

## Mathilde ter Heijne

### Ontology of the In-Between

The skull of a primeval fossil protrudes here, the femur of a powerful dinosaur there. And isn't that a petrified whale? Visitors entering Mathilde ter Heijne's exhibition "Ontology of the In-Between" might, at first glance, feel as if they are in a paleontologist's storehouse.

With a closer look, the five objects on view do not lead us to the Mesozoic era but rather to the origins of human culture in the Neolithic. For nearly ten years, the Dutch artist has been engaged with the possibilities offered by the transformation of artifacts from the Stone Age—magical abstractions of man and woman that, though clearly sexualized, admit of no unambiguous attribution of gender. The artifacts are tiny. The largest measures not more than seven inches—a phallus with breasts and the face of a stick figure excavated in Hungary, dating from the sixth millennium BCE, which the artist presents as a forty-five-inch-tall sculpture of fired clay in *Experimental Archeology: Ontology of the In-Between; G.*, all works 2014. Like the others, this piece came into being as part of a three-day collective performance that combined the firing of the figures with a shamanistic rite. Anyone who thinks that ter Heijne wanted to sign up for the esoteric scene will learn better from her presentation: the functional shipping containers, crates, lids, and aluminum tubing here are all part of this sculpture, incorporated into its vertically exaggerated scale. With aesthetic cunning, the show charmingly switches the mind-set of the observer to that of the in-between.

*Translated from German by Diana Reese.*



View of "Ontology of the In-Between," 2015.

— Max Glauner