

JONATHAN SITTHIPHONH

PORTFOLIO 2023



Jonathan Sitthiphonh is a french visual artist born in 1983. After graduating from high school with distinction, he studied Mathematics at Reims Science University. Then he entered Reims Art & Design School to study Object Design and transfer to Bourges National School of Art in order to specialize in Contemporary Art. He also studied one full year in China (2008/2009) at the Central Academy of Fine Art of Beijing as an exchange student. Since 2010 he works in his studio in Bourges and live mainly in France.

Mechanical Utopia: Imaginary Machine Laboratory

My concern deals with the mechanism of movement and the interaction between the user and his instrument. I shape tools that fuse with me, like a prosthesis that enhances a limb. Following my movements, the device activates and gives birth to a hybrid being.

All of my work can be seen as a laboratory, where the failed projects stand alongside the work in progress: the shape of my sculptures is not final but evolve through time. I improve them endlessly according to the skills I learn, the experience I get.

It's a reflection on the human body and how to upgrade it with our own hand.

An obsession of becoming more than human, that ultimately fails.

Indeed despite the mechanisms features and efficiency, my work remains restrictive for the user: Instead of improving my physical ability, it limits me.

This failure is the main point of my artistic concern.

My work witnesses human limits, while celebrating the desire of mankind to transcend itself. It refers to the notion of Transhumanism and Posthuman focusing on the human body and its improvement by mechanization.

Because I want to improve myself by myself as an individual being (with my own skills), I exaggerate my prosthesis by making them by hand and with non suitable materials (scraps, wood, ...).

On the other hand, it enhances them from a sculptural point of view. The use of wood, for example, forces the gears of a system to change shape, as well as deprived of its function, a machine reveals all the aesthetics of its design.

Moreover the semi-functionality of my devices emphasizes their evocative potential. Eventually, this sculptures with limited function, need our imagination to be fulfilled as machines.

FÛTREAU

2023

Wood (douglas), screws, bolts

750 x 750 x 150 cm



Residency project at B2X (Beaulieu-les-Loches, Centre Val de Loire, France)

Installed in a meadow flooded in winter (dry in summer), Fûtreau is an amphibious vehicle that refers to the typical flat-bottomed boats of the area (La Loire). Made with local wood, this ecological and anachronistic construction illustrates the theme of “resilience”: the ability to adapt to a change in the environment.





CERNUNNOS

2022

Wood (oak), screws

425 x 350 x 200 cm

Residency project at 2 angles (Flers, Normandie, France)

Conceived as a contemporary idol, Cernunnos refers to a major figure of the Celtic pantheon. After getting to know the territory -particularly the Andaine forest - and in consultation with the children of the village, I decided to create an anthropomorphic representation of the fauna. A type of forest guardian, a protective god illustrating the unshakeable power of nature. I therefore reappropriated the figure of the «horned» (Gallic god of fauna and flora, cycles of nature, animals but also hunters) by transposing it into my phantasmagorical repertoire. Built from wood provided by the local sawmill, the project took place in several steps throughout the school year with the help of local residents and contractors. In the end, a significant part of the village contributed to the realization of this work. Like the pagan idols of the past, Cernunnos is a collective construction that could symbolize the amity between the inhabitants and their environment.





GOLEM

2020

Wood (pine), screws

300 x 400 x 500 cm

Like science fiction combat robots, I have build a wreck whose origins and function question the viewer's imagination.

The wooden structure on which proliferates wild vegetation leaves indications of an archaic machine from an ancient time. But the futuristic design of the "Robot" drives us to fantasize about future technology. I deliberately play on this opposition in order to create a "retro futuristic" archaeological situation.

Moreover, we do not know if it is alive, dormant, dead. If it is an object, where does it come from, if it is still functional, who created it? All these questions stimulate the viewer's imagination and lay the foundations of a contemporary mythology.

This anthropomorphic giant revisit the myth of Golem (relation between human-creation -machine - god) at a time where technological advances challenge ancient beliefs.





SCAPHANDRE

2020

Beech plywood, screws, bolts, nails

70 x 70 x 50 cm

Residency project at Usine Utopik (Tessy-sur-vire, Normandie, France)

During the Covid-19 outbreak, I have designed fictionnal individual protection prototypes .



CHRYSSALIDE

2020

Plywood, screws, bolts, nails

185 x 185 x 50 cm



Residency project at Usine Utopik (Tessy-sur-vire, Normandie, France)

During the Covid-19 outbreak, I have designed fictionnal individual protection prototypes .



COCON

2020

Burnt wood (Pine), glue ,nails, screws

170 x 170 x 90 cm



Residency project at Usine Utopik (Tessy-sur-vire, Normandie, France)

During the Covid-19 outbreak, I have designed fictionnal individual protection prototypes .



NEZHA

2019

Bamboo

110 x 190 x 200 cm



Residency project at Pier-2 Art Centre (Kaohsiung, Taiwan):

«Nezha's six hands armor»

Inspired by a chinese folklore deity.

vidéo : <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/nezha>



BUDDHA'S PALM

2019

Bamboo, rope

35 x 90 x 150 cm



Residency project at Pier-2 Art Centre (Kaohsiung, Taiwan)

«Buddha's palm gauntlets»

It refers to Son Wukong's capture in the tale « Journey to the west».

vidéo : <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/buddhas-palm>



ARACHNE 2.0

2018

Plywood, screws, nails, bolts

100 x 100 x 170 cm



Human octopod machine prototype (version n°3):
Orthesis especially made for an artistic performance with the storyteller Sandrine Gniady. As we are told the story of Arachne, I physically interacted with the narrator's body, gradually transforming it into one of my artwork.





MAIN D'OEUVRE

2017

Wood (pine), screws, bolts, steel wires, puleys

400 x 500 x 600 cm

Project for the Biennale «La Science de l'Art: La Culture du Risque» (France)

Like industrial robot arm, I have conceived my own mechanical system, controlled by sticks and levers. It's an allegory of the use of the human hand as a tool: the decomposition of all its movements in a machine that needs all the human body to be activated.

Video: <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/main-doeuvre>



À QUATTRE PATTES 2/2

2017

Wild cherry plywood, screws, bolts

75 x 140 x 170 cm



Residency project at Axeneo7 (Gatineau, Canada):

Human quadrupod machine prototype (version n°4).

Development of a device that allow a human to walk with 4 legs..

Vidéo: <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/a-quatre-pattes-22>





À QUATTRE PATTES 1/2

2017

Wild cherry plywood, screws, bolts

75 x 140 x 170 cm

Residency project at Axeneo7 (Gatineau, Canada):

Human quadripod machine prototype (version n°3).

Development of a device that allow a human to walk with 4 legs..

Vidéo: <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/a-quatre-pattes-12>

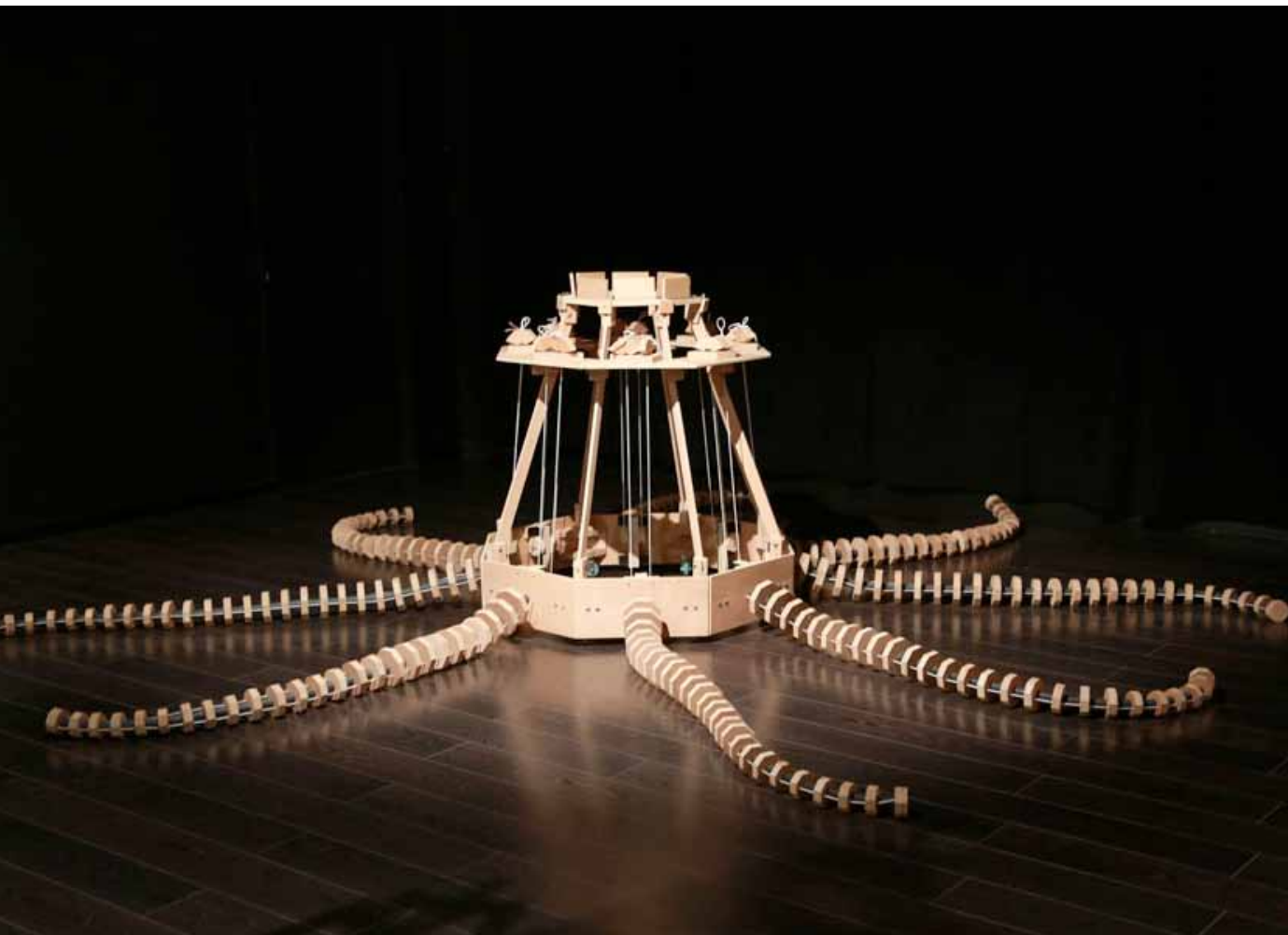


OKTO

2017

Plywood, plastic coating, polyester treads, screws, bolts

140 x 400 x 400 cm



Residency project at La Belle Etoile (Grahya,
Auvergne, France):

Human octopod machine prototype (version n°2).

Mecanical research on tentacles.

Development of a non human limb.

Vidéos: <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/okto>





COCOON#2: DANGO MUSHI

2016

Wood (Japanese Cedar), nails, screws, bolts

140 x 160 x 160 cm

Residency project in ACAC (Aomori, Japan):

Research on the concept of «Cocon».

A human body dimension micro architecture // A transit and transformation space
// Isolated from the outside world, (re-)center on oneself // An introspective
space of reflection that presume a future change.

Cocoon#2: Dango mushi is a shell that you can wear, open or close at your own
will. If you want to be completely secluded from everything else, you have to roll
yourself in a fetal position.

Vidéo: <https://vimeo.com/193017596>



COCOON#1: DODECAHEDRON

2016

Wood (Japanese Cedar, Plywood), screws, nails, bolts

140 x 160 x 160 cm



Residency project in ACAC (Aomori, Japan):

Research on the concept of «Cocon».

A human body dimension micro architecture // A transit and transformation space // Isolated from the outside world, (re-)center on oneself // An introspective space of reflection that presume a future change.

Cocoon#1: Dodecahedron is a Micro architecture.

A space just for one person to crawl in and reflect on oneself, isolated from the outside.

It's tiny, intimate, private, quiet.



MUE

2016

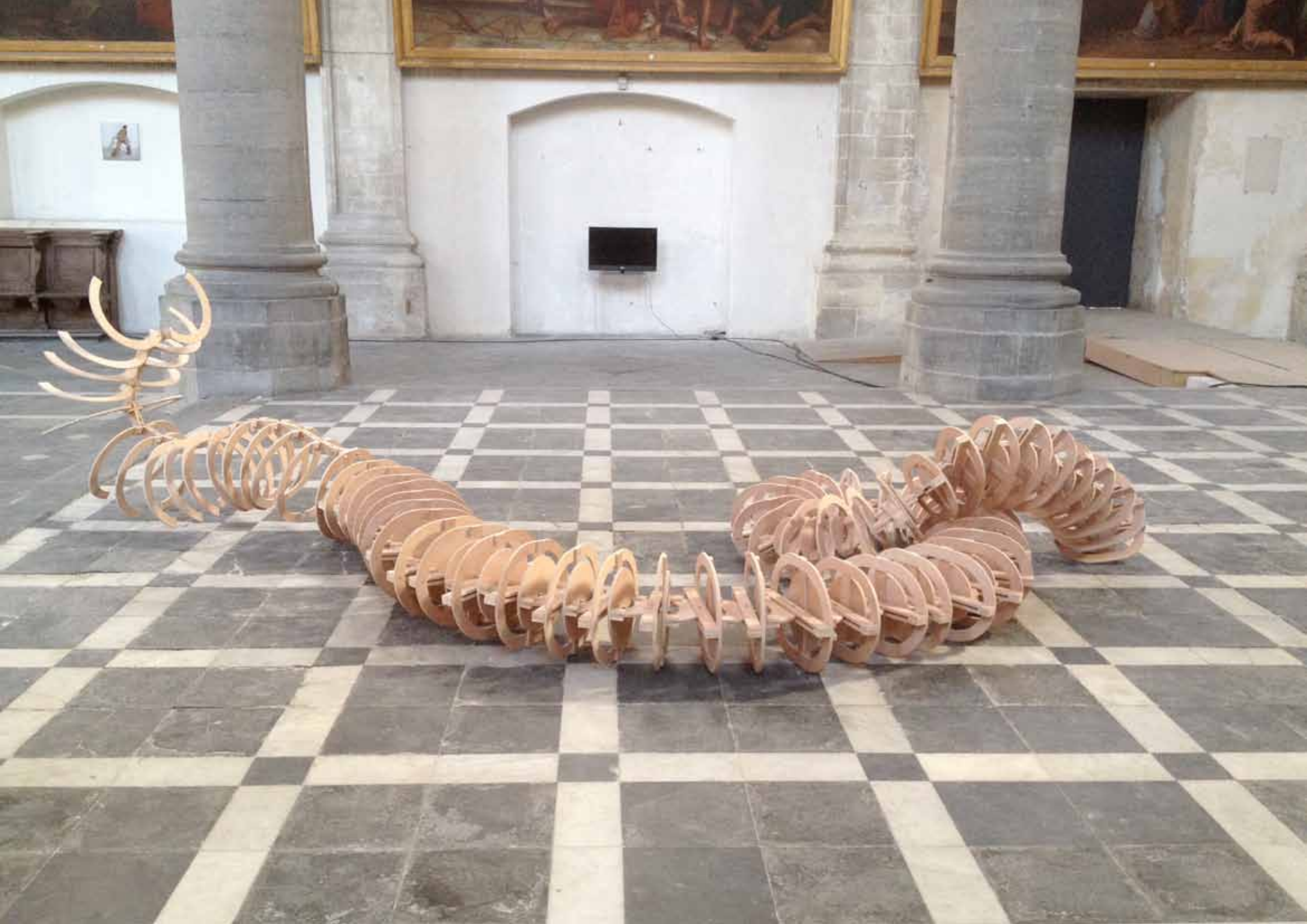
Plywood, screws, bolts

40 x 40 x 12000 cm



Tail prototype (Version n°2):

Articulated tail system link to an harness that can contain a human body.

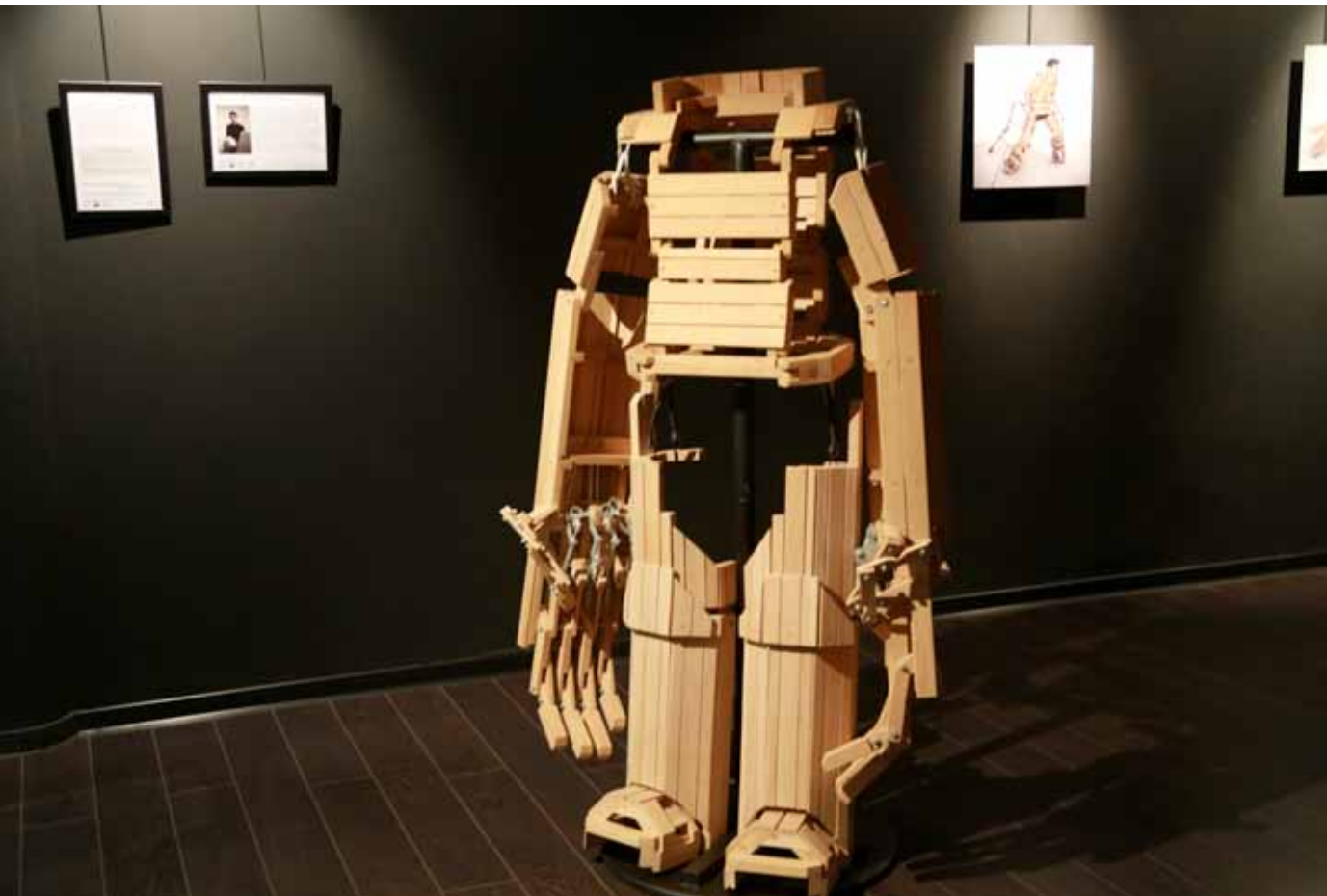


COQUILLE

2015

Wood (oak), aluminium, screws, bolts

50 x 70 x 180 cm



Robotic armor prototype (Version n°2):

Project financed by a creative grant from DRAC
Centre-Val de Loire (France).



ICARE 2.2

2015

Wood (oak, beech plywood), screws, bolts

50 x 90 x 200 cm



Human flying device prototype (version n°3).

Tribute to the myth of Icarus and Dedalus.

Vidéo : <https://vimeo.com/133233290>



SARU NO O

2014

Wood (japanese cedar), screws, bolts, bungee cords

50 x 90 x 150 cm



Residency project at AiA (Aso, Japan):

«King of apes»

Like the powered exoskeletons currently being developed in the army research department and by big companies (especially in Japan), I have conceived a mechanical suit in order to enhance my physical strength.

Video : <http://www.jonathansitthiphonh.com/saru-no-o>



ARACHNE

2014

Wood (oak, plywood), screws, bolts, straps

150 x 150 x 175 cm



Human octopod machine prototype (Version n°1):

Development of a device that enable the addition of 8 limbs to the human body.



VPOM

2014

Bicycles, wheelchair, wood, metal

120 x 300 x 400 cm



Residency Project at «Lizières»

with Romain Weintzem:

«Véhicule à Propulsion Ondulatoire Musculottracté»

Development and construction of vehicle with scraps. Flying machine prototype made out broken bicycle and other wheels objects.

Vidéos : <https://vimeo.com/90579333>
<https://vimeo.com/98949539>



VPGM

2014

Bicycles, cradle, wood, plastic, metal

120 x 200 x 300 cm



Residency Project at «Lizières»

with Romain Weintzem:

«Véhicule à Propulsion Giratoire Musculottracté»

Development and construction of vehicle with scraps. Flying machine prototype made out broken bicycle and other wheels objects.

Vidéos : <https://vimeo.com/90271550>
<https://vimeo.com/98949539>



SANS TITRE

2014

Steel and galvanize steel square pipes, bolts

50 x 200 x 200 cm



Mechanical Arm Prototype (version N°2).

Research on a device that could increase the arm length and strength.

The use of steel obviously restrains the user's limbs and makes him less efficient...



FLYING DEVICE

2013

Wood scraps, screws

75 x 100 x 200 cm



Residency Project at The Josef & Anni Albers Foundation (Bethany, USA):

Development and construction of vehicle with scraps and leftovers from a neighboring construction site. This Flying Device is entirely made out of wood. All the gears are hand made.

NB: The mechanism was design after the dragonfly way of flying.

Vidéo : <https://vimeo.com/154830479>



WOODEN RAFT

2013

Wood scraps, screws

75 x 100 x 150 cm



Residency Project at The Josef & Anni Albers Foundation (Bethany, USA):

Development and construction of vehicle with scraps and leftovers from a neighboring construction site. This Raft is entirely made out of wood. All the gears are hand made.

Vidéo : <https://vimeo.com/154830477>



SOBEK

2013

Wood (Plywood), screws, bolts

50 x 40 x 200 cm



Crocodilian Jaw Prototype (version n°2).

Development of a device that enhance the human jaw.

Addition of an articulated tail that follow the user's movements.

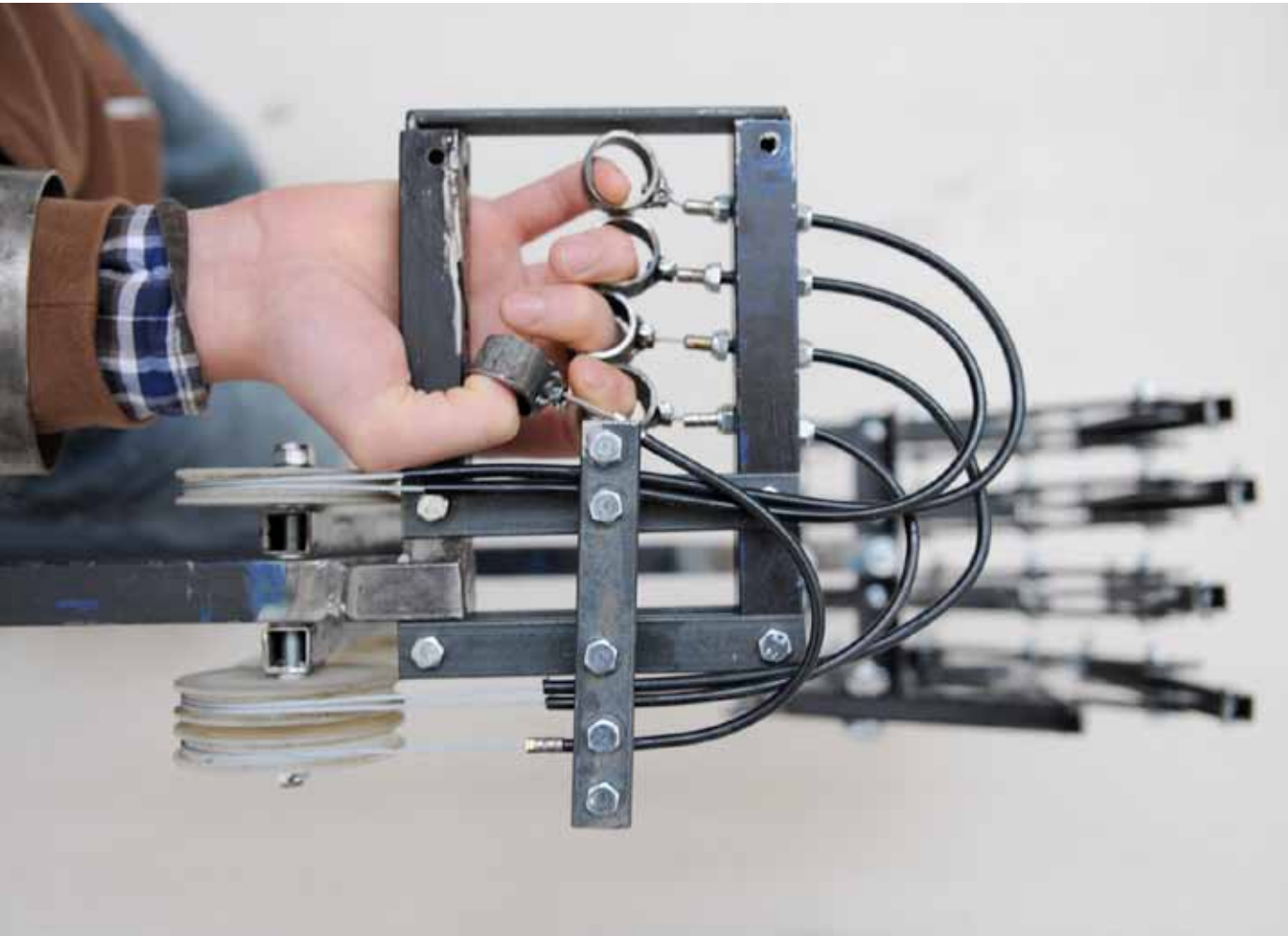


BRAS DE FER

2012

Steel scraps, springs, cables, pulleys, bolts

30 x 50 x 150 cm



Mechanical Arm Prototype (version N°1).

Research on a device that could increase the arm length and strength. The use of steel obviously restrains the user's limbs and makes him less efficient.

NB: Mainly made with old bikes.



CHIRON

2012

Wood (oak, plywood), screws, bolts

75 x 120 x 170 cm



Human Quadripod Machine Prototype (version n°2).

Tribute to the legendary centaur.

Development of a device that enhance the human way of walking.

Each leg is linked to a wooden one, allowing you to walk on 4 legs, but preventing you from running.



ICARE

2010

Wood (oak, plywood), screws, bolts

30 x 75 x 400 cmv



Flying Human Machine Prototype (version n°1).

Tribute to the myth of Icarus and his father Daedalus.

Following their example I have design my own pair of wings out of scraps.

The mechanism works perfectly but this device is obviously too heavy to allow me to take off. Flapping the wings is possible but incredibly tiring...

In the end my wings bound me to the ground.

