

NEWSLETTER



ISSUE NO. 10
MARCH 2026

CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY

Inside this issue:

Welcome to the 10th issue of the Newsletter,

I am very happy to share this edition's conversation — an in-depth dialogue with Lodie Kardouss. Please take your time exploring it, and you can discover more of her work on her website:

<https://lodiekardouss.com>, or follow her on Instagram [@lodiekardouss](https://www.instagram.com/lodiekardouss).

As always, I would be glad to hear your thoughts and comments. Do get in touch if you have suggestions for future interviews, or if you have a piece of writing on contemporary jewellery you would like to share here.

I hope you are all well. Spring is approaching, March is here — the winter has been long and difficult in Glasgow, so for those nearby I wish us sun, sun, and a little more sunshine.

Jewellery: the Present, the Plural

In the first year at university we had to present three jewellery designers to our year group whose work we considered important in some way. As contemporary jewellery was still relatively new to me at that time, I wanted to explore which practitioners were operating at the boundaries of the field. During this process I discovered the work of Lodie Kardouss, and I was fascinated by the idea that performative contemporary jewellery initiates a relationship with viewers from a completely different perspective. It was so inspiring that I contacted her to learn more about who she is and how she works.

Now, seven years later, researching for the interview and formulating the questions felt like a kind of journey through time, and it is an honour to share Lodie's thoughts and practice through a deeper conversation in this space.

Lodie Kardouss lives and works in Brussels, and her works emerge at the intersection of performance and visual art. She began her training in Paris within the Rencontres Internationales de Danse Contemporaine programme, continued in Bordeaux at the Junior Ballet d'Aquitaine, and later deepened her knowledge in Brussels in Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's research and creative programme for the performing arts.

After years of performing, Lodie now primarily works as a director and creator of performative works, and also writes as a critic. Her artistic activity extends into the field of contemporary jewellery as well: she obtained her diploma at the RHOK Academy in Brussels. In her practice, stage-based thinking, visuality, and the world of forms connected to jewellery organically merge as part of a unified creative process.

Front cover: A Jewelry Piece, 2009 Stretch fishnet, silver-plated steel, clasp, polystyrene, Circumference 1,300 cm; clasp Ø19 cm, © Yvan Guerdon , Performers: Maria Ferreira Silva, Eva Honings, Gala Moody, Marina Palovaara, and Jason Respilieux



A Jewelry Piece, 2009 Stretch fishnet, silver-plated steel, clasp, polystyrene, Circumference 1,300 cm; clasp Ø19 cm, © Yvan Guerdon , Performers: Maria Ferreira Silva, Eva Honings, Gala Moody, Marina Palovaara, and Jason Respilieux

As a dancer and choreographer, your background in movement is present in your jewellery practice, where you create performative and interactive pieces actively engaging the audience. How does this performative dimension shape your work, and what does it allow your jewellery to express beyond the object itself?

Alongside my training in contemporary jewelry, I was originally trained as a contemporary dancer, where choreography was inseparable from practice. Today, as a stage director, I extend choreography to everything on stage, danced or otherwise, with jewelry always present—shaping the process, the outcome, or both. The performative dimension shapes my work at its very core: liveness—the body—is the motor of stillness—the object. Liveness brings movement, energy, and emotion, creating contexts and stories that spark the imagination. Stillness responds in turn, forming a continuous cycle between body and object. For me personally, performativity is essential because I experience the world through life in motion. Stillness alone rarely moves me; I understand and feel things more fully when there is life, when emotions—energy in motion—flow between bodies and objects.

This interplay is central to my practice. In *A Jewelry Piece*, for example, a 13-meter-long statement necklace is not worn in the conventional sense but by five bodies. The work moves through and with the bodies, generating endless motion. The materials respond to the movement while being shaped and animated by it, creating an ongoing dialogue between object and human action.

The audience often becomes part of this dialogue. In *Sleeping Beauty (+)*, I lie in the exhibition space, one arm stretched toward an inflatable ring. The story remains incomplete until the audience interacts, building on the familiar tale and deciding who acts and what emerges. The work invites reflection on consent, choice, and agency, provoking new imaginaries and questions in a contemporary context. Creating the right conditions—through light, movement, interaction, or ritual—is essential for generating these experiences. In *The Messiah – Crafting the Concert*, Handel's Hallelujah is sung by a choir while a massive 12 x 10-meter diamond is revealed on stage through a system of ropes and pulleys. The diamond embodies multiple layers of meaning: connecting earth and sky, human and divine, presence and aspiration, drawing on its cultural association with eternity and preciousness. Music, movement, material, and symbolism fuse to create a shared, immersive experience.



Curiosity #3, 2017 Tissue paper, hardening paste, flax yarn, baking soda, 14 × 15 × 1.5 cm
©Yvan Guerdon



Curiosity © Screenshots from the performance in Anciens Abattoirs, Mons, 2017.



Curiosity © Nalbadis during AJW, 2018.

Ultimately, my jewelry seeks to do more than exist as objects. It is a platform for interaction, reflection, and sensation—a place where liveness and stillness meet. Through these pieces, I aim to create openings for questions rather than answers, for reflection rather than snapshots. This matters to me because depth is not just a concept—it is the ground under our feet, the layer where emotions, stories, and imagination take root and grow.

You describe intimacy, care, and social value as central themes to your practice. How do these ideas inform the way you make jewellery, and how do they become visible in the work?

Intimacy, care, and social value appear in my work through the way I understand care: as the capacity to awaken people from social isolation. This is why I am drawn to creating collective jewellery. Traditional jewellery—worn on the body to embellish, express identity, or mark personal milestones—speaks to me in the singular and feels anchored in the past. What I want is for jewellery to speak in the plural and in the present. I want it to live, to activate life, to integrate people rather than singularise them.

For me, this is where a new social value for jewellery can emerge. In the way I approach the discipline, what becomes precious is not the individual body but the link—concrete, physical, tangible. Some of my pieces only exist when several bodies engage with them, so their value lies in the act of connecting, cooperating, and coexisting.

And when you work with the link, you inevitably touch intimacy. Not intimacy as something private, secret, or individual, but intimacy as the capacity to feel connected, to create relationships, to maintain them, and to sustain them over time. So yes, intimacy, social value, and care become visible in my work through an immediate physical link that aims to generate a lasting emotional one. My jewellery creates situations where people must rely on each other, negotiate space, and build trust. The object becomes a catalyst for connection, and that is the kind of care I want to bring into the world.



Curiosity #4, 2017 Tissue paper, hardening paste, flax yarn, baking soda, 14 × 15 × 1.5 cm
©Yvan Guerdon

How do viewers respond when your jewellery is performed, and in what ways does their engagement transform the work?

I see the audience's reaction through my own lens, so my response is necessarily subjective. What I can sense is that, because of this specificity, my work does not leave people indifferent.

Some viewers are immediately captivated. A door opens, and they welcome what they see, feel, and imagine. Depending on their ability to navigate the unknown and their relationship with themselves, they may even feel inspired to see things differently.

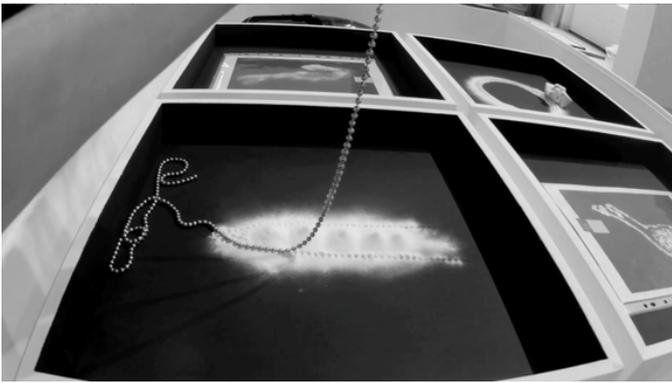
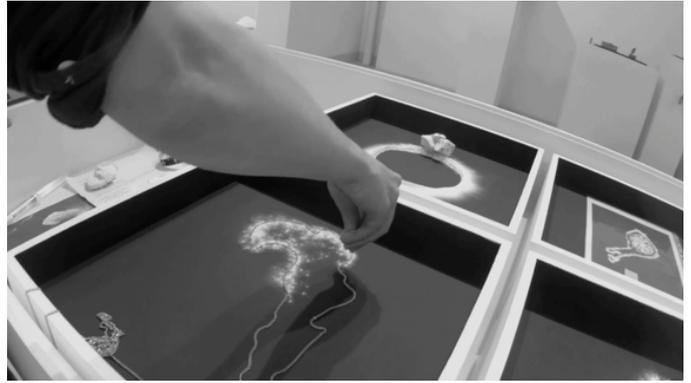
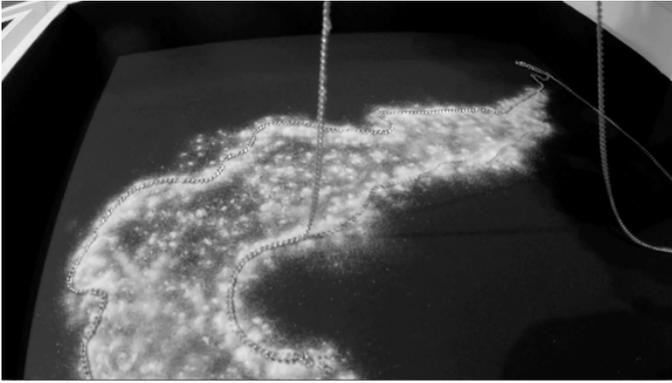
Others object ; my work exceeds their definitions. This often happens when they equate jewellery solely with a wearable object, or when debates about whether it belongs to contemporary jewellery prevent them from going any further—debates that, in fact, should not even be the question.

Then there are those who fall in between: some return to the work later and make a connection, while others do not.

Responses depend on the audience. An audience is first of all a collection of very different individuals, who perceive and value things according to their own background, values, and needs, and who share, at a given moment, a greater or lesser interest-and a greater or lesser degree of expertise-in what they are about to experience.

Moreover, the audience for contemporary jewellery is not the same as the audience for the performing arts. These publics do not share the same approaches, the same habits, nor the same expectations. Because of its performative aspect, my work does not fully align with the usual audience of contemporary jewellery, and because of its specific approach to jewellery, it can also slip outside the usual audience of the performing arts. This is why I say that my work rarely leaves anyone indifferent and can be triggering at times.

Regarding the question of audience engagement and its impact on the work, I would say that engagement can transform the work in very real, very concrete ways. Depending on the piece, viewers become actors and complete it. In *Sleeping Beauty (+)*, their gestures -leaning in, hesitating, smiling, stepping back, or any other movement- become the vocabulary of the work, since, as the performer, I remain still.



Screenshots from the performance in Anciens Abattoirs, Mons, 2017

In *Porte Z*, the diffracted diamond made of elastic ropes guides the viewer's trajectory through the space, allowing them to choose whether or not to interact with the ropes and alter their form.

In *Ring of Shelter (Abri de fortune)*, viewers can sit inside the work for as long as they wish, becoming both subjects and objects of observation, either rendering the piece invisible or, on the contrary, enhancing its value.

But there is also an invisible form of engagement, and it is nonetheless very present. In my recent work, the staging of Handel's oratorio *The Messiah – Crafting the Concert*, the audience is seated in a theatre, and there is no direct or physical interaction with the large diamond that forms in front of their eyes within a few seconds. And yet, one can feel their breathing change at the very moment it happens. The quality of listening and looking intensifies: it is subtle, but palpable. It is a form of engagement from the audience, and it changes something both in them and in the work itself, influencing its ongoing life and development.

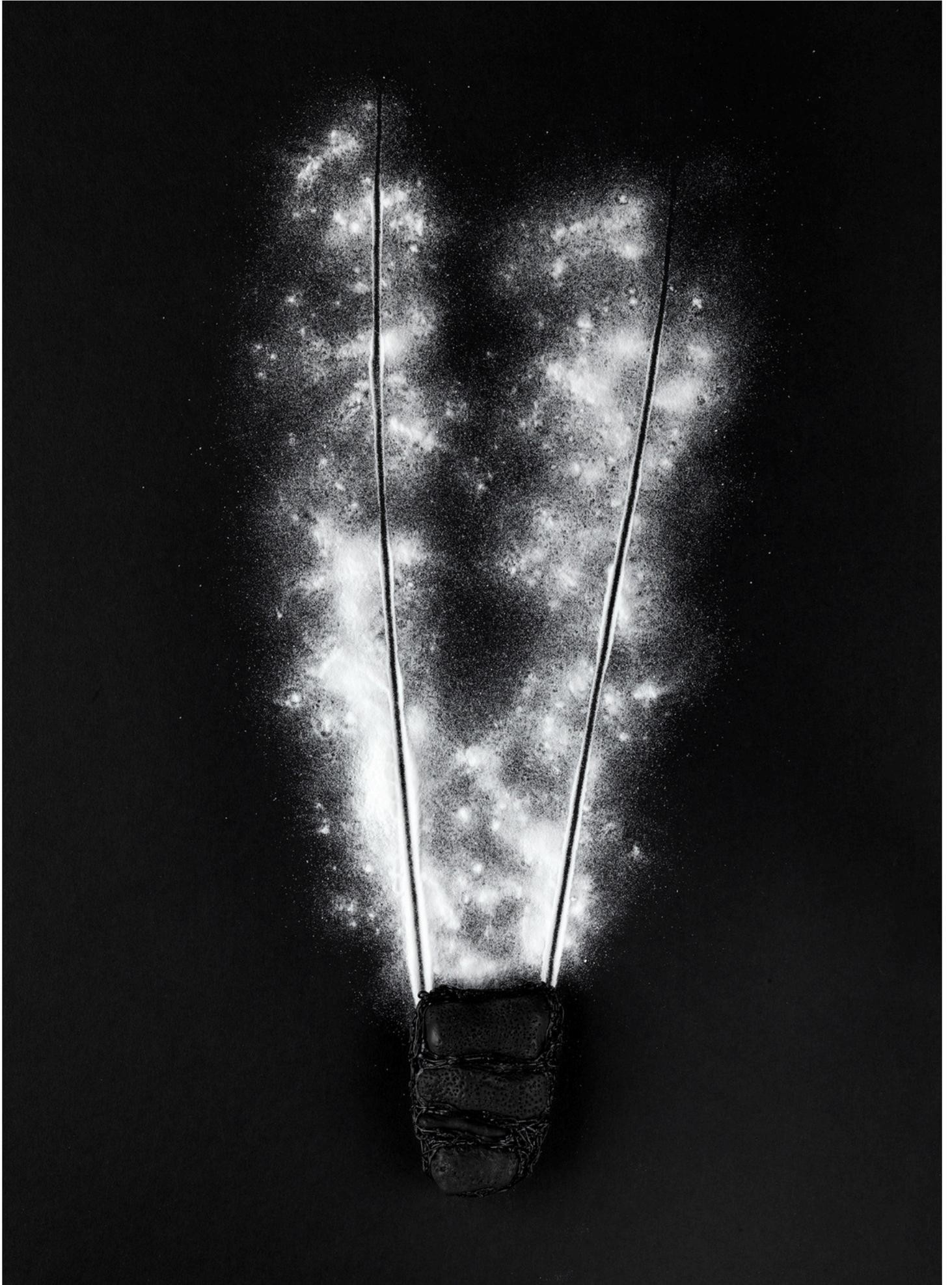
I like to share a quote from Bernard Dort, from his critical essay *Théâtre public*, with which I feel in perfect resonance:

“The value of a theatrical work depends entirely on its audience. It is created in contact with them. It changes, it alters itself, becoming enriched or diminished depending on whether the audience gives it their support or withdraws it. The audience is -in the strongest sense- its producer: it is they who literally bring it out of nothingness, they choose it and, in choosing it, also choose themselves.”

Audience engagement makes the work multiple, alive, and relational. I create the framework, the conditions, the soil; but the viewers bring the weather. And each time, the climate changes the landscape of the piece.

How would you describe your creative process? What drives your research, how do you navigate decision-making, and what sources of inspiration feel most important to you?

My creative process unfolds over a long period of time, usually between six months and a year. It always begins with either an initial idea or a commission. When it is a commission—such as *The Messiah – Crafting the Concert* - I start with an extended phase of research, note-taking, writing, and gathering images. This period allows me to understand the subject deeply, but also to identify how it resonates within me personally and where I want to take it.



Curiosity #5, 2017 Tissue paper, hardening paste, flax yarn, baking soda, 14 × 15 × 1.5 cm
©Yvan Guerdon

Only once this internal connection is established do I begin to build the work, allowing the research to unfold through me.

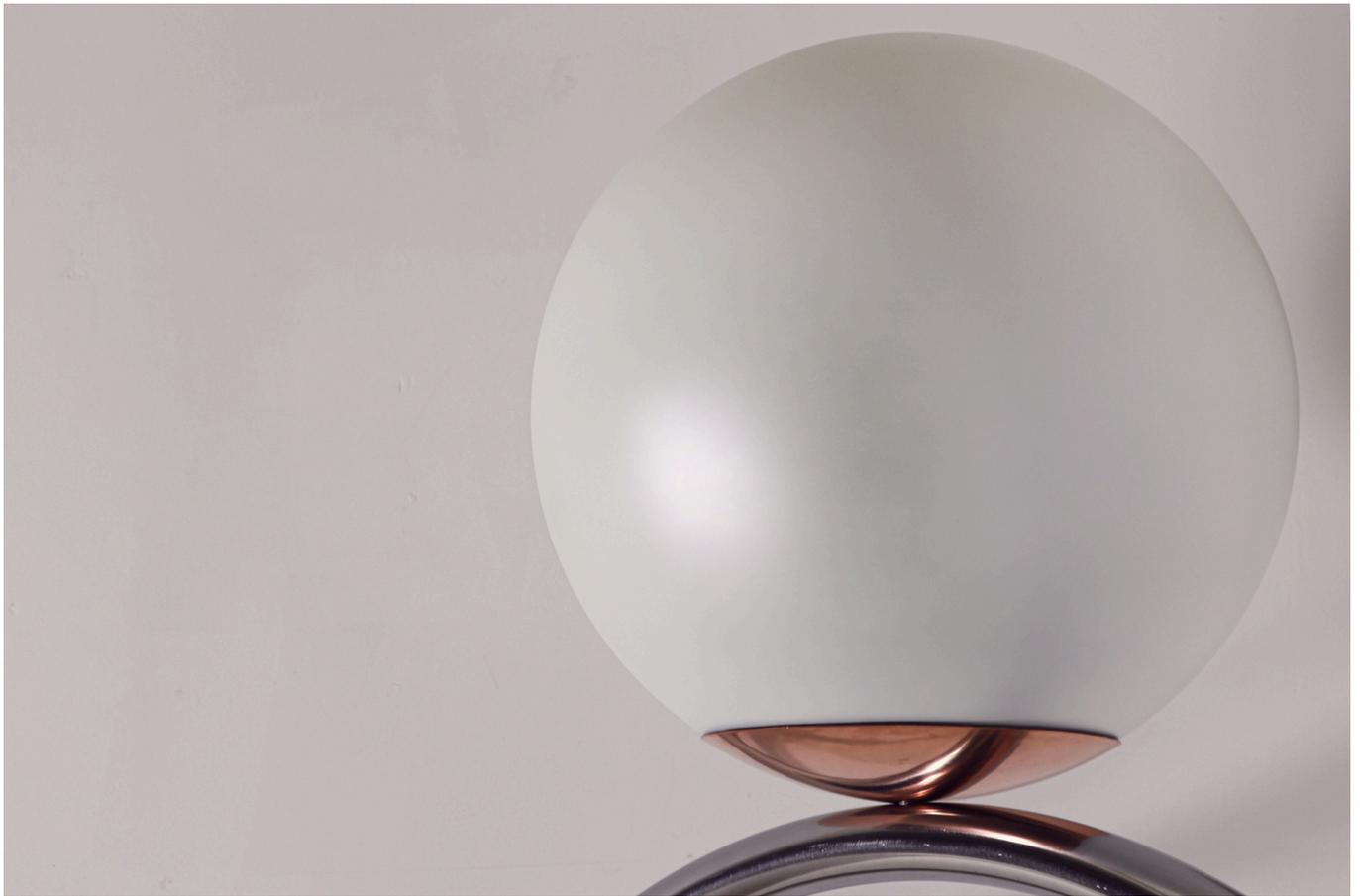
I often think of the process as assembling a puzzle. I begin by selecting a few pieces that feel easier to connect—because of their shape, their color, or their immediate clarity. From there, things start to unfold. Action calls for action. It is essential for me to step into the unknown; meaning only emerges once I begin to move. Gradually, the unknown becomes less opaque.

I do not work in a linear or hierarchical way. I don't build a skeleton first and then add muscles, tendons, and organs. Instead, I assemble everything simultaneously: a few bones here, some muscles there, an organ placed before its connections are fully defined. At the beginning, this phase is very laborious, because everything is possible. It requires trust and persistence.

Sometimes I move forward for two weeks only to realize that something is not working, and that I need to retrace my steps—occasionally all the way back to the beginning. This can be frustrating, but it is an essential part of the work. Advancing, retreating, advancing again—until, at some point, things begin to make more and more sense. I discover my own technique, my own answers, and I continue in that direction until the work reaches its full form.

Once everything is roughly in place, I go back over the entire piece in detail. Now that I can clearly see the starting point, the path, and the destination, I reconsider every micro-decision, validating or adjusting them as needed. When I feel the work is complete, I let it rest for several weeks—usually while working on another piece or taking a holiday, as I like to say, rest is part of the creative process—before returning with fresh eyes. I repeat this at least twice, as I need to be certain that my choices hold up over time. It is very important to me to be able to look at a work ten years later and know that, at the moment I created it, I was operating at the highest level of my resources and abilities.

When the project is not a commission, the process remains essentially the same, except that no one is asking anything of me, and there is no deadline—which can be more challenging. In that case, I must find the idea myself: an idea strong enough to justify committing to it over such a long period of time.



Ring of Shelter (Abri de Fortune), 2023, Polycarbonate, steel, copper, bodywork paint, linoleum, 210 × 150 × 58 cm © Maxime Van Roy



Ring of Shelter (Abri de Fortune), 2023, Polycarbonate, steel, copper, bodywork paint, linoleum, 210 × 150 × 58 cm © Maxime Van Roy

What drives my research is curiosity—the desire to uncover something meaningful for me within a given subject. Even if I were asked to create a work about something I have no initial affinity with, I would immerse myself completely in it, studying everything I could find in order to understand what it truly is. My aim would be to identify an entry point that resonates with me personally, and to connect it to a broader thought and outcome.

Decision-making happens through action. After the research and writing phase, I focus on working with my hands—testing, experimenting, and making small-scale trials with whatever tools are available. In reality, this already begins during the research phase, but at a certain point the body must take over from the mind. Making decisions means doing, undoing, and redoing until something feels right. Over time, as my technical knowledge grows, there is less undoing. I allow myself to be guided by experience, intuition, and the divine force.

As for inspiration, everything is a source. Even when I am resting, I remain highly attentive to my environment: the flow of events, the words people use, the individuals I encounter, and everything happening around me. I read these elements as signs—material that feeds directly into my creative process.

There is a contrast between your work and what we typically associate with jewellery — something made to last, to be inherited, to remain with us beyond a lifetime. In your practice, jewellery is instead closely connected to the present moment, while still focusing on connection and experience. Can you explain this perspective in your practice, and how it relates to your everyday life?

There is indeed a strong sense of durability associated with traditional jewellery, largely because of the materials used. When we think of metal such as silver or gold, or stones, these materials do not easily alter or degrade, and therefore jewellery can be inherited and passed down through many generations. To this material durability is added a sentimental value: stories, memories, and emotional attachments that accumulate over time.

I am not rejecting the idea of durability in jewellery; I am shifting it from the permanence of the material to the persistence of a shared experience and the memory it leaves behind.



Sleeping Beauty (+), 2022, Foil balloon ring; brass ring stand, Balloon ring: 40 × 21 × 53 cm, Ring stand: 35 × 25 × 10 cm, © Fabrice Kada

What feels most important to me is not so much the opposition between permanence and ephemerality, but rather the distinction between the singular and the collective. When something is collective—made together, experienced together, or spoken about together—it exists primarily in the present moment. This shared dimension anchors the work in a specific time and situation. At the same time, my work does leave a trace. The object may continue to exist after the experience, and the experience itself, ideally, remains in memory. This concern with fully inhabiting the present moment while allowing it to leave a trace is something I remain deeply attentive to in my everyday life.

One of my first projects, Curiosity, directly explored this relationship between the present moment and remembrance, and the idea that an experience can persist even when the object does not. Curiosity is a collection of ephemeral jewellery. Because the materials used are destructible, each “tableau” is recreated for every new exhibition.

This project unfolded in two temporalities.

The first was a time of performance: I executed a choreography of gestures to recreate each piece of the collection as it was originally conceived in my studio. The second was a time of memory: a series of photographs documenting the project. These photographs function both as a faithful matrix for future performances and as a tangible trace of the project’s existence.

In this way, my work honours the present moment while allowing its memory to persist, creating a different kind of durability—one rooted in shared experience, alongside the material permanence that may remain.

I’m also curious to hear about what’s currently on your mind — what plans you’re developing, what interests you most at the moment, and what you’re researching right now.

What currently occupies my mind is my next project, Allez, Vaches Allez. A participatory performance in development, it explores registration, marking, and the quiet politics of being counted. As the work is still in process, I prefer to keep certain aspects undisclosed.

Sleeping Beauty (+) © Screenshots from the performance in MAD, Brussels, 2022.

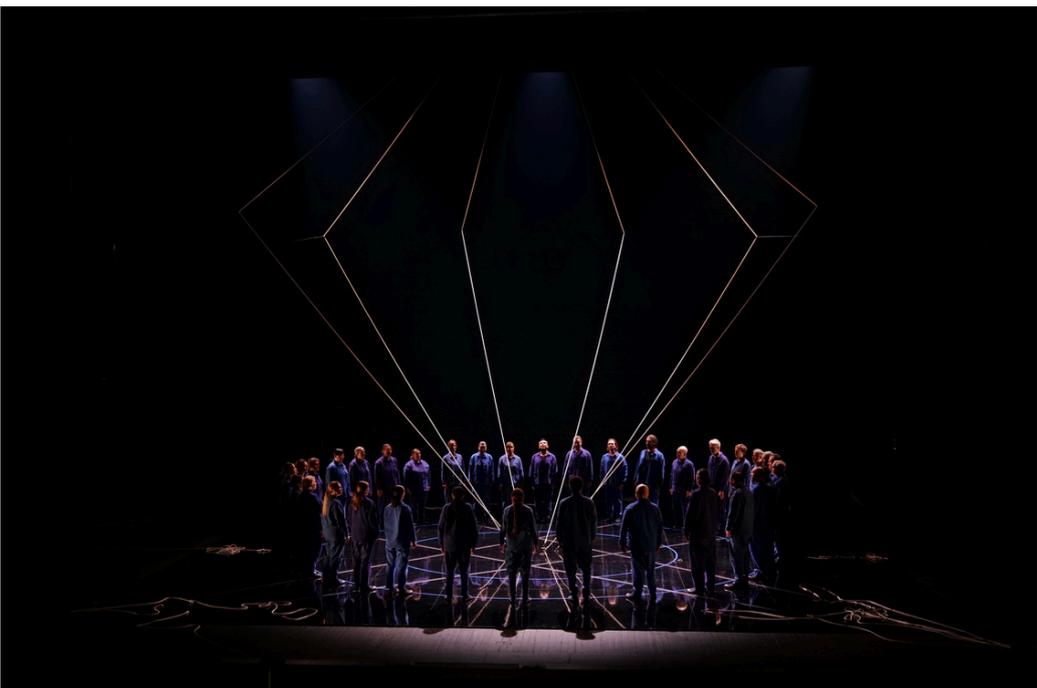




Politics has always been present in my practice, often embedded beneath aesthetics or poetic gestures. Ring of Shelter, for example, is political in the way its human-sized pearl ring functions as a space for reflection on belonging, exclusion, and resilience under pressure. This political dimension is not immediately legible; it reveals itself through engagement rather than at first glance.

With Allez, Vaches Allez, the political dimension becomes more explicit. Theatricality and humour—slightly ironic—take on a larger role, balancing reflection with playfulness. While humour has appeared only subtly in my work, Sleeping Beauty (+) hinted at it through the absurdity of the oversized inflatable diamond ring, my arm stretching toward it as I lay at rest. With Allez, Vaches Allez, humour is more overt than in filigrane, offering an accessible front door through which to engage with serious questions.

As with my previous jewellery projects, the work reflects on our contemporary world, with the performative dimension unfolding through the participation and collective presence of people—not performers. And this time, it's truly wearable—yes, you can actually put it on!



The Messiah – Crafting the Concert, 2025, Diamond in white polyurethane rope. Diameter of the ropes: 1 cm; 1,200 × 1,000 cm © Steve Barek

I AM ALWAYS HAPPY TO HEAR YOUR
FEEDBACK! IF YOU HAVE IDEAS OR WOULD
LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT AN EVENT, BOOK, OR
ARTIST, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH AT
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