

PRESS KIT

Laura Garcia-Karras, *Laura* (detail), 2024, oil on canvas, Production MO.CO. © MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain - Artwork by Laura Garcia-Karras - Paris 11 ADAGP, Paris 2024

**EXHIBITION
PERENNIAL
LAURA GARCIA-KARRAS
26.10.24
→ 12.01.25
MO.CO. PANACÉE**

**MO.CO. MONTPELLIER
CONTEMPORAIN**


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Montpellier

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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.

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.

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.

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

Supporting young contemporary artists is one of the missions of art centres. The result of a four-month residency in Montpellier, *PERENNIAL* is Laura Garcia-Karras' first institutional exhibition in France. The artist has produced more than forty new paintings, imbued with the summer colours and rhythm of the city. Some older works, such as *Hyrule* (2024), are also on display, but she has drawn essentially on Mediterranean light to compose a new series in which the permanence of nature, in all its forms, is at the heart of her statement.

The Latin word *perennial* refers to the idea of durability and continuity. In botany, it refers to long-lasting perennial plants. 'Perennial and long-lasting' are also the colours and organic forms that populate the artist's paintings, are like spaces of resistance and resilience to the world that surrounds her.

Her formal research has led her from figuration to abstraction, and then to a combination of these two, always leading her towards organic forms. Nevertheless, Laura Garcia-Karras is not 'a painter of flowers'. Plants, a seemingly innocuous and popular subject in the history of painting, are transcended by the artist. They reveal a hidden essence, that of a world in perpetual motion, where shapes metamorphose and colours evolve. As Roger Caillois wrote in *La lecture des pierres*¹, natural structures obey a logic that goes beyond simple observation: they contain a mysterious, almost cosmic force. It is this force that Laura Garcia-Karras seeks to capture in her work.

The organic comes to life and blends with the anatomical, the corporeal, the carnal. Some of her compositions are veritable 'body paintings': anemones become vessels (*Plexus*, 2024), the petals unfold like the ribs of a ribcage (*Oraison*, 2024), eyes (*Le début de la fin*, 2024), tongues and cells (*Bro*, 2024). The artist depicts the interior of a plant or flower, as much as that of a body or the world, embodying above all the vitality of living things. In her paintings, every line and curve responds to each other, forming a silent dialogue between the world of plants and that of humans.

Her works are therefore portraits (*Laura*, 2024), still lifes and vanitas, depicted in close-up, from the front, decontextualised. She assembles them to create landscape exhibitions or gardens through which visitors pass. Laura Garcia-Karras considers that everything is a landscape, an expression that can be observed by the senses on the surface of the earth.

It is the act of painting that interests her. The motif serves as a pretext for brushstrokes, contrasts and gradations of colour, and the play of light. Her gestures oscillate between precision and spontaneity: surgical cuts with scotch tape or smears of juice, mixing technique and instinct. This duality in her practice reflects a tension between control and letting go, where every gesture becomes a quest to capture the ephemeral.

In this exhibition, the artist is playing out a colourful score articulated to the rhythm of the different formats (from large to very small). She creates a luminous explosion in the space, revealing a monumental ceiling painting, the highlight of the exhibition. This bold gesture shifts the visitor's gaze and creates an immersive experience, embodying the idea that runs through the exhibition: nature is omnipresent, both protective and revealing.

Colour becomes a language in its own right, a medium for sensory connections. 'Put the colours together and they start to sing. Not as a choir, but as soloists. What is the colour of the music of the spheres, if not the echo of the big bang on the spectrum, repeated in a loop?'²

Beyond the visual element, light is 'a metaphor for illumination and revelation' for the artist. It sculpts the shapes, makes the colours vibrate, and reveals hidden details, giving life to these carnal plant giants.

PERENNIAL sets the eternal in the ephemeral. By 'capturing the invisible'³, Laura Garcia-Karras invites us to look at her work as a portrait of the living, a mirror reflecting her own transformations and her relationship with the ephemeral.

{1} Roger Caillois, *La lecture des pierres*, éditions Xavier Barral, 1966

{2} Derek Jarman, *Chroma. A Book of Color*, p.185, 186, l'éclat/poche, Paris.

{3} Roger Caillois

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY



Laura Garcia-Karras, *Oraison*, 2024, oil on canvas
Production MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain
Courtesy de l'artiste © maxvanvm. Adagg, Paris, 2024

Laura Garcia-Karras

Born in 1988.

Lives and works in Paris and Aubervilliers.

Her work is represented by Galerie Paris-B (Paris). She studied at La Cambre school in Brussels and then at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, from which she graduated in 2015. In 2018, she was the winner of the Fondation Crédit Agricole competition and the third winner of the Prix Antoine Marin, sponsored by Bernard Frize. She is currently resident at Poush Manifesto in Aubervilliers.

She has also exhibited at Galerie Taymour Grahne Projects, London (UK), Galerie Comparative (Paris, France), Galerie Paris-B (Paris, France), Musée Zhi Art (China), Collection Lambert (Avignon, France), Fondation Greenline, Parc d'Ognon (France), Beirut Art Fair (Lebanon), Art Paris (France), Miart, Milan (Italy), The Shanghai Art Fair (China) and the MO.CO. Panacée (Montpellier, France).



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.

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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

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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
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