

A TOY HORSE

HERMÈS MAISON
166 NEW BOND STREET

Opening 16 June 2026

Monday to Tuesday - 10:30 am to 6:30 pm

Wednesday to Thursday - Closed

Friday to Saturday - 10:30 am to 6:30 pm

Sunday - Closed

INTERVIEW WITH JESSICA
WETHERLY



How did you end up making a horse for Hermès?

Pierre-Alexis Dumas, Creative Director, invited me to create a sculpture for the atrium at 166 after seeing a horse I made for a sculpture park in Spain. It felt exciting to work with a company who have a belief in craft, a deep curiosity and dedication to artistry.

I was also lucky enough to speak with Philippe Dumas who is another reminder of the people behind the company and how family sits at the heart of it. Since it is 2026 the year of the Fire Horse, it felt right to make a horse again.

What was your inspiration for the sculpture?

I began by visiting the Hermes museum, which felt both exciting and rare. What struck me most was the functionality of the collection. The bits, bridles, tools, and toys all carry a sense of use, they are active objects. A key idea emerged during the visits: that the sculpture should have potential energy. An analogue resistance.

There were also beautiful books filled with heraldic imagery, emblems that also exist in my own visual language. I kept returning to a kind of theatrical magic where imperfection makes it more believable like in the opening sequence of The Wizard of Oz. This sense of tactility and whimsy feels central to Hermès, and to its enduring ability to capture our imagination.

How have you approached scale and space in this work?

The location for the artwork within the atrium presented a challenge. It is a vast vertical space with a small footprint, requiring a work that holds presence within the impressive architecture while remaining personal.

The alert pose - head and tail raised - is inspired by a small glass rocking horse in the collection. Enlarging it to life-size, allows the work to hold both intimacy and monumentality, connecting to the store's Alice in Wonderland theme, where shifts in scale transform perception and invites a sense of curiosity, play, and disorientation.

Mounted on wheels and assembled in visible sections, the work resists the idea of a fixed central monument. The sculpture can wander through the atrium, it is never fully settled - something both intentional and incidental.

What does the toy horse represent for you?

As an artist and a new mother. I see play as something radical: a connection to childhood, to freedom, to strangeness, and to the ability to hold multiple realities at once. I wanted to make an object that makes space for family, dreams, and imagination - qualities that feel intrinsic to Hermès.

I began by looking at alternative histories of horse sculpture, drawing on British folklore: the hobby horse or hoden horses as well as the geoglyphs carved in chalky hillsides that have been maintained over generations. The toy horse struck me as a simple, iconic framework, the Horse and carriage merge into a single sculptural form, transforming from functional to fantastical. A white horse is also a powerful symbol in European History associated with the sun. In British Celtic traditions it was associated with the Otherworld.

Hand-drawn figures swim, float, and drift across the surface like shadows. These motifs are traditionally associated with protection, healing, and good fortune, linked to healers, midwives and medicine women. In the material, they create a surface that evokes an ancient cave painting, as though one is encountering a language that is familiar but not fully deciphered. These forms remain open and provisional, holding a space where meanings shift and fate is never entirely fixed.

What is the sculpture made from and why?

The sculpture is made from Jesmonite a gypsum based acrylic, built over a steel armature with a recycled polystyrene core. It is designed to have a low carbon footprint using cold material processes, which have little waste which is kinder to our environment. It also resembles chalk hills, the phenomenal deposit of white rock which spans the divide between England and France and the material in which our ancestors chose to honour the sun in the form of a white horse.

The palette is deliberately desaturated, inspired by how colour fades in the shadows giving a dreamlike disturbance. I hope the work gives people a sense that imagination is something we carry with us, not something we grow out of. There is also a small dedication to Celandine - a wayside weed and one of the most recent Dumas daughters. For me it felt important to reflect Hermès as a family, and the sculpture as something made for that shared world.



Jessica Wetherly, (1989) is a London based artist working across sculpture and installation. She uses a range of organic and synthetic materials but her craft is in modelling clay and casting in plaster. Wetherly is particularly interested in the relationship between ecology and imagination. In her work, animal forms become symbols of transformation and connection - objects that tell stories of the landscape and cultivate empathy with non-human world. Jessica graduated with an MA in Sculpture from Royal College of Art in 2019. Selection of solo exhibitions include, ACC Galerie Weimar (2023), Aspex Portsmouth (2022), Muse Gallery, London (2022), BilbaoArte Foundation, Spain (2021); Korai Project, Cyprus (2020); and Fieldworks Gallery, VAC Austin Texas (2018).