Pantin
17.06 - 19.07.26
Raphaël Massart

À Georges-Henri Rivière, 2026
Wooden mannequin
Variable dimensions

Asbesos (au lit, J), 2026
Wood, electrical cables, foam, Bulgomme, found objects
105 x 75 x 15 cm

Mentir (E), 2026
Wood, paint, steel
75 x 15 x 15

Crad (t), 2026
Wood, paint, found objects
45 x 75 x 15 cm

À club (‘), 2026
Wood, steel, paint, silver gelatin on Lambda, found objects
123 x 120 x 15 cm

Pantin (A), 2026
Wood, paint, found objects
105 x 75 x 15 cm

Bestranged (la loi, IM), 2026
Wood, paint, laser printing, steel, found objects
Variable dimensions

La tenue (E), 2026
Wood, paint, steel, electrical cable
Variable dimensions

Reduction (matin), 2026
Silver gelatin print on Lambda paper, varnish, fabric, MDF
170 x 5 x 2 cm

Reduction (soirée), 2026
Silver gelatin print on Lambda paper, varnish, fabric, MDF
175 x 5 x 2 cm

Reduction (à nuit), 2026
Silver gelatin print on Lambda paper, varnish, fabric, MDF
180 x 5 x 2 cm

All works are courtesy of the artist.

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la Fondation des Artistes

Born in 1997 in Toulon, Raphaël Massart graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2024. He lives and works in Paris.

The exhibition *Pantin* seeks to explore the connections between language, the city, and intimacy through an installation of letter-sculptures and images created in the artist’s living and working spaces. It draws on his experience of the city, where certain signs—municipal newspapers, promotional images, the rhythms of the neighborhood—initially appear to him as silent, before gradually reassembling themselves into language. The exhibition opens by welcoming us with a wooden mannequin floating at the threshold of the space. Usually confined to store windows, the puppet addresses no one; it is voiceless. From its vantage point, it surveys the exhibition space unfolding before its eyes. This opening sets us apart from the weight of things and promises a sense of calm—a blend of hyper-attention and unease. The suspension mechanism, typical of museum and retail display cases, acts as a sort of role-reversal device, inviting visitors to transform their gaze into a material presence. Through its positioning—immediately visible yet also partially hidden from view, with hands cupping its anonymous face as if to block access to it—the puppet creates a tension between exposure and concealment. It speaks the silent language of objects—which observe, approach, admire, learn, and speak just as fluently the language of museums, which place everyday objects under glass and elevate them to a status of aesthetic exemplarity, dignity, and rarity. The exhibition draws inspiration from this history of display cases and installations, a history in which the modern museum and the department store imitate and respond to one another.

In this context, a simple phrase—“I LOVE YOU”—functions as an operator. Repeated, repositioned, and regularly inscribed alongside ordinary images by the artist, it becomes at once a signature, a motif, and, here, an object. Formulated using the tools of urban signage, this declaration has no specific recipient; it seems suspended in the social atmosphere like a slogan. What is surprising is the most fragile register into which it plunges us. And yet, it stands with the clarity of signage, constructed like typography, almost architectural. The constructed letter-sculptures become volumes to be explored: open and closed boxes, on different scales. The sentence they form is never immediately apparent; it fragments, reassembles itself, and compels the viewer to move, to circle around, to lean in. Language here is less read than traversed, explored. Each self-contained display is nevertheless connected to the whole, and is presented with an open side, revealing an inside and an outside, and an inverted setting. Objects found by the artist are incorporated into them as fragments of intimacy.

A shift takes place: what was once a word and a signifier becomes form; what was once a matter of expression becomes structure. Letters, like the storefronts that inspire them, frame and display.

The photographs on display were taken in contexts of daily life, work, and friendship. Drawn from a stream of unranked images produced by the artist, they retain an element of contingency. Three of them are displayed individually on horizontal supports at body height. Three bars—a sort of standard measure—punctuate the horizontality of the space. Each image bears within it the trace of an active off-screen space. Embedded in different fabrics, the photographs are both framed and draped. The garment-like installation does not aim to fully expose the image but to condition its appearance. The fabric introduces a gentle resistance and establishes a relationship of desire: something is shown, but never fully revealed. The off-screen spaces of the images denote not only what is absent, but also what shapes perception. Their framing suggests, shifts, and maintains a distance. This economy of the gaze aligns with that of letter-sculptures and display cases: showing through framing and generating desire by limiting access.

The exhibition thus disrupts modes of interpretation. It offers an experience in which the audience enters the language almost without realizing it, while the intimate and the material are constantly transforming, redefining the boundaries between public and private.

Maëlle Dault