

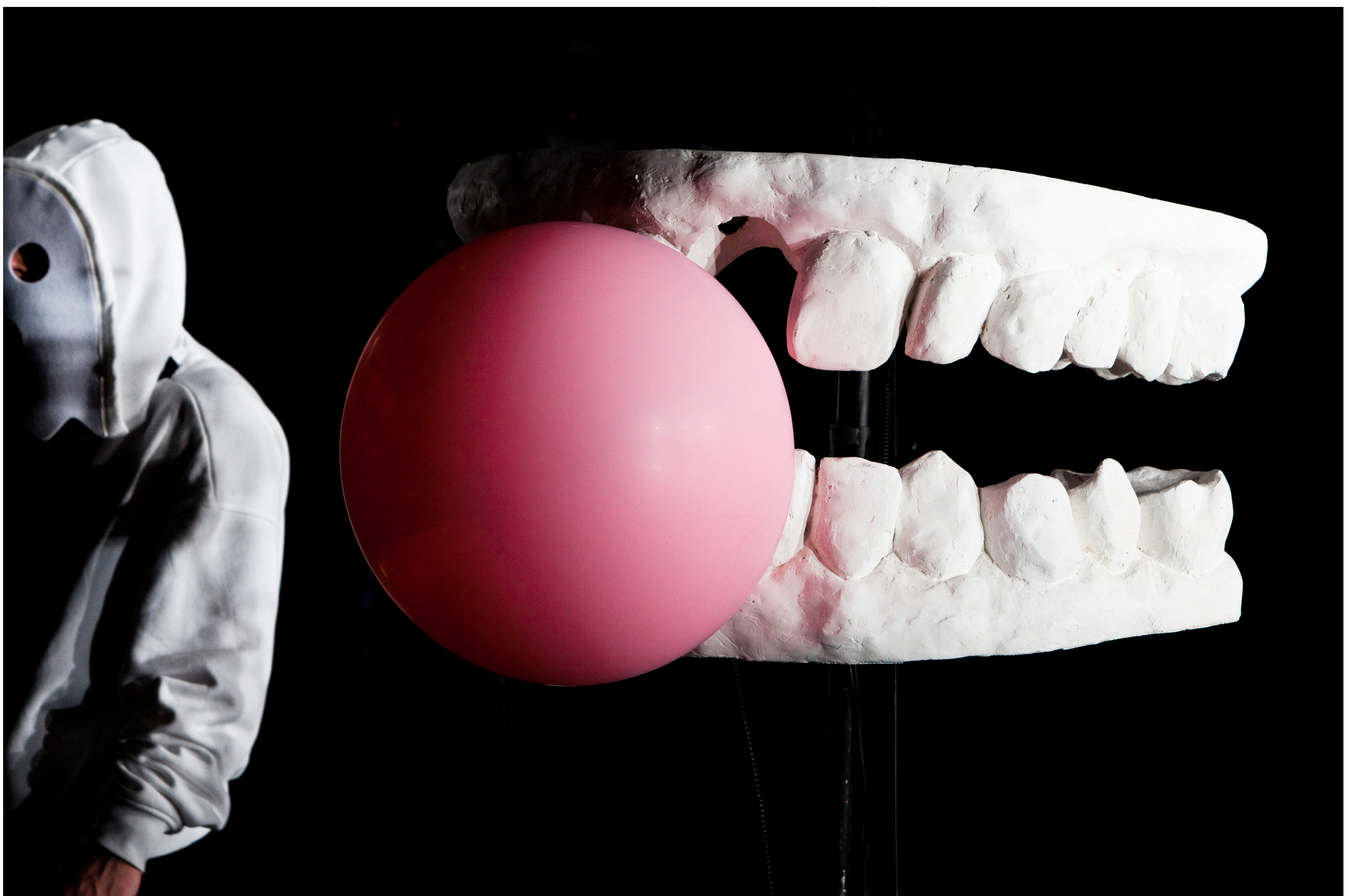
miet**warlop**

Production: Miet Warlop / Irene Wool vzw & hetpaleis (Antwerp)

Premiere: April 21, 2018 hetpaleis (Antwerp)

Co-production: Arts Centre Vooruit (Ghent), Gessnerallee Zürich (CH), TJP Centre Dramatique National Strasbourg (FR), AUAWIRLEBEN Theaterfestival Bern (CH), Luzerner Theater (CH)

With the support of: Vlaamse Overheid, City of Ghent, Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk)



bigbears**cry**too

conceptualidea

Miet Warlop's plays have garnered international praise for their visual originality, unique dramaturgy and absurd humour.

Her show *Mystery Magnet* was performed more than 120 times all over the world, and her latest production, *Fruits of Labour*, is another big hit.

Big Bears Cry Too is a performance that deals with the vulnerability that people experience in this large and incomprehensible universe. A series of objects literally fly onto the stage, each with something to say about individuality in the world. There is a large – a too large – plastic heart that can only be restricted by letting a small amount of air out. Then there is a massive tablet that is supposed to make you happier, but the actual result is that you no longer recognise yourself. And then there is a bear that falls victim to its own excessive cuteness. We end up in a universe of coloured rain and never-ending symbols.

Springville, Dragging the Bone, Mystery Magnet, Fruits of Labor – each one an intriguing title of an equally intriguing show that was successfully unleashed upon the world in the last 15 years by artist and dramatist Miet Warlop. Her latest production, *Big Bears Cry Too*, marks her first production for an audience of six and older.

creditlist + timeline

concept en direction: Miet Warlop

performer: Wietse Tanghe / Christian Bakalov

music and lyrics: Pieter De Meester, Joppe Tanghe, Wietse Tanghe, Miet Warlop

technical team: Bennert Vancottem, Jack Vincent, Jurgen Techel

light design: Henri Emmanuel Doublier

assisted by: Lila John, Karolien Nuyttens, Barbara Vackier, Ian Gyselinck, Geert Viaene (Amotec), Mathias Huybrighs

outside eye: Danai Anesiadou

production and technical realisation: Miet Warlop / Irene Wool
vzw (Gent) and hetpaleis (Antwerpen)

coordination: Elke Vanlerberghe

co-producers: Vooruit Gent (BE), Gessnerallee Zürich (CH), TJP
Centre Dramatique National Strasbourg (FR), AUAWIRLEBEN
Theaterfestival Bern (CH), Luzerner Theater (CH)

with the support of: Flemish Authorities, City of Ghent,
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thanks to: Jonas De Meester, Koen Demeyere, Marie Jeanne
Symons, Bram Coeman, Koen Jansen, Maarten Van
Cauwenberghe, Emma Van Roey, Michiel Goedertier (La Roy NV),
Sparks FX, Seppe Cosyns, Hugh Roche Kelly, Mathias Batsleer,
Frouke Van Gheluwe, Seppe Janssens, Johannes Vochten, Johan
Vandenborn, Sander Salden, Linde Raedschelders, Richard
Kerkhofs, Carla Beeckmans, Elke Vanlerberghe

April 2018: premiere at hetpaleis

A droplet that very briefly escapes the whole.

Miet Warlop on her new production, *Big Bears Cry Too*.

Springville, Dragging the Bone, Mystery Magnet, Fruits of Labor – each one an intriguing title of an equally intriguing show that was successfully unleashed upon the world in the last 15 years by artist and dramatist Miet Warlop. Today she is busy at the Antwerp youth theatre hetpaleis fine-tuning *Big Bears Cry Too*, her first production for an audience of six and older. Why would a person who is internationally praised for her refreshing view of the performing arts dare to take on a show for kids?

Miet Warlop: In recent years people have on occasion drawn my attention to the fact that the visuality and fantasy of my work could also appeal to children. I can imagine that a young audience can easily follow a show such as *Springville* but my work has developed since then. That means I'm now once again looking for a form that will also work for kids. My biggest struggle at the moment is the language – I'm no longer used to thinking and writing in Dutch. I worry about how much I should explain. Under normal conditions I show a series of images that speak for themselves, but will that also work for children?'

Incomprehensible universe

Miet Warlop: Children ask adults the same questions. They also think about the endlessness of the universe, about the black hole and the immensity that is ungraspable. They also have fears that they can feel but not understand. *Big Bears...* it's about the futility of humanity in that large and incomprehensible universe. The show finds us on the balcony of the world – "Ready for take-off". A series of objects literally fly onto the stage, each with something to say about individuality in the world. There is a large – a too large – plastic heart that can only be restricted by letting a small amount of air out. Then there is a massive tablet that is supposed to make you happier, but the actual result is that you no longer recognise yourself. And a mouth from which the front tooth shoots out and shatters into a thousand pieces...

mietwarlop

At the conclusion you end up in the universe and it emerges that the freedom you experience as a person on earth is just imaginary. There is no beginning and no end. You change shape constantly, being a body now but soon you will be something else entirely. On stage we translate that using coloured paint as rain, dropping it onto a platform of four by four meters filled with milk. When detergent is shot into the mixture, the fat in the milk starts to separate and beautiful drawings in a variety of colours appear. It's a dynamism that can continue forever, just like the universe itself. There is something meditational about it, and it is representative of life too: a droplet that very briefly escapes the whole but that irrevocably returns to it.'

Actor Wietse Tanghe is the sole person on stage.

Miet Warlop: 'He manipulates the objects on stage and his job is to keep everything in motion. He is also a person that you can identify with as part of the audience. At a certain point he is a ghost who in a flash turns into a bride on the catwalk, and then a little later he becomes one with "the third eye", the special eye that can see the invisible.'

So what about the bear in the title?

Miet Warlop: 'The bear explodes. He blows himself up because he is too cute; a fact he thinks is hilariously funny. It takes minutes for him to exhale like a balloon in the space above us. And when he eventually collapses, he is dissected and his ears, snout, nose and rump are thrown around. It's not horrible at all; in fact, it's an overdose of cuteness. It serves as a cushion against what we do not want to exhibit: the vulnerability of our souls.'

'You can make yourself as afraid as you want to. You often create the things that you fear most in your own head. Your anxiety can be as extreme as you want it to be. But at the same time we live in turbulent times, and a lot of fear is generated. So what is the solution? Prescribe antidepressants for the entire universe? We have to teach kids to deal with their fears and help them to rationalise them. That is why I have shown the dissection and the ghost with the rolling ping pong ball eyes.

'I want the kids to somehow create a type of soundscape of the production. We are currently experimenting with microphones in the stands – wouldn't it be great if the children could provide their own live commentary to accompany the scenes they are seeing on stage?'

mietwarlop

Miet Warlop (°1978) is a Belgian visual artist born in Torhout. She lives and works between Ghent and Brussels.

Miet Warlop holds a master degree in Multimedial Arts from KASK, Ghent. For her graduation project **Huilend Hert, Aangeschoten Wild**, an 'inhabited installation consisting of six scenes and a crawling subject', she won the Franciscus Pycke Jury Award and the residence prize for Young Theatre Work 2004.

Many other performances, actions and projects followed and in 2005 she premiered **SPORTBAND / Afgetrainde Klanken** a 40' performance, 20 people racing against time through music and sports. In the context of Lovepangs (Vooruit, 2005) she created the one-on-one performance **Cherish the Cherries**. From January 2006 until November 2007 Warlop was one of the six artists of DE BANK (Arts Centre CAMPO, Ghent), where she was working on her series of 'Propositions', called **Big Heap / Mountain**. In between, she was responsible for the set design for performances by Pieter Genard, Raven Ruëll, DitoDito-Jef Lambrecht, KVS (Brussels), Arts Centre Vooruit (Ghent) and Les Ballets C de la B (Ghent).

While she was touring the 'Propositions' all over Europe, she realised **Springville**, a 50 min game of chaos, expectation and surprise, in which scenography, costumes, props and characters are closely interwoven and merged together. *Springville* premiered in May 2009 at Arts Centre BUDA (Kortrijk).

Miet Warlop moved to Berlin for three years, to concentrate on her visual work and prepare a new piece called **Mystery Magnet**, which premiered at KunstenFestivalDesArts (Brussels) in May 2012. *Mystery Magnet* Won the Stuckemarkt Theatertreffen Prize at the Berliner Festspiele for best work in new forms of theatre. *Mystery Magnet* has played more than 100 times all over the world and was nominated for Theatertreffen Berlin for finding a new way of making stage-arts. *Mystery Magnet* is still touring all over Europe and beyond.

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In the course of 2012-2013 Miet Warlop explored different possibilities with her **Nervous Pictures** and performances, through projects and commissions, both in visual arts as in a theatre context in/with Baltic Triennial (Vulnius), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Lisson Gallery (London). In November 2012, as part of her four-year associated artist residency at Beursschouwburg (Brussels), she created the opening event of the season with the **Alligator Project**: a weekend of combined media and performances by different artists and musicians like Reggie Watts and Michael Portnoy, curated by Miet Warlop.

In 2014 Miet Warlop started her own legal structure “**Irene Wool**”. In October 2014 the first production **Dragging the Bone** premiered at Beursschouwburg (Brussels). *Dragging the Bone* is a solo performance on a sculpted planet.

In 2015 Miet Warlop opened the festivities that celebrated the 50 years of Beursschouwburg (Brussels) with a **Rocket Piece** that took off to the grit. Also, Art Gallery Barbican (London) commissioned a performance as part of the project **Station to Station**, hosted by Doug Aitken.

While touring her solo *Dragging the Bone* and celebrating the 100th show of *Mystery Magnet* in Ghent, Porto and Bordeaux, she finished the year by opening her first solo exhibition project in KIOSK gallery (Ghent) titled **Crumbling Down the Circle of my Iconoclasm**.

In 2016 a new large scale stage work premiered - **Fruits of Labor**, a deep night music performance functioning as a painkiller for the world. *Fruits of Labor* premiered at KunstenFestivalDesArts (Brussels) in May 2016 and is up until now touring around the world.

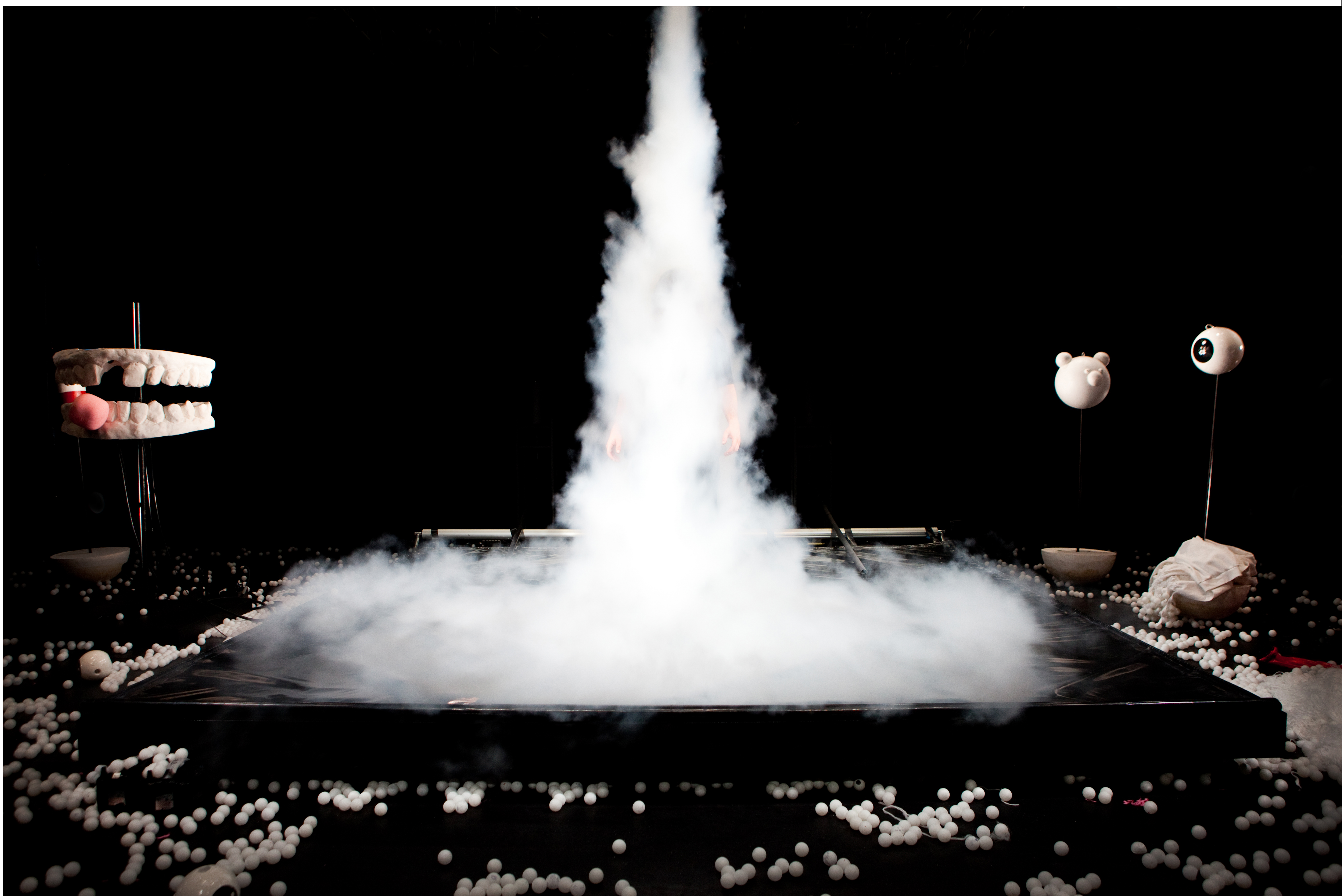
In addition to her performance work for theatre venues, Miet Warlop has created and presented an ever-growing cycle of visual art performances, interventions and live installations. **Nervous Pictures** has been presented in KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin), Lisson Gallery (London), Barbican Art Gallery (London), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Performatik (Brussels), among others.

mietwarlop

In 2017 she opens Art Institute Vooruit (Ghent) with her monumental performance **Amusement Park**, and she was invited by BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts (Brussels) within the context of the Yves Klein retrospective exhibition to re-envision and re-stage her seminal work, *Mystery Magnet*, as well as to create the opening performance of the exhibition, **A horse, a man, a woman, a desire for adventure**, and to present a visual art intervention, **The Board**, during the closing ceremony of the Paul Bury exhibition.

Festival Actoral. 17 (Marseille) invites Miet Warlop to collaborate with author and curator Raimundas Malasauskas for “L’Objet des Mots”, which results in a new project **Ghost Writer and the Broken Hand Break** – a production that premieres in September 2018 at NTGent (Ghent).

Beginning of 2018 Miet Warlop creates **Big Bears Cry Too**, a show for all ages that premieres at hetpaleis (Antwerp) in April 2018.



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