AiR bij DRAWinternational

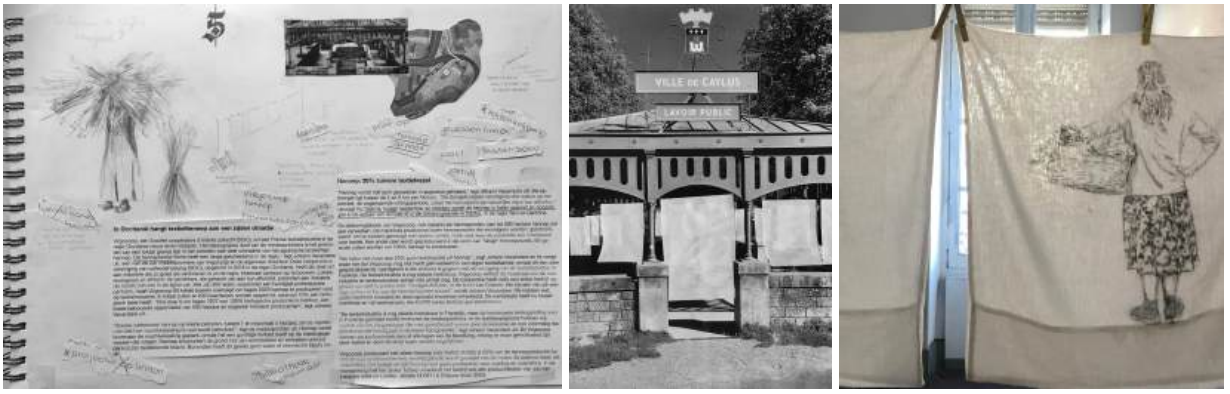
01/09–29/10 2024, Caylus, France

In September and October 2024, I stayed in the medieval village of Caylus in France, where I worked as an artist-in-residence at DRAWinternational, developing new work. It was a valuable period that provided me with the space to experiment with materials, techniques, and ideas without the pressure of producing a final result. This freedom allowed me to translate my drawings into spatial installations and discover new possibilities. The residency reminded me of how enriching it is to step outside my familiar environment, let go of my usual working methods, and have the time and space to gain new insights.

caylus

Caylus itself played an important role in my work. The village and its surroundings, rich with stories and history, inspired me in many ways. During walks and encounters, ideas emerged that extend beyond this residency. The village was not merely a backdrop but formed the foundation for my concepts. The residency was not about fully realizing these ideas but about exploring possibilities and testing techniques. It provided me with the space to experiment: collecting ideas and materials, trying out techniques, creating spatial models, and collaborating with local women, receiving advice from craftspeople, the Fablab, and John & Greta of DRAWinternational.

I worked on eight different projects, each with its own research and approach.



WasGoed?

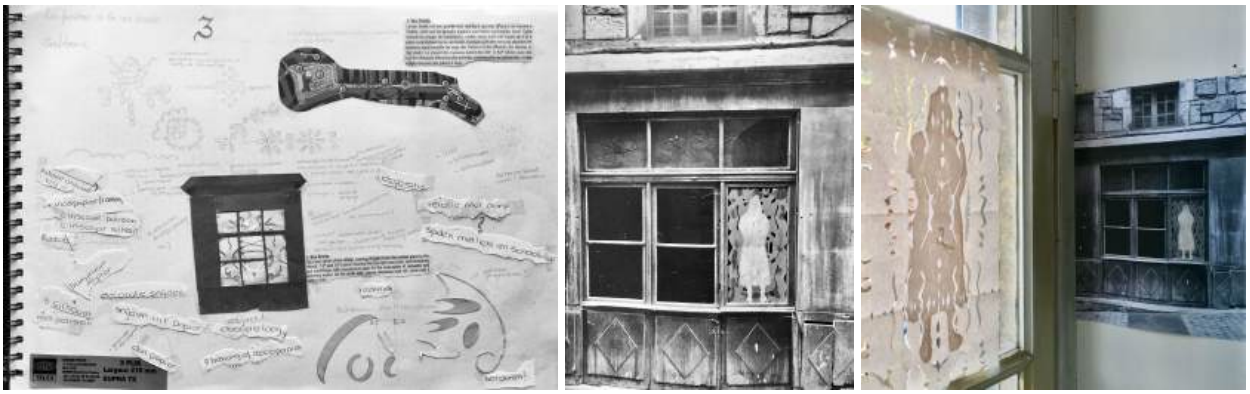
One of these projects, ***WasGoed?***, was inspired by the old lavoir (washhouse), once a meeting place for women during their hard labor. I created a charcoal drawing of Latitea, the cleaner at DRAWinternational, on a white linen sheet. This work, along with other white sheets, was intended to be placed in the lavoir as a symbolic connection between past and present.

Another project, ***HoogSpel***, focused on the dried-up water source ‘La Fontaine de l’Ifernet et la source.’ Empty buckets placed high on poles symbolized the fragility of our water resources. At the same time, the buckets had a playful element, reminiscent of basketball hoops, inviting reflection on our relationship with water.

HoogSpel

techniques and materials

At the local Fablab in Caylus, I experimented with laser engraving and cutting, an opportunity to combine traditional crafts with modern techniques. I used embroidery patterns from old French nightgowns to create new motifs and cut them out of paper with a laser. From the same paper, I cut silhouettes of local ‘working’ women, each holding a tool or implement, for the project ***Verbloemd***. These women, hidden behind decorative patterns, were designed to be placed behind the windows of vacant shops in Rue Droite.



Verbloemd

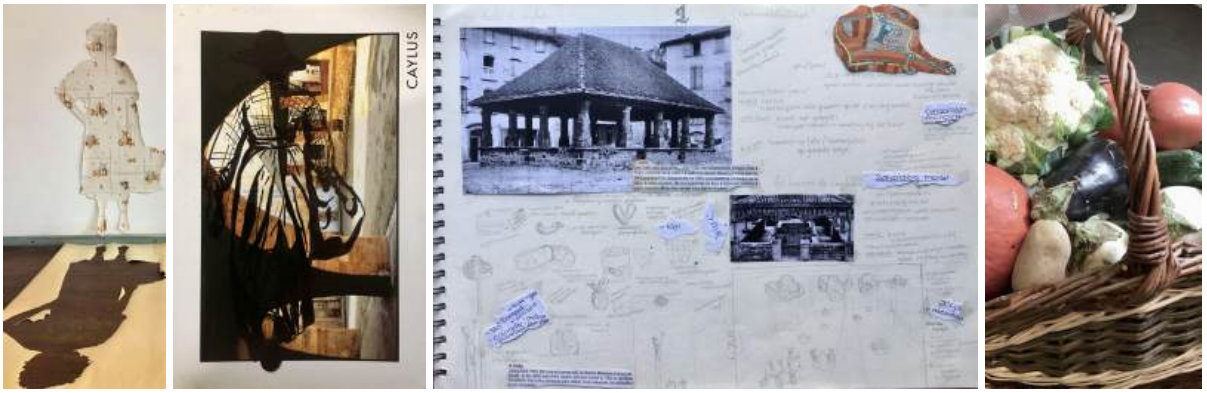
Onder het juk

I also worked on a transparent plexiglass figure for ***Onder het juk***: a water carrier symbolizing the burden of our relationship with water and nature. Additionally, I experimented with an embroidery machine and engraved broom handles for the project ***BeZem(nn)en***. These handles, engraved with Latin names of rare lady's mantle species, referenced female strength, labor, and the historical association with witchcraft.

BeZem(nn)en

thematic reflection

The residency at DRAWinternational offered not only technical depth but also space for thematic reflection. Feminism, identity, ingrained patterns in posture and behavior, and the role of women in the past and present formed a continuous thread. For example, the project ***Onbereikbare Oogst?***, inspired by the local market, explored the contrast between perfectly presented products and local, organic ‘imperfect’ vegetables, questioning sustainability, appreciation, and how value and beauty are determined.



Onbereikbare Oogst?

presentation

During the Journées des Ateliers d'Artistes d'Occitanie, I opened my studio to the public, showcasing my experiments, spatial models, sketches, photos, projections, and drawings. Earlier, I participated in an exhibition during the Fablab open days, sharing my first steps with new techniques.

Aubergiste

reflection and future

My time in Caylus has deepened my artistic practice and brought me new insights and techniques. At DRAWinternational, I had the chance to explore my concepts from new perspectives, which guided my experiments. My sketches and concepts form a solid foundation for future work. The idea for ***Aubergiste***, inspired by the legend of Kaatje van Blokzijl, was born here and may be realized later this year. I look forward to further developing the ideas that emerged here and expanding my work.

Verbloemd?

Additionally, I am working on a new project, ***Sporen van Tijd***, which will be executed in Zeeland in the summer of 2025. The experience I gained with materials like plexiglass and techniques like laser engraving at the Fablab contributed to the concept for this project. Working with local stories and (symbolically) connecting past and present, as I did in Caylus, is a recurring theme in both ***Aubergiste*** and ***Sporen van Tijd***. I am excited to continue developing these ideas and furthering my practice.

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