

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2023

MAD BRUSSELS



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INTRODUCTION BY THE MANAGEMENT

2023, has been marked by one word: change. We had to deal with changes in perspectives, objectives and internal functioning in order to keep up with industry development and create a pleasant atmosphere within our organization. Change has become a constant element in our lives, forcing us to constantly adapt. Versatility and adaptability are now essential daily skills.

At MAD, we have been able to adapt to changes of the fashion and design industry in order to offer qualitative services that are responding to the needs of creatives. To continue on this path, we have developed together with the team a new five-year strategy. Our teams and roles have been restructured accordingly, taking into account the skills and talents of each of our employees.

We have also defined a new approach for our B2B direction focused on networking and matchmaking to promote collaborations between companies, institutions and Brussels-based designers. And we are proud to present our new support format that will be launched in 2024.

Meanwhile, the visibility of MAD, which showcases Brussels-based creatives, continues to grow thanks to word of mouth generated by our events. We also cannot forget the remarkable exhibition by Mous Lamrabat, a fashion photographer internationally known for the way he combines Moroccan and Western aesthetics and offers a fresh perspective on society through his photographs.

In these dark times, it is important to remember that creativity is a powerful mean of peaceful communication, bringing people of different cultures together around common interests. We are proud to embody these values at MAD and to share them with you.

Thank you all for your support and involvement. We look forward to continuing this adventure together.

Anaïs Sandra Carion
General Manager MAD Brussels



HIGHLIGHTS 2023

In 2023, MAD organized a total of 55 events, including 37 activities related to its objective obusiness development and international support, and 27 inspirational and visibility activities. These events were made possible thanks to a workforce of 14.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) during a year of restructuring. The activities as a whole allowed us to attract a total of 24,176 visitors to MAD, representing a 62% increase compared to 2022. The number of project holders is also on the rise: 179 in total, a 32% increase compared to 2022, and a 7% increase compared to 2019, when the FTE corresponded to 22.70.

It was also a year of increased creation of VAT numbers among our project holders: 19 in total, compared to 4 in 2022 and 9 in 2019. This is mainly due to two factors: the stabilization of the market, despite fluctuations in the economic world, and the need for some project holders to evolve their status.



To top it off, a new approach was developed within MAD: individual matchmaking, either through an open call or by direct contact, between creators and organizations. For this test year, 8 matches were successful, some of which were already visible in 2023 and others will be in 2024. For example, the creation of the new tapestry for the wedding room at City Hall, where the designer Daniel Henry won the open-call. This is just one of the early examples of a new path we are taking.



Our exhibitions were also a great success, with a total of 5 events and a total attendance of 20,555 visitors. These expos included a group exhibition dedicated to ceramic artisans, an exhibition on housing following the 2020 floods by the Cultural Institute of Architecture of Wallonia-Brussels, a solo exhibition by Belgian-Moroccan photographer Mous Lamrabat, as well as a spotlight on the works of 12 selected recent graduates in the MAD graduation show.

To end the year in style, our 600m2 exhibition space was transformed into a real Ali Baba's cave with a retrospective of 20 years of work by Spanish designer Jaime Hayon, nicknamed the "contemporary Gaudi". This exhibition was organized as part of Brussels' Art Nouveau year and the Spanish presidency of the European Union. The opening was attended by industry leaders and allowed MAD to gain recognition on an international scale.

① PRESENTATION OF MAD

1. THE TEAM

MAD employs a staff of 14 people, representing a total of 13.60 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) as of 12/31/2023. Taking into account new hires and departures, the average number of FTEs in 2023 is 14.3.

As of 12/31/2023, the team is composed of:

- Anaïs Sandra Carion, Managing Director, also responsible for the management of the business team;
- Daphrose Nkundwa, Financial and Human Resources Director;
- Dieter Van Den Storm, Artistic and Communication Director;
- Anne Vertongen, responsible for Human Resources and staff well-being, and point of contact for the Triaxes program;
- Inas Ben Bachir, in charge of budget monitoring, invoice management, as well as administrative management of public tenders for MAD;
- Maxime Mahieu, in charge of building management and internal IT service, as well as related public tenders;
- Peggy Acke, responsible for advising and monitoring project leaders;
- Adeline Faveau, responsible for MAD incubator residents and the development of tailor-made projects;
- Clara Goblet, responsible for seminars and other sustainability-related support activities;
- Baïlo Staumont, in charge of international activities and local and international contacts;
- Lore Detremmerie, responsible for general and external communication for MAD;
- Margaux Dibos, responsible for events and creation;
- Alexandra Bergerhoff, responsible for press and community building;
- Cornelia Van Den Boogaart, receptionist.

Any managerial issues are discussed by the board of directors, composed of:

- The managing director;
- The financial and human resources director;
- The artistic and communication director.

Team changes or role adjustments took place in 2023 for two reasons:

- Adaptation to the new strategy and strengthening of the networking objective;
- Adjustment of roles according to workload and abilities of each employee.



2. EVOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The departures in 2023 were as follows:

- Bénédicte de Brouwer, project manager for social impact, departed on 22/01/2023;
- Jean Paternotte, who was in charge of coordinating the activities of the TRIAXES project, which came to an end this year, departed on 31/05/2023;
- Alice Lepoutre, communication officer in the support department, departed on 08/06/2023;
- Ludovic Goossens, concierge, departed on 20/08/2023.

The entries and recruitment within the team were as follows:

- Anaïs Sandra Carion, CEO with responsibilities for managing the business team, joined on 02/01/2023;
- Maxime Mahieu, responsible for building management and internal IT service, joined on 03/01/2023;
- Clara Goblet, responsible for seminars and other support activities, joined on 16/08/2023;
- Baïlo Staumont, in charge of developing local and international contacts, joined on 27/09/2023.

In addition to the departures and entries, the year 2023 also brought changes, including:

- The end of the contract for an external consultant, hired as support in the role of team manager for the business department;
- The recruitment of a freelance person for the business department;
- Recruitment of interns for the different departments and students for reception, in order to strengthen the teams for day-to-day operations;
- The recruitment of a concierge who will start on April 1 of the following year.

Significant efforts were made in 2023 regarding the management of human resources. In order to motivate the teams and create a climate of well-being within the team, several actions were taken.

The MAD commits to continue finding medium-term solutions to promote a real company culture and well-being for each of its employees.



3. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors is composed as follows:

Lydia Mutyebele Ngoi
President, appointed by the City of Brussels

Gäetan Danneels
Vice-President, appointed by the Brussels-Capital Region

Qendresa Guerlica
Member, appointed by the City of Brussels

Audrey Dubois
Member, appointed by the City of Brussels

Nicolas Van de Velde
Member, appointed by the Brussels-Capital Region

Frank Lelon, Penningmeester
Member, appointed by the Brussels-Capital Region

Eve Demoen
Member, appointed by the City of Brussels

Siré Kaba
Member, comes from the Fashion sector

Amaryllis Jacobs
Member, comes from the Design sector

Alexandre Helson
Member, comes from the local economic and eco-system

Gwendolyn Grolig
Member, comes from the creative world

Lynn Tytgat
Member, comes from the academic world

The power of ceramics



② SOURCES OF FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUBSIDIES EVOLUTION

The City of Brussels and the Brussels-Capital Region remain the main subsidizing authorities of the non-profit organization "MAD Brussels" - Brussels Center for Fashion and Design.

However, MAD can also count on other support at a community level, such as the Wallonia-Brussels Federation - Culture.

Other state aid comes from the Maribel Fund, which in 2023 evolved from paying for a full-time equivalent worker to 1.5 full-time equivalent worker starting in the 4th quarter of 2023.

STRUCTURAL SUBSIDIES AND COLLABORATION AGREEMENTS

N (2023)	COMMERCE EXTERIEUR 2023 COMPLEMENT	€ 58.760,00
	CFWB CULTURE	€ 75.000,00
	BRUXELLES ENVIRONNEMENT	€ 120.000,00
	FONDS MARIBEL	€ 56.297,00
	RBC IMAGE FR/NL	€ 140.000,00
	RBC ECONOMIE EMPLOI/INDEXATION	€ 375.000,00
	VILLE DE BRUXELLES	€ 600.000,00
	FEDER ADMIN - FINALISATION PROJET	€ 16.216,00
S/T		€ 1.441.273,00

OCCASIONAL SUPPORTING REVENUES

	HUB ACTIONS INTERNATIONALES	€ 72.000,00
	LOTTERIE NATIONALE	€ 15.000,00
	AMBASSADE ESPAGNOLE	€ 14.900,00
S/T		€ 101.900,00

OTHERS

	PARTICIPATION AUX FRAIS DE FONCTIONNEMENT	€ 70.062,00
S/T		€ 70.062,00

TOTAL € 1.613.235,00

D2B, Designers to business



③ STRATEGY & KEY FIGURES FOR 2023

“We Inspire, Connect & Guide”: MAD Brussels’ mantra is also the basis of its strategy and existence. How to inspire and nourish creatives, how to connect them with the economic sector of fashion and design and more broadly, the creative and cultural industries, and how to support them throughout their journey.

To achieve this vision, MAD develops and promotes entrepreneurship and creative thinking in the fashion and design sectors in Brussels, while seeking to showcase them on the national and international stage.

MAD’s mission is translated into 4 strategic objectives:

- **Guidance:** reflected by a focus on supporting and networking for young creatives and the professional public;
- **Networking:** reflected by a focus on networking with the professional public of the fashion and design sectors, but also with the public sector;
- **Visibility & Inspiration:** reflected by a focus on visibility and communication, both for MAD as an entity, and for young creatives and professionals;
- **Connected to the public and its ecosystem:** reflected by a focus on strategic alignment with the Brussels ecosystem.



Through these objectives, MAD strives to inspire creatives by providing them access to resources and opportunities for training, development, and networking. It also aims to connect these creatives with the economic sector by facilitating collaborations and partnerships and supporting their entrepreneurial projects. Finally, MAD guides these creatives along their journey by helping them gain visibility and positioning themselves on the national and international stage, while also maintaining strong relationships with public and private stakeholders in the fashion and design industry in Brussels. Overall, the Inspire, Connect & Guide strategy aims to strengthen Brussels’ position as a creative city and highlight the talents and innovation of Brussels’ fashion and design creators in the world.

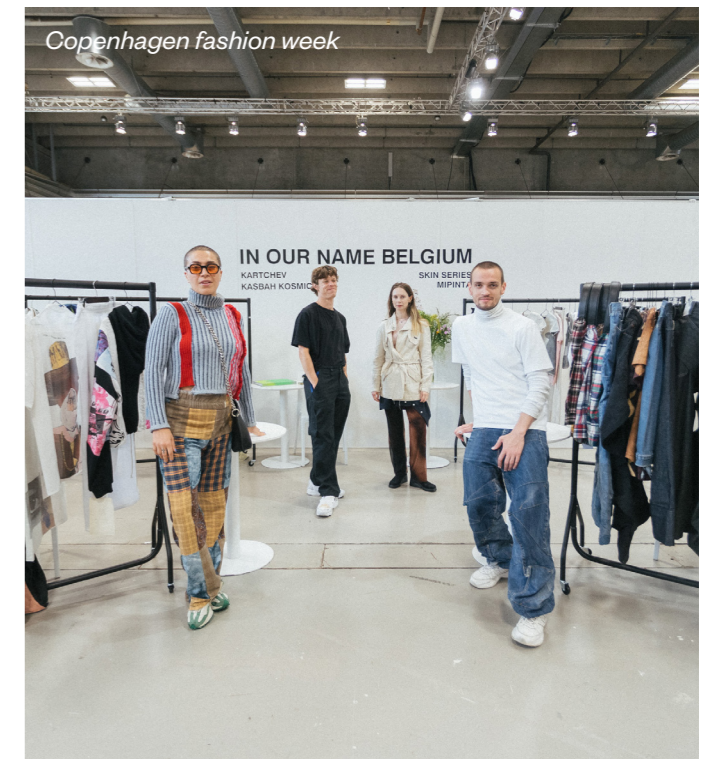


1. ORIENTATION OBJECTIVE

The orientation objective is the aim to support profiles, project holders, and existing brands. In order to help these profiles, a number of seminars, collective workshops, and individual sessions were organized at MAD in 2023, totaling 28 with 476 participants.

The number of projects supported in one-to-one consultations is higher than in 2022 (+32%) and even in 2019 (+7%), the year before COVID. Out of the total number of projects supported:

- **129 are part of the MAD Starter program**, meaning people who want to start a project or are considering starting an activity;
- **23 are part of MAD Take-Off**, projects in their final phase of creation or in the initial phase of their activity (out of which 19 have obtained a VAT number);
- **10 projects (11 people) are part of MAD Incubator**, a two-year residency program at MAD;
- **8 are part of MAD Fly** (4 from MAD Fly 2022 and 4 from MAD Fly 2023), for companies selected by a jury and with 1 to 3 years of existence;
- **1 is for the MAD Contest**, preparing for the FashionClash festival in Maastricht;
- **7 are for MAD Cherry-on-the-Cake**, for senior profiles with a company that exists at least 3 years, and requiring advice related to business strategy or financing.



The total number of hours of one-to-one support, either with our in-house business consultant or with our external experts, was 377.50.

Several brands and project holders were also supported internationally, in collaboration with other Belgian entities such as hub.brussels and actiris, through 9 distinct activities:

- a presence at the **Milan furniture fair** with 4 profiles, under the branding “Belgium is Design”;
- a week-long workshop at **Boisbuchet in France** with 10 profiles;
- a presence at **Copenhagen Fashion Week** in August under the branding “In Our Name Belgium”, including a fair presence and an influencer press event for the launch of 4 brands;
- a **conference in London** where 4 companies presented at a conference on biosourced textiles and a total of 7 profiles participated in the networking dinner;
- a visit to the **Dutch Design Week** with 14 Brussels profiles and 16 project holders present at the networking cocktail;
- a trip to **London** for furniture design project holders with 7 profiles.

2023 stands out in terms of the number of profiles supported and activities conducted, and is a result of the excellent work of the team in place.



2. NETWORKING OBJECTIVE

MAD has implemented a new strategy to connect different actors in the sector, at a local, regional, national, and international level, fostering mutual enrichment but primarily with the goal of promoting Brussels talent and fostering paid collaborations between creatives and companies.

A new member has been hired within the business team starting in October 2023, with the aim of fostering local and international connections in order to develop this networking strategy.

The networking is carried out through three means:

- Events at MAD and internationally;
- Call for applications for tailor-made projects published on the MAD website;
- Direct connections.

For this test year, 38 matchmakings have taken place between Brussels creators and public, local, and European companies or institutions. 8 of these matchmaking events have resulted in collaborations, with 7 made-on-measure projects supported by MAD: 3 with the City of Brussels and 4 with private entities.

If we look at some great examples of non-confidential tailor-made projects:

- The Kasbah Kosmic project in an exhibition at MIMA in January 2023;
- The scenography by Rond Carré Studio for the entrance of Ceramics Brussels fair, presented at the end of January 2024;
- The tapestry created by Daniel Henry for the marriage hall at the city hall, to be presented in April 2024.

The total budget allocated to creators by public and private entities for all 7 projects was 52,930 Euros.



3. OBJECTIVE OF INSPIRATION AND VISIBILITY

MAD develops a communication strategy with the following goals in mind:

- Promote the target recipients and beneficiaries of MAD (fashion, furniture design, collectible design, and set design sectors);
- Contribute to the promotion of Brussels by highlighting its fashion and design sectors;
- Continue to have a public communication focus whenever relevant;
- Continue to have a media, specialized, and public communication focus whenever relevant.

This visibility strategy was made possible through:

- The second part of the exhibition “**The Power of Ceramics**”, a collective exhibition showcasing the expertise and new techniques used in ceramics, featuring 32 local and international artists, including 15 local talents: Abel Jallais, Antoinette d’Ansembourg, Eleonore Joulin, Frizbee Ceramics, Guillaume Slizewicz, Hugo Meert, Jaan Wouters, Jean-Paul Lespagnard, Jonas Moenne, Maya Eline Leroy, Naomi Gilon, Quentin Caillaud, Studio Biskt by Charlotte Gigan & Martin Duchène, Studio Minimètre by Bérénice de Salvatore & Bastien Chevrier, Sylvain Willenz;
- The exhibition of fashion photographer Mous Lamrabet, “**A(R)MOUR**”, where the famous Belgian-Moroccan photographer focused on issues of inclusion and globalization, showcasing custom-made photos of 11 Brussels-based fashion creatives: Anneleen Bertels, Erratum Fashion, Florent Seligman, Kasbah Cosmic, Mipinta, Naomi Gilon, Pauline Haumont, Shishi San, The Zed, Marie-Adam Leenaardt & Valentine Tinchant;
- The solo exhibition “**Nuevo Nouveau**” by famous Spanish designer Jaime Hayon, organized as part of the Spanish European presidency and the Year of Art Nouveau, with 5,096 visitors in 2023, and concluding at the end of January 2024.

In total, 56 Brussels-based designers were highlighted through these exhibitions, inspiring 20,555 visitors and generating 312 press publications.



To continue inspiring professionals and young creators, 5 creative lunches, involving a prominent name sharing their insights over lunch with the public, were organized:

- With **Kiki van Eijk**, Dutch textile and ceramic designer, showcasing her sustainable studio approach and collaborations with international houses, with 40 participants;
- With **Dennis Vanderbroeck**, Dutch set designer known for creating runway show scenography for Diesel, with 42 participants;
- With **Bento**, a Belgian studio that designed the latest Belgian pavilion scenography in Venice for the Architecture Biennale, featured as part of the VIP route at the Collectible Art Design fair, with 43 participants;
- With **Priyanka Mehta**, a jewelry designer with a transparent production process from A to Z, with 40 participants;
- With **Julien Renault**, designer of the year in Belgium, who has collaborated with numerous international furniture and home decor brands such as Hay and Nine, with 52 participants.

Inspiring talks were also organized, including:

- One by **Mous Lamrabet** during the exhibition closing event, with 135 participants;
- One by **Across** in collaboration with ICA, with 117 participants;
- One by architect **David Garcia**, with 58 participants;
- One by famous Danish multidisciplinary creative **Henrik Vibskov**, sharing his insights on fashion and set design, with 96 participants.

Between the creative lunches and talks, there were a total of 10 events inspiring 655 participants.

MAD also hosted and co-organized 12 other initiatives, with a total of 2,966 participants.

MAD's media presence in 2023 was exceptional:

In terms of press coverage, there was:

- An increase in advertising value compared to 2022 by 51%, totaling 4.8 million euros;
- An increase in the number of publications by 55-60% compared to the previous year, with a total of 312 publications, 6 magazine covers, and 19 international publications.

In terms of website coverage and social media presence:

- An increase of 20% in website visits compared to the previous year, with 62,550 unique visits and 175,000 total visits;
- Growth in the number of followers on each social media platform compared to the previous year: +2.50% for Facebook, +31% for Instagram, +30% for LinkedIn;
- The creation of a new platform: TikTok, as a way to engage with the new generation.



4. OBJECTIVES OF THE ECOSYSTEM

There are several important data points to note when considering the MAD within its Brussels ecosystem:

- In terms of visibility, the number of visitors increased by 62% compared to 2022;
- In terms of projects and companies supported, there was a 32% increase compared to 2022 and a 4% increase compared to 2019;
- In terms of connections made, we connected 38 creators/brands with the ecosystem in order to foster collaborations, out of which 8 were positive and 4 have already resulted in successful partnerships;
- In terms of promoting economic transition, there were 46 events focused on sustainability or internal training, with a total of 596 participants;
- Out of all the established projects we support (excluding MAD starters who are still developing their ideas), 50% have a strong sustainable focus at the core of their project, and 18% offer innovative solutions (such as a new textile made from corn, like Noosa, or 3D printing solutions using various types of waste, like Studio Minimètre);
- 55 inspiration and support events were organized and accessible to the public for free;
- There was a 23% increase in the use of MAD's free space for photo services for young brands, compared to the previous year;
- We had 7 international presences, compared to a total of 2 in 2022.



④ SOCIAL, SOCIETAL & ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The values of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation are at the core of all actions at MAD. They characterize a Brussels focused on innovation, sustainability, and inclusion, driven by creative minds. These individuals actively contribute to instilling positive change, both in cultural and economic spheres. Their success and that of the Brussels Region are closely linked: their performance serves that of Brussels, and vice versa. Creatives are at the forefront of proposing new ideas, sustainable creations, while promoting diversity so that no one is left behind.

1. INCLUSIVITY VALUE

MAD is committed in making the fashion and design sectors inclusive by seeking to involve a wide audience. This includes:

- Free accessibility to exhibitions
- Programs and support opportunities for all Brussels residents;
- Through training, events, and collaborations that are open and free for all;
- Inclusive language in all external communication, as well as communications in French, Dutch, and English;
- Collaborations with a sheltered workshop;
- Welcoming schools and other institutions to the buildings.

Given its density and diversity, the Brussels-Capital Region faces several challenges in terms of inclusion, participation, and social cohesion. This diversity is also a source of intrinsic wealth and creativity for Brussels fashion and design, which we need to highlight and on which the MAD aims to work in the coming years.



2. ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY VALUE

MAD also aims to be an exemplary institution in terms of social and environmental responsibility. This is reflected, in particular, through the orientation of its “core business”, building management, and personnel.

It is essential that sustainability be integrated into the fashion and design sectors. In this context, MAD plays a proactive role by providing advice, tools, and training to professionals in the sector to measure their ecological footprint and social impact. Thanks to this, we position our center as a key player in slow fashion in Brussels. It also offers a range of services to entrepreneurs in the sector, by organizing workshops and bringing together local sustainable initiatives. All of this is done in partnership with the leading administrations of the Regional Economic Transition Strategy. Additionally, MAD strives to be an example in terms of social and environmental responsibility by orienting its “core business”, managing its building sustainably, and ensuring the well-being of its staff.

It is within this reflection that it has been decided to calculate our carbon footprint every 3 years, in order to improve its energy use. In the same vein, the establishment of the PEB (B) certificate was completed at the beginning of the year, and the establishment of the Ecodynamic label was completed, with a score of 74%.

3. INNOVATION VALUE

MAD places great importance on innovation in its strategy and actions, by implementing several initiatives such as:

- Promotion of new methods, processes, materials, and applications in creation and production;
- Improvement of support for fashion and design entrepreneurs in Brussels, whether they are residents of MAD or not;
- Innovative communication aimed at creators;
- Establishment of closer links between the different targets of the MAD and the Brussels ecosystem of economic transition;
- Combination of different creative sectors to foster innovation.

MAD incubator, open atelier days



MAD
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 RÉGION DE BRUXELLES-CAPITALE
BRUSSELS HOOFDSTEDELIJK GEWEST



 shifting
economy.brussels 
ENSEMBLE, VERS L'ÉCONOMIE DE DEMAIN
SAMEN OP WEG NAAR DE ECONOMIE VAN MORGEN



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