

BOOKLET

A Singular History

L'École des beaux-arts de Montpellier

For a long time, the history of the Montpellier School of Fine Arts has been written only in the present tense and in fragments, following the rhythm of current events—as if there was nothing to say about its past, nothing to tell of the legendary artists trained there, the renowned professors they encountered, or the destinies and movements that took shape there in their earliest stages; as if this memory was nothing more than a succession of coincidences.

As Chief executor officer of MO.CO.—a tripartite institution of which the School is a central pillar—I myself shared, to some extent, this lack of awareness, and underestimated this intangible artistic heritage that has nonetheless helped to shape the identity of our city. From time to time, I would discover that a well-known artist had once studied at the School, and regret that no major publication or event had ever addressed this subject.

To address this, a generous project was required—one that extended beyond the boundaries of MO.CO. alone. This provided the opportunity to establish a partnership with the Musée Fabre, whose history is intimately intertwined with that of the School: a collaboration between our two institutions whose ambition had no equivalent until then. Other public and private institutions joined us, including the Frac Occitanie Montpellier and the Musée Paul Valéry in Sète, bearing witness to the contribution of the School of Fine Arts to an entire region.

Together, we sought to reveal the epic story of the School across two centuries, in all its diversity and singularity, through both its major figures and its now-forgotten personalities, while bringing young contemporary artists into dialogue with the masters of the past. We aimed to speak of the art studio, of teaching, of lineage and emancipation, of the relationship to the city, and even of friendship itself—so many dimensions without which art could not be passed on from one generation to the next.

[...]

Numa Hambursin

Chief Executor Officer of MO.CO.

At MO.CO.

The exhibition *L'École des beaux-arts de Montpellier: A Singular History* unfolds as a city-scale project, conceived through a dynamic of circulation and resonance between

places, disciplines, and audiences. In Montpellier in particular, institutions dedicated to the dissemination and education of contemporary artistic creation have, from the outset, functioned as part of a virtuous ecosystem. This is why the exhibition is presented jointly at the Musée Fabre and MO.CO., affirming both the historical and contemporary continuity between spaces of artistic education and display.

Beyond these two sites, the exhibition extends and spreads throughout the city. Videos are projected at night onto the windows of the School of Fine Arts; concerts and performances are hosted at Frac Occitanie Montpellier; and films are screened at the Utopia cinema. This dissemination reflects a desire to allow art to circulate throughout the city and to activate its cultural fabric.

An exhibition tracing nearly three hundred years of history cannot claim to be exhaustive. At the Musée Fabre, the exhibition proposes thematic focuses—particularly on public commissions and models of academic teaching—while alumni of the Montpellier art School are invited to intervene, in close dialogue with the permanent collections.

At MO.CO., the history of the School is showed chronologically, in order to highlight key turning points, pedagogical dynamics, and encounters that have shaped its evolution.

Sections of the exhibition

- **History**
- **The Studio**
- **Golden Generation**
- **Landscapes**
- **In the Street**
- **Youth — before Supports/Surfaces:** Bioulès, Dezeuze, and Viallat
- **Supports/Surfaces:** Legacies and Continuations
- **The ABC Group**
- **Radical Influential Figures:** Bernard Frize and Robert Combas
- **Encounters**

History

The history of a federating structure for artistic education in Montpellier begins within the Société des Beaux-Arts in 1779, the result of a shared initiative by groups of art enthusiasts and patrons. Among those trained there was François-Xavier Fabre, prior to his departure for Paris, where he joined Jacques-Louis David's studio and attended the Academy. This learned society would later give rise to the Montpellier School of Civil Engineering (École des Ponts et Chaussées), and subsequently to the École Centrale, until 1804.

Upon his return from Italy, François-Xavier Fabre inaugurated the Musée Fabre following his generous donation in 1828, he chose to integrate the art school into the museum as early as the following year. Fabre thus became director of both the museum and the School. This dual role continued under his successors, Charles Matet (1837–1870) and Ernest Michel (1871–1902). Thereafter, the directors of the School remained deeply involved in the life of the museum: Prosper Jouneau (1902–1923), Louis Guigues (1923–1938), and Camille Descossy (1939–1967).

Until 1948, when the School left the museum's premises, the boundary between the museum and contemporary artistic creation remained highly significant. There was no clear boundary between art of the past—considered solely as an object of study—and living artistic practice. Connections formed naturally, as evidenced, for example, by the organization of a Salon presenting student works within the museum as early as 1873.

The Studio

The studio is a fundamental place for artists: it is both their space of creation and an extension of their inner world. Views of the studio constitute a recurring theme throughout the history of art up to the present day, whether expressed through drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, or video. It is also a living space, where artists receive visits from family members, friends, professionals, or students. By extension, the term “studio” also refers to a collective of collaborators, assistants, or students gathered around a single master, within an academy or a school of fine arts.

The studio is likewise a place of encounter, as evidenced by artists’ portraits. Vincent Bioulès’s portrait, made when he was a student at the School of Fine Arts, was painted by the School’s director, Camille Descossy. Bioulès, in turn, produced a portrait of his friend Claude Viallat in the studio of Georges Dezeuze. The tools essential to artistic creation may themselves become the subject of artworks, as seen in the sculptures of Sébastien Duranté or the still life by Julien Descossy.

Finally, the studio is also a space for reflection on the creative process, with all the difficulties it may entail. The drawings and the medicine cabinet of Émilie Plateau, a comic-book artist, bear humorous witness to the precarious situation of women authors—and, by extension, of artists more broadly.

Génération dorée / Golden Generation

The years 1920–1950 were marked by a generation of artists who formed friendships at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts and, without creating a formal movement, established significant milestones in the city’s artistic development. Germaine Richier was a student in 1920, followed by Albert Dubout, Suzanne Ballivet, Camille Descossy, Georges Dezeuze, Gabriel Couderc, and Jean Milhau. Not only were the individual

careers of this generation influential and emancipatory—through the diversification of practices in sculpture, illustration, caricature and ceramics—but their friendships and groups were rooted in an environment that preserved their impact for years to come.

Beyond the movements emerging from this generation, such as the Frédéric Bazille Group founded in 1937 or the Montpellier-Sète Group in 1953, it is above all a lineage that shaped the next wave of artists attending the Montpellier School of Fine Arts in the 1940s and 1950s. Georges Dezeuze and Camille Descossy mentored Pierre Soulages, François Rouan, Valentine Schlegel, as well as future key figures of the Supports/Surfaces movement—Vincent Bioulès, Daniel Dezeuze (Georges's son), Claude Viallat, and Toni Grand—all of whom found in Montpellier a fertile ground for experimentation within a rich and diverse framework of artistic lineages.

Landscapes

A common inspiration unites generations of artists trained at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts: the landscape, an obvious and universal motif, yet always unstable depending on the seasons, human interventions, and light. These are challenges that painters strive to capture in order to reveal them more fully.

Here, the drawings of the first students of the Société des Beaux-Arts (circa 1784), Jérôme René Demoulin and Jacques Moulinier, engage in dialogue with subsequent generations: Eugène Castelnau and Ernest Michel, trained by Charles Matet, and Max Leenhardt, a student of Ernest Michel who also joined Cabanel's studio in Paris. A leap forward in time, beyond the Golden Generation including Georges Dezeuze, brings us to the youthful drawings of Daniel Dezeuze and later works by his brother François.

The landscape, ever present, emancipates itself from notions of realism to become evocation through lines or assemblages of traces. Michel Martin, Yongkwan Joo, and Marie Havel experiment with techniques and media that blur chronological markers. The image becomes mysterious, illustrating an attempt to alter reality to make it more true, highlighting intentions that go far beyond mere mimicry or representing a tangible reality.

In the Street

Rodolphe Huguet's practice transforms ordinary materials and urban devices into both plastic and critical objects. Crates, abandoned or recycled, reveal the circulation of goods and gestures within the city, while surveillance cameras question the role of public authorities in controlling public space. Huguet turns these instruments of surveillance into platforms for reflection on visibility, authority, and freedom.

This attention to urban signs resonates with the work of Agnès Fornells, who repurposes signs and visual codes to interrogate mechanisms of normalization while introducing ambiguity and poetry into the public space. In Gwendoline Samidoust's work, art

emerges in the interstices of the urban landscape, playing with usage and temporality, transforming everyday life through discreet and site-specific interventions.

Together, these approaches demonstrate how the street can be inhabited as a space of creation: through the reappropriation of materials and devices, the subversion of signs, or direct intervention in the environment. They affirm public space as a site of friction, narrative, and artistic emancipation.

Youth — before Supports/Surfaces: Bioulès, Dezeuze, and Viallat

Claude Viallat enrolled at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts in October 1955, where he met Henriette Pous (1937–2025), originally from Le Boulou in the Pyrénées-Orientales. At the School, Claude and Henriette also became acquainted with François Rouan, Vincent Bioulès, and Daniel Dezeuze. Claude was called up for military service from June 1959 to December 1961. During this period in the barracks, he painted various subjects, including war scenes, flayed oxen, self-portraits, as well as portraits of his mother and father. Henriette Pous-Viallat, for her part, produced still lifes before developing a more abstract approach to painting.

Vincent Bioulès studied at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts from 1957 to 1960, where he met young painters who would become companions in the following decade: Jean Azémard, Daniel Dezeuze, François Rouan, and Claude Viallat. Upon arriving in Paris, he entered the Prix de Rome competition in 1961 and was awarded the Second Prize for his painting *The Marriage of Heaven and Earth*, placing landscape and work from life at the heart of his practice.

Daniel Dezeuze spent his youth in Montpellier, receiving instruction from his father, Georges Dezeuze, who himself was a teacher at the School of Fine Arts. From 1964 to 1965, he lived in Mexico, where he discovered the Anthropology Museum and Mayan civilization. This shift in perspective and openness to other cultures became central to his artistic practice. In 1978, he settled in Sète after being one of the founders of the Supports/Surfaces group alongside Claude Viallat and Vincent Bioulès.

Supports/Surfaces: Legacies and Continuations

A French movement born between Montpellier, Nice, and Paris, Supports/Surfaces proposed a radical questioning of traditional painting. Most of the group's artists had studied at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts and deconstructed the painting by analyzing its components: stretcher, canvas, pigments, fabrics. The works gathered in this room bear witness to this approach.

Vincent Bioulès transforms simple wooden laths into a repetitive, rigorous structure and a poetic forest. Claude Viallat, a central figure of the movement, preferred to paint on suspended fabrics. He lets the color spread, diffuse, and permeate the canvas,

exploring material through folds, saturation, and both sides of the fabric. Daniel Dezeuze removes everything that typically constitutes a painting, revealing the stretcher itself, while Patrick Saytour engages the canvas in a flexible, modular, and living volume.

Later, Bruno Peinado translated this heritage by introducing movement and instability into space. He repurposed a metal frame from an advertising panel, which becomes on one side an abstract painting and on the other a reflection of the surrounding works, creating a dialogue of forms and colors that transcends time.

With this work, as with the artists of Supports/Surfaces, the focus is on questioning how art can interrogate society. Far from imposing a style, what matters to these artists is to propose a method: to observe material, liberate form, and deconstruct artistic habits in order to better understand their foundations.

ABC Group

In 1969, Tjeerd Alkema, Jean Azémard, Vincent Bioulès, and Alain Clément founded the ABC Group in Montpellier, with the aim of rethinking the role of art in the city. The group denounced the inability of traditional institutions to accommodate contemporary art and proposed new forms integrated into urban space. Rather than a formal collective, ABC functioned as an open approach, where color, geometry, and perception became tools to transform the way we see.

Tjeerd Alkema developed sculptures designed for movement and exploration. Vincent Bioulès, after experimenting with abstraction, returned to figurative painting, particularly portraits and landscapes. Jean Azémard explored modular structures and surface play, while Alain Clément created works at the intersection of painting and sculpture, focused on line, balance, and color. François Rouan reinvented the pictorial surface through weaving and folding, extending the group's reflection on art as a constructed space.

Continuing this legacy, Nicolas Lebrun (graduated 2011) investigates the relationships between form and perception, carrying forward ABC's spirit: making space a field for visual experiments in which the artwork is realized through its encounter with the public.

In May 1970, the group organized "*100 Artists in the City*", directly activating public space. Four decades later, in 2019, MO.CO. revived this ambition with "*100 Artists in the City – ZAT*", highlighting both the vitality of art in the urban context and the enduring relevance of ABC's original intuitions.

Radical Influential Figures: Bernard Frize and Robert Combas

Trained at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts, Bernard Frize and Robert Combas are among the major figures of contemporary French art. Their internationally recognized work illustrates the lasting influence of this school on both abstract and figurative painting at the end of the 20th century.

Since the 1970s, Bernard Frize has explored the very mechanisms of painting. He produces series of canvases governed by precise rules and procedures, aiming to foreground the materiality and organization of the painting rather than personal or narrative expression. By frequently changing methods—brushes loaded with multiple colors, repeated patterns, evolving systems—he avoids what he calls the “personification of abstraction.” For Frize, painting is constructed as a visible system, where gesture, tools, and constraints become tangible and invite the viewer to perceive the work as a process in action.

Robert Combas played a decisive role in the creation of *Figuration Libre*, alongside Hervé Di Rosa and several related artists. The movement arose in reaction to dominant conceptual currents, advocating a return to imagery, drawing, and popular energy. In the 1980s, Combas developed a visual vocabulary of bold colors, black outlines, and abundant scenes inspired by comic books, street culture, music, and history. His spontaneous and narrative painting reaffirmed the role of the figurative while opening it to an accessible, contemporary culture.

Frize and Combas contributed to the redefinition of painting in France between the late 1970s and early 1980s, at a moment when the medium was reorganizing itself between methodical abstraction and a return to imagery.

Encounters

This is a constellation of artists linked to MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain, whose works investigate how reality forms, alters, or doubles before our eyes. Drawings, photographs, paintings, films, sculptures, and installations coexist as multiple modes of appearance—visions, traces, phenomena, and displacements. The landscape becomes a sensitive material, a space for reflection, and a meeting ground, revealing fragile atmospheres and evolving forms.

From the tactile density of Lucien Pelen’s mountains to the vibratory networked spaces of Cédric Torne, from the transforming clouds of Julien Crépieux to the liquid blacks of Didier Tallagrand, the landscape oscillates between meticulous observation and poetic abstraction. Some works arise from dialogue: Abdelkader Benchaïma & Gilles Miquelis reactivate old images and translate invisible flows in the sky; Alain Lapierre & Jimmy Richer compose an expanding wall; Marie Havel & Clément Philippe imagine crystalline archipelagos where the artificial and natural respond to each other; Grout/Mazéas present a new film extending their duo work, translating music, encounter, and perception of the world through moving images.

Others explore gesture and materiality: Bruno Persat invents a drawing born of movement, Mehdi Melhaoui transforms a zodiac into a rope-bound body, and Toma Dutter proposes suspended shelter huts in a wind-swept world. The paintings and sculptures of Marc Aurelle, Miles Hall, Belkacem Boudjellouli, Hadrien Gérenton, and

Ninon Hivert continue this reflection, depicting worlds balanced between fragility and density, precision and collapse.

Through his documentary work and paintings, Jean-Baptiste Durand invites viewers to observe what escapes attention and to perceive the margins of the invisible. Thus emerges a polyphonic landscape, born of singular perspectives and friendships woven between the artists, inviting each viewer to find their place within this shared territory.

At MO.CO. Esba

Nicolas Boillot

Noé Grenier

Yongkwan Joo

Nicolas Lebrun

MO.CO. offers a film program on the windows of the MO.CO. Esba gallery. Each screening, visible from the street, transforms the space into a laboratory of visual experiments, where installations and videos engage in dialogue with the School's pedagogical and architectural framework.

From Noé Grenier to Yongkwan Joo, and including Nicolas Boillot and Nicolas Lebrun, this program explores a variety of worlds—from the recomposed memory of cinema to poetic contemplation, and from generative image transformations to the flow of media—offering students and the public a lively encounter with contemporary artistic practices.

01.31 — 02.22.2026

Noé Grenier

Extérieur Nuit, 2022, 6'50" loop

Graduate, 2011

Created from excerpts of Jacques Demy's films—*La Baie des Anges* (1963), *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964), *Peau d'Âne* (1970), and *Parking* (1985)—*Extérieur Nuit* composes a poetic wandering through the filmmaker's universe.

Through an editing process that brings together, reconfigures, and sets these fragments in dialogue, Noé Grenier examines the passages, transformations, and movements experienced by Demy's characters. The film loop, presented as an installation, offers a continuous journey through a recomposed memory of cinema.

02.25 — 03.18.2026

Yongkwan Joo

Vague verte, 2022, 1' loop

Graduate, 2019

Based on images captured during his daily walks, Yongkwan Joo's practice explores the act of contemplation and the question of borders—a theme closely tied to his personal history between the two Koreas. With *Vague verte*, the artist films trees swaying around the Abbey of Fontfroide. The installation transforms an everyday motif into a sensitive and shifting landscape.

03.23. — 04.12.2026

Nicolas Boillot

Lambeaux, 2012, live

Graduate, 2001

Nicolas Boillot uses the SamplTV system to remix television broadcasts in real time. His installation *Lambeaux* extracts micro-movements from the image, redistributes them in loops and GIFs, and creates a visual palimpsest in perpetual mutation. Situated and reconfigurable according to location, time, and the channel captured, the work offers an open and emergent experience, questioning our relationship to media flow and digital temporality.

04.15 — 05.03 2026

Nicolas Lebrun

Architecture dégénérative, 2021, 23'29" loop

Graduate, 2011

In this video, the artist transforms residential facades from cities such as Hong Kong, San Francisco, and Shanghai through a generative process. The algorithm duplicates fragments of the image, shifting the habitat from reality toward an architecture in continuous mutation—unstable and constantly reinvented.

At FRAC Occitanie Montpellier

Bobby Brim

Ava Carrere

Mark Geffriaud

Vir Andres Hera

Pierre Peres

In resonance with the exhibition, MO.CO. has partnered with Frac OM to showcase artists who studied at the School of Fine Arts and whose practice unfolds in the temporal frame of events, concerts, or performances.

This opportunity to extend aspects of the exhibition into the Frac OM space highlights the importance of this institution within a local network that has long supported, and continues to support, graduates of the Montpellier School, and more broadly, the region's artists. Frac OM has loaned numerous works for this exhibition, many of which it acquired over the years. This collaboration thus reflects the natural connections that link contemporary art dissemination across our territory.

The program revolves around five figures who explore modes of creation related to the visual arts: singing, performance, video, spatial structuring through light, and scenography.

02.07.2026, 2 PM — 6 PM

Pierre Peres

TYT

Concert

Graduate, 2017

A self-taught musician, singer, and composer, Pierre Peres is co-creator of the artistic collective *In Extremis*, a member of *Trilaphon*, and performs in a duo with Núria Lloansi. His practice unfolds within a transdisciplinary and collaborative sound universe, encouraging the listening of spaces through different media and rhythms. For the exhibition, he created *TYT*, an afternoon concert, wearing a costume specifically designed for the occasion by Chloé Viton.

02.13.2026, 7 PM

Ava Carrère

Souffle et Jure

Performative Concert – approx. 45 min

Graduate, 2004

Ava Carrère first made her mark on Berlin's underground scene before returning to France to form the band *Ava et Les Hommes de Main*, and later the duo *Sages comme des sauvages*. Defining herself as a singer-songwriter, she presents a unique concert for the exhibition. This retrospective concert-performance blends investigative work and memories, combining singing, stand-up, neuropsychiatry, and revolution.

03.13.2026, 7 PM

Bobby Brim

Mixing Salivas: Smelling the Interepidermises

Performance

Graduate, 2019

A sound performance first created in 2023 (Linge Records) and revisited for the exhibition, including projections of Muddy Waters and Musty Bodies, in collaboration with Pierre Peres.

Bobby Brim is a transdisciplinary artist, creating images, installations, sounds, and digital devices. They compose their work along the path of cyborg entities they encounter, producing “data-generating monsters” and exploring autonomous worlds. Pixels, decibels, waves, bodies, and collectives serve as concrete materials for probing active and transgressive spaces in a post-conspiratorial world.

Bobby Brim is currently participating in the E.X.E.R.C.E program at CCN Agora de la Danse in Montpellier.

03.20.2026, 7 PM

Vir Andres Hera

RE-MEMBRANCES

Performance

Graduate, 2015

Performance with students from MO.CO. Esba.

Re-Membrances – Cahiers de l’ESBA draws from the personal archives of Vir Andres Hera (born 1990)—lecture notes, diaries, and memories from their youth at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts. The performance spans sixteen years of intimate and collective history, intertwining discoveries, explorations of identity, and artistic learning.

Vir Andres Hera’s practice is situated within a struggle against the idea of cultural obsolescence. Crossing personal narratives with fragments of history, their works give voice to words, voices, and languages, combined with fragmented visual montages and enigmatic images, reflecting the plurality of perspectives and realities.

03.27.2026, 5:30 PM

Mark Geffriaud

In Your Dreams

Performance

Graduate, 2004

Meeting point:

MO.CO. Esba, 130 rue Yehudi
Menuhin, 34000 Montpellier

An art school makes you dream
We dream of entering an art school
And once we’re in, we understand that the real thing
Is how are we going to get out of it
How are we going to make it once outside
We enter an art school in order to be able to leave it

With style if possible
With panache if possible
Which school do you come out of ?
Being an artist makes you dream
But what exactly is this dream ?
Can it also be a nightmare ?
What does this dream look like today ?
Maybe we could start from here....

At cinéma UTOPIA

Emilie Aussel

Ekiem Barbier / Guilhem Causse/ Quentin L'Helgoualc'h

Aude Chevalier-Beaumel

Jean-Baptiste Durand

MO.CO. has partnered with the Utopia cinema to organize evening events around the exhibition, offering the public the opportunity to discover the work of filmmakers who graduated from the Montpellier School of Fine Arts. These artists extend their visual arts practice into cinema, exploring a variety of forms: documentary, fiction, and experimental.

These screenings also allow the exhibition to extend beyond its walls, creating a lively space for exchange and discovery, and revealing how the experience of the School continues to nourish innovative and engaged audiovisual practices.

02.15.2026, 7:30 PM

Jean-Baptiste Durand

Chien de la casse

93 min, 2023

Graduate, 2010

Jean-Baptiste Durand (b. 1985) trained at the School of Fine Arts, a formative experience that shaped his attention to bodies, gestures, and everyday situations, gradually leading him toward cinematic writing and direction.

Chien de la casse, his first feature film, was completed in 2023. Set in a village in southern France, the film explores a male friendship tested by the arrival of a young woman. Praised for its realism, it won two César Awards in 2024, including Best First Feature Film.

03.31.2026, 8 PM

Guilhem Causse, Quentin L'Helgoualc'h, Ekiem Barbier

Knit's Island (2022, 91 min)

Graduates, 2017

Guilhem Causse is the director of *Marlowe Drive* and *Knit's Island*, as well as the series *La Vraie Vie* with Arte, exploring the links between reality and virtual worlds.

Quentin L'Helgoualc'h combines sculpture, video, and drawing in a multidisciplinary visual arts practice.

Ekiem Barbier is a filmmaker, writer, and musician. He creates poetic and experimental documentaries, including *Anent* and *Marlowe Drive*, exploring anthropology and visual creation.

Knit's Island, the Endless Island, is a feature film composed entirely of footage captured during online sessions of the game *DayZ*. The work sits at the intersection of documentary and video game: somewhere on the Internet exists a 250 km² space where individuals gather to simulate a survivalist fiction.

Assuming the form of avatars, a film crew enters this space and interacts with the players. Who are these inhabitants? Are they truly playing, or something else entirely?

04.07.2026, 8 PM

Émilie Aussel

La Grotte des enfants perdus (2024, 19 min)

and *L'Été l'éternité* (2020, 75 min)

Produced by Shellac, co-written with Emmanuelle Bayamack-Tam and Yacine Badday
Graduate, 2002

Coming from independent cinema, Émilie Aussel develops a sensitive perspective on adolescence, relationships, and states of transition, favoring a storytelling attentive to bodies, silences, and diffuse emotions.

L'Été l'éternité (2020) delicately explores grief, innocence, and resilience. Praised for its empathetic approach and the performances of its actors, the film creates a gentle and immersive atmosphere where emotion emerges through gestures and silences.

La Grotte des enfants perdus (2024) follows six students into the natural environment of the Sainte-Baume massif. As they lose their way in the woods and encounter a mysterious rocky cavity, the characters undergo a transformation at the boundary between childhood, legend, and initiation rites. The film blends collective imagination with individual quests, revealing the director's interest in spaces of transformation and wonder.

04.28.2026, 8 PM

Aude Chevalier-Beaumel

Patrícia (2026, 96 min)

Directed by: Aude Chevalier-Beaumel

Cinematography: Aude Chevalier-Beaumel, Alexis Zelensky, Marcelo Barbosa

Production: Chuck Productions and Marea Filmes

Editing: Quentin Delaroche

Original Score: Francisco Ferro

Postproduction: Saraband and Cairn Studios

Graduate, 2004

Aude Chevalier-Beaumel is a filmmaker and visual artist whose work sits at the intersection of documentary, sociopolitical engagement, and exploration of latent social realities. Several of her works have been awarded at Brazilian film festivals.

In Rio de Janeiro, Patrícia is a single mother of five, a grandmother, and an independent sex worker for her entire life. At 45, she faces the challenges of her profession in relation to her age. While trying to guide her daughters toward a different path than her own, Patrícia falls back into the vice of cocaine, and everything seems to slip away: her health, her family's stability, and her children's future.

Performances and Concerts at MO.CO. and Musée Fabre

01.31.2026, 3 PM and 4 PM

Rodolphe Huguet and Maël Gagneux

Concert-activation of Graines de conserve, 10 min

At MO.CO., meet on the forecourt in the garden

02.01.2026, 11 AM

Nicolas Fenouillat, *Iron Man*, 12 min

At Musée Fabre, meet on the museum forecourt

02.01.2026, 1 PM

Geoffrey Badel, *Patience*, with Sylvanie Tendron

At Musée Fabre, meet at the museum reception

05.03.2026, 5 PM

Wendy Pot

Concert followed by sound encounters

At MO.CO., meet on the forecourt in the garden

Free entry subject to availability

And in the galleries of Montpellier

AL/MA

Pablo Garcia – Le combat ordinaire

29 January – 28 February 2026

Opening: 28 January at 6 PM

Rodolphe Huguet

7 March – 4 April 2026

Opening: 6 March at 6 PM

Address: 5 rue du Plan du Palais, 34000 Montpellier

Vasistas

Cyril Chartier-Poyet – Showroom

30 January – 28 February 2026

Opening: 29 January at 6 PM

Address: 5 rue Saint-Firmin (corner of rue Foch), 34000 Montpellier

Iconoscope

Toma Dutter and Benoît Pype – Des Châteaux en Espagne

29 January – 3 April 2026

Opening: 30 January at 6 PM

Address: 18 rue Chaptal, 34000 Montpellier

Les chantiersBoîteNoire

Samuel Spone – Blue Monday

30 January – 21 March 2026

Opening: 29 January at 6:30 PM

Hadrien Gérenton – La Sera Que Scende

10 April – 8 June 2026

Opening: 9 April at 6:30 PM

Address: 1 rue de la Carbonnerie, 34000 Montpellier

Hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 2:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Aperto

Video Game – Interactive installations and playable videos, with Ayşegül Altunay, Ekiem Barbier, Guilhem Causse, Quentin L'Helgoualc'h, Pierre Bellemin, Philip Berg, Max Boutin, Collectif A (Pierre Bellemin, Didier Casiglio, Emmanuelle Etienne, Agnès Fornells, Alain Lapierre, Michel Martin, Patrick Sauze), Vincent Ducarne, Lea Emeline, Alain Lapierre, Michel Martin, Groupe Pollen+ (Alice Boyreau, Igor Dubreucq, Marie Féménias, Nicolas Foix, Tipoume Garin, Thomas Jung, Alice Olausson, Pauline Pagès,

Alix Salel, Yuri Sohn)

30 January – 28 February 2026

Opening: 29 January at 6 PM

Address: 1 rue Etienne Cardaire, 34000 Montpellier

At musée Fabre

For the third edition of the SOL Biennale, musée Fabre and MO.CO. took on the challenge of presenting, jointly, the story of an art history that is simultaneously local to Montpellier, national, and international, bringing together the work of around one hundred artists trained at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts.

The exhibition offers a narrative across a long span of time, recalling the essential model that was the Société des beaux-arts de Montpellier (1779–1787), followed by the founding of the municipal school of drawing in 1806, its integration with the museum envisioned in 1825 by François-Xavier Fabre (1766–1837), and its gradual transformation into a School of Fine Arts. This history is nourished by the connections between young artists in training, their teachers, and the collections of Musée Fabre.

The selection of works highlights, within the MO.CO. spaces, the major stages of the school's evolution, emphasizing the succession of generations. This historical presentation is complemented at Musée Fabre by thematic focuses: the enduring practice of drawing from life and from motifs, the ambitions of Montpellier's public commissions, and studio methodologies.

The link between the two institutions is also celebrated through a series of interventions by graduates of the School within the museum's collections, writing a new chapter in this singular history that has unfolded over more than two centuries.

Youthful Drawings: Academic Heritage and Modernity

Opened in 1829 in the orangery of the Hôtel de Massilian (now destroyed), the school founded and directed by Fabre adopted the principles of academic teaching by reinstating a course in drawing from the live model. Instruction was entrusted to three professors, including the painter Charles Matet (1791–1870), who took over the school after Fabre's death in 1837 and directed it until 1870.

During his long career, Matet trained several generations of artists such as Alexandre Cabanel (1823–1889), Eugène Castelnau (1827–1894), and Édouard Marsal (1845–1929). One of his former students, Ernest Michel (1833–1902), winner of the Prix de Rome in 1860, later took over the Montpellier School and began reforming it. He secured its transformation into the Regional School of Fine Arts while reaffirming academic

principles. Under Michel's directorship, the school expanded to encompass what is now the entire Cour Vien, then called the "courtyard of the School of Fine Arts."

The study of anatomical drawing, copying the masters, sculpture (ronde-bosse), and drawing from the live model remained constants of the school's training, aspects of which continue to this day.

The landscapes around Montpellier, particularly the banks of the Lez River and the village of Castelnau-le-Lez, provided another fundamental source for developing the sensitivity of students at the Montpellier School of Fine Arts.

Vincent Bioulès

Léon-Louis Cauvy

Daniel Dezeuze

François-Xavier Fabre

Alphonse Goutès

Toni Grand

Charles Matet

Esprit Matet

Pierre Frédéric Peyson

Henriette Pous-Viallat

Jean Aristide Rudel

Pierre Soulages

The School in the City: Artists from the L'École des beaux-arts de Montpellier and Public Commissions

In Montpellier, the municipality, the state, and the universities have commissioned some of the most ambitious public artworks. Two emblematic cases illustrate projects that provided artists trained at the School of Fine Arts with the means to create monumental works and gain significant visibility.

Public commissions come with strict constraints, and the accidental destruction of certain works highlights, as early as the 19th century, the vulnerability of this heritage. Ernest Michel experienced this painfully in 1881, when his decoration for the old Comédie Theatre was destroyed by fire. In 1887, he was commissioned to create a

painting for the foyer of the new theatre, working within a restrictive architectural framework.

After World War II, reconstruction programs and later major urban and university projects offered artists new fields for experimentation. From the 1960s and 1970s onward, the diversification of practices and techniques fostered a renewed dialogue between art, architecture, and public space, embedding contemporary creation permanently into the urban landscape.

This integration of art into daily life is also illustrated by the archives of the competition organized by the City of Montpellier in 2017, which allowed Mona Young-eun Kim (born in 1988), then still a student at the School, to design the ceiling decoration of the Laissac market halls.

Ernest Michel

Mona Young-eun Kim

Contemporary Encounters Through the Collections

Within the permanent collection galleries of the musée Fabre, contemporary artists have been given pride of place. Around thirty of them—graduates and/or instructors from the L'École des beaux-arts de Montpellier—have engaged with the museum's spaces as if it were a large studio. These interventions create various forms of sensitive dialogue, formal and thematic resonances, and sometimes more transgressive confrontations, offering a fresh perspective on the collections.

Hall Buren : Michel Martin

Cour Vien: Benoît Pype

Room 2: Geoffrey Badel, Bruno Peinado

Room 3: Yoann Estevenin

Room 11: Alba Sagols

Room 12: Frédérique Bourguet, Paul Dubois

Room 16: Marie-Charlotte Nouza

Room 18: Robert Combas, Sébastien Duranté

Room 21: Clara Rivault

Room 22: Daniel Dezeuze, Mona Young-eun Kim

Room 28: Chloé Viton

Room 30: Nicolas Aguirre

Room 32: Aurélie Piau

Room 33: Pablo Garcia

Room 34: Gabrielle Manglou, Valentine Schlegel, Andrée Vilar, Frédérique Bourguet

Room 37: Gaétan Vaguelsy

Room 39: Soufiane Ababri

Room 40: Yoann Estevenin

Room 45: Emmanuelle Etienne, Joëlle Gay, Caroline Muheim