

Clémence Lollia Hilaire & Janina Frye

It was a Tuesday morning at PARK, just days before the opening of "Breather". We sat together for nearly an hour, and slowly the conversation found its rhythm. "Breather" has become a quiet subtly and serene installation. Yet their works and materials carry a strong sense of personality, context and depth. And just like "Breather" itself, the conversation between Clémence and Janina had a calm and serene atmosphere.



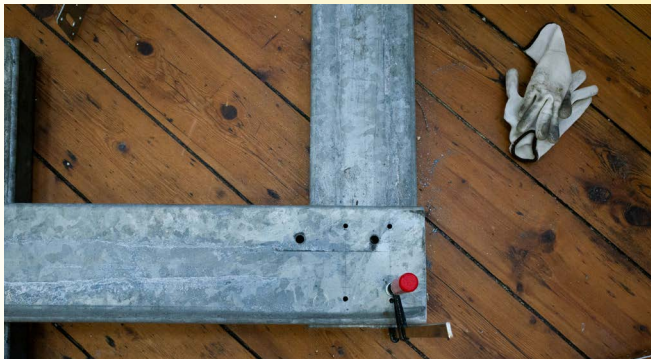
J: 'My work is about the porosity of boundaries — how distinctions between inside and outside, soft and hard, care and control, are never fixed. I'm interested in how materials embody ambiguity: how something can protect and restrict at the same time. I started working with vacuum compressors during my master. I was interested in how I can translate something that is not physical, like thoughts, emotions, ghosts, and how these things then become physical. For example, when we are scared, when there is anxiety, the breathing rhythm changes and the tension of the skin also changes. The whole physicality of the body changes. I was interested in how I can translate this into material, into a sculpture. The installation I made for PARK combines fences inspired by Latin American forged metalwork with rubber and latex. Through the materiality, I'm playing with two distinctions – soft and hard – which can also be seen as care and control, protection or restriction, decoration or safety.'



C: 'I feel that I have similar tensions in trying to stay evocative while doing so. I try to stay very close to the material and what is compressed within it. By using them evocatively, it's almost like casting spells. Materials have a charge that you activate when making works. They carry a charge in their relation to one's positionality. I would love to hear what rubber and the use of fences, that you expand in South America and also to hear about the relation you have with those things to your own positionality.'

J: 'Latex and rubber are soft, stretchable, and flexible. They are mostly used in the health care and industrial contexts. Fences, and even decorative fences, have meaning. On one hand they protect, but they also decorate. The reason we put a fence somewhere also has an emotional aspect. It also translates feelings into the material. When I encounter areas where there are more fences, that translates back into a feeling. Besides I'm interested in how the histories of these materials resonate with the ideas in my work. Latex, a material originally discovered and developed by the Olmec and later industrialized through colonial extraction, embodies the tension between vitality and exploitation — between natural origin and industrial control. The forged metal grids in Latin America emerged as both protective and ornamental structures — architectures of safety that also reflect social and political hierarchies. When these two materials coexist in my installations, their histories start to speak to each other: the colonized and the colonizer, the organic and the industrial, the intimate and the systemic.'

C: 'For my smaller work that is meant as an edition at PARK, I wanted to touch upon the difference in perception of value and accumulation. More precisely between some of the first exchanges between Europeans and the Tainos and Arawak people. Europeans traded items in brass for gold as a way to get rid of something they considered less valuable and return home with pure gold. To them, it felt like a clever or even sneaky exchange – as if they were outsmarting the others and taking advantage of the situation.'



C: "But there's an interesting twist. For the people of the Caribbean, pure gold wasn't necessarily seen as more valuable than brass. Brass — an alloy of tin and copper — was essential for crafting many intricate metal objects that carried greater worth. They called brass Guanín, a word that refers to a spotless sky — because of brass's distinctive shine when cast. So maybe we can think about a single material that carries deep significance. For me, as someone from the Caribbean, that meaning is also personal. The editions I make are small brass pieces, and I price them by weight as if they were gold, a payback."

C: "Here in PARK I have been influenced by the space because it used to be an old chapel. And this installation with the bell is something I have wanted to try for a long time. I'm thinking of activating the work and the sound to resonate with the space. Because it's a chapel, it makes a lot of sense to try it here and now. I can always ring some bells in my studio, but it's not the same. The bells themselves are two different tones. I was thinking about music theory and harmony, and how our ears guide our expectations. In the Western context and music theory, there is something called a "perfect cadence." It refers to the ending of a musical phrase that feels like a nice rounder conclusion, one that your ears guide you toward resolution."



C: The first time I had this work in mind actually came from something in the news in France and in Guadeloupe. The current president took a Guadeloupean artist to court for a caricature that depicted the president beheaded. While in mainland France, caricatures are often perceived as expressions of freedom of speech, someone expressing that same freedom was taken to court by Macron. It was yet another instance showing the double standards France still has when it comes to us, French Caribbean people, supposedly part of France."

C: "And there is a saying in French: "two sounds of bells.". Meaning to say something and its opposite. That's actually when I came up with the idea. But it was so far back. What triggers you to do something then evolves into something else. But that was the starting point. You start with something, you research, you start making — it ends up so far away from the start."

J: 'I think this is really beautiful. As a connection with the sound it also brings it together, it makes sense, it is really strong.'

C: "But there would also be sound in your work, how is that going?"

J: "My work also produces sound. Each fence is connected to a vacuum compressor, there are around 13 of them in the space. They switch on and off in a kind of rhythm, although I haven't fixed the timing yet; it's something I still want to test in the space. The sound is quite mechanical, but it also gives the life to the sculptures. I'm interested in that moment where the machine starts to feel alive."

C: "Almost something that would keep a body alive"

Extra activities

PARK presents *Breather*, a duo exhibition by Clémence Lollia Hilaire and Janina Frye, on view from November 1 to December 14. PARK will also host a series of additional activities alongside the exhibition.

08 - 09.11 2025 KUNSTSCENE
open studio weekend and performance
A Sonic Oasis

On Sunday, November 9, performances by A Sonic Oasis will take place at 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. under the title Immersive Sound Experience. A Sonic Oasis is a music collective dedicated to creating immersive sound experiences that invite deep listening and reflection.

29.12.2025 ARTIST TALK
Clémence and Janina will engage in a conversation with a moderator about *Breather*, their working process, installations, and the connection between them.
Start: 15:00

13.12.2025 KOMMA #50 + #51
KOMMA #50 will be created by performance artist, video maker and poet Berendine Venemans.
KOMMA #51 is a collaboration with De Link, Tilburg and will be performed by Teleport, a musical improvisation duo consisting of Koen Wijnen and Eva van Pelt.

Both KOMMA candidates have a short working period in PARK during which they can shape their interdisciplinary response to the exhibition *Breather*.

Start: December 13 at 3:30 p.m.
Free admission



ABOUT PARK

PARK is an art initiative founded in 2013 by Rob Moonen, in collaboration with six other artists from Tilburg. The PARK working group currently consists of Linda Arts, René Korten, Rob Moonen, and Lieve van den Bijgaart. Anne Parlevliet is the business manager at PARK, and Sanne Tegelaar is responsible for PR.

Opening hours during exhibitions:
Friday 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Saturday 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Sunday 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Admission is free

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PARK

