

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Carlson, Matthew. 'Critics' Picks'. *Artforum* Online. June 2019

# ARTFORUM

## CRITICS' PICKS



Jean-Luc Moulène, *More or Less Bone (Formal Topological Optimization)* (Paris–NY, 2018–19), fiberglass and epoxy paint, 63 x 335 x 177".

### Jean-Luc Moulène

SCULPTURECENTER

44-19 Purves Street

April 29–July 29

Jean-Luc Moulène's new sculpture sits in a room like an unearthed piece of technology from the future. To think of its weight, one might consider the epigraph from Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 film *Stalker*: "What was it? A meteorite that fell to Earth? Or a visitation from outer space?" For *More or Less Bone (Formal Topological Optimization)* (Paris–NY, 2018–19), Moulène collaborated with France's Aerospace Valley, a civilian and military aircraft engineering cluster, to render an optimal form that amalgamates a set of various shapes: spheres, stairs, and human knuckles. This seemingly random fusion, developed with modeling software (though the object itself was not 3-D-printed), yields something not too unlike a cattle skull.

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With its coldness, this mammoth structure becomes the inverse of Ana Mendieta's *On Giving Life*, 1975, a photographic work in which the artist, bathed in sunlight reminiscent of Eric Rohmer's springtime romps, lies atop a human skeleton, lending warmth to ever-present death. Moulène's fiberglass-and-epoxy colossus defies such tenderness, trading sense experience for a work worthy of our technocratic era. But there is something impish in Moulène's grinning skull, faceless though it is. A bodily form, couched on the concrete floor, reaches toward a trapezoidal shape that dominates the construction, becoming a line break that ends in a snarled enjambment of splintered material at the trapezoid's tip. The incidental demarcations between these forms allow for the possibility of grace, an offering to climb inside and be cocooned there.

In an interview, Moulène stated that he sees his sculptures as "surfaces, with no inside or outside, only holes." His object suggests the physical representation of a cinematic idea, something approaching Soviet montage theory, which forces the question: If technology trickles down from a military to a civilian populace over a decade, what, then, is nature when photography is augmented by a third dimension?

<https://www.artforum.com/picks/new-york>