

les
sentiers
de la
création

les

s e n t i e r s

de la

c r é a t i o n

didier guillon ■

sophie vann guillon ■

franka holtmann ■



Didier

The character has *panache*; he is elegant and well-spoken, with a wry smile, meticulously groomed three-day stubble and glasses that lend him that dapper, intellectual air...

He may appear aloof, fussy, demanding and sometimes strict...

He is *Monsieur Guillon*, *Mister Guillon*, *Didier Guillon*, *DG*...

Monsieur Valmont, playing his role of businessman like a game of chess, with passion, gravitas, strategy and method.

But he is first and foremost *Papa* to his children and simply *Didier* to those capable or lucky enough to have earned his trust...

For he is also wary, fragile, anxious and sensitive...

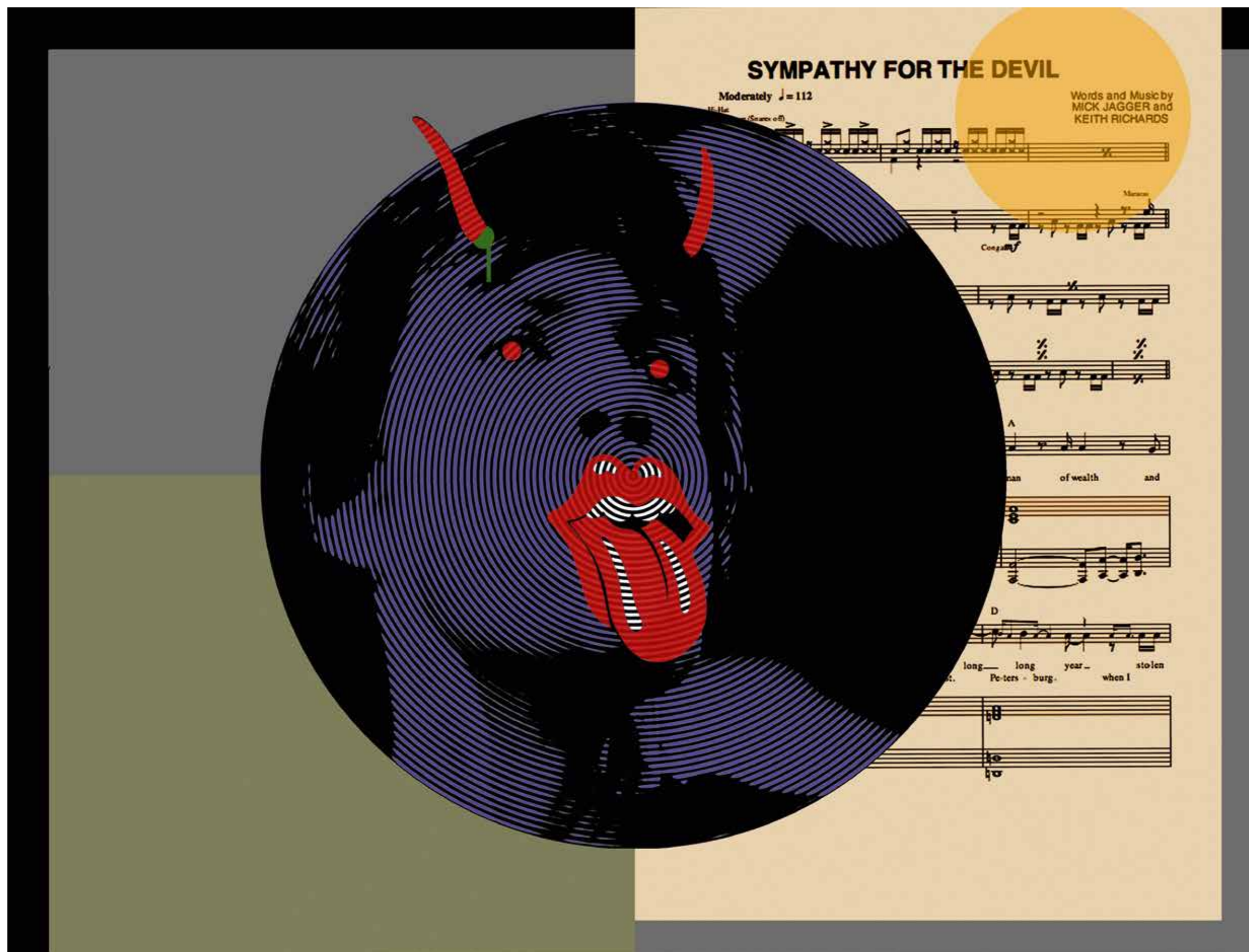
The *man* is curious, loyal and generous, with good taste and a refined sense of humor.

A cosmopolitan humanist, he travels the world, from Geneva to Barcelona, from Paris to Venice, from Montreal to Tokyo and on to London, Hong Kong, Berlin or Hydra...

On an eternal quest for modernity, he explores, unearths, promotes and defends creation in all its forms: *cuisine*, architecture, sculpture, painting, theatre or cinema... His fields of interest are infinite.

An artist himself, humble and discreet, he sketches, sculpts, photographs...

Undoubtedly in search of truth. His own...



Sympathy for the Devil

“Please allow me to introduce myself”

“Paris – May 1968 : I was 15, standing in front of the *Notre Dame de Sainte Croix*, Catholic School in Neuilly, my junior high school. I saw priests in cassocks fighting with young students who were demanding greater social freedom, including sexual liberation. As a bystander, I understood that I was witnessing a major event that would change the course of History. The musty odors and stuffy atmosphere that defined the 1950s and 1960s were fading away...

A few days later, as socio-political protests raged, the Rolling Stones sang *Sympathy for the Devil*. The scathing lyrics of this song, written by Mick Jagger, shocked conservatives who saw in them a cult of devil worship that could exert a nefarious effect on young people.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. I took the tones of these vibrations as my own, along with the deafening arrangements. And those notes, like the period in general – both were immensely inspiring in their own way – stimulated me and revealed my own character, surely planting a few seeds for the man I would become.

This stage of life resonates in me still today as a permanent revolution. I cannot bring myself to accept a calm life. I need intensity to create and a free spirit to move forward; that’s what drives me day by day.”



Barcelona

“From dawn to dusk”

“*Cervantes* is said to have lived there, Jean Genet explored it in drag... Ah Barcelona!* City of irresistible exuberance! Nestled between the deep blue of the Mediterranean and the emerald green of Montjuïc, stunningly portrayed in the novel by Grégoire Polet*, you have snatched me up again and again, steering me through unfettered odysseys into your architecture and history. Your charm, your light, your pulsating atmosphere, your welcoming Catalans, your good cheer, your literary *cafés*, your artists, your avant-garde style, your cosmopolitanism and so much more, bewitch me every time.

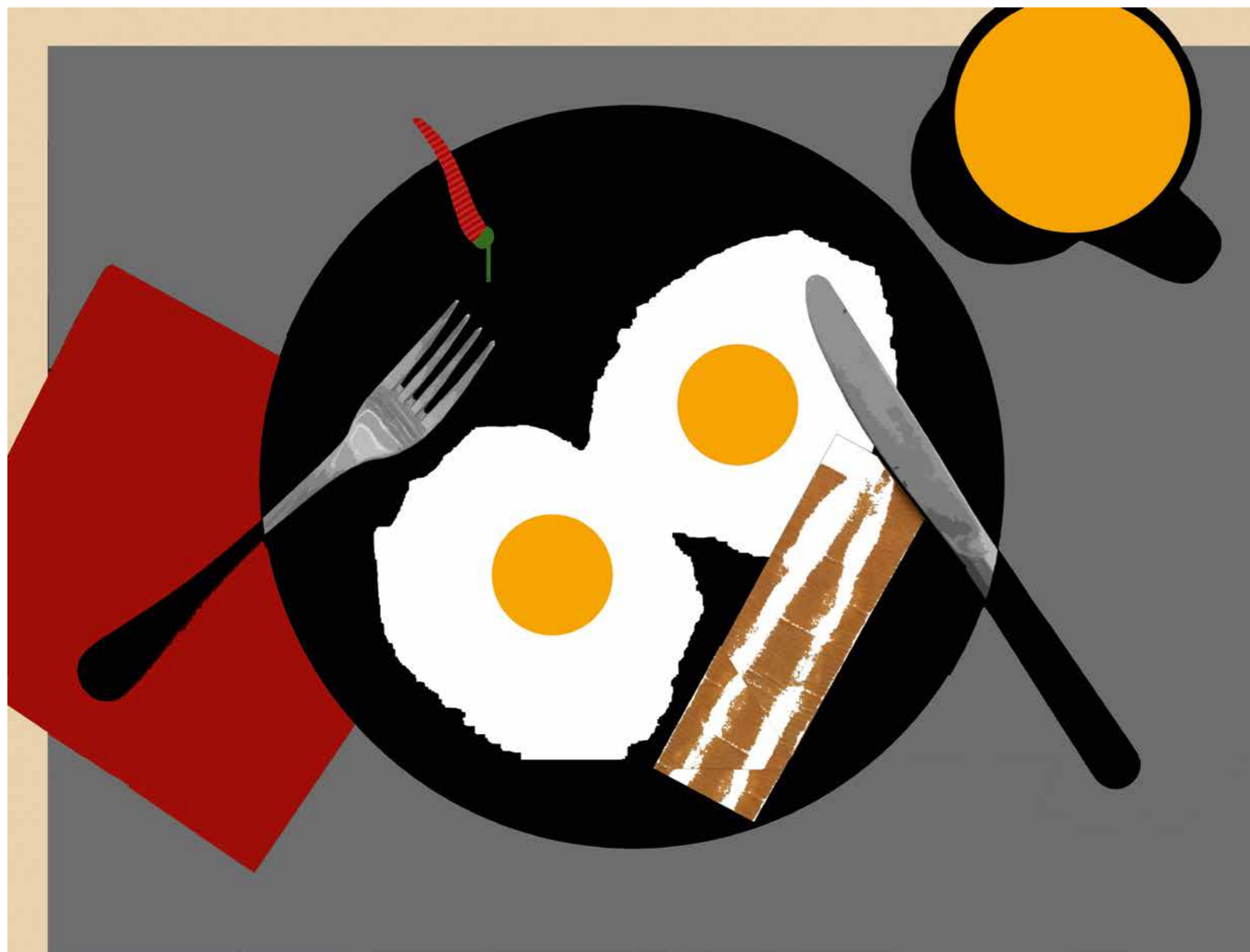
I still remember my excitement as a child when my father showed me the mischievous houses designed by architect Antonio Gaudí, that ingenious jack of all trades, not to mention his daring Sagrada Família and his Casa Batlló, reminiscent of a dragon with the arched back of its roof and its ceramic tiles for scales. Breathtaking, like all of your iconic structures that never cease to captivate me. I can never get enough of you and return for a visit whenever my schedule permits.

First stop : the *Tres Torres/Sarria* neighborhood. In the charming Villa of Pomaret**, that I fell in love with a few years ago, my spirit wanders with erratic abandon, fluttering on the breeze with the butterflies or playing with the reflections of sunlight on the peonies in the Japanese garden. In these places so conducive to musing, halfway between art and beauty, I am at peace. Especially since it is thanks to you, my lovely Barcelona, that I can once again meet up with my lifelong friend, the artist Isao Llorens Ishikawa.*** This friendship offers moments of rare intensity, making my mind even more restless, since our conversations nearly always ignite the spark of creativity.”

* *Barcelona!*, Éditions Gallimard, 2016.

** Site of the Valmont Spa and the workshops of artists associated with the Fondation Valmont.

*** Isao Llorens Ishikawa, artist and grandson of Joan Gardy Artigas, the ceramic artist known for his collaboration with Joan Miró, among others.



Fried eggs

“Fried eggs and a cup of tea, please!”

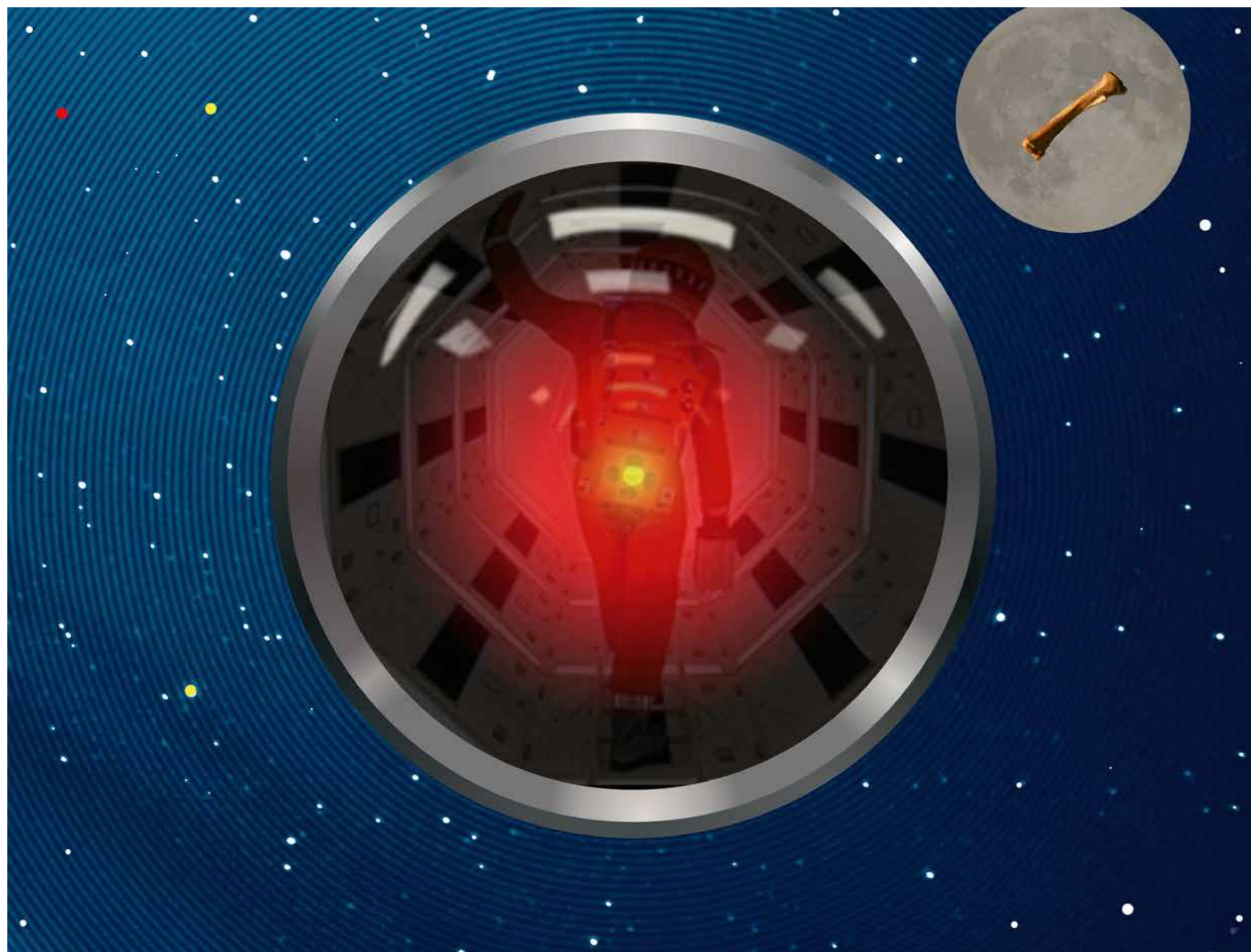
“At breakfast time, no caffè latte with buttered toasts for me; I crave fried eggs. Especially when they go together so harmoniously on the plate and are prepared by the chefs at the Hotel Café Royal in London. Their minimal aesthetic reminds me of Suprematism. I am nearly certain that Kasimir Severinovich Malevich could have invented this dish.

I have tried them scrambled, poached and hard-boiled, but my little girl Valentine and I always go back to our first choice, preferably served with a cup of milk tea. It is a kind of tradition and a true moment of bonding that even inspired us to write a poem.

Looking closer, subjectively combining various images, these eggs, prepared sunny-side up to match the Valmont colors, seem inconspicuously to sketch the outline of a deep-seated essence. Just before digging in, I see myself with Sophie, my wife, my friend and my alter-ego in the Valmont adventure.

This dish, the epitome of modesty, perfectly reflects the simplicity and coherence of our creations, the qualities we have always aimed for in each of our initiatives. Together, we strive for even greater excellence and we focus on the basics.

Another subliminal quality of these eggs : they symbolize birth. That of Valmont, that of our many creations, and of course that of our three children. A revolution that continues to resonate in me.”



2001: A Space Odyssey

“A space poem”

“When you think about it, *2001: A Space Odyssey* is a true masterpiece!

I was 15 when it first hit the silver screen in 1968. Immersed in the vastness of the universe for more than two hours, I was speechless in front of such cinematic genius. The images were groundbreaking, and all the more astounding as man had yet to set foot on the Moon. A modern myth was born, and with it the deep-rooted conviction that humanity was at a turning point in its history.

The genius of Stanley Kubrick, the director who spoke to an entire generation, reaches its climax with this film: his talent blends with the intelligence of the subject itself, which breaks loose from the overly rational contours of a philosophical tale. It would be quite presumptuous to claim that I grasped the film’s many dimensions at that tender age, but the magnetism of this work lies more in the emotions it inspires than in than in any rational explanation. It is above all a sensory experience that asks questions without providing answers. Several shots have remained engraved in my memory, and those that have nourished my spirit all these years continue to offer me inspiration. The arid landscapes of the dawn of humanity, the vessels traveling through space, the famous white room, its architectural lines clearly recalling the wonderfully pure universe of Richard Meier*... And most of all, the persistently majestic appearance of the eminent black monolith, like a unifying theme for the movie: a fascinating object that could have sprung from the mind of Carl Andre**. But that’s not all. Although some shots are perfectly silent, Kubric generally cloaks his film in well-known classical music. A masterstroke! Hearing *Also Sprach Zarathustra* by Richard Strauss and Johann Strauss’ *Blue Danube Waltz*, I find myself overcome with emotion. I feel like I can fly.”

* Richard Meier, born in Newark, New Jersey on October 12, 1934, is an American architect and designer of the MACBA, the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art in Spain (1995), the Getty Center in Los Angeles (1997) and the White Plaza in Basel, Switzerland (1998), among other structures.

** Carl Andre, born in Quincy, Massachusetts on September 16, 1935, is an American minimalist painter and sculptor.



An architect – Richard Meier

“Beyond the walls”

In every country, every culture and every stylistic tradition, architecture is an art I particularly appreciate. At the crossroads of scientific reasoning and pure artistic instinct, this wonderfully inspiring discipline moves and transports me. In the architectural melting pot that spans the globe, from Mondrian’s Holland to the Russia of Sonia Delaunay, not to mention Le Corbusier’s Switzerland, Barcelona found in Antoni Gaudí the antidote for its conservatism. But alongside the virtuoso of the Sagrada Família and other great names who made the Catalan capital what it is today, there are masters for whom architecture is a deep and consummate quest, where thought organizes both space and the senses. Richard Meier, with his enlightening MACBA*, is such an architect.

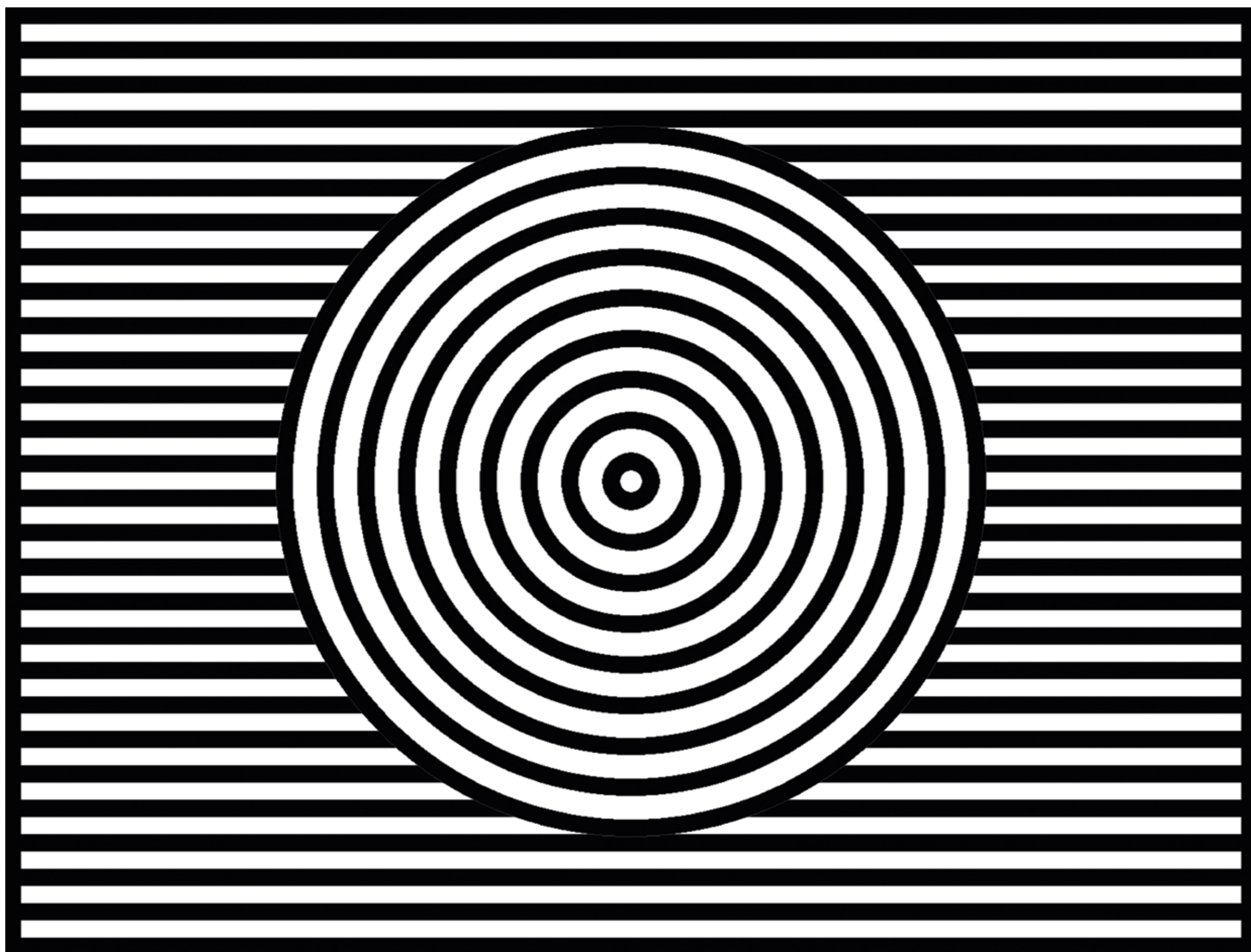
I remember the genuine shock I felt in 1995 upon discovering this particular museum. As I crossed the threshold, I was overcome by the circular space and vertical elegance, reminiscent of a cathedral. Think of the resolutely immaculate white – or rather white light – that engages in constant interplay with the structure’s lines and perspectives, further enhanced by the use of glass walls and reflective materials. Between the clarity and the shadows produced by the natural lighting, these sometimes minuscule details underscore the quality and timelessness of the work in each and every room.

These images also inspired the illustrations for our Expert of Light product line, as well as the decor of various exhibitions by the *Fondation Valmont* in Hydra and Venice.

Even today, I return to this museum regularly, strolling through the corridors and taking in the atmosphere. This museum re-energizes me and lets me reconnect with myself, confident that we all love anything that awakens our senses. As such, ‘I will never lose myself for that which the senses can take in. But only for the *je-ne-sais-quoi* found nowhere but at the heart of the Mystery.’**

* MACBA is the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, devoted primarily to exhibiting works created during the second half of the 20th century. Designed by Richard Meier and built from 1987 to 1995, MACBA opened on November 28, 1995.

** Quote from a poem by Saint John of the Cross.



Sol LeWitt

“Art at its purest”

“Far from the precepts of my middle-class upbringing, and undoubtedly contrary to its basic principles and values, throughout my youth I devoured the works of a handful of flamboyant artists : the American conceptualists of the 1960s, who invented the idea of a purely visual and minimal form of art.

Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Robert Morris, Carl Andre and others... they all continue to captivate me. And surely none more so than Sol LeWitt*.

During his lifetime, he fashioned his works with care : simple or sophisticated, all alive with straight lines, curves and other variations of abstract shapes. With an expressive veneration for subjectivity, the artist succeeded in uniting the precision of repetitive geometry and respect for methodical rules, all the while vindicating creative movement. For example, his Wall Drawings – mural puzzles of a sort – defy the imagination. They subjugate the viewer with their apparent simplicity, giving off a mysterious and nearly hypnotic beauty. Like a Stanley Kubrick picture!

I would describe my relationship with art as essentially philosophical. So when this rapport becomes tangible, I in turn start creating. I create cages directly inspired by the minimalist cubes imagined by Sol LeWitt in the 1960s. Large, small, gilded, burnished, glass or metal, in all shapes and sizes... I explore them with the broadest possible approach. They all symbolize the disillusioned world that humanity has created to confine itself and filled with dreams, nightmares, frustration and any other sensation. We can all escape from our cage – every side is open – and aspire to a brighter future.”

* Solomon “Sol” LeWitt (1928-2007) was an American minimalist and conceptual artist.



Death in Venice by Thomas Mann

“Divine beauty”

“Death in Venice leaves no one indifferent, I am sure of that. The deadly passion that overwhelms the famous but aging Bavarian writer Gustav von Aschenbach upon seeing Tazio, a Polish youth of beguiling beauty, is poignant.

I was only 20 when I read this novella with keen interest, following the little sailor suit and red silk bow through a cholera-ravaged Venice and admiring the magnificence of this image to bind the storyline.

In this context, Mann’s prose takes on a flavor of revelation and subtlety. I remember wrapping myself in every word, sometimes rereading a passage until I had soaked up its very essence.

The lines certainly do not condone this forbidden love. Indeed, sexuality – both carnal and emotional – may be evoked, but is never materialized. What shines through is rather the strength of the attraction between the two characters. With remarkable concision, the author goes even further, probing, qualifying, questioning and carrying to its utmost limit the mortal fascination that such an attraction can exert. In the end, the story comes down to an expression of beauty harboring a platonic philosophy that allows the soul to soar... like an evanescent, lyrical and personal breath.”



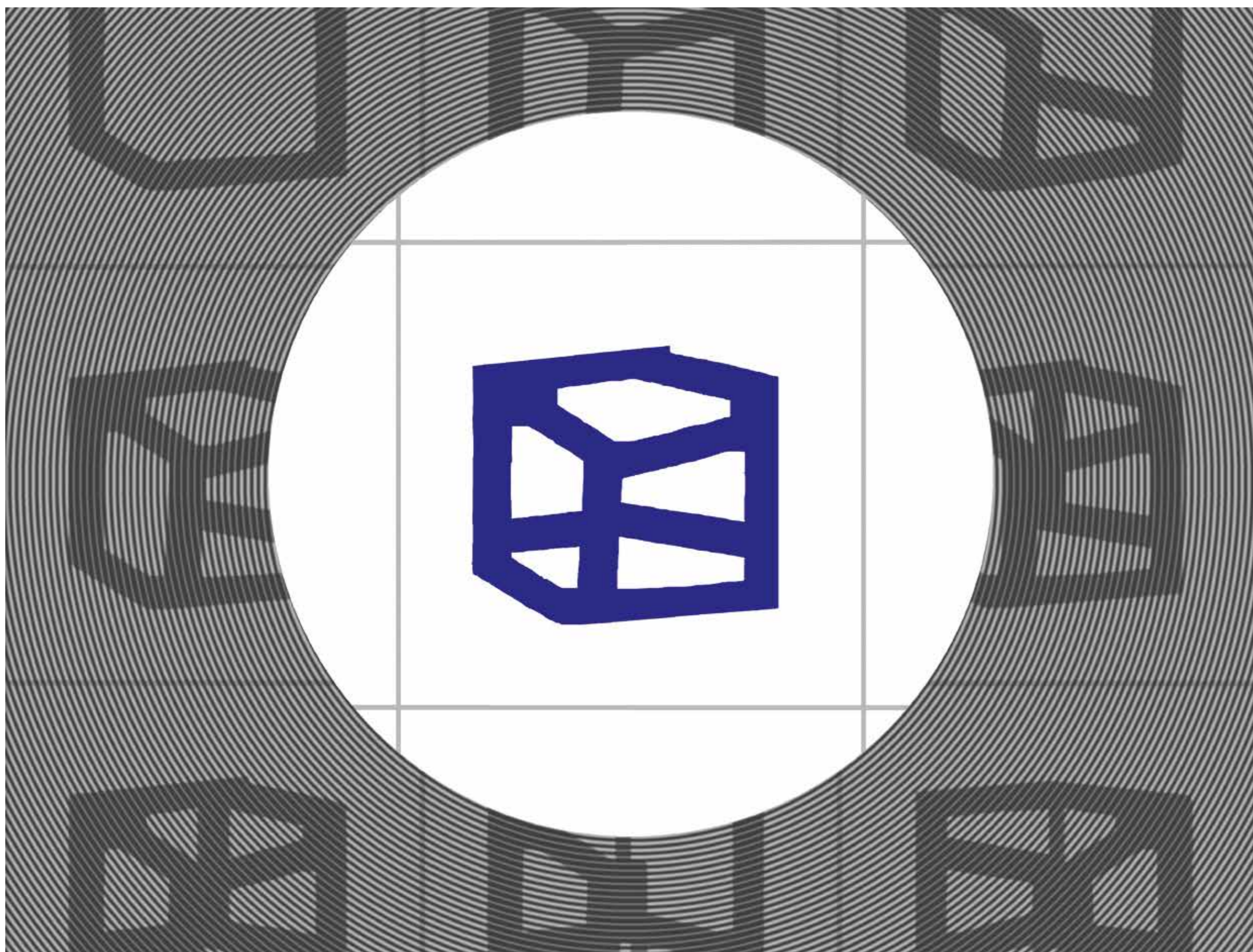
Casanova 2161

“In search of perfection”

“For me, there are no objective criteria involved in choosing a perfume. My selection is entirely emotional. I especially like perfumes with character, scents that evolve and that, without being linear, strike a certain balance.

Penhaligon’s *Juniper Sling* is a potent catalyst. An energizing and fleeting surge of rare intensity, this fragrance inspired by London Dry Gin – England’s most famous spirit – and the atmosphere of the Roaring Twenties envelops the skin in a veil of infinite tenderness. In 2020, Sophie has edited the perfect fragrance to match my character, in the *Storie Veneziane by Valmont* collection.

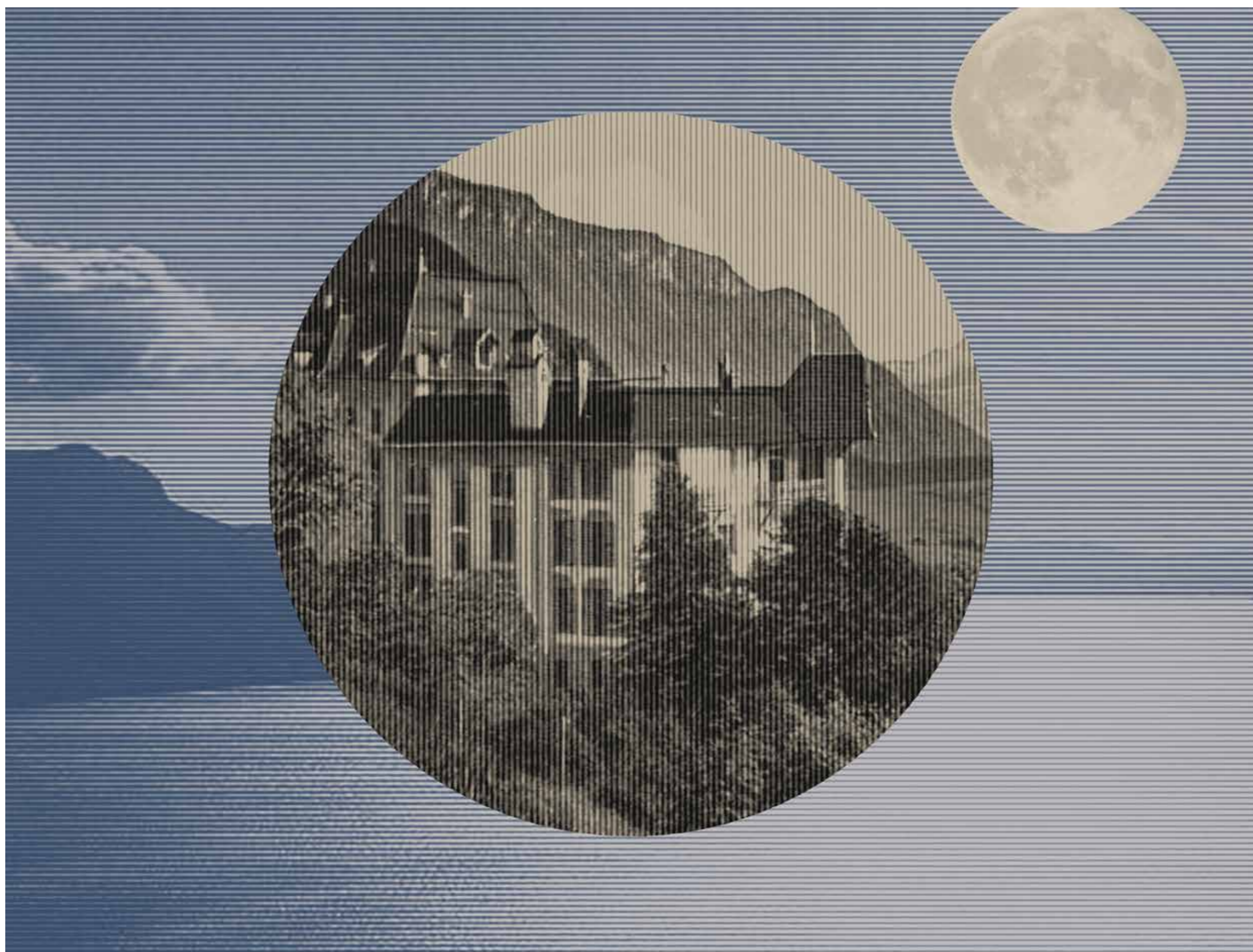
A gift baptized *Casanova 2161*, as the embodiment of eternal seduction... in a contemporary bold and elegant ode to vetiver, elevated with juniper berries and orris – the flower of kings. Subtle yet charismatic, this *eau de toilette* carries me away...”



Murano glass

“Art and substance”

“When I first wandered through the alleyways of Venice, under a sprinkling of mist rising from the lagoon to enshroud the city’s architecture in an unearthly aura, I also discovered the colorful treasures of the Berengo Studio on exhibit in the *Palazzo Franchetti*. They were all captivating... and all made of glass. I meticulously examined each piece, realizing that the greatest contemporary artists had managed to give free reign to their creativity in glass, experimenting the substance in every shape, even the most unexpected structures. I was fascinated by the highly skilled *savoir-faire* of these master glass blowers. The substance itself attracted me as well. Thanks to its spectrum and sorcery, it takes on a true personality. It captures and imprisons light. Ethereal yet structured, glass flirts with extremes: from superfluous luxury to mass consumption, from intense refinement to the practicality of daily life. This material is a highly technical product; its appearance depends entirely on the use made of it. When a craftsman truly delves into the glass, new architectures emerge from the substance, like this cage that Leonardo Cimolin, one of the most gifted master glass blowers, helped me create out of... Murano glass! And since I need constant contact with the water, I designed it in Cobalt blue, one of the most stunning hues in the infinite palette the medium offers. This intense and translucent shade magnifies space and plays with light, drawing man into infinitude.”



My arrival in Switzerland

“Encounter at the summit”

“I will always cherish the memory of my first steps on Swiss soil. It was 1989. At the time, I was living in Paris and working half-heartedly in *La Défense*, a gray and uninspiring imitation of Manhattan. My life was going nowhere and I had little in the way of career prospects, until the day the family business I was working for sent me to Switzerland to look into a sale offer from a certain Mr. Willy Schopfer, founder of the Valmont brand.

Shortly afterwards, I landed in Geneva, where the chauffeur responsible for conveying me to my destination had the welcome idea of driving along *La Côte* and the shores of Lake Geneva. It was a magnificent day: the prairies were resplendent, surrounded by shaded slopes, the placid lake glimmered like a mirror, innumerable shades of green stretched to the horizon, the nearby mountain peaks cast their majestic gaze over the land, and in the distance, I glimpsed the awe-inspiring snow-capped greatness of *Mont Blanc*.

The beauty of this unique landscape with its many peculiarities captivated me more with every mile: a series of perfectly enchanting postcard-like images. I immediately felt as if I had found my home, and had no doubt that this country was bursting with magnificent treasures of which the world was generously invited to partake. I literally fell in love, and the honeymoon continues to this day. Today, blending the purity of Switzerland’s natural resources and the power of science, *La Maison Valmont* continues to master the signs of time by offering the finest cosmetics.”



Sophie

“Bursting with creativity, light as a butterfly and mighty as a dragon”

Not for the faint of heart!

A figure as vivacious as Sophie never goes halfway. If she likes you, she loves you. Generosity is her motto, for every thought and every deed! I have seen this doctrine at work, in her relationships with her friends, her family and her career.

What is the secret to her openness and unfailing perspicacity? A gift of omnipresence? No. Rather, it is the inexhaustible energy particular to those who succeed in everything they do. Energy that comes from the heart. She cultivates her own style, a simple elegance seasoned with a touch of fantasy but devoid of ostentatiousness. A devoted mother and authority figure, she shows respect for each person's uniqueness and encourages their talents.

What sets her apart in her professional life? Her insatiable curiosity, her openness to innovation, the pleasure she takes in flinging open the bolted doors of science and traveling the precarious paths of the unknown. Those who know her have grown used to seeing her explore the worlds of beekeeping, glacier water, gallinacean and – why not? – even the occasional jellyfish.

At Valmont, don't ever tell her that it can't be done. It is simply waiting to be done! She seeks out the best for her creams, for beauty and for her clients.

Her team is made up of passionate professionals who have taken on her philosophy as their own. Valmont creams seem to have been created in Sophie's image: light texture, potent formulation.

Finally, in the silence amid her bonsais, she finds moments of reassurance, an indispensable break after her myriad trips around the world and her incessant activity, catching her breath before taking off again, ever faster, ever stronger!

Olivia Sellier



China Girl

“Light and free”

“As the *Bateaux Mouches* set off for their last cruise under a starlit sky, the bells of *Notre Dame Cathedral* marking the passing hours, I was about to head home from a party when suddenly, ‘Oh, oh, oh, ...’

The first notes of David Bowie’s ‘*China Girl*’ soared above the din of the evening’s festivities. My body and my heart immediately responded to the exotic tones of this eminently recognizable, rough and sultry voice. Holding my stilettos in my hands, I raced to the dance floor. ‘*I could escape this feeling.*’

Propelled by a breath of freedom, a mischievous smile accentuating my girlish dimples, I danced like there was no tomorrow. This glam rock sensation, as sophisticated as it is apocalyptic, struck a chord within me, taking control of my body like an irresistible impulse. It overwhelmed me, rekindling the link between Europe and Asia and uniting the lands of my roots. And the fact that these words were sung by my blond-haired, blue-eyed British crush only heightened my euphoria.

‘*I hear her heart beating...*’ As strong as mine.

The night dissolved into joyous folly. I was spinning, happy and carefree, carried away by the melody. I felt light. Something indescribable was happening. At the age of 25, I was a young woman in full bloom.”

« Ajoutez deux lettres à Paris
c'est le paradis! »
JULES RENARD, 1925

jusqu'aux étoiles

RIVE DROITE

RIVE GAUCHE

dentelle de verre

GRAND PALAIS

18^h00 : Balade le long des quais de Seine

19^h00 : place de la Concorde

15^h00 : SPA du Maurice JARDIN DES TUILERIES

City OF Light



Paris

“My heart aflutter on the *Pont des Arts*”

“As far back as I can remember I have always adored Paris. Aside from calling it home for many years, I love the City of Light for its joyous insolence. I love it for its maze of streets through which I never tire of wandering, and for the infinite possibilities it offers. I love its distinctive architecture, its monuments, its hotels and the Haussmann buildings ... the whole history of the city. I am bewitched by the *Seine*, its embankments and its succession of bridges. The air is so sweet, drifting along the river banks.

Aside from its fabled beauty, I also love Paris for its contrasts, its concrete, its traffic jams, its gray skies and eternal drizzle, its constant commotion and its sometimes uncouth disposition.

Whether a first-time visitor or a dyed-in-the-wool Parisian, you cannot help but succumb to the charm and energy of the French capital. The city awakens the senses. From art galleries to impromptu exhibitions, not to mention little bistros to discover on the fly, including my favorite, *Le Georges*, atop the *Centre Georges Pompidou*, as well as the colored stalls of the street market in the 17th *arrondissement*: the flavors of Paris, both savory and intellectual, never cease to thrill me.

The elegance of Parisian women, their heels clicking on the pavement, always capture my attention. Cheerful, spirited and full of charm, they have the gift of attracting light. So much so that on every trip to Paris, I explore the colors, materials and cuts of their outfits to keep up with changing styles and behaviors. This sophisticated atmosphere is a source of inspiration to create new Valmont formulas.

Those who say I'm too Parisian are absolutely right! Jules Renard* said it best in his Journal: ‘Add three letters to Paris and you get Paradise.’”

* Jules Renard (1864-19010), novelist and playwright, wrote Journal, 1887-1910 in 1925.

YOU'LL NEED:

- 6 cups chicken stock
- 2 stalks lemongrass
- 3 kaffir lime leaves
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 fresh red chili
- fresh shitake mushrooms
- juice of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- soy sauce
- shrimps
- other vegetables
- coconut milk
- sugar
- fresh coriander
- secret ingredient?

ต้มยำซุบ



Tom Yam soup

"The taste of pleasure"

"Naturally, given my Vietnamese background, I could have talked about my love for Phở, the soup I was brought up on. Though my roots are my support, I don't let them hold me back. That's why the soup I crave today, especially when shared with Capucine, my eldest daughter, goes by the Thai name of Tom Yam. Once you taste it, it is forever etched in your memory.

I discovered its quintessentially Eastern aroma later in life, in a Thai restaurant, and its rich, spicy taste gripped my palate.

Its subtle blends of flavors and colors makes each spoonful an experience, bursting with authenticity. Most importantly, every ingredient counts. Just like at Valmont!

The delicate aroma of lemongrass instills a freshness without acidity, while coriander infuses a soft savor suggestive of aniseed. The coconut milk lends an exceptional softness to the dish, with a smooth, fruity bouquet reminiscent of almond and tiare flowers that lulls me into sweet contentment and paves the way for the intriguing jolt of ginger. Or maybe it's that dash of Thai curry that echoes the mysteries of the Orient?

Indeed, a bowl of this gastronomic masterpiece is all it takes to make any meal exciting. It reflects the way I want to live my life: spicy and colorful, never dull!"



Bienvenue en Suisse, Tomorrow and En Quête de Sens

“Mother Nature as a muse”

“In the *Pantheon* of the silver screen, I cannot claim to have a single favorite, but I could name a Top Three.

Let’s start with *Tomorrow**. This film, directed by Mélanie Laurent and Cyril Dion, made me think. The two protagonists, driven by unfaltering optimism, set off together for a trip around the world to film pioneering and constructive initiatives in support of the environment and a new kind of society. They make us aware of how the world is changing and what we will leave for our children if nothing is done. Universal concerns that reflect real-life truths!

I would also choose *En Quête de Sens (In Search of Meaning)*** . Also well-known albeit more anecdotal, this is a road movie in which two childhood friends decide to leave everything behind, indulging their wanderlust and their dissatisfaction with the way the world is going. An in-depth philosophical journey together with an inner quest that gives hope to future generations who have lost their bearings.

Last but not least in my Top Three list is *Bienvenue en Suisse (Welcome to Switzerland)****, a sparkling comedy by Geneva-based director Léa Fazer. Light, funny and satirical, the filmmaker took on her native land, poking fun at the clichés that so well illustrate the contrast between Parisian intellectualism and Swiss authenticity. Every time I see this film, I laugh out loud while reliving a few of my own experiences.

Although they look at the world under different angles, these three feature-length movies share the very essence of life: a sense of love and of being one with nature. They show us how vitally important it is to see the Earth as a source of life rather than a simple resource to be used and discarded. They provide me with daily inspiration that also contributed to our Essence of Bees line for *Elixir des Glaciers*. We will never outdo Mother Nature, so let us do everything we can to live in harmony with her.”

* *Tomorrow* by Mélanie Laurent and Cyril Dion – 2015.

** *En quête de sens* by Nathanaël Coste and Marc de la Ménardière – 2015.

*** *Bienvenue en Suisse* by Léa Fazer – 2014.



EMBODY THE
Dream

Oscar de la Renta

“Sacred union of the fantastic and the material”

“His creations are iconic references in the world of fashion. Floating, elegant, feminine, colorful, cherished like jewels. His dresses have won over countless actresses, celebrities, queens and princesses, not to mention American First Ladies. And for good reason! His gowns, long and romantic with their fitted bodice, embody an art of sophistication devoid of bourgeois airs. This Dominican-American fashion designer lived in a world of dreams. He loved women and proved it throughout his career. As you may have guessed, these words describe non other than Oscar de la Renta, one of the figures who has most inspired me.

Having worked alongside him from 1989 to 1992, I saw first-hand his commitment to the female body. He devoted himself to elevating the female form, bringing together every continent in his artistic expression. Thanks to him, women emerged from the bonds of trendiness and became themselves, freed from the obligation of highlighting their elegance with special effects. He had the gift of making women unique. He sanctified them with his art.

That is exactly how I see cosmetics. In *La Maison Valmont*, we are all at the service of women – and especially their skin. With each of our creations, we spare no effort to pay them the tribute they deserve.”

* Óscar de la Renta was born Óscar Aristides de la Renta Fiallo in Santo Domingo on July 22, 1932. He died on October 20, 2014 in Kent, Connecticut, and was an American fashion designer.



Constellation by Adrien Bosc

“Shooting stars”

“I devoured Adrien Bosc’s first novel, *Constellation*, in a single sitting when it was published in 2014. *Constellation*: the title refers to the airplane that crashed in the Azores archipelago in October 1949, carrying legendary boxer Marcel Cerdan to New York where he was to be reunited with Edith Piaf before his fight against Jake LaMotta. Like many people, I already knew about the event from films and other books recounting the love story between “La Môme” and the “Casablanca Clouter.” However, I knew nothing of the other passengers killed in the crash. Today, when flying is as routine as driving, risk is almost forgotten. But in the early days of aviation in the 1940s, flight was reserved to a select few. Thus, illustrious figures pursuing singular destinies climbed aboard this steel sarcophagus like so many luminaries shimmering in a well ordered yet hazardous flock: a virtuoso violinist, the inventor of the Mickey Mouse watch, Basque shepherds, a journalist, a paper winder, et alii. On the path to tragedy, the life stories of these shooting stars collide, leaving behind wreckage, dreams and memories. My heart sinks. Especially when I come to the chapter where the author connects his personal story with his yearning to explore the fragments of a random series of events. The lines impart a certain poetry interspersed with more detached, quasi-philosophical reflections that make my head spin.”





my mood
my fragrance



Several

“Skin deep”

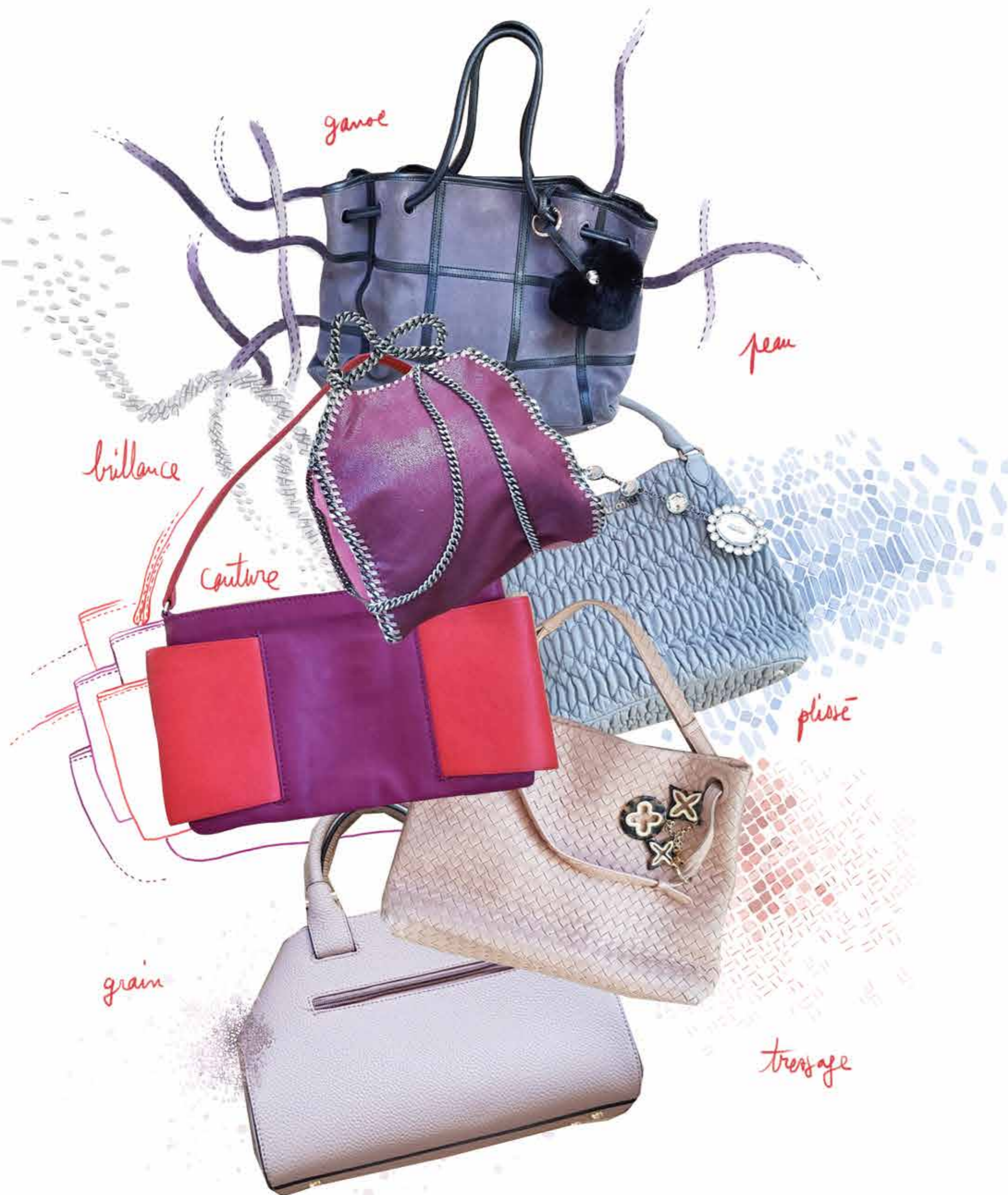
“Thirty years ago, choosing a perfume was a life-long commitment. Today, faced with a dizzying abundance of temptations, I admit that I myself flutter from perfume to perfume like a honey bee buzzes from flower to flower. Sometimes fresh, sometimes wild or romantic, I choose my fragrance depending on my mood, continuously reinventing my olfactory identity. Don Giovanni said: “I will change your fate.” Even taken out of context, this sentence perfectly reflects the multiple lives that perfumes offer us.

Laurent Mazzone’s *Chemise Blanche* for Monday mornings. This fragrance fits my professional identity. It calls to mind clean linen drying in the sun... Its aura, neutral and delicate, hints at a fruity chord of bergamot and mandarin. The heart reveals a blend of iris and lily of the valley, along with a touch of rose, making a lasting impression and giving me the intellectual acuity I need to start a new week.

Lately, I vibe to the utamable and sassy character of *Jazzy Twist*, an attractive floral gourmand eau de parfum I edited for my Collezione Privata. Celebrating fearless freedom, its contrasting notes of feminine magnolia, spicy black pepper and sweet chocolate chips enchant my days...

Delving into another style, I also love powdery scents. In this regard, *White Suede* by Tom Ford is an absolute gem. An unusual take on musk conveys a deep and almost commanding gentleness. Like a second skin, this fragrance is alive with physical and ethereal sensuality, expressing woman in all her glory.

My heart has been beating for *Verde Erba I*, one of our *Storie Veneziane* by Valmont olfactory masterpieces. Its voluptuous floral symphony, and especially its overtones of mockorange, or Poet’s jasmine, expresses a broad array of emotions. Elegant, graceful and soaring, it imbues every day with a sense of springtime in a sunbathed prairie. Pure ecstasy!”



LOVE THE DIFFERENT

textures

OF LEATHER

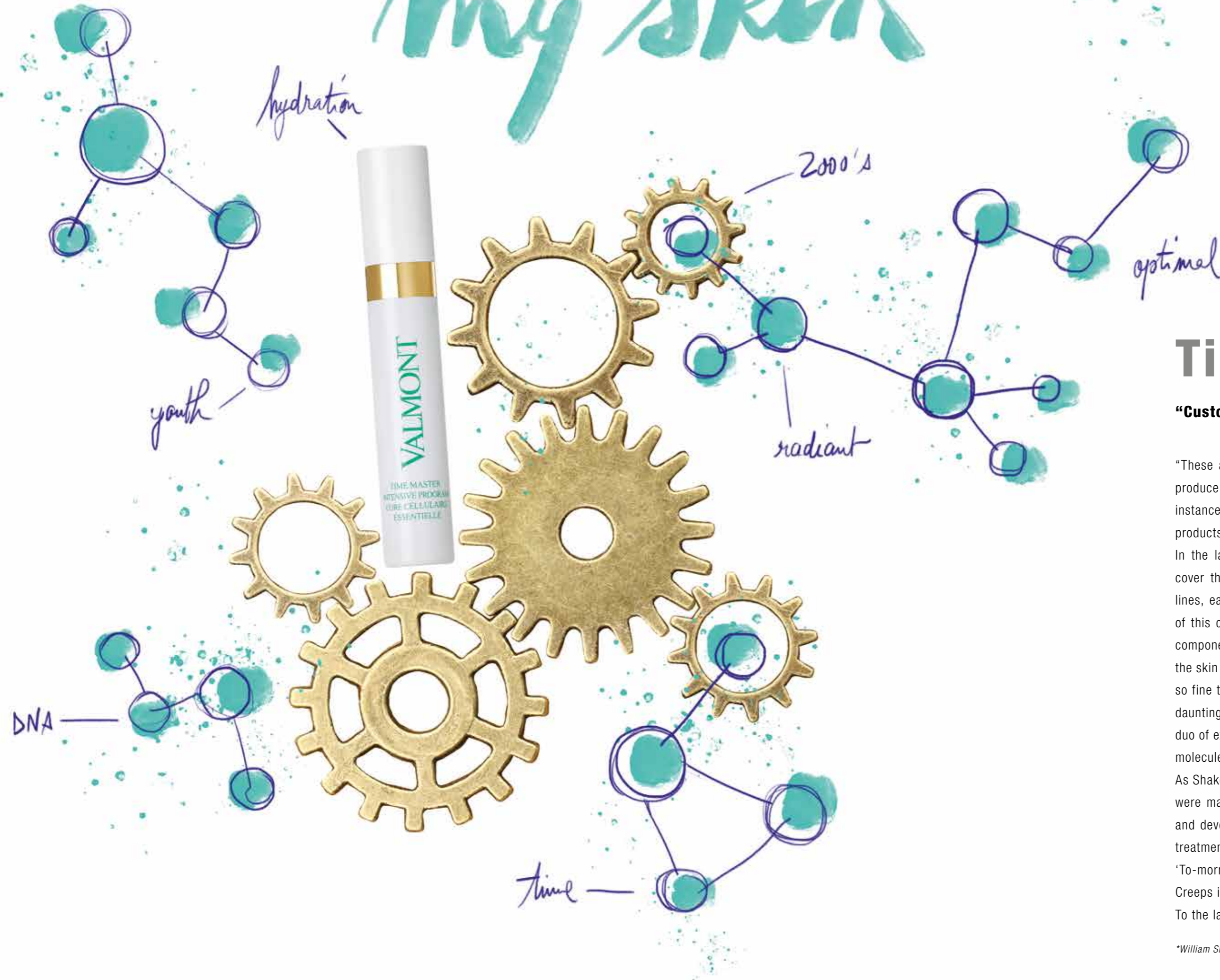
Leather

“A carnal connection”

“I am a great lover of materials of all kinds, but one particularly stands out: leather. Tanned, treated, tawed or suede, not to mention Russia leather... these skins are simply irresistible. And once the temperature starts to drop, my wardrobe overflows with leather. Additionally, by juxtaposing the material with a touch of silk or mohair, I play with different textures. I quite enjoy underscoring the complexity of contrasts. In the end, my vision of matter goes beyond simply contemplating or admiring a material; it must connect, or even merge with another substance.

And let's not forget that leather, because of its specific qualities, is a dynamic material: even inert, it has the reflexes of a living organ, a second skin that breathes and evolves with time. It melds with the body, and ages so gracefully that it can proudly display the wear and tear we strive to prevent on our own skin. Leather offers endless possibilities, countless textures, like the materials we use to create our creams. When creating a formula, we eschew any unexceptional ingredients: as a rule, we source our raw materials from the heart of Switzerland's natural bounty. We constantly strive to find new ways of extracting biologically active ingredients of the finest quality, which we then re-orient for other uses. More than anything, I love finding the right trick to adapt ingredients for use beyond their initial purpose. For me, this is a way of re-awakening the senses and celebrating matter, real, tangible matter. The kind that gets under your skin.”

under my skin



Time Master

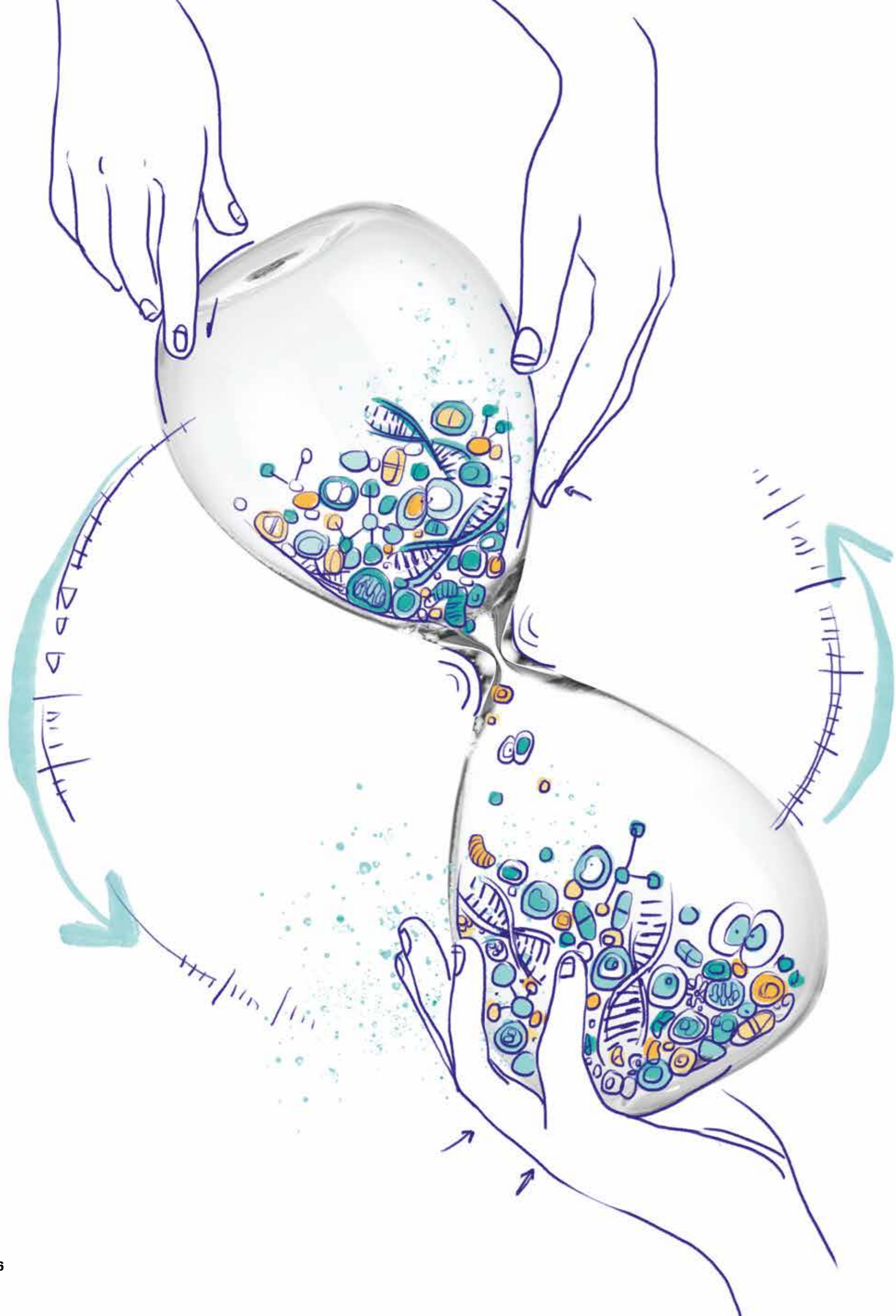
“Customized extravagance”

“These are many instants, both funny and moving, that determine the course of our lives. They produce the happy or painful memories that we share in conversation with our loved ones. For instance, I have joyful memories of the successful creation of *Time Master*, today one of our flagship products.

In the late 2000s, as our company was enjoying rapid growth and launching new products to cover the market, I thought it wise to entirely restructure our product offering into three main lines, each line targeting a specific set of needs for the skin. To mark the successful conclusion of this classification, I began thinking about an overall treatment that would encompass all four components. In other words, a product so ingenious that it could cure any skin condition, leaving the skin hydrated, radiant, visibly firmer and more youthful. My idea was to create a nano-emulsion so fine that it would sink into the skin in a fraction of a second, ensuring optimal effectiveness. A daunting challenge to be sure. I wanted to harness Valmont’s key strengths, based on a dynamic duo of exclusive active ingredients: DNA and RNA. However, to create a nano-emulsion from these molecules, they would first have to be liposomed, which is akin to fitting an elephant into a size 8. As Shakespeare would say, ‘Ay, there’s the rub!’ Those who claimed it was impossible – and there were many – didn’t take measure of my resolve and determination. After five years of research and development, Valmont achieved a true technological feat by creating *Time Master*, a cellular treatment of rare nobility, the ultimate weapon to turn time into an ally.

‘To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time.’”

*William Shakespeare – excerpt from *Macbeth*.



turn
back
the time

I dream a dream

“The invention of an elixir”

“What do I dream about? What remains of my dreams when night gives way to daylight? A beauty treatment, naturally! Let me share a secret: my most extravagant dream would be to invent an elixir, a kind of *Time Master* of the future to be sipped and applied on the skin, and containing the boldest ingredients ... unfortunately, many of the ingredients I dream of using – human stem cells, placenta extracts and certain hormones – are prohibited.

To be more precise, this cosmetic product would feature an invaluable formula that melds perfectly into the skin and – the apex of ingenuity – containing mini-sensors, waves or electric agitators to ensure constant stimulation for the skin. It would never rest, except at night. As physical activity is crucial for health, this delicate and indelible emulsion, designed for both men and women, would serve as a workout for the skin.

I admit it would be no easy task. But in the end, I have always been able to find the right people to bring my ideas to life. Believing in your dreams gives you strength, confidence, and a self-evident feeling of freedom. I champion that as a universal law.”



Franka Holtmann

“Lioness of luxury and inspirational icon”

Behind that megawatt smile is a woman with a sharply strategic mind, a visionary with unwavering determination to create the utmost in satisfaction for her family and friends as well as her global family: the guests of *Le Meurice*.

That Franka Holtmann is unique is a given. Her professional firsts are Olympian: She is the only woman to run two of Paris' six Palace hotels: The *Hotel de Crillon* and *Le Meurice*. In 2010 she became the first woman General Manager to receive France's highest decoration, the prestigious French Legion of Honor.

But the recipient of these and other accolades is much much more than her awards. Franka is a warm, caring and always curious person with a big heart and a big brain. Her friends cherish her. Though her profession is all encompassing, she always has time for a friend, a friend of a friend or for a special request, perhaps from a friend of a friend of a friend... the list goes on.

There really aren't enough superlatives to describe her – professionally and personally. As one who has worked with her as a public relations consultant in the past and now consider her one of my dearest friends and confidantes, she is a treasure. I am not unique in my feelings.

To know her is to respect and admire her. Those of us who have been lucky enough to call her friend or colleague cannot help but maintain a sense of wonder about this very special person: a devoted daughter, wife, mother and a proud, very new grandmother. Franka Holtmann sparkles with a joy for her personal and professional life, all the while applying her unique deft touch or a heavy hand to the daily or long-term challenges of her profession.

She is truly an inspiration.

Karon Cullen



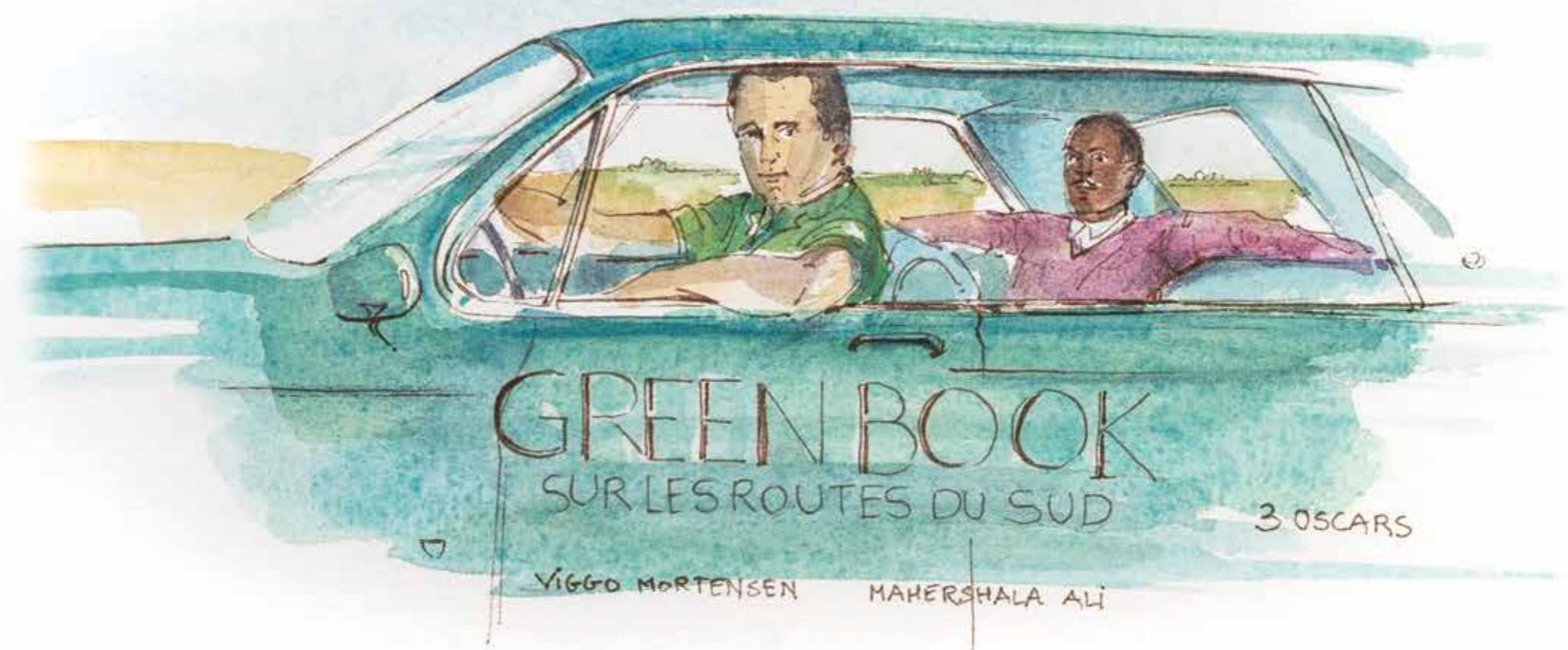
Biarritz

“In the Heart of the Waves”

“Some cities feel whitewashed, searching for their identities, like they would a lost package.... But Biarritz, this Basque beauty, is not one of them. She could never remain anonymous. With one foot in the Atlantic and the other in the mountains, this former whaling village that grew into a renowned seaside resort – even boasting the patronage of Empress Eugenia and Napoleon – has kept the splendor and authenticity of yesteryear, without taking on the veneer of snobbery. This city of white houses ‘with red roofs and green shutters set upon grassy hills’ – to borrow from Victor Hugo’s description – is a snapshot in constant motion. On Sundays, it’s not unusual to see Biarrots form an impromptu circle near the *Grande Plage* (Big Beach) to dance the *Mutxiko* – rain or shine. The inheritor of great traditions, Biarritz proves to be just as sweet as it is strong – just like Espelette pepper, one of the staple ingredients in the local cuisine.

Surfers are drawn to the incredible power of the ocean at Biarritz, where the waves have carved a spectacular scene of high cliffs, long sandy beaches, and wild coves. Add to this the traditional, gentle pace of a uniquely gourmand and festive art de vivre, and you get a friendly, sharing culture – one that checks all my boxes.

I feel at home in this blessed corner of France. For years, I’ve packed my bags for Biarritz to recharge my batteries and revitalize myself, always with the same amount of pleasure. I simply take up the same espadrilles, friendships, beaches and sunshine and munch the same apricot beignets that I remember from when I was 17 – and which, it seems, I’ll never get over.”



Green Book

"An Open Book"

"I'm struggling to pick just one, the list is so long. But I recently fell in love with *Green Book*. Based on a true story, this film follows two improbable friends in the 1960s. One is a black, gay, virtuosic jazz pianist, as elegant as he is cultivated. The other is a white bouncer-cum-chauffer, a smooth-talker with lots of ingrained racial prejudices. When the pianist is asked to perform a series of concerts in the segregated South, the two men hit the road, with only the infamous *Negro Motorist Green Book* – the somber souvenir guide for African-Americans to find black-friendly businesses – to lead the way.

While the plot may be too predictable for some, the unexpected friendship that binds the two men transcends prejudice in all its forms – because, in the end, the contrasts of class, education, and sexual orientation prove even more divisive than skin color. And, if you look a little deeper than the tired reconciliation plot, this road-movie, shot by Peter Farrelly, proves itself more sensitive than it seems. The brilliant friendship between these two loners really touched me. And beyond the racial issues it explores, what sticks with me is how the encounter with the Other can change a life and transform the person you are."



Zen striped bass

The Virtues of Being a Foodie

"It's no secret that I'm a foodie. Pasta served with artichokes, tomato and garlic; cheeses with personality; extra dark chocolate melting in a cup of anise tea; the scrumptious tartes of Cédric Grolet fresh out of the oven – just thinking about food makes my mouth water! But this isn't about stuffing my face with an éclair on a street corner. No! My gastronomic pleasures revolve around making connections and sharing with others. Since my career is so time demanding, as soon as I'm at my house in Biarritz, I invite friends and family over to share my carefully simmered dishes. Good food, good friends, good laughs – guaranteed! So I pop over to the market first thing in the morning. There, among stands bursting with summery colors, I find inspiration. Driven by taste and seeking a balance of flavors, I consider it a matter of pride to only use high-quality products. And then, taking the lessons I learned from Alain Ducasse, I turn to nature and the changing seasons and cook my signature dish as often as possible: zen striped bass. The simplicity of this dish approaches the divine, taking my breath away with every melt-in-your-mouth bite. The secret to cooking the perfect fish? Place it in the oven for 40 minutes at 120°C (250°F) – a slow, no-stress approach. Perfected by chef Olivier Roellinger, this is my all-time favorite dish, made even better when paired with mashed potatoes or thinly sliced cucumber in lemony yogurt. Every bite somehow makes you want more. My guests and I are wild for this classic!"



Alain Ducasse

“Mr. Bold”

“Deep in their heart, everyone has a role model. Whether celebrities or loved ones (of the real or fictional variety), the people we admire inspire us, and can even help us develop into who we really are. For me, Alain Ducasse jumps to mind. This multi-starred, world-renowned French chef is a writer of best-sellers, a feared and formidable businessman, and the owner of a strong and unique personality. Since we started working together at Le Meurice in 2013, I’ve noticed that people sometimes imagine him differently from how he really is. To work alongside him is to add vim and vigor to multiple projects – and every instant feels the richer for it!

It should go without saying that I love his food. Accessible and solid, it’s both classic and original at the same time. I love the way he works his products – his *terroir*, as he calls them. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the memory – and the taste! – of his hare *à la Royale*, or the canny interplay of contrasts in his *chaud/froid de Saint-Jacques* (hot and cold scallops). This alchemist of taste captures the spirit of the moment – no, outpaces it, keeping excellence as his constant goal.

But behind the peerless professional is the man. Genuine, timid, and principled, he has a taste for the well-turned phrase. And, like a sponge, he absorbs everything that goes on around him, drawing nourishment from new experiences and never hesitating to question himself. He takes this knowledge and disseminates it, readily sharing his *savoir-faire* with those animated by the same passion as him. He knows a bright future when he sees one, and always inspires people to go just a little bit further – to the places we don’t dare to go.”



The Man Without a Shadow by Joyce Carol Oates

“A Never-Ending Möbius Strip”

“Captivated. Exhausted. Unsettled. Seduced. Fascinated. These words capture my state of mind while reading *The Man Without a Shadow*, one of the recent novels by the insatiable Joyce Carol Oates. The book doesn’t stop at the star-crossed love story between an amnesiac and the research scientist taking care of him. Far from it! Delivering mystery, intrigue, and scientific knowledge drawn from interviews with preeminent medical specialists, Oates juggles the irrational and the rational with disconcerting ease, using the intimate relationship between protagonists Margot Sharpe and Elihu Hoopes to draw the reader deep into the science of the human brain.

This book interrogates true love, identity, memory, and our secret innermost selves. It asks: can a love story this strange be called a love story at all? What is identity without memory? Can we survive as prisoners of a perpetual present moment?

Oates sets a fire in my heart with her adroit telling of the lives of these characters whose hearts have been bruised, if not broken. I think back to the scene where the scientist, torn between sexual desire, medical ethics, and her professional ambitions, goes so far as to play-act her fantasy of marrying Elihu Hoopes by wearing a phony wedding ring. Above all, I love the way Oates dissects humanity in these pages, analyzing our equivocal urges and their derivatives, our mental dysfunctions and our deepest, shadowy selves.

The importance of remembering, to recall and not to forget – because without you, dear memory, who are we? Shadows of ourselves – without past, present, or future.”



Diana Krall

“Lady Krall, The absolute crooneress”

“Aside from a few songs here and there, I never really knew Diana Krall. That is, until winter 2015. That’s when I was left stunned by a performance she gave at *the Cinémathèque de Paris*. What a revelation! This ‘Crooneress,’ with her opulent blonde locks and piercing baby blues, proved to all of Paris that she was anything but some B-list artist whose pretty face thrust her onto the global stage. Aside from her stunning voice, her fascinating femininity proved just as central to her performance as her piano skills. After that experience, I sought out the rest of her *œuvre* – a uniquely elegant discography.

On *Quiet Nights* (2009) – by far her most sensual album – her velvety voice warms my heart with its smoky and rolling accents. Her rather jazzy melodies – originally played by Charlie Parker, Tom Waits, Miles Davis or Keith Jarrett – tickle me. I am faced with a sudden desire to curl up in front of a fire with a good glass of wine, or to slide my lips against the skin of my beloved.

But with her characteristic talent, Diana Krall goes beyond jazz. This beautiful Canadian brings her style to a host of genres to great effect. *Wallflower* (2015) is proof positive. Mamas & Papas’ *California Dreaming*, *In My Life* by The Beatles, and *Desperado* by The Eagles constitute a diverse anthology, where Krall uses Brazilian culture as inspiration to springboard into an impulsive hedonism. Whether vaunting a bossa nova or whispering Christmas songs as if they were standards arranged by big-band composers, Diana Krall shows us just how much there’s still to discover in the classics we know and love... as if life itself starts anew with every strum, every intimate and spine-tingling song.”



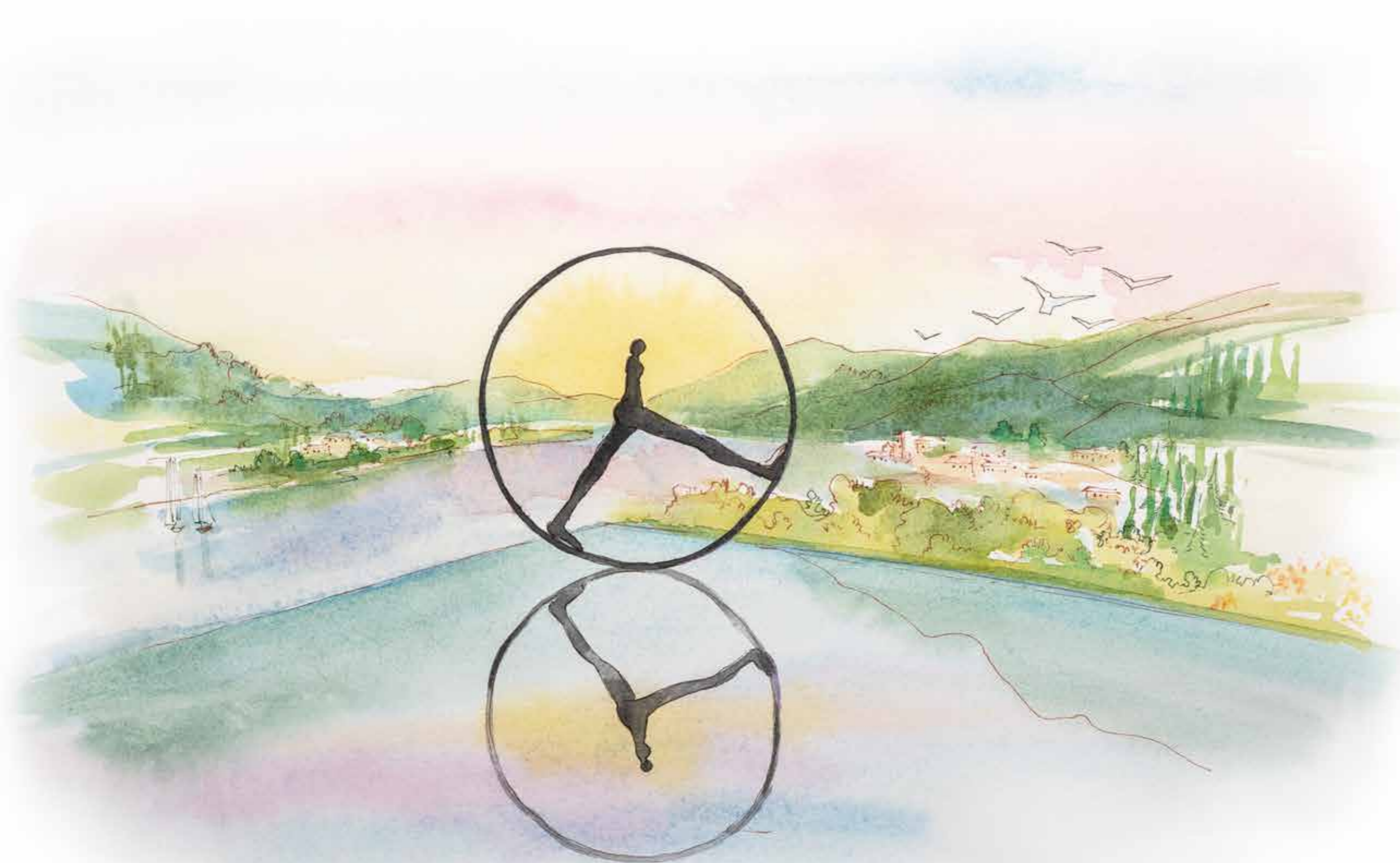
L'Elixir des Glaciers : Cure Majestueuse

“My extra thing”

“Once summer is over, there is nothing more depressing than seeing your warm-weather glow disappear the moment you’re back in your day-to-day life. And while most women swear by their ‘must-have’ beauty routines, I find that the secret to keeping that stunning vacation glow is much simpler than that.

My tip? Valmont’s L’Elixir des Glaciers : *Cure Majestueuse*. While I’m something of a novice when it comes to oils, I have to admit that this sensuous nectar goes on smooth and penetrates deep into the skin. Bursting with powerful omega fatty acids and beautifying agents straight from the beehive, it transforms my skin into a plumper, softer, and visibly more radiant version of itself. But the benefits are not only skin-deep ! It’s uncanny how well this lightly-scented, silky oil smoothes the skin and naturally erases tiny imperfections. On top of this, the ingenious packaging helps me dose just the right amount of revitalizing product whenever I need it. Seeing how quickly I use it up, I sometimes wonder whether my husband has been using some behind my back !

I would just as strongly recommend all other La Maison Valmont products. Beyond their well-proven results, I love the heart and soul behind these cosmetics. Sophie and Didier Guillon march to the beat of their own drum, and I’ve been lucky to forge a close friendship with these two go-getters. Our bond is based on altruism, a passion for listening, and a shared love for art. All in all, it’s a simple, mutual exchange where everyone benefits from our common desire to create a fruitful, long-lasting impact.”



The Sculptures of Nathalie Decoster

“An Irreducible Artist”

“Is it her voice that carries more than it ensures such strong thoughts? Her icy blue gaze that falls on you with warmth? Her lioness hair, all disheveled, which lends her a unique and mysterious allure? Her zeal for communication, embodied by her bubbly nature? Or how she bears, with calm modesty, her status as a world-renowned artist?”

Wherever it comes from, Nathalie Decoster – an emblematic figure of contemporary art – exudes an effortless, mesmerizing charm. From the moment we met, her unique personality has captivated me with the same dreamlike power as her art, which leads us to pay attention to a feature of our lives that we usually take for granted.

Nathalie Decoster’s monumental and streamlined bronze works – fascinating both for their force and their poetry – share a common denominator: Time. Whether passing, dragging, flying, breaking, or loving... Time – and her different perspectives of it – serves as an endless source of inspiration. And thanks to a canny interplay of form and material, Nathalie Decoster is able to present this universal theme in its reality and in the abstract. The little man who stubbornly marches along the thread of time to create his destiny, confronted by the cycle of life and death, the forces of nature, and other men, showing us the hidden mysteries of Time and upsetting our notions of it.

Between sorrow and joy, fear and hope, apprehension and serenity, Nathalie Decoster springboards off Seneca’s philosophical tenets to demonstrate the absurdity of the life of modern man – with a pinch of cheekiness, of course. This is a life lesson for everyone, and offers a key to new levels of consciousness. This is important to me because one of her works holds pride of place in my home. It is an ever-present symbol, a gift offered by my team at the Plaza Athénée upon my departure, and it holds a special place in my heart.”



Architects Bjarke Ingels and Philippe Starck

“Pragmatic Utopians”

“Because of his widely recognized *Louis Ghost chair*, and because of his unique method and fascinating profile, Philippe Starck is without a doubt one of the readiest examples, when asked to name an outstanding contemporary designer.

I can attest to his skill, having developed a rapport with him during several of the renovations at *Le Meurice*. He always approached the issue with certainty, knowing what he was doing and why, and applying himself instinctually to the service of the establishment. The result? Through little touches of glamour and wit, and by distancing himself from the materials themselves – a feat for a creator of materials! – Philippe Starck breathed life into the oldest of the Parisian Palace hotels. He negotiated past and present, helping the hotel sparkle without alienating it from its roots. This man thinks ‘outside the walls’! I admire his vision, vaster than the spaces he punctuates with glass walls or winged armchairs.

In another vein, I recently had the chance to meet Bjarke Ingels. With the air of a Viking and dark, piercing eyes, this is an architect of unusual creativity, delivering some of today’s most innovate projects*. Unassuming, this Dane animates his creations with a bracing Northern wind. To understand his work means approaching architecture from 360 degrees – but even that doesn’t show the whole picture.

From this odd couple of extraordinary personalities, I note one similarity: the gift of using the ordinary as a lens to see the extraordinary. Ever more inspired, ever more inventive, they boldly innovate with balance and subtlety. Their creative genius sustains me, helping me pull myself out of a stiff formalism and break free from convention. And the pinch of cheekiness adds flavor to my projects!”

* Among other projects, Bjarke Ingels designed *Two World Trade Center* (2015), the *Lego House* in Billund (2017), the *Amager Bakke waste-to-energy plant* in Copenhagen (2019), and the forthcoming *Audemars Piguet museum* in Le Brassus (planned for 2020).



Diane Von Furstenberg Stella McCartney Tory Burch

“The Elegance of Being Yourself”

“Although I would not call myself a fashion victim, I would say that what we wear – far from being frivolous – is a fascinating and expressive medium that often sheds light on people and helps them tell their stories.

I would describe my personal style as effortless, smart, and on-the-go. Any garment that isn't easy to live in, or doesn't make me feel more elegant and confident, takes me further away from my true self. More often than not, I wear black, since it's easy to wear and eminently mix-and-matchable. I brighten up dark outfits with colorful accessories, and some favorite pieces that bring a sprinkle of fantasy.

To have style means to level with yourself without forcing it, and not risk becoming a caricature. I believe that allure lies not only in your wardrobe, but also in how you move, how you travel through space, and, more simply, how you depict your unique place in the world in which you live. I like to drape myself in flowy materials that are perfectly cut. That's why I'm an unconditional fan of the creations of Diane von Furstenberg, Stella McCartney, and Tory Burch.

Tailored for the modern woman juggling back-to-back meetings, business lunches, and gallery openings, their collections are bursting with pieces that are easy to mix. Their remarkable eye for contrasts helps accent the silhouette, and they redefine the shape of femininity by breaking free from conventional shapes.

I would also point out that these three super-engaged designers share a powerful, charismatic personality that combines the best of boldness, intuition, and talent. Entrepreneurs at heart, they are committed to shaping the fashion world to fit their vision, and not the other way around. Their work is suffused with a refreshing sense of liberty. They encourage women to take the daring step of exploring their truest selves – and beyond that, to follow their dreams...”



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