



Mónica Mays

Mónica Mays (b. 1990, Madrid) lives and works in Amsterdam. Her practice involves sculpture and installation, enmeshing autobiography, material process and historical archive. Her pieces are composed of assemblages taking the shape of animated domestic objects that are spilling over, distorted or in a process of transmutation. Drawing from catholic body horror and baroque iconography she has been working with excess, ornamentation and exuberance as states where in-between and opacity of meaning can exist. From the depiction of maladie and magical thinking in female figurines, to colonial representations of nature, dominance, desire and control, the baroque is deployed by Mays to create works that exist in a tension of fragility and violence.

Having studied Cultural Anthropology at the University of New Orleans, she graduated Cum Laude from the École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg in 2015 and received an MA from the Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam in 2017. She has developed projects in artistic residencies such as Rupert (Vilnius), Fundación Bilbao Arte (Bilbao, Spain) and Matadero (Madrid, Spain) and Cemeti Institut for Art and Society (Jakarta). Her works have been exhibited in spaces such as the Frascati Theater (Amsterdam), Tallinn Art Hall (Tallinn), Punt WG (Amsterdam), Blue Velvet Projects (Zurich), Centro Centro (Madrid), KUBUS (Hannover), La Casa Encendida (Madrid), Industria (Brno) and Atelier Chiffonier (Dijon, France). She has been awarded the 3PD prize bestowed by the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts 2022, the Mondriaan Fonds Young Artist Stipendium 2023 and the Generation 2022 prize from the Montemadrid Foundation.

**and they pray to these images,...., knowing not what
gods or heroes are, 2024**

saddle, conveyor belts, pulley, palm, chain

350 × 80 × 90 cm (min. approx) | 600 × 80 × 90 cm (max. approx)





Exhibition view *Fragment and Form* at Henry Moore Foundation, Leeds, UK, 2025



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Exhibition view *Las iguanas van a morder a los hombres que no sueñan* at Sala Arte Joven, Madrid, 2025



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Exhibition view *Fueled, Oasis, Fueled* at Pedro Cera, Madrid, 2024



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Fallen, extracted, expelled from paradise, 2024

exhausts, beeswax, palm wax, vellum, canvas,
shock absorbers, steel, school table

266 × 80 × 60 cm

**Suspensions are shock absorbers on the terrain
where we are rolling, 2024**

shock absorbers, beeswax, palm wax, canvas, tree
resins, vellum, palm fiber, fur
172 × 53 × 54 cm approx.





Exhibition view *Fueled, Oasis, Fueled* at Pedro Cera, Madrid, 2024



Exhibition view *Fueled, Oasis, Fueled* at Pedro Cera, Madrid, 2024



Exhibition view *eventually, Eden* at Cibrián, Donosti, Spain, 2024 | Image courtesy of the artis

Blackboard, 2024
stoneware, wood
41 × 26 × 3,5 cm





Cultivos / Cultures I, 2022
taxonomy box, brass, silk,
Bombyx mori cocoons, flowers
66 × 49 × 4 cm



Exhibition view *NN Awards* at Kunsthall Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2024 | Image courtesy of the artist



Installation view *Buttermilk* at Blue Velvet Projects, Zurich, 2023



Installation view *Buttermilk* at Blue Velvet Projects, Zurich, 2023



Mule machine, 2023

wood, glass, cardboard, feathers, porcelaine,
velvet, rust, mirobalan

150 × 98 × 81 cm



Lets call it a draw, 2023
plants, linen, wood, brass
136 × 136 × 3,5 cm



Installation view *Buttermilk* at Blue Velvet Projects, Zurich, 2023



It's my party, 2023
found wood, leather, fur
140 × 93 × 102 cm



**No more lists (barren lube machine lithium rusty
diamond fertile tar), 2023**

wood, vellum, wool, feathers, Bombyx mori cocoons
174 x 108 x 104 cm



Breeding value, 2023

wood, glass, vellum, wool, feathers,
Bombyx mori cocoons, aluminium, brass
184 x 146 x 60 cm



Not giving, 2023
found chairs
variable dimensions



babies carrying stork, 2023
 bees wax, graphite, transfer on paper
 40 x 30 cm



goofy, dragon, pluto, 2023
 silk, flowers, transfer on paper
 40 x 30 cm



Installation view *The Houses Of The Serpent Bearer: The 9th House* at
Lucas Hirsch, Dusseldorf, 2023 | Photo Jana Buch



Installation view *The Houses Of The Serpent Bearer: The 9th House* at
Lucas Hirsch, Dusseldorf, 2023 | Photo Jana Buch



Shadowbox, 2023

taxonomy box, brass, silk,
Bombyx mori cocoons, flowers
83 × 66 × 5 cm



Exhibition view *Shadow Boxes* at Liste Art Basel, Switzerland, 2023



Shadowbox, 2022

taxonomy box, brass, silk,
Bombyx mori cocoons, flowers
50 × 42 × 4 cm



Exhibition view *Tallo que Clavo* at Twin Gallery, Madrid, 2022



Cardados, 2022
detail



Mantos y Moldes, 2022

wood, silk

48 × 50 × 12 cm

www.pedrocera.com



Enrejado II, 2022

silk, horsehair, wool, fur, Bombyx mori cocoons,
jute, wood, sisal, cotton, flowers

205 x 40 x 15 cm



Abre y cierra abre y cierra, 2022

120 gr recycled paper, graphite, beeswax, rattan

27 × 70 × 1 cm



Enrejado, 2022
detail



Exhibition view *Cardados (Generación 2022)* at La Casa Encendida, Madrid, 2022



Chrysalid (Tending Towards), 2022

sheepskin, flowers, leaves, Bombyx mori cocoons, raw wool, glass, wood

80 x 200 x 30 cm

Exhibition view *Broken Open* at Luis Adelantado, Valencia, Spain, 2022



Exhibition view *A green jade lake* at Centro Centro, Madrid, 2021-2022



Chrysalis II, 2022

silk, wool, shells, flowers, leaves, onions, cotton

40 x 190 x 20 cm



Slowmo Rollercoaster, 2022

rattan, wool, lace, skin

64 × 150 × 47 cm



Exhibition view *Fundamental Occurrences* at Nosbaum Reding, Brussels, 2022



Exhibition view *Homies* at Corridor PS, Amsterdam, 2019

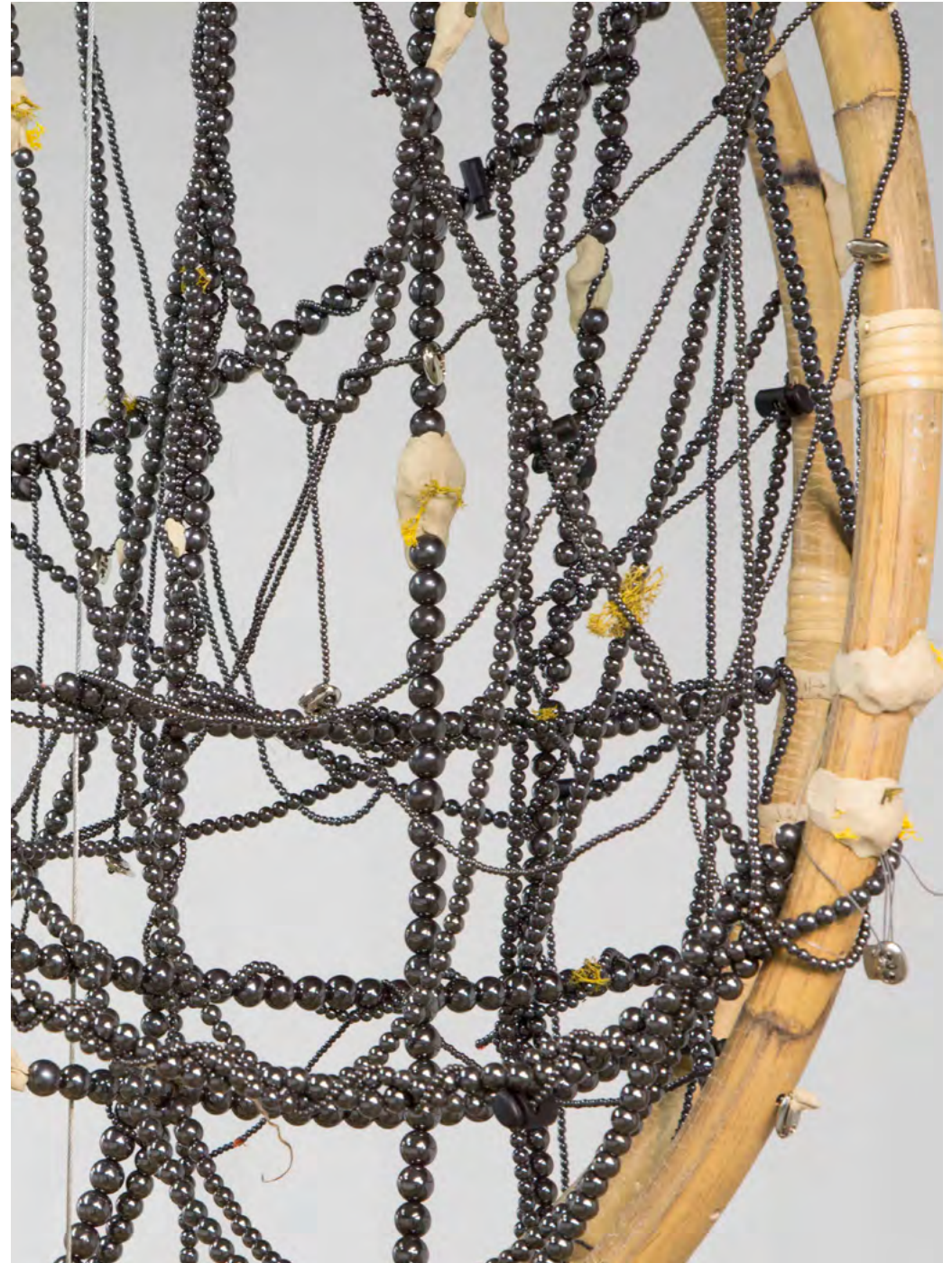


Exhibition view *Homies* at Corridor PS, Amsterdam, 2019

**'Homies' by Monica Mays at Corridor Project Space,
Amsterdam
TZVETNIK, 2019
Bruno Alves de Almeida**

"There is a strange familiarity to the objects that inhabit Monica May's work. At first glance, they seem to belong to the visual vocabulary and bodily experience that we have inherited from our daily lives. But quickly, the seemingly decipherable features give way to a set of enigmatic configurations that disrupt the expected "behaviors" of these things. Careful combinations and juxtapositions of shapes and materials guarantee that the pieces exist in a well-calculated limbo between the familiar and the uncanny. The objects cease to be domesticated and become quasi-creatures with a seemingly animalistic temperament. They articulate new vocabularies, and establish unconventional correlations to the space and to the individuals and more-than-human agents that they interact with. The "things" go beyond their physical outlines and become entangled within a larger network of immaterial dynamics that the artist sets in place. Performative and discursive situations are often as important attributes as materiality and shape. The conjunction of tangible and immaterial layers in space and time turns the work into an animate and hybrid organism, without easily discernible outlines. The core of the work does not lie in the things or the events themselves, but it inhabits the fleeting interstices between them.

The network of material and incorporeal elements that Monica orchestrates is simultaneously context-specific and "context-creating". It not only responds to the conditions in which it is inserted, but also generates the circumstances through which it can enhance its actions. The same reasoning can be applied to the artist's working process. It is, on the one hand, situation-specific and porous, absorbing influences and contributions from the individuals it is entangled with. But, on the other hand, the conceptual elasticity of her methodologies actively incites the emergence of other forms of togetherness, and processes of empathetic identification and contamination. Within these proceedings, collaboration and participation become forms of critical engagement rather than idealistic conceptions of agreement and camaraderie.





And the process of discussing, making, exhibiting and performing the work, is not only a way to ponder upon other possible modes of personal and communal ethics/politics, but also a tool for prefiguring them, here and now.

Such non-normative ways of collaborating and co-existing are not processes that occur exclusively alongside other artists or art-related professionals. Local Spanish artisans, cloistered Carmelite nuns, Dutch farmers from the region of Friesland, are some of the individuals with whom Monica also cooperates in the making of her pieces. The working method developed from such alliances is balanced between the third parties' creative and technical input and the artist's precise instructions and intentions. The procedures that Monica entangles with traditional manufacturing processes, are not only a means to further enhance the shapes and materiality of her pieces, but fundamentally a strategy to engage with a tacit knowledge that is rooted in such practices. Through these processes the artist gains access to an embodied cultural memory that has taken refuge in procedures and skills passed down by traditions, which carry unique cultural identities in-between the individual and the social.

Working with such quasi-obsolete practices, which speak of past economies and ecologies, could easily culminate in conservative and retroactive proposals, but the work successfully avoids a nostalgic rescue and/or fetishization of these modes of production. It carries within itself a responsiveness to its social context and to the processes and narratives that gave rise to it, but any criticality or social comment is not handed on a silver platter. The shapes and materiality of the final pieces convey such knowledge but translate it into a vocabulary that incorporates both the familiar and the alienating; that is simultaneously impregnated with such ancestral cultural identity and regionality but also with the glimpses of utopian futures; that speak of community and kinship but also of an almost autobiographical individuality. Monica's work goes beyond discernable narratives and easy categorizations and resists its insertion into edifying or critical grand narratives. As much as one can apprehend a strong coherence in such artistic practice and research, there is also a set of strategies that intentionally interrupt any immediate and comfortable comprehension of the whole. When it seems that the work has finally made itself known, it deliberately creates a twist in the plot, presenting new clues to other conclusions."



Appendix Songs – Scrap Talk II, 2021

brass, rattan, skin, flowers



Appendix Songs – Scrap Talk III, 2021

brass, rattan, skin, flowers, leaves, pine



Exhibition view *Bucolic Gang* at Virgin Maria Church, Rupert, Vilnius, 2021



Exhibition view *Bucolic Gang* at Virgin Maria Church, Rupert, Vilnius, 2021

Anamorphosis I, 2021

scavenged wood, walnut, leaves, flowers, leather, brass

137 × 180 × 40 cm





Soft allegories, 2021

carved wood, leather, flowers, leaves, brass, wool
170 × 90 × 6 cm



Exhibition view *Bucolic Gang* at Virgin Maria Church, Rupert, Vilnius, 2021



Exhibition view *Bucolic Gang* at Virgin Maria Church, Rupert, Vilnius, 2021



Longing II, 2021

forged steel, copper sulphate

100 × 80 × 4 cm



Exhibition view *Unsayings* at Industra Gallery, Brno, Czech Republic, 2020



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Mónica Mays

Born in Madrid, 1990

Lives and works in Madrid and Amsterdam

Education

2015-17	MA Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam
2009-10	BFA Cum Laude, HEAR / École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs Strasbourg, France
2009-10	Cultural Anthropology, University of New Orleans, USA

Solo Exhibitions (selection)

2025	<i>ridden</i> , Blue Velvet, Zurich
2024	<i>Fueled</i> , <i>Oasis</i> , <i>Fueled</i> , Pedro Cera, Madrid <i>eventually</i> , <i>Eden</i> , Cibrián, Donosti, Spain <i>Si plou així que, no escampi!</i> , Fabra i Coats, Barcelona, Spain
2023	<i>The Serpent Bearer</i> , Lucas Hirsch, Dusseldorf <i>Buttermilk</i> , Blue Velvet Projects, Zurich
2022	<i>Nail That Stems</i> , Twin Gallery, Madrid
2021	<i>Bucolic Gang</i> , Virgin Maria Church, Rupert, Vilnius <i>Sand Shine</i> , Aparador Monteleón, Madrid
2019	<i>Homies</i> , Corridor PS, Amsterdam
2018	<i>w.i.l.l.i.a.m.</i> , organized by Helena Lambrechts and Tim Roerig, Bologna. cc, Amsterdam
2016	<i>ooo.ooo</i> , <i>A Place Beyond Desire</i> , Rietveld Pavilion, Amsterdam

Group Exhibitions (selection)

2025	<i>El sueño de una serpiente</i> , Luis Adelantado, Valencia, Spain (upcoming) <i>Chi esce entra</i> , The Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Roma <i>Fragment and Form: Emii Alrai, Mónica Mays, Dominique White</i> , Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK <i>On Immanence</i> , Pedro Cera, Lisbon <i>Tragicomedia</i> , <i>Mutaciones</i> , Casa Museo Lope de Vega, Madrid <i>Tout sera oublié et rien ne sera réparé</i> , Dvir, Paris <i>Las iguanas van a morder a los hombres que no sueñan</i> , Sala de Arte Joven, Madrid
2024	<i>If only we could master miracles</i> , Kunstfort, Vijfhuizen, the Netherlands <i>Carpenter's Gothic</i> , Someday Gallery, New York, USA <i>Inéditos. Últimas adquisiciones del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo</i> , Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid <i>Residency 2024</i> , Cemeti Institut for Art and Society, Yogyakarta, Indonesia <i>Still Making Art Volume Seven (SMA7)</i> , Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam <i>NN Awards</i> , Kunsthall Rotterdam, Rotterdam, the Netherlands <i>Prospects</i> , Mondriaan Fonds, Art Rotterdam, Rotterdam, the Netherlands <i>Control</i> , Goethe Institute with Catinca Tabacaru, Bucharest
2023	<i>Old sky, old dirt, new grass</i> , Travesía Cuatro, Madrid <i>Bodies of Resistance</i> , Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon <i>Y mis ojos son como el jerez que el huésped deja en la copa</i> , Nebrija Art Prize, CC Galileo, Madrid <i>If we remain silent</i> , Casco Art Institute, Utrecht, the Netherlands <i>The Serpent Bearer</i> , Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf, Germany <i>Desengaño</i> , Ateneo, Madrid

2022 *Lo que pesa una cabeza*, TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes, Tenerife, Spain
How long is an echo?, Städtische Galerie KUBUS, Hannover, Germany
International Art Talent 3PD-AFK, Felix Meritis, Amsterdam
Dogo Totale - Home, Alte Turnhalle, Lichtensteig, Switzerland
Her Legs, an Egg, Her Toil(e) and Blankets, Linnagalerii, Tallinn Art Hall, Estonia
Broken Open, Gallery Luis Adelantado, Valencia, Spain
fundamental occurrences, Nosbaum Reding, Brussels
Getting Lost in the Woods, Twin Gallery, Madrid
emotions are facts, curated by Chloé Bonnie More, Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg
Generación 2022, La Casa Encendida, Madrid
 2021 *Al Revés*, Art Nueve, Murcia, Spain
Silencio Oscuro de los Grandes Troncos, Injuve, Madrid
A Green Jade Lake, Centro Centro, Madrid
Itinerancias Premio de Arte Joven C&L, Museo de Palencia, Museo de Segovia, Spain
Appendix Songs, Punt WG, Amsterdam
Sand Shine, Aparador Monteleón, Madrid
 2020 *I'm Not Your Territory, We Are My Only Character*, Atelier Chiffonnier, Dijon, France
Young Talent Sculpture Prize, Museo de Zamora, Museo de León, Sala Unamuno, Palacio Butrón, Spain
Unsayings, Industra Gallery, Brno, Czech Republic
Un gesto que permanece, Salón, Madrid
 2019 *hypnoquinomagia*, Combo & Microlima, Venice, Italy
Soft Landings, TAC, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
City Circles, wemakethecity, wow, Amsterdam
 2018 *Shifting Class*, former Gsus Sindustries headquarters, Amsterdam

2017 *No zero No two*, SNDO, Academie voor Theater en Dans, Amsterdam
NEWTOWN, Sandberg graduation show, Metro Station Noord, Amsterdam
 2016 *Bienal Arte Contemporaneo Emergente*, Eve-Maria Zimmerman, Tenerife, Spain
paranymph (slush puppies), De Fabriek, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
A Place Beyond Desire, Rietveld Pavilion, Amsterdam

Performance (selection)

2020 *Homies Prayers*, Come Together V, Frascati Theater, Amsterdam
Breathe in, breath out, Neverneverland, Amsterdam
 2018 *Museumnacht*, Museum Willet-Holthuysen, Amsterdam
 2017 *Isola 3000*, Amsterdam Art Weekend, ISO, Amsterdam
Amsterdam Dance Event, De School, Amsterdam
 2016 *Modern Body Festival*, De Nieuwe Regentes Theater, The Hague
Instant Composition, Extra City Kunsthall, Antwerpen, Belgium

Awards (selection)

2024 XVII Illy SustainArt prize
 2024 Selected NN Awards
 2024 Cemeti Institute for Art and Society Residency, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
 2023 Ceramicres Co-net Residency, Alcora, Spain (upcoming)
 2022-23 Young Talent Stipendium, Mondriaan Fonds, Netherlands
 2022 Dogo Residency, Lichtensteig, Switzerland
 2021 Matadero Residency, Madrid
 2021 Generación 2022 Prize, La Casa Encendida, Spain

- 2021 Bilbao Arte Foundation, Spain
- 2021 Visual Arts 3PD Prize, Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst, Netherlands
- 2020 Rupert Residency, Vilnius
- 2020 Young Talent Sculpture Prize Castilla y León, Spain
- 2019 Project Grant, Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst

Public Collections (selection)

DKV Arteria, Spain
Fundación Montemadrid, Madrid
Junta de Castilla y León, Spain
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Madrid
Biblioteca Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid