

P R E S S - R E L E A S E

Isabelle Andriessen *ABYSS*

20 May – 5 July 2023 at Berthold Pott, Cologne

ABYSS offers a window into a speculative world in which Isabelle Andriessen explores the agency of clusters of interlacing materials, parsing queer materialism and probing plastics, crystals, and coolant for latent dark intent.

Isabelle's first solo exhibition at Berthold Pott presents a body of work that reminds of re-animated automata or relics, revealing unreliable characteristics within materials that otherwise seem dormant or passive. Andriessen continuously pushes her work to inhabit a liminal space between sculpture and performance in order to address a world attuned to death but thriving with new organs and sex, as if to suggest how new entanglements might flourish in a non-human world.

As uncanny amalgamations of mechanical remnants, extraterrestrial formations, and chemical waste, these performing sculptures obscure the interface between the animate and inanimate, while offering a glimpse into a grim future reality. A reality in which materials have agency, enabling them to control certain entities and bodies, transgressing them into resilient species withstanding violent environments. The *ABYSS* alludes to loss, grief and horror, and redefines what an apocalypse can be, understanding it as not necessarily (or only) a space for destruction but rather a continuum state in which there is apocalypse upon apocalypse, or catastrophe upon catastrophe—an inhospitable darkness that is also a fertile source.

All together, these sculptures become a cast of characters in a sticky landscape members of a semi-choreographed orchestra, an exhibition chorus. Their eerie material realities form alien or grotesque anatomies inspired by 'weird' and 'fluid' life forms; they creep, crawl, ooze, penetrate, cling to, and react with one another as if their metabolism is infected. They physically respond to the surrounding atmosphere while triggering chemical processes within each other, thus manifesting their agency through continuous interaction and change. These processes unfold in phases choreographed over one or several exhibitions; Some of these slow material performances last a few months, while others continue to develop over years. They showcase the passage of time, disturbing notions of permanence, posterity, and the primacies afforded the restoration and collection of art.

Brief Biography:

Isabelle Andriessen lives and works in Amsterdam. She investigates ways to physically animate inanimate synthetic materials in order to provide them with their own metabolism, behavior, and agency, in this way creating sculptures that perform over the course of one or several exhibitions, seemingly beyond control.

Andriessen has presented solo exhibitions at institutions including, De Pont Museum, Tilburg (NL) and CAN Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel (CH) (both 2021). Group exhibitions include Moderna Museet, Malmö (SE) (2022); GAMeC, Bergamo (IT); Modern Museum of Art, Warsaw (PL) (both 2020); 15th Lyon Biennial, Lyon (FR) (2019); Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (NL); Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (FR) (both 2018).

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