

# AIR DE PARIS



# MONA FILLEUL

**Born in 1993**

**Lives and works in Brussels and Paris**

Filleul's relief works are built from industrial objects such as insulation boards, foam panels, and concrete, onto which an eclectic variety of materials are applied, ranging from beeswax and mulberry fiber to hemp and LED lights. On the textured, illuminated surfaces of these works, which are often scaled to the proportions of an iPhone, Filleul creates constellations of images with traditional techniques such as clay molding, papier-mâché, tempera, and hot wax painting. Using the gallery's architectural supports to stage continually shifting perspectives of the works, the sculpted and painted images — depicting anime characters, stuffed animals, and quotidian selfie shots — appear on one side of a given work, while the viewer's spatial wandering engenders an encounter with a manipulated composition of electronic chips and wiring on the other side. In these ways, Filleul's works challenge dematerialized conceptions of the online world, instead grounding its profound identity-producing and embodiment-altering effects through a materially attuned visual language.

Deeply committed to the trans community to which she belongs, Filleul often initiates dialogue with other artists who share her experience through her artistic and curatorial projects. As playful as they are intimate, they become acts of dissent, a testament of queer people's resilience in the precarious present.

Mona Filleul has recently had her first solo exhibition in the United States at the Swiss Institute, New York (2025) as well as her first solo exhibition in Air de Paris, Romainville (2025), following a group show in 2023. Filleul has also has exhibited her work in solo show in various venues, including Krone Couronne in Biel/Bienne; sis123 in La-Chaux-de-Fonds (2022); DuflonRacz in Bern (2021); Emergency in Vevey (2020), and Los Atlas in Brussels (2017).

She was assistant curator for établissement d'en face (2021- 2023) and Duflon/Racz (2018, 2020, 2021) in Brussels.

Filleul was named laureate of the Swiss Art Awards 2023 and completed a residency at the Centre d'Art Contemporain WIELS, Brussels, the same year.

# **SELECTED EXHIBITIONS**

# **Sissy Institute**

**feat. Arthur K, Emily Zhou, McKenzie Wark, Mohammed Zenia, Nuri Patriciaz, Slant Rhyme**

**Swiss Institute, New York, United States**

**30.09.25 — 04.01.2026**

Swiss Institute (SI) is pleased to present *Sissy Institute*, the first solo exhibition by artist Mona Filleul in the United States. In *Sissy Institute*, Filleul continues her exploration of artmaking as a vehicle for creating and sustaining queer transnational communities. Featuring works that blur distinctions between painting, sculpture, and assemblage set within an architectural scenography, the exhibition constructs a refuge for the increasingly policed expression of queer and trans subjectivities.

In the lower-level gallery, aluminum studs, which typically undergird walls, both guide the viewer's navigation through the gallery space and frame the works on view.

Also in the gallery are a series of listening stations, which viewers are invited to engage via headphones. Each of the stations feature audio recordings of Filleul's collaborators including poet and illustrator Arthur K, writer Emily Zhou, writer and theorist McKenzie Wark, poet Mohammed Zenia, painter and writer Nuri Patricia, and artist and writer Slant Rhyme. By including these recordings, which foreground the varied sonic expressions of queer and trans artists and thinkers based in New York City, ranging from acts of narration to music-making, Filleul seeks to center socially situated and collectively articulated forms of queer creative vitality.

In *Sissy Institute*, Filleul reclaims the notion of sissiness as a dissident mode to critique normative understandings of gender. Transmuting structural conditions of gendered violence and economic insecurity into playful, intimate, and haptic aesthetic encounters, Filleul's exhibition offers an in-between space for sharing the resilience of queer life in the precarious present.





Exhibition views

Sissy Institute

feat. Arthur K, Emily Zhou, McKenzie Wark, Mohammed Zenia, Nuri Patriciaz, Slant Rhyme

Swiss Institute, New York

2025





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Swiss Institute, New York

2025





Exhibition views

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Swiss Institute, New York

2025



## Air de Tranny

**feat. Thilda Bourqui, Ix Dartayre, Miss Chakchouka, Nuria Mokhtar, Rafael Moreno**

**Air de Paris, Romainville, France**

**23.05 — 12.07.2025**

Welcome to Air de Tranny! When I look around, I start to think that Mona Filleul has built a city here. In Mona's city, although there's no places to go shopping, no business district or luxury hotels, there's a metal verticality that recalls that of skyscrapers steel frames – their shine, their coldness, their texture and their angles. I can't quite make out my reflection in the façades of these buildings, but I'm sure that I can glimpse something of our western capital cities, of their ambiguities, perhaps something of their rigidity, too. Mona takes us with her through these stripped back walls to show us what's going on within. She marks out zones and thresholds, and builds an architecture that's at once narrative and sentimental, emptying out all the things that usually stay hidden. She even recreates the sky...

Mona is an iconophile, one of those people who venerate images and try to save them from their certain destruction. She learned to paint by looking at the canvases of expressionist painter Paula Modersohn-Becker and the symbolist Mikhail Vroubel, which she ended up mixing with manga and memes in her own syncretic forms. In her cathedral-less city, the bas-reliefs on insulation panels that adorn her structures seem to surround her images with a halo of sacredness: friends become angels, Instagram stories are transformed into reliquaries, and tracks become hymns... She tells me that she wants to celebrate those who have been excluded from representation, to canonise her community with the saintliness that it has long been denied.

(...) Mona's city has found new inhabits: she has invited Thilda Bourqui, Ix Dartayre, Miss Chakchouka, Stella Kerdraon, Rafael Moreno and Nuria Mokhtar to come and populate it and to surround it with their works, their words and their interventions on the evening of the opening of Air de Tranny. Throughout her work, her exhibitions and the curatorial and collective project *tr4n\$F€m pr@Xis* that she began with Ix Dartayre, Mona makes space for her sisters, creating new avenues for them, new passageways into the city to thwart loneliness and which let them share a bubble tea at the foot of the towers that loom above the shopping centre. Mona rewrites the names of places, twisting onomastics and sissifying them to make them more welcoming.

Air de Tranny shines bright as a star and has nothing to fear from blackouts. Mona is a lighting specialist, or perhaps a fireworks technician – she tells me how much tenderness she feels for these lights that sparkle like those of the city at night or like 24hr convenience stores, which have something reassuring and enchanting. I'm not afraid of the dark any more, and even though I can't grasp the stars on storefronts and shop signs, when I squint, I see constellations everywhere.

— Lou Ferrand

Translated by James Horton



Exhibition views

Air de Tranny

feat. Thilda Bourqui, Ix Dartayre, Miss Chakchouka, Nuria Mokhtar, Rafael Moreno

Air de Paris, Romainville

2025

Photo : © Marc damage





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Photo : © Marc damage



Exhibition views

Party Mix

feat. Thilda Bourqui, Tony Colombe. K, Pauline Coquart, Gaia Vincensini, Xaxalxe

Krone Couronne, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland

2024

Photo : © Fabrice Schneider





Exhibition views

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Krone Couronne, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland

2024

# Of Bodies in Digital Life

## Kunsthaus Langenthal, Switzerland

### 04.04 — 23.06.2024

The exhibition features young artists whose work engages with the body in digital life. Since the dawn of the internet era, the topic has continued to be a subject of discussion as well as of artistic exploration: Utopian visions of transcending the body and becoming cyborg confront the sober reality of swiping over smooth, cold surfaces for hours on end, causing aching joints and disrupted sleep. The dream of a free, democratic network has given way to the mechanisms of the attention economy and commercialization.

Virtual spaces and online platforms offer diverse opportunities for self-representation, artistic practice, as well as networking and community-building. The past few years have seen the growth of emancipatory movements surrounding questions of body images and norms, particularly in regard to gender and race. At the same time, virtual spaces beyond these niches continue to be dominated by bodies that peddle normative and gender stereotypical conceptions of beauty as erotic capital within platform capitalism.

How does the youngest generation of artists, which was born in the 1990s, the decade that saw the launch of the World Wide Web, and grew up with the internet, respond to these developments? How do they bring their everyday experience and critical reflection of media-saturated life to bear on an artistic tradition of representing bodies, which, after all, is one of the great topics in art history?

Mona Filleul contributes *Bonnie* (2024) and *Kuromi* (2024), which is constructed from sheets of plasterboard into which reliefs and objects made from LED lights have been integrated. The reliefs are the result of labour-intensive manual crafting: Filleul first creates clay models, then covers them in mulberry fibre, and finally applies the actual surface, a layer of beeswax and colour. The outside relief alludes to the world of memes, while the inside is an intimate portrait of a friend.

Aside from the true-to-life head – albeit with the face hidden – the person is represented through their preferred texting emojis. The simultaneous presence in physical and digital spaces and the presence of the body in the allegedly disembodied digital world are central topics in the work of the artist. In which of these spaces do people feel at home? When is there a need for the creation of new (virtual and physical) spaces by communities of like-minded people – just as the installation consisting of building material quite literally delineates a new space? The motif of showing and hiding, which already occurs in the portrait, also comes up again in *Thank You and Me* (2024), which was created with Gaia Vincensini and can be found on the opposite wall





Exhibition views  
 Of Bodies in Digital Life  
 Kunsthaus Langenthal, Switzerland  
 2024  
 Photo: © Cedric Mussano





Exhibition views  
Of Bodies in Digital Life  
Kunsthaus Langenthal, Switzerland  
2024  
Photo: © Cedric Mussano

# Destinées

## Air de Paris, Romainville, France

### 05.10 — 25.11.2023

What if curating an exhibition involved «problematizing»? As David Vercauteren puts it: «What is problematizing? It's a kind of production of materials that takes place in the twists and turns of thought: between words and things, among the multiple realms of experience and the ways we tell them, among our lives and the wounds that shape our bodies, among all the signs that inhabit our perception and the meaning that shatters our established worlds ».

The exhibition Destinées presents works by Mona Filleul, Jeanne Jacob, Aurélien Potier, Émile Rubino and Leïla Vilmouth, young artists we have met here (Beaux-Arts de Paris) and there (Swiss Awards). What happens when, far from being based on a precise and assertive concept, which would imply that the visit is an opportunity to check its relevance, an exhibition is conceived to form a group that does not yet exist? It would be hard to find immediate links between their works, all the more so as they seem resistant to any hasty approach, which is nevertheless what we must try to do here.

The pieces of Mona Filleul's Starmix series consist of insulation boards whose proportions are similar to those of a smartphone. They are displayed perpendicular to the wall, and the artist has reproduced some of her stories on one side by carving them out and inserting reliefs. These images, «a combination of life images and of SoundCloud covers», are reproduced in clay covered with paper made from plant fibres and painted using traditional techniques (tempera and hot wax painting). The LED lamp wires inserted into the panel are visible on the reverse side, as are the Mp3 players in which sound loops, limited to 15 seconds by the app, are recorded. The works offer a new, comforting experience. They share with Instagram — the app they come from — the power to record powerful experiences using image and sound.





Exhibition views

Destinées

Air de Paris, Romainville, France

2023

Photo : © Marc Damage

# Parking Me

## SB34 Clovis, Brussels, Belgium

### 28.04 — 03.06.2022

I had a chat with Mona four days ago. Her playlist consists of five songs that are necessary survival items despite how bad they are. Urgency rules over banality—who would notice the cheesy color of the oxygen mask dropping from the panel above your head. Mona mentioned how relieving it was to present the work in an art nouveau house with post modern interiors. The simple white cube is complex—its ideology poses questions that Mona's work is not comfortable with. Indeed comfort is a trope in her proposal for "Parking Me". The music soothes while we cocoon in the squeezed layers of a warm niche, while the built city of bricks runs its course outside, likely a rough one, definitely cluttered. An art nouveau interior hardly included insulating material. Heat was created but not preserved. In Mona's words, the un-conserved interior of the exhibition space is, "the clue about something sad, the project of someone who overlooks a common order, but shows their ideology with blunt clarity, and for this reason should be respected more than a cunningly counterpart who simply sugarcoats the same intentions." Happily we see the back of Mona's bas reliefs in this show. Naked yet covered, they are like that little itch: we are curious at first, we obsess shortly next.

— Piero Bisello







Exhibition views  
200 km/h in the Wrong Lane  
SIS123, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland  
2022

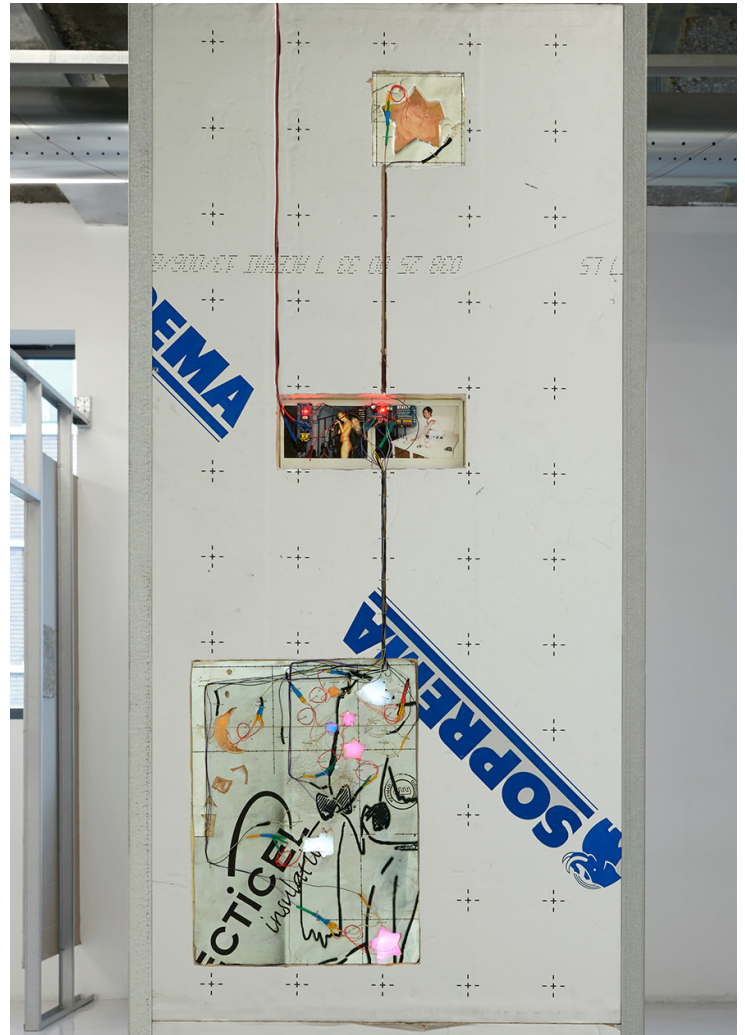




Exhibition views  
200 km/h in the Wrong Lane  
SIS123, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland  
2022



# **SELECTED ARTWORKS**



R2T2

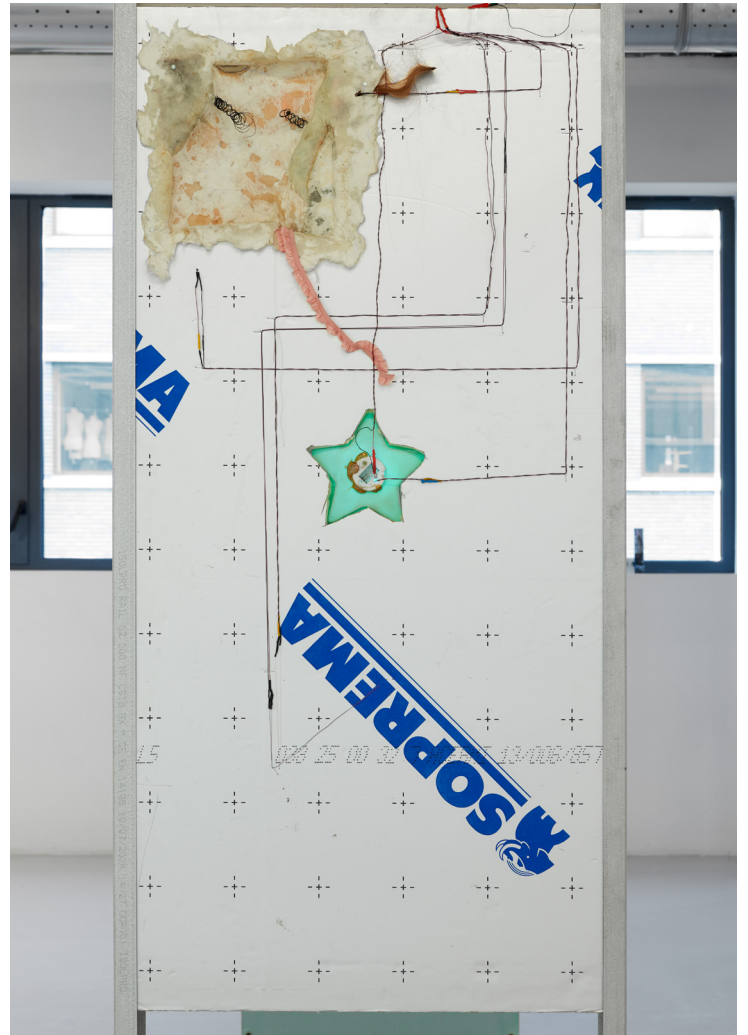
2025

Insulation panel, encaustic on wood, epoxy resin, mulberry fiber, tempera, hemp, spray paint, Polaroids, electronic components, LEDs

120 x 60 x 6 cm

Unique





R2T3  
2025  
Insulation panel, encaustic on wood, mulberry fiber, tempera, hemp, plastic necklace, fabric, nightlight, LEDs  
120 x 60 x 6 cm  
Unique



R2T4

2025

Insulation panel, encaustic on wood, mulberry fiber, tempera, hemp, earring, LED screen, plastic, BA13 plasterboard, electronic components, LEDs

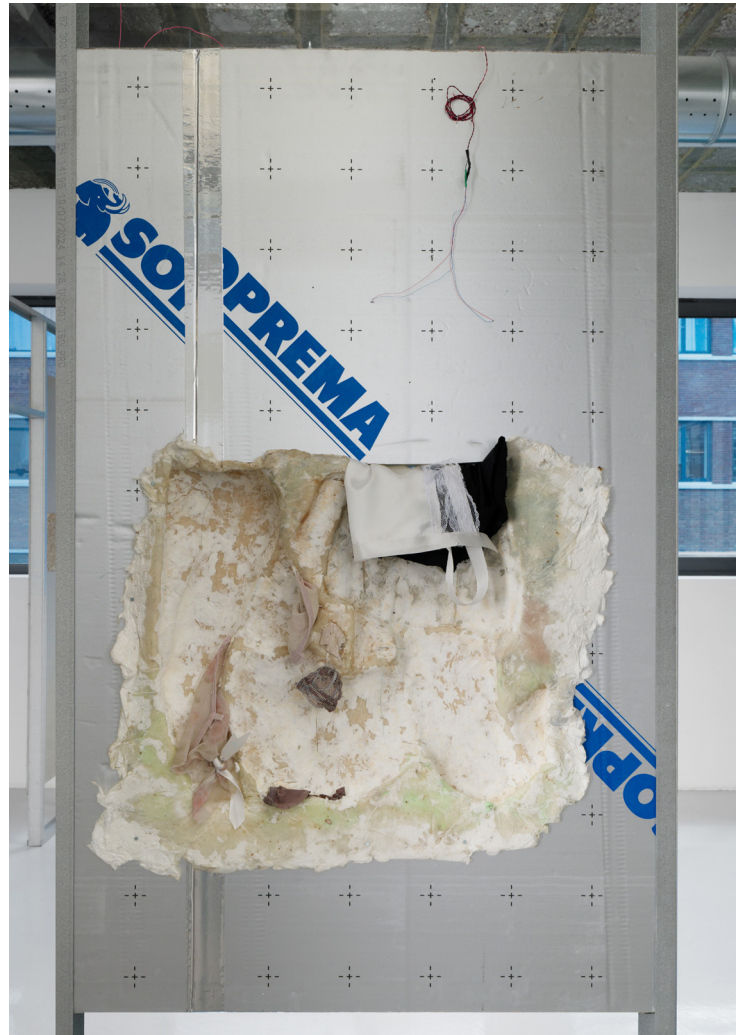
120 x 60 x 6 cm

Unique





R2T5  
2025  
Insulation panel, encaustic on wood, mulberry fiber, tempera, hemp, tiles, aluminum can, LEDs,  
metal structure  
120 x 60 x 6 cm  
Unique



R2T8

2025

Insulation panel, encaustic on wood, mulberry fiber, tempera, hemp, clothing, LEDs

120 x 60 x 6 cm

Unique





R2T9

2025

Insulation panel, encaustic on wood, mulberry fiber, tempera, hemp, LED screen, glitter, hair, Polaroid, electronic components, glitter glue, LEDs

120 x 60 x 6 cm

Unique



Starmix 1  
 2023  
 Insulation plates, Mulberry fiber, tempera, beeswax, hemp, mp3, led  
 60 x 120 x 8 cm  
 Unique





Starmix 2  
 2023  
 Insulation plates, Mulberry fiber, tempera, beeswax, hemp, mp3, led  
 60 x 120 x 8 cm  
 Unique



Starmix 4  
 2023  
 Insulation plates, Mulberry fiber, tempera, beeswax, hemp, mp3, led  
 60 x 120 x 8 cm  
 Unique





Phantasia 1 - My Melody

2024

Tempera, cellular concrete, mulberry fiber, beeswax, fabric, LED lights, screen

80,5 x 62 cm

Unique





Phantasia 2 -Kuromi

2024

Tempera, cellular concrete, mulberry fiber, beeswax, fabric, LED lights, screen

80,5 x 62 cm

Unique





E+E (And & And)  
 2024  
 Tempera, oil, hemp, mp3, mulberry fiber, beeswax, led, hair  
 48 x 34 cm  
 Unique





Phantasia 3 - kiss me

2024

Tempera, cellular concrete, mulberry fiber, beeswax, fabric, LED lights

76 x 90 cm

Unique





Ta lyubit tu 2 2020  
 2022  
 Mulberry fiber, beeswax, tempera, rhinestone jewelry  
 53 x 90 x 12 cm  
 Unique