

EXHIBITION
DEFECT DESIRE
AURÉLIEN POTIER
26.10.24
→ 12.01.25
MO.CO. PANACÉE

WWW.MOCO.ART

SUMMARY

Introduction	p. 3
Exhibition text	p. 4
Artist biography	p. 5
Practical information	p. 6

INTRODUCTION

For this new season, two young French artists are being welcomed to the MO.CO. Panacée. Laura Garcia-Karras and Aurélien Potier will each be presenting their first solo exhibition in a public institution.

To prepare their exhibition, MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain invited them for four months of artist residency to enable them to create a series of new works and immerse themselves in the exhibition spaces. Beyond a first formal interpretation that could separate them, the affective approach of their respective practices motivates this choice. It is the gesture that is most important to these two artists.

Aurélien Potier questions the world surrounding him in his practice of sculpture, installation, writing, engraving, ceramics and performance. It's not really the medium that matters, but the relationship to the environment that the artist builds and destroys as much with words as with materials. Observing that the world in which we live oscillates nervously through opposing forces, between fragility, vulnerability and anger, failure and desire, emptiness and fullness, the artist proposes a delve into the exhibition space, deliberately re-wired, re-furnished and co-nnected, like the bodies that will pass through and inhabit it.

Laura Garcia-Karras is dedicated to just one medium: painting, which she stretches, deconstructs and sculpts, questioning its own materiality. In her representations of elements of nature, essentially flowers, the artist proposes different levels of interpretation. In her canvases, she goes beyond their poetic language and invokes their symbolism of fragility and eternity, transcending their sensuality and carnality. This show is an opportunity for the artist to explore her medium in a new way, exploding and consuming the motifs and bringing out the juices.

Under the artistic direction of Numa Hambursin, Chief Executive Officer MO.CO.

On the invitation by Vincent Honoré

Curated by Caroline Chabrand and Anya Harrison, curators

Assisted by Deniz Yoruc, curator assistant

EXHIBITION TEXT

A terrain crossed by metal cables, scattered with mortar invading the surfaces, populated by assemblages of worn-out furniture stripped of their original function - cupboards with broken drawers, a cracked mirror - opens up to us at the entrance to *DEFECT DESIRE*, the first institutional exhibition by Aurélien Potier.

Blackened cables penetrate and pierce these totemic sculptural configurations, symbols of desiring relationships governed by a contemporary society shaped by extraction and domination. Despite their apparent fragility, they stand upright, saved / repaired / healed by the insertion of rusty red wax that mends these open wounds and by the mortar that attempts to reinforce their structure. Suspended between two modes - tension and tenderness - these sculptures-assemblages highlight the issues that run through Aurélien Potier's practice and that evolve throughout all the works presented at MO.CO. Panacée.

The artist's formal and material vocabulary, which includes engraving, sound, writing, language, mortar, cables and metal spikes, is used in this exhibition to question the modalities of emancipation on the terrain of desire. In their analysis of the current state of ecological crises, philosopher Timothy Morton advocates for a radical self-awareness in order to achieve a potential planetary coexistence. Their concept of dark ecology allows us to imagine a more playful, anarchistic future by reconnecting with a deep desire for connection and exploring our own vulnerability to the world¹.

The question posed by Aurélien Potier seems to be: what are the possibilities that lie within the intimate space, physical as much as psychological or emotional, enabling us to break away from the power structures that maintain a grip on our daily lives, habits, desires and gestures? How can we move away from human relationships based on precarity and neoliberal competition? How can we stop desiring what is destructive for others?

Aurélien Potier's proposal is based on a reversal. A renewed relationship with internal tensions can become regenerative and restorative, a painful position to take, but one that allows to question, on an intimate level, the ways of living, thinking and consuming that late capitalism has taught us.

Aurélien Potier brings out an enveloping vulnerability in a number of ways. The materials he uses often exceed their material limits. The twisted shape of the steel spikes that form what the artist calls 'icons' soften the inherent rigidity of the metal. The metal plates display the marks of a gestural painting subjected to the passage of time, as these traces, created with a metal darkening agent, will eventually disappear. Words take form, drawn and engraved. They shape the space as well.

Like the cables in which our feet get tangled, pouring out from the walls in avalanches, which (dis)orient us and impose a deviant choreography, they are a form of writing in space, a syntax made up of dualities and paradoxes: healing can also be painful. As facing loss, that can be an access to tenderness.

Yet what is also striking in Aurélien Potier's work is the void or, better still, the negative space. Philosopher Sara Ahmed describes 'queer phenomenology' as a politics of disruption that reorders social relations in space, bringing to light what is usually cast to the margins, inhabiting the world at its points of deviation. If we follow this path, what Aurélien Potier ultimately presents is an instability, a fluidity, a 'defect' that reminds us that we are always walking on shifting ground that calls out to our desires².

Anya Harrison
Co-curator of the exhibition

{1} Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology : For a Logic of Future Coexistence*
(Columbia University Press, 2018)

{2} Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology : Orientations, objets et autres*
(Le Manuscrit, 2022)

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY



Aurélien Potier, *Wild Control*, 2024
Sanded, torch-twisted and welded steel rounds
MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain production
Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan, Vienna

Aurélien Potier

Born in 1992.

Lives and works in Marseille.

Aurélien Potier participated in artistic residencies at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Triangle - Astérides (Marseille), Center for Contemporary Arts & GSS (Glasgow, Scotland), and the contemporary art center la Synagogue de Delme (France).

His work has also been presented at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France), Triangle - Astérides (Marseille, France), CAPC Musée d'art contemporain (Bordeaux, France), CCA (Glasgow, Scotland), la Casa Encendida (Madrid, Spain), Art Basel Paris (France), Gianni Manhattan (Vienna, Austria), Sissi Club (Marseille, France), Air de Paris (Romainville, France), Sultana (Paris, France), Cooper Union (New York, USA), Belsunce Projects (Marseille, France), Centre International de Poésie (Marseille, France), Montez Press Radio (New York, USA).

He graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (Amsterdam, Netherlands) and studied at the Cooper Union School of Art (New York, USA). His work is represented by Gianni Manhattan, (Vienna, Austria).



MO.CO. Panacée © Photo : Yoann Gozard

ABOUT MO.CO. MONTPELLIER CONTEMPORAIN

MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain is an artistic ecosystem that goes from training to collection, production, exhibition and mediation, due to the convergence of an art school and two contemporary art centers: MO.CO. Esba (Superior School of Fine Arts of Montpellier), MO.CO. Panacée (laboratory of contemporary creation) and MO.CO. (space dedicated to exhibitions of international scope).

EXHIBITIONS PROGRAM

FROM OCTOBER 26, 2024 TO JANUARY 12, 2025

AT MO.CO.

PARADE, A FRENCH SCENE.
COLLECTION LAURENT DUMAS

AT MO.CO. PANACÉE

PERENNIAL
LAURA GARCIA-KARRAS

DEFFECT DESIRE
AURÉLIEN POTIER

FROM FEBRUARY 15 TO MAY 18, 2025

AT MO.CO.

ÉPROUVER L'INCONNU
A major thematic collective exhibition around art and science
In partnership with the University of Montpellier

AT MO.CO. PANACÉE

IVANA BAŠIĆ
PIERRE UNAL-BRUNET (In partnership with the CCCOD, Tours)

FROM JUNE 21 TO SEPTEMBER 21, 2025

AT MO.CO.

FRANÇOISE PÉTROVITCH

AT MO.CO. PANACÉE

JEAN-MARIE APPRIOU

EXHIBITIONS PROGRAM

Communication

MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain
Margaux Strazzeri
Director of Communication
and Sponsorship
+33 (0) 4 99 58 28 40
+33 (0) 6 29 86 46 28
margauxstrazzeri@moco.art

Press and Media Relations

Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
and Ville de Montpellier
direction-presse@montpellier3m.fr
Tel: 04 67 13 48 78
www.montpellier3m.fr - www.montpellier.fr

MO.CO.

13 rue de la République, Montpellier
Open Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (October-May)
and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (June-September)

MO.CO. Panacée

14 rue de l'École de Pharmacie, Montpellier
Open Wednesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (October-May)
and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (June-September).

Photos et credits

Exhibition visuals available online at www.moco.art
Login: presse
Password: mocoPresse2024