

LIEU-DIT

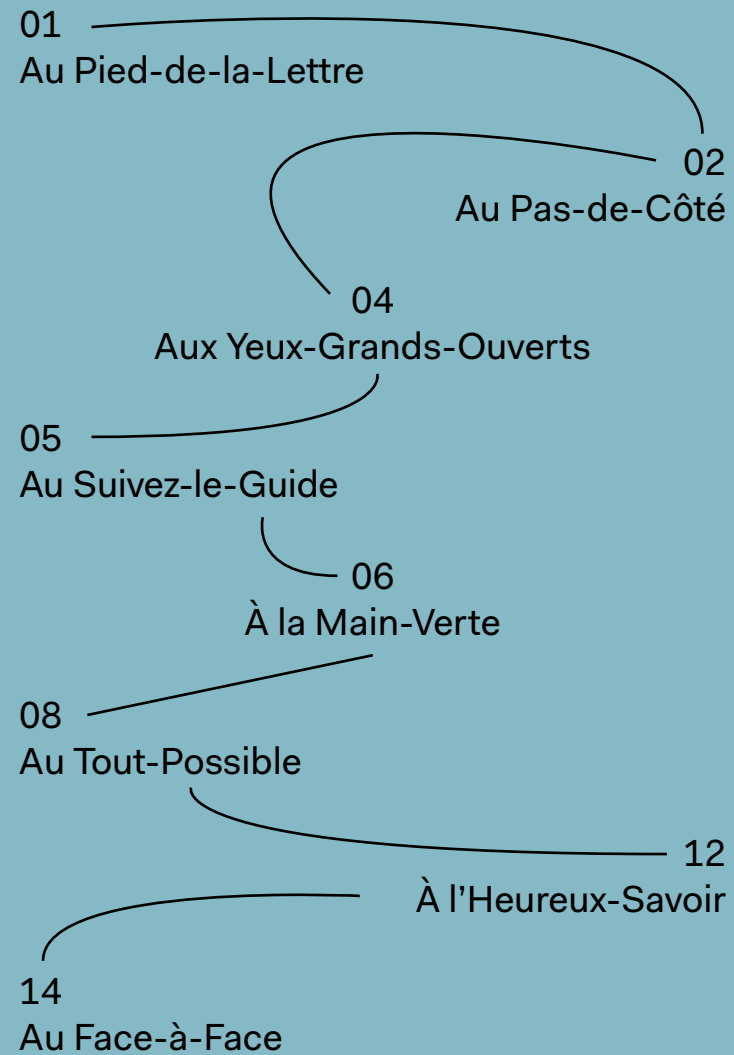
THE JOURNAL OF THE FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS



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LIEU-DIT is the journal of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. It is a mouthpiece for the communities the Foundation partners on the ground, in the creation of new work across the arts, the transmission of skills and know-how, the preservation of biodiversity and the promotion of social solidarity. Since 2008, the Foundation has brought together a network of individuals committed to implementing diverse gestures of support at the local, national and international level.

WITH TIME AND FREEDOM

The third edition of LIEU-DIT continues to showcase projects steered by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, through the voices of those who play a key role.

The Foundation works with individuals and organisations – artists, project leaders, friends and partners – dedicated to encouraging the creation of new works of art, the transmission of skills and know-how, the preservation of biodiversity, and social solidarity. All of these people are recognised, too, for their commitment, their love of what they do, and their expertise. With the Foundation's backing, they are enabled to act *in situ*, offering targeted support in the best possible conditions. LIEU-DIT tells their stories, as they share their passion and experiences in its pages.

How can we best pursue and enhance our creativity, our exploration and knowledge of the world around us, our actions, in service of the wider public? The testimonies featured here all point to two essential factors: time and freedom. Our programmes favour targeted, structured patronage, designed to help our beneficiaries achieve the autonomy they need to transform their work, their lives. Our approach builds relationships of trust, founded on the humanist values that have shaped the Foundation from the outset.

This edition of LIEU-DIT charts a topography of activities supported by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès: in each of our fields of intervention, through the gestures of our diverse beneficiaries, we pursue our sustained commitment to work for the common good.

Cover: Workshop for the sixth Skills Academy, Atelier d'Isly des Compagnons du Devoir, Saumur, 2023 © Tadzio

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LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

By Mathilde Monnier,
choreographer

Black Lights – a new work by French choreographer Mathilde Monnier – comes to Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon and Rennes, serving as the common point across the four venues of the Foundation's Transforme festival. For LIEU-DIT, Monnier explains the creative processes behind the piece, guiding her performers from the text to the stage, and finding new ways to give physical expression to challenging themes.

"*Black Lights* examines the shards of memory that cut through the fabric of our dreams, intruding like flashes that ignite and explode years later. It looks at how we live with the continuing presence of certain traumatic events. How can we reinvent our bodies, and our imaginations, in the face of a history of violence? How can we support one another to speak with one voice? How can we talk about these things publicly, on stage?"

French publisher Actes Sud has collected texts from the series *H24*, created for TV channel Arte by two women directors, Valérie Urrea and Nathalie Masduraud: twenty-four stories of the everyday violence experienced by women. Some are classic, theatrical monologues, written in the first person and spoken in ways that work well on stage. I decided to use these as the basis for a new work of theatre and dance.

There are eight women of widely differing ages and careers – three actors and five dancers – all of them superb practitioners with a strong commitment to the piece. In collaboration with the dramatist Stéphane Bouquet, we selected nine of the twenty-four stories, focusing on a coherent theme, and balancing the dance elements of the work. In rehearsal, we strive to make connections between the dancers' bodies and the substance of each text. How can we give physical expression to these stories? How can dance movements match the evocative,

imaginative power of the words? We have to find physical states of being that are capable of bringing the stories to life. Above all, how can we forge a group, an ensemble of voices to carry these individual, solitary narratives? We chose to embody each story in a chorus of voices that accompanies the action.

Annie Tolleter's set is a devastated landscape of centuries-old olive tree stumps, found in fields around the city of Montpellier. We decided to partially burn the stumps to blacken them, then arrange them across the back of the stage. It's a real landscape, but also a landscape of the mind: ancestral, poetic, exerting itself like our most deep-rooted memories.

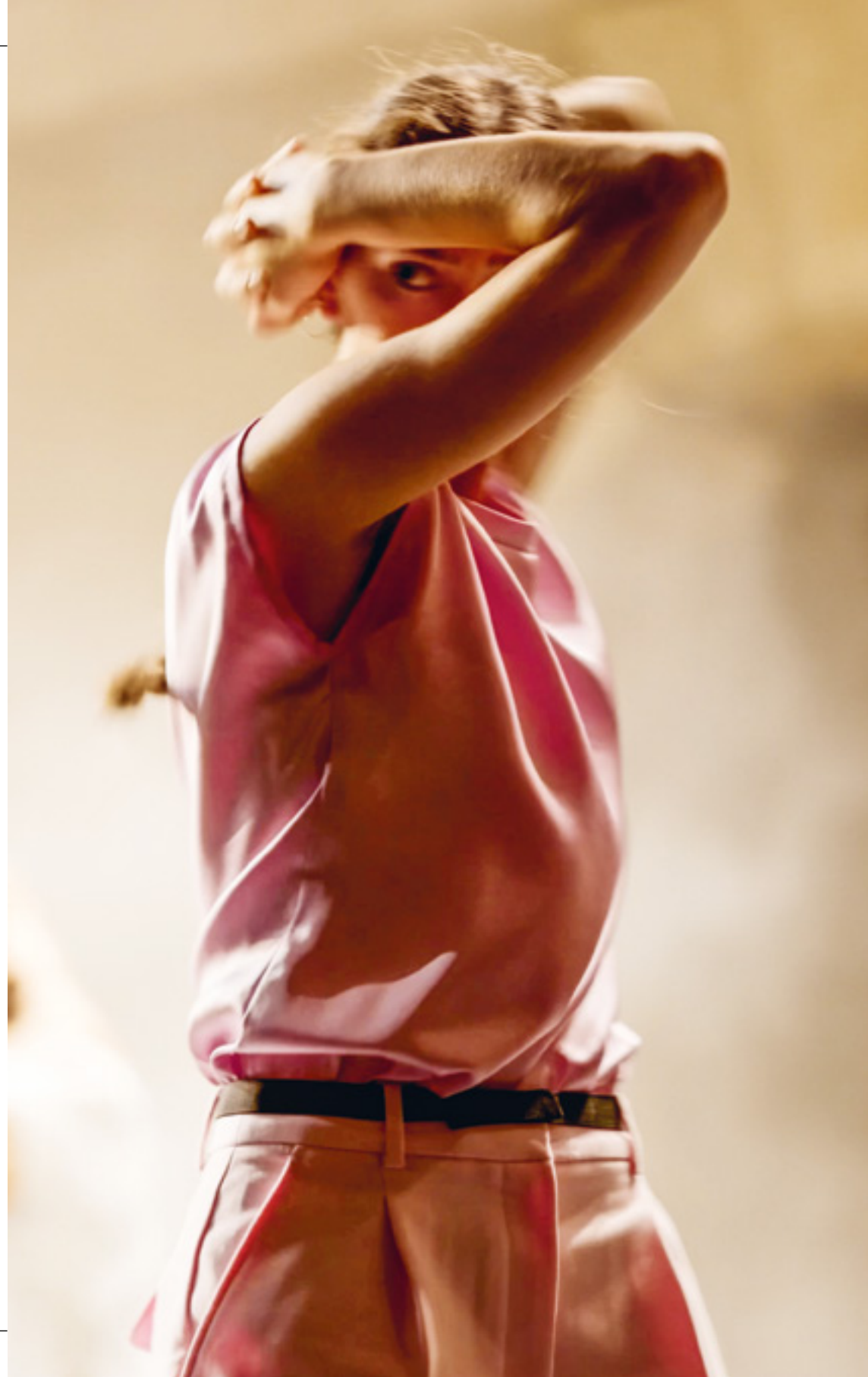
We were determined to bring this burning, contemporary issue to the stage, to address the urgent need to hear voices, from beyond those in the media, political and literary debates that have characterised the #MeToo movement. We wanted to find another way to address violence against women, by engaging with women's bodies – the memory of the skin, forgotten gestures and movements. But the project is also a way to reveal the potential for resilience: an invitation to and by the body to reach some reconciliation with itself."

Transforme
Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon and Rennes
16.11.2023 → 30.05.2024

Transforme is a touring festival launched by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2023, featuring a season of multidisciplinary works that engage with the contemporary world.

02 Mathilde Monnier, *Black Lights* (rehearsal), 2023

→



A PLACE TO LOOK AND TO RECEIVE

By Joël Riff,
curator of La Verrière

Since 2023, Joël Riff has curated exhibitions at La Verrière on the principle of 'augmented solo shows' that invite the viewer to engage with artworks in a multifaceted, plural context. For the opening of "Emi e dames messeur", Joël Riff's fourth exhibition here, he describes how the Foundation's Brussels exhibition space inspired this collective approach to the work of individual artists.

"To exhibit is to illuminate – in every sense, in the case of works displayed beneath the glass roof of La Verrière, a gallery that reaches out to the public, bathed in the natural light pouring in from the opening overhead. Like a great glass 'lens', the space presents as a receptive tool, both concentrating and opening the mind's eye, a platform that enhances perception and visibility alike.

An exhibition space for everything and anything under the sun (quite literally). This inspirational concept is the springboard for our 'augmented solo shows': multifaceted group exhibitions with a shared sensibility or theme centred around the work of a single artist. A format designed not to pass comment, but simply to show, to manifest. So far, in the programme's inaugural year, Marion Verboom, Anne Marie Laureys and Cristof Yvoré have provided the focus for works by more than twenty other artists, covering almost 150 years of visual, decorative and applied arts. Now, we bask in the light of an exhibition by Koenraad Dedobbeleer

– a photosensitive experience that imprints itself upon the retina as it presents illuminating works in a new light. Dedobbeleer's creations are eclipsed by the figures they reveal, sampled from close friendships, snippets of 20th-century culture, avant-garde photographs, and icons of the art of living. After three solo shows, La Verrière pursues its commitment to 'exclusivity' by transporting visitors to another place, with a confidential glimpse 'backstage' in the making of a work of art.

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès has encouraged the making and staging of works of contemporary art since its inception, with the programming of exhibitions in four gallery spaces in Europe and Asia.



In the artist's own kitchen, a constellation of complicities reads as an encyclopaedia of his inner, sentimental life, and the basis of his sculptural practice. A prism to help us see the world through his eyes."

Koenraad Dedobbeleer
"Emi e dames messeur"
La Verrière, Brussels (Belgium)
08.02 → 27.04.2024



LA GRANDE PLACE
Saint-Louis-lès-Bitche
(France)

16.11.2023 → 28.04.2024

Group exhibition
"Glass"

The exhibition presents an extensive repertoire of forms, organised into five sections. What do they all share? A collective starting point: the same industrially-manufactured glass bottle. For the closing workshop of the Foundation's fifth Skills Academy – on glass – programme director Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance instructed the participating artisans, designers and engineers to recycle the glass. The resulting pieces were created at the Centre International de Recherche sur le Verre et les Arts Plastiques (CIRVA) in Marseille, where they were first displayed. Now, this collective, experimental ensemble dialogues with the heritage crystal collections at La Grande Place.

LE FORUM
Tokyo
(Japan)

16.02.2024 → 26.05.2024

Nicolas Floc'h,
Kate Newby, Takeshi Yasura,
Raphaël Zarka
"Ephemeral Anchoring"

As the second part of the diptych exhibition "Ecology: Dialogue on Circulations", "Ephemeral Anchoring" presents four artists' in-depth exploration of the transfer of energy between humanity and the natural world. The show invites viewers to extend their thinking on ecology, as a counterpoint to the first exhibition "Our Ecology: Toward a Planetary Living" presented at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, which also features work by Kate Newby and Takeshi Yasura.

L'ATELIER HERMÈS
Seoul
(South Korea)

22.03.2024 → 09.06.2024

Claire Fontaine
"Beauty is a Ready-Made"

Claire Fontaine, founded in Paris in 2004, is a collective feminist, conceptual artist who works to reveal power imbalances in societies and to expand spaces of freedom through readymade work. This exhibition at the Atelier Hermès will be the artist's first solo show in Asia, introducing a selection of their emblematic works including the *Foreigners Everywhere* series, which is the inspiration for the title of the 2024 Venice Biennale.

MANUTERRA: SHARED PERSPECTIVES

Throughout the school year 2022-2023, over 270 pupils across France took part in the Foundation’s Manuterra programme: an introduction to permaculture in twelve sessions. Participating classes cultivate their own garden plot and discover first-hand the challenge of preserving our fragile biodiversity. Here, students, gardeners and teachers share their experiences.



Launched by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2021, the Manuterra programme introduces school pupils to the importance of biodiversity, as they discover horticultural know-how.



“The children really enjoy the practical aspect: we go outside, into the garden, and we get our hands dirty and work with tools.”
Caroline, natural sciences teacher

“I didn’t know that gardeners did so many different things.”
Jannah, age 7

“It’s vital that we feed the soil because in permaculture we really try to give back what we take out.”
Clara, gardener

“The pupils learn to work together as a group. The experience teaches them patience, and encourages them to cooperate, support and listen to one another, and to share...”
Christelle, teacher

“I love digging in the soil with my hands.”
Malo, age 12

“...[when you connect with the natural world] you feel calm and peaceful.”
Tanoa, age 12

“My favourite moments are when the class comes together around a particular activity – making a soil ‘lasagne’ for example. To aerate the soil, you need to alternate nitrogen-rich layers with carbon-rich layers. The pupils were busy using wheelbarrows and garden forks, they really came alive!”
Fanny, gardener

“I can’t wait to pick the vegetables in my garden, because I really love food!”
Mia, age 6

“In the final workshop we harvested what we’d grown – the pinnacle of our achievement. The children were amazed, really happy and surprised, bursting with excitement.”
Fanny, gardener

“Manuterra is a programme for the long term. The children can’t force things to grow, they have to learn to let nature take its course.”
Caroline, natural sciences teacher

THE TIME WE GIVE

In conversation with Bernhardt Eichner, managing director, Hermès Services Groupe, and Léa Martins, buyer, Corporate Services, Hermès Services Groupe

H³ – Heart, Head, Hand is a social solidarity programme steered by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès and delivered by Hermès team members, who serve as ambassadors and give a portion of their work time to projects in the public interest. The Hermès Services Groupe is a committed supporter of H³, as a skills-based philanthropic initiative. A look back to this experience.

Bernhardt Eichner We've taken part in H³ in the past, and now the scheme has entered a new phase, developed in association with the Group's human resources team, who reached out to us. Hermès Services Groupe (HSG) is piloting this new skills-based philanthropic initiative, which presents team members with the chance to spend a portion of their work time on public-interest projects and organisations. Participation is entirely voluntary, and open to all. Of our 450 HSG team members, fifty have already come forward to take part, offering what I like to think of as 'generous time' – our time of giving to a not-for-profit association. Team members can get involved in activities which may lie outside their professional skill set, but which are beneficial to society as a whole.

Léa Martins Yes, the only 'skill' anyone needs to take part is a desire to help people in need. For me it's very important to feel that I'm doing something useful and valuable. I wanted to work for a cause close to my heart. We're fortunate here at Hermès: team members who wish to volunteer get a lot of support, making it so much easier to get involved. Within HSG in particular, everyone gets five days of their work time per year to invest in social

solidarity projects. It's the first time I've come across this in a workplace. The opportunities Hermès offers match my own objective to help out, in my own small way.

B. E. We invited ten not-for-profit associations to a forum with our staff so that everyone could find out about the wide range of opportunities on offer. H³ is a long-term project, which is why I'll be talking about it regularly with our team members. Once examples and precedents have been set, more people will get involved over time. Our volunteers can club together to organise joint activities over the course of a day, for example. Some are still reflecting on what exactly they want to do. I'm giving people the time they need for individual initiatives to emerge.

L. M. In my case, I'm part of a group of four people from different teams who've come together to work on a social solidarity project. We chose La Chorba, a not-for-profit association that has been working for the past twenty-five years, to combat social isolation by serving hot meals and breakfasts in several locations across Paris. It's a secular organisation that gives unconditional support to people in often very difficult circumstances.

B. E. We've set ourselves a number of criteria: social solidarity, of course, and projects rooted in local communities, which makes it easier for people to get involved as part of their daily routine, close to home or the office. We've chosen community associations based in the Paris region, for that reason.

L. M. In that regard, we chose to work with a project in Paris, at La Villette, in the north-east of the city. We took time out one afternoon to visit the association and meet their volunteer organiser who showed us around, and briefed us on their organisational structure and the work they do: they have a large space that's open to the public from 6 p.m. We began by preparing meal trays and storing yoghurts, eggs and bread, so that the stocks and supplies could be managed easily and effectively. The four of us formed part of a team of ten volunteers. We split the tasks between us, from greeting people to serving the soup – chorba means soup in Arabic – then clearing tables and trays or cleaning the space. I was very much the last link in the chain! We were shocked to discover that the association is short-staffed – they weren't able to serve tea and coffee, as they usually do, nor charge up mobile phones, because there weren't enough volunteers. We found it hard to imagine how they could have coped with so many visitors if we hadn't been there that day. We served 800 meals in four hours – it was really hard work! Each meal consists of a hot dish served on the spot, and a dessert – a fruit compote, a yoghurt or other dairy product. Some people ate very quickly and left, others took the time to stay and chat with their fellow visitors.

B. E. Are the meals served every day?

L. M. Every day except Thursday, and breakfasts are distributed at another site in Paris, near the Centre Pompidou. La Chorba serves over 210,000 hot meals a year. It's fast-paced, quite relentless. The space is made available to them by the City of Paris, but the association needs more resources – people and money. For example, the equipment we used to clean the premises at the end of the day was very old and worn out. They've put out calls for new equipment, and machines in good working order.

Since 2014, H³ – Heart, Head, Hand has provided a structured framework for social solidarity initiatives by house of Hermès staff, in the form of skills-based philanthropy or financial support from the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès.

B. E. Based on that initial experience, how do you plan to use the rest of the time available to you?

L. M. We'd like to use the remaining time to work with other associations to distribute parcels to people in need, for example. We were really proud to play a part in serving the meals. It motivated us to share new experiences together, with La Chorba and elsewhere. It was very stimulating to take this collective action, together.

B. E. We'll be communicating about the activities undertaken so far – it's vital that people learn about what others have done, so that they can choose to get involved too. We need to promote the opportunities for voluntary work for it to become a continuing virtuous circle.

L. M. Yes, sharing your own experiences can really encourage others to take part. It's important to talk about it, and to answer any questions people may have.

B. E. The key thing is to get involved during your own work time, but I realise that there are challenges involved. As the pilot for the scheme, we have to be sure that everyone can take part, whether their work is administrative or much more operational: executives, security and warehousing staff alike. We have to organise the volunteers' activities around their work schedules, but we're very motivated. The corporate social responsibility and sustainability teams at Hermès will be steering the scheme, and guiding the team members who wish to take part. It's in the early stages, but we'll review progress in six months' time.

L. M. The sustainability team is vital in encouraging people to make the transition from "I'd like to get involved", to "I'm signing up!" I was thrilled that Hermès made it possible for us to have this experience. I hope that these opportunities will really take off in this new form.

B. E. I'm absolutely convinced that they will!



By Raphaëlle Delaunay,
training programme director of Élan

OPENING NEW PATHS

In 2021, the Centre National de la Danse launched Élan, a 'school of equal opportunities' for lycée students who practice dance at an advanced-level. The third intake is composed of twenty pupils from the Paris region, selected according to their socioeconomic background. Free of charge, the training provides them with the concepts and confidence needed to embark on a choreography career. The Foundation supports Élan as part of its Artists in the Community programme.

"Élan is a school like no other, tailored to complement the arts education on offer at traditional conservatoires, which is focused essentially on technical training. We're only in our third year, but already the young people we teach are very keen to work across disciplines, ready to venture outside their comfort zones. At their age, performers are often reluctant to speak out for themselves, or to reveal intimate aspects of their lives... We broaden their perspective, and even include experimental work that takes them beyond the field of choreography proper.

To give an example: we began this season with some work on clowning, which I called "Corps poétique, corps burlesque". And we got some wonderful responses! Expanding choreography to include other disciplines means embracing comedy, theatre, clowning. Dance has long tended toward being a multidisciplinary practice, but that's not always obvious in the training programmes currently available. We worked with non-European dance traditions, too. I invited Fanny Vignals to come along: she's a dancer and choreographer who has worked on Afro-Brazilian dance, which has a different approach, more closely connected to ritual.

Élan opens up opportunities for young people who might otherwise feel a dance career isn't for them. It gives them the tools and confidence they need to aim for the impossible. It gives them a greater sense of legitimacy, helps them speak out for themselves, propose new stories

to tell. We aren't aiming for 'excellence', we don't set targets that define 'success'. There isn't even a performance at the end of the course. The programme is completely free, in the truest sense of the word: it's not an investment from which one would expect a return. We're all about encouraging students to flourish, liberate themselves, explore their true potential, develop their imaginations, weave the threads that connect their intellect, their personal histories, their bodies... so as to nurture and nourish the artistic possibilities of tomorrow.

The programme is getting increasingly well known. Former Élan students are its best ambassadors because they love talking about it. We send out our call for applications, and young people show up and take part in workshops where we see what they can do, how they interpret our suggestions, how they work with the rest of the group. Then we give each candidate a short interview. We take their financial situation into account as part of the recruitment process, too. Among students with equal abilities, we will take those who have faced the biggest challenges, for whom moving on to professional training would otherwise be complicated. We also look at other factors: something in a student's attitude that suggests they are struggling with mental barriers, or who've endured overly rigorous, rigid training so far. We look for ways to open up new paths for them. And there are some wonderful surprises along the way."

Artists in the Community is a programme launched by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2018 to encourage skills transmission in the performing arts, for the talents of tomorrow.

12 Élan participants, 2022-2023



GETTING CLOSER TO THE MATERIAL

In conversation with Thibaut Barrault, architect and teacher, and Anna Saint-Pierre, designer



In 2023, the sixth Skills Academy, on 'Stone', gathered artisans, designers, engineers and, for first time, architects, to explore the many facets of this primal raw material. After morning lectures and masterclasses, the Academicians met in Saumur, on the Loire, for a workshop devised by the programme's director, architect Lina Ghotmeh. Together, they worked with 25cm blocks of the local, volcanic tufa stone. Here, two Academicians compare notes.

How did you find the Academy's first semester?

Anna Saint-Pierre In the morning sessions, I found the differing perspectives of the geologists, historians and archaeologists both relevant and inspirational: I wasn't used to making connections across disciplines in that way. On our quarry visits, I found the landscapes created by the extraction of the living rock fascinating and frightening in equal measure. It was a powerful emotional experience, and a key to a better understanding of how stone is exploited as a resource. I enjoyed the learning curve in places with such a powerful physical presence, and which had so much to say about the nature of stone.

Thibaut Barrault The morning sessions and the masterclasses were connected in multiple, specific ways, both in terms of the panellists invited to speak, and the places we visited. The sessions and classes were well planned and delivered insightful content. The masterclasses in particular showcased the human dimension of working with stone, as a perfect counterpoint to the more scientific aspect of the programme.

At the end of the first semester, what were your expectations for the workshop?

A. S-P. Personally, I set my initial expectations aside. After discovering new techniques at the different sites we visited, I was keen to experiment with them. I also wanted to apply these techniques to other materials and explore ideas connected to contemporary issues like energy, the economy of resources, etc.

T. B. I didn't really have any expectations for the workshop – I had already got so much out of the morning sessions and masterclasses. I was eager to collaborate with stone masons, specialists in pietra dura marquetry, artists... to watch them at work and try to learn their skills, to try my hand at something of which I had no previous experience. But I wasn't looking for a coherent theme that would pull all those threads together – I was asked about that at one point – that's what I do every day. I came to the workshop to open myself up to something new.

What did Lina Ghotmeh propose as your workshop project?

A. S-P. We worked in small groups, with tufa blocks. The idea was to put together a kind of *cadavre exquis* of our different approaches to stone. One group went on an excursion to

a dry arm of the Loire, to collect and make an inventory of pebbles and other objects that had been tumbled and polished by the river: flints, slates, terracotta roof tiles, limestone blocks. They set them into the tufa, with or without mortar, as a kind of marquetry that suggested imprints in the rock and fossils. Some Academicians focused on the composition of the stone, and the poetic, aesthetic aspects of its geological formation. Ultimately, they explored stone basins, echoing the limestone and sediment left by the gradual retreat of the sea. Others approached the stone blocks as objects to carve, engaging with their decorative aspect, which was an important theme throughout. They engraved text, and addressed the notion of bringing an inert material to life. Finally, we worked on a stereotomy project that was a much debated subject during the workshop.



A large portion of the group translated a drawing of an arch into a real arch of hand-sculpted modules, one by one. Together, the pieces formed a parallelepiped, which we initially called the 'podium', before pivoting to other terms. For me, this felt quite staged, quite performative: it was a demonstration of different skills, and an agglomeration of memories that concretised what we had learned and shared during the workshop.

Why was stereotomy a subject of debate?

A. S-P. Because we discussed the use of stone, its contrasting performative and poetic aspects. Working with stereotomy meant using a large

number of blocks for the project. Scale became centrally important, as we discussed what role size and scale would play in the project as a whole.

T. B. We worked with blocks that measured 25×25×25cm, and this had a considerable impact on the direction the workshop took, because we could carry them on our own, with our bare hands. The performative aspect that Anna mentioned, centred on questioning whether the object we created in the end would be in some way heroic, if it could overcome stone's inferiority complex compared to other materials that are able to 'release themselves' far more easily – like wood, steel or concrete. There was a recurrent theme of stone saying me too, "I can do that!" We differed about that, but in the end we agreed that we would explore how to get the blocks up off the floor, and we all realised that the solution we arrived at was terrific.

What parts did you each play in this collective undertaking?

A. S-P. I wanted to try specific techniques, like stone-cutting, which I'd never done before, and which could be transposed to contemporary contexts. I felt I'd learned a great deal about the subject – the tools, the vocabulary, even the question of stereotom: how, from the starting point of a simple block of stone, we could create an architectural object, without mortar or cement, and which could also be deconstructed.

T. B. I talk a lot about materials in my work, but I'm very far from the hands-on, practical side. It was a powerful experience, to realise the stone's weight, its materiality and humidity, the way it reacts under the tools: I'm not used to getting that close to the material in that way, as an architect. And that made me think, in my work as a teacher, about how I might lead my students to a different relationship with their raw materials. Ultimately, I realised how distant I was from the material itself, in the quarry, and how close I came to it, thanks to those blocks.

A. S-P. I feel absolutely the same. Working with your hands gives you a new sensibility to the material, its properties, its grain. We discussed the tufa a great deal. Some people were used to working with much harder stone, but you

can cut tufa with a teaspoon: it's a material that's accessible to anyone, and local to the workshop, which was what Lina Ghotmeh wanted. That kind of back-and-forth between the lectures, the site visits and our physical engagement with the material, was a key aspect of the Academy, and especially important for the designers and architects among us.

What did you take from the experience, and how has it influenced your practice?

A. S-P. We really connected with one another, and that will doubtless lead to collaborations that will enrich our different practices. For my part, stone-cutting will help me review how I deconstruct and make use of repurposed elements in my work.

T. B. The workshop broke down the barriers between disciplines and professions, and I hope that will lead to future collaborations. Looking ahead, it confirmed that you really need to get closer and closer to your raw material, especially as a teacher. Whether you're re-using or extracting it, you have to address the issue of energy – the energy of the hand that engraves a letter for days at a time, or the energy of an electric saw that transforms quarried blocks that weigh several tonnes into smaller architectural elements. You have to raise students' awareness of all this during their training, to shape our discipline in future.

A. S-P. The contact with sculptors and stone-cutters, some of whom had done France's national *Compagnons* apprenticeships, gave me a deeper understanding of their concerns and fears, as they face tremendous change. Some of the skills we encountered may even disappear. We visited sites where limestone is worked, no longer by hand but with a digital milling machine, and naively, I found that hugely interesting. Yes – the question of energy: machine energy, and human energy, the time spent, the pleasure and the pain of those professions, those disciplines. These were things that interested me before the Academy, and I'm keen to explore them even further now.

Since 2014, the Skills Academy, from the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, has invited professionals to collectively explore a universal raw material, across a spectrum of disciplines, with the accent on innovation, experimentation and eco-responsibility.







