

I■ Night Café

INDEPENDENT NEW YORK

Solo booth Mandy Franca

May 8–11, 2025

Spring Studios | 50 Varick Street

Booth 503 B Independent Debuts Section

Night Café is pleased to present a solo booth by multidisciplinary artist Mandy Franca at Independent New York 2025. The booth is part of Independent Debuts, a new special section in which galleries present solo booths by artists making their debut in New York.

Franca's new body of work in her ongoing 'On Being Light and Liquid' series reflects on the collapse and exposure of global structures, as well as the illusion of freedom in contemporary society. Rooted in her experience of being bedridden due to illness and observing the clouds drift by, Franca contrasts her immobility with the fluidity of the world around her. This contrast prompts deep reflections on her physical limitations and the freedom symbolised by the clouds; free, yet shaped by unseen forces. Through this lens, she examines the collapse of global structures and the illusion of freedom in contemporary society, questioning broader concepts of freedom and humanity in our era.

'On Being Light and Liquid' combines various mediums, including photography, textile, sound, sculpture, and mark-making. For the works in the series, Franca mostly uses photographs taken of clouds or from NASA's archive that she reworks into different mediums. Through these works, Franca reflects on the impermanence of life, the constant flux of time, and the tension between personal limitation and societal freedom.

In *Inner Views* (2025), she printed photographs of clouds taken on her iPhone on canvas and reworked them with oil pastels, oil sticks, china markers and graphite. These soft pastels, which do not dry completely, allow for a gestural, fluid interaction between the pigment and the underlying imagery. The marks, sometimes reworked, evoke a sign of existence, capturing the impermanence and constant transformation inherent in life. Franca's preference for using her fingers to apply pigment establishes a direct and unmediated connection with both surface and material.

In 'Mark III (28022025)' (2025, Franca uses voile, a thin, translucent fabric, as a surface for her painting. Defined by vertical, directional marks, the composition mirrors the portrait orientation of the canvas. The repetition of these marks creates a sense of order, while the freehand quality of the application remains fluid and unpredictable.

In 'Untitled IV (05112018)' (2025), a floor sculpture combining a plaster support structure with pastels on canvas, Franca engages the notion of the vertical and horizontal struggle, drawing on the work of William Pope.L, particularly his 'Crawl' performances. Pope.L's slow, deliberate movement across the floor challenges associations of height with autonomy and power. Franca's own experience of restricted mobility is materialised in her sculpture, which explores the tension between horizontality and verticality, highlighting how space, agency, and mobility are shaped by social and physical forces.

An accompanying essay written by Night Café founder Maribelle Bierens explores these works in the context of William Pope.L's exploration of the vertical and Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity, referencing artists such as Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Roni Horn. These references ground Franca's work in an art historical context, underscoring her contribution to the ongoing dialogue about the complexities of contemporary existence.

Mandy Franca is a Dutch interdisciplinary artist who investigates the notion of interconnectedness, drawing from life experiences which are informed by growing up in a cross-cultural environment and her personal archive. She researches and observes the meaning of mundanity to give eternal value to seemingly insignificant places, moments and objects. As a result, the notion of preserving languages, traditions, domestic settings and everyday objects in a state of flux, both digital and physical due to digitalization and globalization, takes precedence in her work. Franca's priority is to bring the individual experience into a broader communal context and show the parallels between our common needs, objects and experiences, with the notion of care as a fundamental aspect of being.

She was a resident artist at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, NL (2024). She obtained her MA in Print with distinction at the Royal College of Art in London, UK (2020). Her work has been exhibited and acquired by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. She was also recently invited to be part of Phaidon's upcoming volume *New Perspectives on Contemporary Painting*, which will be published in spring 2026.



