

PORTFOLIO

NINA AZOULAY

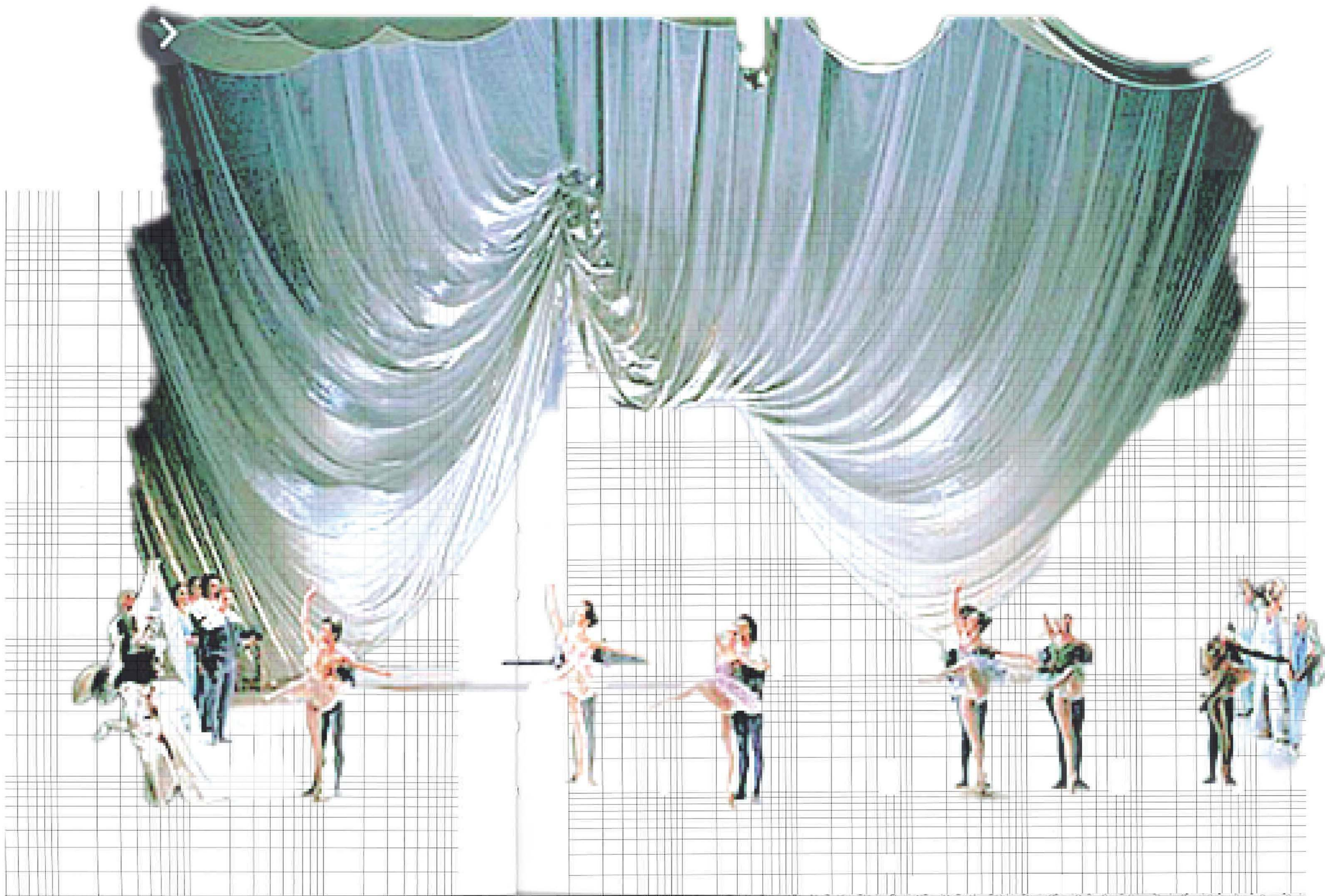


BIOGRAPHY

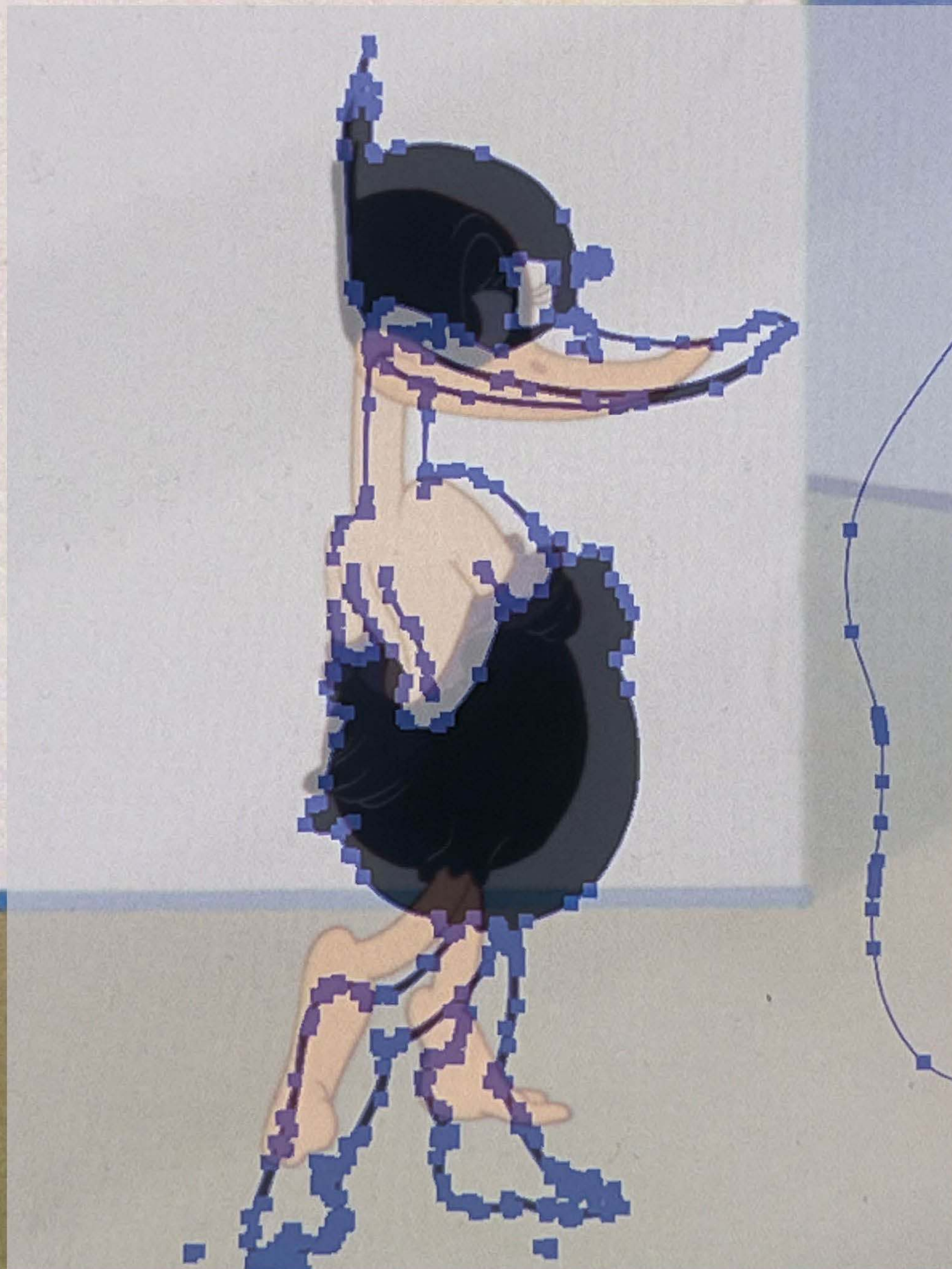
Nina Azoulay is a French visual artist who graduated from Ecole nationale des arts décoratifs of Paris and Beaux arts of Cergy. In 2024 she held her first solo show “Like a circle in a square” in the Project room at Le Plateau – Frac Ile-de-France. In 2025, she is invited by Michel Rein Gallery to hold her second solo show in Paris “This version of you”. In 2026, her work showcasing used foldable bath chairs “The big cleanup” entered the collection of the Paris contemporary art regional fund.

Her main research theme is clothing seen as a social coating, an architecture of the body, a surface of expression, and a space of simultaneous freedom and constraint. She also uses a wide range of materials to build her work such as upholstery, furniture, clothes, books, sugar, flowers, laundry liquid detergents... Through her work, she questions ideas like surface, limits, emptiness, edges, vulnerability and beauty. Her practices of volume, drawing and writing are made of fragments’ gathering : a thick and sandwiched poetry.

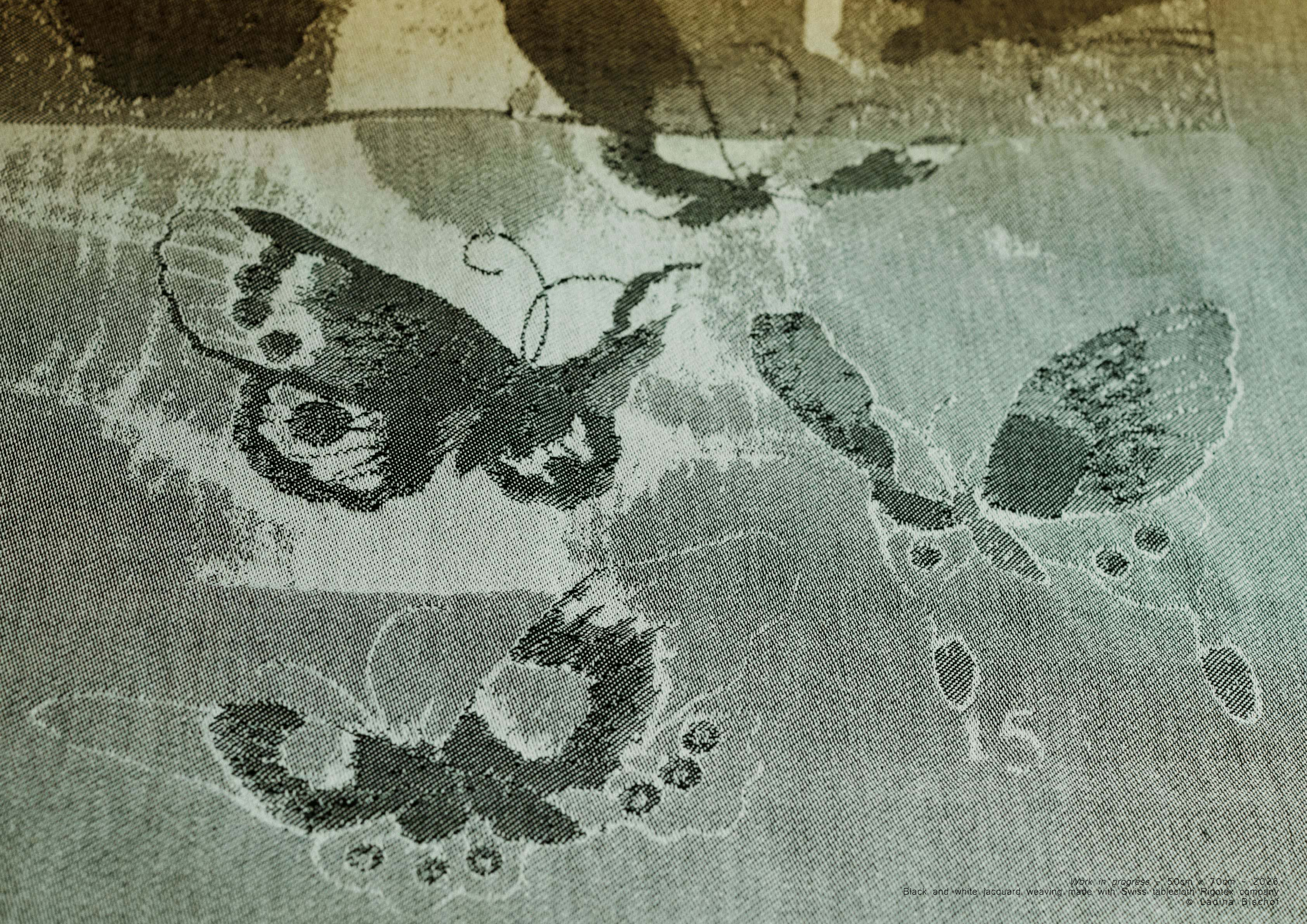




Taffeta darling, taffeta - Work in progress - 300cm x 400cm - 2026
Serie of sublimations, puff silk-screen printing, laser engraving and embroidery
© Nina Azoulay







PORTFOLIO



The big cleanup, foldable shower chairs
collected from Leboncoin.fr
Group show at Galerie municipale
Jean-Collet, Vitry-sur-Seine, 2025

The big cleanup is an interactive installation exhibited at the Galerie Municipale Jean-Collet in Vitry-sur-Seine in 2025 and recently acquired by Frac IDF.

My intention is to bring visitors' bodies into play within the exhibition. The installation thus lives to the rhythm of visitors passing through, with the seats variously open or closed, occupied or empty. They can be folded against the wall, unfolded, sat upon, or leaned against.

This installation also serves as a pretext for several things: it articulates my fascination with retractable chairs—which combine space optimization, utility, and design—a blend that fuels the sensual and intellectual pleasure I derive from studying them. It is also a playful, indirect way to engage with people and forge a connection. Indeed, this vocabulary of folding chairs acts as a springboard for stories: it involves sourcing used objects from Leboncoin.fr—items that carry the histories of their previous owners, as well as the story of the furniture of our era, reflecting our relationship with illness, the restricted body, aging, and death.



The big cleanup - Group show at Galerie Municipale Jean-Collet, Vitry-sur-Seine - 2025
Foldable shower chairs
©Antonin Sambussy



Lavander - Group show at Galerie Municipale Jean-Collet, Vitry-sur-Seine - 2025
large sequins, knitting needles
©Léo Barranco ; .kit (@pointkit)



Baigneuse - Group exhibition at the Galerie Municipale Jean-Collet, Vitry-sur-Seine - 2025
Swimsuit, fringe trim, ruff, curtain ring, clothes hanger, pins, suction cup
©Léo Barranco ; .kit (@pointkit)

This version of you,
Solo show
Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, 2025

By the chance of an opportune meeting, by fortunate circumstances, through the immediate chemistry of certain bodies or the labor of numerous attempts, one occasionally witnesses the magic of well-crafted arrangements. For, despite calculations or appearances, one thing sometimes fits perfectly with another, matching it as though tailor-made. I believe that it is at this initial scale—the one of fortuitous assemblies, of an art of connection and detail—that Nina Azoulay’s work can be understood. Her gestures draw equally from the precision of the goldsmith and the resourcefulness of childhood; thus, through the simplicity of a stacking or sometimes a perforation, objects that would seem incompatible are affected and come together as sculptures—creating moments of weightlessness in certain places, levitations in others. This grammar of weight and balance bears the quality of tightrope walking, which, by bending its thread, divides space and makes gravity palpable. These plays of ties and lines sketch figures of a suspicious verticality; for, alongside the irregular contours of flesh, Nina Azoulay supplements the sharpness of geometry. Thus, Rosalind, suspended by the chimney, is emptied of her body, of which only the final garment remains. Facing her, a fabric envelops the rigidity of a curtain rod, akin to a padded chrysalis, warming her with its curves [*Oh oh oh oh oh oh, is the world still spinnin’ round*]. There is a certain indulgence in these layers, which pile upon one another like a mille-feuilles; a melancholy in these figures, broken by their destinies, intertwining and suffocating one another.

Salomé Burstein



La Ballade d'Ariel - "This Version of you" - Solo show at galerie Michel Rein, Paris - 2024
large sequins, knitting needles
© Florian Kleinfenn



Rosalind & Bouquet - "This Version of you" - Solo show at galerie Michel Rein, Paris - 2024
Jacquard, pins, rhinestones, Led, PVC fabric, fleece, polyester
fabric, lanyards

Azoulay thus employs clothing for its condensing quality and the ambivalence it carries: on the one hand, it contains potential lives, and on the other, it forces one into preordained function. The artist brings attention to identity's inherent artifice and performance. She even adopts circus vocabulary and the props of spectacle to expose both the set and behind the scenes, revealing the strings behind the craft; these strings then accumulate into ligatures, wrapping around one another like pulleys hastily mended together. Needles stitch sequins, transforming them into bouquets [*The Ballad of Ariel*]; a spool of rhinestones suspends a silhouette, strangling it in a river of diamonds [*Rosalind*]. Here, ornamentation is far from a mere finishing touch or decorative addition. On the contrary, it provides the piece with its skeleton, even its mechanics. But it is something else besides vanity, egoism, and love of self that is at stake. Is it Death itself?¹ This wardrobe has something both pop and ghostly about it, made of spectral and garish presences. It summons grand, sometimes tragic shadows: Isadora, killed by her scarf caught in the door of her car², Abdallah, who committed suicide surrounded by the books Genet had dedicated to him³. Azoulay carves the space through a landscape of sharp objects where bodies measure and balance themselves like in a diagram; a path winding between the weeds and the rosebed. Then, our reflection ripples and doubles in every petal, reminding the self of its unease "*So that you sparkle, of course, but above all so that [...] you may lose, during the journey from your dressing room to the stage, a few poorly stitched sequins*".⁴

Salomé Burstein

¹Jean Genet, *Le Funambule*, Paris, Gallimard, coll. L'arbalète, 2010 (1957), p.14.

²Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) was an American-born dancer and choreographer who became a Soviet citizen; she was a pioneer of what came to be known as European "modern" dance, and later contemporary dance. She died tragically in Nice when her long silk scarf became caught in the wheel of the vehicle transporting her.

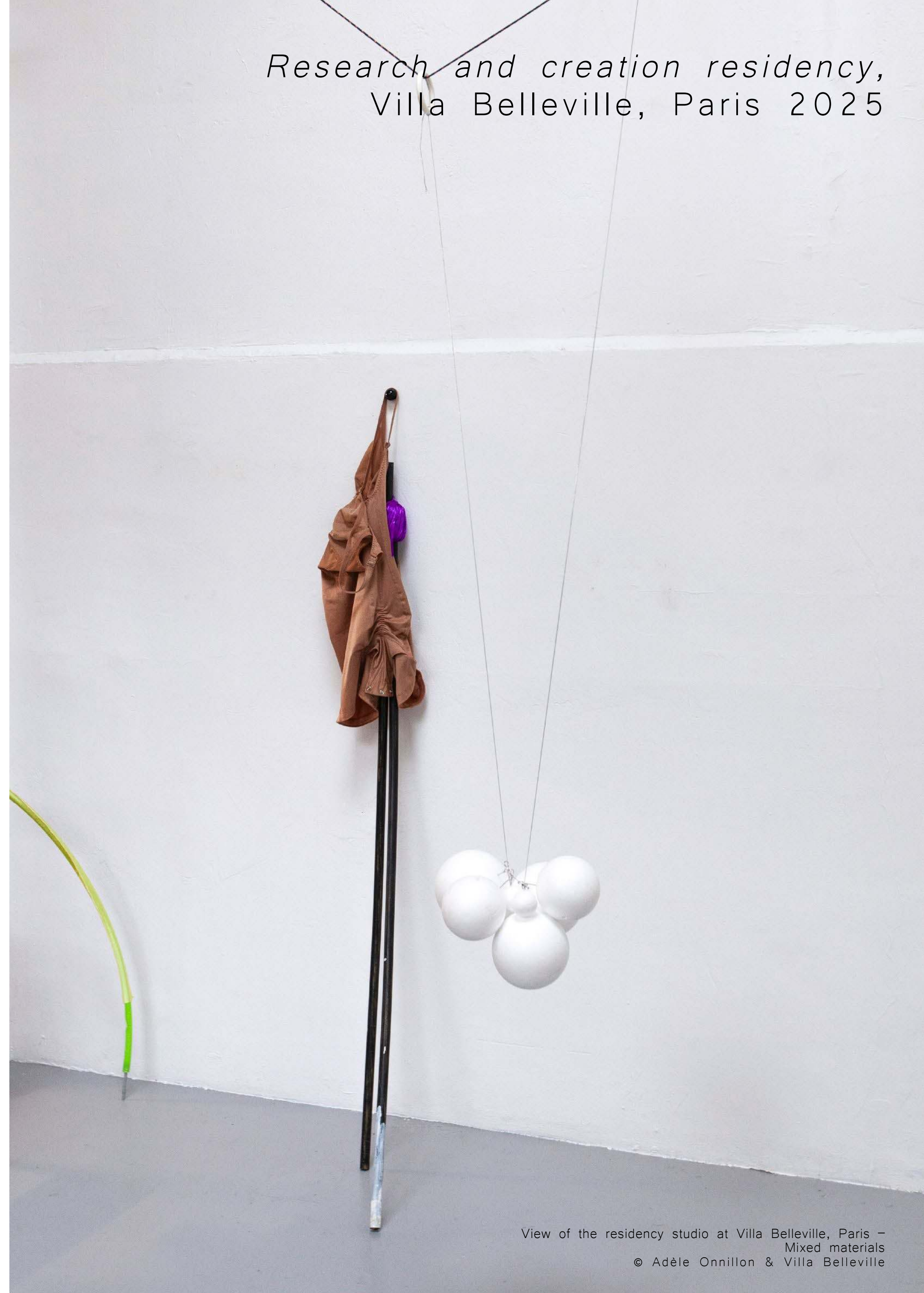
³Abdallah Bentaga (1937-1964) was an acrobat of Algerian and German descent with whom Jean Genet fell madly in love and to whom he dedicated his text *Le Funambule*. He committed suicide following a severe injury sustained during a performance that prevented him from returning to the tightrope.

⁴Jean Genet, op. cit., p.25.



Keur – Studio view during residency at Villa Belleville, Paris –
Rings, ribbons, handle, threaded rod, metal, curtain rod, tieback
© Adèle Onnillon & Villa Belleville

*Research and creation residency,
Villa Belleville, Paris 2025*



View of the residency studio at Villa Belleville, Paris –
Mixed materials
© Adèle Onnillon & Villa Belleville

Like a circle in a square,
Solo show,
Le Plateau Frac Île-de-France, 2024



Vue de l'exposition personnelle "Comme un rond dans un carré" - Project Room au Plateau Frac Île-de-France - 2024
© Martin Argyroglo



Halfway between a minimal and amused version of Oscar Schlemmer's triadic ballet and a false inventory of dresses in the colors of the moon, the sun and time from the film *Peau d'âne* by Jacques Demy, Nina Azoulay seems to invite us to the general part of a little spooky choreography, a fashion show with ghostly accents. (...)

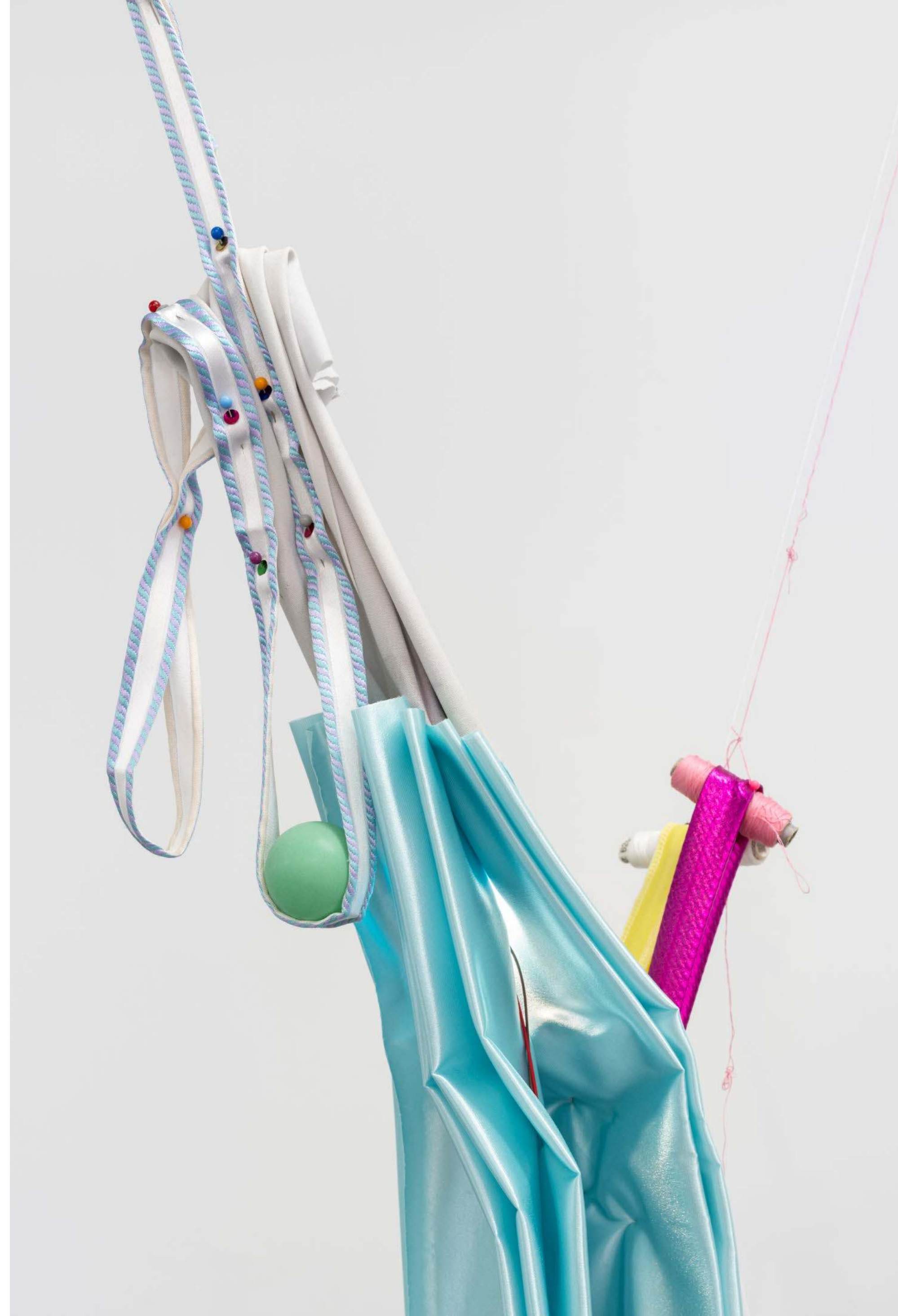
The figures are eroticized through their draping, which hides or reveals their dazzling trappings. The attention paid by Nina Azoulay to details – the folds, certain rolls of fabric, their tension or their looseness, their association – make all of the chosen ornaments attractive and graceful but also structural elements. Everything is held together seamlessly, with pins and sliding knots, so nothing is fixed.

Two small gravestones are presented on the ground. One of them, named Kasper, is a reference to the cartoon in which the ghost, despite himself, scares everyone he meets. While he manages to bond, Casper is constantly on a quest to make friends. The sculpture is the result of a crazy sequencing of a block of plaster covered with resin and elements of textile sandwiched together. From the ground, the block tends to utopically rise thanks to fine gold wires connected to a pulley, inviting the spectral lightness of Casper. The internal conflicts of the cartoon character are replayed here as is the violence of current events, like this flower – which can be found in other places in the exhibition – which grows at the end of a plaster LBD (projectile weapon used by French police against protesters).

Maëlle Dault



Kasper - Like a circle in a square - Project Room at Plateau Frac Île-de-France - 2024
Plaster, silicone, resin, wadding, fabrics, t-shirt, bib, gloves, paper, ostrich feathers, suspender belt, LED system, ping pong ball
© Martin Argyroglo



Olivia - Like a circle in a square - Project Room at Plateau Frac Île-de-France - 2024
 Fabrics, elastic threads, plaster, bias strip, braid, pin, houzeaux, sequins, spools of thread, LED system, ping pong ball
 © Martin Argyroglo

Papillons de nuit,
Group exhibition,
Bétonsalon – Center for Art and Research,
2023



"Papillons de nuit" – In the group show *Semblable à un petit os de seiche* at Bétonsalon art & research center – 2023
Textiles, blouse, shirt, sweatshirt, braid, bias strip, ouatine, ropes, broom handles, houzeaux, pins, sequins, suspender belts, tiebacks
and curtain tassels, plexiglass, wood, metal, paper, plaster, resin
© Charlie Boisson



Betty in "Papillons de nuit" - In the group show *Semblable à un petit os de seiche* at Bétonsalon art & research center - 2023
 Textiles, blouse, bias stip, pins, sequins, suspender belts, clamping clip
 © Charlie Boisson

Betty's closet,
Césure,
Paris 2023





Detail of ground drawing in installation *Betty's closet, l'entre-peaux de B.* - Césure - 2023
Chalk, pastel, sequins
© Marie Ward



4G - in *Betty's closet, l'entre-peaux de B.* installation Césure - 2023
Cotton wool, fabric, chalk, paper, string, beads, sequins, pins
© Marie Ward