

EN

Big Appple presents

Esperanto

An exhibition by Anaïs Fontanges

March 22nd - May 17th 2026

A little tired on the day I visit Anaïs in her studio, my eye is drawn to one of the military-inspired medals she is crafting from small objects found in the street. On the plate of one of the badges, I think I read “travelo.”* General Travelo. Commander Travelo. It has a certain flair. In fact... I had misread it: the plate actually says “travels.” Did she intend this double entendre, or is my mind playing tricks on me?

In any case, Anaïs Fontanges’s work unfolds through such slippages. She captures disillusioned utopias and recomposes them from fragile, gleaming fragments gathered along her way, patiently collected and then assembled. Torn from the chaos of the ordinary world, these elements indirectly express the artist’s position: where to stand and where to place one’s body and gestures in a world that is coming apart. Accumulating, classifying, and recomposing thus become ways of attempting to organize what surrounds her, of creating a microcosm out of fragments. It is an effort to bring order to the disorder of reality, and perhaps, in doing so, allow her body to inhabit it.

In these reconfigurations, military decorations evoke children’s medals won in pony riding or judo; chewed gum becomes the intestinal system of miniature skeletons; toy soldiers covered in glitter worship “the angel of money,” made of feathers and rhinestones; elsewhere, letters come together like the beginnings of an alphabet, suggesting the possible vocabulary of a language yet to come.

Created at the end of the 19th century by Ludwik Zamenhof, Esperanto was conceived as a language that could transcend borders and enable immediate mutual understanding. It belongs to no nation but an empire without territory, sustained solely by its speakers. Though this utopian project has largely fallen short, it is spoken by an estimated 100,000 to 3 million people today, and continues to carry within it a persistent sense of hope.

In Anaïs Fontanges’s work, something of that horizon endures. Beneath a veneer of *cute* innocence, the works reveal the anxiety of a world in disintegration. The artist gathers its debris and makes it her material: a patient gesture of recovery and transformation, as if to offer a second chance, however fragile, to a handful of fallen hopes.

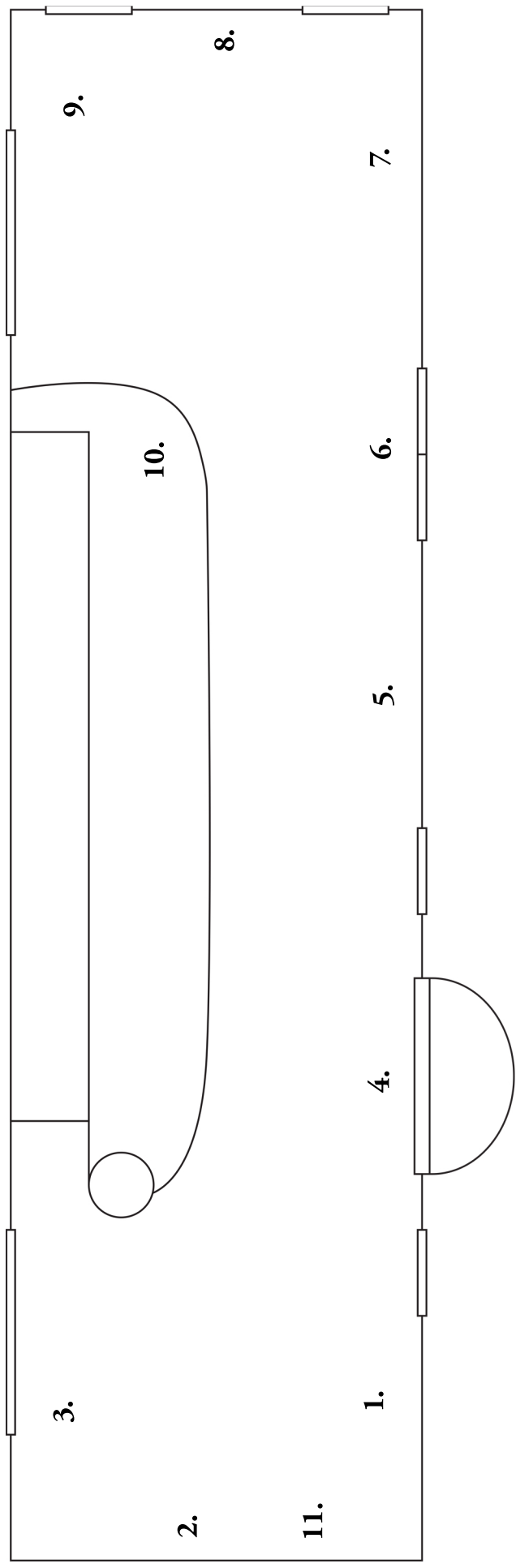
*ed.: “travelo” in French translates to “tranny” in English.

Clément Hébert

Translated by Eve Ida Fiertag

Biography: Anaïs Fontanges was born in 1998 in Portugal. A French-Spanish artist, she graduated from the Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2024 and lives and works in Paris. Her work has been exhibited, among others, at Pony, Montreuil (2025); Soft Power, Berlin (2025); and Air de Paris, Romainville (2024).

Big Appple is a nonprofit, artist-run space housed in a fairground-style structure at 401 Rue du Pommier in Anderlecht and founded in 2024. The exhibition space is regularly expanded and transformed through custom furniture elements designed and built by invited designers and makers. The light fixtures are by Arnaud Eubelen, and the entrance door by Joseph Dofny.



1. *Alphabet*, 2025.
2. *Sans titre*, 2026.
3. *Enjoy The Ride*, 2026.
4. *V.....*, 2026.
5. *Esperanto*, 2026.
6. *Game Over*, 2026.
7. *Sans titre*, 2026.
8. *Le soldat de rien du tout*, 2026.
9. *Sans titre*, 2026.
10. *L'ange de l'argent*, 2026.
11. *Para que estoy aquí en la tierra ?*, 2026.