

Residency of the creative artist
STEFAN SHANKLAND with ECT
May to November
2022

EXPÉRIMENT*TERRE*

Retrospect on Stefan Shankland's residency: artistic research into the
materials, sites and know-how of the ECT group

STEFAN SHANKLAND
27 October 2022

EXPÉRIMENTERRE

CREATIVE ARTIST RESIDENCY

from May to November 2022

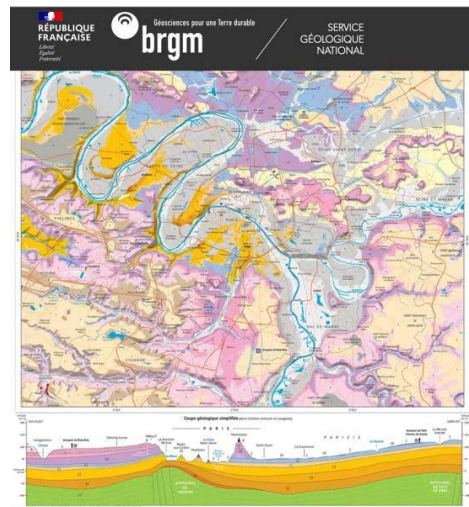
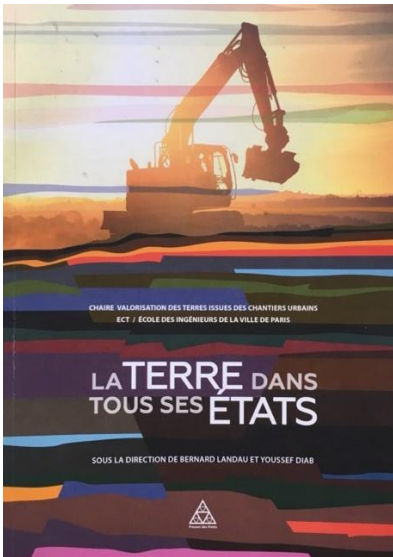
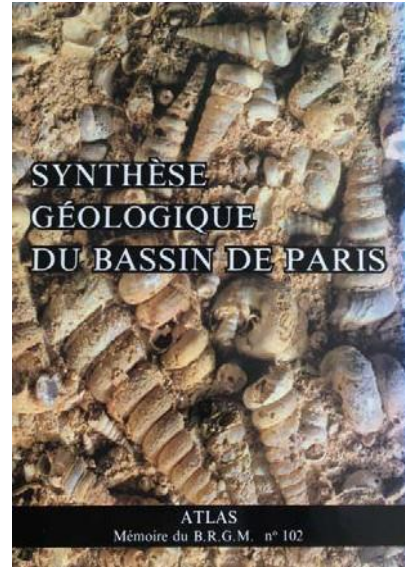
Between May and September 2022 I carried out a set of exploratory research projects connected with the management of excavated earth; soil produced by groundworks operations in the Île- de-France region, soil from the tunnel boring machines of the Grand Paris Express, rubble, spoil and other inert soil being handled by the ECT group.

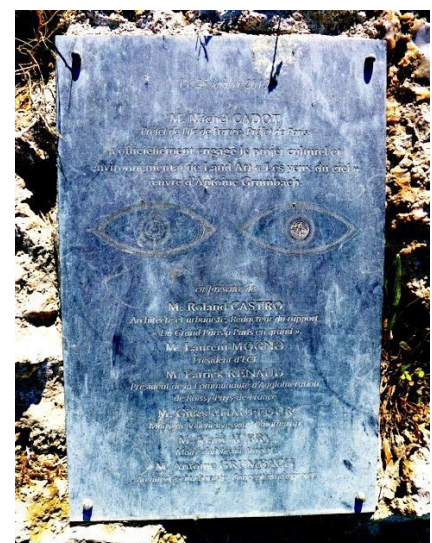
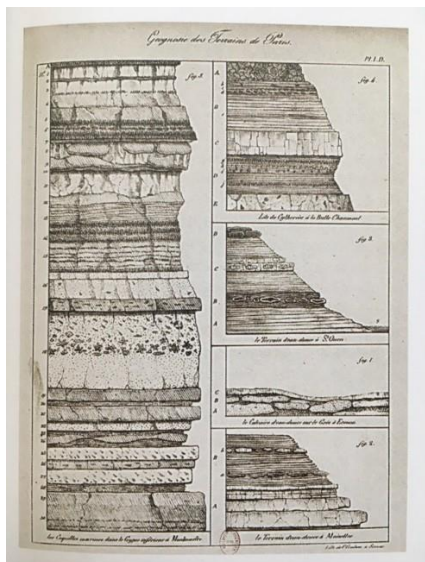
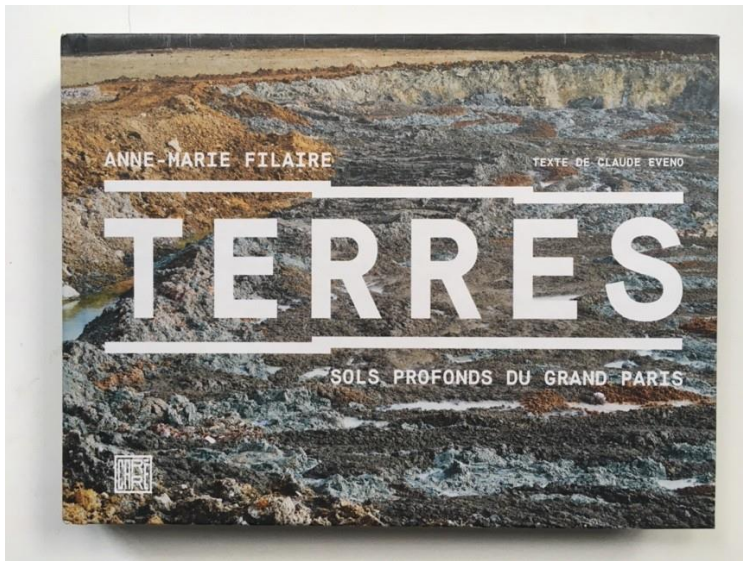
The research was enriched by visits to sites where excavated soil is deposited (at Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Annet-sur-Marne and Chelles); by collecting material (inert soil and soil from tunnel boring machines); by taking photographs during site visits; by meetings and conversations (with ECT staff - geologists, engineers, specialist tradespeople and designers); by consulting documents connected with the activities of the ECT group, the management of excavated soil and the geology of the Île- de-France region; and by a workshop carried out at Ivry-sur-Seine.

The main aim of this residency was to make it possible to carry out fieldwork, experiments in the workshop, new meetings with experts and reading. This special time for research helped enhance a process of thought, and promoted the emergence of new avenues for artistic creation centred on excavated soil, soil from tunnel boring machines and inert waste managed by the ECT group.

This note summarises the propositions that have emerged from me artistic residency with ECT.







INVISIBLE MONUMENTS

Excavated soil: monumental yet invisible

The monumental quality of the quantities of excavated subsoil is impressive: Almost 20 million metric tonnes of soil are excavated every year in the Île-de-France region (of which 13 to 15 million are managed by the ECT group). Work on the Grand Paris Express alone generated almost 50 million cubic metres of soil. These very solid figures remain an abstraction which we are unable to connect with our experiences or with physical representations:

"50 million cubic metres." What is that? Where is that? What kind of thing is it?

The material "earth" remains invisible for most of us. No doubt we will never have before our eyes or in our hands even the smallest sample of earth removed from our deep subsoil by the tunnelling machines.

In the future we will use the public transport system and in our daily lives we will go through miles of tunnels. And from the windows of the Grand Paris Express, we will see "nothing".

The earth will escape us. Earth, or soil, will be no more than a word, an idea, a promise. An emptiness.

Stealth monuments

We see landfill cells, generally from some distance away, that form part of the wider man-made landscape of the Île-de-France. The elongated profiles of their retaining banks, their uniformity, the scale of them, which is hard to assess, the impossibility of walking around them or of grasping the overall layout — all of this gives them a kind of indecipherability.

These are monumental yet stealthy installations of which the real size, shape, nature, functioning and future are not grasped by those who pass close at hand. They are there, but they tell us nothing. These monumental installations are mute.

Beyond our experience

We see the horizontal retaining bank. We see it from below. In profile. Never from above. Never from inside. Except on satellite images - but they are only virtual.

Who has experienced a deposition site for excavated soil *from the inside*? Who has seen the earth from the tunnellers in its liquid, plastic state, poured into its centre? Who has set foot, or laid a hand, inside?

Behind these retaining banks, within these cells: several million cubic metres of ancestral geological strata, all mixed up by a tunneller set loose in the sub-basement of the Île-de-France in the 21st century. A myth? A reality!

Soil is everywhere / soil is nowhere

The deep earth is always *below the threshold of visibility*: beneath our feet; the other side of the hoarding around a building site from which the public are excluded; behind the retaining bank; over the horizon of the landfill cell, and covered forever beneath a layer of topsoil.

The invisibility, the lack of any scale, the lack of anything to represent excavated soil or soil produced by the tunnel boring machine of the GPExpress are one with those other monumental but equally fundamental and equally invisible things: the metropolis of infrastructure, the land of flows and networks, the urban metabolism, the invisible mountains of waste from the building and public works sector, the Anthropocene, which shapes the landscape and the world...

Negative monument

Negative: That which is contrary, the opposite, the inverse.

The negative of the tunnel borer's hole: a monument created from excavated soil.

Negative: that which is subtracted from, which is withdrawn from, which is invisibilised. That which resists our words, which is lacking in our representations, which is missing from our experience. Negative monument, negative landscape, negative material.

A site for deposition of excavated soils: an anti-monument?

Soil from the tunnel borer: anti-matter?

Manifesto

The work of the *land* artist is not limited to one situation or to the communication of one piece of information.

The land artist's work: To attempt to make visible, tangible, perceptible. To seek to produce a *positive* from a *negative*.

To make manifest from the latent, from the absent, from an invisible omnipresent.

PROJECT THUMBNAILS FROM EXPÉRIMENTERRE

A number of different avenues of technical research relating to the possible uses of excavated soil were explored during the EXPERIMENTERRE residency.

These enquiries and researches with a view to an artistic application concerned mainly:

A - The use of excavated soil in combination with hydraulic binders (realisation of volumes, sculptures, landscape installations).

B - The use of excavated soils as pigments (for printing and silk-screening).

C - The use of excavated soils as enamels (ceramics).

The project thumbnails assembled here are both the result of our researches and possible production routes that may be activated in future.

List of EXPÉRIMENTERRE project thumbnails:

Thumbnail no. 1: FEET ON THE GROUND

Thumbnail no. 2: TERRESTRIAL

Thumbnail no. 3: SUBSOIL

Thumbnail no. 4: TAKEN IN HAND

Thumbnail no. 5: RE-ONYX

Thumbnail no. 6: STRATIGRAPHY

Thumbnail no. 7: SILO

Thumbnail no. 8: TEST CYLINDER

Thumbnail no. 9: FLOW

Thumbnail no. 10: SPILL or CELL

Thumbnail no. 11: DOME

Thumbnail no. 12: DISC

Thumbnail n° 1

Name or title of project (provisional):

FEET ON THE GROUND

Project (simple description):

Monumental sculpture in rammed earth, of a foot placed on a stratified ground or plinth.

About:

A foot on a plinth, in a single piece, in a single material. The one indissociable from the other.

The plinth is extruded soil making visible the strata of the subsoil beneath the foot. The foot is likewise stratified, geological, petrified.

The clay foot of a Colossus.

A monument to the earth, to strata, to the passing of time, to man's effect on the earth, to the link between geological strata and human activity.

A monument for the Anthropocene.

Made in rammed earth from excavated soil, the plinth and foot are coloured with various excavated soils.

This monumental object is positioned at the entrance to one of ECT's sites. It is a sign.

It marks the entrance to a territory, to a world: a site on a monumental scale; a site where the human body is nothing and/or humanity has made itself into a geological force.

Material / technique for implementation

Soil from tunnel boring machines + hydraulic binder.

Technique of stucco moulding (or *jeté-moulé*) on a rough matrix made of concrete from recycled rubble.

Dimensions:

Proposal: 2.5 m (height) x 3 m (length) x 1.5 m (width).

That is about 6m³ of materials (soil, rubble and hydraulic binder).

To be defined depending on the project and site.

Site (of implementation or viewing)

Outdoor installation on a particular site and in a given location. At the entrance to one of the sites managed by ECT (?)

Creator(s), collaboration(s):

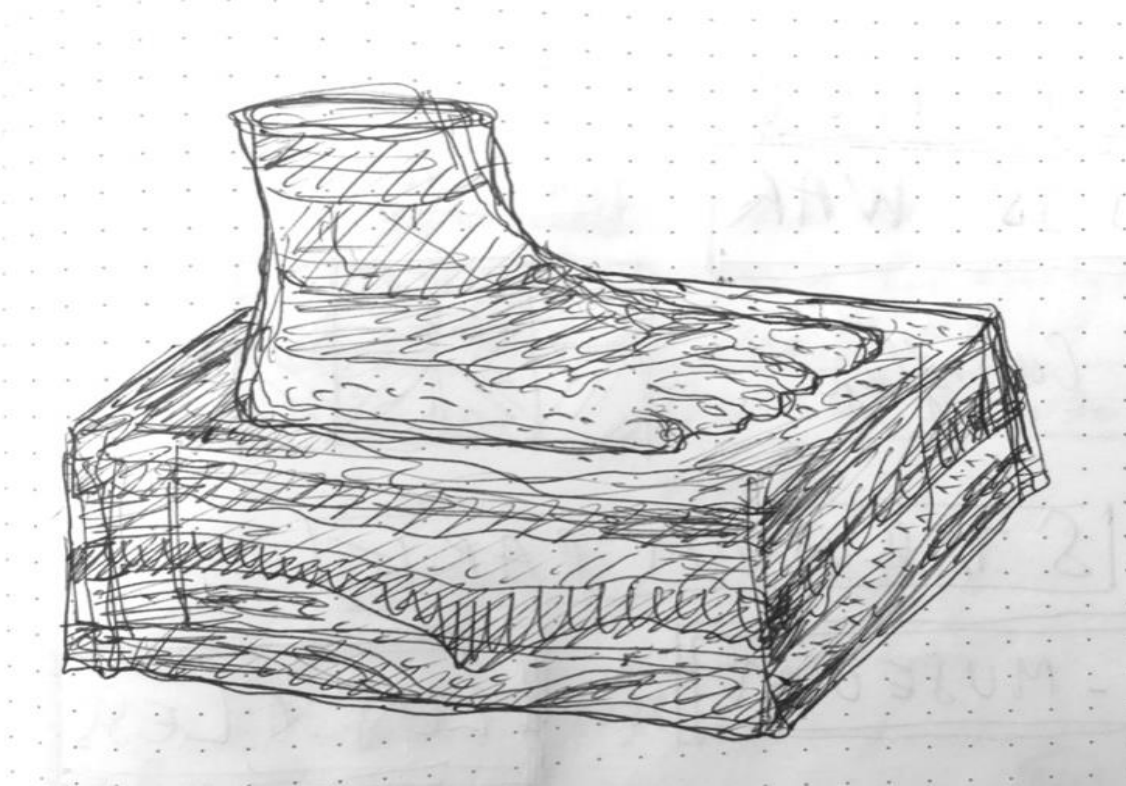
Stefan Shankland

Partners / providers:

CERIB (the concrete industry's centre for studies and research)

EFCAT concrete flooring (local advisers on *terrazzo*).

Thumbnail n° 1 — illustrations



Sketch, Stefan Shankland, 2022



Johann Heinrich Füssli, Detail from "The Artist's Despair Before the Grandeur of Ancient Ruins", 1778-1780 (Zurich, Kunsthaus)



Egyptian statuary

Thumbnail no. 2

Name or title of project (provisional):

TERRESTRIAL

Project (simple description):

Series. Foot scale: life size + stratified plinth. *Coulage* in soil + hydraulic binder.

About:

A foot on a plinth, the one indissociable from the other. The plinth and foot are made with the *coulage* technique, in a single piece in a mould. The *coulage* is done in strata with various layers of rammed earth coloured with samples of excavated soils.

Material / technique for implementation

Excavated soil, soil from tunnel boring machines + hydraulic binder. Technique: formwork / *coulage* in layers.

Limited edition: 20 no.

Dimensions:

25 cm (height) x 35 cm (length) x 20 cm (width.)

Creator:

Stefan Shankland



Alberto Giacometti, plinth and foot, detail of unfinished sculpture

Fragment of Egyptian sculpture

Feet of Clay, Bruce Nauman, 1970

Thumbnail no. 3

Name or title of project (provisional):

SUBSOIL

Project (simple description):

Silk screening with earth pigments

About:

The image is of a bare foot, below which there is highlighted that which is usually invisible: the subsoil made up of rubble, earth, rocks and strata. This X-ray detail from a painting by Leonardo da Vinci (The Holy Family) is printed by silk screening (1 to 3 colours) on paper. The ink used is produced from pigments from excavated soil, or from soil from the tunnel boring machines of the GPEXpress.

An image of the subsoil, made with the material of the subsoil itself.

Material / technique for implementation

Pigments from excavated soil or soil from tunnel boring machines + binder. Printed by silk screening. Limited edition (25 no.)

Dimensions:

60 x 80 cm

Creator:

Stefan Shankland



Soil pigments, Stefan Shankland



Léonard de Vinci, detail of the Holy Family, radiography

Thumbnail no. 4

Name or title of project (provisional):

TAKEN IN HAND

Project (simple description):

Screen-printed images presenting a series of hands in contact with excavated soil, inert soil and rubble.

About:

To hold in your hands that which is lacking from our representations, that which is missing from our perceptions, that which is without value, without interest, negative: subsoil, excavated soil, waste. To make portraits with it: hand + material.

A series of images of inert waste materials, produced by silk-screening using the material itself. A self-portrait or a tautological image of the material and the hand that holds it.

Material / technique for implementation

Silk screening (1 to 3 colours) on paper. The ink used is produced from pigments from excavated soil, from broken rubble or from soil from the tunnel boring machines of the GPEXpress.

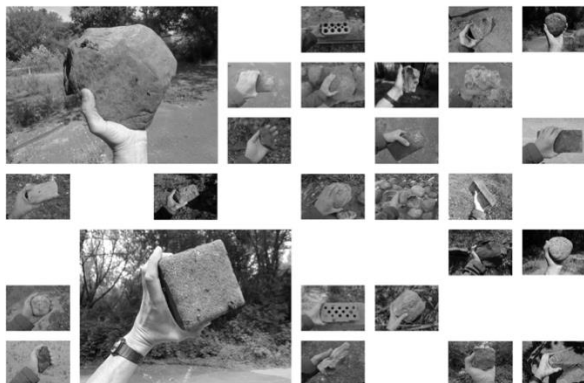
Dimensions:

Variable

Creator:

Stefan Shankland

HAND / STONES



Stefan Shankland 2019-2022



Stefan Shankland 2022

Thumbnail no. 5

Name or title of project (provisional):

RE-ONYX

Project (simple description):

Textile hanging printed with earth pigments.

Motif: Onyx stone in Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona pavilion.

About:

Remake of an iconic *motif* from Modernist architecture: the room divider created in onyx stone by the architect Mies van der Rohe for his Barcelona pavilion.

The stratigraphy of the natural stone becomes a decorative motif.

The hardness of the rock is replaced by the undulation of a textile hanging. The extraction of a top-quality mineral is replaced by the recycling of used materials.

The colours are those of excavated soil deposited on the sites managed by ECT.

Material / technique for implementation

Printing on textile

Dimensions:

Variable

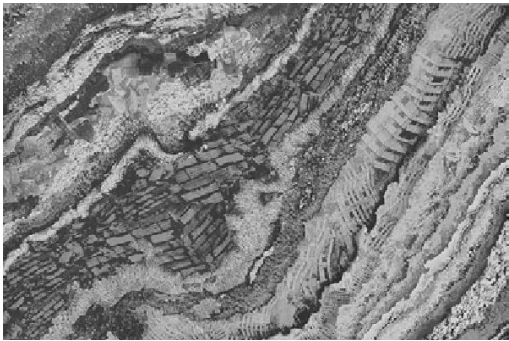
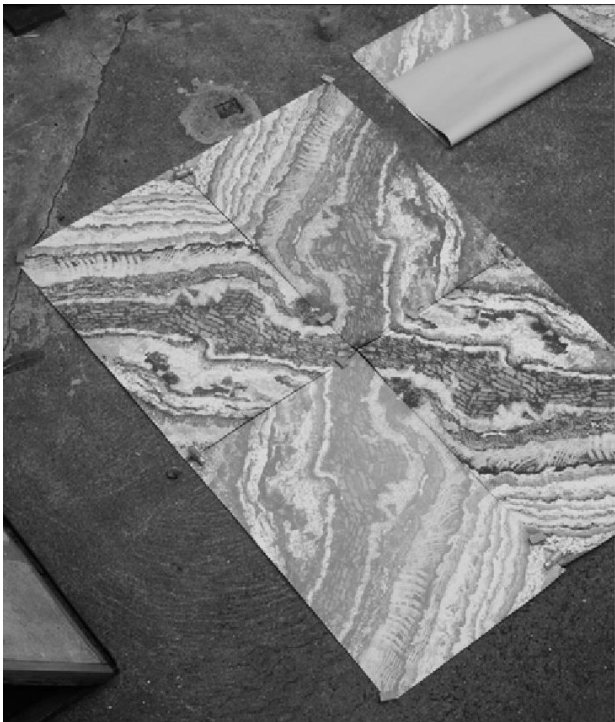
Creator(s) / collaboration(s):

Stefan Shankland. A collaboration with Anna Saint Pierre (textile designer).



Mies van der Rohe, pavilion, Barcelona, 1929

Thumbnail no. 5 — illustrations (continued)



Stefan Shankland, 2017-2022

Thumbnail no. 6

Name or title of project (provisional):

STRATIGRAPHY

Project (simple description):

Wall-hanging created on mesh tarpaulin or directly onto a façade with paints produced using earth pigments.

About:

To make use of soil – invisible media — to make a sign.

Creation of a simple repetitive motif that can be deployed on a large scale, on a rectangular surface or along a site hoarding.

A creation to be positioned at the entrance to an ECT site, on site installations, on the sides of a covered storage area, or on the gates or hoardings surrounding an active site.

Material / technique for implementation

Excavated soil or soil from tunnel boring machines + binder. Synthetic mesh textiles, tarpaulins.

Dimensions:

Variable.

To be defined depending on the project and site.

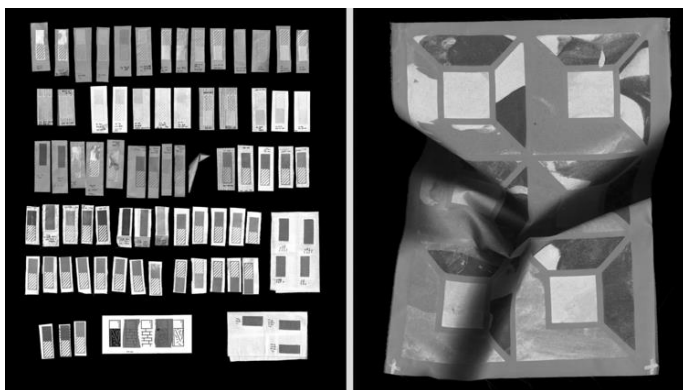
Site (of implementation or viewing)

Installation outdoors, on installations managed by ECT (site cabins, industrial buildings, hoardings, fences).

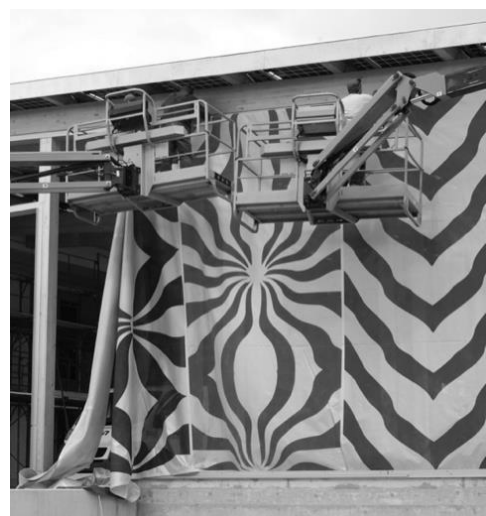
Creator(s), collaboration(s):

Stefan Shankland

With Anna Saint Pierre (creator of textiles) and Super Terrain (graphic designers).



Pigments from rubble, on textile, Anna Saint-Pierre



Thumbnail no. 7

Name of title of project (provisional):

SILO

Project (simple description):

Cylindrical, stratified monumental sculpture in rammed earth from excavated soils.

About:

A sculpture-monument in the form of a core sample or test cylinder of rammed earth.

A monolith which places before the viewer something normally down in the subsoil: soil, geological strata.

A monument to strata, to human activity, to the passing of time.

A monument to the Anthropocene: to humanity as a geological force in this new epoch.

An *in situ* installation created in rammed earth made with excavated soil.

A monumental object to be positioned on the summit of one of the ECT sites that is being rewilded. A memory of this universe of soils, mineral, which will again be covered by vegetation.

Material / technique for implementation

Soil from tunnel boring machines + inert rubble + hydraulic binder

Technique of stucco moulding (*jeté-moulé*) on a rough matrix made of concrete from recycled rubble. Or formwork with a mould-release agent and a *coulage* of rammed earth.

Dimensions:

Proposal: 5 m (height) x 2.4 m (dia.)

The monument consists of a hollow cylinder (15-30 cm wall thickness)

It requires about 5m³ of materials (soil, rubble and hydraulic binder).

To be defined depending on the project and site.

Site (of implementation or viewing)

A sculpture to be sited in an area open to the public, outdoors, at the summit of one of the ECT sites being rewilded.

Creator(s), collaboration(s):

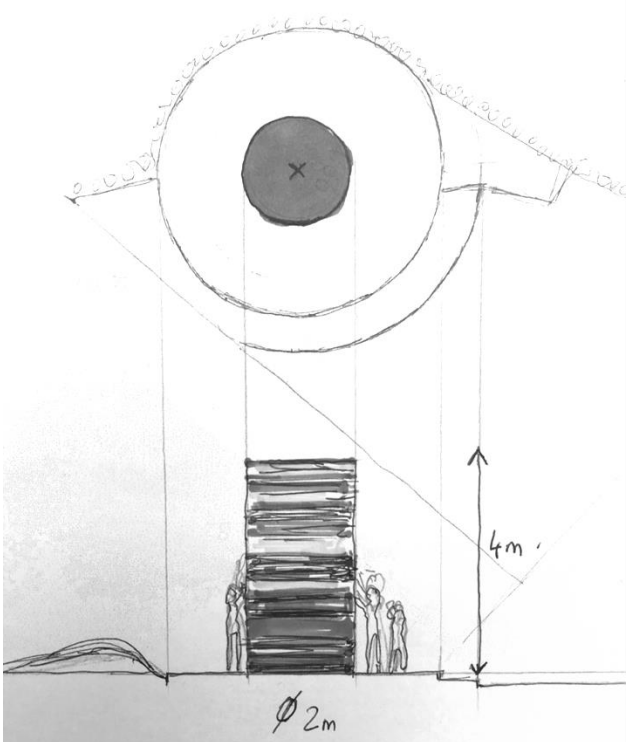
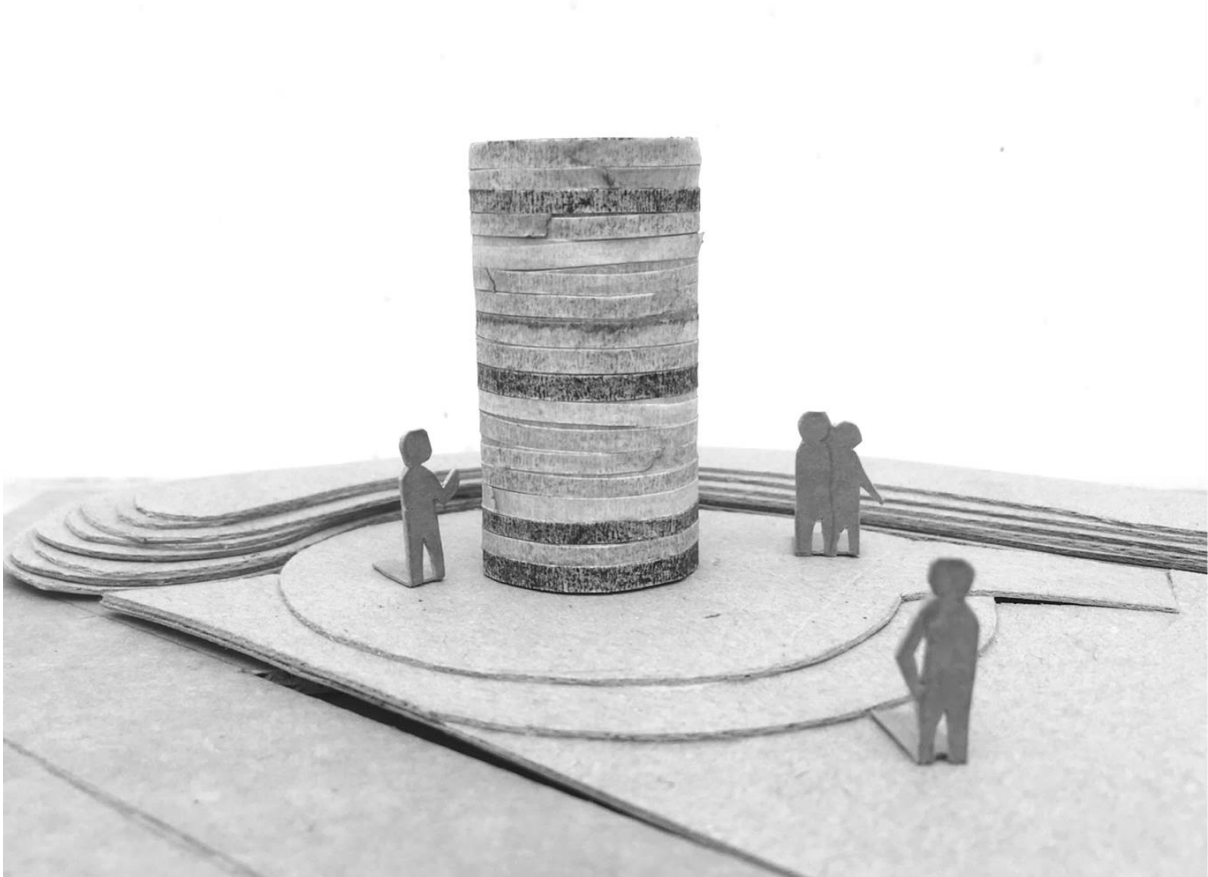
Stefan Shankland

Partners / providers:

CERIB (the concrete industry's centre for studies and research)

EFCAT concrete flooring (local advisers on *terrazzo*).

Thumbnail no. 7 — illustrations (continued)



Stefan Shankland 2022

Thumbnail no. 8

Name or title of project (provisional):

TEST CYLINDER

Project (simple description):

Creation of a series in the form of life-size test cylinders, made using "soil from here".
***Coulage* in strata of rammed excavated soil, or soil from the tunnel boring machines + hydraulic binder.**

Material / technique for implementation

Excavated soil or soil from tunnel boring machines + hydraulic binder.

Technique using formwork / *coulage* in strata.

Limited edition (20 no.)

Dimensions:

22 cm (height) x 11 cm (dia.)

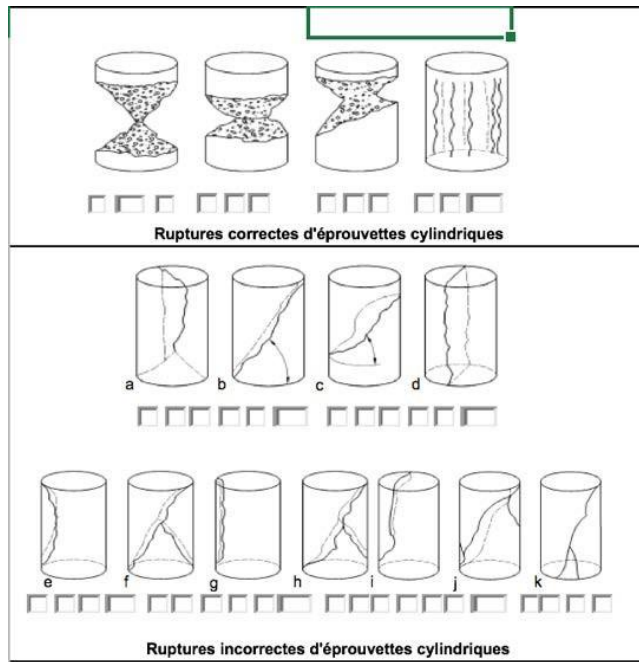
Creator:

Stefan Shankland

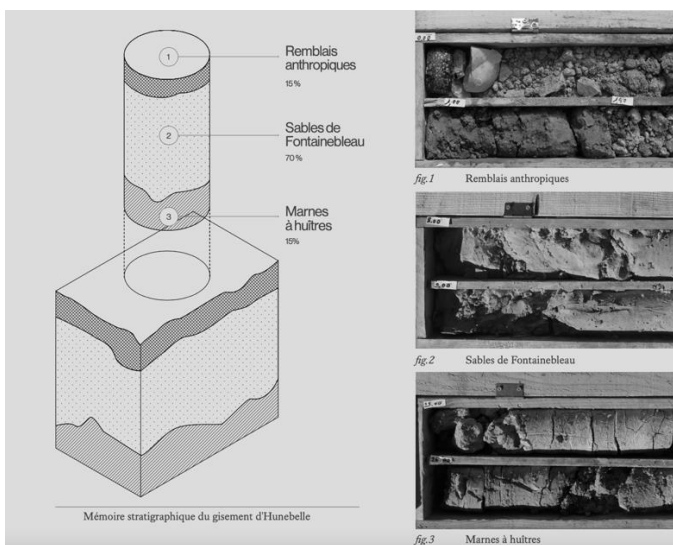


Stefan Shankland, pisé test cylinders, 2020

Thumbnail no. 8 — illustrations (continued)



Stefan Shankland, Test cylinders, rammed earth, 2020



Core sampling

Thumbnail no. 9

Name or title of project (provisional):

FLOW

Project (simple description):

Stratified monumental installation in rammed earth from recycled soil and rubble

About:

A sculpture-monument in the form of a petrified flow of soil.

A monument that preserves the trace of a moment, of a movement, of a time: that of the work of filling the cells for soil from the GPEXpress.

A monumental installation to be positioned on one of the old ECT sites, transformed into a public space. A trace of this universe of liquid earth, and movements of a terrain that has now been stabilised.

Material / technique for implementation

Soil from tunnel boring machines + inert rubble + hydraulic binder

Technique of stucco moulding (*jeté-moulé*) on a rough matrix made of concrete from recycled rubble.

Dimensions:

Proposal: 2 m (height) x 150m² surface area.

To be defined depending on the project and site.

Site (of implementation or viewing)

A sculpture to be positioned in an area open to the public / outdoors, on one of the old ECT sites.

Creator(s), collaboration(s):

Stefan Shankland

Partners / providers:

CERIB (the concrete industry's centre for studies and research)

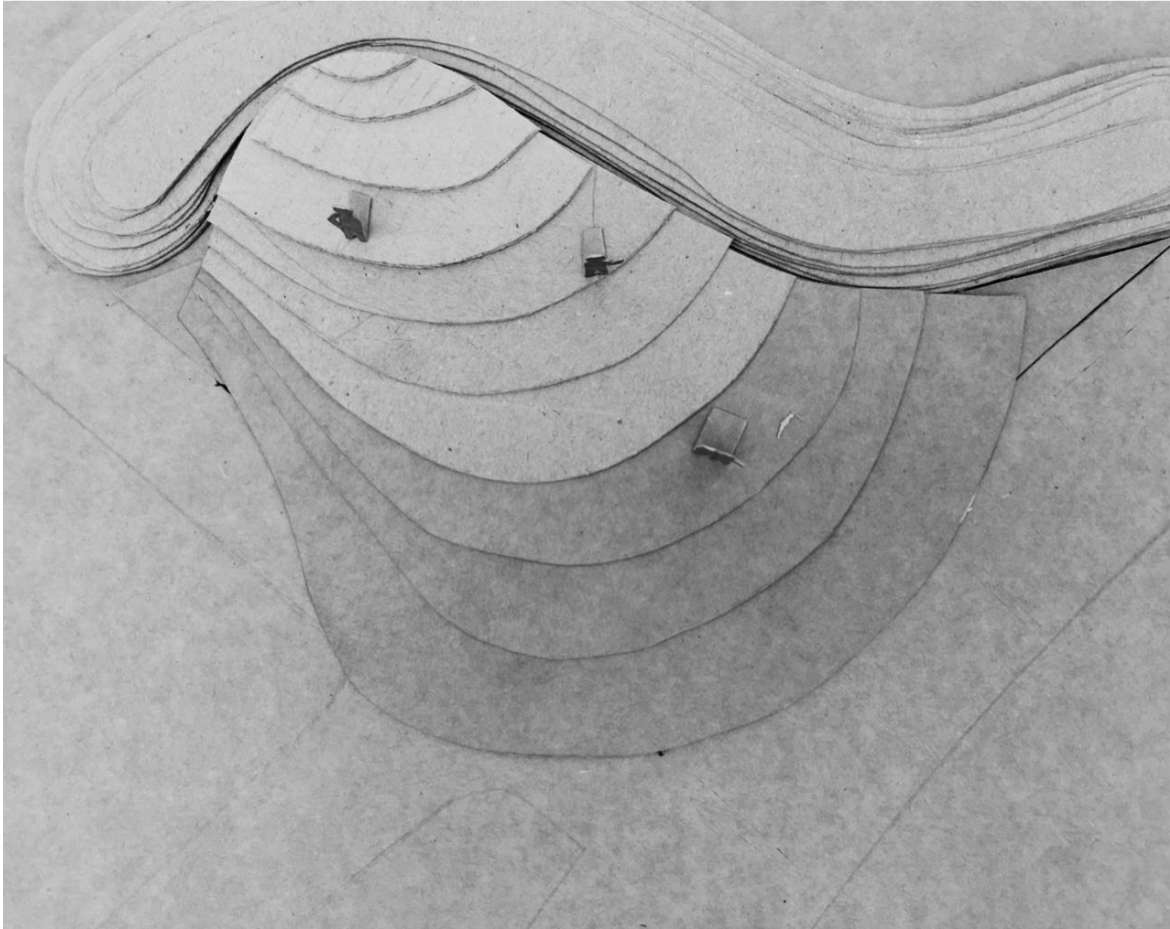
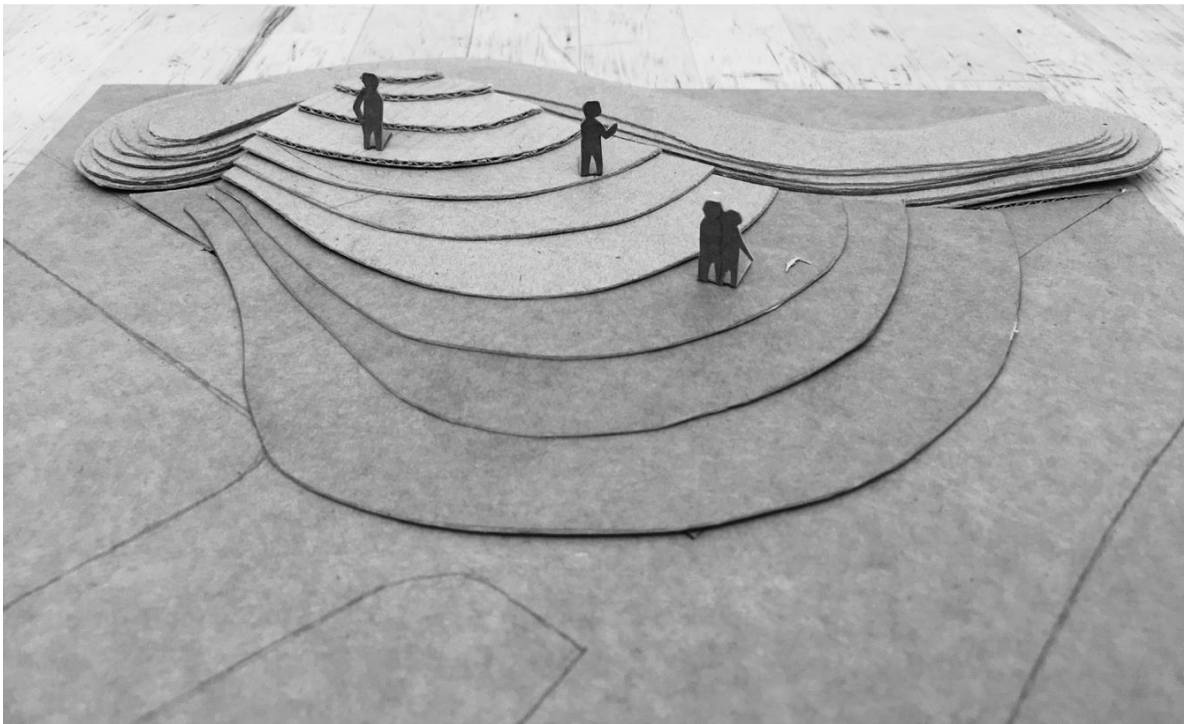
EFCAT concrete flooring (local advisers on *terrazzo*).



Mud flow, Villeneuve site, ECT.

Photograph Stefan Shankland 2022

Thumbnail no. 9 — illustrations (continued)



Stefan Shankland, Maquettes, 2022

Thumbnail no. 10

Name or title of project (provisional):

LANDFILL CELL

Project (simple description):

Creation of series in porcelain with enamels produced with earth pigments

Material / technique for implementation

Porcelain + earth enamels

Limited edition. Each piece is unique (different enamels)

Dimensions:

30 cm (length) x 20 cm (width) x 5 cm (height)

Creator:

Stefan Shankland

with Anna Saint Pierre (designer)



Stefan Shankland 2022

Thumbnail no. 10 — illustrations (continued)



fig.4 Vase-nuancier et vase-ardoise « grand-feu »,
porcelaine.

Anna Saint Pierre, 2019



Stefan Shankland, 2022

Thumbnail no. 11

Name or title of project (provisional):

DOME

Project (simple description):

Monumental sculpture in recycled rubble and ceramic tiles with enamels from earth pigments.

About:

A sculpture-monument in the form of an emerging dome.

A monument recalling a bygone world: that of the working site and a mineral landscape in movement.

A monumental sculpture to be positioned on one of the old ECT sites transformed into a public space. A trace of a world that is now buried.

Material / technique for implementation

Inert soils and rubble + hydraulic binder

Ceramic tiles with enamels from earth pigments.

Dimensions:

Proposal: 1.5 m (height) x 3 to 6 m (dia.)

To be defined depending on the project and site.

Site (of implementation or viewing)

A sculpture to be positioned in a public space on one of the old ECT sites.

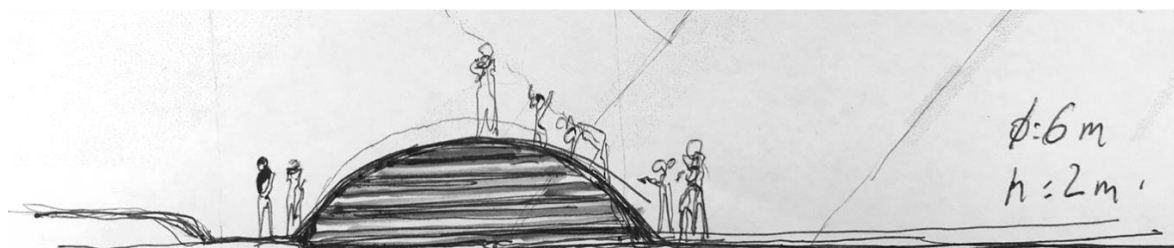
Creator(s), collaboration(s):

Stefan Shankland

Partners / providers:

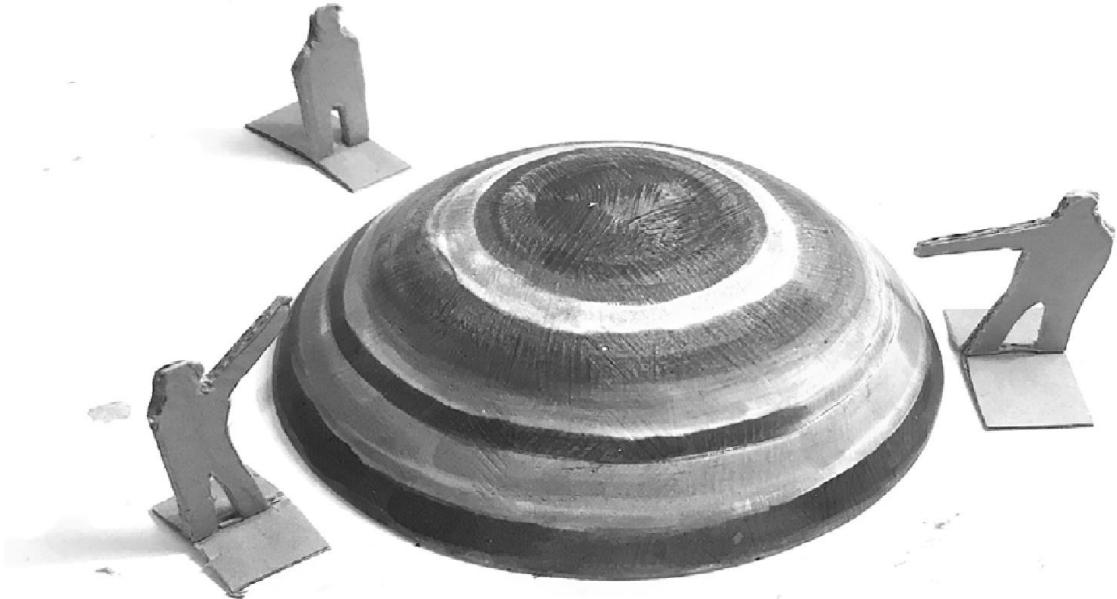
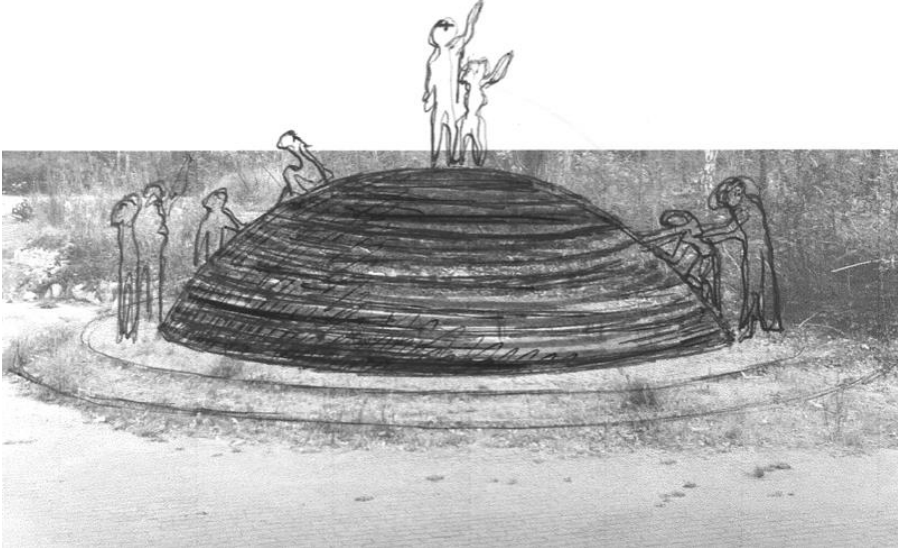
EFCAT concrete flooring (local advisers on *terrazzo*).

La Manufacture de Sèvres (ceramicists)



Dome, Stefan Shankland, 2022

Thumbnail no. 11 — illustrations (continued)



Dome, Stefan Shankland, 2022

Thumbnail no. 12

Name or title of project (provisional):

DISC

Project (simple description):

Creation of series in porcelain with enamels produced with earth pigments

Material / technique for implementation

Porcelain + earth enamels

Limited edition. Each piece is unique (different enamels)

Dimensions:

25 cm (dia.) x 5 cm (height)

Creator:

Stefan Shankland

Partners / providers:

La Manufacture de Sèvres (ceramicists)



Disc, Stefan Shankland, 2022

Thumbnail no12 – illustrations (continued)



Disc, Stefan Shankland, 2022

Atelier / **MARBRE D'ICI**

Stefan Shankland

67, rue Maurice Gunsbourg, 94200 Ivry-sur-Seine
s.shankland@free.fr 33 (0)6 13 24 05 61

Affiliation à la maison des artistes : S 167 604
SIRET : 423 933 100 00020 TVA intracommunautaire : FR 1142393310000020