

During your residency in Iceland, the content of your work changed because of how you experienced your surroundings. What was so different about the experience of your surroundings compared to before?

In Iceland I stayed in a small remote village in a fjord, with hardly any people, shops, news sources or traffic, but surrounded by mountains and sea. I think the peace and quiet allowed me to experience my surroundings much more intensely. I noticed that my senses became sharper, and as a consequence I paid full attention to the subtle smells, colours, changes, touch and sounds in the rugged landscape. In the silence I was also able to let myself be carried away by details with more attention and patience than at home while drawing.

I had gone to Iceland with the intention of investigating the relationship between body and landscape. Once there, the landscape turned out to be so overwhelmingly present that the body disappeared into the landscape while drawing. During my daily walks I experienced very strongly that I was part of a larger whole - an earth full of mountains and water streams that existed before me, and will exist after me, and are in a state of constant change. I began to see and draw the Earth as a living body: breathing, moving, digesting, leaking, in a time other than our own. Soft, slow-growing mosses cover ancient rocks, as flesh temporarily encases our bones.

**SENSE OF SEDIMENT** 2024  
acrylic, ink and pencil on paper

Spierenburg drew the series *sense of sediment* during her residency at the Fish Factory in Iceland. In the drawings, the distinction between body and landscape blurs. Are we looking at blood vessels, for example, or rock veins? The series is the foundation for I can be a mountain. The rest of the new works on display in this exhibition are based on the drawings.



The mountain-like installation *being earth* is centrally located in the exhibition. Did mountains play a special role for you in Iceland?

I stared endlessly at the mountains that surrounded our house and studio. You could see a number of mountains from the living room that seemed to change every moment of the day due to the swirling clouds, the reflection of light, and the changing patterns in melting snow and water streams. At another mountaintop that I often walked to, different layers of stone were very clearly visible - so you could feel how the mountain had been formed by time, and the moving layers of earth. I think that this made me see the mountains as something alive. It is not without reason that our language gives mountains backs and shoulders.

**BEING EARTH** 2024  
polystyrene, cotton, modeling paste, marble sand and more

*being earth* can be interpreted in two ways: 'being the Earth', and 'Earth as a being'. Spierenburg was inspired for this installation by the navel mountain in Delphi, a stone in the shape of a mountain that represents the center of the Earth in Greek mythology. If we imagine the Earth with a navel, it becomes a person, the being Earth. A person like us: are we Earth?

One of the images that inspired you to create *being earth* is centrally located in the exhibition. Did mountains play a special role for you in Iceland?

The image depicts an ancient burial practice from South America, where the deceased is wrapped in many layers of textile in the shape of a mountain. For me, it especially emphasizes the cyclical nature of living and non-living matter: the deceased ends up in the fetal position, the same position in which the person once began life. Every ending is a new beginning. From a human perspective, that is a beautiful spiritual notion. From the perspective of the Earth, it refers to the cycle of matter for me: the body becomes a

collection of substances that are absorbed into the Earth's geological processes. Just as all substances on Earth are constantly forming connections, transforming, and breaking down again into elementary particles.

So when we die, and we disintegrate into elementary particles, could those particles reassemble into a mountain?

Yes, or the particles might become part of a tree or a river; our body dissolves into the landscape and merges with the celestial body Earth. The exchange between our body and the landscape also works the other way around: the water particles within our body once flowed in the sea, or fell to the Earth as raindrops. Even while we are alive, we carry bits of mountain, tree and river in our bodies. I feel very drawn to Astrida Neimanis' ideas about fluidity. Our body is constantly in exchange with the world and people around us.

**SENSE OF SEDIMENT (DISSOLVE)** 2024  
satin, cotton, yarn, wood, acrylic paint

This blue textile work is based on a drawing of a swaying ball of seaweed. The shapes have become fluid in sense of sediment (dissolve). The ball of seaweed is no longer seaweed, it could just as well be a beating heart. The movement is still visible because of the lines of the current. Just like in sense of sediment (sinking) Spierenburg has chosen to embroider the lines. It is an alternative way of drawing that literally makes the satin wave; a movement that is emphasized by the sheen of the material.

She writes: "Mammal, reptile or fish; sapling or seed, river delta or backyard pond -all of these bodies are necessarily brought into being by another body of water that dissolves, partially or completely, to water the bodies that will follow. On a geological scale, we have all arisen out of the same primordial soup".

This is what I can also feel sometimes: our body absorbs the environment and vice versa. In this way we are part of a fluid whole that is constantly in motion, and our body is not a separate thing disconnected from other bodies and nature. In daily life here in the Netherlands I find it very difficult at the moment to experience this connectedness with everything and everyone;

in Iceland, that was much easier. I think my work right now is an attempt to hold on to and convey the sense of connection I felt there.

1. Officially, Earth is not a celestial body because it is considered a central object looking out at the rest of the solar system. But from a more-than-human perspective, Earth is one of many planets, and seeing Earth as a body could make our relationship with our environment more equal.



3 MAY  
–6 JULY  
2025

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2611JB DELFT

Can you point to works from  
I can be a mountain where  
you feel that connection  
when you see them?

At the moment I feel it most strongly in the video [being fluid](#).  
A video is able to transport you to another place through  
the combination of movement and sound. For me, this

**BEING FLUID** 2024

HD video projection  
2.30 min (loop)

Spienburg filmed this image  
in Iceland in 2024. The image  
evokes a sense of connection  
that cultural theorist Astrida  
Neimanis describes as the  
'aqueous community'. Water  
flows through everything, and  
when we experience our-  
selves as watery, we are less  
isolated from our surroundings  
and more part of an all-encom-  
passing flow.

work shows how every  
movement sets other  
movements in motion. It is  
also beautiful how the flow  
repeats itself, but each  
wave is always slightly  
different.

In other works, that  
connection is present in  
different ways: the strands  
of [being earth](#) that dangle  
down from the ceiling are  
derived from dried sea-  
weed stalks that I found in  
the fjord. This type of sea-  
weed looks very much like  
human veins or umbilical  
cords, which for me shows  
how we are composed  
of the same matter and  
structures as the world  
that surrounds us.

Another kind of con-  
nection is in the braids of  
[braiding, breathing](#). While

making this work, I listened to the book *Braiding Sweet-  
grass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. In it, braiding sweetgrass  
is described as a way to connect with the Earth: just as  
braiding a person's hair is a way to show care and affection.

**BRAIDING,  
BREATHING** 2025

sisal, cotton, ink, metal  
bracket, stones

The braids in [braiding,  
breathing](#) refer to bota-  
nist Robin Wall Kimmerer's  
book *Braiding Sweetgrass*.  
Kimmerer is half Potawatomi  
– within this North Ameri-  
can Indigenous group, braids  
of sweetgrass are gifted as  
a symbol of prosperity. This  
type of grass is a species that  
flourishes when picked by hu-  
mans. The grass needs us, and  
we need the grass.

In the exhibition as a  
whole, I have tried to give  
shape to the elementary,  
visual and emotional  
similarities between our  
bodies and the landscape,  
in which, for me, our con-  
nectedness lies.



Gemeente Delft

Stalpaert  
van der Wiele

amarte  
fonds

bng  
bank van  
meerwaarde

Mondriaan fonds  
voor beeldende kunst & erfgoed

38  
CC

DIALOGUE ON

I can be a mountain

For this exhibition, it was  
decided to provide more  
context through corre-  
spondence. In this text Eva  
is asked about her thoughts  
behind the works, and in  
her answers she reveals  
a part of the creative pro-  
cess. She also mentions  
sources of inspiration for  
*I can be a mountain*.

Would you like brief in-  
formation about the indi-  
vidual works of art? The  
works mentioned in the  
text are explained in blue.  
The explanations have  
been written in such a way  
that they can also be read  
independently of the text.

BETWEEN ARTIST EVA SPIERENBURG  
AND CURATOR VEERLE DRIESSEN