vision that the Belgian Coast is increasingly becoming a holiday destination for all seasons.

**Sabien Lahaye-Battheu, Deputy for Tourism and Chair of Westtoer**

## THE CONCEPT

Beaufort 21 is pervaded by social momentum. Now that the limits of the ecosystem have come into full view, we are being increasingly confronted with our limitations as human beings. The dominant image of man standing atop the pyramid of creation no longer applies, and a turning point in our attitudes about nature has become imperative.

Confronted with a rising sea level, the changed relationship with nature is most clearly expressed on the seacoast. While the high-rises along coast raise the question 'how have human beings changed the coast?', Beaufort reverses the roles and the question becomes 'how has the coast changed human history?'. This perspective of modest influence seems even more appropriate after a year of global pandemic. In Beaufort 21, the works of art enter into dialogue with their environment and they take a fresh look at familiar locations, with above all natural history taking pride of place.

The history of the entire greater region is closely interwoven with the North Sea. For example, the tide is present in the very name 'Vlaanderen', derived from the Germanic 'flaumaz', which means 'inundation' because between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> century the coastal area was flooded twice a day. The bilingual county of Flanders thus received its name from the perspective of the sea. In addition, the development of Bruges and later Antwerp into metropolises is primarily due to maritime trade. From Norway, the Baltic states or Italy, the North Sea brought us not only knowledge and prosperity, but also art forms from the Renaissance which the Flemish artists then further developed.

At the same time, the North Sea is one of the most unpredictable seas in the world. It developed 'only' 8000 years ago, after the riverscape Doggerland was deluged by a tsunami. Its capricious character is forever chiselled in the name 'Ostend', the 'Eastern end' of the peninsula of Testerep, which in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was partially swallowed up by the sea during a heavy storm.

In line with this focus during Beaufort 21, the public space is being expanded to include the seabed. Remains of ships that sank to the bottom of the sea during storms and wars have recently received greater acknowledgement as a part of our cultural heritage. By analogy with the heroic war monuments on land, these shipwrecks form new underwater memorials that tell different stories of humanity on the coast. They reveal elements from our history which generally get little attention and facilitate a more precise and complete narrative. Just think of The Horse Market, an undersea munition dump from WW I that constitutes a toxic threat for our ecosystem and demonstrates parallels with the darkest moments of colonial history.

The exhibition strives to approach the present period historically. Our look at the past is pervaded with one-sided concepts and old-fashioned ideas. A perspective where many voices are missing, however, and where man imagines himself supreme. The works of art allow effaced voices to be heard, with attention for everything that lives, and within a growing realisation of the vulnerability of human beings in the ecosystem. The sculptures of Beaufort 21 constitute memorials of a different kind, better suited to the current age.

**Heidi Ballet – curator Beaufort 21**

## HEIDI BALLETT, CURATOR BEAUFORT 21

Heidi Ballet (born in 1979 in Hasselt, Belgium) works from Brussels and Berlin as an independent curator. In 2017, she curated the Lofoten Biennial (LIAF) in Norway in collaboration with Milena Hoegsberg under the title *I Taste The Future*, and in 2016 she curated the series of exhibitions *Our Ocean, Your Horizon* in Jeu de Paume in Paris and the musée d'art contemporain (CAPC) in Bordeaux, working with artists Edgardo Aragon, Guan Xiao, Patrick Bernier & Olive Martin and Basim Magdy. In the same year she also curated *The Morality Reflex*, a group exhibition in the Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre (CAC). Between 2013 and 2015, she worked as a research curator for the *After Year Zero* exhibition in the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin (2013) and the Museum for Modern Art in Warsaw (2015). In 2012, she was assistant curator of the Taipei Biennial and before that worked from 2008 to 2012 as gallery director for Jan Mot in Brussels.

## THE ARTWORKS

### DE PANNE

#### **Laure Prouvost (FR)**

##### ***Touching To Sea You Through Our Extremities, 2021***

"Female, noun. Slimy, liquid, kneadable. 9 brains, 8 tentacles, has 3 hearts and blue blood. Elegant, can shoot ink, to cook and to write. Transparent. Grey-brown. Very powerful. Brain on a platter." That's how Laure Prouvost describes the octopus in her *Legsicon*, published for her solo exhibition *Am-Big-You-Us Legsicon* in the M HKA two years ago. Prouvost remains fascinated by this sea creature, which shows up regularly in her videos, sculptures, (sound) installations and performances.

A gigantic specimen washes up on the beach of De Panne. Her tentacles symbolise how Prouvost - who also washed up in multilingual Belgium - had to manoeuvre amongst the different cultures and forms of communication. She spreads her tentacles over the sand and cautiously explores the environment with her suckers. She points you the way with a telescope in hand. No less than sixty percent of the octopus' intelligence resides in her tentacles. Her thoughts, palpations and movements fuse together. Synaesthesia, the ability to link one sensory impression to a different sensory impression, constitutes her greatest strength *and* survival strategy. This tactility also finds its way into Prouvost's oeuvre. She often addresses the viewer directly with a brief maxim, thus immersing you in a special sensorial environment.

Moreover, with a humorous wink Prouvost compares the octopus with human 'ways of coping': the octopus holds a plug and other working instruments firmly in her tentacles, which are grown over with mussels and breasts. As well as a boot of one of the riders of the artwork *Men* by Nina Beier on the breakwater in Nieuwpoort.

Location: Beach zone nearby Leopold I Monument, Leopold I Esplanade, 8660 De Panne

*This work of art was created thanks to the support of Bronsatelier, Zottegem.*

#### **Michael Rakowitz (US)**

##### ***Cast Away, 2021***

Michael Rakowitz is a sculptor - but not in the classical sense. "Sculpture is about performance - the projection of a magical significance onto objects," he says. "For example, memories often attach themselves to objects around us. Can we ever free them from one another?" For Beaufort he explores the history of Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of the Allied troops from Dunkirk in May 1940, after an attack by the German army. As a result of Operation Dynamo the Belgian army surrendered, and thousands of Belgian soldiers became prisoners of war.

During Operation Dynamo, the HMS Wakeful, an English ship that was bringing 640 Allied soldiers to the English coast, was torpedoed. Today the ship, a war grave on the Belgian seabed, is recognised as a protected underwater heritage site.

Rakowitz invited the Belgian population to choose an object to which a painful war story is attached and give it to him. In this way he seeks to initiate a new phase in the memory process. On the other side of the Channel, as part of England's Creative Coast, Rakowitz already made a statue in which he processed the traumatic objects of an Iraq veteran. Rakowitz is integrating the Belgian objects into a new anti-war memorial which will one day end up at the bottom of the sea as well due to the rising sea level. In doing so, he mirrors the Jewish ritual Tashlich, in which worshippers throw stones or breadcrumbs into an ocean, river or other stream. At the beginning of the new year, each piece of bread or stone symbolises a personal lapse that the thrower wishes to atone for, and a commitment to the work of holding oneself accountable. Just like Tashlich, the sinking of Rakowitz's 'new shipwreck' can signify a moment of reflection and healing for the Belgians.

During the production process Rakowitz already looked ahead to the future of this 'new shipwreck'. By making a sculpture according to the production method of artificial coral reefs, he anticipates that the artwork will develop into a new biotope on the seabed. On land, the traumas of the war continue to be experienced in the memories of relatives and loved ones, while the wrecks at the bottom of the sea are transformed into a new haven for algae and underwater creatures: a compost, however troubled, upon which new life can grow.

Location: beach area across from Hotel Escale, Zeedijk 73, 8660 De Panne

## **Els Dietvorst (BE)**

### ***Windswept, 2021***

While walking along the coast of Ireland, Els Dietvorst discovered how the wind forces the trees slightly on their knees. These bending trees are known to the local population as 'shrugs'. Intrigued by their form, Dietvorst collected various washed-up pieces of driftwood. After two years of gathering, together with a local craftsman she fashioned a new, downward-bending tree. You can see the assembled pieces of wood, just like its original, as a shelter of fortune. Under the curved branches, passers-by find protection against rain showers or heavy winds. Because the wood branches are very fragile, Dietvorst created a bronze counterpart for Beaufort. In this way she refined the washed-up pieces of wood into a place of safety.

In this way, *Windswept* takes its place within the socially-engaged oeuvre of the artist. Since the 1990s Dietvorst has picked up stories, elements or figures that often escape the eye of society as the raw material for her art. The form orients itself - just like the tree - to the situation: with drawings, sculpture, video, performance, theatre or installation, Dietvorst deploys a wide array of media. Her work is a vehicle for communication between public and environment, and herewith leans closely on Joseph Beuys' 'Soziale Skulptur'. The artwork is never the end goal per se, but a way to create interaction between different groups of society. With *Windswept* she immortalises the idea of vulnerability by means of the newly-assembled tree.

Location: Strandzone aan de Trumelet Faberstraat, 8670 Oostduinkerke

*This work of art was created thanks to the support of Art Casting, Oudenaarde*

## **Heidi Voet (BE)**

### ***White Dwarfs and Supergiants, 2021***

What position do we occupy in our cultural, historical and cosmic environment? The question runs like a leitmotif through the work of Heidi Voet. In playful, monumental installations and performances, she places everyday objects in a new relation to one another. Thus also in *White Dwarfs and Supergiants*. In the dunes of Koksijde she distributes a large number of coloured, concrete-cast balls. Whoever looks closely can distinguish the beach balls, golf balls or beach volleyballs by the imprint of their seams, textures and materials. You can thus symbolically link each ball to a specific social group in our society - from the golfing businessman to children playing on the beach.

But whoever zooms out and sees this work in its entirety recognises a different constellation. The artist calculated the configuration of the starry sky above Koksijde at the closing hour of Beaufort's last day - and the placement of the balls reflects the position of these stars. Each ball reveals itself to be a star. The title *White Dwarfs and Supergiants* also refers to the evolution in the life of two types of stars. The 'White Dwarf' is a small, very dense older star that is at the end of its life and slowly dying out. The young 'Supergiant', by contrast, has the greatest luminosity, but burns out most quickly in its brief life. In relation to the immeasurable scale and time dimension of the star system, the visitor comes into contact with his own limitations. As the fossilised remains of a



contemporary culture, the concrete balls confront us with the limitations of social structures and point to the place of the individual in a large symbiotic ecosystem.

Location: Dunes at the end of Goede Aardelaan, 8670 Koksijde

*This work of art was created thanks to the support of BeTom-Design and Aeros.*

**Goshka Macuga**

***Family Module, 2021***

In 1968 the Argentine artist Oscar Bony had a family pose as a 'living sculpture' on a pedestal. With the performance, entitled *La Familia Obrero* (the working-class family), the family earned more than their monthly social security benefit. Entirely in the spirit of May '68, Bony was criticising the double standards of a government which claimed to value the family as the cornerstone of society, yet did nothing to help the working-class poor.

Fifty years later, *La Familia Obrero* inspired Goshka Macuga to a similar examination. On the basis of a photo of Bony's performance, she made a monumental sculpture in concrete, floating between figuration and brutalist abstraction. The life-size model for this sculpture was originally produced for an exhibition in Warsaw. In this context, she commented on the efforts of right-wing groups in Macuga's homeland of Poland to popularise Christian and traditional family values and ban any form of diversity from society.

It is these groups which today govern in Poland and actively attack the right to abortion, members of the LHBTQIAP+ community or critical artists. *Family* protests the erasure of vested human rights in favour of a single model for society: the family. In broad-minded societies the idea of the family has been expanded to embrace many forms of family that are not heteronormative, represented in this image.

In Nieuwpoort the monument receives an extra layer of significance. On the market square a commemorative plaque pays tribute to Jeanne Panne and other women who were accused of witchcraft in the seventeenth century. These were above all women who did not accept the role that the patriarchy had in store for them: that of a good housewife raising children. The image emphasises the permanent threat of a return to an oppressive traditional concept of the family.

Location: Paul Orban Promenade at Mauritspark, 8620 Nieuwpoort

**Maarten Vanden Eynde (BE)**

***Pinpointing Progress, 2021***

How do you measure progress? Is bigger always better and smaller always more powerful? Is human intervention always necessary, or do we evolve in any case? And is progress always a good thing? These are the questions being asked in Maarten Vanden Eynde's *Pinpointing Progress*. In this sculpture he links several modern achievements with one another. At a certain moment, buses, mopeds, bicycles and radios were regarded as the most advanced technology. In the twentieth century these inventions were proudly exported by both the West and the USSR. It was a race to be the most advanced, which would confirm the superiority of an ideology. This sculpture was originally made for the Biennial of Riga in 2018, where today only the tiniest, uppermost item of the spear is produced, the transistor. In this way, Vanden Eynde's tower visualises the speed of evolution.

The construction of *Pinpointing Progress* refers to the town musicians of Bremen, the folk tale of the Brothers Grimm, in which four ageing and mistreated domestic animals join forces in order to escape from their wicked masters. The story attests to the poor working conditions and abuses that often seem to be the flip side of progress. Just think of the building works that Leopold II realised along the Belgian coast, such as the port of Zeebrugge, the coastal road and the station of Ostend. This king, whose misdeeds are

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amongst the worst atrocities in history, turned the coast into a region enjoying a global reputation. However, he accomplished this using the wealth he accumulated by exploiting the Congolese population. Today when we think of technological progress, we imagine the developments of tech giants such as Google or Apple, which in their quest for mineral ores in Congo still make use of child slavery. Violations of human rights appear to be indissolubly linked to modernisation. *Pinpointing Progress* cautiously draws up the balance and understands: one day, the Tower of the Progress might collapse again.

Location: Square next to the town hall, Marktplein 8, 8430 Nieuwpoort

**Oliver Laric**

***Metamorphosis, 2021***

At first sight Oliver Laric's oeuvre appears to be oriented towards the contemporary perpetuation of traditional sculpture. One of his long-term projects is the website [threedescans.com](http://threedescans.com) where he posts digital scans of sculptures and objects for which the copyright has expired. As a result, everyone can use the scans of the original image and print them out in 3D. However, his practice is more complex.

Laric seeks new forms of hybridity and variation that emerge during the distribution of objects and images. He seeks to escape from the rigid terms that define the idea of authenticity and authorship and looks at creations that are made in the grey zones of interpretation. 'Morphing', the physical transformation that a character goes through, is a recurrent theme in his videos, installations and sculptures. The calculations of a computer algorithm ensure a flowing transition and countless new designs can be created.

In Middelkerke, *Metamorphosis* shows the transformation from a normal toad, or European toad, to a table. Laric thoroughly unravels this transformation. Each phase of transformation is an image in itself, of equal weight and importance. Laric is interested here in the idea of identity and its complexity and ambiguity. Throughout history, the borders between man and woman, animal and human being, have been clearly delimited. In various cultures undefined, grey zones were regarded as the zone where monsters are born, such as in Ovid's Latin poem *The Metamorphoses* dating from 8 AD. Laric, by contrast, is looking precisely for the non-binary, for porous borders and transformations. In his works, many human and non-human forms appear intertwined with one another, which explicitly undo the superiority of the human. By depicting new figures that are less defined by categories, Laric makes room for a new relationship of mutual dependency, which explicitly undo the superiority of the human.

Location: Beach area at the end of Flandriaan, 8434 Middelkerke

**Raphaela Vogel (DE)**

***There Are Indeed Medium-Sized Narratives, 2021***

Vogel's various artistic practices glue together media that at first sight appear to be opposed: objects, sculptures, collages, paintings, videos and music. She calls up dream-like landscapes that tell anything but a clear, linear story. With much humour and lightness, her sculptures pose questions about grand ideologies such as imperialism or colonialism. In a time where public sculptures are being intensely discussed around the world, Vogel clears the way for what she calls 'medium-sized narratives'. It is the answer to two discourses: the oft-criticised grand narratives that you see depicted in monuments, and the micropolitics which proceed on the assumption that you can change the world by starting with yourself. As a compromise between the two discourses she places the medium-sized narratives: the ideal successors for the dusty, outmoded ideologies that today are long past their sell-by date.

Vogel plays with the ancient motif in art history where two animals must offer protection to an element that they surround symmetrically and so must ward off evil. For Beaufort

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Vogel chose two giraffes. They try to make themselves look bigger by standing on ordinary refrigerators and using them as a pedestal. With their unthreatening character and their slogan that calls for acknowledging medium-sized narratives, they introduce a new type of monument, without glorification, better suited to the present age.

The giraffes appear to refer to Testerep, the island that lay off the coast and from which Ostend ("East-end") derives its name. As of the fifteenth century the tongue of land was inundated and submerged by the North Sea. Today washed-up fossils still attest to the former human and animal activity. Whether giraffes actually foraged on Testerep is (still) unknown. Vogel leaves that question entirely to the viewer's rich imagination.

Location: Beach area at the end of Louis Logierlaan, 8430 Middelkerke

**Rosa Barba (IT)**

***Pillage of the Sea, 2021***

Since time immemorial, 'cairns' have graced our landscape. They crop up as piled-up stones; small towers as handy anchor points for lost hikers. They have a spiritual significance in various cultures. Above all in Japan they are seen as ceremonial or sacred places for reflection. Standing before the balancing stones, the individual acknowledges being at the mercy of nature and quietly whispers his wishes to it. In Ostend Rosa Barba has anchored such an outsized cairn. She imitates the stones by casting concrete in textile: a technique that promises flexibility for the architects and designers of tomorrow. The textile makes one think of the form of sandbags, with which Barba creates a type of imaginary barrier against the future rise in the sea level.

Each stone symbolises a city whose fate is threatened by climate change. World cities like Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Rio de Janeiro, Miami, Jakarta and Chennai are represented by a stone whose size corresponds to the number of people who live there. The position of each city in the tower reflects the actual altitude of the place, and shows the relation to the steadily rising sea level. For example, Amsterdam already lies two metres below the current sea level. The title references the poetess Emily Dickinson. The sight of the sea struck her dumb, literally robbing her of her words. At the same time it calls up an impossible image of a plundering of the sea, which belongs to no one.

Over the years *Pillage of the Sea* will gradually be submerged by the water. The sculpture forms a visual yardstick for climate change, while the ebb and flow of the tides determine how much of the artwork is visible at any given moment. With this work Rosa Barba reminds us to acknowledge our vulnerability and to revere nature.

Location: Beach at the end of Vergeet-mij-nietjes-laan, 8400 Mariakerke

*This work of art was created thanks to the support of Furnibo and Enjoy Concrete.*

**Monokino (BE)**

***Cracks & Crumbles, 2021***

Over the past year as a result of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement the debate on colonial monuments has heated up once again. Activists poured buckets of red paint over statues or sprayed graffiti on them. Their actions reopen colonial history and question the idea of an immutable past. Impressive monuments and buildings glorify an illustrious history, as a result of which it sometimes appears to be literally carved in stone. In this way they tell unilateral, problematic versions of our national history.

For Beaufort, the Ostend nomadic film and art collective Monokino is seeking a different perspective. Where the statues in the city look down on us from above, Monokino turns the gaze around. In collaboration with a number of artists, we put the grand narratives of history into question by creating a personal, intimate microperspective. Film, as an everyday medium, offers greater recognisability than statues, which appear more alienating (or even alien). How does this film and visual culture then and today define our (colonial) imaging? In what alternative way can these media transmit knowledge today?

At various locations in the city, the invited video artists display a different vision of our shared past. Monokino is deconstructing the concrete foundations of the static monuments and buildings via a fluid, multi-voiced approach in moving images. Just as in the practice of the Monokino collective, in each case here dialogue wins out over monologue: in the film programme, conversations are held with filmmakers, writers and opinion makers from different strata of society in order to stimulate contemporary reflection on this history. Via the light of the film projector, Monokino puts into question the shadows cast by the monuments.

Full programme at [www.beaufort21.be](http://www.beaufort21.be)

Starting point and route map: De Grote Post

## BREDENE

### **Nicolás Lamas (BE)**

#### ***Unstable Territories, 2021***

Two pieces of reflective material are processed in the sculpture of Nicolás Lamas. He cut out the contours of the European map and assembled the parts so as to form a standing sculpture. Cartographers often degrade precisely these waters to a kind of 'emptiness' or 'space to be filled': they take second place to the land areas described in detail. They divide up terrain, mark borders and thus frequently also 'property'. By contrast, the seas or oceans - which nevertheless cover 71% of the Earth's surface - have little geopolitical importance. Lamas does the opposite here. This time, the cut out or 'negative' space is the land, not the seas or oceans.

In the perspective that we develop as human beings, we rarely comprehend the full picture. Either we still lack certain knowledge, or we classify the knowledge that we already have - just like the 'land' map - extremely subjectively. Think for example of Africa, a continent that in reality is many times larger than the world maps would lead one to believe. Yet Lamas believes that we can ourselves cast doubt on these relations. At the same time, Lamas reminds the viewer of his or her physical relationship to our environment by working with reflective material.

Location: Park Paelsteenveld, Kapelstraat 76, 8450 Bredene

### **ROSSELLA BISCOTTI (IT)**

#### ***Stranded, (2021)***

The installation of Rossella Biscotti took form by remelting glass and then letting it harden. The work prompts a feeling of astonishment about washed-up elements on the beach that reflect the light. On the beach, puddles of water, oil spots or transparent jellyfish often appear to merge with the light and the sand. Biscotti's installation is firstly an investigation into the physical qualities of materials, how they interact with other materials and change when manipulated, as well as their purely aesthetic characteristics.

The production of *Stranded* hints at creative processes that occur in nature over a timeline of hundreds of millions of years and which gave geological shape to the Earth. For example, take the formation of petroleum. This yellow-black liquid was formed from the remnants of microscopic plant and animal species in the sea. The microorganisms absorbed sunlight and then stored it in their bodies as carbon molecules, which gave their remains special properties. The incalculable remains became deposits on the seabed, buried over time beneath sand and stone, and now form rich petroleum reserves, including in the North Sea. It appears paradoxical that a raw material which came into being in such a strange way is today one of the most devastating factors in the climate crisis.

The beach is the place par excellence where natural elements such as stone and sand are formed, through a continuous interaction between minerals, water, wind and waves, over the course of millions of years. Shells, fossils and stones remind us of this prehistoric heritage and wash up as if the beach was a bulletin board. At the same time, the finds warn us about the Earth's increasingly worrisome ecological condition. As a time wizard, the tide provides us today with a fossil thousands of years old, yesterday a shard of pottery from the Roman settlement in Bredene, and tomorrow probably a load of plastic.

Location: Beach area at beach post, 8450 Bredene

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**Maen Florin (BE)**

***Benjamin, 2021***

*Benjamin* sits turned inward in reflection. With his drawn up knees, knitted brows and extended hands, one strikingly larger than the other, he appears to be deep in thought, waiting. The viewer waits as well. He gazes at the sculptural character of Maen Florin, but receives no look in response. As in other sculptures by Florin, this causes a good deal of uneasiness. Her fairy-tale dolls are situated between marionette and human being: we have difficulty grasping it. Above all Benjamin's donkey's ears prompt questions. In the last century children were sometimes forced to wear donkey's ears after they had misbehaved. Is Benjamin being held in detention and awaiting release? Is he playing the stubborn donkey, or on the contrary is he strong and wise, humble and affectionate like a donkey? In the appearance of this boy, who embodies a lonely 'otherness', there resides a confusing mélange of guilt and innocence that partly explains our discomfort. This interplay is also frequently present in fairy tales - a new hint to the donkey's ears. It makes us think of the feeling of 'Unheimlichkeit', the eeriness produced by many old German folk tales.

In the local context of De Haan, fairy tales came to life in the Zeepreventorium, a rehabilitation centre that was built a century ago in order to treat children with tuberculosis and other respiratory illnesses. During 'story nights', singers or actors took to the stage to perform, and in this way helped the sick children not feel 'different', at least for a little while. With her hybrid sculpture, Florin asks us not to evade our discomfort vis-à-vis the 'Other', but rather to look it straight in the eye. Does the 'Other' form a mirror for what we dare not recognise in ourselves? Maybe Benjamin is waiting above all for this (re)cognition.

Location: Forest across from Park Leopold II, 8420 De Haan

**Jimmie Durham (US)**

***Thinking of You, 2008***

In 2005, the Flemish Government Architect's art unit gave an assignment to eight visual artists from home and abroad, asking them to formulate a proposal for an artwork to be installed on a Flemish roundabout.

With this project the artistic advisors, Piet Coessens and Ulrike Lindmayr, wanted to start a discussion about art on roundabouts, a phenomenon that in past decades was often regarded as a problematic way of filling a public space. Jimmie Durham was one of those artists. This installation is the realisation of his proposal, fourteen years after publication of the study. On a bare, streetlamp-like tree with two dead branches, a vulture stares into the distance. Unperturbed, the bird looks out over the traffic that surrounds him.

In his considerations on art in the public space which accompany the proposal, Durham refers to the Berlin 'Siegessäule' as a well-known example of art on a roundabout, a nationalistic victory column erected to commemorate a series of Prussian military victories in the second half of the 19th century. Durham notes that public monuments of this kind preach exclusion more than inclusion. He finds that the term 'public art' is misleading, because it gives the impression that the public is involved in the assignment, while in fact the public is virtually never consulted in advance.

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"My work can be regarded as 'interventionist', because it runs counter to the two foundations of the European tradition: belief and architecture. My work is against the association of art with architecture, with the 'statue', with monumentality. I want it to be interrogating, and therefore not 'imposing', not credible", says Durham.

Location: Roundabout at De Smet de Naeyerlaan 30, 8420 De Haan

**Marguerite Humeau (FR)**

***The Dancers V, A marine mammal invoking higher spirits, (2020)***

Because of her interest in ecosystems, Marguerite Humeau regularly talks with zoologists, biologists and cognitive experts. Together with them she formulates fictitious hypotheses from which her artworks then germinate. One such speculative theory, for example, is that global warming could cause animals to develop spiritual behaviour. This stimulating proposition led to a series of sculptures in which Humeau tries to imagine this spiritual behaviour.

One of the sculptures from this series is *The Dancer V, A marine mammal invoking higher spirits*, a futuristic sea mammal engaging in a ritual dance to the moon. Humeau sketches such a future full of amorphous creatures: hybrids of human beings and animals that couple remnants of a lost culture with a survival strategy for the future. Ultimately, the sculpture will be installed on the new breakwater in Blankenberge, which is being created in order to prevent the silting-up of the port.

The sculpture fits in seamlessly with local history. Near the Belgian coastline archaeologists have found flints, bone material, human remains and fossils that attest to the prehistoric, paradisiacal and vast plain of 'Doggerland', where man, fauna and flora found a home. This plain existed up to around 8000 years ago, when a submarine landslide caused an enormous tsunami. The whole area ended up submerged in water, giving rise to the current North Sea. Like her other sculptures, *The Dancer V* unites present, past and future, but it also points to a tipping point. Where for 'Doggerland' the submarine landslide was a catalyst, we are now confronted with the consequences of climate change. This will change the landscape around us just as radically. Humeau asks us to imagine the world *past* this point. Well-known animal species and people must make room for a wealth of new, fascinating beings and ecosystems.

Location: Beach area nearby Wenduïnse Steenweg 15, 8370 Blankenberge

**Timur Si-Qin (DE)**

***Forgiving Change, 2018***

The cultural roots of Timur Si-Qin stretch far and wide. The artist is of German and Mongolian-Chinese descent and grew up between Berlin, Beijing and an Indigenous American community in the United States. Each root has provided him with a different perspective on the relationship between man and nature and how this manifests itself in divergent forms of spirituality.

In the West, the European relationship to nature is one of extraction, where land and living organisms are at the service of human beings. We see this model confirmed in European religions, which found their origin in an agricultural culture. In the spirituality of indigenous cultures, by contrast, the relationship to nature is defined by reciprocity and symbiosis. Here the human being is seen as only a part of a large ecosystem, and not as a master over nature.

Now we are confronted with Earth's impending unlivability for man; like indigenous cultures, we need a spirituality of symbiosis in order to focus on the survival of our culture.

For Beaufort, Si-Qin is showing his work *Forgiving Change*. In the aftermath of the Tubbs megafire of 2017 in northern California, he made 3D scans of several burned trees in the landscape. The results of this process were used as the starting point for this sculpture, first displayed at The High Line in New York in 2018. On a branch he fastened the 'New Peace' logo, a recurrent element in his work. It refers to Timur Si-Qin's long-running project 'New Peace', which proposes a new kind of spirituality for the age of climate change, and transcends the dualism between nature and human culture.

Location: Albertstraat 1, 8370 Blankenberge

**Adrián Villar Rojas (AR)**

***From the series Brick Farm, 2012 - ongoing***



**In collaboration with the Bruges Triennial.**

When the team of artist Adrián Villar Rojas moved into a studio in a former brick factory outside the Argentine city of Rosario, they found there a large number of nests of the Hornero bird. It is precisely these nests which give the small South American bird its renown. Their structures, built from mud, copy wonderfully well the ancient mud ovens that were vitally important for the early agricultural population in Argentina, Southern Brazil and Uruguay. Each nest is an impressive architectural feat of thick, strong walls built on a floor of branches. As its base of operations, the Hornero always looks for a structure created by human beings. Streetlamp, electricity or telephone poles, but also facades of houses, churches or office buildings are occupied. The birds are thus regarded as 'synanthropic': animals that take advantage of the human habitat in order to assure their own continued existence.

Villar Rojas sees his own artistic practice crystallised in the Hornero, since his work explores the notion of the Anthropocene, the age in which the impact of man upon nature is decisive. After the discovery of the nests, Villar Rojas' team integrated them into their investigation. They repaired and restored abandoned nests by imitating the construction technique of the Hornero using mud, twigs, clay, saliva and other materials. The installation of the assembled nests outside their territory creates a coexistence between this Argentine bird species and the flora, fauna and architecture of other environments. For Beaufort and the Triennial of Bruges, Villar Rojas' team distributed around eighty nests throughout Zeebrugge and the more urban Bruges.

"I cannot speak about my artistic practice as 'making works of art', says Villar Rojas. "I think that there is only a single overarching project, one that will last my entire life. This project starts from the question 'What can survive? What doesn't leave any traces behind?' Paradoxically enough it is the case that, to make my work, I spread material all over the world". As far as these nests are concerned, nature will decide whether they will still be present after the exhibition.

Different locations in Zeebrugge

**Sammy Baloji (DRC)**

***... and to those North Sea waves whispering sunken stories, 2021***



**In collaboration with In Flanders Fields Museum.**

Sammy Baloji's practice explores how our colonial history is interwoven with the current exploitation of people, raw materials and land. The starting point for this work is several

kilometres away, where 'The Horse Market', a munition dump from the First World War, lies at the bottom of the sea. By analogy with the chemical shells that were dumped under water and constitute an ecological threat, our memory of the role of the DRC during both World Wars also sank into the depths of Belgian memory. Congo was indispensable for the Belgian army, as a reservoir for soldiers and copper.

The installation incorporates an audio witness from the past: Albert Kudjabo, a Congolese soldier, who volunteered to fight in 1914 in Belgium, together with 31 other Congolese soldiers. He was deported as a prisoner of war to Berlin, where he became an object of study due to his origin. The German sound recording of Kudjabo offers a Congolese voice which represents the presence of Congolese volunteers in the Belgian army. It also attests to the oppression by the colonial police force Force Publique in Congo, and the fact that Congolese workers were used as slaves for the extraction of minerals in service of the war effort.

This shadow history is crystallised in Baloji's sculptures. The forms derive from scientific drawings of minerals, made to map out the extraction in Congo. Baloji refers at the same time to the Wardian Case, a glass container used for transporting exotic plants by sea. Through this global mass export of crops, new economies developed and natural processes were manipulated. This process of displacement and subjection is part of what led to the current climate crisis.

The Wardian Case encloses, just like 'The Horse Market', traces from a decisive moment in the past that still reverberate. The sculpture exposes the colonial side of the war and the violent heritage of extraction in Congo. A heritage that today is disrupting the global society, unbalancing ecosystems and maintaining an unequal world market.

Location: Beach across from Hotel Palace, Baron de Maerelaan 2, 8380 Brugge

## **Jeremy Deller (UK)**

### ***Ask The Animals And They Will Teach You, 2021***

Collaboration characterises the artistic practice of Jeremy Deller. Involving communities in his art lends his work a political content and he radically undermines the idea of the artist as individual genius. Take for example *The Battle of Orgreave* from 2001, one of Deller's best-known works, in which he replays a confrontation between striking miners and police officers in Thatcher's England. A staging that Deller directed together with people who were actually present during the battle in 1984.

For Beaufort 21, Deller is installing his giant chameleon attraction, in Knokke-Heist. As a sculpture and slide for children, this work formulates an alternative to the tradition of monuments which are generally very serious, often refer to historical events and sometimes even exult in sheer heroism. In place of that Deller pays homage to one of the oldest creatures on Earth, the chameleon. Chameleon fossils suggest that chameleons have already been living on Earth for around sixty million years. "There's something magical about chameleons," says Deller, "they can do things we can only dream of and are the most beautiful creatures on the planet. We have to worship them."

The chameleon is slowly disappearing throughout the world, probably as a result of climate change, although this is not the main theme in Deller's work. His focus lies on inviting children to use the slide and glide off the long tongue. With this he wants to counter the idea that art in the public space can only fulfil a decorative or commemorative function.

Location: Van Bunneplein, 8300 Knokke-Heist

## **Ruben Bellinkx (BE)**

### ***Dive, a proposal, 2018***

Like few other subjects of modern cultural history, the motorway brings together conflicting meanings and emotions. On the one hand, a symbol of desire and freedom, of modernity and progress, of leaving behind what's holding you back in life and the potential of making new connections and discoveries. Road movies and novels became a major genre on precisely this basis, and the aesthetics and the design language of cars and the road environment have augmented this desire. But the motorway also came to represent danger, pollution, shadowy activities that the anonymity of the motorway environment lends itself to. When a road is created, everything else must yield to it.

The ambivalence of this work of art is further magnified by the fact that it positions itself in every major discussion of this age. How do we increase our coast's ability to withstand the rising sea level? In so doing, how do we adopt a proportionate position within the nature of which we form a part? How will mobility and tourism develop, especially after an extended pandemic period? How open should the internal and external borders of Europe be?

*Dive, a proposal* finds its meaning in the way it will be adopted by the public, as a place for recreation and reflection, as an uncomprehended relic of a past age and as a foundation for a new one.

Location: Zeedijk-Heist 264

## **Beaufort 21**

27 May – 7 November 2021

## PERFORMANCES ALONG THE COAST

### **Ari Benjamin Meyers (US) with Die Verdammte Spielerei (BE)**

#### ***The Long Parade***

In a line of people, someone whispers a message into the ear of the next person. He or she then whispers the message to the next one, until finally the end of the line is reached. The last participant pronounces the message out loud - and hilarity or confusion ensues, because the final result has invariably been totally deformed by a series of misunderstandings along the chain. This game - something named "telephone call" in Belgium and (more evocatively) "Chinese Whispers" in Great Britain - inspired composer and conductor Ari Benjamin Meyers to create a new composition along the Belgian coastline.

In collaboration with the walking orchestra '*Die Verdammte Spielerei*', Meyers is composing an original piece for Beaufort. With the piece, the orchestra will be marching through all of the ten Belgian coastal towns. At each "border" an exchange will take place, as an open rehearsal, where the musical piece is passed on. It all kicks off in De Panne, where for two weeks a local group of musicians worked on transforming the piece into a new composition. They perform their version while walking from their own town hall to that of the next town on the coastline: Koksijde. Spread over the summer of 2021, this process will repeat itself in each town during ten musical parades, until the work reaches its finale in Knokke-Heist.

*The Long Parade* thus fits into the research of Meyers on the structures and processes that (re)define performative and social aspects of music. Via local collaborations he easily exposes underlying structures to the listener. For Public Art Munich 2018, for example, he formed a new orchestra composed of street musicians from the Bavarian capital. Recently he has been concentrating on the relationship between performer and public and the political power relationship existing between them. With the coastal-wide project he is attempting to unite the different identities of the Belgian coastal towns into a single new composition - without thereby losing sight of their unique characters.

### **Saâdane Afif (FR)**

#### ***Pirate's Who's Who*, ongoing project**

In 2004, Saâdane Afif started with his Lyrics protocol, where he let people from his environment write songs about his works of art. On the occasion of the exhibition '*The Dream of the Library*' in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Siegen, Germany, the artist had ten texts written in relation to his work *Pirate's Who's Who*. These lyrics, which enrich the work of Saâdane Afif with another's imagination, in turn became a medium for Afif's work. This resulted in a series of shows that the artist directed and had performed by different singers or actors.



For Beaufort 21 Afif is creating a new work in the form of a concert. Ten texts from his series *Pirate's Who's Who* will be interpreted by musicians or musical groups of his choice. The concerts will be preceded by a poster campaign with which the artist will communicate his performances. A vinyl record will be co-produced on the Lyrics Record label.

### **Nel Aerts (BE) and Gert Verhoeven (BE)**

For Beaufort 21 these two artists will join forces and present new work in the summer of 2021. More info soon.

## BEAUFORT 21 PRACTICAL DETAILS

- Beaufort 21, the contemporary art Triennial at the Belgian Coast can be visited free of charge from 27 May until 7 November.
- As most work of arts are on display in public areas, you can view them at your leisure 24/7. The few artworks displayed indoors can be viewed during opening times only. Check out [www.beaufort21.be/en](http://www.beaufort21.be/en) for the exact opening hours.
- Plan your route on the basis of the tram stops, bicycle and hiking junctions next to all the works.
- The visitor guide (€ 1) is available from the tourist information offices and via the Westtoer web shop.
- Quite a few accommodation providers offer special Beaufort packages.
- For a guided tour: De Lange Nelle coastal guides organise half-day and full-day tours. Info: +32 (0)59 80 73 81 or [info@oostendeahoy.be](mailto:info@oostendeahoy.be).
- The Uitwaaier XL introduces families with children to the sculpture park in a playful manner. This colourful booklet full of challenges and brain-teasers is available from the tourist information offices free of charge.

Full details: [www.beaufort21.be/en](http://www.beaufort21.be/en) / #Beaufort21

## THE BELGIAN COAST, PRACTICAL DETAILS

Level of activity at the seaside: the [crowd barometer](#) on the Belgian Coast's website offers you a real-time view of the busy and quiet spots at the seaside. The website also tells you what's going on at the Belgian Coast.

- Download your free Coast Pass: the complimentary Coast Pass is your buddy while at the seaside. With more than thirty attractions offering discounts and other benefits, the Coast Pass is the way to go. Ideal for a great day out!
- The Coastal Tram and train: aside from being the showpiece of the Belgian Coast, the Coastal Tram takes you from one seaside resort to the next, quickly and safely. The Belgian Coast is also easy to get to by train. There are railway stations in De Panne, Koksijde, Oostduinkerke, Ostend, Blankenberge, Zeebrugge and Knokke-Heist.
- Cycling and walking: the cycling and walking opportunities at the Belgian Coast are endless. Check out the hiking and cycling networks for hours of walking and cycling joy with a view of the sea or the heritage walks which bring you along hidden gems. Alternatively, follow the Belgian Coast's hiking trail and walk from De Panne all the way to Knokke-Heist (or vice versa).
- At your service: the welcoming tourist information offices are your port of call at the Belgian Coast. [www.myknokke-heist.be/en](http://www.myknokke-heist.be/en), [www.visitbruges.be/en/kust/zeebrugge](http://www.visitbruges.be/en/kust/zeebrugge), [www.visit-blankenberge.be/en](http://www.visit-blankenberge.be/en), [www.visitdehaan.be/en](http://www.visitdehaan.be/en), [www.bredene.be](http://www.bredene.be), [www.visitoostende.be/en](http://www.visitoostende.be/en), [www.middelkerke.be/en/tourism](http://www.middelkerke.be/en/tourism), [www.visit-nieuwpoort.be/en](http://www.visit-nieuwpoort.be/en), [www.visitkoksijde.be/en](http://www.visitkoksijde.be/en), <http://http://tourism.depanne.be/>.
- Belgian Coast website: [www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en) is *the* online place for all your tourist and recreational information. It also features all the events and happenings at the Belgian Coast's.
- Happy Trip: the ideal travel formula if you're planning a break at the Belgian Coast. One ticket, one price. The perfect way to combine your accommodation and transport. Book your stay and trip by train and tram/bus to your destination..
- Q label: qualitative addresses at the Belgian Coast (accommodation, tourist information offices, restaurants and attractions) are recognisable by the Q label and are listed on: [www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en/sleep/all/label/Q-label](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en/sleep/all/label/Q-label).
- The Belgian Coast map: the free Belgian Coast map gives you a full overview of what is going on at the Belgian Coast, complete with activities and tips for a fun-filled year and a map that will help you find your way around. Available from the tourist information offices at the Belgian Coast or via [shop.westtoer.be/en](http://shop.westtoer.be/en).
- Weather at the Belgian Coast: [www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en/webcams](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en/webcams)
- Accommodation at the seaside: book your accommodation directly and at the keenest prices at [www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en)

FULL DETAILS: [www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk/en)

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