

MARIA ZAHLE

Le mur vert bouteille (A wall bottle green)

weaving – sculpture – monotyping – poetry

11. 09. 2026 > 7. 11. 2026

PRIVATE VIEW

Thursday 10th September – 5 pm > 8:30 pm

POETIC PERFORMANCE

Saturday 12th September at 7:30 pm – Maria Zahle & guest

LA SEMAINE DE L'ART

SUNDAY OPENING

Sunday 18th October 2 pm > 6 pm

MEET THE ARTIST / TALK

Sunday 18th October at 4 pm – Maria Zahle will be conversing with Vanessa Desclaux, art historian and curator.

CLOSING DAYS

From the 1st to the 7th of October included

*At the top of the green blackboard, she wrote 'gods'; at the bottom 'humans'; with a line demarcating the border between the two worlds. And then, from the bottom to the top, crossing the dividing line, an arrow pointed upwards. This arrow was crucial! Next to this arrow she wrote 'længsel', in English 'longing'. **Maria Zahle, June 2026**—extract of text*

Longing is a diffuse state of desire, of aspiration, of yearning, even of nostalgia. It does not have a precise object but makes us face a feeling of unfulfillment. Art, just like history, has always offered a wealth of languishing feminine figures. A consuming and creative passion, languor —a mirror of spleen— arises as a particularly feminine feeling, as a state of those who allow themselves to feel, to feel that absence, that irreparable nostalgia.

The exhibition *Le Mur vert bouteille* (A Wall bottle green), Danish artist Maria Zahle's first in France, is built around that longing, in a wider sense of absence, grief, and melancholia. Its title echoes a wall that Maria Zahle's grandmother had painted, as a liberating gesture, in her seaside house. A space for independence and creativity, that house was also the host of loneliness, of heartaches, of absent or dead men, and of languishing women. Today, the colour green is found as thin threads in her series *Længsel* (Longing): woven works separated by a horizontal strip in two parts —one dark, the other of a warm light— and held in space by a sculpted bronze suspension which anchors and supports. Her compositions are also a nod to a diagram presented by her mythology professor: at the top, the word "deities," at the bottom, the word "humans," and pointing upwards an arrow bearing the word *Længsel*, longing.

Thus, *Le Mur vert bouteille* connects women's lived experiences, memories, and tales. But it also serves to highlight the importance of colour for the artist: more than a mere pictorial element, colour is a physical body, a material, a tool to her.

Maria Zahle's multidisciplinary practice includes collage, textile, sculpture, performance, and poetry. For years she has been creating her own dyes using natural materials and plants she grows: indigo, madder, linen, mignonette, walnut, soot... As a result, her delicate palette of blues, pinks, reds, yellows, greens, and blacks is the product of a long and complex process, connected to nature and human history since times immemorial. For colour is not only a form of light we worship, it is also the expression of our relationship with the physical environment —a relationship now broken by the emergence of synthetic colours. That relationship, Maria Zahle has been striving to mend it: she dyes threads which she then weaves or let diluted natural pigments run on a surface, often a wall (*Awash*). She recently developed a weaving process in which she paints in touches on a woven surface, bringing colour as the creation work goes. Like a *cadavre exquis* (exquisite corpse), where the result is only revealed as the paper is unfolded, the work is only revealed as the loom is undressed. Small knots of coloured threads creep in, bringing volume on volume. At the edge of the woven work, a bookbinder's wire is added to the

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warp, allowing the piece to curve once finished, fleshing it out further within the space. The pieces are suspended through sculptures of burnished, polished bronze twigs, whirling outwards, going beyond mere functionality to become integral parts of the works.

The series **Venetian Bodies** (2022) is a set of sculptures, each made of a light linen weave, dyed and draped over thin steel structure. With these, the idea of colour as a physical body takes on its full meaning, as they become both silhouettes and movements. *Krat (Bushes, 2025)* is a series of monotypes with marked reliefs, made with wool yarn gorged with colour. Interlacing lines, concentrations, and small autonomous formations give rhythm to these compositions.

During the winter of 2025-2026, Maria Zahle was invited for a residency at the Skagens Museum, located in the small town of Skagen at the very tip of Denmark, where the Baltic Sea meets the North Sea. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Skagen was the centre of an important artist colony, with Peder Severin Krøyer, painter of international fame whose wife Marie was said to be the most of beautiful woman in Denmark, as one of the main figures. Marie too was a painter but stopped when she got married to turn to interior design —echoing the *Arts and Craft* movement (in Denmark called *Skønvirkestil*)—, raising the question of the *why*. As a result, the house the couple dwelled in until their separation in 1905 is a gem of attention to detail which Maria Zahle got to explore during her residency. Textiles, woods, metals, ceramics... The artist borrowed some elements to make them hers: a knot was transposed to a metal suspension for a woven work and the leaves inspired by a painting can be found as decoupage on the back of two chairs forming a “conversation bench,” a device allowing to take a break and tell your own stories at the heart of the exhibition.

With Maria Zahle, the feeling of longing is the essence of an emancipatory vision; she claims back those transitory and sensitive states. Reflection, softness, and care are at the core of her work: weaving is an act of patience, the plants for her dyes grow slowly, dreams take time to penetrate reality, words go through us and come back different, and gestures become more precise. Her pink goes redder, her yellow is verging on a pale green, and the bottle comes and goes at the bottom of the sea, sometimes a sapphire blue, sometimes a night purple. The bottle green wall thus becomes a summary of multiple inspirations. There come to meet stories of women, in the family or in history, in a search for freedom and meaning, highlighting the emotions we pin on the material world, its objects, its figures, and its colours. Maria Zahle conjures up, shows, and brings (back) to life, making languor now an active presence.

background

Trained in London at **The Slade School of Fine Art** (2001-2005) and at **The Royal Academy Schools** (2006-2009), Maria Zahle (born in Denmark in 1979) lived in England from 2001 to 2015. She now lives and works in Copenhagen.

The artist had exhibitions in institutions and galleries in England, including **Kettles Yard**, Cambridge (2018), the **Drawing Biennale**, Drawing Centre, London (2017); in Spain at the **CentroCentro**, Palacio de Cibeles, Madrid (2016) and in Mallorca, **Andratx** (2014); and in Germany at the **Dorothea Schlueter Galerie**, Hamburg (2012). Since she came back to Denmark, Maria Zahle has had several solo shows at the public institute **Cobra-Rummet**, **Sophienholm**, **Lyngby** (2018), *No Stranger or Lover to Me*, **Rønnebæksholm** (2021).

The artist was commissioned for institutions and public spaces: New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester (UK), 2014 – Aalborg University, Departments of Energy and Technology (DK), 2016, three pedestrian tunnels, Copenhagen (DK), 2016-2019, and Nyckelpigans Idrottshall (a gymnasium), Sunnanå, Skellefteå Kommun (SE), 2025.

Her work also became part of the collections of the Skovgaard Museum, Viborg (DK) 2024 and of the New Carlsberg Foundation (DK), 2023.

Maria Zahle has published several collections of texts and essays: Maria Zahle: *The Toe, The Horse, The Sister*, published by AkermanDaly, 2020 – Christine Clemmesen and Maria Zahle: *Stråle Kant Dag*, design by Officin (DK), 2018 – Maria Zahle: *8 Poems*, published by AkermanDaly, 2017 – *Occasional Geometries, Yorkshire Sculpture Park*, an essay by Diana Campbell Betancourt, 2017.

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