

ATELIER MAURY

Dorure - Polychromie - Toile de Laque®

When the Rail meets Toile de Laque®

A FRENCH ADVENTURE ACROSS THE CHANNEL...

Let me ask you. What do a railway track and a lacquer-covered fabric have in common? At first, you might think, not a lot... except when a young designer blends the two together.

The idea of this fusion came from Gwendoline Porte, a French woman living in London for the last 6 years, who recently graduated from Chelsea College of Arts in Interior Design.

She first came across Toile de Laque® in 2013 whilst reading an article in Decoration International magazine. Gwendoline, former PR agent, had just started a course in Interior Design and was immediately fascinated by this new material, which she describes as “both traditional and innovative”. The second encounter with Toile de Laque® happened in March 2015 during the French Design Forum in London organised by Ubifrance, a

professional meeting between French luxury craftsmen and English designers. At the time Gwendoline had recently enrolled to study interior design at the prestigious Chelsea College of Arts in London, and for the first time was able to meet Chantal Duclert, co-creator with Patrick Maury of the Toile de Laque®, a lacquered-covered fabric. At the forum, a friendly and casual discussion started between the two, which culminated in Chantal Duclert offering her to support the young budding designer in what would become her final project at Chelsea College of Arts.

Delighted with this prospect, Gwendoline sought to promote Atelier Maury’s rare expertise with an innovative design project. The first stone, of what was to become a fruitful remote collaboration between London and Paris, between Gwendoline and Atelier Maury was laid.



Pictures of rails and Gwendoline Porte during the summer show at Chelsea College of Art and Design June 2015

Until recently, Gwendoline had been working on an ambitious refurbishment project of a former tube station. A railway track section became the source of her inspiration to create objects and pattern from such sections. She re-invented the unique function of furniture favouring a modular concept and designed a flexible railway track that mutate into a coffee table, a stool or, multiplied, a totem or a bench, etc. Gwendoline sent her technical drawings to Atelier Maury who immediately understood the functional diversity. Chantal Duclert offered to Gwendoline to build 4 modules that can be associated.

In charge of building the structure, Patrick Maury made sure it was lightweight and resistant with an extra attention while putting on the Toile de Laque® around the surface. He built it in MDF, inspired by the shipbuilding techniques.

Then the modules were covered with handmade coloured Toile de Laque® by Atelier Maury and selected by Gwendoline. According to her project's theme, the London tube and railway tracks, she opted for a bronze colour on the edge to remind the patina of the metal and London tube lines colours for the side surfaces. The modules are named: Piccadilly, District, Victoria and Central.

Once finished, the modules were sent to London just in time for Gwendoline's College summer show. When she discovered the Rails, she was amazed by the transformation that Toile de Laque® brings to

the modules: "the Rail's shape has something rough that Toile de Laque transforms in a fine and precious object".

During the summer show the Rails were very successful and aroused enthusiasm. The Chelsea College of Arts "Dean's Award 2015" crowned the Rails with success!

A few months later, Gwendoline graduated and analysed the experience: "It has been an amazing opportunity to work with the beautiful and luxurious Toile de Laque® but most of all to engage with such talented and open minded craftsmen and Living Heritage Company. I would like to underline this exceptional partnership because it is as rich for designers as it is for craftsmen".

Gwendoline's design adventure starts now at Decorex from the 20th of September with the Rails showcased on Atelier Maury's stand (A21). You will probably meet Chantal Duclert and Gwendoline Porte discussing about the rewarding partnership between craftsmen and designers, and if you pay attention, you will maybe hear them discussing future projects.

September 2nd, 2015.
Interviewed by Françoise Bergaglia