



Giulia Cenci, *dry salvages* (detail), 2023, installation view. Photo: Charlott Markus.

AMSTERDAM

## Giulia Cenci

P/////AKT PLATFORM FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Zeeburgerpad 53

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In his 1922 poem “The Waste Land,” T. S. Eliot describes an acute aridity: “Here is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road.” Giulia Cenci channels this concurrence of dryness and death in an installation that takes its title from another Eliot reference: *dry salvages*, 2023. The central installation comprises various sculptural assemblages in a syncopated spread throughout a large garagelike space that gives the scene the semblance of an abattoir. Each structure deploys variations of similar elements—reclaimed shower cabins, animal mannequins, a sculpted human head, the occasional organic matter—to suggest compartmentalized displays of the desiccated skeletons of unidentifiable animals.

Cenci deliberately positions these objects so as to recall the preservation methods of dehydrated bodies. By using shower cabins—elements traditionally associated with hygiene—to encase them, the artist charges the fragments with a potential for water that will never be realized. Water makes life possible, but it also represents a means of social control over the individual, intimacy, and privacy, as symbolized by the memory of bodies that have passed through these shower doors.

Mixing in elements of horror and science fiction, Cenci creates a parallel world in which visitors find themselves to be the actors populating the room. The frosted glass obscures not only the plaster sculptures, but also fellow viewers as they attempt to observe the scene. More slyly, the show serves as a material provocation in this city famous for its waterways, which recently battled a drought so severe that hunger stones started to reveal themselves amid the rocks upstream.

— *Angels Miralda*

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