

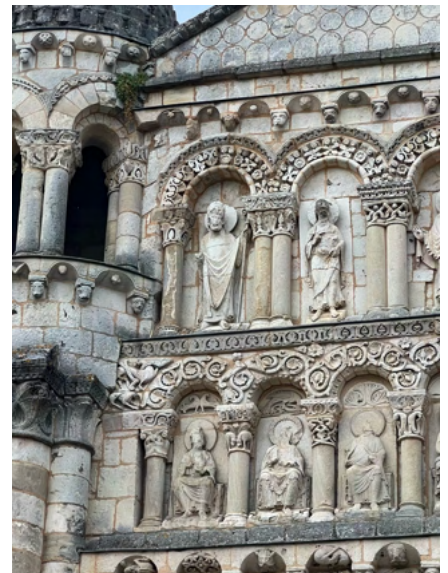
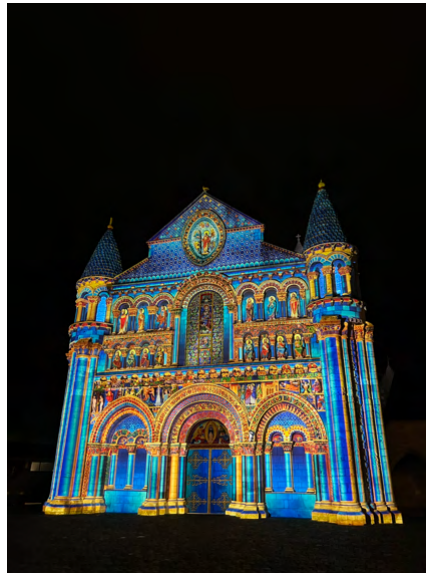
DOMAINE de BOISBUCHET

Honor Dodd

2024 Incorporation of Hammermen bursary recipient

In 2024, I was awarded the Hammermen award for my proposal to attend the Domaine de Boisbuchet residency programme in France. This opportunity allowed me to explore a collaborative and community-based style of making and different material explorations. I had very few expectations of myself when I began my residency, knowing only that I wanted to explore different methods of making to break away from the repetitive and target-based style I had adopted during my studies.

I started my trip with 3 nights in Poitiers, a nearby gothic/medieval town. This was perfect as my work centres around Gothic and ecclesiastical architecture, so I undertook many self-directed trips to churches, cathedrals, and other medieval monuments. This gave me a solid basis of visual media to work from that was culturally relevant to the Domaine. Poitiers is where the examination of Joan of Arc took place- her questioning before a religious court on grounds of heresy. The Palais de Justice a Poitiers resonated with me, specifically the decorative gothic-style windows, so I chose this window to explore during my time as I understand that I need a foundation to work from otherwise I struggle to even begin.



1. a detail of a flamboyant style gothic window
2. Church de Notre-Dame le Grande illuminations
3. stone carving details

The Domaine itself is a sprawling collection of architectural pavilions, repurposed farmhouses, and natural features such as a lake, river and forest. The very surroundings encouraged a grounded and original approach to working, with many of the multidisciplinary artists not seeking a quota to fill but rather letting themselves be directed by the landscape. Each dinner time was a community affair, with the staff serving dinner, then eating and socialising with the residents during the week, and residents taking over cooking duties on the weekends. We ate at trestle-style tables, eating only freshly prepared, seasonal foods, allowing even the food to become part of the artistic process. During my first week, the workshop programme was still active, with the sessions being led by lighting and material explorer Pablo Bolumar. His work this session focussed on transformative lighting using beeswax-infused seaweed paper. The cohort for this session was a class of Peruvian design students. While I wasn't engaged in these sessions, the style of the workshops meant that a lot of cross-collaborative research happened and the exchange of materials- I was able to use the beeswax paper to explore translucency in some of my research



1. Pablo Bolumar's final installation with the Peruvian students
2. eating lunch outdoors with the other residents
3. one of the wild horses on the land

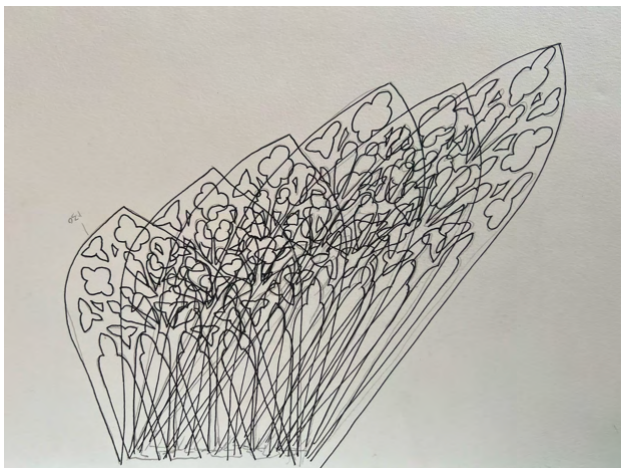
I divided my time in two- the first week, I dedicated myself to collaborating with other artists, taking in the surroundings, and being guided by the offerings of the Domaine. Using my jewellery knowledge, I worked with Gabrielle Venguer, a Mexican fashion designer, on a small-scale jewellery project. We combined silver clay with mirror, glass and acrylic, all materials left by other residents, to create an organic and free-flowing series of earrings. Both of us taught each other something- I taught Gabrielle practical skills in jewellery making, such as how to use a torch and files, etc., while Gabrielle showed me a more experimental way of treating materials, such as warping and manipulating plastics. I also spent some evenings working with the media team to film a short video using Gabrielle's clothing pieces. The team were solely inspired by the modern, psychedelic nature of Gabrielle's clothing, and I really enjoyed working to a brief with the sole guidance of the visual aesthetic



1. Showing Gabrielle how to use the torch
2. The results of our material experiments
3. A still from the short video showing some of the outfits



At this point in my trip, just before the first weekend, I was feeling almost overwhelmed- there were so many things I could explore, so many interesting people to talk to and work with, and many different places I could set up and work from. I almost had the burden of too many options. One thing I realised through my work with Gabrelle was how much I enjoyed being in a workshop with the machinery, materials, and help on hand. It was in this custom-built wood and plastic workshop that I decided to set up. I needed a sense of familiarity, so I built a jewellery bench- even if I didn't use it, I knew I had a place I could work, especially with all the copper I had brought with me. I built a jewellery bench using reinforced plywood, trestle legs, and a DIY bench peg. I brought a basic supply of tools with me and made a simple copper cutout of the Poitiers window as a starting point and to test out the bench. From there, I moved my bench outside into a nearby field. By happy accident, as I began to work on the copper cutout, I realised I was rotating around my bench to avoid getting the sun in my eyes. The conditions were so lovely outside, yet I was constantly fighting it. I decided that instead of using my typical phone torch set up to artificially manipulate shadows that serve as the basis for my work, I could sit back and allow the sun to help me. I positioned the copper cutout on a sheet of paper, set a timer for every hour, then traced the shadow each hour for 7 hours, all while I rested, ate, and sketched



1. the results of my sun-catching drawing
2. my handmade bench in a field near the workshop
3. the process and set-up of sun-catching drawings

My final week, after my weekend of sketching and photosynthesising, was split primarily between the workshop and the field where I had set my bench up. My expectation of creating any result in metal was beginning to feel stifling, as it was the antithesis of my aim for this residency- to explore new ways of making. I found some translucent sheets of acrylic in the material box- a material challenging to work with in the sense that it was less forgiving than metal. If I cut something wrong in metal, I could solder it back together, or the wrong shape could be sent to scrap and recycled efficiently. With acrylic, I didn't want to pollute the landscape with excess waste and cuts, so I had only one opportunity to execute my idea. I refined some of the shapes found in my sun-caught drawing and translated them into acrylic and bamboo. Taking one shape from each hour, I cut the acrylic, mounted it on varying heights of bamboo, and installed it in an arc shape in the place where the drawings were done. I aimed to create some large-scale, interactive installations that engaged with the landscape and the sun itself; as the sun moved overhead, it would replicate the shadows and exaggerate the distorted shapes even further. The choice of colour was so that if viewed from a low angle, as done by many of the children there, they could also engage with these and see how they blend into the sky at a certain time of day. The bamboo caused each piece to gently sway in the wind, while the dew overnight meant that morning they wilted slightly until, by my final day, they had reached the ground completely, almost signalling my time finishing at Boisbuchet

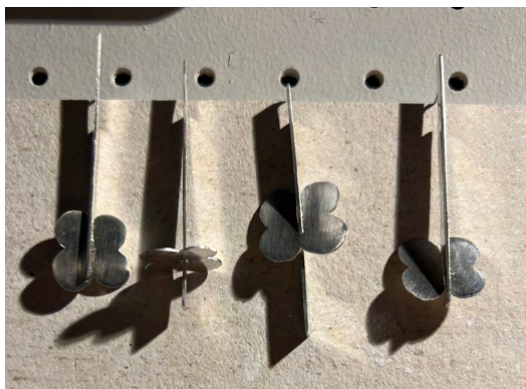
Overall, I was, and still am, incredibly happy with my outcomes. I felt such a relief working in a style that was opposite to how I'd been working previously, in plastic and wood vs metal, installation vs wearable, and large scale vs small.



1. trefoil acrylic sculpture
2. final presentation to the residents
3. up-close to the quatrefoil sculptures

Overall, my time at the Domaine was invaluable, as it truly helped me refine not only my visual aesthetic and the qualities I wish to pursue but also rediscover my love of making and a totally new approach to making in general. I began jewellery as I loved crafting and making with my hands, but the rigidity often found within academia began to sap that joy. Working at the Domaine, alongside so many creative and talented artists who constantly uplifted and supported one another, has reignited this love I have. The practical outcomes of my installations and drawings have already informed a new jewellery collection that has been picked up by a stockist in Edinburgh, while the international community has meant that even my social media is gaining a wider audience. I feel the passion in my making is coming through again, with the ethos shifting to not producing for the sake of producing but rather because I feel joy in it again. My long-term goal of opening a collaborative making/ exhibition space has only been reaffirmed since seeing the demand by artists for these spaces, but also the joy they bring to both artists and consumers.

The collection inspired by my time at Boisbuchet is going to become my permanent collection, featuring organic shapes and textures, expressive figures and a commitment to skill. They will use shapes of the distorted sun-caught drawings alongside the fluid and organic forms taken by the artists in their movements, practices, and existence



1. quatrefoil and line shadow caster earrings
2. organic textures 'Boisbuchet' collection
3. folded shadow brooch