

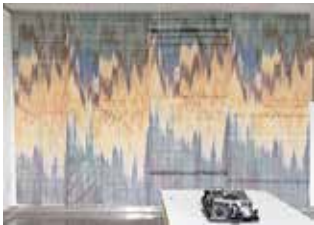
OH WOW!



1. GAUGUIN Paul, *The Wave*, 1888



2. MATISSE Henri, *Two Girls in a Yellow or Red Interior*, 1947



3. ANTIN Xavier, *News From Nowhere*, 2014



4. FRIIS Hanne, *The Mass (Yellow)*, 2011

5. La Maison des Arts
<http://lamaisondesarts.be/>

One of the first sentences I uttered was « *oh que beau!* » (Oh that's so beautiful!). It's a phrase that I still say often, and it shows my inclination to see the *beauty* everywhere and all the time. It sums up pretty well the emotion of wonder, of sensitivity to *beauty*, which is everywhere, all the time as long as we are open to it.

This sensitivity to *beauty* has forged my perception of textiles, which is also omnipresent. Textile design is to me a search for balance between planning, discovery and surprise as well as interactions and exchanges based on craft and skills. Textile activates everyone's curiosity through discovery and exploration (haptic, visual, emotional, poetic, etc).

The sensory relationship to textiles makes it a powerful universal medium, that is approached by everyone in a simple, spontaneous and instinctive way. The ideal medium for dreaming, wandering, travelling.

In that respect, during my years at La Cambre, I went a back and forth between drawing, textiles and photography. I let myself be led by the materials and the gestures they imply and I liked to build different universes, always very colourful, almost childish, allowing everyone to immerse themselves in an elsewhere.

My practice is influenced by Gauguin's¹ palette, Matisse's² formal range, Xavier Antin's³ large formats and his machines, Pastoureau's writings on colour and Hanne Friis's⁴ organic sculptures.

My work process is very spontaneous. Above all, I approach it from the angle of colour: vivid, candid, dynamic, it allows me to animate the surface in both a work of pattern and in the very structure of a fabric. Other factors are taken into account: shape, intensity of rhythm, structure, volume, weight, articulation, suppleness, resistance, touch, etc. However, my work is primarily visual. While my textile work evokes an abstract universe, I am also sensitive to the poetry and beauty found in every moment of our daily life.

Different experiences have led me to these reflections, which little by little take the form of a master's project, but also of professional life choices (which I will develop below).

First of all, a week of children's animation at the Maison des Arts⁵ (Schaerbeek) last year which confirmed my desire to share, to transmit, to meet people and to keep it simple. For the workshop « Fils Fous » with Lucie Burton, we animated a multicultural group of children from 7 to 12 years old. At the Maison des Arts was held the exhibition « Réparation » (Repair), which we visited in the morning. During this time of exchange, we looked at the works and discussed them all together. In the afternoon, we looked at our production (weaving, embroidery, hand and machine sewing, etc.). I was positively surprised to see how in a very short time the children got the grips with the techniques and defined their creative intention. It was a great week of exchanges!

6. EPA: Ecole du Patrimoine Africain de Porto-Novo)

7. AVPTTA: Association pour la Valorisation et la Promotion du Tissage Traditionnel d'Abomey

8. Patrimoine à roulettes
<https://patrimoinearoulettes.org/>

9. MAMCS, ExpériMAMCS, 2018



10. La Grand S Atelier, LAMBERT Joseph, *without title*, 1950

Then, I had the chance to go to Benin in the summer of 2019 for 6 weeks, as part of the « Territoires Tissés » (Woven Territories) project. As explained in my portfolio, this collaborative project between La Cambre as an art school, EPA⁶ and AVPTTA⁷, aims to enhance the know-how of the weavers of the Agonglo Palace. On site, my work as a textile designer was initially very concrete: gathering the history and techniques of different fabrics, understanding how the looms work, the organisation of the weavers' studio, etc. and then more abstract: questioning the relationship to creation that the weavers maintain, the relationship to the original/copy object, the link that each one has with his textile heritage, etc., in order to define the relationship to the textile of the weavers I met, this relationship being of the order of the performer rather than of the artist. This very enriching experience pushed me to go out of my comfort zone and to confront the issues of decolonization, to meet a culture quite different from mine, and to adapt myself to the demands, expectations and desires of the weavers. The actors of the project are from various ages and backgrounds, which contributes to the richness of the project. Many reflections following this internship remain pending.

Finally, I have been a volunteer for several years for the nonprofit organisation « Patrimoine à Roulettes »⁸, whose aim is to promote cultural mediation. « Patrimoine à Roulettes » develops a vision of education through cultural heritage. The latter is envisaged as an objective of knowledge, but also becomes a tool for selfdiscovery and discovery of others, a real means of communication between citizens. Working with them is always very enriching.

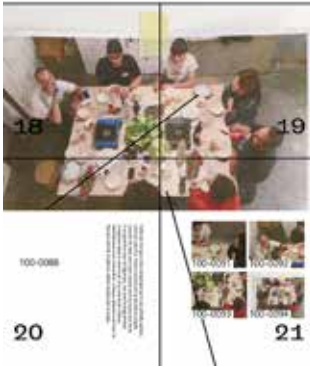
If my journey at La Cambre has helped me to develop plastic qualities in my work, experiences outside La Cambre have led me to ask myself many questions about the concrete repercussions of art, especially textiles. How do you get out of the insider's world of art? How do you (re)create links between art and society, the public? How do you give access to creation, to artistic expression to people who feel disconnected, rejected from the art world?

The « ExpériMAMCS »⁹ project at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Strasbourg provides reading tools and alternative encounters with hits works. In doing so, it offers concrete avenues for reflection on what the museum is and how to appropriate it.

This questioning on the accessibility of art is born from my personal experience. My sister having great difficulties reading and writing, she has always been devalued by the fact that she «only» knows how to do manual activities. However, a strong intuition leads me to believe that textiles can be a vector of revaluation of one's own capacities, a bridge to the world of art, which often seems inaccessible.

« Le « S » grand atelier »¹⁰, for example, the Vielsalm Center for Brut and Contemporary Art, creates a ground for artistic exchanges between people with or without mental disabilities. They work together to create an innovative language and believe in each person's potential.

Meeting Old Friends



11. AFTER HOWL, *Boiling Bouillon*, 2018



12. Horizome, PICCINO Rosella, *Visites inattendues (Unexpected Visits)*, 2012



13. MILETIĆ Hana, *Is Not Written Plain and Felt workshops*, in collaboration with Globe Aroma, 2017

Wonder and manual work are of paramount importance to me, and I would like to be able to share and pass on this pleasure. Textile gestures, repetitive and rhythmic, have this ability to soothe, to rest the mind, which seems to me to be of great use in a world where we are constantly thinking.

How can I make a cultural environment accessible at my level? How can I enhance the value of doing so in a society that is completely disconnected from manual production? How do we go back to craftsmanship, the pleasure of making something with our hands? How to create inter-class, inter-cultural dialogues through textiles? How can my artistic involvement have a more direct social impact?

The collectives « After Howl »¹¹ (which uses food as an artistic medium coupled with space and furniture allowing them to create links in an almost performative way where they intervene), « Horizome »¹² (which activates creation in public space and allows people to meet each other through know-how), or the work of Hana Miletić¹³ (who highlights social realities and explores the city of Brussels by rendering her observations in community workshops and through the work of traditional weaving in a very sensitive and gentle way) bring, each in their own way, artistic answers and processes to these questions.

These questions of access to art and creation in a mixed artist/designer/public context what I would like to work on during my master's degree at the KASK and afterwards.

For my master's project in textile design at the KASK, I would like to develop textile tools. Starting with weaving for example. When you see the frame looms in a workshop, and you never have woven in your life, it is impressive and inaccessible. However, on the basis of recuperation, it is possible to set up tools, simple structures that make these techniques accessible.

Based on my sensitivity and aesthetic considerations I wish to develop a protocol for group creation, elaborate a form of scheme of awakening to wonder. As of now, I imagine this protocol as a lot of small steps to follow, starting with observation, sharing, the discovery of a textile technique and the restitution of an observation. This would allow, as a group, to discover textiles, but also and above all, to share, to exchange, to meet each other, to take the time to contemplate, and to pass on to each other the pleasure of discovering and making. In other words, I would like to find out how textiles can become a lever for encounters.

The « final product » would be a restitution of the project, a set of photos, videos, texts and objects created by the different participants, depending on to what will have been achieved during the master.

The dissertation will be intrinsically linked to the project. At this stage, my theoretical research focuses on the following idea: how does art allow us to form groups, to weave links? I would like to focus on the role of art in social cohesion, accessibility to culture and artistic practice in any environment other than the one of the artists, and this with my textile tools.

The reasons why I would like to join your program are as follows: the « mentor » principle, which seems to me to be a great opportunity to work with teachers who are involved and sensitive to the concerns developed above. The teaching framework offered by KASK would allow me to clarify and develop my project while being stimulated by a new environment.

In addition, the school and the relationships I could establish there would allow me to get in touch with Flanders, which I unfortunately know too little about. I would like to broaden my perspectives and challenge myself by improving my level of English and Dutch.

After these years as a bachelor at La Cambre, and an Erasmus mobility in Paris (at ENSAD¹⁴) during my first year of master, I realise my desire to discover other perspectives on art and creation. Joining your programme will generate stimulating exchanges.

14. ENSAD : École Nationale Supérieure
des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

Thank you for your attention,

Maureen Dodémont