



# LIEU-DIT

THE JOURNAL OF THE FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS

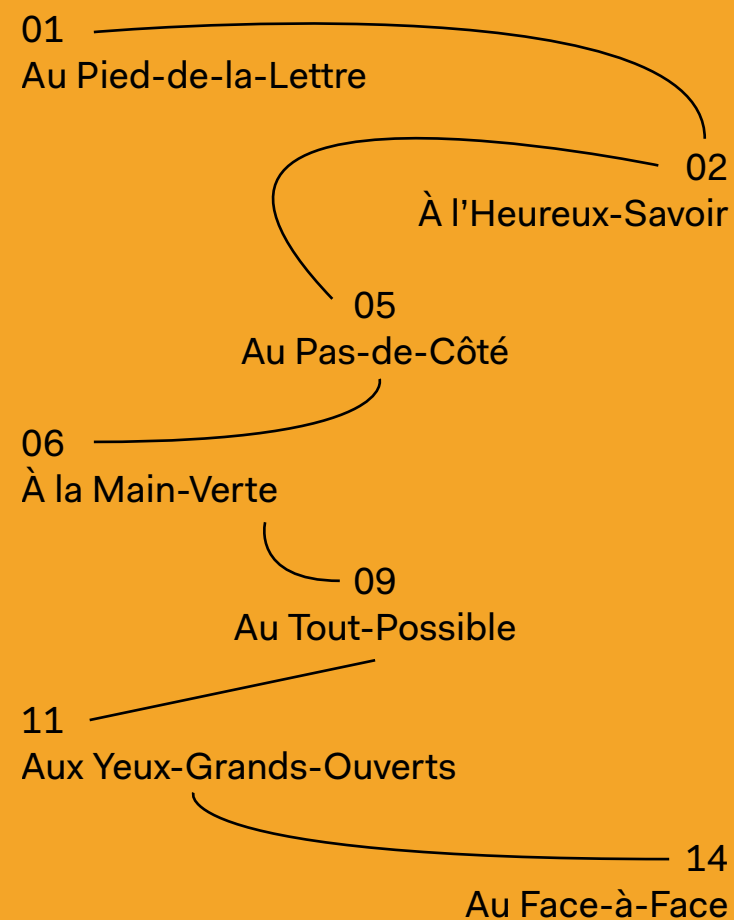


N°7 / JANUARY – JUNE 2026

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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 with 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 levels.

# COMMITMENT

By Olivier Fournier,  
President of the Fondation  
d'entreprise Hermès

There are words that illuminate the things we do, that shape their coherence. Commitment is one of those words. At the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, this is not so much a concept as a way of existing, of working and of moving forward together – discreet at times, but always constant. It unites everyone we work with, from artists, artisans and teachers to researchers and local actors, and it proclaims and defines the humanity that underpins every gesture we make.

To commit to an action means choosing to reach out. It means acting swiftly, driven by the conviction that the public interest deserves our close attention, day by day. It means believing that solidarity, shared progress, the preservation of our living world, and the potential for each of us to flourish and find fulfilment are not distant horizons, but journeys we pursue together.

This edition of LIEU-DIT tells stories of commitment, embodied in the personae of thirty young artists. Supported by the Foundation's bursary programme Artists in the Community, they gathered onstage at MC93 in Bobigny for a collective adventure guided by three creative directors whose approaches embrace the world at large and explore our present realities.

Commitment also underpins our loyal, long-term relationship with the Compagnons du Devoir. With them, the Foundation's programme Manufacto has become a space where skills and know-how are discussed, transmitted and reinvented. At Manufacto's host schools, skilled hand-making emerges as a force for self-determination, where the highest standards of artisanship combine with generosity and the joy of learning together.

These pages share other narratives, all evidence that sincere commitment, expressed through concrete, sustainable action, can illuminate pathways, open up new possibilities and, perhaps, alter the trajectory of our world.

Cover: *Avant toute chose*, MC93 – Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis, Bobigny, 2025 © Jérémy Piot

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President of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès: Olivier Fournier  
Publisher: Laurent Pejoux / Editor-in-chief: Anaïs Koenig, assisted by Esther Druel Hodak  
Managing editor: Marylène Malbert / Translation: Louise Rogers Lalaurie / Sub-editor: Billie McTernan  
Graphic design: Les Graphiquants

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# THE COMPAGNONS' CODE

By Christian Pons, President,  
Association Ouvrière des Compagnons  
du Devoir et du Tour de France

In 2016, the Foundation introduced a new programme, Manufacto, the Skills Factory, in partnership with the Paris Education Board and the Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France. The launch marked the beginning of a shared venture to raise school pupils' awareness of the skills and professions associated with traditional craftsmanship. With 102 classes taking part in the 2025-26 school year, Christian Pons – President of the association Compagnons du Devoir – looks back over the programme. This year, 19 Compagnons are transmitting their skills and techniques to schoolchildren aged 10 to 16.

## Tell us about the Compagnons du Devoir?

**Christian Pons** The Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France is a not-for-profit, public-interest association of working artisans. It aims to transmit know-how through professional apprenticeships, together with life skills through the promotion of shared values such as solidarity, mutual support and generosity. The Compagnons offer professional training in four core areas – construction and development, industrial technologies, soft materials, and food and hospitality – ranging from the CAP (Certificate of Professional Aptitude) to executive master's degrees. More than 11,000 young people are currently enrolled. Being a Compagnon means committing to professional excellence, but also to have respect for others as well as yourself, to embody your ideas and values, and to transmit the expertise that has been handed down.

## How did the partnership with the Foundation come about?

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès reached out to the Compagnons du Devoir, because our association has extensive expertise in training and skills transmission. Drawing on their experience, the Compagnons were able to offer core guidance in response to the following questions: "How can we teach the youngest pupils? How can we encourage

them to discover new skills, and how can we pass these along?" This year, we are delighted and proud to be celebrating ten years of the programme.

## How would you define the Compagnons' and the Foundation's shared values?

We are committed to working for the common good, through initiatives that promote skills transmission, the development of self-confidence, solidarity, and environmental protection. Through these shared values, we aim to uphold exacting standards in artisan professions, and to promote the importance of this highly-skilled career path.

## What are Manufacto's benefits for participating artisans?

Manufacto allows artisans to take a break from their ateliers, to revisit their sector's foundational skills and values, and to adapt their presentation to suit their audience. Class teachers learn how to make an object at the same time as their pupils, who may demonstrate a quicker grasp of the task in hand, or greater dexterity. Swapping roles in this way redefines the teacher-pupil relationship. Many pupils find they have an unprecedented chance to shine and enhance their self-confidence. Their successes may positively boost their social skills, or their approach to other subjects at school.



## Is it easy to transmit craft gestures and techniques to children and young people?

Our young pupils allow artisans to see and reflect on their profession through a different lens. The pupils' enthusiasm gives them a fresh perspective on their practice. The young peoples' eagerness to learn suggests that artisan professions aren't on the decline, nor losing their appeal! It's not always easy to apply yourself and aim for the highest standards, nor to achieve the precision that's often required. Patience is cultivated from one session to the next, and the pupils always take great pride in their finished objects.

## How do you see artisanship's place in society today? And young people's connection to skilled professions as makers?

Craft professions haven't always been positively perceived but fortunately, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, things are changing. The return to local production and sustainable raw materials probably counts for a great deal, but there's a sense that this type of work is meaningful and fulfilling, too. Curious, creative young people are drawn to this prospect of a truly life-enhancing career.

*Launched in 2016, Manufacto, the Skills Factory, enables school pupils to discover artisanal techniques and gestures through the careful crafting of an object.*

## In what way is it important to raise awareness of making things by hand?

Promoting artisan skills in schools helps pupils to discover new aptitudes and to learn differently, in practical workshop settings. Sometimes, new vocations are discovered: thanks to Manufacto, pupils realise that a career as a maker is an option. It's a great way to promote values like mutual support, high standards, patience and perseverance. The programme also leads pupils to explore and question the role of the objects that surround them in their daily lives – their forms and materials. They have very little concept of the time and expertise it takes to design and craft a beautiful piece. Lastly, "concrete" learning – by touching the raw material, feeling its texture – is a real pleasure for them. Most pupils are eager to get to the hands-on part of the workshop! Ultimately, their newfound appreciation for the time it takes to make an object, and the care required in the handling and working of the raw materials, may transform their perspective on much of society's drive for instant gratification.



# LA GRANDE PLACE, A FABULOUS PLAYGROUND

For a two-year season, from 2025 to 2027, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès is inviting the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg (MAMCS) to curate a new exhibition cycle at La Grande Place, Musée Saint-Louis. This initiative further consolidates the regional network of partner institutions to which the Cristallerie Saint-Louis belongs. As director of MAMCS, Estelle Pietrzyk opens La Grande Place to locally based visual artists whose practices engage in dialogue with the collections of the Musée Saint-Louis.

"Devising exhibitions at La Grande Place is something of a challenge, given how unique and distinctive the spaces within this site are, steeped in the history and day-to-day work of the crystal foundry. This was the first thought that crossed my mind, when the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg and the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès entered into a partnership for a series of four exhibitions. The second was the sight of these display cases: they constitute a fabulous playground, ideally suited to the alternative, innovative display of contemporary creative art.

I chose to focus on visual artists based in the museum's home territory – either in Strasbourg or in the wider region – whose practice I've followed with interest in recent years. Whether they are graduates of the Haute École des Arts du Rhin, working in residence in the City of Strasbourg's workshops, active in the public space across the Grand Est region, or present in local galleries... each contribute to the vitality of artistic life in the region and, frequently, further afield. For the first exhibition, entitled 'Les Invités' (The Guests) I've invited ceramicist, printmaker and graphic artist Gretel Weyer, three of whose works – an installation and two paintings – were recently acquired by the MAMCS. Weyer brings her distinctive world to La Grande Place,

inspired by fairy tales yet fundamentally connected to our current times. Working her particular *magic*, she transformed the top floor at La Grande Place into a domestic interior inhabited by a diverse array of guests.

The museum's current exhibition, 'Éclats du crépuscule' (Shards of Twilight) brings together three artists – Camille Fischer, François Génot and Nicolas Schneider – working in three very different artistic spheres, but whose convergence I'm particularly excited about. The gallery space is organised into four broad sequences, which we can read as successive *states*, whether atmospheric or internal and spiritual, each with a particular resonance, I believe, for our time. The partnership with the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès gives artists the opportunity to create and produce new works, while also highlighting MAMCS's commitment to the contemporary works we conserve and display, mostly by artists already present in our permanent collection. It is an original model that offers a dynamic meeting-point between visitors to a historical, heritage site and the audience for contemporary art."

"Éclats du crépuscule"  
La Grande Place, Musée Saint-Louis  
Saint-Louis-lès-Bitche  
Novembre 6, 2025 → April 5, 2026

*An active supporter of contemporary art since its inception, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès programmes exhibitions at four gallery spaces in Europe and Asia.*

Camille Fischer, *Where have all the flowers gone?*, 2020



# THE ZONES ATELIERS, A PARTICIPATORY PROJECT

By Olivier Ragueneau,  
Research Director at CNRS, Scientific delegate for the  
French network of LTSER platforms

As part of its Biodiversity & Ecosystems programme, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès supports the Fondation CNRS (at France's National Centre for Scientific Research) and its Réseau des Zones Ateliers, a national research framework to guide territories towards greater sustainability, through an interdisciplinary approach involving a variety of actors in the field. Scientific delegate Olivier Ragueneau describes the advantages of this systemic initiative.

Explain what a Zone Atelier is?

**Olivier Ragueneau** A Zone Atelier (a French Long Term Social-Ecological Research platform) invites specialists to come out of their silos. Firstly, it encourages those from diverse disciplines across the natural sciences and the social and human sciences to work together in a specific territory to explore complex social-ecological systems. The aim is also to co-construct knowledge, working with not-for-profit organisations and local stakeholders – the people charged with protecting biological reserves, local authorities, the education sector and artists. By combining a scientific approach with empirical, experimental findings, and by leading citizen science projects and experiments with these actors, we seek to transform practices that impact not only the environment but also its related social, economic and political contexts. There are 18 Zones Ateliers, structured around a functional unit, such as a river and its watershed, a mountain range, a coastal zone, or agricultural and urban landscapes or the overseas territories.

How does support from the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès contribute to the development of the Zone Atelier?

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès funds what is known as 'companion modelling'. In a given territory, local stakeholders – including scientists – come together to devise a model that's essentially a simplified

representation of reality, and to interpret and discuss the simulations it produces. Together, they define the key components of their social-ecological system, and their interactions and dynamics, in this way, they co-construct models and scenarios that serve multiple objectives, from knowledge-sharing to help with collective decision-making. The Foundation's funding has enabled us to recruit a postgraduate professional to train an adaptive co-management and modelling operative in each of the Zones Ateliers. We can therefore roll out this valuable tool at the crossroads of science and politics, so that we can have a greater impact on the ground.

What are the advantages of this transformative science approach for local stakeholders?

Our hypothesis is that co-constructed knowledge is a necessary condition for transformative action, to rethink how we live in the world today. It's probably not enough: we know that many things hold us back at the politico-scientific interface – the weight of diverse lobbies and vested interests. Still, this co-constructed knowledge remains a necessary condition: there can be no agro-ecological transition without grassroots support from the agricultural sector, for example. The main interest of this type of approach is to re-establish an awareness of politics, democracy and citizenship at the local level. It's a politically aware, geo-located approach that enables local people



to reappropriate the major issues around water, food and health, in a context of collapsing biodiversity, climate change and widening social inequality. It restores people's power to act, whether individually or collectively.

Have you already observed results that can be escalated at scale?

Yes, there are plenty of small success stories. In Brittany, for example, a team is working on the risks of rising sea levels and coastal erosion: they have developed partnerships with authorities on the ground to co-construct risk-prevention plans. Rather than installing artificial rock reefs or building dykes, they are experimenting with nature-based solutions using vegetation. As an example of agro-ecological transformation, the Zone Atelier Plaine & Val de Sèvre is pioneering the development of what we call socio-ecological experimentation: this is a small region of intensive agriculture where pesticides are used and where biodiversity and pollination have been severely impacted. For the past 15 years, experiments led by local farmers have demonstrated the negative effect of certain neonicotinoids, leading to new legislation and directives at the European level. We have seen reversals and contrasting

growth in neonicotinoid use, and research of this kind continues to play a major role. Building on progress at the local level, it remains crucial that we work to implement findings at larger scales. This is the key advantage of a systemic approach, connecting up experiments conducted in the different Zones Ateliers: we can share best practices, compare our approaches, and test our hypotheses in different settings. The idea is to shape educational programmes that rethink the issue of transformation on a large scale and contribute to reversing current unsustainable trends.

*Steered by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, the Biodiversity & Ecosystems programme coordinates initiatives designed to preserve the living world.*

Zone Atelier Seine: amphibians in an artificial wetland buffer zone in Rampillon, Seine-et-Marne



# "AS IF MY PAINTING HAD COME TO LIFE"

In 2025 – invited by Emmanuelle Luciani, artistic director for the fifth season of the Foundation's Artists' Residencies – Jacopo Pagin immersed himself in the life of the Cristallerie Saint-Louis, working with artisans at the site to discover their glassmaking know-how. Drawing on their exceptional skills, the dreamlike motifs that haunt his work found expression in a series of crystal vases.

"During my residency at the Cristallerie Saint-Louis, I felt as if I was in Werner Herzog's 1976 film *Herz aus Glas* (Heart of Glass): a cold winter, a village that seemed empty. And then, this place, like a veritable alchemist's laboratory, very busy and efficient – a completely unknown environment for me. I was immediately struck by the mastery of the artisans, the smoke, the clouds of vapour, the hum of the furnaces, the continual accompaniment to the working of that infernal magma into fragile, elegant objects. In a place like that, you could really make magic.

## From design to object

Constraints are central to the creative act, perhaps even more so than possibilities. I was especially struck by the strong presence of vases in the foundry. I decided these were the only type of object I'd make, as a sort of archetype onto which I could project the narrative world of my paintings and drawings, often strongly inspired by the glassmaking tradition. The images are shaped by transparency; they take form in the viewer's shifting gaze, the different facets of each object; they are revealed in the play of reflections, light and shadow. I reduced the motifs – whether insects, frogs, snakes or nymphs – to their essentials while playing on the vases' rounded forms to embody their curves. A whole imaginary world unfurled in crystal, perfectly attuned to my practice: it was exactly as if my painting had come to life.

## A collective technical experiment

Unlike Murano glass, for example, Saint-Louis crystal is dense and better suited to decorative cold-work, such as cutting and engraving. In collaboration with artisans Bruno Georget and Dorian Audet, we focused on these latter techniques, using quite traditional blown-glass forms. We pushed many limits, shattering most of the work to pieces, but it was worth it. We spent a great deal of time discussing, and tried dozens of ways to understand the order in which to do things, which gestures were the best and most effective, the right temperatures and appropriate tools. We pursued our objective but as we continued our research, so many paths of exploration







opened up, then closed again, leading us to ever-surprising results. Each piece was a challenge. Using lathes, we shaped the engraved crystal, thinning it to reveal the light and colours of this fine raw material as it responded to my imagination. Ultimately, we produced twenty unique pieces, the fruit of an authentic experiment in the medium.

#### “Les ruines de la lumière”

This experiment was one of the most potent and intense of my career. It came just after the publication of my first monograph, *The Sniper in the Brain*, with Nero Edizioni in Rome. This was a very important step for me, which was followed by a period of uncertainty: what to do next? Today, after my residency at Saint-Louis, I feel more inspired than ever. I can't wait to show the works in crystal at CEAAC (Centre Européen d'Actions Artistiques Contemporaines) in Strasbourg, as part of the Foundation's spring programme. My artistic practice centres around time – historical, psychological and mystical.

Jacopo Pagin,  
“Les ruines de la lumière”  
March 28 → April 26, 2026  
Centre Européen d'Actions  
Artistiques Contemporaines –  
CEAAC, Strasbourg

Since 2010, Artists' Residencies have invited visual artists to create new works at Hermès workshops, drawing on their artisans' skills and expertise.

# “CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ARE WHAT WE MAKE THEM”

By Stéphane Malfettes,  
Director, Bâtie-Festival, Geneva  
Director of Les SUBS, Lyon, from 2019 to 2025

After Clermont-Ferrand and before Rennes, the Transforme festival makes a stop in Lyon, at Les SUBS. Before stepping down as director of this “living space for the experience of art”, Stéphane Malfettes reflects on the key role of collective action at the heart of our cultural institutions. This intrinsic aspect of the Transforme festival, co-devised by the Foundation and its partners, resonates with the powerful connections that nourish the works on its 2025–26 programme.

“As my time as director comes to an end at Les SUBS, after six intense, joyful years, I'd like to share a personal, deeply-held belief. At the risk of stating the obvious, I'm absolutely convinced that cultural institutions are what we make them. And that we are an eminently plural entity, diverse and ever-evolving; a kaleidoscopic we that comprises entities which are themselves multiple and kinetic. Housed in an extraordinary, heritage site on the banks of the Saone in Lyon, Les SUBS is simultaneously a workspace for highly adventurous artists, and a living, creative venue that's open to all. The contemporary scene flourishes here in all its diversity – theatre, dance, music, circus, visual and digital arts – with a twofold emphasis on showcasing international figures and promoting young, regional talents. And of course, Les SUBS is plural too, the embodiment of the we I mentioned just now.

The plurality that makes Les SUBS is reflected in the site's team, in the dozens of artists in residence, and showcased on each season's programme. Also and above all, it's our audiences, as plural, diverse and multitudinous as it's possible to be! We must also celebrate the powerful dynamic of partnerships and collaborations that give a space its energy and vitality. Institutional partners, through their support and confidence, guarantee our creative freedom and the liberating power of art. Equally important are the many projects co-constructed with other cultural operators.

These collaborations allow us to complement each other's work, combine our resources and help projects to circulate between territories.

At the heart of this fertile constellation of partners, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès plays a very special role. The Transforme festival – which the Foundation initiated by bringing together the Théâtre National de Bretagne in Rennes, the Théâtre de la Cité Internationale in Paris, La Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand and Les SUBS in Lyon – models an unprecedented form





of collaboration. It supports new creative work that seeks fresh ways to engage and interact with audiences. These inspirational alliances are based on shared values of innovation, diversity and eco-awareness. Together we form a geography of relationships – a space for artistic encounters where worlds mix and mingle, a safe haven that's nonetheless intimately connected to the major transformations that are revolutionising human organisations now. The programme for each edition of Transforme is the result of passionate, informed artistic discussion; it's an expression of diverse points of view, attuned to societal change and the evolution of artistic practices.

Immersive, sensory experiences, like *Entre vos mains* by Marc Lainé and his associate artists, or *Je suis une montagne* by Eric Arnal-Burtschy, stand alongside similarly hybrid forms from directors and choreographers like Joris Lacoste, Tatiana Julien, Jolie Ngemi, Inbal Ben Haim and the Maison Courbe collective. Their pieces offer a splendid panorama of the diversity and vitality of the contemporary creative scene: innovative formats and politically astute explorations of the sensitive connections between the body, matter and the environment. These are works that celebrate resistance in all its forms, in a spirit of joyful inclusivity.

Transforme's core strength is its ability to restore our confidence in an *us* that's accessible across multiple territories. This enables the organisation to better support astonishing artists, initiate extraordinary projects, and experiment with new and original approaches to cultural mediation – including an arts camp for teens – as part of the 'Going Further' activities. These initiatives bring diverse audiences and partners together with no predefined idea of what might occur. The challenge is to positively welcome chance and unpredictability, so that the public feels free to embrace Transforme's full potential.

There's a poetic, utopian, perhaps even political dimension to the *we* that makes the people of Les SUBS what they are however powerless *we* – that multitude of *I* – may feel when faced with the disasters of today's world. In that context, Les SUBS's definition of *us* is a place of refuge. It is not a retreat from the world, but a space in which to develop alternative ways to confront reality, live in the present and think collectively about the future, as we try to give plurality and optimism a chance. It is a space in which art can truly become a vector for transformation, even metamorphosis."

Transforme  
La Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand, January 7 → 24, 2026  
Les SUBS, Lyon, March 12 → April 3, 2026  
Théâtre National de Bretagne, Rennes,  
May 20 → June 5, 2026



Launched in 2023, the Transforme festival presents cross-disciplinary theatrical works that engage with the contemporary world.

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Above: Jolie Ngemi, *Mbok'Elengi*  
On the right: Domitille Martin, Nina Harper, Ricardo Cabral, *Le Bruit des Pierres*



STRONGER  
TOGETHER,

ABOVE  
ALL ELSE

Interview with artists  
Aurélie Charon, Régine Chopinot  
and Phia Ménard

On September 9 and 11, 2025, 30 talented young performers – grantees of the Artists in the Community bursary scheme – made their professional stage débuts at MC93 – Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis in Bobigny, with *Avant toute chose* (Above all else), a collective work directed by radio producer and stage director Aurélie Charon, dancer and choreographer Régine Chopinot, and stage director and performer Phia Ménard. The Foundation’s fourth post-diploma production invited participants to project themselves into the world of the performing arts, and into the wider world, beyond. The trio talks to LIEU-DIT.

Above all else, to borrow the show's title, how did you feel about being asked to accompany 30 young artists in the making of their first, collective new work?

**Phia Ménard** Above all else, the invitation came as a surprise and at the same time we wondered what was expected of us.

**Régine Chopinot** What was remarkable was that we were so many: the Foundation and MC93, two sizeable organisations – plus the three of us, with 30 young artists, all confronted with a limited time-frame to see the project through. It was a bold of them to propose it, and bold of us to accept the challenge.

**Aurélie Charon** In my work, I enjoy sparking encounters that would never have occurred otherwise. That’s exactly what the Foundation and MC93 did, by going even further: sparking the encounter between the three of us, and between us and the thirty performers, and among the thirty, themselves, because they didn’t necessarily all know each other before. So it was very exciting to think that we’d be living through something we could never have imagined, over the following two weeks.

**P. M.** We feel a kind of sanctity in our relationship to the creative act in the present

moment. We focused on letting the encounter happen, without trying to anticipate or prepare for it too much. We hoped it would work, but we couldn't have imagine how.

**R. C.** From the outset we were on this wild cruise ship, in the middle of the ocean. Every day we had to rise to the occasion, because the young artists were right there in the moment with their differences, their needs, their demands, their thirst for learning... It was powerful stuff!

**A. C.** Yes, it was dizzying because we'd promised not to get too far ahead of them, in other words not to show up with a fixed plan they would just have to follow.

In concrete terms, how did you organise the work amongst yourselves?

**R. C.** We disorganised ourselves continually. In truth, we’re three *warriors*. Phia, who was making things everywhere, and it was fantastic. And alongside, was Aurélie’s wonderful world, a small room where we collected “landscapes”, intimacies, one by one... And me, working on the beautiful *telling* of the body! A kind of hurricane, a tornado... but organised.



**P. M.** Perhaps that’s what we were trying to capture: the confrontation between their artistic desires and our way of thinking about a project we knew nothing about. Perhaps that’s the great adventure of art: you don’t know where you’re going with it, and that’s what’s so exciting and fascinating!

**R. C.** Yes, that’s really how it felt and what made it such an intense experience! No one cheated, everyone took the plunge. It remains an unforgettable moment, and one that’s still *smouldering*, that will keep on giving.

**A. C.** We realised that everything had to happen in parallel: making the suits of armour, laying down a “landscape”... From there, things began to circulate in ways that were invisible to them, navigating all these spaces, the morning session with Régine, the afternoons spent making with Phia, talking and recording with me. Little by little things began to layer, dialogue was established, and it was the young performers who revealed the connections, what it was they could create.

In this “organised tornado”, what connecting threads did you pick out to create something between artists who hadn’t even known each other just two weeks earlier?

**R. C.** None of the three of us took into account the different disciplines of the young

artists: acting, dance, technical direction, scenography... Our starting point was each person’s energy and commitment. Corentin ended up singing, even though normally he would have been doing the lighting and technical direction! We worked with each participant, but not directly with their future professions. What brought them together was the potential in their shared energy, respect, individuality and desires. Under such time pressure, exceptional measures were the only answer.

**P. M.** ...and pressure, but in a good way. We spent two weeks without having to worry about the outcome. Nowadays, we aren’t able to experience freedom or confidence to that extent. We were conscious that we were working on something altogether, and at the same time we were confident that, whatever form it took, its authenticity would be its strength.

**A. C.** How to preserve that collective aspect, so powerfully present, and at the same time take more individual journeys in the narratives, the “landscapes”? The young performers understood, from day one, that having a group of 30 was what made this so extraordinary, that was part of the adventure. It was reassuring to me that Bilal’s sea – the Mediterranean – spoke to others in the group, who also felt they existed between two worlds. They were conscious of shaping a project



<div>AU FACE-À-FACE</div>		
<div> <p>around that particular aspect: so we were able to find solutions that retained the collective creative spirit, but within which each person could find space to exist.</p> <p><b>R. C.</b> There are so many different routes to the heart of things; speaking a text isn't necessarily how it happens. Like the beauty of Valérien – an actor – suddenly starting to dance, out of sheer necessity.</p> <p><u>Did the young artists surprise you?</u></p> <p><b>P. M.</b> We all took unexpected paths. Most had studied drama, so we might have thought that anything we did would be text-based. But we had to work differently, take them to places where they let things emerge, appear. We wanted to explore all these little possibilities.</p> <p><b>R. C.</b> It was while working in rehearsals, for example, that we heard Maria's ear-splitting cry as she ran, with such impressive energy: "I'm not small!" We witnessed that outcry. There was the beauty of Emma's singing, the beauty of the armour in motion... We hear a lot of discourse at the moment and these testimonies were anything but formal discourse: no one was concerned about relevance, validity. Right down to the ways they asserted their presence on stage, the young artists showed a real, authentic commitment that went far beyond what was expected.</p> <p><b>A. C.</b> Each person felt free to blossom or come out whenever they wanted. I'm thinking, for example, of Yanis, who told us: "Here, I've written a text and I'd like to give it a try," and suddenly he had the floor and spoke, magnificently.</p> <p><u>Why is it important for you to support young people starting out on their artistic careers?</u></p> <p><b>R. C.</b> I want to convey the existential passion of an artist fully immersed in everyday life, and for that to carry on long after me. But it's not just a one-way process: I've learned an enormous amount from spending time with them. I need them to check that we're all keeping pace with one another, that we're able to smile at the same things while also respecting our differences. And our differences are a phenomenal plus point, when it comes to learning not only how to live as artists, but also as part of the community. These are fundamental experiences. It's what I live for.</p> <p><i>Launched in 2018, Artists in the Community offers a range of activities designed to encourage emerging young performers and promote equal opportunities in the performing arts.</i></p> <div> <div>16</div> <div>Portfolio: Postgraduate project <i>Avant toute chose</i>, MC93, Bobigny, 2025</div> </div> </div>	<div> <p><u>How do Artists in the Community grantees contribute to the vitality of the contemporary arts scene?</u></p> <p><b>A. C.</b> After the second – and final – performance, some of the artists shared their impressions with all of us. It was very powerful to hear them talk about how, in concrete terms, everything had conspired for them not to be there, in that place, in terms of what was expected of them. They had given themselves permission to dream, to tell themselves they could get there, but it was their encounters that made it possible. I learned so much from entering into each of their worlds: they're vast, and unexpected. People's talents complemented each other, one person's talent augmented or revealed another's, because everyone had come into contact with everyone else. They were graduates from a school, they'd learned an enormous amount, but this was only the beginning: so many things will open up for them now.</p> <p><b>P. M.</b> It's always so beautiful to me when our propositions find acceptance: perhaps that's the best form of transmission. When the performers are ready to open up, to seize things. Yes, it's an unusual way of working, but it's not a problem. And it's the same, beautiful answer each time, from the Foundation and MC93 alike: yes, it's possible. Yes you can.</p> <p><b>R. C.</b> All those poetic moments when everyone began to sing quietly, to murmur: we all sang and then it started over again... like a barely perceptible hum. That incredible capacity to resonate in accepting, joyful, multiple ways. The opposite of the intolerance we see today, the shrinking of places and spaces, of mindsets... When I say "<i>Avant tout chose</i> continues to smoulder", I mean that it's an experience I'm not about to forget. And then, finally, there is the word <i>more</i>, which came to us. Not thank you but more. The more we must absolutely hold on to, the more of children at their most wild, their most primal: when you give them something to eat and it's good, they don't say thank you, they say more. That's why the more is important: thank you finishes everything off and shuts it down. <i>More</i> is open-ended, it's possibility itself.</p> <p><b>A. C.</b> Nothing I could say would be better than possibility and <i>more</i>.</p> </div>	
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