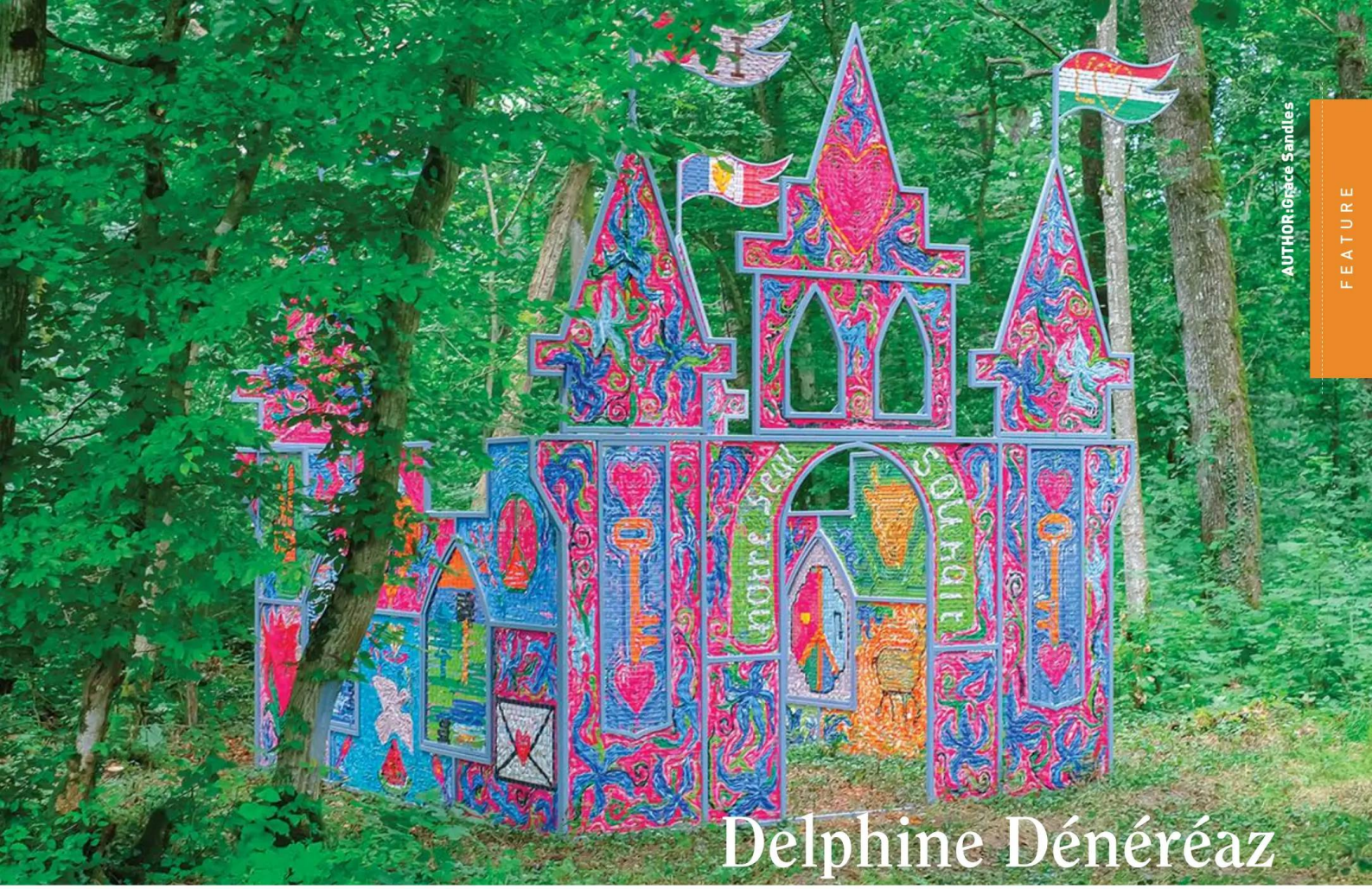
AUTHOR: Grace Sandles



Delphine Dénéréaz

CLOSER TO A SPELL THAN A PATTERN



Originating from the Vaucluse, a section of southern France's Provence region bounded by medieval ramparts, Delphine Dénéréaz positions herself at the intersection of Fibre Art, craft, and contemporary installation. She is a resident at the Vé workshop in Marseille, where she was also a co-founding member of the exhibiting collective Monstera in 2021.

◀▲ Delphine Dénéréaz, *Palais D'harmonia (Palace of Harmony)*, 2024, outdoor fabrics, 400 x 400 x 450 cm. Installed, Vent des Forêts, Lahaymeix. Collection, Vent des Forêts, Lahaymeix, France. Photo: Gabrielle Sosson



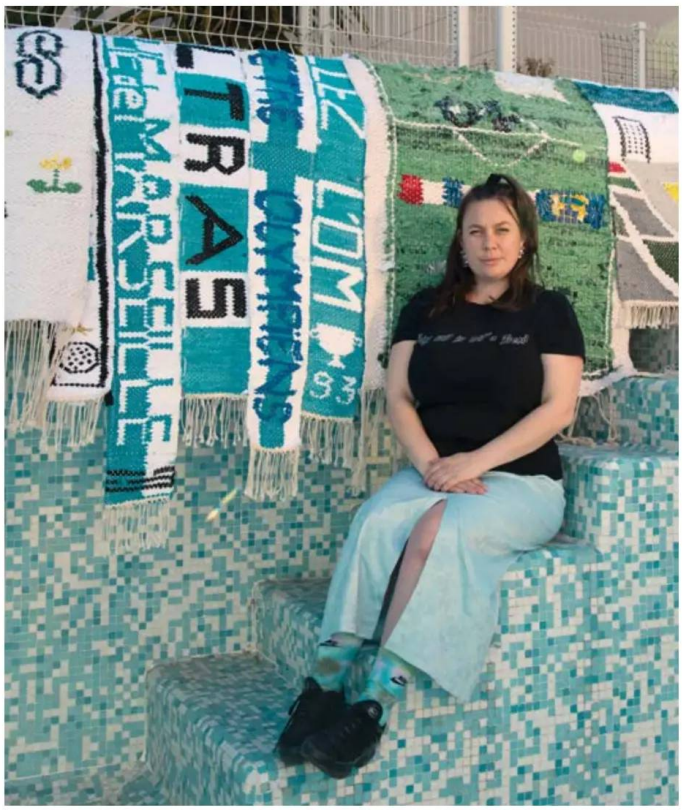
▲ *Palais D'harmonia (Palace of Harmony)*, 2024, outdoor fabrics, 400 x 400 x 450 cm, *detail*. Installed, Vent des Forêts, Lahaymeix. Collection, Vent des Forêts, Lahaymeix, France. Photo: Gabrielle Sosson



"OUT OF THE HOME, INTO THE INSTITUTION, INTO THE STREETS. THE *LIRETTE* RUG, ONCE PEASANT FABRIC, BECOMES A CASTLE, A CHAPEL, A SHELTER." NOT NONLITERALLY, EITHER; SHE HAS CREATED IMMERSIVE CASTLES, CHAPELS, HOUSES, AND BEDS.

The mythic and folkloric rabbit holes of weaving stories can go much deeper than you'd imagine, should you choose to pull at that thread: Arachne's competition with Athena, Rumpelstiltskin's straw into gold, Sleeping Beauty and the spindle, Penelope's funeral shroud, and so forth. Naturally, fairy tales are foundational for artist Delphine Dénéréaz. She, who lives and works in a former Knights Templar commandery – the hilltop village of Villedieu – is attuned to "the enchanted forest, the sleeping castle, the world just on the other side of the known one."

Dénéréaz was born in 1989, enjoying a rural upbringing in the Vaucluse, in the south of France. It's a bucolic landscape, as if out of a storybook: mountains, medieval fortresses, ancient Roman structures, fields of lavender, vineyards, and groves of olive. She studied Textile Design at La Cambre in Brussels, then turned her practice towards Fibre Art. Perhaps it was the influence of the environment she grew up in, but it was then that she became drawn to *lirette*, a medieval weaving technique originating in North Africa and Southern Europe, which uses bands of fabrics, typically from recycled textiles. "What fascinated me was the idea of taking something so rooted in peasant and domestic history and pulling it entirely out of that context. By adapting the technique to metal or wooden structures instead of a loom, I freed it from its decorative constraints and began building something closer to immersive sculpture," she explains.





◀ Delphine Dénéréaz with her works, Hyères, 2022. Photo: Robin Plus

The motivation of freeing form from its domestic tradition reaches beyond just technique for Dénéréaz, as for most fine artists working with textiles. "The history

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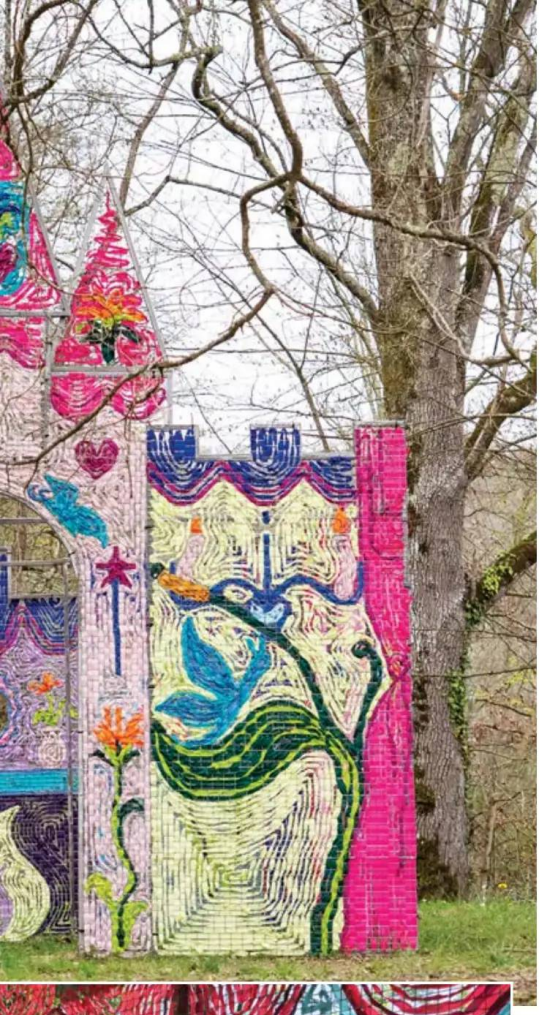
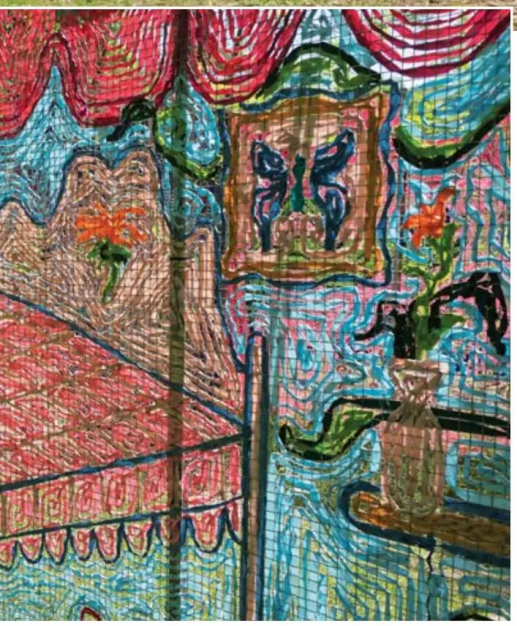
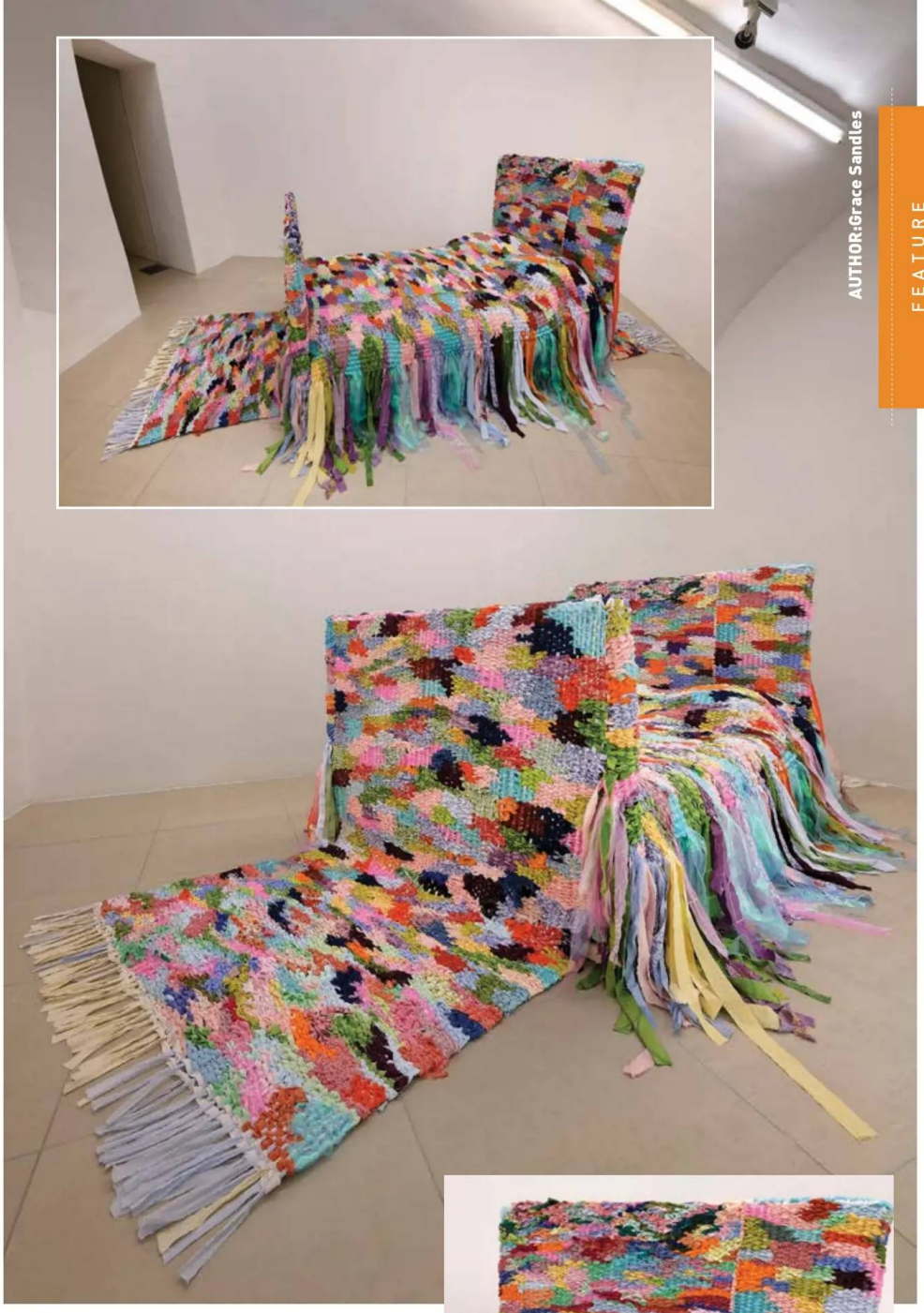




▲▲ *Là Où Chuchotent les Morphos (Where the Morphos whisper)*, 2025, outdoor fabrics, 395 x 450 x 410 cm. Photo: Pierre Meyer, AE Médias. *detail*. Photo: Courtesy Abbaye de L'Escaladieu



▲▲▶ *La Chambre de Chloé (Chloé's Room)*, 2025, reclaimed wood, tarp and linen, 800 x 140 x 200 cm. Photos: Blaise Adilon

of textile and domestic arts is something I hold very consciously... There is a long history of textile being marginalised, seen as decorative, domestic, feminine, and I'm interested in reclaiming its power and complexity. My work draws on that lineage while pushing it somewhere else: out of the home, into the institution, into the streets. The *lirette* rug, once peasant fabric, becomes a castle, a chapel, a shelter." Not nonliterally, either; she has created immersive castles, chapels, houses, and beds, such as *Le Refuge des Vents* (2025) and *Le Chambre de Chloé* (2025).

These works begin with site visits, which help her to understand the atmosphere and constraints of the location, and involve finding a balance between the environmental and logistical factors. Dénéréaz has learned to adapt, using outdoor waterproof, fireproof, and UV resistant materials. The core of these works, like all her others, is developed in the studio, but she then works collaboratively with a small team for production, installation, large-scale weaving, and the practical aspects of security and insurance.

Within that same history – of diminishing the domestic sphere – the flower is, as Dénéréaz describes, "one of the most persistent motifs, from embroidery to wallpaper, from tapestry to ceramics, it has always been there, ornamental, contained, expected." She counters, "in my work, I take the flower seriously as a form and as a symbol, but I let it escape its frame. It proliferates, invades, overwhelms. It stops being decorative and starts being something wilder, closer to a weed

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▲ *Le Refuge des Vents*, 2025, outdoor fabrics, 300 x 300 x 450 cm. Musée Dehors L'unique, Caen. Photo: Courtesy Musée Dehors



▶ *Let's go?*, 2025, *lirette* weaving, weaving on wire mesh, 100 x 200 cm (approx.). Photo: Grégory Copitet



HER INFLUENCES SKEW PAINTERLY. "I'M DEEPLY DRAWN TO MATISSE, THE IMPRESSIONISTS, AND THE FAUVES, THEIR RADICAL LIBERATION OF COLOUR, THEIR WILLINGNESS TO LET FEELING OVERRIDE REPRESENTATION. THAT ENERGY LIVES IN MY WORK TOO, IN THE HYPER-CHROMATIC, ALMOST OVERWHELMING PALETTE I USE."

than a bouquet, closer to a spell than a pattern." At the time of writing, her most recent solo exhibition, *Le Murmure des Simples (The Murmur of the Simple)* at The Market Hall in Pont-en-Royans, centred the garden and cultivated flowers and plants used as medicine in the Mediaeval period. The allure of fairy tales, which "have always used the domestic and the handmade as portals to the magical," makes even more sense in this context. "I feel very close to that logic," Dénéréaz tells me. "Weaving itself is deeply embedded in that mythology... The loom is a site of transformation, of waiting, of spell-casting."

Her influences skew painterly. "I'm deeply drawn to Matisse, the Impressionists, and the Fauves, their radical liberation of colour, their willingness to let feeling override representation. That energy lives in my work too, in the hyper-chromatic, almost overwhelming palette I use," she says. "There is also a deeper connection between painting and weaving that I find compelling: both are built from colour, line, and composition, yet historically painting has been elevated as high art while textile has been pushed to the margins, deemed decorative, domestic, minor. My practice lives in that tension, and tries to dissolve it." Evidently, Dénéréaz is comfortable working at any scale, yet even her smallest works, such as *Sortilège du Serpent* (2025) and *Pour Connaitre ton admirateurice* (2025), live largely through the boldness of their palette and pattern.

Of course, she's also naturally drawn to "the ornamental lineage of Art Nouveau, its flowing lines, its obsession with the organic, the way pattern and structure become inseparable." She's exploring that fascination in a deeper way, currently. She does so by "finding a drawing line within my woven work, a rhythm of motifs on the grid that echoes that tradition. The weave itself is a coordinate system, and within that constraint I'm looking for a line that is

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▲ *Les Fleurs Continuent de Pousser (The Flowers Continue to Grow)*, 2025, weaving on mesh, 12 sqm. Photo: Grégory Copitet



▲ Delphine Dénéréaz & Bridget Löw, *We built a home so she could keep all our secrets,* 2025, weaving and weaving on wire mesh, *lirette*, acrylic, ribbons, 600 x 300 cm. Photo: Grégory Copitet

both structural and alive, somewhere between ornament and language."

On the topic of her recent practice, in 2023, Dénéréaz had a major solo exhibition titled *Bienvenue à Delfunland* at Collection Lambert in Avignon – one of the most important contemporary art collections in France.



▲ *Dandelions always return*, 2026, 600 x 200 x 400 cm. Installation at Granary Square, King's Cross, London. Earth Day 2026 installation. Photo: MT ART Agency

Even more recently, she describes the aforementioned *Le Murmure des Simples* at La Halle Centre d'Art in Pont-en-Royans (2025), as feeling "like an important step." She's also "very proud" of *Le Palais D'Harmonia*, a permanent outdoor work created for Vent des Forêts in 2024, and of *Ce qu'il en restait*, at the 19M space at the Mucem in Marseille.

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▲ *A Provençal Christmas: The Great Supper*, 2025. Commission, Hermès Maison, Middle Huaihai Road, Shanghai. Photo: Courtesy Hermès
▼ *A Provençal Christmas: Epiphany with the King's Cake.* Photo: Courtesy Hermès



"MY COLLABORATIONS WITH HERMÈS AND MY COMMISSION FOR PORSCHE SCOPES HAVE ALSO BEEN MEANINGFUL IN EXPLORING HOW AN ARTISTIC PRACTICE ROOTED IN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE EVOLVES IN DIALOGUE WITH CONTEMPORARY LUXURY,"

"My collaborations with Hermès and my commission for Porsche Scopes have also been meaningful in exploring how an artistic practice rooted in traditional knowledge evolves in dialogue with contemporary luxury," she notes.

Among her other branded collaborations she can list Gucci Sneaker Garage, Lacoste, and Nike. These luxury commissions allow her to work at a larger scale, with access to specific resources and production means, while bringing new challenges, particularly when working across distance. It's a flexibility she values, afforded in part by her decision to



▶ *Aïgo, Flamo e Cacho Fio (Water, Flame, and the Lighting of the Log)*, 2025, LED lights, iron, outdoor fabrics, weaving. Commission, Hermès Maison, Middle Huaihai Road, Shanghai. Photo: Courtesy Hermès

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▲ *A Provençal Christmas: The Cacho Fio (Lighting the Yule Log)*, 2025. Commission, Hermès Maison, Middle Huaihai Road, Shanghai. Photo: Courtesy Hermès
▼ *A Provençal Christmas: Gifts brought by the Three Wise Men*, 2025. Photo: Courtesy Hermès



currently remain unrepresented. She is also one of forty-four textile artists featured in the publication *Textile x Art* (2025) edited by Australian creatives Ramona Barry and Rebecca Jobson. [reviewed in ***TFF*** 162].

When I asked her to describe her artistic process, from conception to finished work, she said, "Everything starts with a space and an intention, a feeling I want to create, a world I want to build. I work with recycled and worn fabrics, already saturated with anonymous tactile memories. The gesture itself is obsessive and repetitive: over, under, again. The weaving is both meditative and structural, it is the architecture. I tend to think in terms of total environments rather than isolated objects, so a piece rarely exists alone: it invades walls, floors, entire rooms."

Dénéréaz's practice is generous, sharing historical knowledge, some magic, and a space for melting into the tapestry of the natural world for a moment. Her hope for her work is that "people enter a place that feels simultaneously familiar and slightly wrong, an abundance that carries an undertone of threat." That rings true of the best fairy tales, too.



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▲ *An enchanted lamp*, 2025, *lirette* weaving, metal grid, salvaged chains and ribbons, 90 x 60 cm (approx.). Photo: Courtesy, Maison du Livre, de l'Image et du Son, Villeurbanne

"THE WEAVING IS BOTH MEDITATIVE AND STRUCTURAL, IT IS THE ARCHITECTURE. I TEND TO THINK IN TERMS OF TOTAL ENVIRONMENTS RATHER THAN ISOLATED OBJECTS, SO A PIECE RARELY EXISTS ALONE: IT INVADES WALLS, FLOORS, ENTIRE ROOMS."

"My works are Mediterranean arcadias, distorted by wind and swallowed by sun, where flowers never wilt and symmetry absorbs the horizon. I use comfort as a tool. I want people to feel held, then unsettled. Joy, but not quite. The motifs – keys, hearts, flowers, smileys – are symbols I try to drain of their power and redirect somewhere that belongs only to me."

What she draws together, Dénéréaz emphasises, is "equally folkloric and popular; ancestral craftsmanship, Mediterranean nature, but also the visual noise of late capitalism: Barbie, emojis, brand symbols. I'm interested in what happens when all these worlds collide and contaminate each other." Like the form that it takes, that of the *lirette* rug, her work takes disparate, existing, anachronistic ideas and creates something novel and beautiful. It's metamorphosis, a becoming. Magic.



▲ *Ne Faîtes pas Pleurer les Sirènes (Don't Make the Mermaids Cry)*, 2025, recycled fishnet, recycled fabrics, 450 x 200 cm. Photo: IGO Studio. ▼ *Le petit jardin, 2025, lirette* weaving, recycled ribbons, cotton warp, wire mesh, 110 x 85 cm. Photo: Blaise Adilon



Grace Sandles

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