



Aude Pariset

Débris Legacy

10.12. – 04.02.17

Opening Friday 9th December 2016

Sandy Brown is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Aude Pariset. This is the artist's second solo show at the gallery.

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Vegetables: five days to one month. Paper: two to five months. Tree leaves: one year. Tin cans: fifty to one hundred years. Styrofoam cup: five hundred years to forever.

Styrofoam, that notorious object immune to decay, might never decompose on its own, but it turns out that a species of mealworm can break it down into organic matter. Not only can the worms eat Styrofoam, but they can learn to thrive on it.

Magnify: a wriggling mass of worms becomes a many-bodied, efficient recycling machine. A soft machine to survive the age of the landfill. A soft machine to quietly process the capitalist ruins.

Magnify further: each worm is itself host to a complex ecosystem. The hard work of digestion is actually being done by the microbes living inside the gut—a particular strain of *Exiguobacterium*, to be exact. Digestion, as always, is a symbiotic process, a calibrated exchange, a mutual agreement.

Zoom out: the human body also contains trillions of tiny lives. We carry about two kilos of bacteria in each of our bodies, companion species digesting at least ten percent of our food for us. They regulate our internal climates, chew through the glycerin encasings of pills, extract nutrients from jelly beans. A microscopic greenhouse radiates beneath the skin. We can't live without our microbiota, and they can't live without us.

As it stands, certain synthetic chemicals will eternally cycle through your bloodstream. Your body and your bacteria are simply unequipped to crunch them down, to extract anything of value. But maybe—if you asked politely...could you convince your body and its companions to metabolize shards of plastic, beads of polymer? Could you persuade a bacterium to savor the most resistant materials—to love a challenge? Could the most artificial synthetic become the highest luxury?

Fast forward: healthful aspirations shift from organic kale and fresh-pressed juices to smooth polymer beads and crusts of old nail polish. From the basinet to the picnic basket, the most valued materials are now those hardest to digest. We prove our worth via our ability to extract value from the unlikely of places.

A discarded tin can becomes a delicious time-release capsule, a recipe for a long and happy life. Luxury flips from scarcity to abundance. We find ourselves enriched. We are born again as worms.

- Elvia Wilk