



Charlotte Daniëlse

the earthworm/digging i did, 2026

HD video (4:3) 17 min., sound, ceramics, drawings pencil on paper

Lately, I've sensed something different. I've wandered around here for a long time, in my corridors and burrows. And before me, my ancestors and cousins. The consistency of my house, if you'd like to call it that, has changed many times. But this time, it is different. Everything feels more sour: more sour on my skin, more sour in my mouth. My food tastes more sour, and there is less diversity in my diet. How about that! So I set off on a little research. I entered a grass field, or perhaps an orchard, a bulk of earth, and maybe also a gritty, sandy patch. Not wanting to understand anything in particular, not looking to solve or cure what is going on. Just observing, and sharing this observation with you.

I live underground. Or I could put it another way: you live above ground, and I squirm, wriggle, and writhe in the soil beneath your feet. Most of the time, I am surrounded by a pleasant, moist darkness where I can easily find my way without eyes, detecting light and dark with my skin. I am an earthworm.

In *the earthworm/digging i did*, we enter a world where we follow our protagonist: an earthworm. Moving through different layers of soil—set in Zeeland, the most southwestern province of the Netherlands, and also the place where Charlotte Daniëlse has her roots—the earthworm searches for the source of what is changing its habitat. Zeeland is a delta where the rivers Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt meet, with a long history of battling tidal flooding.

For years, an ecological issue has been building up, now manifesting in a decline in biodiversity: an overload of the element nitrogen. Nitrogen is an invisible element essential for the growth of plants, crops, and food. However, an abundance of nitrogen in the soil causes some plants, such as nettles and brambles, to grow very quickly. Wild and chaotic they grow, overshadowing plants that require less of this element to thrive. Alongside this loss of diversity, nitrogen also turns the soil sour. This issue sets off a chain reaction. The earth becomes oversaturated, biodiversity declines rapidly, and increasing stress is placed on the land we rely on. It has consequences not only for nature, but eventually also for our food supply and housing.

With this in mind, Daniëlse attempts to understand an ecological disaster that remains barely visible if you don't know where to look, caused by an element that is itself invisible. With the question of how we can connect to and act upon something we cannot see, feel, or smell, she adopts a literal bottom-up perspective to grasp a system that is deeply intertwined with almost everything around us. The question also arises: is nitrogen really the issue, or is it the system we have placed ourselves in that puts too much stress on our environment? A system that largely encompasses our human food supply and production. One that has, over time, shaped itself to the verge of absurdity.

In a video installation combining film, sound, drawings, and ceramics, this exploration of visualizing something invisible is presented, while also attempting to reshape a story that has so far been told with earnest seriousness. Because how can we find hope and create new ways of thinking without touching on its absurdity and offering a different perspective?

Time Slice camera: Victor Van Rossem

Sound design: Taco Drijfhout

Music: Maya Dhondt, The London Vegetable Orchestra

Special effects: Sarah Lauwers

featuring in order of appearance: rugby club Tovaal Goes, Afroditi Katsaouni, The London Vegetable Orchestra, Margo Van der Meulen

music:

Original music by Maya Dhondt

'MacArthur Park' (Live) by Donna Summer

A variation of 'Het Land van Maas en Waal' by Boudewijn de Groot, performed by The London Vegetable Orchestra

Special thanks to Julia Tröscher, Adriënne Van der Werf, Eva Steenbakkers, André Daniëlse, Richard Daniëlse, Fiona Keeble, Marcel De Theije, Nicolas Baeyens, Tim Loudon, West Horsley Place, Stichting Duinbehoud, Marie Tak van Poortvliet Museum Domburg, Sofie Goormachtig Lab VIB UGent.

Charlotte Daniëlse lives and works in the Low Countries. In her practice, she questions the use of language as means of communication, with a focus on pre-verbal narratives, intuition, connection, and subjectivity. She investigates how we shape our inner worlds and explores the tension between what can be expressed and what remains unsayable, within a world filled with noise and absurdity.

She obtained a BFA and MFA with a specialization in photography at KASK, Ghent, and completed an additional MFA in sculpture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. After years of studying and searching she remains driven by an appetite for knowledge and skills, which she nourishes through projects, exhibitions and residencies. She is currently an artist in residence at Nesse (NL) in the Shared Urgencies program.

The Antwerp Art Graduation Prize Exhibition was made possible with the generous support of the players of the National Lottery. The work of Charlotte Daniëlse is additionally supported by the Nitrogen work group of the Province Zeeland and Nesse in Terneuzen. This presentation is part of the 12th Antwerp Art Weekend (14-17.05.2026), shown on M HKA's 6th floor. The work presented during Antwerp Art Weekend is the first phase of this project. A second part will be on view Autumn 2026.