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Anne Duk Hee Jordan Creates Moving Sculptures

by iGNANT

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From a mummified cat standing on a shelf to medicinal jars filled with unidentifiable objects, artist Anne Duk Hee Jordan's studio appears to be part-natural history museum, part-metal workshop. You can hardly walk through the space without encountering strange stone specimens or striking contraptions.

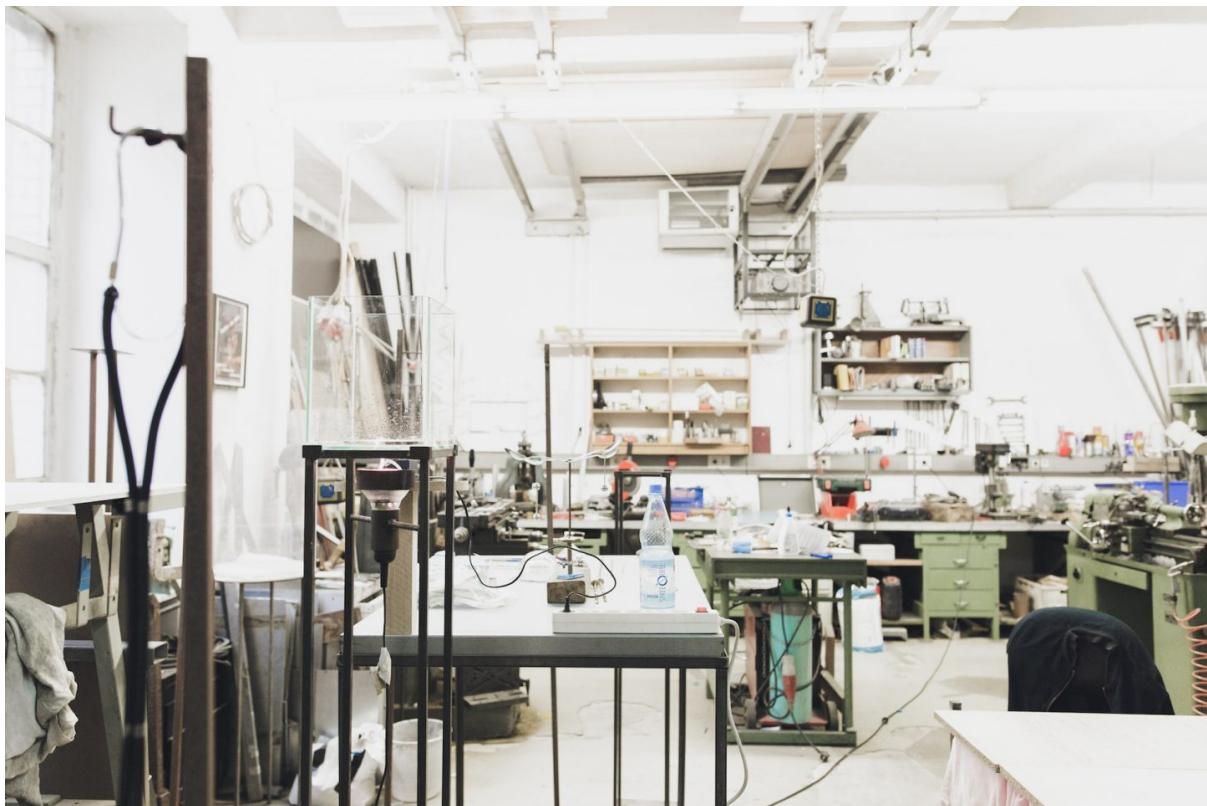
One thing that's hard to ignore upon entering Jordan's studio is a recurring bubbling noise, which originates from a deceptively simple-looking standing structure that consists of a light connected to a pump spewing water into a glass box periodically. Like many of her works, the model explores movement in sculpture. Jordan, who attended Berlin Weissensee School of Art before participating in Olafur Eliasson's Institute for Spatial Experiments, considers herself first and foremost a sculptor.

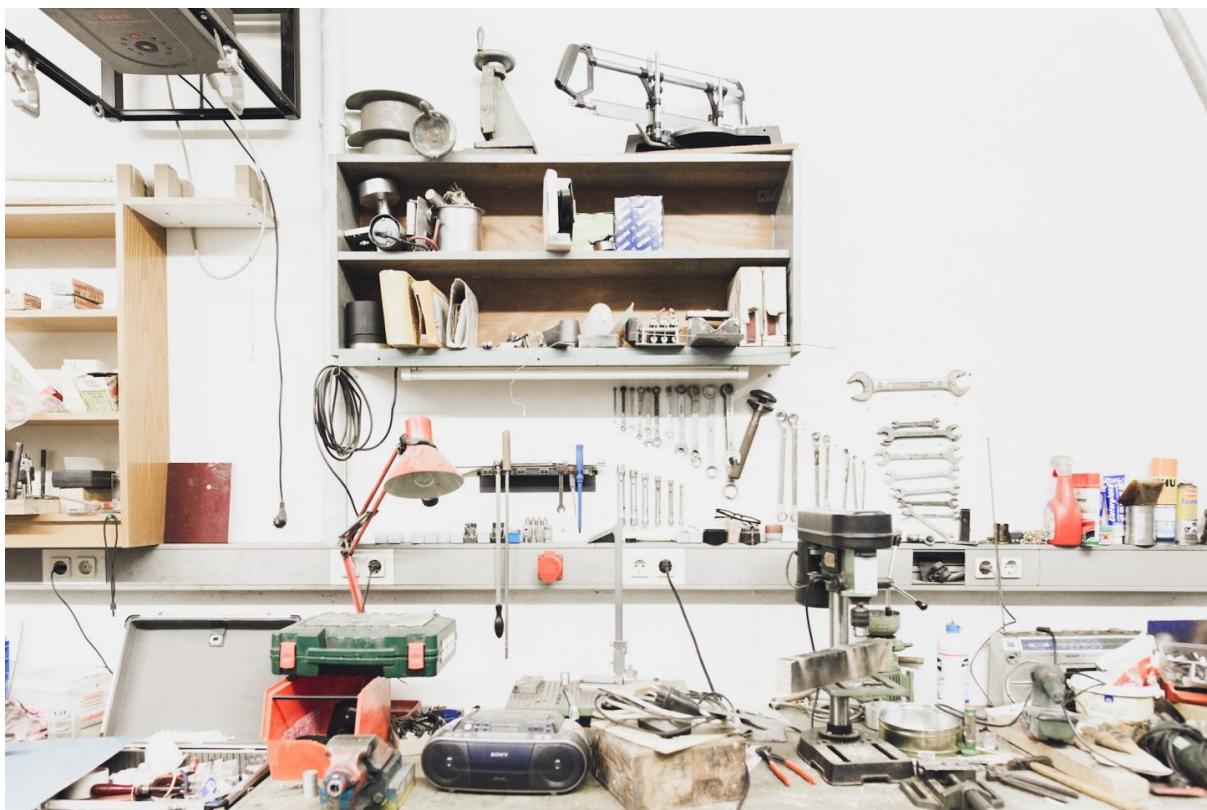
Ultimately, she's trying to "give materiality another dimension" through movement and performance.

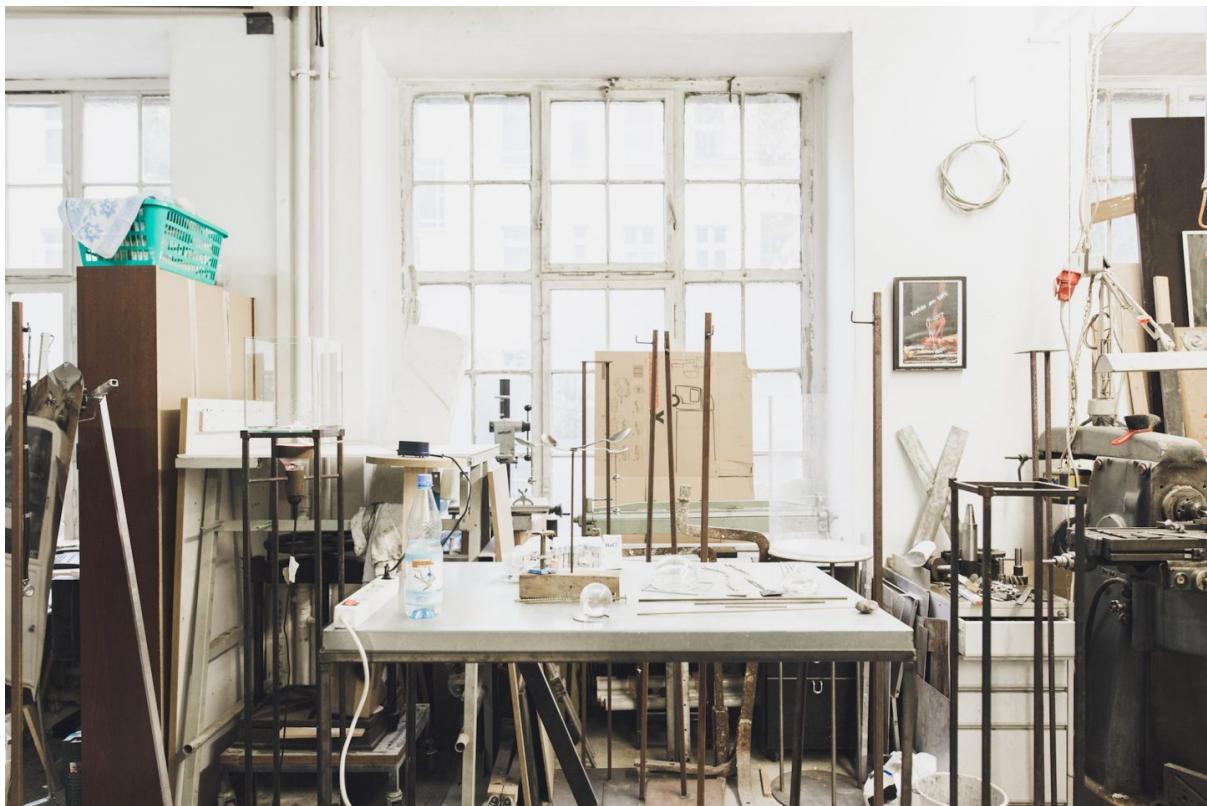
During a visit to Jordan's studio in Berlin where she mostly conducts research and builds models, we chatted about where her interest in art stems from, what her creative process is like and how all of her pieces are related to one another.













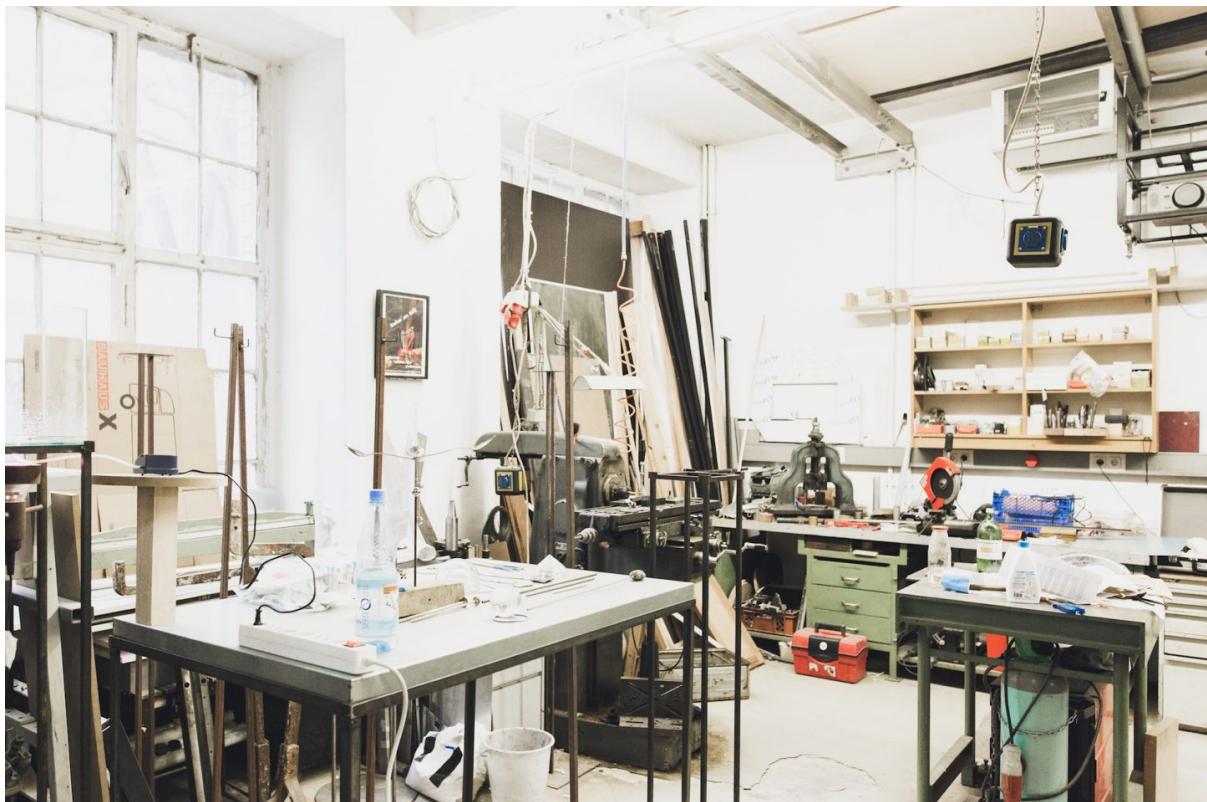
Before you began studying art, you were an occupational therapist... Can you talk a bit about how that transition came about? Were you always interested in art?

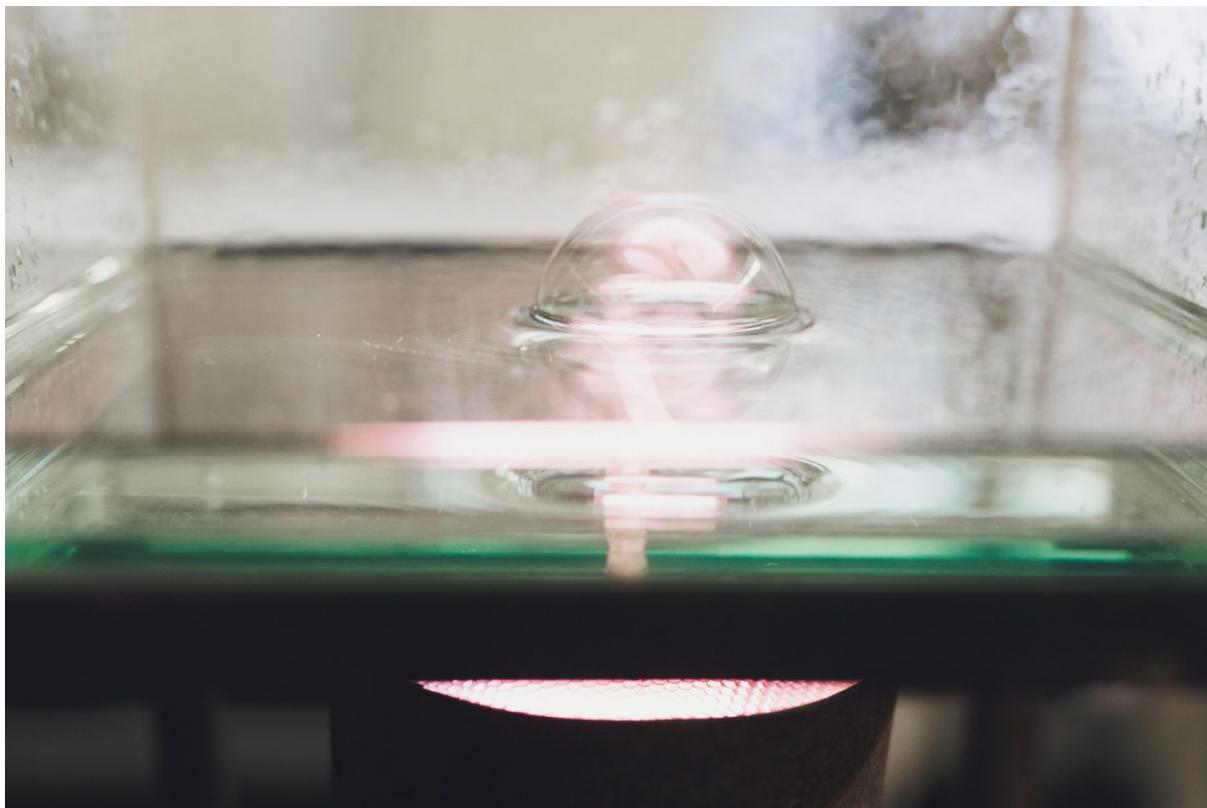
Anne Duk Hee Jordan: So my father, who's an engineer, had a construction company and I grew up in that kind of environment and learned quite early on how to use big tools and drive all these big machines. It was the most fun I had as a child – building and creating things.

And this was always in me and I don't really know why I studied therapy... it was just like a side thing. I think I was more interested in the psyche, the brain and the mind, which I'm still interested in. But actually, I still work as a therapist once a week. Most of the kids I work with are like four years old and have autism, which is also interesting.

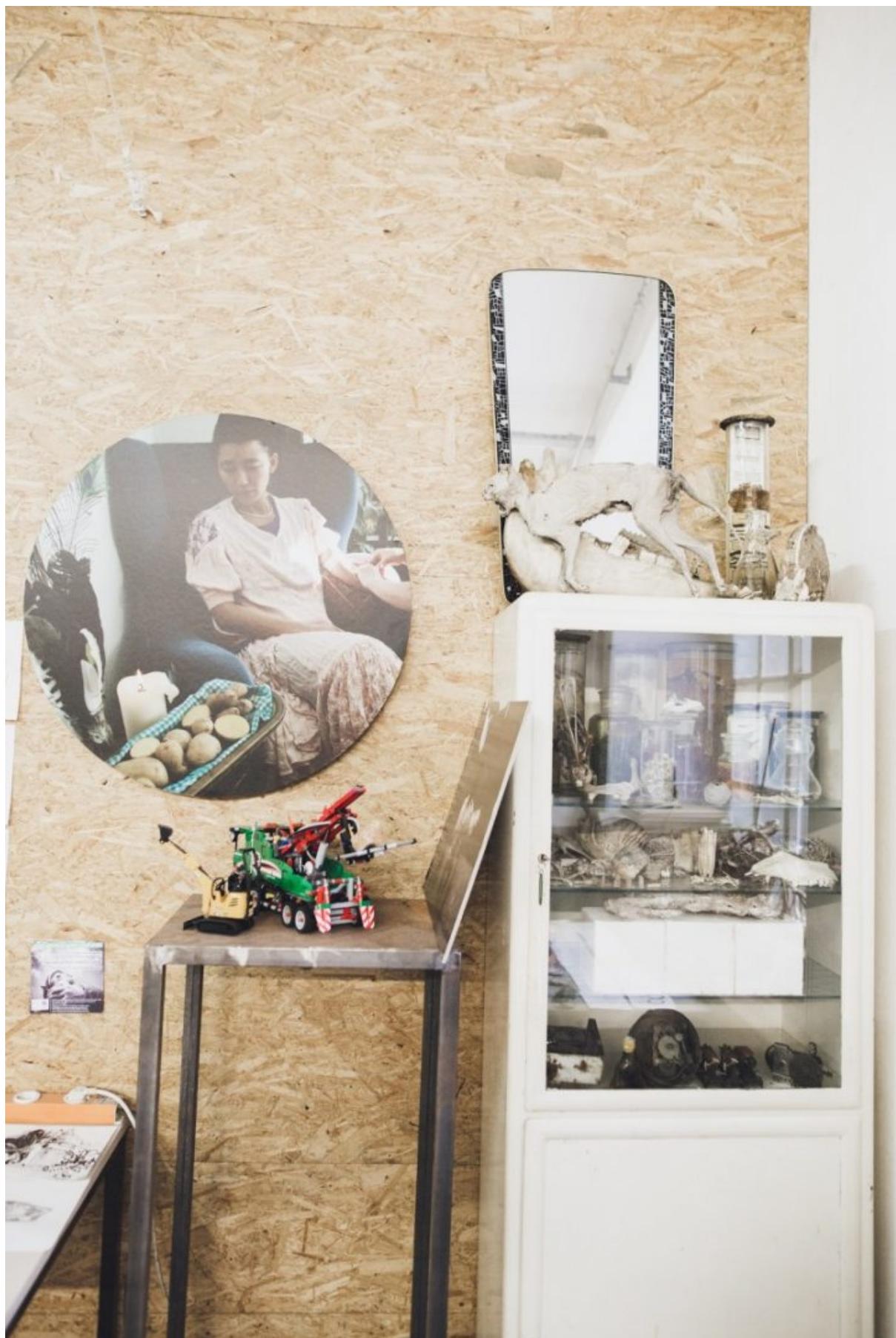
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In three of your artworks, titled the *Stone Series*, you explore the symbolic meaning of stones in different geographic contexts – in Afghanistan, Morocco, Iceland – and the ever-evolving myths that accompany them. How do you typically start your research process for your pieces? Is the impetus usually from a personal experience or something from books?

Anne Duk Hee Jordan: It's usually history and news... And it's also something that comes from inside that makes me automatically start delving into one topic. For example, the stones, I've been working with them for years and then it follows up in other pieces and follows up and follows up... For me, it's important that the stones have a connection to our environment, histories, wars – these things which are so sad and also a tragedy. And once it's in my head, it begins to stir and then I start to draw or to write down ideas.

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Your recent piece at NON Gallery, 'Stone Project N.5', features volcanic stones. Can you talk a bit about that installation and how it came about?

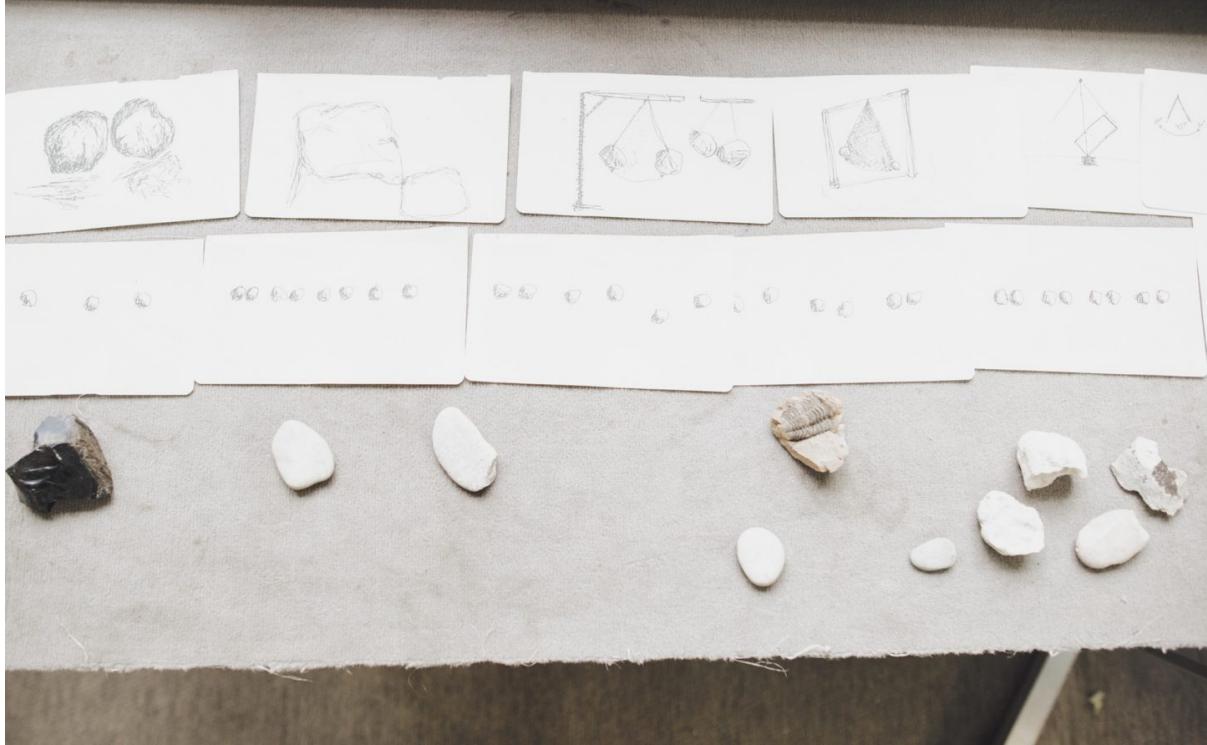
Anne Duk Hee Jordan: I made a big pendulum with stones that swing because it is connected to motors, but also because of the natural forces that act when pendulums work... So these two stones are engaged with each other through that and, eventually, they start to synchronize in motions – which is pretty crazy. This for instance [*points at a model*], is the research that I did for the pendulum. I wanted to have a magnetic field at first, because I thought it'd be interesting to see how the movements work. Each ball is a magnet and creates a really small movement, but they still interact with each other. But it's not possible to create this installation with magnetism at NON, so I decided to go with the swing of the pendulum, which also has a lot of power. A lot of the piece is about space, time, setting and our own interactions, and that's why I wanted to show this through a big pendulum, which is like a threat that constantly comes up.

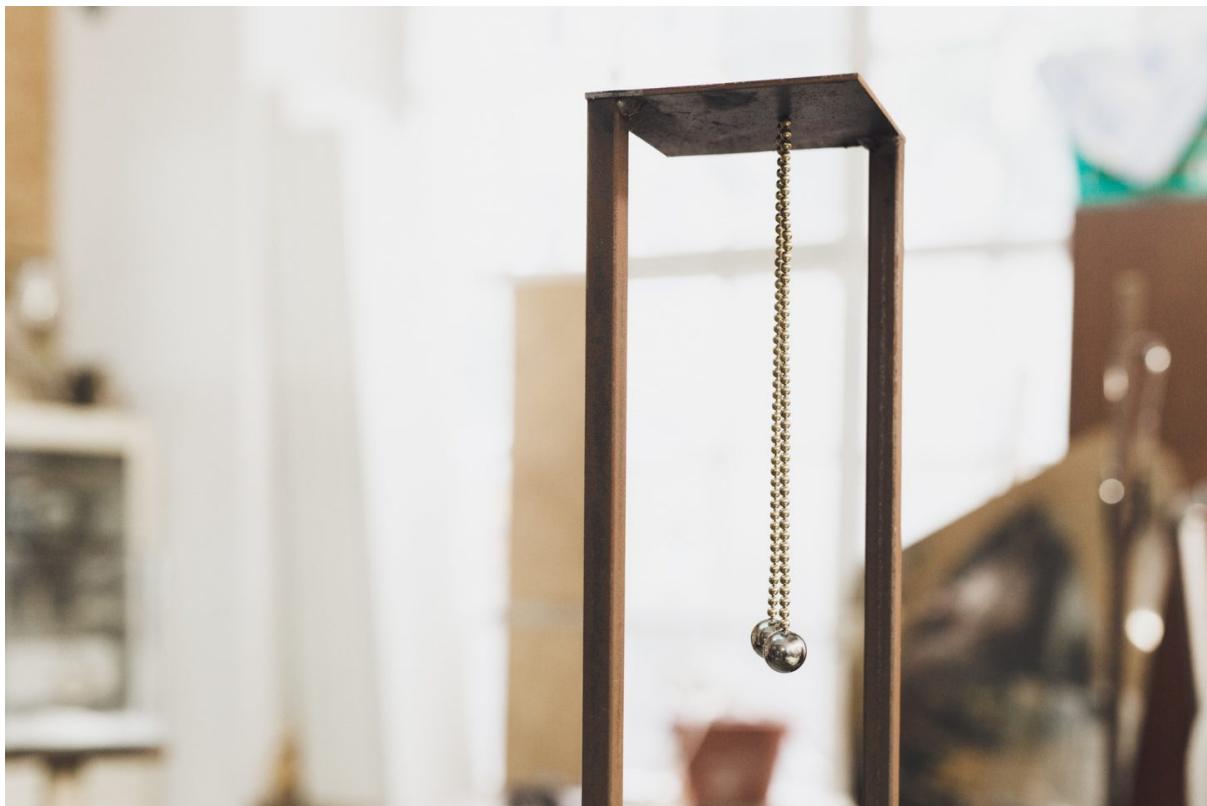
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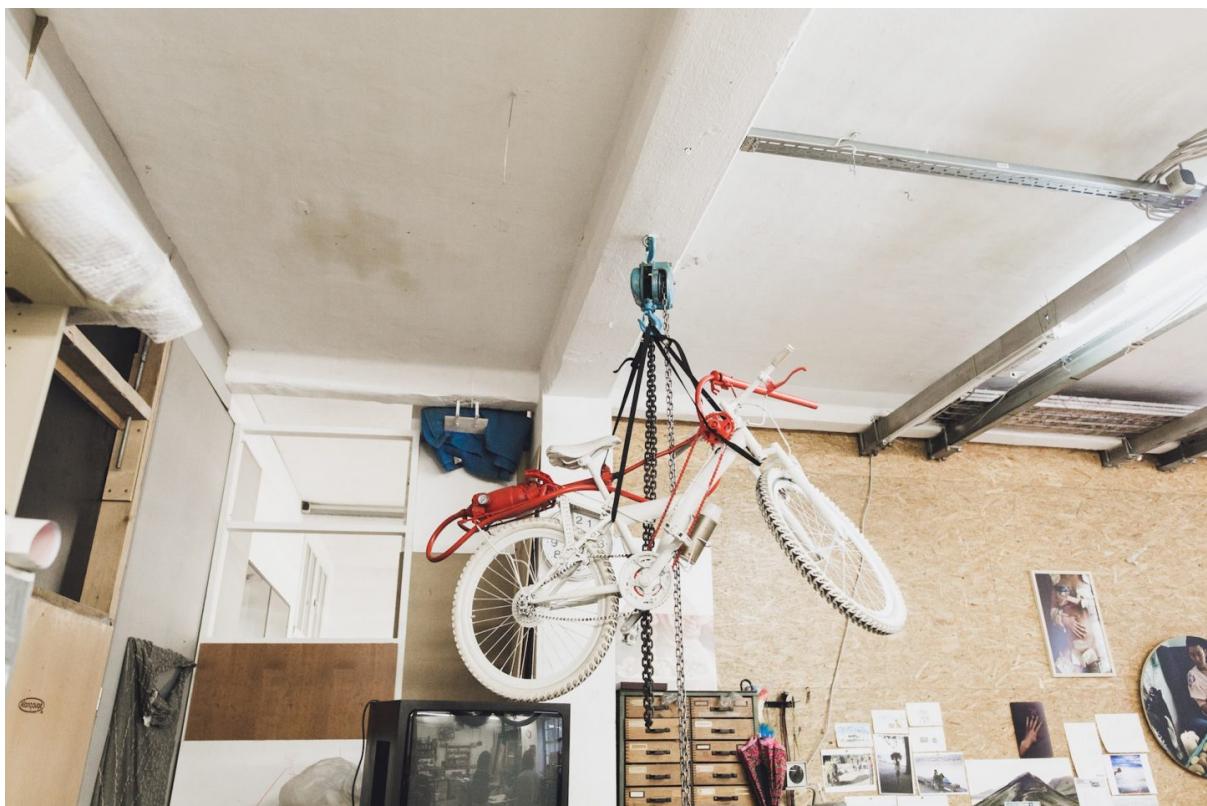


Much of your artworks create a dialogue between science, art and philosophy. Why are you drawn to these particular areas?

Anne Duk Hee Jordan: Because everything is related to this and builds up to it. Even though we don't see them, they're always with us – and in us. Also, I'm interested in how we are in the world and how we engage in our environmental setting. I believe that you can only understand things on a bigger scale when you understand it on a smaller scale. This is why I have all these small things here.

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Photos by [Ana Šantl](#), Interview and text by [Charmaine Li](#)