

Press Kit

# Meriem Bennani



Sole crushing (2025). Reinterpretation de l'œuvre présentée initialement dans For My Best Family à la Fondazione Prada, 2024 © Meriem Bennani - Design graphique - Aethelia

Exposition Sole crushing 22.10.25–08.02.26

**LAFAYETTE ANTICIPATIONŠ**

Fondation Galeries Lafayette

Entrée gratuite

9 rue du Plâtre, Paris 4<sup>e</sup>





Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Benmami at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, 22 October 2025 - 8 February 2026. Courtesy of artist and galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corisni (Bruxelles) and Sadie Coles (Londres). Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations

<b>Press kit</b>	4
<b>Exhibition</b>	5
<b>Meriem Bennani</b> Biographical highlight	6
<b>Interview</b> Meriem Bennani and Elsa Coustou	7
<b>Press visuals</b>	9
<b>Lafayette Anticipations</b> La Fondation La Librairie pluto, café-restaurant	17
<b>Practical info</b>	20

## Focus on architecture

The building for Lafayette Anticipations is a unique architectural project designed by architect Rem Koolhaas and his agency OMA. Begun in 2012, the project required two years of preparation and three years of construction before the inauguration of the place on 10 March 2018. The challenge was immense: to preserve the entire nineteenth-century stone building and insert a 19-metre-high exhibition tower at its centre, in what was formerly an inner courtyard. Equipped with four movable floors and racks installed on the pillars, this structure allows the floors to be raised and lowered using electric contrails. Thanks to this "machine building", the space can be endlessly reconfigured to accommodate exhibitions. Lafayette Anticipations also houses a fully equipped 350 m<sup>2</sup> workshop in its basement, dedicated to the production of works by artists in residence.





Vue de l'exposition *Sole crushing*, Meriem Bennani à Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, 22 octobre 2025 - 8 février 2026 © Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations

# MERIEM BENNANI

*Sole crushing*

Exhibition | 22 October 2025 → 8 February 2026

With *Sole crushing*, the artist Meriem Bennani proposes an installation that explores the notion of being together and the individual's place in the community. Unfolding across the full height of the Fondation, the work stages some 200 flip-flops that are animated by a pneumatic system, performing a score composed in collaboration with the musician Reda Senhaji (aka Cheb Runner).

These flip-flops embody a multitude of characters and evoke collective moments where bodies are united by the rhythms of footsteps, songs, or political uprisings — whether at a protest, football stadium, or musical ceremonies. Fascinated by such contagious collective energies, the artist takes further cues from *dakka marrakchia*, a Moroccan ritual in which participants play music while reaching a peak of spiritual intensity.

She likewise refers to the notion of *duende*: a mysterious force, described by the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca in the 1930s, that seizes the bodies of flamenco dancers, with a concomitant hold on their spectators.

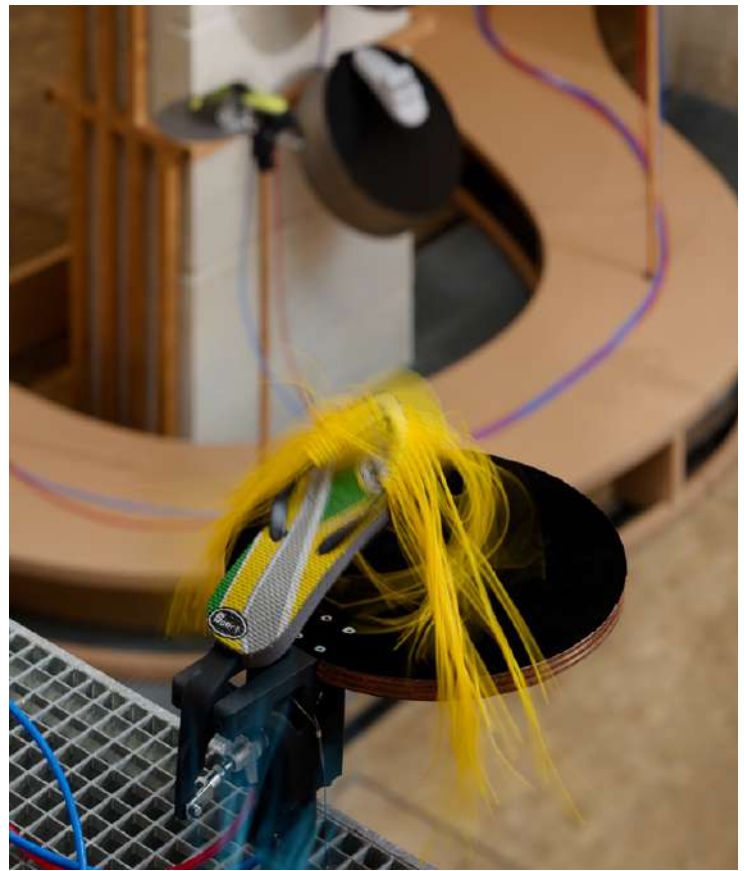
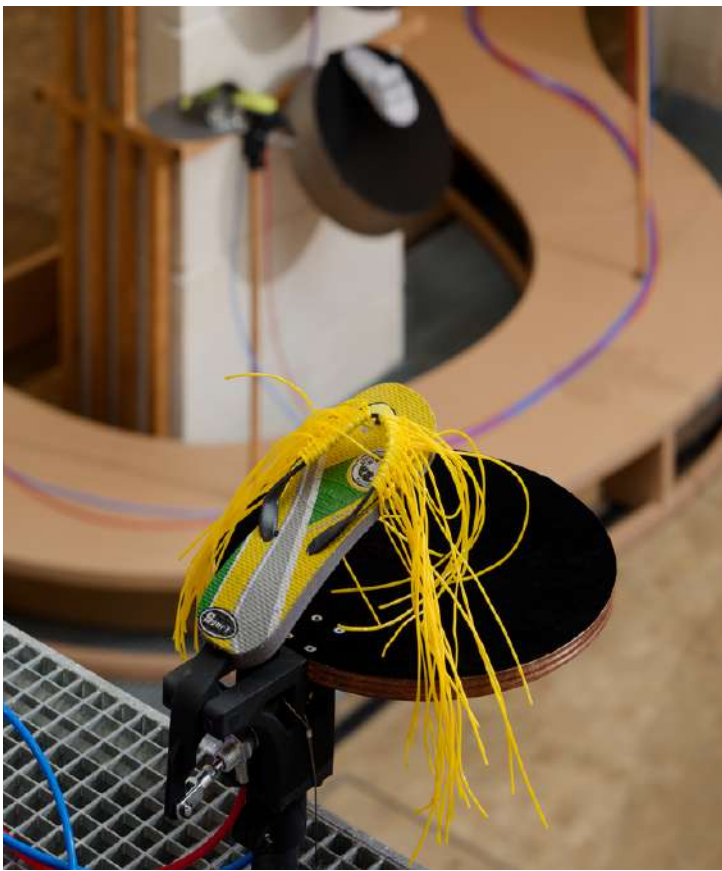
The work's title plays on the expression "soul-crushing" with the materiality of the sandals' soles, which both keep time and rhythmically sync up with what can become an overwhelming sonic power. First exhibited at the Fondazione Prada in Milan in 2024–25, *Sole crushing* has been completely readapted for Lafayette Anticipations with new instruments and a new musical composition. Meriem Bennani invites visitors to wander through the space, absorbing an experience of collective joy or uprising.

**Curator:** Elsa Coustou

**Publications:**

Catalogue, bilingual, Éditions Lafayette Anticipations, €29

Carnet, bilingual, Éditions Lafayette Anticipations, €8



*Sole crushing* is composed of 201 flip-flops, each connected to a pneumatic system by two tubes: one that receives air and sets the sandal in motion, the other of which completes the circuit and halts the movement. This air breathes life into the work, like a living organism or a vast wind instrument. The sandals' claps are programmed and sequenced following an original musical score, composed with an electric keyboard connected to a computer. Based on their accessories, supports (wood, metal, plexiglass, or velvet), and the size of their sound boxes, each shoe emits a particular sound.

Drawing on the repertoire of traditional North African music as well as that of symphony orchestras, Meriem Bennani takes inspiration from varied types of percussion such as drums, tambourines, and wood-blocks – in this case imagining a new tubular instrument that simultaneously evokes an organ, a marimba, and a carillon.

The artist chose the sandal for its malleability and ubiquity alike. Already present some 4,000 years ago in ancient Egypt and still worn around the world, here it steps into an entirely new dimension.





Meriem Bennani dans l'exposition *Sole crushing*, à Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, 22 octobre 2025. © Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations

# MERIEM BENNANI

## Biographical highlight

Meriem Bennani was born in 1988 in Morocco and lives in New York. In her sculptures, installations, and videos, she explores the potential of storytelling while amplifying reality through a strategy of magical realism and humour.

She earned her BFA from Cooper Union in New York and her MFA at the École nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Recent solo presentations include Fondazione Prada, Milan (2024–25); Fondation Kamel Lazaar, Tunis (2023); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2022); The High Line, New York (2022); The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago (2022); Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2022); Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden (2021); François Ghebaly, Los Angeles (2021); Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin (2020); Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2019);

and MoMA PS1, New York (2016). Her work was featured in the 2019 Whitney Biennial, the 2018 Biennial of Moving Images, and the 2016 Shanghai Biennale. Bennani participated in the most recent Toronto International Film Festival with her feature-length animated film *Bouchra*, co-directed with Orian Barki.

Her work is held in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Fondation Kadist, Paris; the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris; and Lafayette Anticipations, Paris.

# INTERVIEW

Meriem Bennani and Elsa Coustou

**[ELSA COUSTOU]** *Sole crushing* is an installation in which nearly 200 flip-flops, set in motion by a pneumatic system, play music. Previously, you created kinetic sculptures and videos in which objects come to life, or that include scenes of danced celebrations. How did you arrive at an orchestra of this scale? Could you tell us about the origins of the project and your choice of the flip-flop as a central element?

**[MERIEM BENNANI]** I made a sculpture with a single flip-flop a couple of years ago. I think I was just instinctually drawn to it as an object. And usually, when I'm instinctually drawn to something for some time, I try to understand why. I think something about how simple and common an object it is, feels compelling. I also like the challenge of thinking: can I make an interesting sculpture with something so simple? And so I made a first sculpture: it was just one flip-flop on a motorised system, high up in a show, that would just hit the wall following a random sequence. You wouldn't notice it at first. Then it would hit the wall really loudly, and you would notice there's a flip-flop hanging high up. It made a sound. It was just funny; it almost acted as the metronome of the exhibition. I really like music, particularly percussive music, and I had already worked with musical traditions that are based on percussion instruments in Morocco, like *dakka marrakchia*, for example. I did a project where I worked with musicians who played *dakka*. I thought it would be fun to program more than one, to start creating a rhythm out of this one. But I never did it. And then, when I visited the Podium at Fondazione Prada, in Milan, which is where I did the first iteration of this piece, I realised it was such a fancy and big space. I also couldn't help but think about Prada and its history in fashion, even though Fondazione Prada is an art space. I kept thinking that if I could pull off inhabiting such a big, intimidating, gorgeous space, based on something as simple as a flip-flop, which is also at the bottom of the fashion chain, it would be an interesting challenge.



Again, that was just an intuition. Then I thought that one flip-flop is nothing but a thousand could help me achieve something which is almost emotional. If they're stomping and making the ground shake, it might become overwhelming or create something. And in my exhibitions, I'm always more interested in provoking some kind of emotional response than intellectual responses. I'm more interested in creating a feeling in order to talk eventually about other things that you can intellectualise. So that intuition I had about using many flip-flops, I think it reminded me of when you have a crowd. Then I started thinking about all those moments where there are a lot of people together for different reasons. Also, on an "animation" level, flip-flops are made out of rubber, and they feel so animated, in a way. They feel very elastic and I have been interested in things that stretch and that are squishy. They are polymorphic, they can change their shape and become something else. In a way, they evade the rigidity of authority and rules. These characteristics then start making sense with the theme of people gathering against authoritarian rule.

**[E.C.]** Unlike most of your previous works, *Sole crushing* doesn't seem to rely on narration. However, each flip-flop that you chose and, for some, customised, represents a character. Which stories do they embody?

**[M.B.]** Fashion is so charged with signifiers, whether they have to convey gender, class, or style. Style is also about class and social norms. Associated with flip-flops, there's the idea of a certain lifestyle, a neoliberal healthy Californian one; some of them are really girly. I actually got them in Morocco, not in an official store but in a market selling wholesale to other people who then go sell them in markets.

All of them are bootleg. Anyway, even flip-flops, as a design, help to emulate a certain kind of lifestyle or a way that you want to present yourself. But these flip-flops are an emulation of the emulation, because they look like some brands. Sometimes I try to take that into consideration when I position them in the space: which ones should be the central ones, or which ones play the bass. I also like the idea that they can always change. Something I really like about the way that *dakka marrakchia* works, in opposition to a canonical European symphonic orchestra, where you have the conductor who is guiding with a very centralised power, is that even if there is someone who is called *maâlem*, which means knowledgeable, who is also a guide, he is actually more like a metronome. I feel like he is more of a heartbeat than a brain. I like this idea that even though in *Sole crushing* I have a structure with a central island, I have these two flip-flops that act almost as a metronome, and that start the call and response structure of the work. And I have this big bass tambourine hanging above them. In this orchestra, things change all the time. Sometimes, people who play main roles can become secondary in other circumstances. In *Sole crushing*, there are also two ladders which I call the "military ones", because they perform this march. It doesn't matter how they look, but the music and the way they're organising starts having this almost fascist element to them. (...)

**[E.C.] (...) Talking about the importance of air in the work brings up the magical. You often mention the animation film *Fantasia* as a reference, and I think of the scene of the sorcerer's apprentice, trying to emancipate from his master, at first joyfully taking control of a broom, and failing to tame it, eventually losing control: the broom multiplies and becomes a threatening army of brooms. I see a parallel with what you have described as a tension between the cute and comical aspect of the flip-flop and its potential for violence. What is your take on this tension?**

**[M.B.]** It's interesting because *Fantasia* is so magical but it was also a demonstration of technical prowess. It was to show all these masterworks of European classical music and all this progress in animation that was made. Eisenstein is really obsessed with Disney, and the "plasmatic" aspect of animation is something he talks about.

I think he even invented it, the idea that the animated character is like a protoplasm that can take any shape and become anything. How animation makes that happen through the magic of technique. In his mind, it's always something that is so evasive and so rebellious; that's why it was so important in that context of cookie-cutter, suburban American life, where everything seemed so perfect. It's kind of funny because that's very much what Disney actually is. To make animation on an industrial level, things had to be extremely regimented, and the conditions of work were crazy. There's always that tension in the animation of that era, even in *Fantasia*, or even from today. In the case of the flip-flop, there's the trope of the disciplinarian object, that of your mom turning to you. At this point, it's even a big meme in the Global South. My mom never did this to me, but it's something that people think of right away. Also, there have been so many images emerging in the past years of flip-flops being thrown at Netanyahu, or other political leaders, that people are protesting against. Historically, there have been a lot of shoes thrown at political figures, like George Bush. There is even a monumental sculpture in Iraq of this moment. I think there's a connection between all those elements together. (...)

**Excerpt from the interview between Meriem Bennani and Elsa Coustou.**

Published in the Carnet *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani. Editions Lafayette Anticipations.

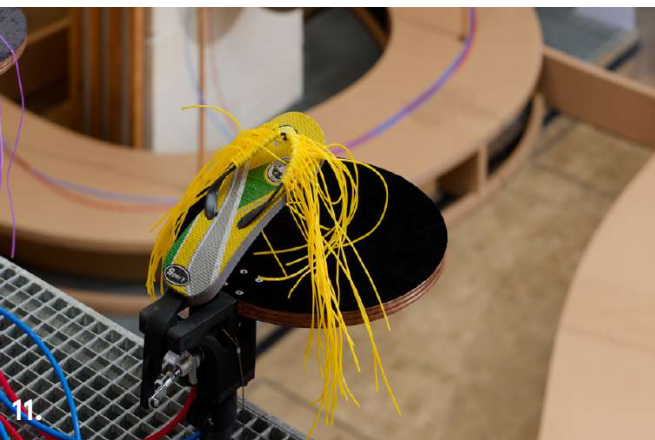
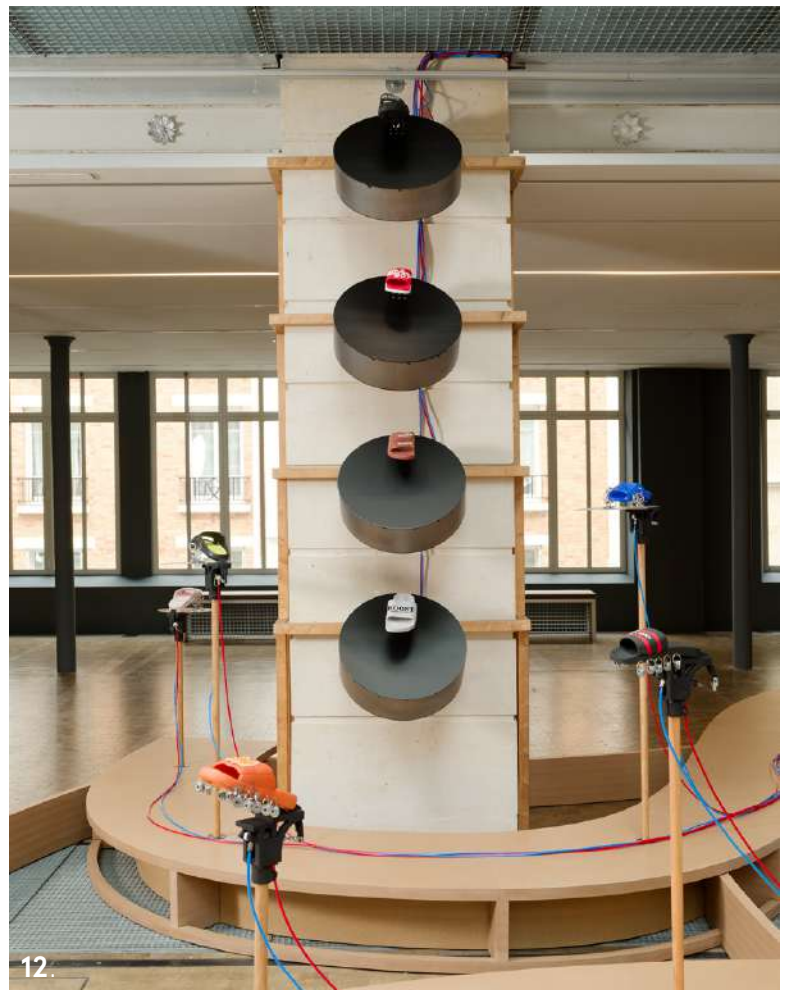
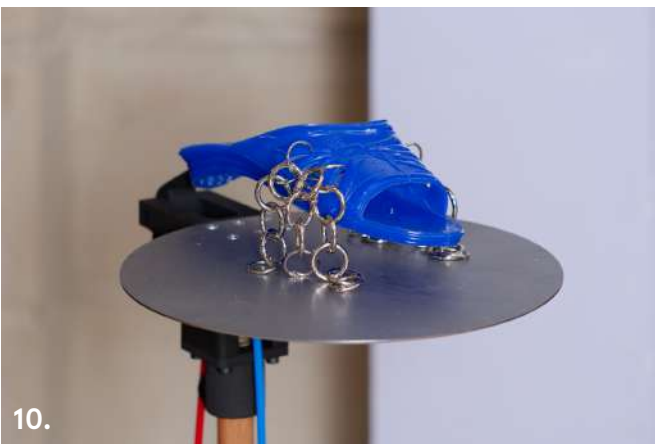


# PRESS VISUALS

The press visuals are free of rights for the promotion of the exhibition.  
For any request of high definition visuals, you can contact the Claudine Colin Communication agency,  
a FINN Partners Company: +33 (0)1 42 72 60 01 /  
[louis.sergent@finnpartners.com](mailto:louis.sergent@finnpartners.com)



1-7. Meriem Bennani, Flip-flops presented in *Sole crushing* exhibition at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025-February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London). Photo: Théophile Mottelet, Lafayette Anticipations

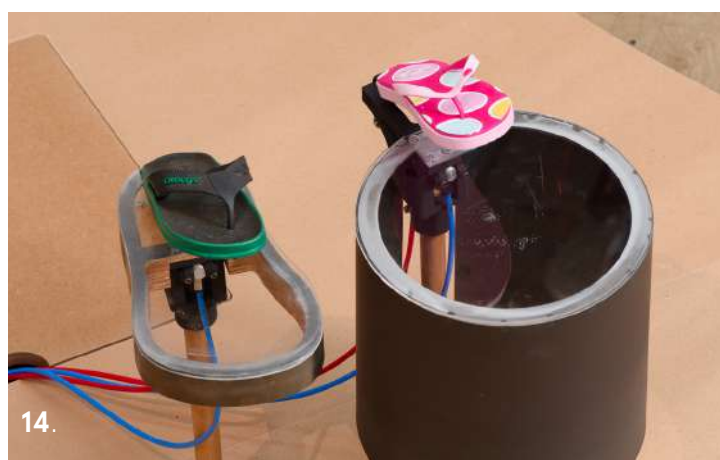


8–12. Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025– February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London). Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations





13.



14.



16.



15.



17.

13-17. Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025- February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London). Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations





18.



19.



20.



21.



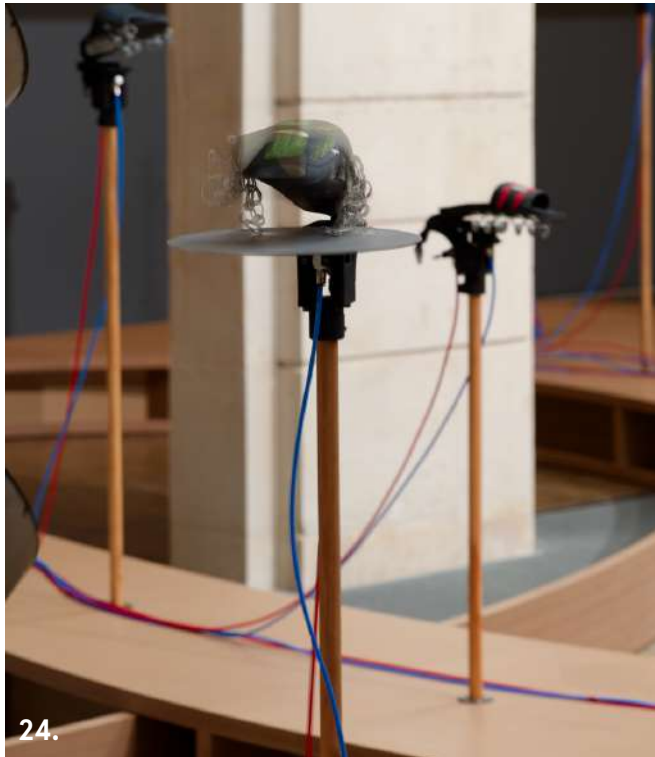
22.

18–22. Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025– February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London). Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations

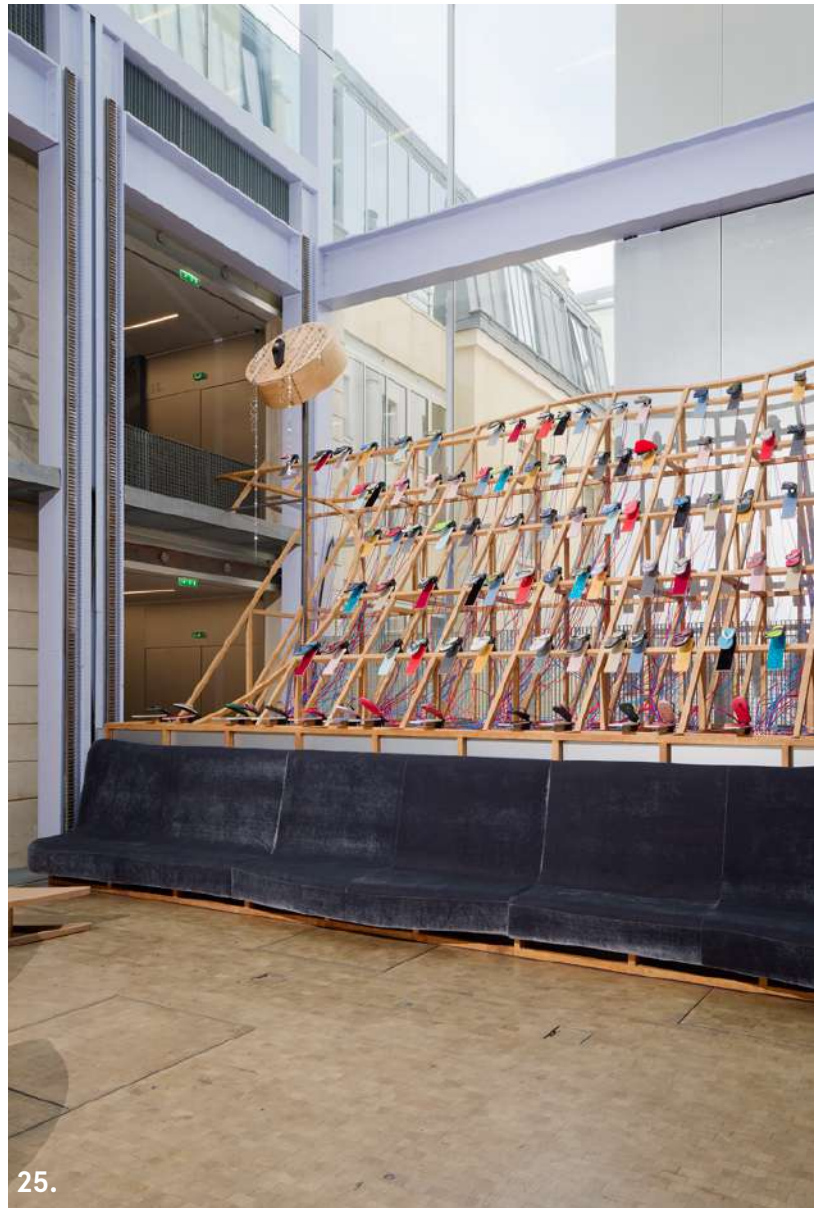




23.



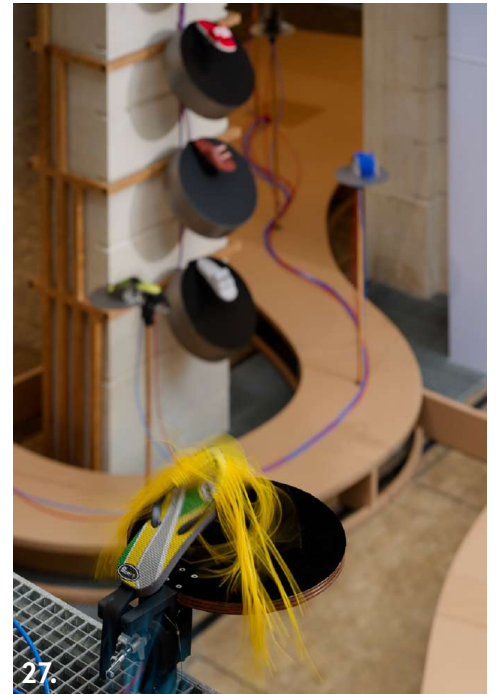
24.



25.



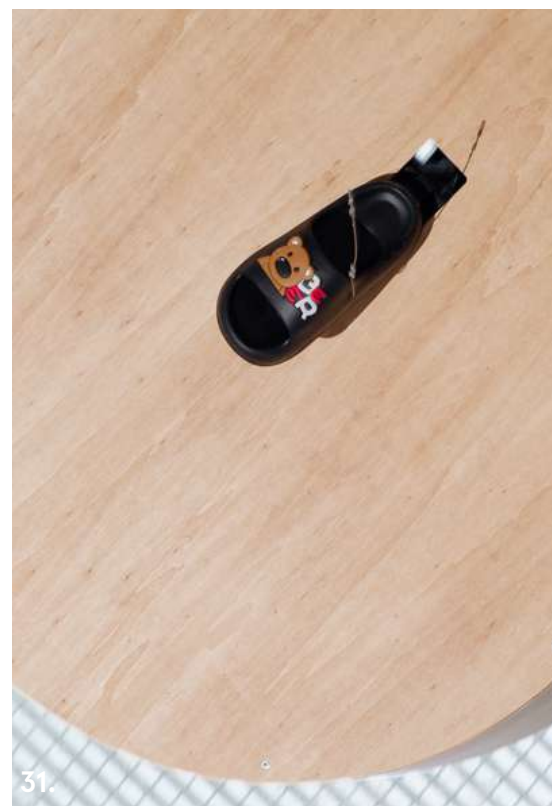
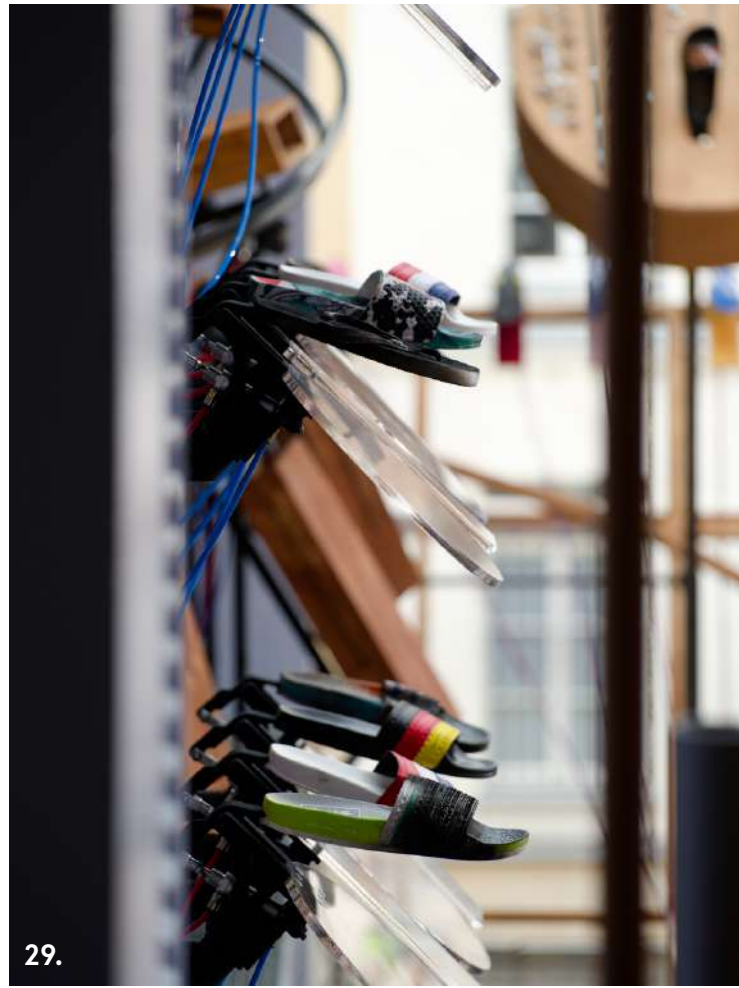
26.



27.

**23–27.** Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025– February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London).  
Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations





28-31. Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025- February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London).  
Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations





32.



33.



34.



35.



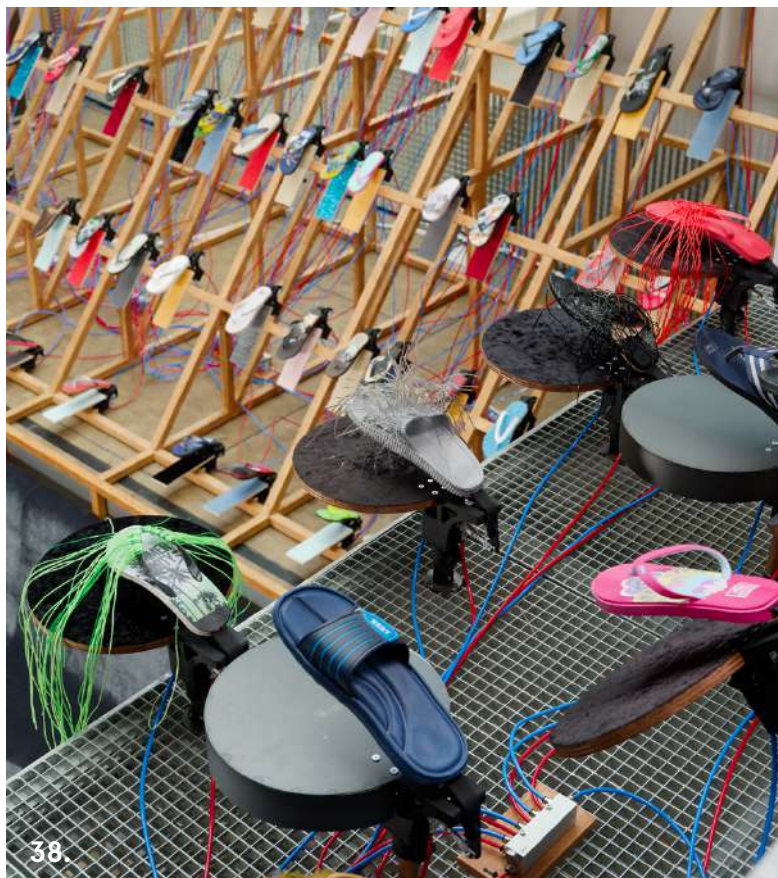
36.

32-36. Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025- February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London). Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations





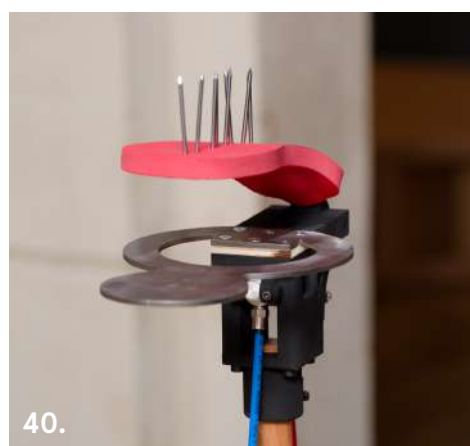
37.



38.



39.



40.



41.

37-40. Exhibition view, *Sole crushing* by Meriem Bennani at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025- February 8, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and the galleries François Ghebaly (Los Angeles), Lodovico Corsini (Brussels) and Sadie Coles (London). Photo: Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations

41. Meriem Bennani in the exhibition *Sole crushing*, at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, October 22, 2025- February 8, 2026

© Aurélien Mole, Lafayette Anticipations



# LAFAYETTE ANTICIPATIONS

Galleries Lafayette Fondation

## **Lafayette Anticipations, art for another experience of the world**

Created on the initiative of the Galleries Lafayette group, the Fondation is a place of exhibition and sharing dedicated to the visual and performing arts. Located in the heart of Paris in the Marais district, Lafayette Anticipations invites visitors to discover other ways of seeing, feeling, and listening to today's world in order to better imagine, thanks to artists, the world of tomorrow.

## **Expanding horizons**

Each year, the Fondation presents several exhibitions of daring, inspiring, and moving works, offering as many visions of the world as ways of living in it. The emerging music scene is invited to the Closer Music Festival, and the performing arts meet the visual arts during the Échelle Humaine festival. The public programme reflects, through talks, conversations, and performances, the ideas that shape and shake up our time.

## **Welcoming**

The exhibitions are free of charge and can be viewed alone, in groups, or accompanied by mediators who encourage sharing, for a lively and accessible visit. The Fondation provides events and workshops for young and old alike and opens its doors in order to encourage the expression of all different sensibilities, welcoming the most diverse audiences.

## **Artists and creation at the heart of the Fondation**

The workshop in the basement of the Fondation is a place of experimentation and creation for artists, with custom tools dedicated to production. Each year a new design studio is invited to create visual identities in connection with the exhibitions and festivals.

## **An open space of life**

The ground floor and its agora constitute a space of life that is open to everyone. La Librairie presents the Fondation's publications, books related to the programme and to social issues, as well as design objects. At Pluto, the café-restaurant, the cuisine created by chef Thomas Coupeau is offered throughout the day and in the evenings.

## **A space of solidarity and care**

Lafayette Anticipations cultivates a solidarity-based approach to creation: wellness-oriented visits, art therapy programmes, collaborations with partners in the medical-social field, and at-risk populations. The Fondation supports non-profit artistic projects and shares its expertise with young people from all walks of life.

## **Young generations and the spirit of transmission**

Open to young audiences and their families, Lafayette Anticipations is a space for sharing. Texts for children, visits and workshops, festive events and activity books are provided free of charge. In collaboration with education professionals, the Fondation designs activities for visitors ranging from kindergarten to university-level students.

## **A collection of our times**

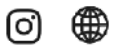
Lafayette Anticipations continues its support for contemporary creation through its collection and acquisitions supported since 2013 by the Fonds de dotation Famille Moulin. Thanks to a committee of experts, the collection expands each year with works by emerging artists. The fund now includes 400 works which are representative of its commitment.



© Léna Domergue / Camille Lecomte, Lafayette Anticipations

# LA LIBRAIRIE

*art & design*



**La Librairie is an address designed for lovers of art, design, beautiful books and surprises.**

Conceived as a gold mine where you can unearth nuggets, you will find Lafayette Anticipations' artists' editions, books and records that echo the programme and current ideas, as well as a singular selection of art and design objects:

- Fine books and essays related to the exhibition ;
- A selection of self-published designers ;
- A living space for publishers highlighting the new scene.

## **A wealth of events**

The programme - book or magazine launches, signings - echoes the exhibitions, the public programme, the Fondation's editions.

Find the full programme of meetings and launches at La Librairie on [lafayetteanticipations.com](https://lafayetteanticipations.com)

Open from Wednesday - Sunday: 12pm - 7pm  
E-shop: <https://shop.lafayetteanticipations.com/en/>





© Clélia Stevenard

# pluto

café-restaurant



**Surrounded by artists' works, the pluto café-restaurant is a place for culinary experimentation in tune with the seasons, from lunch to dinner!**

The brainchild of three childhood friends: Adrien Ducouso, Pierre-Louis Hirel and chef Thomas Coupeau, pluto is a place of life and joy, where Coupeau's gastronomic offerings resonate with the effervescent creativity celebrated at the Fondation. The restaurant offers mischievous and delicious dishes that reflect the inventiveness of the chef, who celebrates flavour, curiosity and indulgence in equal measure.

Nestled in the unique architecture designed by Rem Koolhaas at Lafayette Anticipations, in the heart of the Marais, pluto is the new gastronomic landmark of the Parisian and international cultural scene.

In this exceptional setting, in the sunshine of the Fondation's hidden courtyard, or on its terrace on the quiet, discreet rue du Plâtre,

you'll meet artists passing through Paris, musicians at aftershows, local gallery owners and fashion lovers...

At lunchtime, the menu is relaxed and comforting; in the afternoon, you can stroll around, make appointments and enjoy coffee and pastries, followed by a visit to an exhibition or reading a magazine at the Librairie de la Fondation, just a few metres away; and in the evening, dine in iconoclastic bar and bistro mode.

In the spirit of Zen, this café-restaurant has been designed by the Hugo Haas studio, with bespoke wooden furniture and elegant chairs by Danish brand Frama. Pluto can also be transformed to accompany concerts, parties, artists' dinners and many other Lafayette Anticipations events.

Open Wednesday to Saturday: 12pm - midnight

Sunday: 12pm - 5pm

[Online booking](#)

# PRACTICAL INFO

## MEDIA PARTNERS

*Sole crushing Exhibiton*

**Meriem Bennani**

Libération

M Le Magazine du Monde

Beaux Arts Magazine

Konbini

Time Out

FIP Radio

## 3 – 10 years old activities

With Paris Mômes

## ADMISSION FEES

Exhibitions: free of charge

Individual visits: free of charge

Talks: free of charge

Workshops: free of charge

Family activities: free of charge

Concerts: special rate

Visit [lafayetteanticipations.com](http://lafayetteanticipations.com) for the full programme of exhibitions, tours, meetings, workshops, performances and concerts.

## PRESS CONTACTS

### LAFAYETTE ANTICIPATIONS

*Claudine Colin Communication – Finn Partners*

**Louis Sergent**

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 59 24 89

[louis.sergent@finnpartners.com](mailto:louis.sergent@finnpartners.com)

*Lafayette Anticipations*

**Annabelle Floriant**

Head of communications

Tel. +33 (0)6 63 39 79 57

[afloriant@lafayetteanticipations.com](mailto:afloriant@lafayetteanticipations.com)

Press kits can be downloaded on our [website](http://lafayetteanticipations.com).



## ACCESS

### Lafayette Anticipations

9, rue du Plâtre – 75004 Paris

44, rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie

75004 Paris

## OPENING HOURS

From Wednesday to Sunday: 2pm – 7pm

### Métro

Rambuteau: ligne 11

Hôtel de Ville: lignes 1 & 11

Châtelet – Les Halles: lignes 4, 7, 11, 14 &

RER A, B & D

### Bus

Archives – Rambuteau: 29 & 75

Centre Georges Pompidou: 38, 47, 75

Hôtel de Ville: 67, 69, 76, 96

### Vélib

N° 4103: Archives – Rivoli

N° 4014: Blancs-Manteaux – Archives

### Parking

31, rue Beaubourg

41-47, rue Rambuteau

4, place Baudoyer