

Museum van Bommel van Dam: first Dutch solo exhibition by international rising star Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien



Mémoires des corps
Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien
© Gasworks

From 3 October 2026 to 7 March 2027, museum van Bommel van Dam presents *Material Memories*: the first solo exhibition in the Netherlands by Paris-born artist Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien. Through monumental installations made from textiles, copper, organic materials and crystals - materials imbued with memories and meaning - the artist connects different periods, cultures and traditions, making care visible, tangible and open to discussion.

Material Memories also marks the launch of a new series of exhibitions at museum van Bommel van Dam. In this series, international rising talents on the verge of a breakthrough will be given their first museum solo exhibition in the Netherlands. Manlanbien is a striking example: in 2023, she had a solo presentation in Palais de Tokyo, one of the world's leading institutions for contemporary art.

Materials rich in symbolism

Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien (1990) was born in France to a French-Antillean mother from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe and a father from the Akan people of Côte d'Ivoire. She grew up between Paris, Guadeloupe and Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire. Since 2004, she has lived, studied and worked in France. Her multifaceted background defines the way she works with materials.

For Manlanbien, gold, copper, earth, fabrics and crystals are not just neutral raw materials. In her father's Akan culture, for example, gold is a symbol of royal power; copper evokes warm memories of family workshops; and stones such as carnelian, pink opal and moonstone have been used for healing for centuries. Each material carries its own history and memory. For Manlanbien, these are not simply materials, but also important carriers of meaning - of care and strength, of fertility and transmission.



Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien
Ritratti Borsisti 2025-2026
© Daniele Molajoli



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Art that soothes

Convinced that gentleness is more powerful than anger, and that restoration is more radical than accusation, Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien has created six installations for *Material Memories*. Together, they form an artistic exploration of the body, of care and of what we pass on to future generations.

The exhibition begins with *Take Care* (2023): a monumental copper spiral that winds along a tapestry as a conductor of warmth, connection and life force. Surrounded by crystals, blown glass, plants and sound, the work transforms the space into a meditative setting in which to reflect on what you carry with you and what you need.



Exhibition view (detail), Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien
L'être, l'autre et l'entre, Palais de Tokyo (16.06-10.09.2023)
 Courtesy of the artist & Galerie Cécile Fakhoury (Abidjan/Dakar/Paris)
 Photo: Aurélien Mole

For *Mémoires des Corps* (2025), Manlanbien explored the lasting effects of trauma and pain associated to female sexuality and reproduction. The installation is conceived as a space for reflection and resistance to harmful taboos.



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Temple du Soin / Temple of Care (2024) was created in an old monastery, whose spiritual resonance is reflected in the work. Water fountains and blue textiles, inspired by both the ocean and the cosmos, invite visitors to slow down and take a moment to rest.



Temple du soin [Temple of Care], 2024
 © Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien
 Photo © Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana / Cecilia Coca

In *Night and Day / La Nuit & Le Jour* (2021), the relationship between human beings and their natural surroundings is the central theme. For this installation, Manlanbien brought together different creation stories about the cosmos, evoking close and faraway worlds.

New, previously unseen work

Especially for *Material Memories*, Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien has created new work. During a recent year-long artist residency at the Villa Medici in Rome, she studied a variety of local plants and tapestries. She also explored pharmacopoeia, the ancient knowledge of medicinal plants. Of particular interest was the helichrysum, a plant used to treat a wide range of ailments.

This research eventually inspired the founding of La Maison Messouma, a creative house and couture extension that also offers meditative care services. The same research also led to *Myriades* (2026) and *Un Pied de Chance* (2026). Both installations comprise textiles, fragrant plants and flowers, essential oil, poetic texts and sound. Together, they create a sensory environment that invites visitors to pause for a moment.



Myriades
 Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien
 Oracles au-delà des mers, Villa Medici
 © Daniele Molajoli

New series of international rising stars

With *Material Memories*, museum van Bommel van Dam launches a series of solo exhibitions dedicated to international rising stars who have not previously been given such a major platform in the Netherlands. These artists are selected for their significance as a new generation: they are the ones shaping the art of today in distinctive and radical ways.

Museum director Rieke Righolt:

"For Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien, everything begins with the body: with recovery, with that which carries us. In contemporary art, we increasingly see attention for care, healing and tenderness, but Manlanbien makes these ideas radically tangible. Each material, every technique, every form is deliberately connected to a heritage, traditional use or family history. Nothing is pure decoration; everything carries meaning. Her monumental installations embody a deeply rooted conviction: that care is a collective responsibility. Pause, the work seems to whisper, and listen to your own body - to where it comes from. Care for it and give it the attention it asks for. She knows how to communicate this to the viewer with great power."

Following Manlanbien's solo exhibition, the series will continue with Spanish artist Eva Fàbregas (Barcelona, 1988). Her presentation opens in the spring of 2028. Previous solo exhibitions by Fàbregas have been held at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin (2024) and Matadero in Madrid (2025).

Material Memories was made possible with the support of the Municipality of Venlo, the Province of Limburg, the Mondriaan Fund and Institut français NL.

About [museum van Bommel van Dam](#)

Museum van Bommel van Dam, housed in the beautifully renovated former main post office on Keulsepoort in Venlo, is the museum for modern and contemporary art in North Limburg. The collection was founded on the art collection of Maarten and Reina van Bommel-van Dam. The museum has a broad collection of post-war and contemporary art and presents a vibrant programme of exhibitions and public programmes.

[museum van Bommel van Dam](#)

Keulsepoort 1 | 5911 BX | Venlo

3 October 2026 to 7 March 2027

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 11.00 am - 5.00 pm

tickets via: www.vanbommelvandam.nl



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