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DAMIEN GERNAY MIMESIS

CID-GRAND-HORNU.BE





At first encounter, Damien Gernay's works appear both familiar and elusive. Surfaces shimmer, forms suggest known structures, yet their material presence resists immediate identification. What seems recognizable gradually transforms, opening a space where perception oscillates between clarity and uncertainty.

Gernay's practice begins with intuition: a mental image often rooted in elemental experiences—light reflecting on water, the density of a forest, the slow formation of mineral matter. From these impressions, he does not design objects directly. Instead, he develops processes. Through digital simulations, material experimentation, and controlled physical conditions, he establishes frameworks within which form can emerge. In this interplay between intention and autonomy, each piece results from a negotiation between control and unpredictability.

Such an approach introduces variation at every stage. Minor changes in parameters or material behavior lead to distinct outcomes, allowing each work to retain its singularity. Through processes that parallel natural phenomena, Gernay's objects evoke landscapes, textures, and organic structures. They exist at the threshold between design and sculpture, where function remains present but recedes in favor of a sensory and visual experience.

Mimesis brings together two decades of this exploration, assembling works shaped through the interaction between advanced technological processes and elemental forces—such as heat and air—along with the changing states of materials. Across the exhibition, perception is continuously tested: what is seen, what is understood, and what remains unresolved.

Each piece affirms its presence with clarity and precision, as a suspended instant—capturing fleeting phenomena held in abeyance, whose perception varies with light and viewpoint. What follows is a body of work that holds moments between permanence and ephemerality.



1. MER NOIRE

Ø 120 x H 36 cm

Leather, patinated steel

Mer Noire is a coffee table derived from the observation of the sea—its constant movement and continuously shifting surface. The work translates this unstable condition into a fixed object.

The tabletop is formed by shaping leather over a structure, using the material's flexibility to produce a relief that recalls the surface of water. Once set, the leather retains these deformations, preserving the traces of the forming process. Its textured surface interacts with light in a way comparable to caustic reflections on water. The object remains static, yet the changing reflections across its surface create the impression of movement, linking material behaviour to the visual experience of the sea.





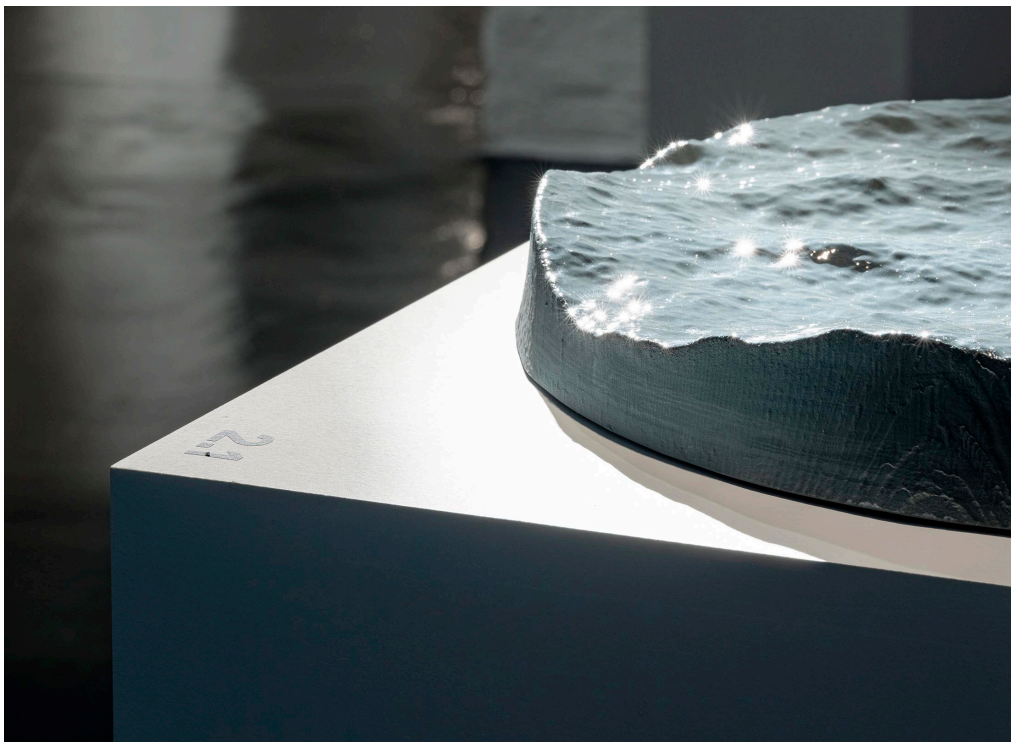


2.1. OCEAN FRAGMENT

TERRAIN VAGUE : DAMIEN GERNAY & JULIE ISTASSE

Ø 44 x H 6 cm

Mass-coloured stoneware



2.5. RAINY DAY

TERRAIN VAGUE : DAMIEN GERNAY & JULIE ISTASSE

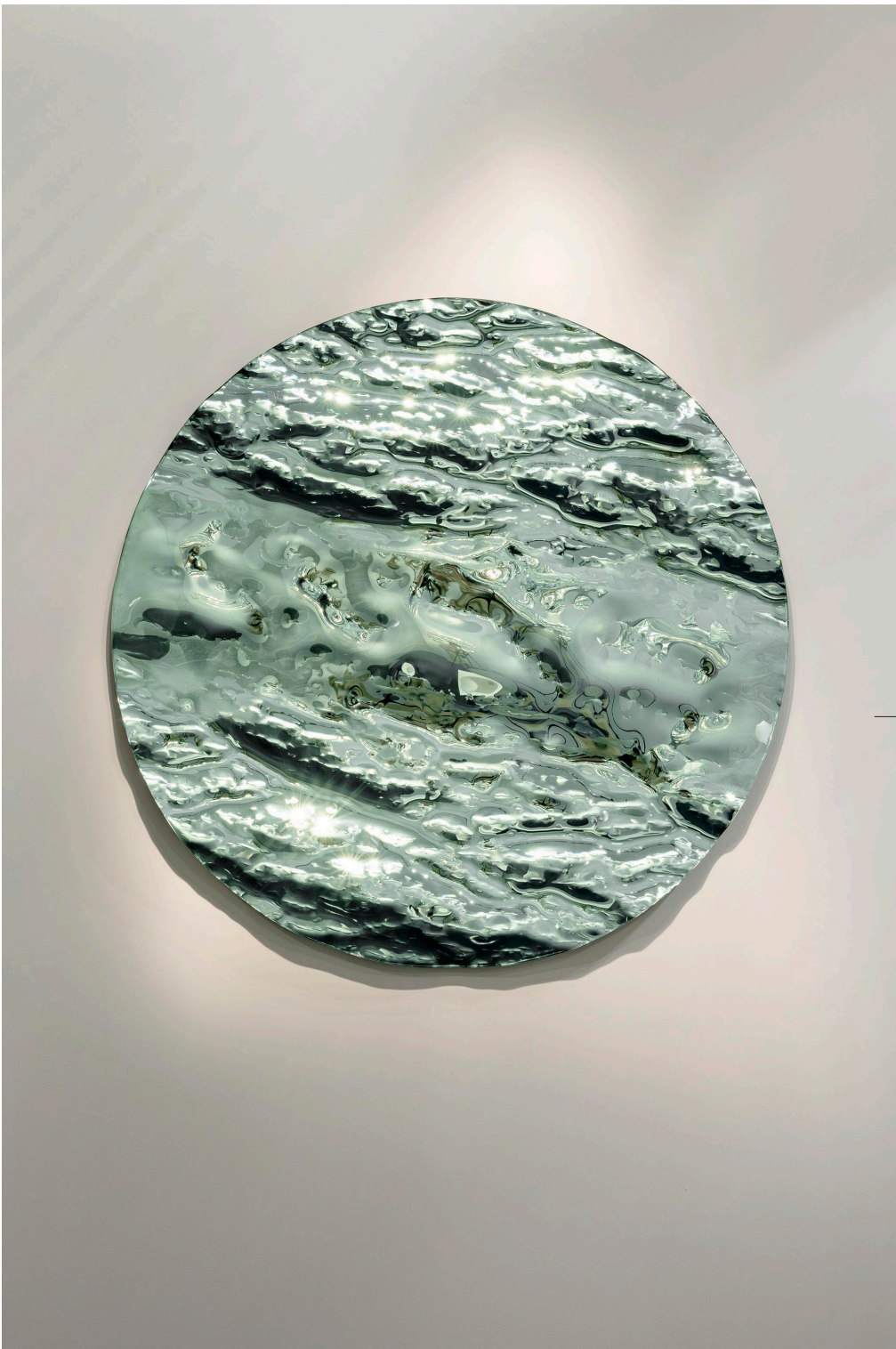
Ø 44 x H 4 cm

Mass-coloured stoneware

This ceramic work captures the moment of rain falling onto the surface of water. The impressions of the droplets, fixed in the clay, reveal their movement and repetition. Through the contrast between the permanence of the material and the ephemeral nature of the phenomenon, the work preserves the trace of a moment in constant disappearance.

The pieces are typically glazed on one side and left raw on the other, creating a contrast in texture and finish. In stoneware, pigments are integrated directly into the material, producing subtle gradations that catch and diffuse light across the surface. The object retains visible variations resulting from the forming and firing process.





3.1. GLAZ GREEN

Ø 110 cm

Thermoformed and silvered green glass

Glaz and Glaz Green are two mirrors inspired by the movement of ocean waves. When two waves meet in opposite phases—when the crest of one meets the trough of another—they partly cancel each other out, reducing their height. The title refers to “glaz,” a word used in Brittany to describe the shifting colour of the sea, somewhere between green, blue, and grey. This unstable colour is reflected in the material itself: the tinted and silvered glass creates changing hues and reflections.



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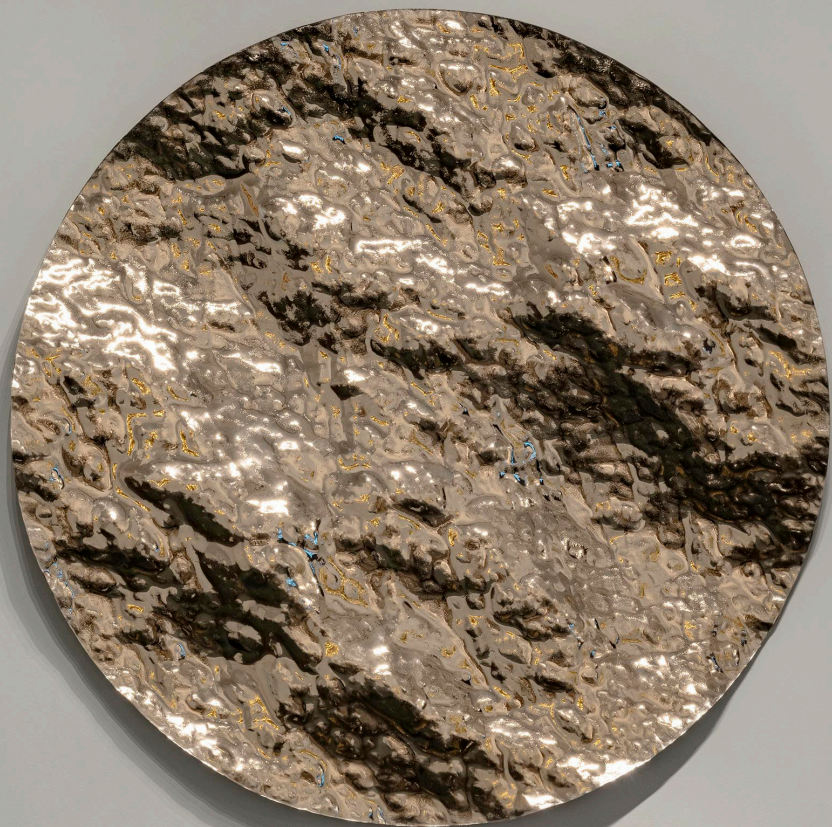
4. OCEAN SUNSET

Ø 90 cm

Thermoformed glass, gold leaf

This series of 5 glass pieces, gilded with gold leaf, evokes the shifting light of a sunset over the ocean. Each tone of gold corresponds to a different moment in the transition from dawn to dusk. Applied to the surface of thermoformed glass, the gold leaf creates subtle variations in colour and reflection. The composition unfolds through a sequence of hues, ranging from pale to deep tones: white gold (13.25 kt), green gold (18 kt), light yellow gold (22 kt), yellow gold "extra" (23 kt), red gold (23 kt), and champagne gold (22.5 kt).







6. BLANC CASSÉ MIRROR

Ø 120 cm

Stainless steel, paint

The Blanc Cassé series explores white as an originating surface one that becomes functional through physical transformation. It refers to the painter's canvas and the writer's blank page, where an initial void gives rise to form.

Here, a painted stainless-steel disc is mechanically sanded until it becomes reflective, gradually acquiring its function as a mirror. The process remains visible: the surface retains the traces of its making, revealing a continuous transition from matte white to black primer, and finally to polished metal.

The mirror appears like an organic opening in the wall. Its slightly uneven surface fragments reflections into a pointillist image, as if painted in real time, with the grain of the metal acting as a brushstroke.

5. BLANC CASSÉ TABLE

L 250 x W 90 x H 75 cm

Steel, paint, varnish

In this piece, the process is guided by the marks left by a welding machine. These traces are not concealed but activated: the tool becomes a drawing instrument, revealing the contours of the object through heat and material alteration.





7. TEXTURED CABINET

L 100 x W 50 x H 90 cm

Plywood, faux bois painting

Textured Cabinet is part of a series exploring the relationship between form and surface. Inspired by digital 3D modeling, the work begins with a simple, neutral shape defined only by its geometry, with the surface added afterward. In this piece, a wood grain is painted onto plywood, creating the illusion of solid wood. The material is only a surface effect, not part of the structure. By separating structure from appearance, the work highlights the gap between what the object is and what it seems to be.





7. GRAFT

40 x 58 x 72 cms

Solid wood, steel

A simple rock or a cut tree trunk can serve as a seat. The addition of a backrest transforms it into a piece of furniture. Graft explores this shift through the confrontation between a natural piece of wood and a manufactured structure, made functional through a process of physical grafting. The chair exists at the intersection of organic form and constructed framework, where raw material and designed intervention are directly joined.



10. LUMBERJACK

Variable dimensions

Oak, powder-coated steel

Lumberjack is a shelving system that draws on the direct gesture of cutting wood. Its construction recalls the decisive stroke of an axe splitting a log. This piece combines solid oak with a powder-coated steel structure, creating a contrast between the irregular mass of the wood and the precision of a framework that supports the shelf while producing a visually unbalanced effect.





12. BOIS MORT

DAMIEN GERNAY & FELIX LUQUE

Variable dimensions

100 units of 36W TLD, variable dimensions

In Bois Mort, the designers 3D-scanned a small forest located in Asturias. This is a snag forest, where dying trees and fallen branches form dense, irregular structures over time. Drawing from this environment, they developed a modular assembly system using fluorescent light tubes, allowing simple elements to be combined into complex, branching forms. These luminous structures behave like electronic extensions of the forest. The installation also produces sound: electromagnetic activity from the lighting components is captured, transduced, and amplified through loudspeakers, making otherwise inaudible signals perceptible.



14. FROISSÉ WALL CABINET

91 x 172 x 33 cm

Aluminium, oxidized steel

The Froissé series investigates the transformation of sheet metal through air pressure. Using a process related to aeroforming, thin metal plates are inflated with compressed air inside a sealed mould. The pressure causes the material to expand into smooth, organic forms that appear soft despite their rigidity. The surface is subsequently treated with chemical patinas, producing deep, soxidized tones that emphasize the relief and variations created during forming.

15. FROISSÉ TABLE

75 x 253 x 95 cm

Black patinated steel

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16. HARVART

Ø 90 cm

Silvered moulded glass

Harvart explores the transformation of a simple geometric form through physical deformation. Starting from a basic disc, the object acquires its identity and function

through a process that alters its surface and volume. The mirror is shaped into an irregular, three-dimensional form, resembling a draped surface. This deformation affects the reflection, shifting and distorting the viewer's image. The work draws on principles related to chaos theory, where small variations within a system can produce significant visual effects.



17. AMALGAME SIDEBOARD

200 x 82 x 42 cm

Enamelled metal, American walnut

Amalgame refers to the process of fusing powdered glass with steel through firing, creating a vitreous enamel surface. Each piece emerges from the interaction between a controlled intention and a volatile process, drawing on an interest in the unpredictable aesthetics of natural formations. The approach is comparable to painting, where abstraction gradually gives way to suggestive, figurative impressions—evoking seascapes or mineral landscapes.

In its molten state, enamel behaves with a degree of autonomy: it flows, shifts, and forms patterns independently. Rather than fully determining the outcome, the process involves guiding the material—encouraging certain formations while limiting others. Under heat, the material melts, moves, and changes colour, introducing an element of chance before cooling into a smooth, durable surface.



18. GYPSUM DISORDER

130 x 35 x 6 cm

Leather

The Gypsum Disorder series, developed in collaboration with Delvaux, explores the technique of leather covering, in which leather is stretched and fixed over a solid form. Here, this traditional process is applied to shapes derived from plaster-pulling methods typically used in architectural mouldings.

Fully covered in leather, the objects create a subtle trompe-l'œil effect: surfaces that appear to be plaster or stone are in fact soft material stretched over rigid structures.

In some works, ink is introduced into the leather and absorbed through capillarity, producing gradients that form directly within the material.





19. EXTRACTION CABINET

180 x 100 x 44 cm

Aluminium, leather

Extraction Cabinet extends the EXTRACTION series, developed from a virtual quarry based on 3D scans of rocks. Through this process, scanned data is translated into a physical form, bringing geological structures into the scale of furniture. An aluminium framework is combined with leather panels. Shaped using a process similar to that of Mer Noire, the leather here takes on the appearance of rock rather than water.

Fully functional as a cabinet, the piece contrasts its practical use with a dense, almost monolithic presence. Its proportions and material treatment evoke a raw, extracted mass, giving the object a simultaneously utilitarian and sculptural character.





20.1. EXTRACTION SIDE TABLES (Sailing Stone)

55 x 34 x 51 cm

58 x 31 x 51 cm

Resin

These pieces extend the EXTRACTION series, developed from a virtual quarry based on 3D scans of rocks. The scanned data is digitally manipulated and translated into physical objects through a sequence of transformations. The two side tables, conceived as a mirrored pair, are inspired by the “sailing stones” of Death Valley—rocks that slowly move across the desert surface under specific conditions, leaving visible trails behind them. To evoke this movement, the forms combine 3D printing with traditional plaster-dragging techniques. The resulting objects retain the qualities of geological forms while introducing subtle distortions, suggesting motion within a fixed structure.

20.2. EXTRACTION LOW TABLE (Sailing Stone)

130 x 90 x 35 cm

Resin

Part of the EXTRACTION series, this table originates from a virtual quarry based on 3D scans of rocks. The scanned forms are digitally manipulated and translated into physical objects. Its shape draws from the sailing stones of Death Valley, where rocks slowly shift across the desert surface. A sense of displacement remains visible in the form, as if the object had slightly moved from its position. Produced through a combination of digital modelling, casting and plaster-dragging techniques, the piece is finished with a faux marble surface that reinforces its mineral character.





23. EXTRACTION VASES

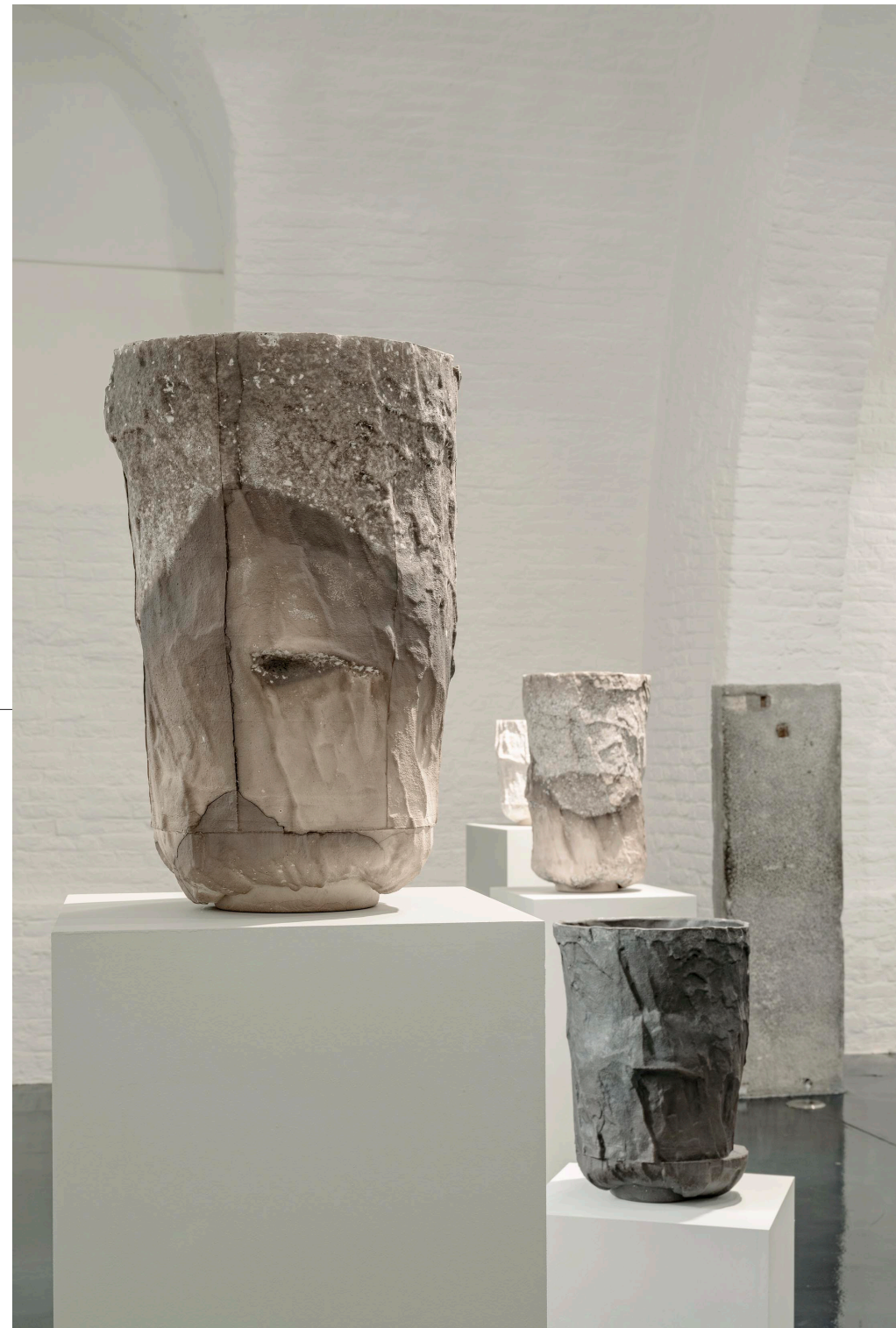
Variable +/- Ø27 x H50cm

Cast stoneware, smoke-fired

Extraction Vases begin with a 3D scan of a rock taken from the natural environment. This data is translated into a physical object through a sequence of transformations: first digitized, then re-materialized in stoneware, and finally altered through smoke-firing.

Each stage leaves visible traces. The forms retain a geological familiarity, while their reconstruction introduces a degree of abstraction, as if the rock had been re-composed. The smoke-firing adds tonal variations that both follow and transform the original form.

Rather than extracting material directly from the landscape, the process operates through its digital capture. The work shifts extraction into the virtual realm, where the objects









24. EXTRACTION ARCH

200 x 100 cm

Thermoformed and silvered glass

Extraction Arch extends the EXTRACTION series, developed from a virtual quarry based on 3D scans of rocks. The scanned data is translated into a physical form through a sequence of transformations, where geological structures are reinterpreted through fabrication.

In this work, the process is applied to a reflective glass surface. Using silver rather than gold, the material produces a mirror-like effect, shifting the emphasis from colour to reflection.

The form responds directly to the exhibition space, echoing the arches of the former stables. Conceived as a passage to the outside, the reflective surface captures and redirects light, creating the impression of an opening rather than a solid structure.

