

# FROM DUST

## VIRTUAL REALITY OPERA

### Scene 1

I am a lake,  
a twin birth,  
a place within  
that both is,  
and contains everything.

I see myself standing,  
we gaze at each other, curious,  
tearing into silk,  
our fingertips tingling.

Your face  
is the face of all the others,  
those before you and those after.

A secret knowledge  
is shared between us.

Every beginning is involuntary  
This may be my life

### Scene 3

My hands of dust  
can barely alter the road  
where your footsteps  
must settle into seaweed.

Shut your eyes softly now.  
No one can step twice,  
into the waters of the same river.

My feet of dust  
cannot brave the rocks,  
but the solitary seagull can.

Wherever you go,  
no matter how far,  
a path runs before you, open and sharp.

My hands of dust  
cannot protect you  
a path runs before you  
from your eyes like a scar.

### Scene 2

She, in the light stone robe,  
that flutters in the breeze,  
lives, imperceptibly,  
among all others disguised as her.

The innumerable live within us.  
When I think or feel,  
I don't know who it is  
that thinks or feels.

I watch the people pass by my window,  
efficient, organized,  
and I feel life flowing through me,  
like a river between its banks.

Outside, a great silence,  
like a sleeping god.  
The present circles back to retrieve me.  
I don't know who it is  
that thinks or feels.

I want to blend in,  
to be swept along,  
hurled like a grenade.  
to live large in the open air,  
to fall from high up.

I want to run like rain down the walls,  
rip all the doors from their hinges,  
pull the house down upon me.  
I want to be reckless, outgoing,  
a world without gaps!

*Alternative side of the hallway:*

I want to blend in,  
to flow with the current,  
horizontally obscured.  
To thrive under the open sky,  
and softly descend from above.

I glide like dew along the stones,  
ease open each barrier,  
draw the silk veil over me.

I want to be thoughtful, solitude,  
in a world without gaps.

Who are you? Are you nobody, too?  
I won't linger, for I never do.

# FROM DUST

## VIRTUAL REALITY OPERA

### Scene 4

I am a tree,  
my roots in the soil,  
a mind at peace with all below,  
and in touch with the dream.

A metal door,  
never locked, slightly ajar,  
leads to a place within,  
a little green nightlight  
of a train traveling backwards.  
The stars threw down their spears,  
burning bright,  
eager to meet.

I am inventive, cautious, secure, easy-going,  
compassionate, careless, bold, nervous  
Water, Wood, Fire!

I am observant, independent, organised  
easy-going, I worry too much, understanding  
self disciplined, perceptive, visionary  
dependable, compassionate, polite, loyal  
witty, versatile, sensitive,  
patient, confident, resourceful, detached  
punishing, efficient, charismatic, generous,  
thoughtful, honest, trustworthy, proactive  
analytical, practical, methodical, logical,  
resilient, sympathetic, meticulous

I walk among them unnoticed

I am pragmatic, humorous, sarcastic,  
intellectual, optimistic, adventurous,  
dogmatic, intuitive, humorous, extroverted,  
superstitious, thoughtful, caring, rebellious,  
friendly, eccentric, kind, paranoid, loving

Falling in slow motion back to Earth

I only witnessed

I did not touch

Water, Wood, Blood!

### Scene 5

I am a green stream, full of life  
in which the sun gazes.  
A woman bends over me,  
searching my depths  
for who she truly is.  
In me, she has drowned a young girl.

This may be my life,  
now and always.

I have looked for you everywhere,  
in the side-mirrors of spoons,  
silver and exact,  
unmistaken by love or dislike.

Water, blood, dust  
Blood, water, dust

May this be my life,  
now and always.

### Team

Performed by vocal ensemble Sjaella:  
Viola Blache, Marie Fenske, Franziska Eberhardt,  
Marie Charlotte Seidel, Felicitas Erben, and Helene Erben

Composition, director, script – Michel van der Aa  
Dramaturge – Madelon Kooijman  
Lead developer – Roland Smeenk  
Lead technical artist – Rens van de Wiel  
Technical artist – Quint Vrolijk  
Lead 3D artist – Stein van de Ven  
3D artist (characters) – Glenn Wustlich  
3D artist – Bas Jansen  
Animation artist – Niels Weber  
AI integration developers – Michael Hussar, Sean Simon  
Digital clothing designer – Iris van Wees  
VFX developer – Ruud op den Kelder  
Stylist Sjaella – Judith de Zwart  
Vocal recording engineer – Bart Wagemakers (Exalto studio)  
Production – Aram Balian, Daniëlle de Jonge  
Financial director – Rosita Wouda (doubleA)  
Publicity manager – Norman Vladimir Smith

### Motion capture:

XSense mocap – Het Nieuwe Kader, Niels Bosch  
Audio engineer – Tomas Valečka  
Producer – Arjen Oosterbaan  
Director of Photography – Joost Rietdijk  
Tooling face recording – Rens van de Wiel  
Assistant director – Anne van Brunschot, David Wolfswinkel

### Special thanks to:

Eric Chang (Reallusion), Marek Šimoník (Record 3D),  
Sebastian Kox and Abdelhadi Baaddi (Innovation:Lab),  
Roelof Terpstra (Virtual Dutch Men).

*Commissioned by de Doelen, with support from  
Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie, Nederlands Filmfonds,  
Stichting Bevordering van Volkskracht, Erasmusstichting,  
Fonds Podiumkunsten, doubleA Foundation,  
with additional support from the Holland Festival.*

