



ÉLODIE MERLAND

BACKGROUND NOISES

www.elodiemerland.net

Based in Dunkirk and Lille (France), **I develop a practice that connects the intimate and the collective.**

Following a residency in Folkestone in 2016, I have developed a strong connection with the United Kingdom, where I regularly return to pursue personal projects and collaborate with other artists.

At the core of my practice is language, whether written in chalk in public space or inscribed in concrete. My interventions range from the almost imperceptible to the monumental.

I explore what connects us: lived experience, the sensory, shared spaces...

What I bring into view emerges from within. I don't reveal everything, I suggest.

Working across sculpture, installation, performance, photography and video, **I invite viewers to find personal resonances and emotions.** I draw from my own experience but share only fragments, large enough for each person to find something of themselves. **A different way of being in the world, through writing and the sensory, grounded in the conviction that the intimate, when lightly evoked, can become universal.**

It is in this space, between the intimate and the shared, that my work finds meaning.

Background noises is the name I give to my overall practice. Multidisciplinary, with conceptual and romantic overtones, it opens a space for contemplation in which each viewer can engage with the work and project their own experience onto it.

I do not seek to create demonstrative art, but the art of resonance.



WAVES NEVER STOP CROSSING BORDERS



This video was made on 30th October 2019 on a beach in Folkestone, United Kingdom. It was the day before the UK was due to leave the European Union. This was the third postponed date at that time, but the withdrawal was ultimately delayed until 31st January 2020. The reading direction of the sentence **WAVES NEVER STOP CROSSING BORDERS** is oriented towards France. This sentence evokes Brexit, but it also speaks of all the borders that thousands of people are forbidden to cross every day.

WAVES NEVER STOP CROSSING BORDERS | Folkestone
Work in situ, spray paint / video, 13'25" | 2019

► [CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



The *In situ* project consists of ephemeral interventions in public space. I work within transitional spaces, where I inscribe words in the local language. These fragments, tied to a specific place and moment, express emotional states and both disrupt and reveal our perception of the landscape.

IN SITU / REGARDER L'HORIZON, DEVINER L'INCENDIE (LOOK AT THE HORIZON, GUESS THE FIRE) | Dunkirk
Work in situ, spray paint / photograph | 2022

IN SITU / ALLEEN IN ZIJN EIGEN STILTE (ALONE IN HIS OWN SILENCE) | Amsterdam
Work in situ, white chalk / photograph | 2024

► [CLICK TO SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS](#)



In situ / Gardons-nous secrets (Let's keep ourselves secret), Dunkirk | 2021



STILL NOT THE
FUCKING TIME
FOR A ROMANCE

In situ / Still not the fucking time for a romance, Folkestone | 2022





The twenty-two concrete letters, weighing between six and fifteen kilos, are placed in piles on the ground. I move them. I write. With the constant back and forth, my breathlessness increases.

JE PLIERAI LES DRAPS SEULE (I WILL FOLD THE SHEETS ALONE)

is the sentence I compose.

Sometimes I think that the only reason to live as a couple is practical. One gesture that, for me, perfectly represents this is folding sheets. Sheets inevitably also represent love. The combination of the sensuality of fabric and the rawness of concrete seemed to me a fitting way to speak about love and its pain.

SEE MY BREATH

Performance, variable duration / sound recording, 11'03" / installation, 22 concrete letters, variable dimensions (photographer: H el ene Vandenkoornhuyse) | 2016-2024

► [CLICK TO LISTEN TO THE SOUND RECORDING](#)



Murmures aims to create connections between spectators through small gestures that initiate. Throughout the performance, the audience receives elements intended for one person, each time different. To obtain all the information, communication is necessary. *Murmures* defied Covid-19 and social distancing, it is a performance that calls for contact and exchange. It speaks about our relationship with others, and the necessity, or not, of living together. The French word *murmure* refers to the flight of starlings that move in groups in order to protect themselves from danger.

MURMURES

Performance, variable duration (photographers: Chelsey Browne and Angélique Lyleire) | 2021-2022

► [CLICK TO SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE VIDEO](#)





LE NEUF ET PAS
MANQUER LE TRAIN

UNE DIMENSION PLUS
AVEC LA COURSE

DE JOUR
ET
LE JOUR

DE JOUR
ET
LE JOUR

LE JOUR
ET
LE JOUR

LE JOUR
ET
LE JOUR

LE JOUR
ET
LE JOUR

LE JOUR
ET
LE JOUR



DRAINED OF TENDERNESS

PRENDS-EN
PLUSIEURS
CA NE SE VOIT PAS

What if we slipped away for a moment? Set aside our daily routines. Talk about nothing and everything, about love, sex, death, oblivion, time, loneliness, laughter. Speak of old age without mentioning wrinkles. Following a residency in early 2018 at the Schadet-Vercoustre Foundation – a nursing home in Bourbourg, in the north of France – I wrote a series of words born from conversations and observations. Time spent with around twenty residents, mostly women, their memories fading. We would (often) meet for the first time. Friendships would form. Tenderness would settle in. And then I would go for a piss and they would forget me.

ESCAPADE

Installation, corten steel, variable dimensions | 2018

► [CLICK TO SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS](#)



This installation stems from two books I read: *Happening* by Annie Ernaux and *Hysteric* by Nelly Arcan. In them, the authors recount their experiences of abortion in different periods. The title, *Children of water*, is a translation of the Japanese word “mizuko”, a term referring to children who die without seeing the daylight. Twenty-seven cobblestones are each pierced with a blue knitting needle, the same color used by Annie Ernaux in 1963. The number twenty-seven refers to the abortions carried out by Marie-Louise Giraud, the only French angel maker to have been guillotined, in 1943, for her actions.

CHILDREN OF WATER

Installation, 27 granite cobblestones, 27 acrylic knitting needles, variable dimensions / photographs | 2022





On a concrete pillow, the sentence **JE ME RETIENDRAI DE SAISIR CET OREILLER POUR T'ÉTOUFFER** (I WILL STOP MYSELF FROM GRABBING THIS PILLOW TO SUFFOCATE YOU) is engraved. This pillow could belong to a slightly unmade bed, sheets that carry a sense of lived experience. The sentence speaks of love and death, of domestic violence, of that brief instant when, in a surge of anger, sadness, and helplessness, one might, in a single gesture, kill the person they love. That moment in which one refrains from committing the irreversible.

WEAKNESS

Sculpture, concrete, 56x49x15 cm | 2020



This series of A4-sized wall sculptures in concrete explores the transition from ephemeral thought to a lasting material form. Each piece incorporates text drawn from my daily notebooks, transforming intimate writing into a shared trace.

NOTEBOOKS / JUSTE ÊTRE LÀ (JUST BEING THERE)
Sculpture, reinforced concrete, 21x29,7x3 cm | 2026

“Both powerful and fragile, **Élodie Merland’s poetic fragments** slip into the city’s interstices, poised on the edge of a crack, held in constant tension. They **challenge the everyday** and offer **unexpected perspectives on the ordinary.**”

“Murmure” is the name given to the flight of starlings, VALENTINA PERI, 2022. > [FULL TEXT](#)

“Élodie Merland sheltered in telephone boxes, **transforming inactivity into creative activity**, through **shared intimacy**. The philosopher Simone Weil wrote to one of her friends in 1942: “Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. It is given to very few spirits **to discover that things and beings exist.**””

Waiting, attentiveness, ARNAUD DEJEAMMES, 2021. > [FULL TEXT](#)

“Élodie Merland shows a marked **predilection for writing**. In a search for traces of a **non-spectacular world**, her works themselves take on the form of clues. And what could resemble this more closely than writing? Writing, which never reveals anything except through its own withdrawal.”

The subtle charm of details, FRANÇOIS COADOU, 2017.

“Turning a street corner, a word might catch our attention. A subtle intervention would **quietly disrupt the existing** surroundings. Without knowing it, we might come across one of Élodie Merland’s works.”

The vivid words of Élodie Merland, ANA BORDENAVE, 2018. > [FULL TEXT](#)

ÉLODIE MERLAND

born in 1987

contact@elodiemerland.net | www.elodiemerland.net

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

June to July 2026 *Beyond borders* – **Kollectiv** / FOLKESTONE (GB)

September 2017 *Des mots sur la ville* – Watch this space 9_ **Bureau d'Art et de Recherche** (with 50° NORD – 3° EST) / ROUBAIX (FR)

January 2017 *Showdown* – **La Plate-Forme** / DUNKIRK (FR)

November 2016 *Showdown* – **]performance s p a c e [** / FOLKESTONE (GB)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

April 2026 *Amours VII* – **Galerie Espace Temps** (with Les Salaisons) / PARIS (FR)

September to October 2024 *J'écris donc je suis* – **Galerie Robespierre** / GRANDE-SYNTHÉ (FR)

February to April 2024 *Art au Centre #14* – Public space (with **Mouvements Sans Titre**) / LIÈGE (BE)

November 2022 to January 2023 *Les Instants Vidéo Festival* – 35th edition – **Friche la Belle de Mai** / MARSEILLE (FR)

September to October 2022 *Narratives* – **Bureau d'Art et de Recherche** / ROUBAIX (FR)

July 2022 */si:n/* – Biennale d'art vidéo et de performance – **The French Institute** (with A.M. Qattan Foundation & Les Instants Vidéo Numériques et Poétiques) / GAZA (PS)

September to December 2021 *En Hauts !* – **Festival Transphotographiques** / LILLE (FR)

October 2019 *In Champion* – Public space (with **Lieux-Communs**) / NAMUR (BE)

June to December 2018 *L'art dans la ville #2* – Public space (with le **CIAC**) / BOURBOURG (FR)

PERFORMANCES (SELECTION)

December 2025 *Un prunier dans le verger* – **Frac Grand Large**, with François Lewyllie / DUNKIRK (FR)

May 2022 *Murmures* – **Contemporary Space** / FOLKESTONE (GB)

October 2021 *Murmures* – Portes ouvertes des ateliers d'artistes – **Fructôse** / DUNKIRK (FR)

May and June 2019 *Liefde is wachten* – Exhibition *Ménage à trois* – **Poort 8** / GHENT (BE)

March 2017 *Concert for 52 phone boxes* – **Festival V.I.P.** (with le P.L.A.C.) / SOLLIÈS-VILLE (FR)

RESIDENCES (SELECTION)

July to September 2025 *Un prunier dans le verger* – **Fablab Effet Papillon** - Le Relais des Moères, with François Lewyllie / TÉTÉGHÉM-COUDEKERQUE-VILLAGE (FR)

April 2023 *Résidence Croisée* – **Montévidéo**, with Nicolas Meusnier / MARSEILLE (FR)

November to December 2022 *Résidence Croisée* – **Le 109**, with Nicolas Meusnier / NICE (FR)

DEGREES

2010 Diplôme National Supérieur d'Expression Plastique (Master) – Fine Art and Design School - **Toulon** Provence Méditerranée (FR)

2008 Diplôme National d'Arts Plastiques (Bachelor) – Fine Art School - **Dunkirk** (FR)



In situ / Seul avec son propre silence (Alone in his own silence), Paris | 2018 | Photographer: Salim Santa Lucia