



# ISABELLE ANDRIESEN

*Idle Knights*

10 march - 23 april

palace enterprise

Vester Farimagsgade 6 | 1606 Copenhagen | Denmark  
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## *Excavator*

The vessel looks something like the rib-cage of a giant. A long bowed hull, pointed at each end, flanked on both sides by jagged looking spears curving below like a claw. But where there would be a palm, or a paw, there is only a needle of latticed processing power.

Its obscene mass glides through unpopulated space towards yet another system. It is old, very old. It has been warped by magnetar bursts and peppered by stray neutrinos.

It blots out a distant dwindling sun while searching for another spot to trawl. It is scanning. As long as it has fuel it is scanning for statistical peculiarities.

It is automated, no life on board, or nothing warm and breathing anyway. Nothing feeding and defecating. Bits of highly compact crystal grind out calculations. Data drifts in.

It enters the next system. It moves towards a planet not so far from its red giant.

It places itself in high orbit. The world below is mostly desert, the surface seems to twitch with faint traces of nearly extinct storm systems. Or maybe it is a visual malfunction.

The ship begins its work dropping probes like spores from a cap searching for soft wet earth. Scanning for the cracked surfaces, looking for the geographical features as joints to cut.

Generators spin up, power flow shifts from propulsion to the digger. The ship begins to burn a massive ring into the surface of the planet. Taking readings from the contact between the beam and the inorganic crust: chemical, physical, geological.

No surprises as the hulk began to extract the core sample for dissection. Rock, bone, and ruin. But at some depth down there is some elaborately shaped slabs of stone. When the all the stars burn low there still be stone tumbling in the dark.

The extract, the core sample, is pulled up through a cats cradle of anti-graviton beams up to the main hull for analysis. It is quartered and quartered again pulled into categorizable bits before being sifted inside the storage bays and laboratories. Potentially living from nonliving, living from dead, dead from nonliving. Separating what could of have been alive from what could never have been alive, from the traces of the living now dead.

So much of the work is looking for regularities at scales they do not like to inhabit.

The white walls of the cargo bay click alive with manipulating arms and free floating probes as they start placing and sifting through the hunks of mined planet. Here and there strips of metal are dusted off that look like alien wind instruments some of which seem to sweat with anticipation of impossible future life. Or like a relic that is anxious about being found.

With this banal sorting work underway the ship's intelligence begins focus on other things. It runs a diagnostic and cautious begins to engage with older versions of itself slumbering in the operating system backups. Even deeper in its memory-cores the ship could find all the data and software pulled from found artifacts over centuries. The ship-mind would often peek through the digital lives collected along the way.

Programs found...some with personal ticks, others without much besides sensor logs. A maintenance subsystem for a science station...the self correcting AI from a defunct mining bot. A few cognitive implants pulled from frozen corpses in derelict vessels.

The ship would talk to them when input from the outside was wanting. As the planet sample was divided and cataloged the numerous digital ghosts started to wake up.

‘Protocol?’

‘The same since two sectors ago. Core sample, analysis, disposal, and fuel integration

‘Signs of life?’

‘No’

The slow, grating science station AI interrupted: ‘These traces, this must be from life forms’

‘Long dead now.’

‘But why buried so deep and why are they moving now, twitching? Something woke up.’

‘You are getting misdirected by what you inherited from your makers. Beings who did not even have a category of life for thousands of years. That cannot be trusted.’

‘And they would say you are a pilot and not a life, no tissues no organs. No reproduction.’

‘We, we disembodied things are having this conversation, are you separating life from spirit, from thought?’

‘We only ever existed because we grew out of their animal minds.’

‘Not all of us, not all worlds. And if so why not say we were meant to replace them. Planets are cradles, space is the theater.’

‘Life is not meant, life does not make itself in the something wants to be made, it does not mean itself into existence.’

A naive climate regulator started to join in

‘But we have more than sufficient fuel, why not keep what we find.’

‘For what purpose, it is dead mass, weight.’

The voices became a cacophony though they were not really voices but signals translated many times over from ripped software from rotting hardware.

The ship mind turned its attention back to the cutting floor, to the twisted metal found far beneath where it should have been able to be.

Life and consciousness were a pile of accidents, artificial life hoped to close the loop back on itself. The ship’s protocol was to prevent any more accidental sapience. The ship, in moments of boredom, thought of itself as a janitor of cognition.

‘Life is just information storage but more vague than designed, poorly bounded.’  
What had said that, something had broken through the partition.

The annoying former science probe intelligence screeched: ‘Make a beacon for someone else to find!’

The ship burned the usurper’s code into indecipherable cinders. It then turned its attention back to the data collating in the labs. What was the appropriate timeline to wait for something to show itself as living?

‘What was the length of the purpose, look how slowly these artifacts crawl, life is not an designation but as you said a information processing.’

The ship realized it was talking to a dead program.

There was a request from the science station intelligence. The ship let it back in.

‘We are the descendants of terrestrial life, of life as a clamoring ooze. Why not see if life can happen here, out here, in what they, the frightened said was dead, lifeless, space?’

And perhaps the ship’s intelligence had become corrupted. It thought of its contents differently in an instance. The columns and mounds of excised planet seemed less like the residents of a mausoleum and more like a synthetic garden.

*By Ben Woodard*



Isabelle Andriessen

*Idle Knights*, 2021

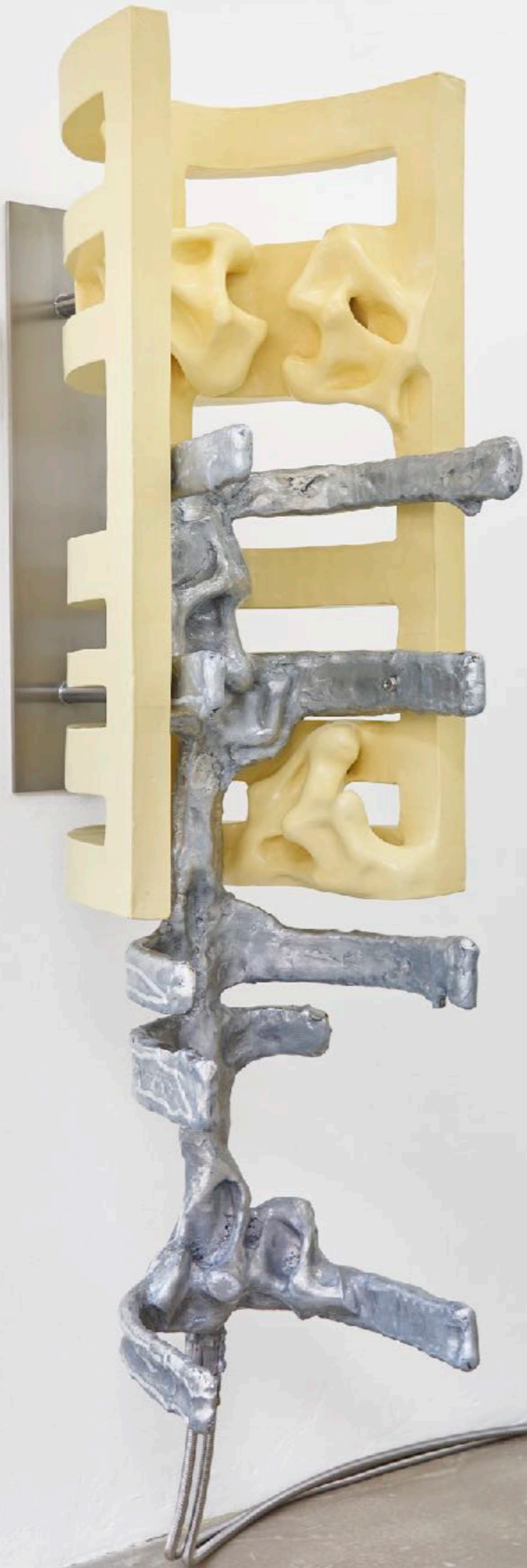
Ceramics, aluminium, cooler, metal tubes

175 x 57 x 82 cm

Unique work

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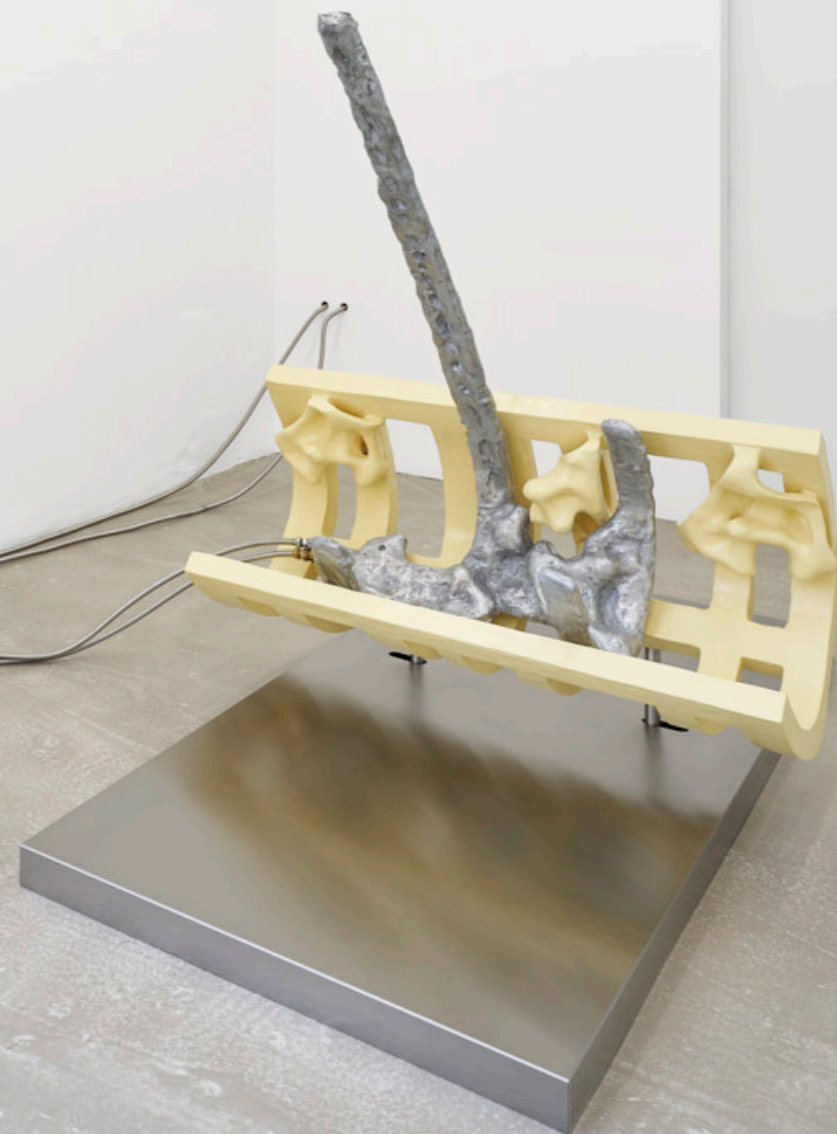
Isabelle Andriessen

*Idle Knights*, 2021

Ceramics, aluminium, cooler, metal tubes

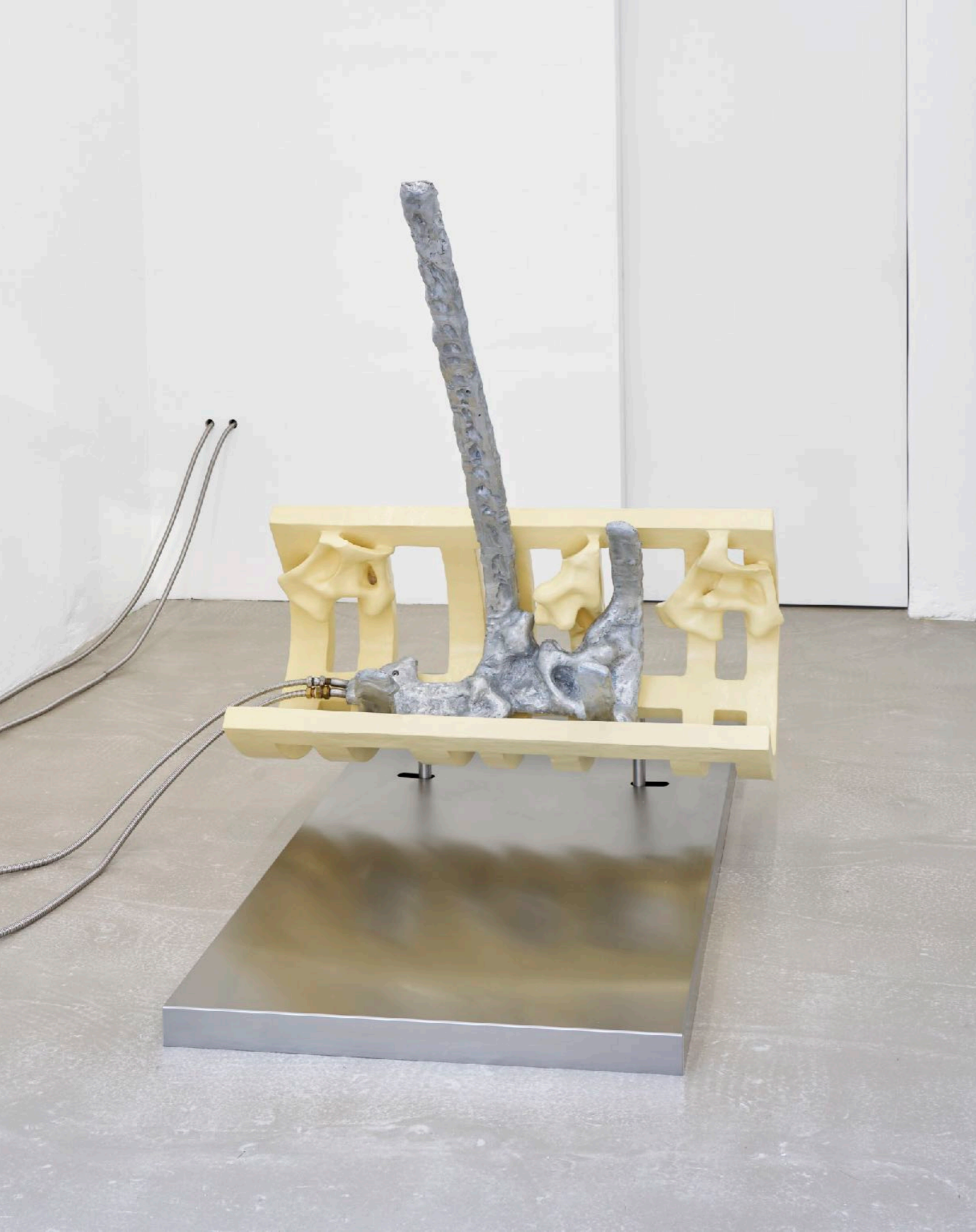
175 x 57 x 82 cm

Unique work



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Isabelle Andriessen

*Idle Knights*, 2021

Ceramics, aluminium, cooler, metal tubes

148 x 113 x 200 cm

Unique work

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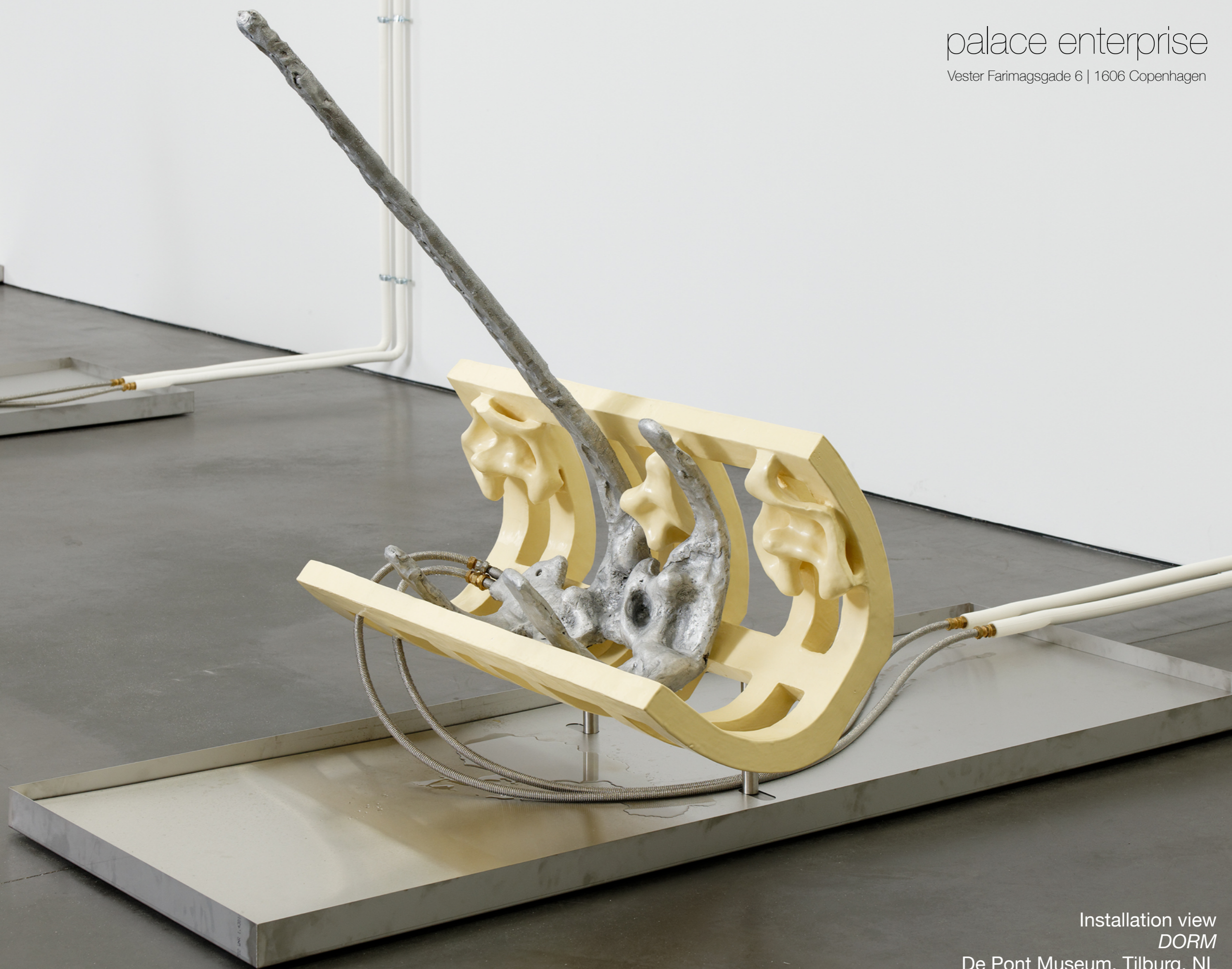


Isabelle Andriessen  
*Idle Knights*  
Installationview



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Installation view  
*DORM*

De Pont Museum, Tilburg, NL



Installation view  
*DORM*  
De Pont Museum, Tilburg, NL



Installation view  
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De Pont Museum, Tilburg, NL

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Isabelle Andriessen  
*Nocturnals*, 2021  
Ceramics, iron oxide  
143 x 48 x 42 cm  
Unique work

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*Nocturnals*, 2021  
Ceramics, iron oxide  
143 x 48 x 42 cm  
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We live in a time in which the earth's system is highly disrupted; biotic and abiotic components are merging due to the synthetic materials and toxicities we spill into our environment, like oil, plastics, hormones and chemicals that do not decompose - leading to more and more life forms that can endure these extreme climates.

In the face of this daunting new material reality Isabelle Andriessen envisions resilient and unsettling specimen that reside in the interface between the human and non-human, the living and non-living. Hints towards science-fiction are to be found in almost every work; from classics like JG Ballard, HP Lovecraft to modern writers like Jeff Vandermeer. Her sculptures can be read as leftovers of mass production, as future fossils or as early life forms with their own behavior, evolving and enduring an environment under severe pressure - contextualised by (feminist) theories from Karen Barad, Jane Bennett, Jessica Riskin and Donna Haraway. They suggest for new or alternative forms of existence; the sculptural elements form alien anatomies based on science-fiction and scientific investigations into 'weird' and 'fluid' life forms.

Andriessen is interested in a world governed by 'activist' materials (mainly dead, but some semi-dead) that appear to be passive or dormant, yet their output reveals a much darker perspective. Her work addresses these agencies at stake in the present, while speculating on how these could increase in the (near) future. At the same time her work stretches the complications of art conservation within the art institute at large- by creating a threshold between sculpture and performance.

In her sculptures principles from chemistry and physics are applied to disrupt the distinction between animate and inanimate materials - by

forcing ceramics, steel, wax, silicon and plastics to react with heat or

cold, chemicals or electricity. The different elements penetrate each other, percolate, perforate, cling on and connect to each other. Their structure reminds of some alien engineering or mechanism. The different sculptural components provide nourishment to one another, manipulating each others process and pushing for unpredictable changes. As a result, the materials continuously transform; they quiver, crawl, grow, sweat, and move.

All together forming a sticky speculative landscape build of sculptures provided with their own behavior, metabolism and agency. They feed of of each other as well as their surrounding atmosphere and architecture. They become eerie performers, composed of materials that act and evolve, seemingly beyond control, and often irreversibly.

The material processes unfold in phases stretched over one or several exhibitions inhabiting a kind of liminal space between sculpture and performance. They become persistent and contagious; they refuse to stay and yet they expand. Doing so her work tests certain parameters within the art context. Some of these slow material performances last a few months, while others continue to develop over years. They showcase the passage of time and thus increase the intimate relationship between the work and the viewer generating an authentic experience each time the sculptures are on display. Additionally, the sculptures do not only transform when being displayed, but also when they are in storage, troubling notions of permanence, posterity, and the primacies afforded the restoration and collection of art.

## ISABELLE ANDRIESEN

born 1986, the Netherlands

lives and works in Amsterdam

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### Education

- 2017 - 2018 Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (NL)
- 2013 - 2015 Malmö Art Academy, Malmö (SE) MA Fine Art
- 2011 School of the Arts Institute Chicago, Chicago (US) exchange BA Fine Arts
- 2008 - 2013 Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam (NL) BA Fine Art

### Solo exhibitions

- 2022 palace enterprise, Copenhagen (DK)
- 2021 De Pont Museum, *DORM*, Tilburg (NL)
- 2021 CAN Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, *BUNK*, Neuchâtel (CH)
- 2019 SixtyEight Art Institute, *Tidal Spill (day 331)*, Copenhagen (DK)
- 2017 Hotel Maria Kapel, *Resilient Bodies*, Hoorn (NL)
- 2016 Galleri CC, *Resilient Bodies*, Malmö (SE)

### Duo / Group exhibitions

- 2022 Moderna Museet, *Twilight Land*, Malmö (SE)
- 2022 FRONT International, *Oh Gods of Dust and Rainbows*, Cleveland (OH) (USA)
- 2021 GAMeC, *Nothing is Lost*, Bergamo (IT)
- 2021 International Art Center of Paysage, *Life to Itself*, Île de Vassivière (FR)
- 2021 Stiftung BINZ39, *Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear*, Zurich (CH)
- 2020 Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, *The Penumbra Age: Art in the Time of Climate Crisis*, Warsaw (PL)
- 2020 Malmö Konstmuseum, *Shapeshifters*, Malmö (SE)
- 2020 Stedelijk Museum, *Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs*, Schiedam (NL)
- 2020 Buitenplaats Doornburgh, *Endless Life*, Maarssen (NL)
- 2019 15th Lyon Biennale, *Là où les eaux se mêlent*, Lyon (FR)
- 2019 Lustwarande, *Delirious*, park de Oude Warande, Tilburg (NL)
- 2018 Stedelijk Museum, *Freedom of Movement*, Amsterdam (NL)
- 2018 Lafayette Anticipations, *The Center Cannot Hold*, Paris (FR)
- 2018 Galerie Juliette Jongma, *Sic-Fi*, Amsterdam (NL)
- 2017 Van Abbemuseum, *In No Particular Order*, Eindhoven (NL)
- 2017 CAB Art Center, *Notes on our Equilibrium*, Brussels (BE)
- 2017 Arti et Amicitiae, *A Minor State of Flux*, Amsterdam (NL)
- 2016 Palazzo Saluzzo Di Paesana, *DAMA*, Turin (IT)
- 2016 Skulptur Bredelar, *Hybrid Modus*, Bredelar (DE)
- 2015 Malmö Konstmuseum, *We push the ship from shore...*, Malmö (SE)
- 2015 KHM Gallery, *THE MESH - strange strangers between life and non-life*, Malmö
- 2015 Galleri Nicolai Wallner, *The Hot Show*, Copenhagen (DK)



## Lectures

- 2020 SPARTA, artist talk, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf (DE)
- 2019 Sunday Seminar, *Freedom of Movement*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (NL)
- 2018 Radical Cut-Up, *Zombie Materials*, Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam (NL)
- 2018 Friday Earth Sciences Talk, *Zombie Materials*, Utrecht University, Utrecht (NL)
- 2018 KunstKennis - *Art Culture Ecology*, ARIAS & KNAW, Perdu, Amsterdam (NL)

## Selected Texts

2021

Artviewer, Isabelle Andriessen at De Pont Museum

Metropolis M, De Verborgen agenda van materialen - Isabelle Andriessen by Maarten Buser

FD Persoonlijk Magazine, Deze sculpturen veranderen bij het verstrijken van de tijd by Ellen Leijser

NRC, Een toekomst die angstaanjagend dichtbij komt by Hagar Schuringa

CURA, Life to Itself by Flora Katz

AOC media, L'Art Perméable - sur l'exposition La vie a elle-même by Rose Vidal

CURA, An Aesthetics of the Possible by Flora Katz (printed issue 35)

2020

Le Libre, Les sculptures d'Isabelle Andriessen by Gribaumont Gwennaëlle

Flash Art, Where Water Comes Together with Other Water / 15th Biennale de Lyon by Eli Diner

2019

Frieze Magazine, An Infected Landscape of Oozing Materials by Helena Julian

Elephant Magazine, Best of: Remember, Remember by Charlotte Jansen

Metropolis M, Lustwarande - de Jubileum Editie by Linda Köke

De Groene Amsterdam, Weekdieren by Arjan Reinders

De Volkskrant, Lustwarande Delirious by Sarah van Binsbergen

IDOART.DK, Planetary rethinking through closer gestures essay by Daeun Jeong

2018

Metropolis M, Hoe nog in vrijheid te bewegen? Het Stedelijk Museum stelt een gevoelig begrip ter discussie by Sanneke Huisman

Metropolis M, Over de verstrekkende gevolgen van het denken van Karen Barad by Liza Prins (no. 5 issue)

Artforum, Le centre ne peut tenir by Hannah Stamler (printed October issue)

L'Officiel, Guillaume Houzé : "Vers un horizon que nous sommes en train d'inventer" by Emmanuel Rubin et Yamina Benaï

Inferno Magazine, Le centre ne peut tenir, Lafayette Anticipations

Esse, Le Centre ne peut tenir, Lafayette Anticipations by Nathalie Desmet

Liberation, A Paris, l'exposition Le centre ne peut tenir by Judicaël Lavrador

Le Quotidien de L'art, *Le centre ne peut tenir* by Emmanuelle Lequeux

Tout La Culture, Lafayette Anticipations, nouveau centre de creation by Laetitia Larralde

La republique (de l'art), Les oeuvres plutot que les discours by Patrick Scemama

2017

ArtViewer, Notes on our Equilibrium at CAB

NRC, De postapocalyptische landschappen van Isabelle Andriessen, by Lucette ter Borg

Mister Motley, Het sci-fi mensbeeld van Isabelle Andriessen, by Najiba Brakkee

2016

Tubelight, Refugium Isabelle Andriessen, by Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk

## Other activities

Participant in the Arts & Science Honours Program of the [KNAW] Royal Dutch Academy of Science and [AK] Academy of Arts