



Mona Filleul
Sissy Institute
September 30, 2025 – January 4, 2026

Swiss Institute (SI) is pleased to present *Sissy Institute*, the first solo exhibition by artist Mona Filleul in the United States. In *Sissy Institute*, Filleul continues her exploration of artmaking as a vehicle for creating and sustaining queer transnational communities. Featuring works that blur distinctions between painting, sculpture, and assemblage set within an architectural scenography, the exhibition constructs a refuge for the increasingly policed expression of queer and trans subjectivities.

In the lower-level gallery, aluminum studs, which typically undergird walls, both guide the viewer's navigation through the gallery space and frame the works on view. Filleul's relief works are built from industrial objects such as insulation boards, foam panels, and concrete, onto which an eclectic variety of materials are applied, ranging from beeswax and mulberry fiber to hemp and LED lights. On the textured, illuminated surfaces of these works, which are often scaled to the proportions of an iPhone, Filleul creates constellations of images with traditional techniques such as clay molding, papier-mâché, tempera, and hot wax painting. Using the gallery's architectural supports to stage continually shifting perspectives of the works, the sculpted and painted images – depicting anime characters, stuffed animals, and quotidian selfie shots – appear on one side of a given work, while the viewer's spatial wandering engenders an encounter with a manipulated composition of electronic chips and wiring on the other side. In these ways, Filleul's works challenge dematerialized conceptions of the online world, instead grounding its profound identity-producing and embodiment-altering effects through a materially attuned visual language.

Also in the gallery are a series of listening stations, which viewers are invited to engage via headphones. Each of the stations feature audio recordings of Filleul's collaborators. By including these recordings, which foreground the varied sonic expressions of queer and trans artists and thinkers based in New York City, ranging from acts of narration to music-making, Filleul seeks to center socially situated and collectively articulated forms of queer creative vitality.

In *Sissy Institute*, Filleul reclaims the notion of sissiness as a dissident mode to critique normative understandings of gender. Transmuting structural conditions of gendered violence and economic insecurity into playful, intimate, and haptic aesthetic encounters, Filleul's exhibition offers an in-between space for sharing the resilience of queer life in the precarious present.

SI wishes to thank Air de Paris for production support.

About Mona Filleul

Mona Filleul (b. 1993) lives and works in Brussels and Paris. Filleul has presented solo exhibitions at Air de Paris, Paris (2025); Krone Couronne, Biel/Bienne (2024); sis123, La-Chaux-de-Fonds (2022); DuflonRacz, Bern (2021); Emergency, Vevey (2020); and Los Atlas, Brussels (2017). Filleul was assistant curator for établissement d'en face (2021-2023) and Duflon/Racz (2018, 2020, 2021) in Brussels. Filleul completed a residency at the Centre d'Art Contemporain WIELS, Brussels in 2023 and was named a laureate of the 2023 Swiss Art Awards.

About Swiss Institute

Founded in 1986, Swiss Institute (SI) is an independent nonprofit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental artmaking through innovative exhibitions, education, and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, SI serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new perspectives on celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions. SI is committed to being an organization that is diverse, equitable, accessible, and environmentally conscious in its work, structure, and programming. Open to the public free of charge, SI seeks to explore how a Swiss context can be the starting point for international conversations in the fields of visual and performing arts, design, and architecture.

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