

Crazy Boots

07 March – 18 April 2026

Sophie T. Lvoff

“Use your imagination.” Printed atop the Blue Book—the small stapled exam booklet¹ long used for secondary-school and university-level handwritten exams in the U.S.—the phrase was meant to encourage critical thinking. Introduced in the early-20th century, the booklet faded with the digital shift and has recently returned as a hedge against AI-assisted cheating. Yet the imagination line feels oddly placed on an exam, which is meant to test knowledge, not invention. Years after filling those pages—hand cramping over essays decrypting the symbolism of grapes present in Caravaggio’s *Bacchus* for an art history class in Florida/New York²—“Use your imagination” reads less as inspiration than permission to bullshit: a slogan that quietly trained generations to admire elaborate displays of nothingness.

Display, transmission, tricks, secrets, symbols—these are themes we discussed with Sophie T. Lvoff while she prepared her solo presentation *Crazy Boots*. The work stems from reading forty-seven books during her pregnancy and postpartum period, as well as reflecting on containment—the gestating body, a book and its content, a bottle filled with liquid. A riff on the monochrome³ and a situation-installation⁴ shake these themes into an ambiguous cocktail, served from the blue book-bottles⁵ themselves. And if Sophie is trained as a photographer—although today her work also expresses itself through language, objects and spaces—her photographic practice should be understood broadly: as a gesture of framing a non-reality within reality, of display, and of unsettling the banal, be it on a photographic surface or in space.⁶

A shadow of a doubt emerges from the street, as the display window of In extenso is covered with an adhesive sticker of a zoomed in image of grapes, tricking passersby into questioning the nature of the premises: cave à vins? supermarché? A few steps further, one peeks in to find a bar-cum-bookcase (or bookcase-cum-bar?), behind which the artist serves calimochos (with Pepsi⁷, not Coke) and white wine spritzers⁸ on the night of the opening. A zoomed-out version of the green grapes photograph from the window scales the wall. Although the grapes simply happened—that is, they were the subject of one of the artist’s most recent and favorite photographs, taken in Bretagne in 2025—the symbolism runs deep. From power to abundance, fertility, hospitality and indulgence, the grapes—and their vines—also represent knowledge, coming full circle.

This looping is not only felt in the repeated motifs—let’s call them the regulars—but also in certain gestures, ticks inherent to the artist’s practice—let’s call her the

bartender. Ticks, and also tricks (don’t forget to tip!). Placed in a large wine glass—a novelty format from the U.S., also recalling bar decor—an enigmatic business card offers a cheatsheet, along with a phone number, similar to a work she presented in our first collaboration in 2019⁹, in which a bronze business card emerged from a wall with only a name and phone number, enticing visitors to dial. The fruit trompe l’oeil also makes a comeback, making the text she wrote for *Fruits & Légumes* applicable here as well: “there’s at least two other secrets in this [...] one private, one public.”¹⁰

As for the title of the exhibition, it refers to a nickname given to the artist unbeknownst to her—before she heard it through the grapevine—prolonging the reflection on what is presented (said) and what is hidden (kept secret). The lyrics of the theme song from *Cheers*¹¹ ring out a little differently.

*Sometimes you wanna go
Where everybody knows your name
And they’re always glad you came
You wanna be where you can see (ah-ah)
Our troubles are all the same (ah-ah)
You wanna be where everybody knows your name*

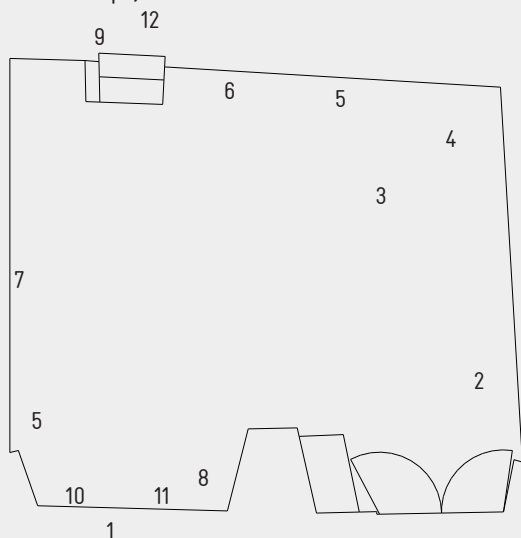
Crazy Boots is the perfect name for the bar.

Katia Porro

- ¹ Blue Books typically have dimensions 8.5 by 7 inches (220 mm × 180 mm) or 11 by 8.5 inches (280 mm × 220 mm), and contain from four to twelve sheets of ruled paper, stapled through the fold.
- ² Sophie T. Lvoff studied in New York, where she is from. I began my studies in Florida, where I am from.
- ³ From Malevich’s paintings to Louise Nevelson’s environments and Anne Truitt’s sculptures.
- ⁴ To borrow the term from late Belgian artist Guillaume Bijl (1946-2025).
- ⁵ The artist produced 47 ceramic book-bottles with the help of Romain Kloeckner.
- ⁶ Since 2008, Sophie T. Lvoff has had the mention “photographie plus” on her business card.
- ⁷ As a child, the artist was convinced that Pepsi was a drink of the gods. Her grandfather was a Pepsi salesman.
- ⁸ Pinot grigio, half of a La Croix, a lot of ice and lemon: Stephen Collier’s recipe.
- ⁹ In the exhibition *L’Almanach des aléas* at the Fondation d’entreprise Pernod Ricard, Sophie T. Lvoff presented the work *The Davidoff’s*, a collaboration with Elia David. The phone number that appeared was 01 40 56 02 01.
- ¹⁰ Sophie T. Lvoff collaboration with Elia David, *Fruits & Légumes*, Medium Argent, Rouen, 2019.
- ¹¹ *Cheers* was a popular TV sitcom in the US that ran from 1982 to 1993 set in a bar in Boston.

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Le Bar du peuple, Marseille
L'Ours, Clermont-Ferrand
Le Fil du Temps, Uzerche



- 1 - *Green Grapes (In Window)*, vinyl adhesive, 2026
- 2 - *Sad Boot*, watercolor on cold-pressed cotton paper, artist's frame, 2023
- 3 - *The Bar*, wood, paint, collections of the artist including: photographs, glasses, lucky Irish horseshoe, bridge championship trophy, postcards, newspapers, 2026
- 4 - *Crazy Boots (carte de visite)*, cardstock, 2026
- 5 - *Book bottles (1-47)*, glazed stoneware, 2022-2026
- 6 - *Good Friend*, watercolor on cold-press paper, artist's frame, 2023
- 7 - *Green Grapes (Wallpaper)*, paper, ink, glue, 2026
- 8 - *The Ghost of Louise Hartwig*, watercolor on cold-pressed cotton paper, artist's frame, 2023
- 9 - (cave) *Bar II*, signage with LEDs and electrical elements, 2026
- 10 - *The Prime Times*, Volume I, artist edition, newsprint installed on wooden newspaper readers, text, drawings and photographs by Sophie T. Lvoff, designed by traduttore, traditore published by crymimicry, 2023
- 11 - *The Prime Times*, Volume II, artist edition, newsprint installed on wooden newspaper readers, text, drawings and photographs by Sophie T. Lvoff, designed by traduttore, traditore published by crymimicry, 2023
- 12 - *Crazy Boots*, one-channel sound piece, 2m 43 seconds, looped, 2026

Sophie T. Lvoff (b. 1986, New York) is an artist, photographer, and writer based in the Corrèze region of France. She holds a BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts (2008) and an MFA from Tulane University (2013), completed curatorial studies at the École du Magasin in Grenoble (2014-2015) and postgraduate studies at ENSBA Lyon (2017-2019). She has exhibited internationally, including at the Lyon Biennale, Prospect New Orleans, the Aperture Foundation, and the Musée de l'Élysée. Her work has been published in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *BOMB Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *La belle revue*. She has curated exhibitions in artist-run spaces in New York, New Orleans, Lyon and Marseille. Lvoff has taught at NYU, Louisiana State University, Pratt Institute, École Supérieure de Design, Saint-Étienne, and École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes. Lvoff's recent book of writing entitled *I'm Back Baby!* was published by crymimicry in 2025.

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