

Hennessy  
PARADIS  
IMPÉRIAL



---

THE QUEST



Hennessy  
PARADIS  
IMPÉRIAL

# MADE OF PRECISION

## THE HEAVEN OF HENNESSY — THE FOUNDER'S CELLAR

The eaux-de-vie that lie here, in oak barrels and dame-jeannes, are the essence of Hennessy's greatest cognacs. They would not exist at all, were it not for a unique, for an inestimable savoir-faire – the art of selection - passed down through eight generations of Master Blenders from a single family: the Fillioux.

Hennessy Paradis Impérial embodies the apogee of the art of selection at Hennessy. The Master Blender exclusively selects within this collection the eaux-de-vie of the most extreme finesse. In an entire harvest, only 10 of 10 000 eaux-de-vie may be deemed worthy of one day entering this blend. Distinguishing that promise, that potential of finesse, choosing the exact conditions for its ideal maturation, is the Master Blender's craft.

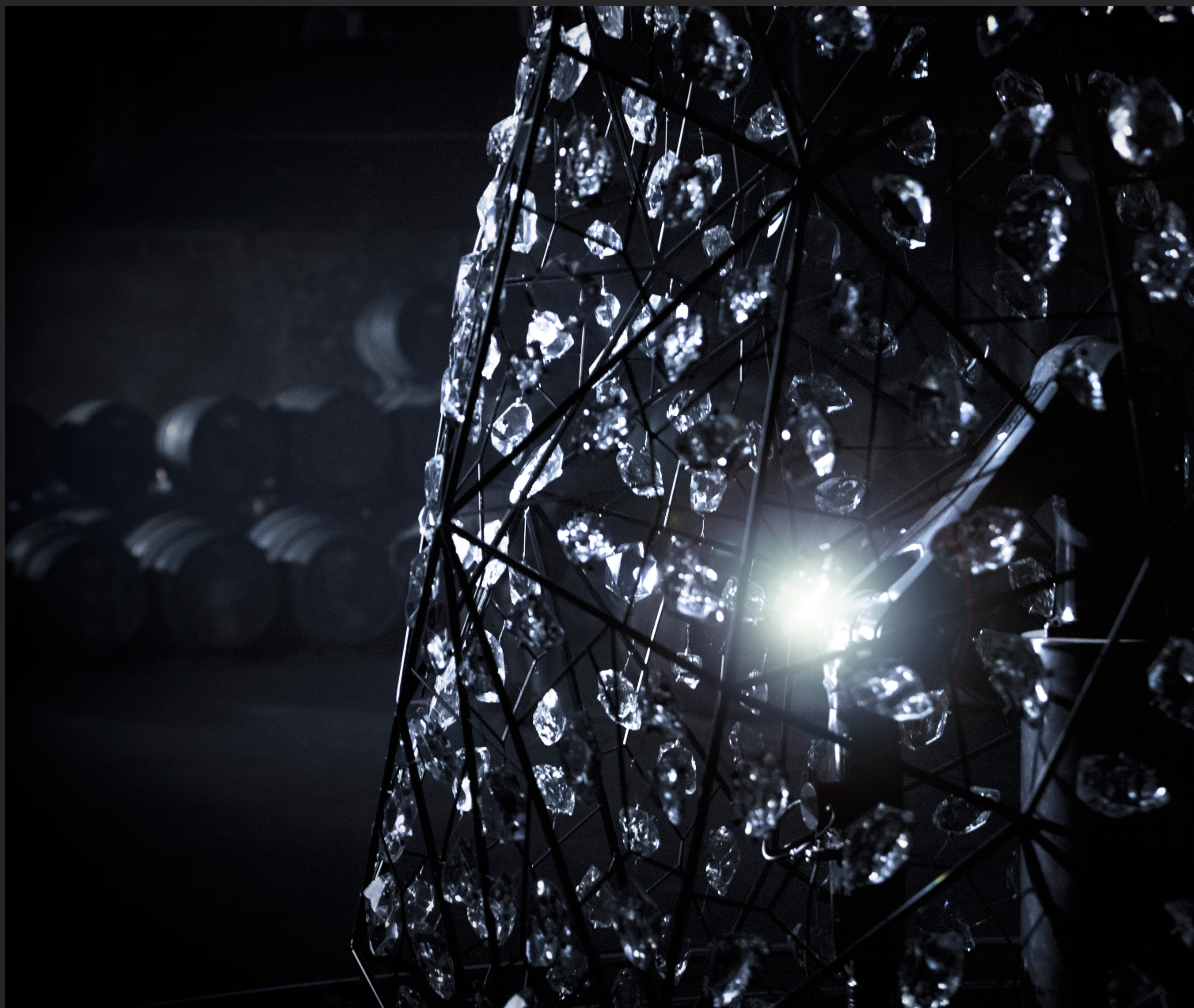
Along the years, with precise tasting techniques and a unique lexicon of sensorial memories inherited from his predecessors, the Master Blender patiently guides these eaux-de-vie to their very tipping point of elegance. The decisive moment the eau-de-vie reaches its apogee is a kind of alchemy. This is his science. His quest. And the reason why Hennessy Paradis Impérial, cognac of such subtlety and delicacy represents the apex of his art. Such a feat of precision is



# HENNESSY PARADIS IMPERIAL MADE OF PRECISION

difficult to fathom. Yet, sometimes, even the most complex ideas can be illuminated by art. Today, an immersive art installation of light and technology by the artist collective Marshmallow Laser

Feast has found its place in the Founder's Cellar. Reflecting the Master Blender's relentless quest, it is a unique window into the inner workings of a living legacy.



# A QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

## THE MOST SECRET PLACE

The seven generations of Master Blenders preceding the actual Master Blender, Renaud Fillioux de Gironde, have selected the most exquisite and rarest eaux-de-vie, and created one of the largest libraries of eaux-de-vies in the world.

The oldest and most priceless of these eaux-de-vie are kept in an exclusive cellar: a «paradis», called the Founder's Cellar.

The fraction of a given selection of eaux-de-vie granted a place in this secret cellar is infinitesimal.



## LEGACY

Since 1800, the Fillioux family has accompanied Hennessy. Both Yann Fillioux and his nephew Renaud Fillioux de Gironde, to whom he passed on the role of Master Blender, embody this Hennessy legacy. A unique alliance of tradition and modernity, ensuring the values and art of selection of eaux-de-vie are handed over to the next gener-

ations. The chain of successive Master Blenders from the same family is the key to ensuring the continuity of the different Hennessy blends. And making sure the Maison's centuries-old memory and savoir-faire will pass on to those who will continue to write the story. An uninterrupted pursuit of perfection through time.



### THE MASTER BLENDER

Former Master Blender Yann Fillioux once described himself as a “builder.” “I take elements and I put them together to create...” The metaphor has an elegant ring of truth, though in its modesty, it belies the complexity of the master blender’s craft. For his building materials are not common bricks, but tens of thousands of eaux-de vie, born of different terroirs and different harvests, spanning decades, even, for very few of

them, centuries. Eaux-de-vie representing a kaleidoscope of aromas and flavors, sensations and textures. All distinct in their characters, and all in constant evolution. Only with experience, memory, and a legacy of savoir-faire passed through generations, can the Hennessy Master Blender intuit when an eau-de-vie will reach its apogee. Only he can define when it will be ready to serve as a building block in the edifice of a great cognac.



# THE ART OF SELECTION



## **THE SELECTION ROOM**

Every single day at 11 am, the seven members of the Hennessy Tasting Committee meet in the Grand Bureau de Dégustation. An intimate office, located on the 1st floor of the Hennessy headquarters, within a stone's throw from the banks of the Charente river, in the center of the town of Cognac. Here, under the direction of Master Blender Renaud Fillioux de Gironde, the Tasting Committee pursues the relentless quest for excellence that has been Hennessy's for over 250 years. Each given year, they taste and determine the fate of around 10,000 eaux-de-vie with great precision. The Master

Blender not only keeps in his memory a factual and emotional database, but also sets down out in writing the characteristics of all the samples in a register called « Grand Cahier » (large notebook).

## **A FACTUAL AND EMOTIONAL DATABASE**

Carefully numbered, all eaux-de-vie are kept in special vials, a number of which ornate the shelves of the historic office, where nothing is to be touched or moved, in order not to disrupt the conditions of the daily tasting ritual. At the core of Hennessy's savoir-faire, the selection of the eaux de vie is not only a science, it is an art.







### **10 / 10,000**

It requires a great amount of dexterity to detect and nurture the subtle nuances of finesse at each stage of an eau-de-vie's lifecycle. Among all the eaux-de-vie of the same year, the Tasting Committee detects the potential of extreme finesse required on a tiny quantity. An average proportion of 10 in 10,000 eaux-de-vie only will be able to one day join Hennessy Paradis Impérial.

Distinguishing that promise, choosing the exact conditions for its ideal matu-

ration, is the art of selection, the quintessence of the Master Blender's craft. Only with razor-sharp intuition and ancestral savoir-faire can the Master Blender then determine when an eau-de-vie has reached its apogee. Yann Fillion's inspired ambition was to compose a blend made uniquely of these rarest eaux-de-vie. The result is a cognac of such profound subtlety and precision, he named it Hennessy Paradis Impérial, in honor of the cellar that has yielded its treasures.



#### **THE TIPPING POINT OF ELEGANCE**

The eaux-de-vie kept in Hennessy's « paradis » may traverse centuries of refinement, gently maturing towards their apogee. At their aromatic peak, some are transferred into large, wicker-encased glass demijohns. Thus have been preserved the exquisite complexities of vintages dating as far back as 1800, result of the savoir-faire of 7 generations of Master Blenders.

For Hennessy Paradis Imperial, the Master Blender's savoir-faire is also to define the right ageing conditions to final-

ly raise an eligible eau-de-vie to its point of elegance, the decisive and fleeting moment when the eau-de-vie reaches its apogee and is ready to join the final blend. Detecting, maturing and finally preserving these fine eaux-de-vie when they reach their apogee, is an exceptional alchemy. At each stage of their lifecycle, it requires an anthology of taste made possible only by the continuous legacy, to distinguish that promise. Elevating these eaux-de-vie to their tipping point of elegance reveals Hennessy Paradis Imperial's principal feature: precision.



# A TRIBUTE TO THE MASTER BLENDER'S QUEST



It took Marshmallow Laser Feast two years to develop their latest installation, commissioned by Hennessy for the Founder's Cellar in Cognac. A large metallic structure featuring hundreds of acrylic crystals that reflect the light of a laser. Sounds and light become a collaborative instrument as well as a piece of art. Their ambition was to pay tribute to the Hennessy Master Blender's quest, and explore the depths of his savoir-faire of selecting eaux-de-vie. Be-

hind the tech part of their work, MLF strives to put forward the emotional and human side in each project. The result is an immersive and magical experience only to be seen in the Hennessy Founder's Cellar.

This multisensory project propels Hennessy Paradis Impérial into the 3rd millennium. Behind an apparent simplicity, it conveys a bold technical challenge which more than 50 people and thousands of hours of work to complete.

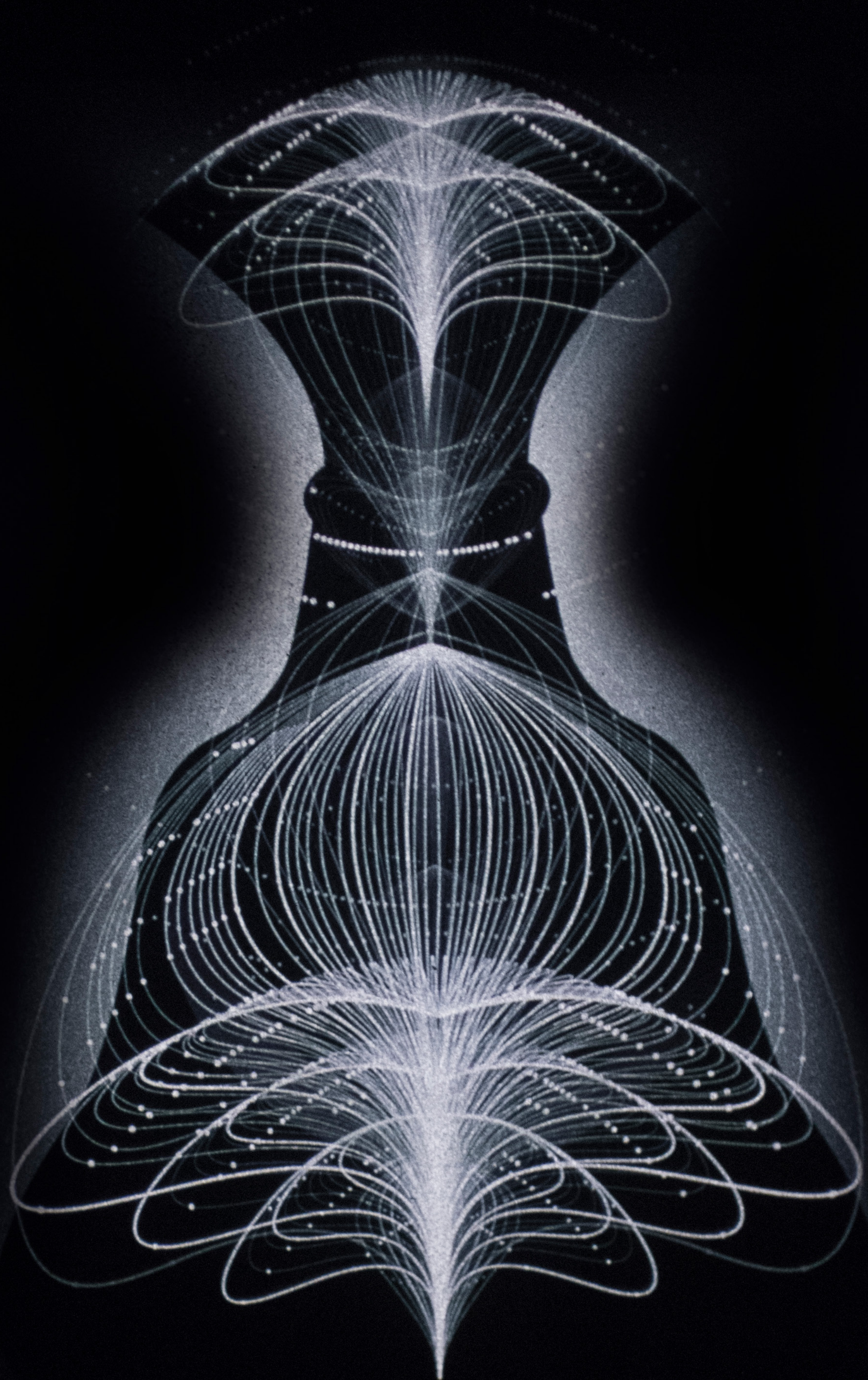
# ABOUT MARSHMALLOW LASER FEAST



Marshmallow Laser Feast (MLF) is a multimedia artist collective based in London that harnesses technology to create emotional and cutting-edge experiences. It was founded in 2011 to produce visually stunning projects at the crossroads between science, technology and art and to reinterpret the idea of human perception. Barney Steel, Robin McNicholas and Ersin Han Ersin are the driving forces behind all Marshmallow Laser Feast projects. The creative studio has earned a reputation for its expertise in creating the seemingly impossible — for producing installations that redefine expectations and

excite audiences worldwide. Their work is responsive and spans kinetic sculpture, film, live performance and virtual reality. Their enveloping world aims at exploring the relationship between light, movement, and sound. A totally new and intriguing territory, always shifting and pushing boundaries.

MLF's art practice combines a wide range of disciplines. Using computation and technology, they examine the functions and structure of nature, human perception, spatialization and movement. Their work focuses on the relationship between real and orchestrated experiences.



# MLF ON MEETING WITH HENNESSY

## **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MLF?**

MLF has existed for 6 years. We are an experiential studio art collective. We don't really define ourselves with a particular line of work. We have different lines of expression. Sometimes it's virtual reality, sometimes it's an art installation, sometimes it's a stage show. It's changing all the time.

## **HOW WAS THIS PROJECT INITIATED AT THE BEGINNING?**

The common thread in our body of work is defining projects by using technology, often advanced technology. This has become the signature of most of our works and this was the reason Hennessy came to us. They wanted to celebrate Hennessy Paradis Impérial as well as the Master Blender's savoir-faire with an immersive light installation.

## **WHERE DOES THE CURSOR STAND FOR MLF BETWEEN ART AND TECHNOLOGY?**

Art has always been using technology, since Leonardo Da Vinci, and maybe even before. It's not something new. We do the same. Sometimes a new technology development dictates a certain path. But often ideas come first, and then we follow and find the technology that can enable us to do it. If that doesn't exist, we try to develop it internally or externally and

we collaborate with many people, just like we did on this project: robotic experts, glass experts, opticians, acousticians... Most of them have Phd's and they came up with incredible ideas to express the idea of precision.

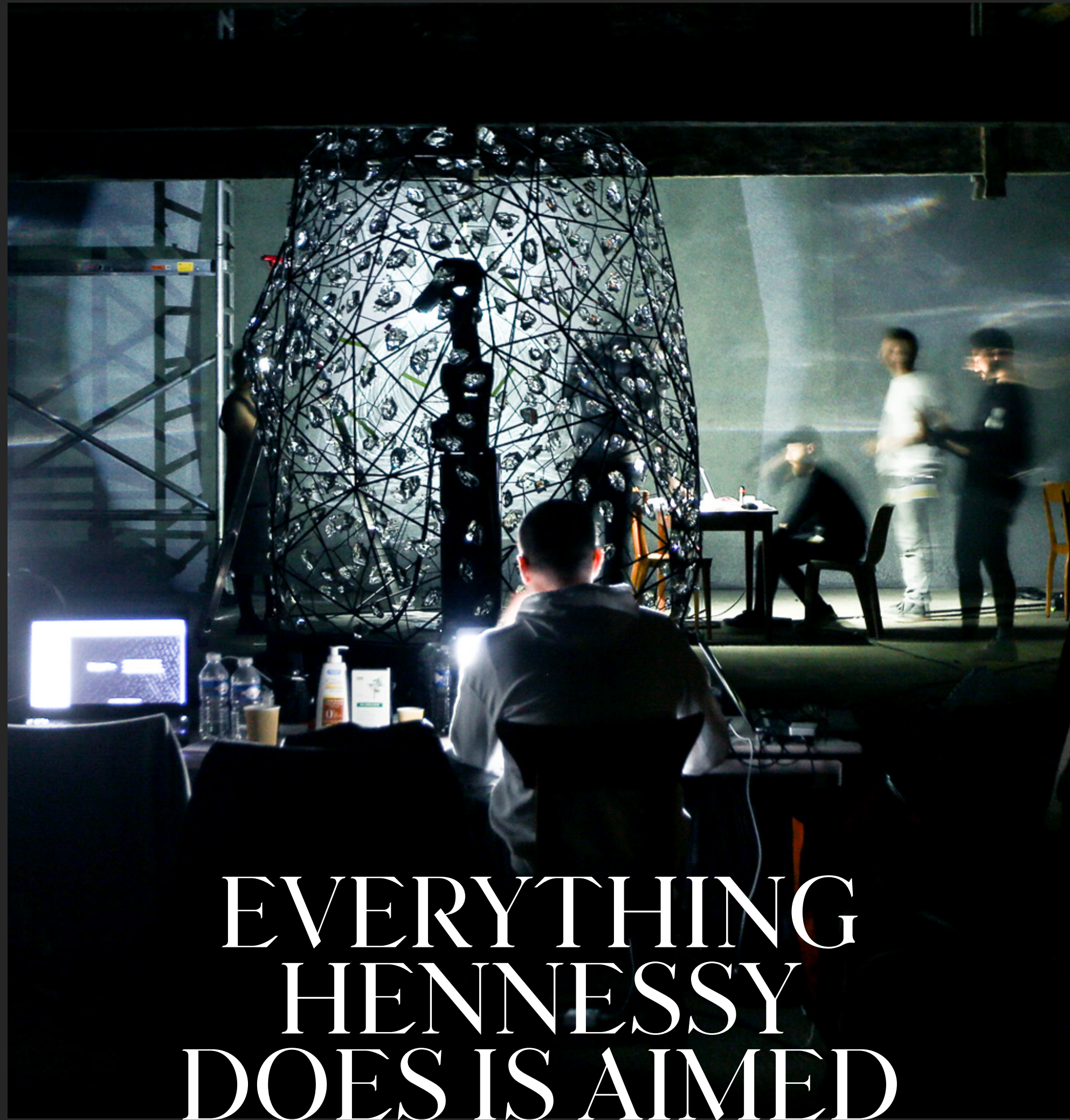
## **WAS THIS INSTALLATION CONCEIVED AS IT IS FROM DAY ONE, OR HAS IT EVOLVED?**

The project evolved constantly. At one point there was the idea that the installation would move from one place to another. But when we visited the Founder's Cellar for the first time, our secret wish was to keep it there. So I'm really glad we came to this conclusion at the end. Putting something highly technical, highly scientific, really advanced, that you would not have imagined in such a place, totally detached from technology, is an amazing combination. Nevertheless, it was a long collaboration with Hennessy, because we shared ideas on what it would look like, the shape of it, the materials, how long they had to last. We took all the decisions together.

## **CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE MAKING OF THE "THE QUEST" INSTALLATION?**

It's a bit like a rocket launch. You have the first engine, the second engine, a back-up... and in the end all adds up to make the model fly





## EVERYTHING HENNESSY DOES IS AIMED TOWARDS THE FUTURE

to the moon. We had to hire glass experts, light designers, mechanical engineers, programmers, sound designers, opticians, architects, and coordinate their action. It was all teamwork, so we will have a long credit list! Originally we had planned 40 days of work, but we went way over.

**WHAT WAS THE MAIN IDEA BEHIND THIS PROJECT?** We did a lot of research on the concept of precision. And we came up with this idea of literally shaping a light beam to create an image. To be able to achieve that, we had to mill the glass down to submillimeter to bend the light. This process requires extreme precision at a nano-level, using machinery

and optics. So we thought it would be a perfect match. Beyond that, what fascinated me more than anything else is the whole process of making cognac which remains so human. The Master Blender tasting the eaux-de-vie is almost like processing data in the digital world. Tasting and keeping memories on the tip of your tongue, to come up with a formula at the end of the day. It's almost how we work at MLF. All these similarities led us to use the whole selection process metaphorically, as a data selection process. Inspired by the precision, we obviously had to move the light quite accurately, that's why we went with a robot: it's sharp, it makes no mistakes.

**WHAT DOES THIS ROBOT STAND FOR?**

It is a kind of symbol of the Master Blender, constantly searching for something. Yann Fillioux has dedicated his life to finding the most refined eaux-de-vie, deciphering their tasting notes: what he is doing is quite superhuman. Scientifically speaking, we still don't know how our senses can differentiate two molecules which have the same atomic structure! Science cannot explain everything our nose feels. What the Master Blender is doing is at the extreme of where your senses can take you. The robot is not a caricature, it's more an homage to the capability of the Master Blender's craftsmanship. We even worked with character animation designers to lend the robot character, to make it feel more human. But you can be sure no technology development will ever replace the human selection!

**HOW DOES YOUR FUTURISTIC WORK FIT INTO THIS VERY TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENT?** I love that contrast and the idea of the installation taking place in the Founder's Cellar.

**IT SEEMS AS YOU BELIEVE THIS ART WORK TO BE A MEDIUM BETWEEN HENNESSY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS?** I am confident this installation resonates with Hennessy's approach and

makes sense. For a Maison like Hennessy, one could believe it could be quite difficult to detach yourself from the past and walk into the future. While cognac conveys a very strong and long heritage, nothing says the future should be associated only with technology brands. For example, when you look closely you realize that everything Hennessy does is aimed towards the future. Some of the eaux-de-vie the Master Blender selects will only be tasted in 200 years. He is playing with time, and so looking to the future.



# ABOUT HENNESSY

The House that crafts some of the most iconic and prestigious cognac Maison is a crown jewel within the LVMH Group. From its seat in the French region of Cognac and throughout its more than 250-year history, Hennessy has perpetuated a rare heritage based on cultivating the best that nature and man can offer, innovation and discovery. Hennessy's lon-

gevity reflects the values the Maison has upheld since its creation: the legacy of a unique savoir-faire, the constant quest for innovation, and an unwavering commitment to Creation, Excellence, Legacy and Sustainable Development. These qualities are its hallmark and reason for continuous success across five continents.

---

## CONTACTS

CLAIRE PICONNET  
cpiconnet@moethennessy.com

ANDREA BORRMANN  
andrea@dmmediapr.com

**Hennessy**  
**PARADIS**  
**IMPÉRIAL**

Please drink responsibly.