



PRESS RELEASE – February 18, 2020

The Bruges Triennial presents its theme for 2021: TraumA

Following on from the highly successful 2015 and 2018 editions, the Belgian world heritage city once again becomes a backdrop for contemporary art and architecture. An enticing trail, studded with international installations, takes us to places that switch intriguingly between fantasy and reality, between delusion and actuality. *TraumA* will take place from May to September 2021.

The 2021 Triennial builds on its two predecessors, whilst simultaneously taking us off in a different direction. The 2015 Triennial considered the hypothetical transformation of Bruges into a megalopolis, if the six million tourists who visit Bruges each year should suddenly decide to settle there permanently. The 2018 Triennial examined aspects of the 'liquid society' and created welcoming public spaces that had a pronounced social and participatory character on or along the canals.

This third edition of the Bruges Triennial, *TraumA*, continues that exploration of contemporary art and architecture in public spaces, but this time from a more inward, subcutaneous perspective: What is going on behind those stately facades? How is the mediaeval city actually being experienced and lived in? International artists and architects* have been invited to explore (semi) public and private spaces across Bruges and to question the hidden aspects of society. Back doors are opened and alleys investigated. Interspaces, courtyards and construction sites form a trail of surprise and wonder and give us a glimpse behind otherwise impenetrable walls.

In *TraumA*, the Bruges Triennial delves into the city's uncanny history and actuality. Historical layers are laid bare, forgotten and hidden storylines are exposed and discussed. This edition wanders the thin line between dream and trauma, between heaven and hell. It appeals to the imagination, responding to the pomp and the splendour, but also to the 'unheimliche' simmering just below the surface. Because, although Bruges may seem to be a dream destination, poverty, loneliness, pollution and anxiety are constantly lurking in this seemingly picture-perfect world. Via artistic and architectural spatial interventions, the *Bruges Triennial 2021: TraumA* also brings out the less attractive aspects of our heritage city and makes them part of the cityscape. It generates a multi-voiced discourse, in which there is room for imagination, beauty, darkness and complexity, a space where artists and architects can explore both the spotlit centre stage and the dark and dusty wings.

The Bruges Triennial 2021: TraumA hovers between the revealed and the concealed, the open and the hidden. With its trail of sculptural, architectural and organic creations, it celebrates the vitality and versatility of this our city: moving between public and private, between dream and nightmare.

* Participating artists and architects will be announced in autumn 2020.

BRUGES TRIENNIAL 2021: Trauma

Contemporary art and architecture in the historical city of Bruges

May to September 2021

Curated by Till-Holger Borchert, Santiago De Waele, Michel Dewilde, Els Wuyts

More information and a selection of images are available online or upon request:

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The Bruges Triennial is a collaboration between Brugge Plus, Musea Brugge, Kenniscentrum vzw and Cultuurcentrum Brugge, commissioned by the City of Bruges.