



LIEU-DIT

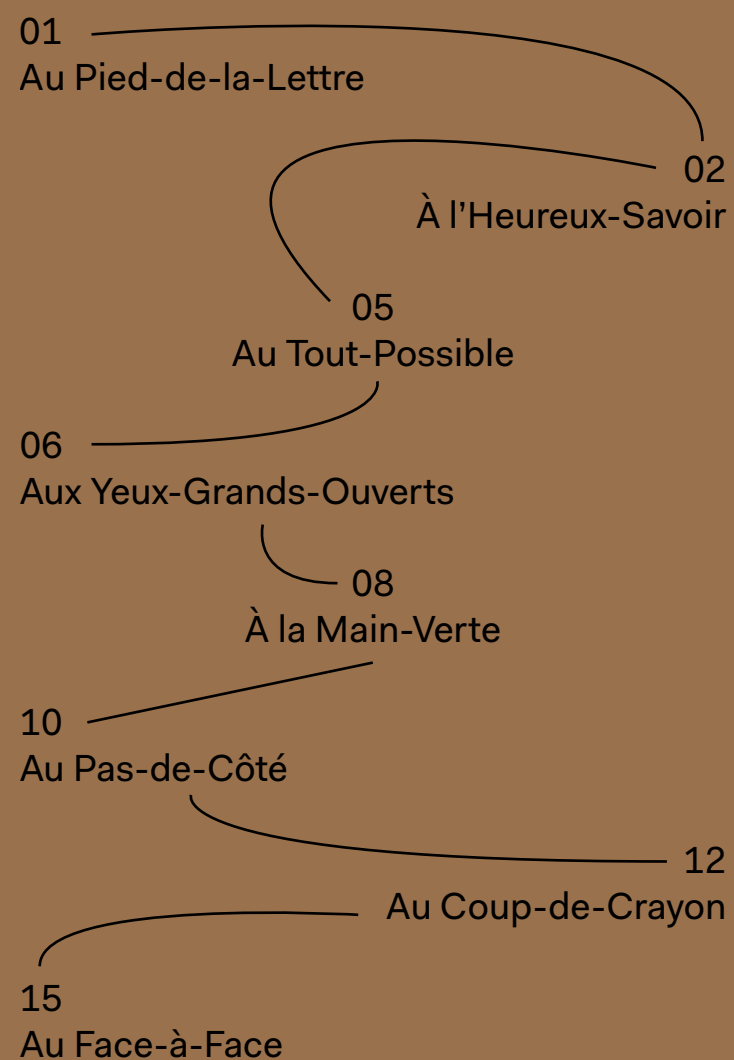
THE JOURNAL OF THE FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS



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ITINERARY





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 levels.

ACTION THROUGH TRANSMISSION

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

Since its launch in 2023, LIEU-DIT has been the mouthpiece for all those who work in the public interest, with and alongside the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. It is a journal for their voices, their testimonies, and a publication that shines a light on an ecosystem of partners, beneficiaries and supporters inspired to action by our shared values.

The fifth edition is no exception, showcasing diverse narratives of transmission – a theme that embraces the learning of artisan skills, of course, but also shared gestures of solidarity and the creation of collective artworks. It reflects a commitment to a course of training in the arts and the deepening of existing knowledge through contact with practicing professionals. These facets illustrate the many ways in which transmission shapes the Foundation's programmes.

This will come as no surprise: transmission is an artisanal, humanist value that has underpinned the house of Hermès since it was first founded. Today, the group as a whole continues to cultivate that spirit of generous, open attentiveness to the world at large. This mindset naturally encourages some Hermès team members to play a part in the Foundation's work by transmitting their expertise, or serving as ambassadors for solidarity projects. Thus, their voices also feature among the stories we are pleased to share with you here.

In these uncertain times, it's vital that we continue to act together, each in our own way, to promote a creative society where everyone is free to fulfil their true potential.

Cover: Manufacto session, introduction to leatherwork © Benoît Teillet

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The central portfolio presents work by photographer Marcelo Gomes, featured in *Passé-Présent-Futur* (forthcoming, second semester, 2025), co-published by Loose Joints and the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès.

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BEHIND THE SCENES WITH MANUFACTO

By Nathalie Grangier,
Graciela Landais and Malika Rouini,
leatherworkers

Manufacto is rooted in the commitment of saddlers, leatherworkers, joiners and plasterers to engage with participating school groups. Over twelve sessions, pupils are introduced to artisan skills and careers as they make their own, handcrafted object. Three leatherworkers from the house of Hermès tell us about their experience with children aged 14-16: a fun, inspirational, shared adventure for artisans and pupils alike.

"Manufacto is a bridge between the generations, a space where expertise and enthusiasm meet. Helping young people to discover our work, our skills, is a little like planting a seed – we hope it will germinate and bear fruit!"

presentation, showing their new-found self-assurance. That transformation was what made the experience so enriching for me."

Nathalie Grangier

Maroquinerie de Pierre-Bénite

Workshop leader for pupils aged 15-16 at the Lycée Professionnel Joseph-Marie Jacquard in Oullins (Rhône)

When I presented my work to the class, the pupils especially loved the range of colours and textures of the leathers. They were curious about the unique tools of our *métier*, too. As they learned about the stages in the making of a leather object, from cutting out to stitching, they understood the expertise, passion and hours of work that go into every finished piece.

"I did my professional training with people who were passionate about their work, and who introduced me to leatherwork as a *métier*, a career. And so, in turn, Manufacto was a chance for me to hand down what I've learned.

From the painstaking design of each pattern, to the stitching together of the pieces, pupils learn how to use specialist tools, like a mallet and shears, to work the leather. Expert techniques and gestures, such as polishing or stitching, proved to be a real challenge, but they showed patience and dedication, and achieved perfect results. Each document wallet is the result of an extended technical and creative process.

When they discovered the different stages involved in making their pencil case, some of the pupils told me they thought they'd never manage it, but we were there to encourage them. We saw how their attitude changed with each session. They weren't too enthusiastic to begin with, but their motivation improved as they learned the techniques. Some pupils who'd progressed further with their own piece, volunteered to help their classmates: that active participation built their confidence, and the sessions acquired a new dynamism and energy.

More than the objects they make, it's the personal growth shown by each student that touched me the most. I saw the young people grow in confidence, learning patience and attention to detail. Some were shy and reserved at first, but they spoke at the final

The stitching was a key stage, because the pencil case really began to take shape. They would come to me, seeking reassurance about the quality of their work, and they showed

great enthusiasm, though it's a difficult step in the process: the threads can get tangled up, fingers can get pricked... But again, we were there with the teachers to show them the proper techniques, and to encourage them to persevere.

When the class visited the Maroquinerie de Normandie, they were surprised at how quiet and peaceful it was in the workshops, and by the artisans' concentration and manual dexterity. They listened attentively as the artisan cutters explained what they were doing, and they were impressed by the presentation of the finished objects, ready for dispatch. That motivated them to finish their own pieces.

I was very happy to pass on my expertise, share my experience and help them to excel. They learned patience, perseverance, and to accept constructive comments from their classmates, also to help each other out and share what they'd learned. To see them smiling and encouraging each other was the greatest reward for me."

Graciela Landais
Maroquinerie de Normandie
Workshop leader for pupils aged 14-15 at Collège
Hyacinthe-Langlois in Pont-de-l'Arche (Eure)



"I really looked forward to my Monday afternoons with the class. The project was a breath of fresh air for them and their teachers because during our sessions, the classroom dynamic was completely different.

People discovered new talents throughout the sessions, and I shared the pleasure they experienced in mastering the dexterity you need for fine leatherwork. I saw them grow more self-confident, and take more risks: there was a palpable buzz and energy in the class – the workshops were an exciting, collective experience that developed concentration, respect, curiosity, the desire to get to work, patience, high standards, and above all a spirit of cooperation. The teachers saw their pupils in a completely new light. The sessions took them out of their daily routine and showed them that they could make things with their own hands.

The whole adventure culminated in the final presentation. The class showcased their work in a stage play. They also produced a short film and posters, they even wrote rap songs based on the Hermès lexicon of technical terms they'd learned during the classroom sessions. An incredible piece of teamwork, which was followed by a visit to the Pierre-Bénite workshops.

I was so impressed by the children's sense of wonder, their adaptability, drive and curiosity. I was amazed by how quickly they understood and were able to saddle stitch! They were surprised by their own manual dexterity, too.

Beyond simply handing down skills, the experience was personally enriching in ways I hadn't anticipated. The pupils showed extraordinary energy, and learned new abilities and techniques in a very short time. Bravo to them all!"

Malika Rouini
Maroquinerie de Pierre-Bénite
Workshop leader for pupils aged 14-15 at Collège
Honoré de Balzac in Vénissieux (Rhône)

Manufacto, the Skills Factory was launched by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2016 to introduce school pupils to artisan skills and techniques, through the making of a contemporary designer object.

A DOGGED COMMITMENT

Handi'Chiens trains service dogs to partner with their beneficiaries through life. The not-for-profit organisation is supported by the Foundation thanks to Hermès team member Teresa Salcedo Calvo, who serves as the project's ambassador for the in-house solidarity programme H³–Heart, Head, Hand. For LIEU-DIT, Teresa Salcedo Calvo and Handi'Chiens spokesperson Sarah Firouzmanech discuss the dogs' little-known role.

"I've always been fascinated by humanity's close connection to animals, and the relationships we establish. After attending a ceremony at which service dogs were formally presented to their host families and beneficiaries, I really wanted to work with Handi'Chiens as a volunteer. Helping to train a service dog has been a fantastic journey of discovery, commitment and pride for me and my family.

Discovery, because we've learned so much about the great diversity of special needs – far more than I'd realised. We've discovered inspirational, astonishing stories, often deeply moving, sometimes painful. And we've discovered how a dog can completely transform their recipient's life. *Commitment*, because training a dog over a period of sixteen months involves teamwork and solidarity. Together, everyone contributes to a successful outcome. *Pride*, when we presented Miko and Popi to their beneficiaries. We saw their delighted expressions, their smiles; and we heard their deeply touching words, which helped us, too, as we parted with animals we had become fond of. The whole experience was so worthwhile, and we're very proud of our contribution to this fantastic cause.

When I heard about the H³ programme, inviting house of Hermès team members to support a project of their choice, I naturally chose to promote Handi'Chiens' work to my colleagues – the house and charity alike share a close connection to, and love for, the animal world!"

Teresa Salcedo Calvo
IT and Digital Manager for leather goods,
Hermès Maroquinerie Sellerie

Since 2013, H³ – Heart, Head, Hand has encouraged action for solidarity by staff members at the house of Hermès, supporting works in the public interest.

"Handi'Chiens' mission involves training service dogs, and much more besides. Established in 1989, we forge relationships with vulnerable people and the special companions we train to support them. It's a collective undertaking in which everyone – our host families, salaried staff, donors and beneficiaries – becomes a vital link in a chain of solidarity.

Our service dogs are life partners who help people with reduced mobility to perform everyday actions such as fetching objects or opening doors. Others accompany children with multiple special needs, or who are on the autistic spectrum, for example. For them, the dogs can be soothing or stimulating companions that respond to their needs. Within the judicial system, service dogs can create a safe space where victims feel able to speak out. And for people with epilepsy, our dogs are trained to detect the onset of a seizure, offering reassurance and peace of mind.

Currently, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès is supporting the training of three service dogs. After sixteen months of initial training with our host families, the dogs complete a six-month specialist programme at one of our dedicated centres. In 2026, the dogs will join their beneficiaries, free of charge – the start of a new adventure for everyone involved."

Sarah Firouzmanech
Manager, fundraising
and business partnerships, Handi'Chiens

By Marlène Saldana
& Jonathan Drillet,
authors, actors, directors

A PURR-FECT PERFORMANCE

Acclaimed for their talented, satirical transfigurations of reality, Marlène Saldana & Jonathan Drillet present a hybrid performance for the Transforme festival 2024-25: part musical, part visionary feline phantasmagoria. For LIEU-DIT, the duo presents this latest project, and look back at their 2023 collaboration with the Foundation, where they partnered with the third cohort of Artists in the Community grantees to devise and perform their collective piece *Sweat, Glitter and Moolah*.

"In 2023, we worked with a group of young artists – all recipients of Artists in the Community grants from the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès – following the completion of their degree courses in theatre and dance. We presented *Sweat, Glitter and Moolah*, a promenade performance, at Les SUBS in Lyon. Featuring texts, dance and songs, the piece centred on a multidisciplinary approach, with each performer equipped to take part in any and every aspect of the show. These young stage talents formed a close-knit, dynamic group as they shone through two sets of performances totalling 12 hours each – a true celebration of their first steps as professional artists, ready to grasp the opportunities and uncertainties that lie ahead.

Now, in *Les Chats ou ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés*, ten cats lead a quiet life, sheltered from the outside world as they observe their fellow species – humankind. The climate, the economy, technology, politics – opinions are varied, and disagreements run deep, but still, everyone must find a way to live together. The cats sing and dance their fears, their doubts, and their hopes; even the tiniest kitten can contribute to a desirable future.

Worshipped as gods in ancient Egypt, burned alive in medieval Europe, felines today are celebrated as icons of Japanese *kawaii* style and the adored companions of childless cat ladies* everywhere. Like humans, the cats

on stage have not chosen their family – Maman, the one who raises them. Some adore her, others detest her, but no one dreams of running away, because the food is so good, and the carpet soft and cosy.

Les chats... is a musical comedy about the Anthropocene and climate change denial, the rise of the Far Right, the concept of catastrophe, and what drives us to resignation, contentment or rebellion. A truly *transforme*-ative project that combines theatre, dance and song, anthropology and zoomorphism, ballet and modern jazz, the stage musical tradition and minimalist choreography, as our protagonists move to and fro between their litter tray, play area, grooming and rest, to an original, poly-stylistic score by Laurent Durupt. The multigenerational cast of singers and dancers are brought together on a stage set by designer Théo Mercier, with costumes by Jean-Biche and Vanessa Riera, lighting by Fabrice Ollivier, sound by Guillaume Olmeta, and technical direction by Moustache, assisted by artistic associate Céline Peychet. The show is produced by the team at Fabrik Cassiopée. Soon, we'll be miaowing and wowing audiences in three of Transforme's host cities: Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon and Rennes!"

Transforme performance dates
In Clermont-Ferrand on 17 & 18.01.2025
In Lyon on 03 & 04.04.2025
In Rennes on 27 & 28.05.2025

*Trump co-listener J.D. Vance's comment on Kamala Harris.

Launched in 2023 by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, the *Transforme* festival presents a cross-disciplinary programme of performances that tackle today's world.

DRAWING NATURE

By Jeanne Buffet,
illustrator and scientific outreach
officer of the Vigie-Nature École
programme, MNHN, Paris

Directed by the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) in Paris and the Office Français de la Biodiversité (OFB), Vigie-Nature École brings community science to the classroom. Pupils take part in projects designed to foster a deeper understanding of the biodiversity in their everyday surroundings. Supported by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès as part of its Biodiversity & Ecosystems programme, since 2023 this scheme has sharpened participants' observation skills through scientific drawing, as Jeanne Buffet, who accompanied them, explains here.



Support disbursed through the Foundation's *Biodiversity & Ecosystems* programme includes initiatives that are aimed at protecting the living world.



"Each year, over 10,000 schoolchildren take part in a range of activities with Vigie-Nature École, collecting data on birds, wild flora, earthworms, snails and slugs, bats, seaweed, periwinkles, lichens and insect pollinators for expert analysis by scientists at France's Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, or other researchers, who commission the studies.

As part of the scheme, over the past twelve months, I've developed a scientific drawing activity to support the pupils' work to track biodiversity. I test the workshops with participating classes and create resource materials for teachers, with three aims. First, I'm keen for pupils to see for themselves the importance of drawing as a natural science discipline. It's a skill that's been used for centuries by scientists, to depict the living world, keep a record of their observations, and communicate their discoveries to their peers.

Second, the drawings complement and enhance the data collected: taking the time to draw an organism means children focus on the details, so that they're better equipped to identify different species. In this way, I believe that drawing makes their observations more accurate, and improves the quality of the data they pass on to the researchers.

Third, and most importantly, without a doubt, the workshops give pupils a richer experience of the natural world. They feel a closer attachment to the organisms they're asked to draw. Some children find insects very off-putting at the beginning of the workshop, for example, but they overcome their fear or revulsion once they've spent time reproducing them in detail, on paper. Vigie-Nature École uses a variety of teaching methods, and drawing is an important part of that – pupils are encouraged to take a less rigid, academic approach to ecology, and hopefully that will stimulate their curiosity for the living world, even if they've showed no interest in it beforehand. We're better at protecting the things we know and love, and so I hope our participants feel a stronger commitment to preserve their everyday biodiversity."

ADDING A STRING TO THE BOW

Interview with Séraphine Boucreux,
artist and grantee,
Artists in the Community

In September 2024, Séraphine Boucreux began her first year at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette (ENSAM), France's national school of puppetry, in Charleville-Mézières (Ardennes). As an Artists in the Community grantee, her bursary from the Foundation covers the full three-year course, which is part of the programme's extended reach to this specialist sector of the performing arts. Here, she tells us about her fine art training to date, and her hopes for the future.

Tell us about your career path before joining the school?

Séraphine Boucreux I spent five years studying art. First, I obtained a DNA (France's national diploma in art) at a school of art and scenography, Pavillon Bosio in Monaco. I was working across both the visual and performing arts at the time, but I made a lot of masks, and that's how I got into puppetry as an art practice. I continued with a master's in fine art in Nantes and completed a placement in stage design with a puppet theatre company – Compagnie Rodéo Théâtre. I was still at the crossroads of making visual art and working for the stage. I was focusing on drawing, but the forms I was engaging with were too silent for me: I wanted to work more with the body, and as part of a group.

How have you found the course so far?

Things have got off to a very good start, there's a great group dynamic! Teaching is in the form of masterclasses. So far, we've worked on the basics in the visual arts and the theatre of movement. It's enriching to progress from structural work to working with the body – our own or the puppet's. There are also theoretical classes in art history and critical analysis. The school's workshops stay open on some evenings, so that we can work together on shared projects.

What does the Artists in the Community scheme mean for you?

The course at ENSAM is more or less full time, which means students aren't able to work in order to pay their way. A lot of us find it quite hard to make ends meet. The scheme takes into account each individual's particular circumstances, as each of us live with a certain degree of precariousness. Thanks to the grant, I won't have to take out a student loan, with no idea of how I might pay it back once the course is over. The scheme has taken that day-to-day weight off my shoulders, leaving me free to focus on my studies 100 percent.

What next? Tell us about your professional plans and hopes?

To be honest, nothing's certain, but I was drawn to study at ENSAM for so many reasons: I really wanted to learn how to make things, in the context of my art practice. I've never done any stage work until now, so I'm keen to see how I'll feel when I'm acting on stage. There are so many avenues open. I know for sure that I want to work as part of a group in the performing arts. The training we receive is thorough and all-embracing, introducing us to a very broad range of techniques and creative vocabularies, through which to engage with other aspects of the medium. So it's wide open as to what happens from here on!

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



ON PAPER AND IN PRACTICE

In conversation with
Hugues Jacquet, sociologist,
and Lucie Verlaquet,
administrator,
Constance Guisset Studio

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès invites French designer Constance Guisset to be the programme director for the seventh Skills Academy, on the topic of paper. Here, she discusses her enthusiasm for its wealth of creative possibilities – a core focus of the Academy's five morning sessions, from January to June 2025, open to the public and exploring every aspect of this universal material.



Since the emergence of new information and communications technologies (NICT) in the late 1990s, people have been predicting that digital communications will replace our use of paper. How has that played out in your design practice, and the day-to-day life of your agency?

Constance Guisset Ever since I was a little girl, paper has been a means of artistic expression for me. At boarding school,

I created a character made out of ink cartridges, who lived in a paper house which I would construct in class, to the annoyance of my teachers! Later, I would make costumes for myself out of paper, for fancy dress parties. At design school, it was my most spontaneous, most readily available expressive medium. All of my projects began with a model made from paper. It's a material with infinite possibilities. I feel a kind of symbiosis with it, like an extension of my hand. Nowadays, I have less time for my own design work, but paper is still a constant presence at the agency. We use models a great deal as an indispensable stage in the design process, in spite of all the digital tools at our disposal. A paper model allows us to check things on a small and large scale – things we would miss if we only worked with digital 3D models. Any weaknesses that are evident in the paper model will be there in the finished object, so it's a tool we really can't do without. It also helps to disentangle issues, to find solutions that would never have occurred to us otherwise. Sketchbooks remain central to my practice, too, even though my tablet PC offers so many options for collaboration and artistic expression. Paper is also hugely important in another part of my life – reading. I spend a lot of time reading, and never on my tablet. I 'devour' books: I'm one of those voracious readers who turn down the pages, fold them back and generally mishandle their books. I respect them as objects, but I like to leave a record of my own pace of reading there in the paper – to feel the book live with me as I read.

What does paper mean to you?
What are the qualities you associate with it?

I'm fascinated by paper. It's an everyday material: we think we know what it is, but really it's impalpable. We often see it simply as a surface, a support. Something insignificant, even superficial. But when you focus on paper as a material in itself you see how versatile it is, the possibilities it affords: volumes, textures, colours, its intrinsic properties. We think of paper as something fragile, vulnerable, but it's much stronger and more robust than that. The thickness of a sheet of paper contains endless riches, and that's what I'm delighted to explore.

What was your reaction when the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès offered you the role of guest designer and programme director for the seventh Skills Academy?

I was thrilled! I've always admired the work the Foundation does through the Academy. I was touched to be chosen for a material that's been with me since the very beginning of my career. One of my very first projects after graduation was to create the set for Angelin Preljocaj's show *Le Funambule*, after the work by Jean Genet. Obviously, the text talks about walking the tightrope, but above all it's a metaphor for creativity. For the set, I chose a sheet of white paper, to suggest the element of risk, the self-doubt, fear and commitment that are essential to the artist's fragility. There's a phrase from the text that I often like to repeat: 'You are an artist – alas – you can no longer deny yourself the monstrous precipice of your own eyes.' The white sheet of paper was the natural choice to convey that sense of vertigo on stage.

How did you devise the programme?
What are your expectations for the Skills Academy?

Paper is such a rich subject: we set about unfolding it, one corner at a time, looking at it recto/verso. The aim is to begin at the beginning, with the origins of paper as a material. It's a fascinating, almost unbelievable story, a starting-point from which to explore every possible aspect. How is paper produced? How is it used in creative art, in the building industry? And so on. Right up to the present, with contemporary issues around the sustainability of a material we find it hard to imagine doing without. I put the programme together, but I still hope to be surprised, and to learn something new!

Every two years, the Skills Academy gathers a group of artisans, designers and engineers. What's your take on artisanship and engineering – disciplines closely connected to your own?

That's the defining principle of my work as a designer. Each project, in its own way, big or small, relies on the dialogue between artisanship and engineering. I love these exchanges, when one person's expertise enriches someone else's knowledge, and vice-versa. When these partnerships work, the end result is an object no one could have imagined on their own. I'm thinking, for example, of the pews I designed for the church of Saint-Eustache in Paris. The backrests are adjustable, you can set them to face one way or the other. It makes the church warden's life much easier. Previously, they had to rearrange each seat to prepare for an organ concert, or a celebration of mass. This solution came about thanks to our collaboration with Houssard, a specialist in church furniture. Together, our combined expertise will always enhance a project. The same is true for *Suchaillou*, an artwork and refuge in Queyrières in the French department of Haute-Loire, on the pathway to Compostela. The designer and architect achieved their desired shape in consultation with the expert artisan drystone builders. The finished piece is the result of their joint efforts.

The Academy promotes the principle of shared intelligence: how do you define this, personally? Why is this approach so important, in your view?

This, too, goes to the very heart of the design process. It's impossible to devise a good object on your own. Each project is the culmination of an often complex ecosystem of multiple actors. Designing an object means taking an interest in its end users, their everyday environment, the production process, the materials, their ecological impact, the objects that went before... A good object is the sum of diverse experiences and expertise, hence of shared intelligence. That's what makes each project better, it's the driving force behind our creativity. I learn, and I progress every day thanks to conversations with choreographers, wall-builders, glass-makers, business leaders, hospital staff, etc. The things we learn on one project feed the one that comes after, even if they seem far removed from one another. That circulation of ideas and knowledge, from one project to the next, is vital.

Do you still write letters by hand, on paper?
If so, who to, and why?

It happens too rarely, though I love writing. Generally, I'll handwrite a note to send along with an object, or a gift, or to say thank you. A letter can take its time, unlike emails, and I love the physical act of composing and writing a letter. I take a great, even insane amount of care over my letters – the choice of format, and the texture of the paper. I'll start a letter many times over if I'm not happy with my handwriting, or the colour of the ink against the background of the paper,

or the way the writing sits on the page. I like to write by hand, because it feels as if I'm drawing my thoughts, giving them shape and form. My handwriting is very small, cursive, and sometimes hard to read because I get carried away by my pen, which I choose very carefully. Yet, I sometimes despair of finding the perfect tool, one that's beautiful to look at and perfectly adapted to the way I hold it. Often, I buy new felt-tipped pens and test them on differently grained papers, always seeking a level of perfection that still eludes me!

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

SKILLS ACADEMY PAPER

LECTURES

THE BASICS I SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2025	Auditorium of the Musée Guimet 6, place d'Iéna – Paris 16°
THE BASICS II SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025	Auditorium of the INHA 2, rue Vivienne – Paris 2°
THE INDUSTRIAL ERA SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025	Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie nationale 4, place Saint-Germain-des-Prés – Paris 6°
SURFACE/VOLUME SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025	Salle Cortot 78, rue Cardinet – Paris 17°
INK-SHADOWS AND LIGHT SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025	Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord 37 bis, boulevard de la Chapelle – Paris 10°

For the full [Skills Academy](#) programme, and to register free of charge for the morning sessions, please visit: [fondationdentreprisehermes.org](#)

PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

Jenna Kaës and Mounir Ayache, visual artists,
in conversation with Emmanuelle Luciani,
artistic director, Artists' Residencies

The year 2024 saw the launch of a new cycle of artists' residencies directed by curator Emmanuelle Luciani. Artists Jenna Kaës and Mounir Ayache were invited to work at the Maroquinerie de la Tardoire (Charente) and Holding Textile Hermès (Rhône). For LIEU-DIT, all three reflect on this unique context for creating new works of art, and explore a central theme in their respective practices: the connection to time.



“The house of Hermès has a unique relationship with the concept of time, and it was this that inspired the focus of my proposal for the 2024-25 cycle of residencies, titled *Past-Present-Future*, in reference to the famous quote from Saint Augustine¹: ‘...there be three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future.’ The Hermès workshops are places that look back and forward in time, from conservation to present-day transmission, and innovation. In this extended relationship with time, the past, present and future overlap. In the context of these residencies, we naturally invited Jenna Kaës and Mounir Ayache – both of whose practices engage with temporality – to examine the notion of history.

Jenna represents the ‘present of things past’, in her exploration of bygone days through the prism of fantasy, while Mounir represents the ‘present of things future’, through speculative world-building based on artistic motifs from the Arab world. Together, we consider History as a construct located fully in the *Jetztzeit* (in Walter Benjamin’s phrase²): in it, we shall find traces of our collective story, and the story of teamwork among artisans at the house of Hermès, in their role as custodians of expert skills and know-how.”

Emmanuelle Luciani

1. Saint Augustine (354-430 CE), *Confessions*, XI
2. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), *Theses on the Philosophy of History*

Launched in 2010, the Foundation’s programme of *Artists’ Residencies* at house of Hermès workshops invites visual artists to create original works based on exceptional artisan skills.

Emmanuelle Luciani Jenna Kaës, you have a very particular relationship with the past as an imaginative resource, where history and legend meet. How did the landscape around the workshop, and the fascination it exerted for you, shape your project?

Jenna Kaës When I arrived at Tardoire, I was electrified by the idea of discovering a completely new environment. And so I began researching the local pagan legends. One figure seemed to have a particularly deep connection to that place: the fairy, known as a *fadet* or *fade* in the local dialect. Legends such as these are born of a determination to explain phenomena such as the migration of birds, the moulting of certain insects, and the experience of pareidolia in vegetation, etc.: they reflect a fantastical, magical way of looking at the world that predates our naturalistic vision. Remnants of that folklore are still very much alive in Charente. Then, I came to see the idea of *metamorphosis* as a natural, connecting thread through each stage of the transformation of leather at the workshops – just like the changing phases of the animal and plant kingdoms, that had inspired the legend of the local *fades* or fairies. The workshop is set in relatively unspoilt countryside; there’s a sense of the infinite in small things: the woodlands, the way water flows around the rocks in a stream, shafts of sunlight that illuminate particles floating in the air; caves and chasms, the blue-tinged mist at dusk... Everything tends to a sense of magic.

E.L. You see art as a very social, collective undertaking, and you have a close connection to the world of artisanship: how do you perceive the ecosystem that operates in the workshops?

J.K. The artisans I was lucky enough to spend time with are passionate about the leather they handle and their work tools, too. Each station, known as a “table”, bears the stamp of the identity of the artisan who works there. From the moment I arrived, the teams were eager to share their expertise. It’s how the workshops have always functioned: some artisans are instructors, and apprenticeship – learning – is a continuous practice. To me, the sharing of techniques and skills, that perpetual need to hand down what you know, is something very beautiful. For a short time, a solid, close-knit community formed around my project. My closest collaborators were Cécile Coiteux and Emmanuel Villette, with whom I was so lucky to work. Around that core, other people contributed their technical expertise or their knowledge about the *fades*. Some people kept leather offcuts to one side

for the project. The stitchers and cutters took part in specific stages of the production process. Links were forged.

E.L. Mounir Ayache, your work takes a comprehensive approach to the means of production, with echoes of the theme underpinning our cycle of residencies. Silk is an ancient, historical material that has benefitted from groundbreaking technological advances. How did you set about working between these temporal extremes?

Mounir Ayache The project is a meditation on how tradition can be reinvented through the use of modern technology. Silk is an ancient material, but it has always been at the forefront of innovation, in weaving techniques, dyeing, or most recently, digital technology. In *Silken Sarab*, the material properties of silk are amplified using digital tools. My creative process is always hybrid, a combination of the digital and physical. The modelling of forms, using software that simulates land erosion, is a perfect illustration of this. These innovations allow me to combine the past and future. This work explores the possibilities that emerge when traditional and contemporary techniques come together – silk becomes the ideal medium in which to unite these two temporalities.

E.L. Your work projects the art of the Arab world into a future written by you, the author/artist. How do you see this work in the context of your creative universe?

M.A. The future I sketch out for the Arab world draws on science-fiction tropes, and a kind of reappropriation of our cultural identities. *Silken Sarab* integrates perfectly into that world, because it proposes a dialogue between past and future. Silk becomes the terrain for a journey of technological discovery, in which ultraviolet light reveals invisible motifs, creating a work that evolves as our viewpoint changes. This work of art is rooted in the history of trade and exchange between Europe and the Arab world. The introduction of specialist textile techniques from Andalusia into the region around Lyon, in the Middle Ages, finds deep echoes in my work and its themes. By revisiting these influences, I seek to blend traditional skills and contemporary processes. In *Silken Sarab*, silk becomes a vector for dialogue between cultures and epochs, projected into a future of my own imagining.



