

# ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2024

MAD BRUSSELS



# SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION BY THE MANAGEMENT

4.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

5.

### ① PRESENTATION OF MAD BRUSSELS

6.

1. *The team*
2. *Human resources management*
3. *Board of directors*

6.

7.

8.

### ② FUNDING SOURCES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

10.

1. *Funding sources and subsidies evolution*

10.

### ③ STRATEGY & KEY FIGURES 2024

12.

1. *Orientation objective*
2. *Networking objective*
3. *Inspiration & visibility objective*
4. *Ecosystem objective*

13.

14.

16.

19.

### ④ SOCIAL, SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSABILITY

20.

1. *Inclusivity*
2. *Durability*
3. *Innovation*

20.

20.

20.



## INTRODUCTION BY THE MANAGEMENT

### United by the year of sharing

*The year 2024 marks a major turning point in our approach to exchange and collaborate with the entire Brussels ecosystem. With a strong local presence, we have felt the need to strengthen our ties with various actors in our neighborhood, while affirming our positioning and role as key players in the Brussels fashion and design scene, and subsequently, on a European scale.*

*We are fully aware that we cannot achieve our goals alone. Therefore, after fruitful exchanges, MAD has established a strengthened partnership with various sister associations and schools, while hosting exhibitions and events in collaboration. In addition, we have fortified our presence at major fairs and events as a partner. This process also marks the promising beginning of close cooperation with retailers in the Dansaert neighborhood and the industry in general, to carry out initiatives that work at the heart of fashion and design.*

*In these difficult times, let us remember the importance of exchange, solidarity, and anticipation to overcome critical periods. We are moved by the courage and creativity displayed by project leaders and brands who continue to believe in their potential with perseverance. We are convinced that, despite the uncertainty of forecasts, new opportunities for innovation and success will emerge, even in the most unexpected situations. Just like Greece, let us show that creativity is a powerful driver for overcoming challenges and building a brighter future.*

*With a definite optimism and unwavering determination, we continue our journey together towards a promising and resilient future.*

*Thank you for your support,  
Anaïs Sandra Carion*



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

2024 was marked by significant events for MAD Brussels, notably the signing of a tripartite Administration contract with the City of Brussels and the Brussels-Capital Region, strengthening our institutional ties and shared vision. We are also proud of our new semi-annual mentoring program, which supported a record number of 188 projects and brands while also experiencing a 45% increase in event attendance. Despite uncertain economic conditions, 16 new companies were launched under our mentorship, demonstrating the vitality and dynamism of our creative sectors.

Our partnership with Slowroom Brussels, an initiative combining sustainable and local fashion sales with musical performances, was a resounding success, with significantly higher attendance than other B2C events. Furthermore, we intensified the collaboration with schools and the Dansaert neighborhood, giving rise to many stimulating projects. Among them was the first edition of the MAD Parcours, bringing together 54 locations and 144 Brussels-based fashion and design creators and brands, showcasing the vibrancy and dynamism of our ecosystem.



The past year was distinguished by the implementation of a major international event: the collaboration between Belgian public institutions in the design sector - MAD Brussels, Flanders DC, and WBDM - and private actors, under the auspices of Zaventem Ateliers. Together, we joined forces to create an ambitious collective presence in Milan during the Design Week, the essential event for design professionals worldwide. Imagine, a 7300 m2 space entirely dedicated to Belgian design, highlighting the talent and abundant creativity of our country.

The year ended on a high note with the Belgian Fashion Awards, where energy and enthusiasm were palpable, confirming the "MAD's comeback". We are determined to continue our mission as a leading figure in Belgian fashion and design, while also strengthening our partnerships with various institutions and actors in these sectors.

## ① PRESENTATION OF MAD

### 1. THE TEAM

MAD employs a staff of 15 people, equivalent to a total of 14.30 full-time (FTEs) as of December 31, 2024.

The composition of the team, as of December 31, 2024, is as follows:

- Anaïs Sandra Carion, (in a 5/5 position), Managing Director, also supervising the business department;
- Daphrose Nkundwa, (in a 5/5 position), Financial and Human Resources Director;
- Dieter Van Den Storm, (in a 5/5 position), Artistic and Communication Director;
- Anne Vertongen, (in a 4/5 position at the beginning of the year), in charge of Human Resources and staff well-being. She has been working part-time since July 2024;
- Inas Ben Bachir, (in a 5/5 position), mainly responsible for budget monitoring and encoding of invoices in both general and analytical accounting, as well as administrative support for MAD's public contracts;
- Maxime Mahieu, (in a 5/5 position), mainly in charge of building management, internal IT service and public contracts. He also took over the management of rental services;
- Jonathan Clément, (in a 5/5 position), caretaker responsible for maintenance and security of the premises;
- Peggy Acke, (in a 5/5 position), in charge of counselling and support for project holders. Since 14/10/2024, working 4/5 due to the expiration of a credit time until January 13, 2025;
- Adeline Faveau, (in a 5/5 position), in charge of MAD Incubator residents and providing support for creative project development and curation;
- Clara Goblet, (in a 5/5 position), in charge of seminars and other sustainability-related support activities;
- Bailo Staumont, (in a 5/5 position), responsible for international activities development and local and international contacts;
- Lore Detremmerie, (in a 5/5 position), in charge of MAD's general communication;
- Margaux Dibos, (in a 5/5 position), in charge of events and production;
- Alexandra Borgerhoff, (in a 5/5 position), in charge of press and influencers;
- Cornelia Van Den Boogaart, (in a 4/5 position), in charge of receiving and welcoming visitors.



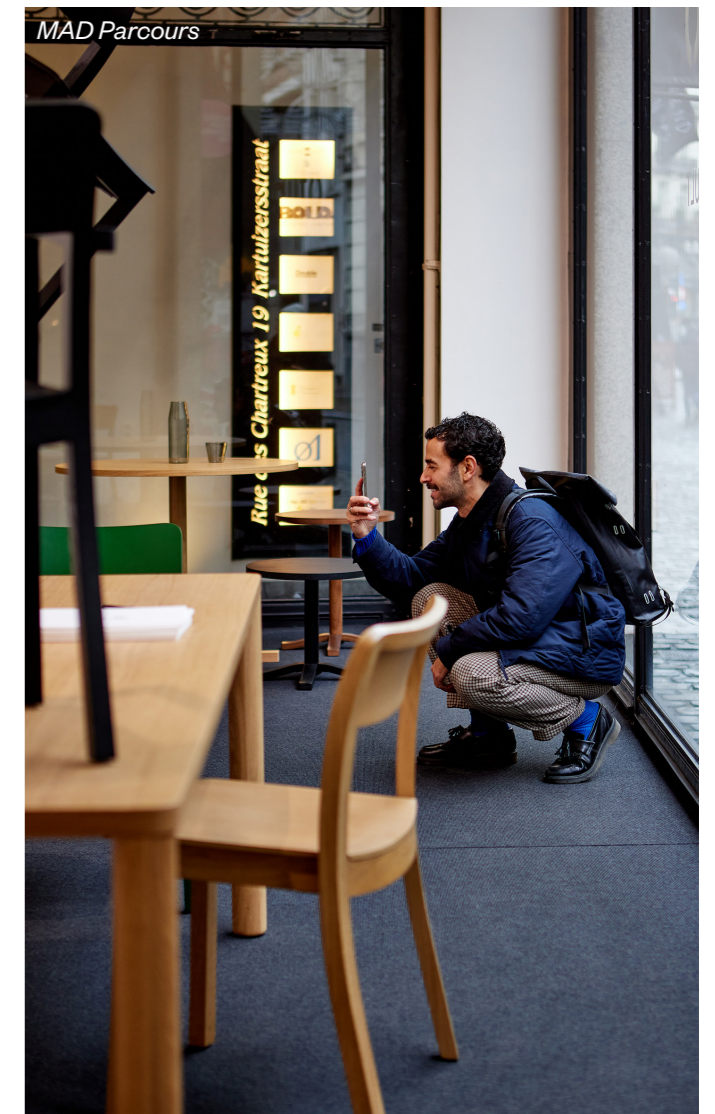
### 2. HUMAN RESSOURCES MANAGEMENT

Regarding human resources management, it should be noted that Cornelia Van Den Boogaart will be retiring on December 31, 2024. Additionally, Jonathan Clément joined the team as the new janitor on April 1, 2024. He is responsible for the maintenance of both concession locations and the security of the MAD headquarters site.

Furthermore, internships have been recruited within different departments, as well as students for reception, to strengthen the teams and ensure smooth daily operations.

Significant effort has been put into human resources management in 2024. To re-motivate the teams and promote a positive work environment, several actions have been implemented:

- Adjustment of certain tasks to align them with the overall strategy of MAD, with the approval of the employee, specifically regarding building rental management;
- An HR roadmap for 2024 was drafted, including the following points:
  - Team cohesion;
  - Information exchange;
  - Small gestures of appreciation;
  - Analytical methods to improve the employee experience, such as eNPS, as well as a psychosocial risk assessment every 5 years by our external prevention advisor Mensura, conducted in October 2024 and whose feedback we are waiting for;
- New initiatives for 2024:
  - Remote work abroad is allowed for 5 days per year;
  - Increase in telecommuting from one day to two days per week;
- The completion of a partnership agreement with the Brussels CPAS (Public Center for Social Welfare) has allowed the placement of two people through article 60. This program offers CPAS beneficiaries the opportunity to integrate into public or private structures while receiving financial support, promoting their professional reintegration and autonomy: :
  - One person will be assigned to building maintenance starting in mid-July 2024, allowing us to reduce the cost of cleaning;
  - One person will be assigned to reception starting in mid-December 2024.



One of the challenges faced by the management team in terms of human resources is the lack of career plans and initiatives to retain talent, due to:

- Limited opportunities for internal advancement;
- A limited budget for training;
- Resources for training that are directly dependent on the allocated budget.

MAD is committed to continuing to find medium-term solutions, within its budget possibilities, to promote a positive and supportive work culture and ensure the well-being of all 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  
*Trésorier, appointed by the Brussels-Capital Region*

Eve Demoen  
*Member, comes from the fashion sector*

Siré Kaba  
*Member, comes from the fashion sector*

Amaryllis Jacobs  
*Member, comes from the design sector*

Alexandre Helson  
*Member, comes from the local economic sector*

Gwendolyn Grolig  
*Member, comes from the creative economic sector*

Lynn Tytgat  
*Member, comes from the local economic sector*

### Fashion Moves



## ② FUNDING SOURCES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### 1. FUNDING SOURCES AND SUBSIDIES EVOLUTION

The City of Brussels and the Brussels-Capital Region remain the main subsidizing authorities of the non-profit organization Brussels Center for Fashion and Design - MAD Brussels. MAD also benefits from other supports at the community level, such as the Wallonia-Brussels Federation - Culture.

Other state aid comes from the Maribel Fund, equivalent to 1.5 FTE.

#### STRUCTURAL SUBSIDIES AND CONVENTIONS

BRUSSELS REGION-CAPITAL - ECONOMY	€ 495.000
BRUSSELS REGION-CAPITAL - IMAGE	€ 140.000
BRUSSELS REGION-CAPITAL - INTERNATIONAL	€ 130.000
CITY OF BRUSSELS	€ 600.000
FEDERATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES CULTURE	€ 75.000
FONDS MARIBEL	€ 78.949
<b>S/T</b>	<b>€ 1.518.949</b>

#### OCCASIONAL SUPPORTING REVENUES

HUB.BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS	€ 63.184
LOTTERIE NATIONALE	€ 28.000
CITY OF BRUSSELS - MAD PARCOURS	€ 25.000
BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL - ECONOMIC MISSION	€ 10.000
<b>S/T</b>	<b>€ 126.184</b>

#### VARIOUS REVENUES

OWN REVENUE	€ 25.908
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**TOTAL € 1.671.041**

Creative lunch - Paul Cocksedge



### ③ STRATEGY AND KEY FIGURES 2024

The mission of MAD is defined by four strategic objectives:

- **Orientation:** a focus on guiding young creatives and industry professionals;
- **Networking:** a focus on connecting with the professional audience of the fashion and design sectors, as well as the public sphere;
- **Visibility & Inspiration:** a focus on increasing the visibility and communication of MAD as an entity, as well as that of young creatives and professionals;
- **Relations with the government and its ecosystem:** a strategic axis aligned with the Brussels ecosystem.

Through these objectives, MAD is committed to inspiring creatives by providing them with privileged access to resources and opportunities for training, development, and networking. It also includes connecting these creatives with the economic sector by facilitating collaborations and partnerships, while also providing support for their entrepreneurial projects. Lastly, MAD guides these creatives throughout their journey, helping them gain recognition and establish themselves on the national and international stage. It also maintains strong relationships with public and private actors in the fashion and design industry in Brussels. In summary, the Inspire, Connect & Guide strategy aims to solidify Brussels' position as a creative city and shine a light on the innovative talents of Brussels-based designers in the fashion and design world.



#### 1. ORIENTATION OBJECTIVE

The objective of our guidance program is to support profiles, whether they are still projects or established brands.

In this perspective, seminars, collective workshops, and individual sessions were organized at MAD in 2024, totaling 37 sessions with 873 participants registering respectively a 24% and 45% increase compared to 2023. This evolution can be attributed to the structuring of our new guidance program and optimization of organized seminars.



The number of projects benefiting from individualized follow-up has also increased by 6% compared to 2023. Among the supported projects, we can distinguish:

- 145 projects integrating the MAD Starter program, intended for individuals who are in the launch or reflection phase to initiate an activity, or profiles that are considered to be in the start-up phase of their companies (of those, 37 companies are already possessing a VAT number);
- 20 projects integrating the MAD Take-Off program, in the final stages of creation or in their early stages of their company (of which 18 have a VAT number);
- 11 projects integrating the MAD Incubator program, our residence that hosts and supports projects for two years at MAD;
- 3 projects integrating the MAD Fly program, selected by a jury and having between 1 and 3 years of existence;
- 9 projects integrating the MAD Cherry-on-the-Cake program, intended for more mature profiles due to their positioning and have been established for at least 3 years and are requiring advice related to commercial strategy or financing.

The total number of hours of individualized follow-up, both with our internal business advisor and both with our external experts, amounted to 298 hours.

## 2. NETWORKING OBJECTIVE

In 2023, MAD implemented a new strategy aiming at fostering connections between various actors in the sector, at the local, regional, national, and international level. This initiative not only allowed for mutual enrichment but also fueled the goal of promoting Brussels' talents and encouraging paid collaborations between creative individuals and companies. The work accomplished in 2024 greatly contributed to this strategy, with a significant reinforcement of the relationships established with sector contacts.

Networking takes place on three levels:

- Organizing events, both at MAD and internationally;
- Calls for projects tailored to the industry, published directly on the MAD website;
- Direct connections between individuals and companies.

Internationally, several brands and project holders were also showcased, including some in collaboration with hub.brussels, through 6 distinct initiatives:

- A presence at the Milan Furniture Fair, under the “Belgium is Design” branding, at Baranzate Ateliers, with 15 profiles (a joint Belgian presence driven by a collaboration between the public and private sectors);
- A presence at the Milan Furniture Fair, this time at the Brussels House, with 14 profiles;
- Participation in the Princely Economic Mission in Oslo, with an exhibition and B2B seminar under the “Belgium is Design” branding, with 8 profiles;
- A one-week workshop at Boisbuchet in France, with 10 profiles;
- A presence at Copenhagen Fashion Week in August, under the “In Our Name Belgium” branding, with an influencer press showroom in the city center, for the launch of 3 brands;
- A presence at Paris Fashion Week in a B2B showroom, with 3 brands.



During this test year, 53 connections were made between Brussels creators and public, local, and European companies or institutions. Of these, 32 led to collaborations, including 15 projects supported by MAD.

Some notable examples of non-confidential tailor-made projects are:

- The window display created by Studio Hier to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sotheby's in Brussels;
- The costume designed and produced by Kasbah Kosmic for Manneken Pis, on behalf of the National Lottery;
- The custom-made scarf designed and produced by Hotel Louis for The Hotel, at the occasion of the BEL Prize.

The total budget allocated to creators, by public and private entities, for all 10 tailor-made projects monitored by MAD, amounts to 56,289 Euros exclusive of VAT.





### 3. INSPIRATION & VISIBILITY OBJECTIVE

MAD is developing a communication strategy aiming at:

- Promoting the target audiences and beneficiaries of MAD (fashion, furniture design, collectible design & set design);
- Contributing to the reputation of Brussels by highlighting the actors of the Brussels scene in the fashion and design sectors;
- Communicating to a larger audience community whenever relevant;
- Communicating through advertising, towards a specific target or a larger audience, based on opportunities and needs.

This visibility strategy has been made possible through several initiatives, including:

- The second part of the “Nuevo Nouveau” exhibition by renowned Spanish designer Jaime Hayon, part of the program of the Spanish EU presidency and the year celebrating Art Nouveau by the Brussels-Capital Region, with 5,096 visitors in 2023 and 1,279 visitors in 2024;
- The second edition of the Brussels Jewellery Week, featuring two 10-day collective exhibitions (Particles and No Waste), with 84 established and emerging artists, including 16 Brussels designers, and a total of 2,309 visitors;
- The collective exhibition Fashion Moves, which explores costume and clothing trends from ballet to contemporary dance, with a total of 3,009 visitors. The exhibition, for which the set design was created by Dutch designer Dennis Vanderbroeck based in Antwerp, showcases creations from internationally renowned Belgian designers - Raf Simons, Pieter Mulier and Glenn Martens - as well as emerging names such as Skin Series, Arno Ferrera, Eunji Oh and Jordy Arthur;
- The Future Generation exhibition, featuring the final projects of 14 students selected during their end-of-year jury through the MAD Graduation Prize, as well as the results of the work of the 10 residents of the MAD Incubator after two years of guidance, attracted a total of 1,728 visitors;
- The exhibition Duos en Résonances, an initiative by Wallonie Design, showcasing 6 completed projects, the result of the collaboration between artisans and designers. Since its launch in December 2024, the exhibition has welcomed 593 visitors so far. It features works by renowned figures such as Julien Renault, Studio Unfold, Flora Miranda, and Frederik Delbart.

Overall, 153 Brussels and Belgian designers were showcased through these exhibitions, attracting 8,918 visitors and generating 92 dedicated press features on these events.



Brussels Jewellery Week



Future Generation

In our ongoing commitment to inspire both professionals and young designers, four creative lunches were organized, offering a privileged moment for sharing between a major figure in fashion or design and the public over lunch. Among our speakers:

- Paul Cocksedge, renowned British designer whose social installations can be seen in Europe and Asia, with 56 participants, as part of the VIP tour of the Collectible design fair;
- Stéphanie d'Heygere, a Belgian jewelry designer based in Paris, known for her eponymous brand as well as her collaborations for luxury brands, with 75 participants, as part of the Brussels Jewellery Week;
- Saul Nash, a fashion designer based in London, with 68 participants, as part of the Fashion Moves exhibition where one of his silhouettes was also showcased;
- Pauline+Luis, Brussels-based lighting designers who were awarded the annual "Designers of the Year" prize by Le Vif Weekend and Knack Weekend (in co-collaboration with MAD), and currently residents at the MAD Incubator, with 42 participants.



Inspiring conferences and roundtables were also organized, both within and outside MAD, some in collaboration with other entities. Among them:

- A conference at the first edition of Ceramic Brussels on raising awareness about sustainable use of ceramics and techniques, with Joëlle Swanet and Jonas Moenne, 58 participants;
- A conference as part of the Slowroom Brussels event, featuring Kenza Vandeput, Nina Maat, and Aja Noël, with 136 participants;
- Three conferences as part of the Brussels Jewellery Week exhibition, one with Marianna Lora (Sotheby's), the second with Saskia Van der Gucht, and the last one hosted by David Huycke, with a total of 164 participants;
- A We Talk Dance conference during the Fashion Moves exhibition, with 58 participants;
- A roundtable organized at Renewal (of which MAD is a partner), featuring speakers Dieter Van Den Storm from MAD and Aser Gimenez Ortega from MVRDV, with 30 participants;
- A conference about artificial intelligence in the creative industries as part of the Future Generation exhibition, featuring as speakers Guillaume Slizewicz, Joana Lemercier, Yannick Jacquet, and Marie du Chastel (KIKK), with 47 participants;
- A conference as part of the annual "Celles qui font le Design" series by Maak & Transmettre, with 72 participants.

Between the creative lunches and the various conferences and roundtables, whether held on-site or off-site, these initiatives have resulted in a total of 14 events with 904 participants.



The media visibility of MAD in 2024 was also exceptional:

Press coverage:

- An estimated advertising value of over 4 million euros;
- 289 publications, 4 covers, 135 full pages;
- A significant increase internationally, with 29 articles published abroad.

Regarding our online presence:

- Stabilization of the number of unique website visitors and a 9% increase in overall website traffic, reaching 190,000 visits;
- Continued growth of subscribers on each social media platform compared to the previous year: +3% for Facebook, +31% for Instagram, +30% for LinkedIn, and +21% for TikTok;
- An exponential increase in reach: +30% on Facebook and +48% on Instagram compared to 2023, partially driven by advertising investments for the MAD Parcours.

#### 4. ECOSYSTEM OBJECTIVE

Some key data to keep in mind when considering MAD within its Brussels ecosystem:

- The number of projects and companies supported continues to grow while maintaining a steady trend (+7%);
- The number of registered VAT numbers among the supported companies stands at 16, demonstrating the resilience of entrepreneurs despite a complex economic context. MAD has facilitated 53 connections between creators, brands, and ecosystem companies, fostering productive synergies. 32 of these collaborations have already resulted in successful outcomes, thanks in part to the MAD Parcours initiative;
- A new fashion and design route in the city center, with the first edition involving 54 local merchants and private actors, representing 144 Brussels-based fashion and design brands and creators;
- Among the structured projects and companies supported within our programs (excluding MAD Starter, still in its exploratory phase), 60% incorporate sustainability at the core of their approach, representing a 10% increase compared to 2023. MAD also initiated 58 events dedicated to inspiration and support, open to all and completely free.



## ④ SOCIAL, SOCIETAL & ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSABILITY

The values of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation are at the core of all actions at MAD. They embody the essence of a forward-thinking Brussels, where creativity drives transformation. Creative minds actively contribute to this push for positive change, both culturally and economically. Their success is intrinsically linked to that of the Brussels region: their performance fuels that of Brussels and vice versa. Creatives hold a prominent position in innovation, infusing new ideas and developing sustainable creations. Their commitment goes beyond the artistic dimension: they also work to promote diversity and inclusion, ensuring that everyone has a place in this constantly evolving ecosystem.

### 1. INCLUSIVITY VALUE

MAD is committed to making the Fashion and Design sectors inclusive, by seeking to involve a wide audience, without discrimination. This commitment includes:

- Free access to exhibitions;
- Programs and opportunities to support all Brussels residents;
- Trainings, events and collaborations that are open and free for all;
- Inclusive communication in all external communications, available in French, Dutch and English;
- Collaborations with a sheltered workshop;
- Hosting schools and other institutions within the MAD spaces.

The Brussels-Capital Region, due to its density and diversity, faces various challenges in terms of inclusion, participation and social cohesion. However, this diversity also represents an intrinsic source of richness and creativity for Brussels' Fashion and Design, which is essential to value. We are fully committed to working towards this goal in the years to come.

### 2. ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE

MAD aspires to be an exemplary institution in terms of social and environmental responsibility, a commitment that is reflected in its core business.

Sustainability is a crucial issue in the fashion and design industries, and MAD plays a proactive role by providing advice, tools, and training for professionals to measure their ecological footprint and social impact. In doing so, we position ourselves as a key player in the slow fashion movement in Brussels. We also offer a range of services to entrepreneurs, organizing workshops and bringing together local sustainable initiatives. These actions are carried out in partnership with pilot administrations of the Regional Economic Transition Strategy.

In this ongoing process and reflection, MAD has made the decision to calculate its carbon footprint every 3 years, to improve its energy management. Moreover, the establishment of the PEB (B) certificate was completed, and MAD was awarded the Ecodynamique label with a score of 74%.

### 3. INNOVATION VALUE

Innovation plays a key role in the strategy and actions of MAD, actively promoting creativity and renewal in the fields of fashion and design. Several initiatives have been implemented to support this dynamic:

- Promotion of new methods, processes, materials and applications in creation and production;
- Improvement of support for Brussels-based fashion and design entrepreneurs, whether they are residents of MAD or not;
- Innovative communication, aiming to inspire, guide and connect designers;
- Strengthening ties between MAD's various target audiences and the Brussels ecosystem of economic transition;
- Combining various creative sectors to stimulate innovation in Brussels.

*Future Generation  
MAD Incubator resident, Guillaume Slizewicz*



MAD  
BRUSSELS



 RÉGION DE BRUXELLES-CAPITALE  
BRUSSELS HOOFDSTEDELIJK GEWEST



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economy.brussels**   
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