

Nomads

'Nomads' are morphological creatures: heating oil tanks used as bodies, shells with limbs constructed from steel pipes. As a group they are connected by a maze of these pipes. The pipes and tanks as sculptures represent an unnatural habitat, an altered terrain in which animals and humans live. Each tank is treated differently and the installation expands into whatever space it occupies, and connects physically into that space. Gestural and animal-like qualities imply the possibility of movement which has somehow been frozen.

Sandblasting the tanks is one exploration, to further recontextualize them as sculptures, and through rust patterns record the passage of time. Some of the tank interiors contain backlit pink fibreglas insulation forms which are vaguely figurative and also read as fat, or flesh. The tank cutouts are abstract, some domestic images, one an image from the Iraq war. Several of the cutouts are reconfigured as steel collages, such as the distorted `knight` figure. Its fragmented reconstruction implies a dis-integrated experience.

The installation addresses environmental issues and explores complex connections between our individual lives and global systems. It alludes to homelessness and transience, and raises awareness about the interconnectedness of human beings, the way we live, and animals.

I am developing a series of images of the sculptures through layering transparencies to create fictional, evolving creatures and environments. These photomanipulations animate the sculptures, heightening a sense of movement. They imply that the sculptures have their own surreal habitat, separate from ours. These images are intended to be shown as projections, or large scale Duratrans prints in light boxes. I might also photograph figures interacting with the tanks, create a soundtrack from radiator valves clanging on and off, and develop mechanisms to move certain parts of the sculptures, adding sound and movement to the installation.

The simple half tanks (see "Couple Tanks" in the portfolio) have become multiple units in other installations in process. They have been arranged in a large spiral of 13 units like standing stones ("Spiral"), or laid flat like open sepulchres in rows. The piping systems continue to connect them. As outdoor installations water, snow, and ice collect in the tanks and on the pipes, then melt and disappear. Lighting the "Spiral" installation on fire is another performance aspect, which could also involve participants doing a sort of 'shrine' installation in each tank—like Mexican altars—which would be destroyed when the tanks are lit. The interaction between the sculptures and the elements will become a video documentation.