La Ville de Narbonne présente

Mathieu Renault



EXPOSITION

Du 29 octobre 2026 au 10 janvier 2027

Chapelle des Pénitents-Bleus

Entrée gratuite

Narbonne
AU CŒUR DES POSSIBLES

BOUCHE D'OR - MATHIEU RENAULT

STRATES

Mathieu Renault was born in France in Angers in 1982.
Trained in the book trade in Paris - where he occasionally painted murals on city walls, worked as a bookseller at the Louvre bookstore, and dabbled in poetry- it was during his travels in Latin America that he truly devoted himself to visual art: along the pillars of the elevated highway in São Paulo with local painters, or by reshaping materials found on the streets of Argentina.



The artist moved to Montpellier in 2008; his studio is now located in the ESAT des Ateliers Kennedy / La Bulle Bleue. As a self-taught artist, Mathieu Renault has developed his own style through layers of experiences, techniques, and shared emotions.
Consequently, his work bears traces and influences ranging from Egon Schiele (Expressionism) to Jean Dubuffet (art brut) and Ernest Pignon-Ernest (urban art). His inspirations are diverse, ranging from literature to cinema, iconic imagery, the black line characteristic of printmaking and comics, and a natural appreciation for humble, readily available materials (Nouveau Réalisme); at the heart of it all are rural streets and city streets, those who inhabit them and those who dance through them.
His unique work with layered posters synthesizes these trends.

LIVE POSTERS

To paint the people he encounters in his daily wanderings, Mathieu Renault tears down the accumulations of posters from street walls: a mass of paper with colors and words that are as soon as they're posted as they are obsolete - a vertical, open-air dump of a society driven by communication.

These are not collages, but rather a process of digging blindly through the layers of what has accumulated on the streets and walls, in search of what is hidden - the meaning one discovers "by accident" or that has already been laid bare on the street by a passerby.

The approach, ranging from the appropriation of techniques used by the New Realists Jacques Villéglé and Raymond Hains to graphic explorations through drawing and painting, continues to enrich itself through the work and the ever-surprising life of the material.

Breathing life and strength into the black acrylic strokes of these figures and bodies involves destroying this mass of cellulose and pigments, tearing apart its chaos, digging into it, and expelling everything that pertains to this form of communication. It is a comprehensive artistic process designed to ensure that a 3 cm^2 printed fragment ceases to be mere "information" and becomes an active color: a fragment of a poem fleeing into the light.



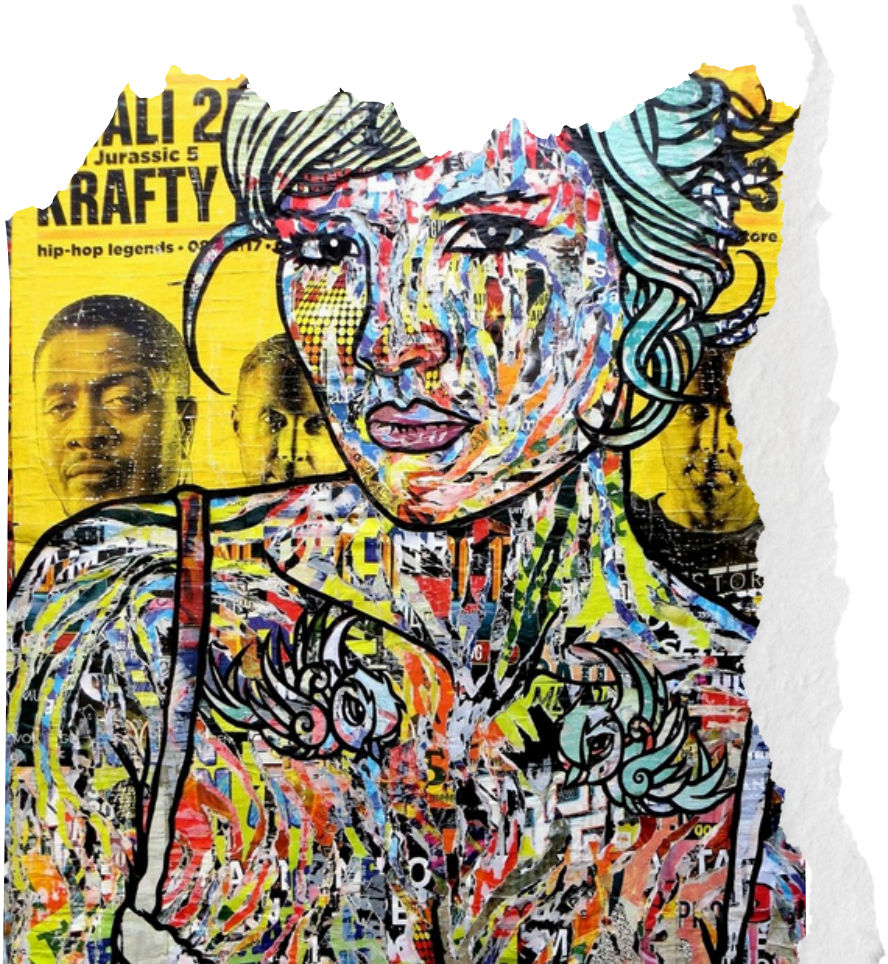
“*It is only when we have laid everything out on the ground, when nothing remains of this material - a cacophony of orders, commands, information, and references - that we discover an opportunity to align this fabric of reality with what moved us in the chosen subject, this person taken as a motif : the doubling of a fold of skin where the arm meets the body, a conflict of forces at play in the lower part of the face, an eye like an abyss,*” explains the artist.

It is this exploration and this work that the exhibition presents, delving into the intimate nuances of each of the figures he draws, in search of what might be a secret, poetic, and collective identity.



BOUCHE D'OR

“Golden Mouth” (Bouche d’Or) is a dream figure that appears in different forms across different eras and cultures. It dates back to humanity’s earliest actions- to the first traces of anthracite on a wall, made using a piece of tree trunk charred by lightning; it is embodied in a poet from Asia Minor in the 4th century B.C., in a man who believed himself to be a dog 400 years later in ancient Corinth, reclaimed by the Orthodox Church in the middle of the first millennium, or even depicted by Hugo Pratt in the Caribbean as a voodoo priestess.
“Golden Mouth” is like a symbol of inspired and creative speech, one that creates and transmits through images and language. It is also the story of a secret, one that cannot be communicated yet is available to all, taking on a different form for each person, provided one is driven by desire and has enough inner silence.



The City of Narbonne is firmly committed to the development of the visual arts, offering an ambitious and diverse program that engages with both contemporary art and art history. This policy aims to make culture accessible to all (through free admission across the board) while maintaining high standards. By utilizing its historic sites, Narbonne showcases both urban art and more traditional visual art forms, while supporting a variety of artistic practices.

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CONTACT:

VILLE DE NARBONNE
Direction de la Culture
Tél : 04 68 90 30 65
Mail : culture@mairie-narbonne.fr

www.narbonne.fr

INFORMATIONS

Exhibition from **October 29**, 2026, to **January 10**, 2027

Chapelle des Pénitents-Bleus
place Roger Salengro, 11100 Narbonne

Open Tuesday through Sunday
Through November 30: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. / 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Starting December 1: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. / 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Closed on November 1 and 11, December 25, and January 1

Exhibition design : Manon Sorbier-Mage (régie), Sylvain Gorant (lumière), Rabah Mokrani et Thierry Noyes (technique), Robert Lasserre (musique), Eugénie Massadau (communication), et l'ensemble du service Culture de la Ville. Avec l'appui des services techniques, du service Patrimoine et son équipe des publics, et du service Communication de la Ville de Narbonne.