

Press kit - April 2026



Hospitality that creates memories

12 projects imagined by young designers
With insights from philosopher Gabrielle Halpern

EQUIPHOTEL 2026

2-5 November 2026

Paris Expo Porte de Versailles

Imagining the hospitality of tomorrow

What turns a stay into a memory?

Is it a place, a welcoming gesture, an atmosphere, an object you take away with you, or an emotion felt at a particular moment during a journey?

In contemporary hospitality, the experience lived by travellers now holds a central place. Beyond quality of service or the comfort of spaces, it is often the details, the thoughtful touches and the interactions that shape the memory of a stay.

It is around this question that EQUIPHOTEL launched a reflection with students from ENSCI-Les Ateliers, France's National School of Industrial Design.

As part of a project workshop, twelve design students were invited to explore the following theme: **hospitality that creates memories**.

Between October 2025 and January 2026, they were given carte blanche to imagine installations, objects or experiences capable of enriching the traveller experience and inspiring hospitality professionals.

Their projects explore different dimensions of the hotel experience: welcome rituals, the sensory perception of places, everyday gestures, objects kept as souvenirs of a stay, and the relationship between travellers and the people who bring a hotel to life.

To accompany this exploration, philosopher Gabrielle Halpern offers her perspective on these proposals and on the contemporary transformations shaping hospitality.

Why is memorable experience becoming a key issue for hospitality?

At a time when the accommodation offer has become considerably more diverse, establishments are increasingly seeking to differentiate themselves through the experience they offer travellers.

Attention to detail, atmosphere and interactions is becoming a key lever for creating memories and strengthening the bond between a place and those who visit it.

EquipHotel 2026: plural hospitality

This reflection is fully aligned with the momentum behind EquipHotel 2026, which will take place from **2 to 5 November 2026 at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles**.

Held under the theme “**plural hospitality**”, this edition shines a light on the diversity of hospitality formats and the new dynamics currently transforming hospitality venues.

The hotel is no longer limited to its accommodation function. It is becoming a hybrid space where experiences, encounters and multiple uses intersect. Travellers are now looking for places capable of offering distinctive atmospheres, unexpected interactions and experiences that go beyond the stay itself.

In this context, design appears as a key lever for imagining new forms of hospitality. By working on objects, spaces, gestures and sensations, it makes it possible to explore how a place can create emotion and leave a lasting imprint on the memory of those who pass through it.

The collaboration between EquipHotel and ENSCI-Les Ateliers is part of this forward-looking approach: inviting young designers to imagine proposals capable of opening up new avenues for hospitality professionals.

“Today, hospitality is constantly reinventing itself. With the theme of plural hospitality, EquipHotel aims to highlight the diversity of experiences and approaches that shape the hotel stay. The collaboration with ENSCI-Les Ateliers fully reflects this ambition: inviting young designers to explore what makes an experience unique and how a place can create lasting memories. ”
Béatrice Gravier, Director of EquipHotel

A philosophical perspective by Gabrielle Halpern, Philosopher



Hospitality is made up of memories — in the plural. This is something the ENSCI students understood well when imagining creative projects designed to stimulate all the senses. Indeed, research in cognitive science has shown that there is not one memory, but many: memories of touch, sound, smell, taste and sight.

What becomes unforgettable is not built by the mind alone, but by every cell in our body, by our whole identity.

The hospitality of tomorrow will draw on all the senses to create unforgettable memories, and this resonates with a broader societal trend: the need for personalisation, the rejection of the standardised, the uniform, the anonymous and the sanitised. That is why the ENSCI students reimagined hospitality as a total experience, one that is rooted in the body: taste with the project *Offrande*, sight with *Discos de fuego*, sound with *Caillou*, and smell with *L'entre-soi*. Rooted in the collective, too, through a reflection on the traveller's personal identity with *Embode* and on that of employees with *Ceux qui restent, ceux qui passent*. Rooted in place as well, extending the territory and echoing it, with the project *Toponymie*. All the projects share one common point: Surprise! What makes something unforgettable is grounded in an element of surprise, which is part of the art of travel, as Stefan Zweig wrote.

More than ever, the hotel must be rethought not as a simple place where guests sleep, but as an experience fully lived by human beings. It is because the hotel of tomorrow will have a true singularity — sensory, spatial, territorial and more — that it will have a soul and become unforgettable.

Contrary to what one might imagine, the future will not lie in all-digital, disembodied experiences; tomorrow's innovations will instead be found in a reconnection with the tangible, as shown by projects such as *Komorebi* and *C'era*. In an increasingly virtual world, it is striking to see how the generations of tomorrow want to live... real experiences.

Elias Canetti wrote that "depending on the images that make you up, your existence will take on a completely different course" — in other words, tell me what you look at, and I will tell you who you will become.

What if the hotels of tomorrow, through the memories they create, could redirect destinies?

Gabrielle Halpern holds a doctorate in philosophy and is a graduate of the École Normale Supérieure. She worked in several ministerial offices before co-leading a start-up incubator.

Her research has since focused on the notion of hybridisation as a major trend shaping the world to come.

In 2024, she was recognised by Elle magazine and La Tribune newspaper as one of the “Thirty Women

Transforming

the Economy and Society.” She is the author of numerous books, including an essay dedicated to hospitality: *Thinking Hospitality* (with Cyril Auizerate, Éditions de l’Aube, 2022). Alongside her research, she also gives talks around the world.

12 young designers' perspectives on hospitality that creates memories

In partnership with ENSCI-Les Ateliers, EquipHotel Paris asked 12 students — future designers aged 18 to 29 — to develop a project on the theme of “**hospitality as a creator of memories**”.

From October 2025 to January 2026, they were given carte blanche, as part of a project workshop, to imagine and develop a deliverable ready to be taken further.

Among their sources of inspiration were the invitation to slow down, the thoughtful touches a hotelier might offer travellers, and the object one brings back at the end of a stay.

Apolline Regnaut, for example, created a corridor conceived as a decompression airlock leading to a spa, where visitors move through a dimly lit, woodland-inspired environment. **Milton Afonso**, for his part, rethought the food offering presented on arrival in a room through a new gesture, an element of surprise and a sensory experience.

Another example: **Zakine Jacobs** embedded an electronic device in a stone, capable of playing sounds or music specific to a hotel as soon as it is brought close to the ear — much like a shell that sings of the sea...

About ENSCI-Les Ateliers

Founded in 1982, the École Nationale Supérieure de Création Industrielle (ENSCI-Les Ateliers) is the only public institution in France entirely dedicated to industrial design. Inspired by the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College, the school stands out for its innovative teaching

approach, centred on project-based learning and personalised study paths. Students explore creation through experimentation and by adopting a socially responsible approach.

ENSCI-Les Ateliers offers two Master's degrees: Textile Design and Industrial Design, as well as a PhD in design through the Centre de Recherche en Design (CRD) in partnership with ENS Paris-Saclay. The school also offers three Mastères Spécialisés® programmes — Contemporary Creation and Technology, Sustainable Innovation By Design and Nature Inspired Design — as part of its lifelong learning provision. It also fosters partnerships with leading academic institutions such as Université Paris-Saclay, Alliance Sorbonne Université and the Institut Polytechnique de Paris. Placed under the joint supervision of the French Ministries of Culture and Industry, ENSCI-Les Ateliers plays a key role in the field of design in France.

www.ensci.com

12 perspectives, 9 projects...

Photos / © Christophe Daguet



Milton Afonso

Project Name: Offrande

What is it?

Drawing on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, this project reinterprets the notion of hospitality and the art of receiving guests by offering food and shelter...

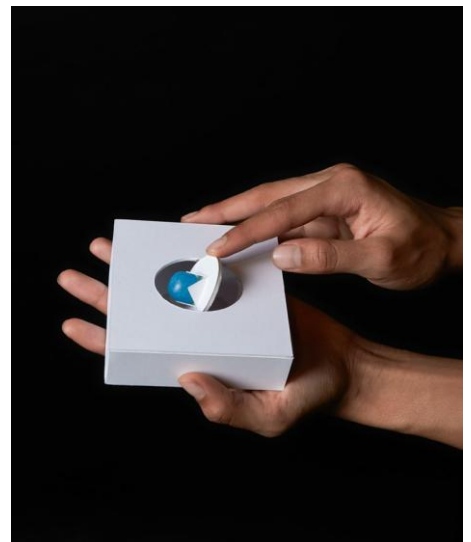
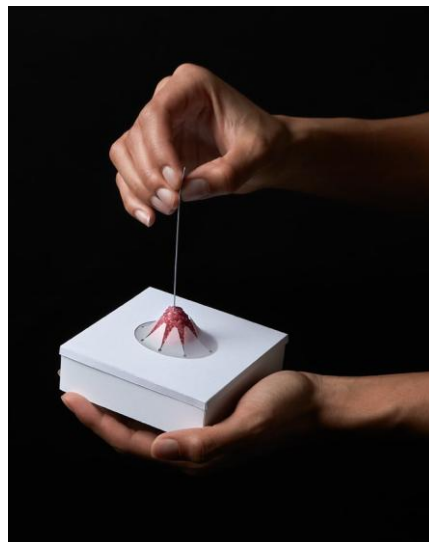
Here, it is the idea of a food offering that is revisited — or how to make arrival in a hotel lobby or room truly memorable by offering a selection of sweet treats to nibble on...

In practice

The traveller adapts their gestures, or even adopts a new set of gestures (Milton Afonso speaks of a "catalogue of gestures"), opening a series of containers with evolving shapes designed to create surprise, before discovering a whole range of sweets, confectionery and other delicacies to enjoy...

Purpose

Here, all the senses are awakened, and the sweet offering could also be extended into a savoury one, or move beyond the lobby or guest room to become a buffet, cocktail reception or dinner aperitif...



Leonardo Ortega Herrera

Project Name: Discos de fuego

What is it?

What if the first impression were the right one — and created an unforgettable memory?... That is, in essence, the starting point for this reflection, which gave rise to a collection and range of objects (or “family of objects”) conceived around a monumental, sculptural piece: a kind of sacred circle — inspired by the primitive geometry of the torus — placed in a hotel lobby.

In practice

The sculpture, originally imagined as a vessel for fire, can also serve to bring people together, gathering them in one place by becoming a seating element with the appearance of a bench, for example during check-in...

Purpose

This monumental sculpture, made of volcanic stone, can also be adapted into wall lights, like candles, and fragrance diffusers for guest rooms...





Clémence Pierrat and Paul Ferrier

Project Name: **Toponymie**

What is it?

Blending the world of a hotel with that of an ecomuseum was the starting point for this reflection, which ultimately leads to reconnecting a lobby with its territory.

A hotel reception area becomes both a welcoming space and a museum-inspired environment, shaped by the richness of the neighbourhood, district, village or city in which it is located. The project was developed through drawings successively completed by Clémence and Paul, in the spirit of an exquisite corpse. It was also informed by a reading of Mona Chollet's book "Chez soi : une odyssée de l'espace domestique."

In practice

A table fitted with shelves is installed in the lobby. Travellers can sit around it, work, have lunch, dinner or a snack, while also accessing information — particularly on the shelves — about the territory in which they are staying.

Purpose

Designed to be modular and mobile, Toponymie takes the form of a kit that can be carried, transported and deployed in different places. An approach driven by a desire to transmit and share.

Matylda Rakowska

Project Name: Embode

What is it?

The reflection began with this question: who am I in a hotel?

Would I become someone else?... What if the hotel were connected to the traveller's identity? What if it were a place of transition and autobiographical memory?

These questions gave rise to an app designed to help users find the ideal hotel according to their mood and feelings... Instead of focusing on the size of the room, the traveller focuses on the reasons that prompted the journey in the first place...

In practice

All you have to do is log into the app and answer a series of questions to receive hotel suggestions...

Purpose

This approach to hospitality echoes a study published by the Accor group in January 2026 on trends in experiential travel in 2026. Among other findings, it showed that "25% of travellers would like to begin their search with a mood," confirming that travel is no longer simply about getting from one place to another, but is rooted above all in emotion...





Apolline Regnaut

Project Name: Komorebi

What is it?

In Japanese, Komorebi means “sunlight filtering through the trees”... The beginning of an invitation to travel, contemplation and suspended time... Here, it takes the form of a passageway to be walked through — almost like a ritual — connecting guest rooms (or a lobby) to a spa. A kind of decompression chamber, allowing one to disconnect from one environment and tune into another, dedicated to relaxation, rest and silence...

In practice

The passageway is made up of two parallel frosted-glass walls (triple glazing), whose forest-inspired pattern evolves over a length of around twenty metres. This evolution is shaped by sunlight, passing silhouettes and night-time backlighting...

Purpose

The experience of moving through this passageway — from one world to another — creates sensations and emotions that are not easily forgotten...



Gauthier Carnéjac-Dijoux

Project Name: L'entre-soi

What is it?

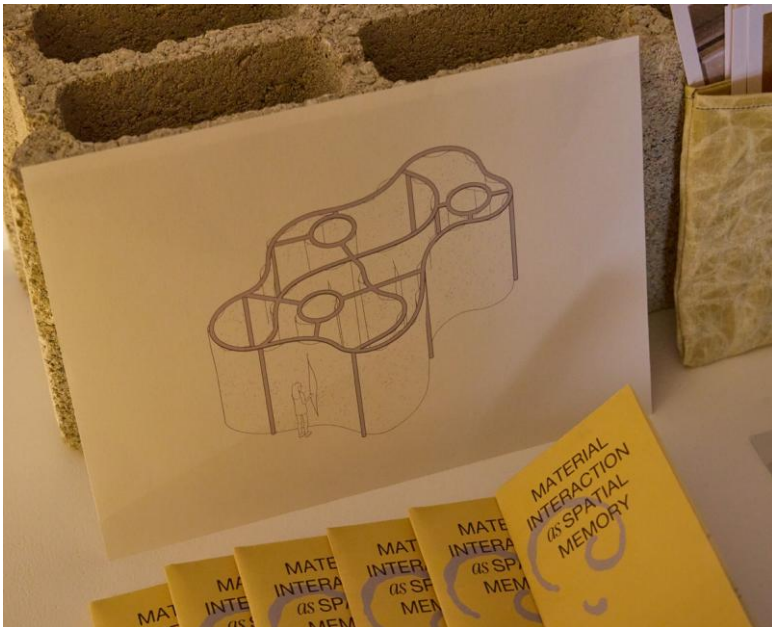
The starting question was: how can one reconnect with the freshness and mist of a morning in the countryside? How can one remember a perfect moment? The answer: what if it were through fragrance? And what better medium than a hotel room curtain, as a change from the routine of the traditional diffuser placed in a lobby?...

In practice

To scent a curtain — whose fragrance can be sensed and felt as soon as the fabric is handled — the project uses a microencapsulation process (a liquid enclosed within microparticles). The microencapsulated fragrance is sprayed by room staff before the guest arrives. The scent is then released each time the curtains are opened, accompanying the user both on waking and at bedtime.

Purpose

This “olfactory curtain” allows the traveller to create their own experience — and memory — within the hotel room.



Giulia Rinaldi
and Filippo
Trevisan

Project Name: C'era

What is it?

C'era explores how reception spaces can create memorable experiences through embodied, sensory interaction. It therefore proposes a tactile journey made up of linen curtains treated with natural beeswax, arranged in transitional spaces dedicated to wellbeing.

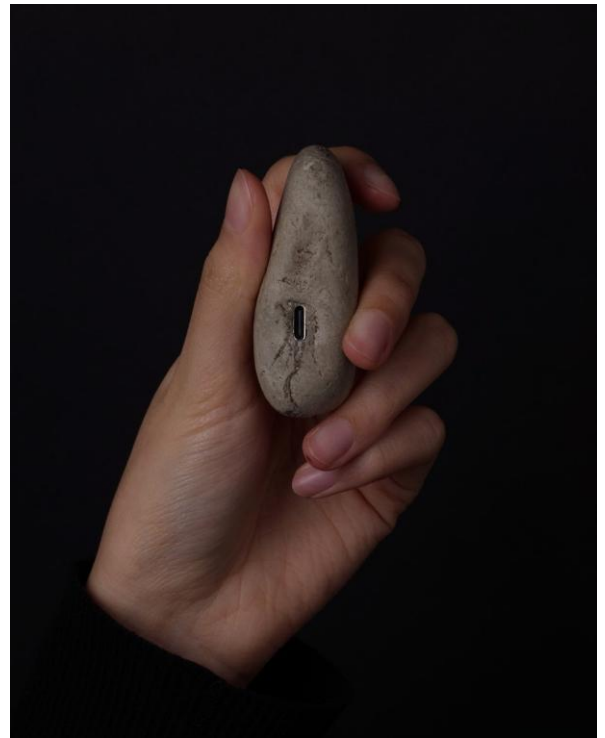
In practice

As travellers move through the space, touch, warmth and repeated gestures transform the material, shape it and leave traces — witnesses to presence and to the passing of time. These pieces of material then become a form of memory and silent archives for collective use.

Purpose

The idea here is to reuse linen that is generally discarded in hotels, within a circular-materials logic, thus giving textiles a second life within the same hotel ecosystem.





Zakine Jacobs

Project Name: Caillou

What is it?

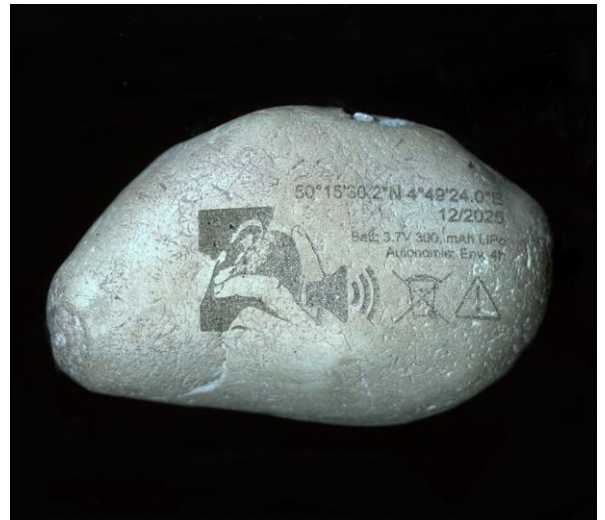
The starting point of this project is the sonic memory of a place — whether background music, the sounds of a city, or the resonance of a hotel lobby... Alongside this is the pebble or stone one picks up during a journey as a souvenir... What if the two were combined? What if you could hold that stone to your ear and hear again a place you once loved? Much like the shell one holds to the ear to hear the sea... This Caillou project makes it possible...

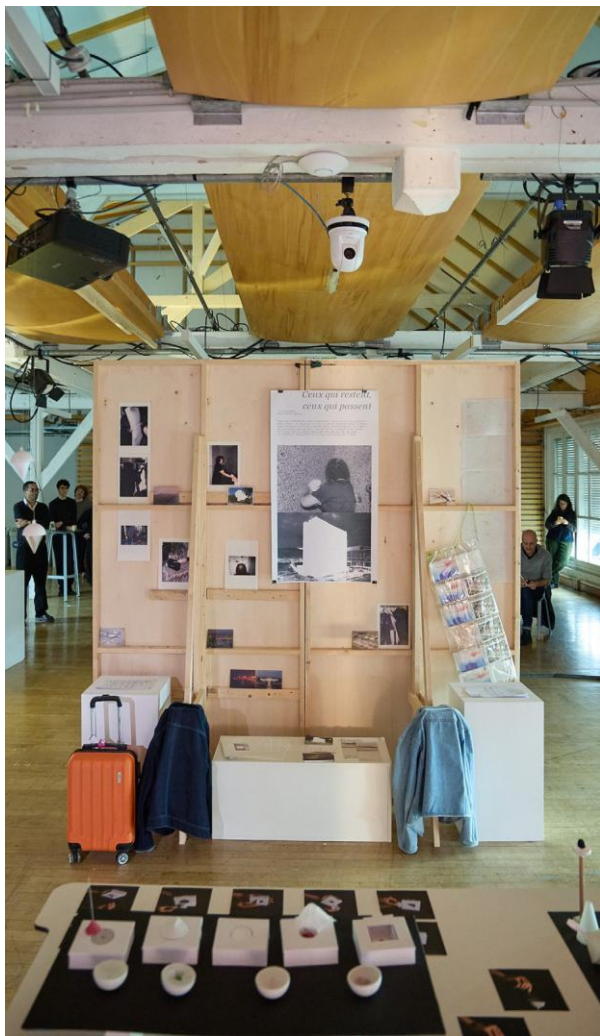
In practice

To achieve this feat, electronic components are assembled so that they can fit inside a cement pebble made using a stone-shaped mould.

Purpose

To bring back a pebble from every hotel one stays in, gradually building a collection of memories... and turning the unusual — even affectionate — gesture of holding a stone to one's ear into a ritual.





Lou Fleurigeon and Carla-Julia Lapinta

Project Name: Those Who Stay, Those Who Pass Through

What is it?

The starting point here was to focus both on hotel employees (those who stay) and on travellers (those who pass through). It highlights the different professions of the former and the different expectations of the latter...

In practice

On the one hand, a series of photographs captures with accuracy — and without embellishment — the daily life of a hotel and its staff: from the dishwashing area to the lobby, via the corridors, the lift, breakfast service, the staff cloakroom and the luggage room... On the other hand, a wide range of proposals is made to travellers: from the hotel gazette (featuring ultra-local information) to the possibility of writing on the back of a pre-stamped postcard... an invitation to escape, to share and to feel.

Purpose

To invite visitors to look at the hotel through a distinctive lens, within a scenographic installation where stories and impressions — from both staff and travellers — intersect and complement one another to tell the story of “well-orchestrated hospitality.”



About EquipHotel

EquipHotel is a trade show organised by RX France, a leading organiser of professional events. Held every two years in Paris, EquipHotel Paris is the benchmark B2B event for the hospitality sector. The event brings together more than 1,200 exhibiting companies, 30% of them international, across four major sectors: Tech & Services, Wellbeing, Design and Foodservice.

This unique offering makes it the most comprehensive international trade show for the hospitality and foodservice industries. It showcases both leading French and international companies in their respective sectors, as well as innovative young businesses imagining the hotel and restaurant experiences of tomorrow.

The event attracts 80,000 decision-makers from the hospitality and foodservice sector, including chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers, architects, interior designers, investors, café owners, brewers, public-sector facility managers, consultancies and installers.

Over four days, these professionals have the opportunity to meet new suppliers and discover their latest innovations.

EquipHotel is also a hub for hospitality trends and innovation, with conferences, masterclasses and inspirational spaces created by leading architects and experts.

EquipHotel 2-5 November 2026
www.equiphotel.com

About RX

RX is dedicated to supporting the growth of businesses, communities and individuals. We combine face-to-face events with data and digital products to help our customers understand markets, source products and complete transactions, with over 400 events in 22 countries and 43 business sectors. RX France organises leading face-to-face, digital and hybrid events in around fifteen different markets. Our high-profile national and international events include MIPIM, MAPIC, Batimat, Pollutec, EquipHotel, SITL, IFTM Top Resa, MIPCOM, MIPTV, Paris Photo, Maison&Objet* and many others. Our events are held in France, Hong Kong, Italy, Mexico and the United States. RX aims to have a positive impact on society and to create an inclusive work environment for all our employees. RX is part of RELX, a global provider of information-based analytics and decision tools for professional and business customers. www.rxglobal.com
*Organised by SAFI, a subsidiary of RX France and Ateliers d'Art de France.

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