

The Written Image

Mauro Carraro

Blue Ink & Golden Leaves · Geneva

Selected works · Autumn 2026

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Letter to Time · Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso Hybris Artistica
Gold leaf being applied to the drawing.
Photograph: Johann Sauty

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An artist's practice in drawing, writing and gold leaf.

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Mauro Carraro

Mauro Carraro draws with a fountain pen, using blue ink as a precise contour and a diluted wash. Gold leaf introduces a physical surface whose reflections change with the light. Faces, timepieces and handwritten passages share the page, but follow different conditions of making. A live portrait develops in the sitter's presence; a studio work allows a more extended composition.
In ***Letter to Time***, the observed timepiece occupies a field of writing: its architecture and the smaller handwritten line remain distinct, yet belong to the same image.

Blue Ink & Golden Leaves · Photograph: Johann Sauty



Jaeger-LeCoultre *Reverso Hybris Artistica*

Letter to Time · Ink and gold leaf on paper · Complete work



Giada

Blue Ink portrait · Ink and selected gold-leaf details on paper



The line and the gold

A lightly described face meets the denser construction of the ruffled jacket. Narrow contours, washes and selected gold details remain distinct in the complete portrait and this close-up photograph.



Antonia · Ink and gold leaf on paper · 56 × 76 cm



Drawing a person

In Antonia's portrait, likeness rests on a few carefully drawn relationships: the eyes beneath the hairline, the turn of the mouth and the position of the hands. Fine contours give the face its structure; broader washes gather in the hair and clothing. Much of the face remains the colour of the paper. Against these open passages, small gold details mark the watch, jewellery and fastenings. The figure is resolved through differences of line, density and reflected light.

Two kinds of attention

The sitting brings artist and person face to face. The complete sheet invites a slower reading of line, wash and selected gold details.

Antonia · Blue Ink Portrait Experience · Photograph: Roel Paffen



Audemars Piguet Starwheel · Johann Sauty · AI-assisted editorial version

A colour, discovered through use

"I first started drawing in blue when I gave myself a gift for my 30th birthday: a Caran d'Ache fountain pen that came with Midnight Blue ink. Since it was already there, I started drawing with this pen and writing in blue without much thought."

"There's such a wide range of possibilities in blue that I've never felt it restrictive."

Mauro Carraro · Answers sent for a Floraïku interview
30 March 2026 · Two separate excerpts



Ink in movement

Mauro describes his use of diluted fountain-pen ink as lavis, distinguishing it from watercolour. Water extends the fine line into broader tonal passages: the same blue can describe an edge, model a shadow or remain transparent enough for the paper to show through. In the Chaykin work in progress, the wash belongs to the construction of the image. Density changes within a shared colour, giving the sheet several registers without adding another colour.

A diluted field

Water extends the ink beyond a solid contour. The visible wash belongs to the Chaykin study.

Photograph: Johann Sauty



Konstantin Chaykin

Joker Golden Mask

Letter to Time · Complete work



Portrait and timepiece

Portrait, timepiece and handwriting occupy one sheet. The drawn line connects the sitter’s features with the watch’s construction.

Photograph: Johann Sauty



The written line

In April 2026, Mauro selected words for his handwriting study with David Grimes: Time, Gesture, Gold, Blue, Ink, Line and Flow. The discussion then moved from individual words to the titles of Letter to Time. Exercises in letterforms, spacing and rhythm developed alongside the drawing. Across the two ArtyA sheets, writing appears blue on pale paper and pale against a blue field.

Naming the work

"Letter to Time — Joker Golden Mask, Konstantin Chaykin": Mauro's April 2026 proposal joins the series, the individual work and its watchmaking reference.

ArtyA Complexity · Process photograph: Johann Sauty



De Bethune Starry Varius

Ink and gold leaf on paper



Drawing the contour

Your blue reminds me of distance. Your gold of memory.

From a letter to
De Bethune DB25 Starry Varius

De Bethune

Work in progress
Photograph: Johann Sauty



ArtyA Complexity

Private commission · One of two complementary original sheets



ArtyA Complexity · The blue field

Some writing retains the white of the paper, protected before the ink is applied.
Private commission on Arches Satiné 600 gsm paper.



Jaeger-LeCoultre

Atmos Hybris Artistica Tellurium

by Marc Newson · Letter to Time · Complete work



Applying the leaf

Across the Atmos drawing, the celestial dial and its surrounding constellations are built in blue ink. Leaf adds another kind of light. In Johann Sauty's photograph, the loose material catches the illumination in small folds and fragments; in the completed work, the gilded hands form a precise centre. The photograph and the full sheet reveal different qualities of the same surface: the relief and reflections of the leaf, then its place within the composition.

Photograph: Johann Sauty

A changing light

The leaf reflects its surroundings. The photograph records one moment of that light; the full reproduction shows the complete composition.

The gilder's notes

The surface beneath the leaf becomes part of the artistic question.

At his Florence course in July 2026, Mauro explored the preparation beneath the leaf. A blue variant of Armenian bole became the subject of tests: how it could be applied, how the metal would adhere and how the finish would respond.

The colour below the gold had become a material question. In August, Mauro was seeking measured proportions and repeatable results. The blue-bole tests were still a line of research in progress.

A work-specific ground

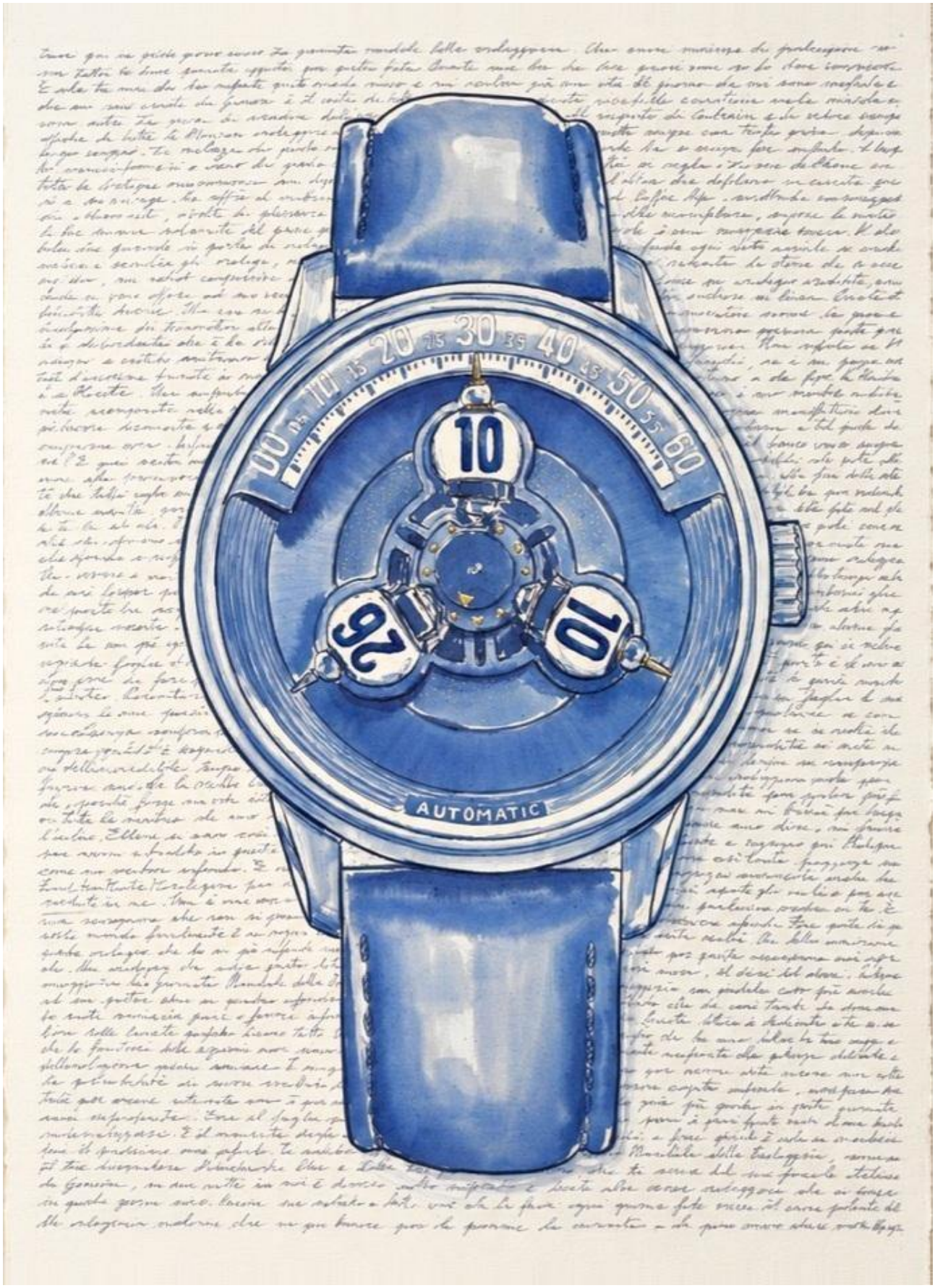
In his account of Atmos, Mauro names Bologna gesso, blue bole, gold and silver leaf. The facing photograph records gold-leaf laying on the Letter to Time made for Daniel Roth.



Letter to Time · Daniel Roth · Gold-leaf laying
Photograph: Johann Sauty

A finish depends on its ground

On a suitably prepared surface, water gilding (doratura a guazzo) can be polished with agate. Size gilding, or doratura a missione, relies on an adhesive and is a different technical system. The two approaches do not share an automatic final burnishing step.



Letter to Time - World Watch Day

Complete work



World Watch Day · Photograph: Johann Sauty

Burnishing the surface

The complete World Watch Day drawing establishes the scale of the composition. In Johann Sauty's close view, the tool meets a small gilded detail, bringing the hand and the surface into focus. Burnishing is a finishing gesture, distinct from laying the leaf.

The gold remains silent until the light finds it.

From a letter to
ArtyA Complexity



ArtyA Complexity

Gold leaf on the drawn surface.

Photograph: Johann Sauty



Antonia · Ink and gold leaf on paper · 56 × 76 cm



Another pose, another portrait

The raised hand brings fingers, hair and cheek into one close arrangement. Dark ink frames the head; broader washes build the jacket around areas of open paper. Compared with the first portrait, this second pose shifts the weight of the composition towards the face and the hand beside it.

Selected gold accents

Gold appears at the wrist and along the clothing. It remains separate from the blue washes rather than spreading across the figure.

Antonia · Blue Ink Portrait Experience · Photograph: Roel Paffen

The writing point



1 · Centenary nib card



2 · Nib under a magnifier

Printed image and instrument

The event brief included the personalisation of printed nib cards. The actual writing point appears separately in the photographic record.

Documents of an evening



3 · Original guest portrait



4 · Original guest portrait

Original guest portraits

The two guest portraits were made in Royal Blue ink with selected gold details. They are original works on paper, distinct from the printed nib cards personalised during the same evening.



Floraïku

Image and encounter.

Mauro Carraro's master visual enters the Floraïku boutique in Paris. At a more intimate scale, portraits in blue ink and gold leaf bring the encounter onto paper, each sheet passing into its sitter's hands.

Master visual by Mauro Carraro · Floraïku boutique, Paris

The finished sheet.



Globus Zurich · June 2026 · Photo: Andrea Monica Hug



A guest with her portrait

Ink, handwriting and gold

The likeness occupies the centre of the A5 sheet. Handwriting surrounds the face; selected gold details mark the drawn figure.

Separate occasion



Photograph: Alain / Photos Là-Haut

The Ritz-Carlton

An evening, one sitter at a time.

During the evening

Guests sat for individual portraits while the anniversary gathering continued around the drawing table. The completed sheets remained beside the artist's tools as the evening progressed.

The Geneva Express · 160th anniversary · 14 November 2025

Portraits from the evening



A guest with his portrait



Mauro Carraro at the event

Photograph: Alain / Photos Là-Haut

The Geneva Express · 14 November 2025



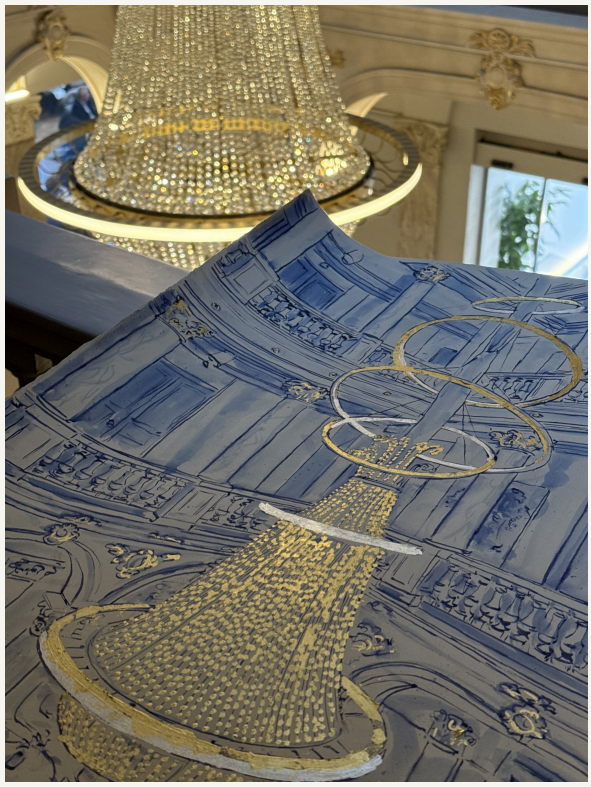
The Ritz-Carlton, Geneva

Architectural drawing
Photograph: Roel Paffen

A room becomes a drawing.

Observing the room

The chandelier and surrounding architecture share the sheet. Columns and balustrades give the suspended light its setting. These photographs show the drawing in the room and a close view of its gilded surface.





The drawing in its architectural setting.

Portrait photograph: Roel Paffen

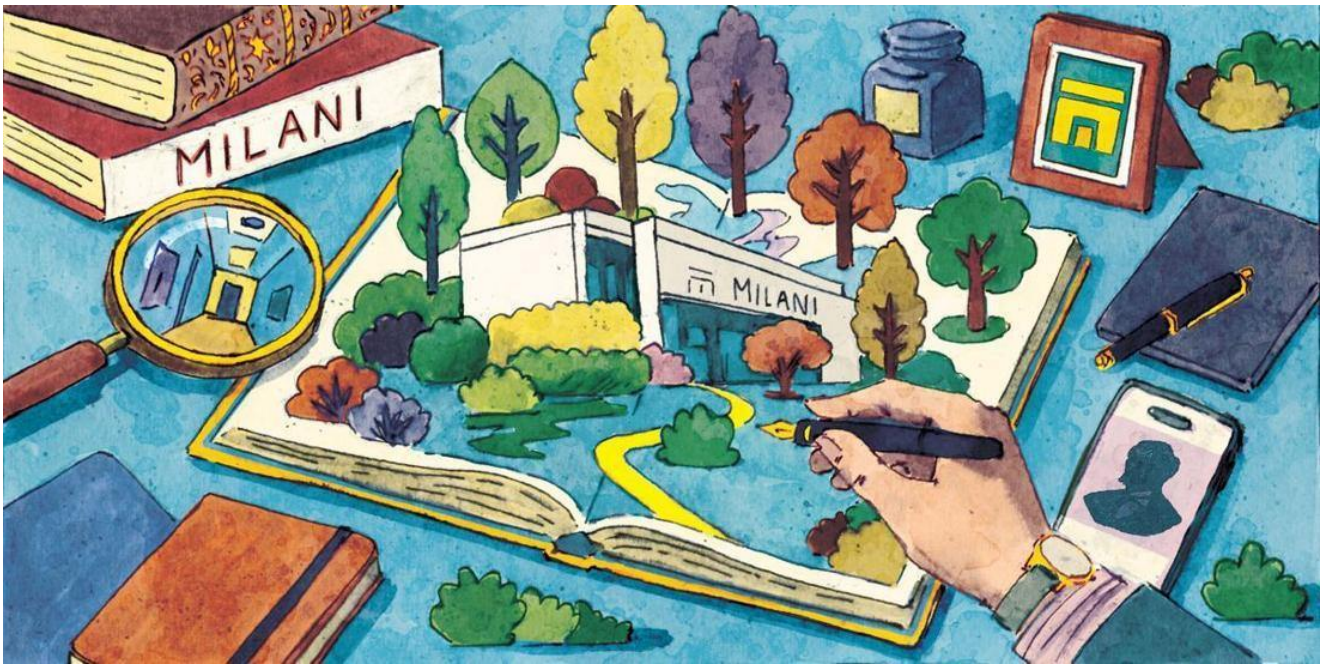
When the light moves

The blue holds the architecture.
The gold answers the light.

As the sheet tilts, the leaf
catches a different brightness.
The drawn chandelier echoes
the one suspended in the room:
one made of lines and gold,
the other of light.

Gold reflection: photographic reference

Grafiche Milani



Colour illustration



Blue-ink illustration

Two versions of a composition

Colour separates the architectural and natural elements; the blue-ink version organises the same composition through changes of density, with selected gold accents.



Printed colour application · Photograph: Johann Sauty

The printed object

The illustration was commissioned for Grafiche Milani's institutional brochure. Mauro contributed the image; publication design was handled separately.

Sand and Skin



The idea

The image began with words and haiku. Ropes suggested a connection between sand and skin: pressure leaves a trace after the rope is removed. Seen from above, sand and water could keep their identity as the hand-drawn composition moved towards the bottle cap.

From paper to object

Hand-drawn on paper, then prepared digitally for the cap.
Complete illustration.



The printed cap · Sand and Skin

Mauro prepared the drawing digitally for printing. Where physical gold leaf was too difficult to reproduce reliably on the object, a yellow representation took its place in the image. The original illustration and the manufactured surface therefore answer different material conditions.

Floraïku · Manufactured object · Printed colour on the cap



Rhône Sauvage

Blue ink on paper

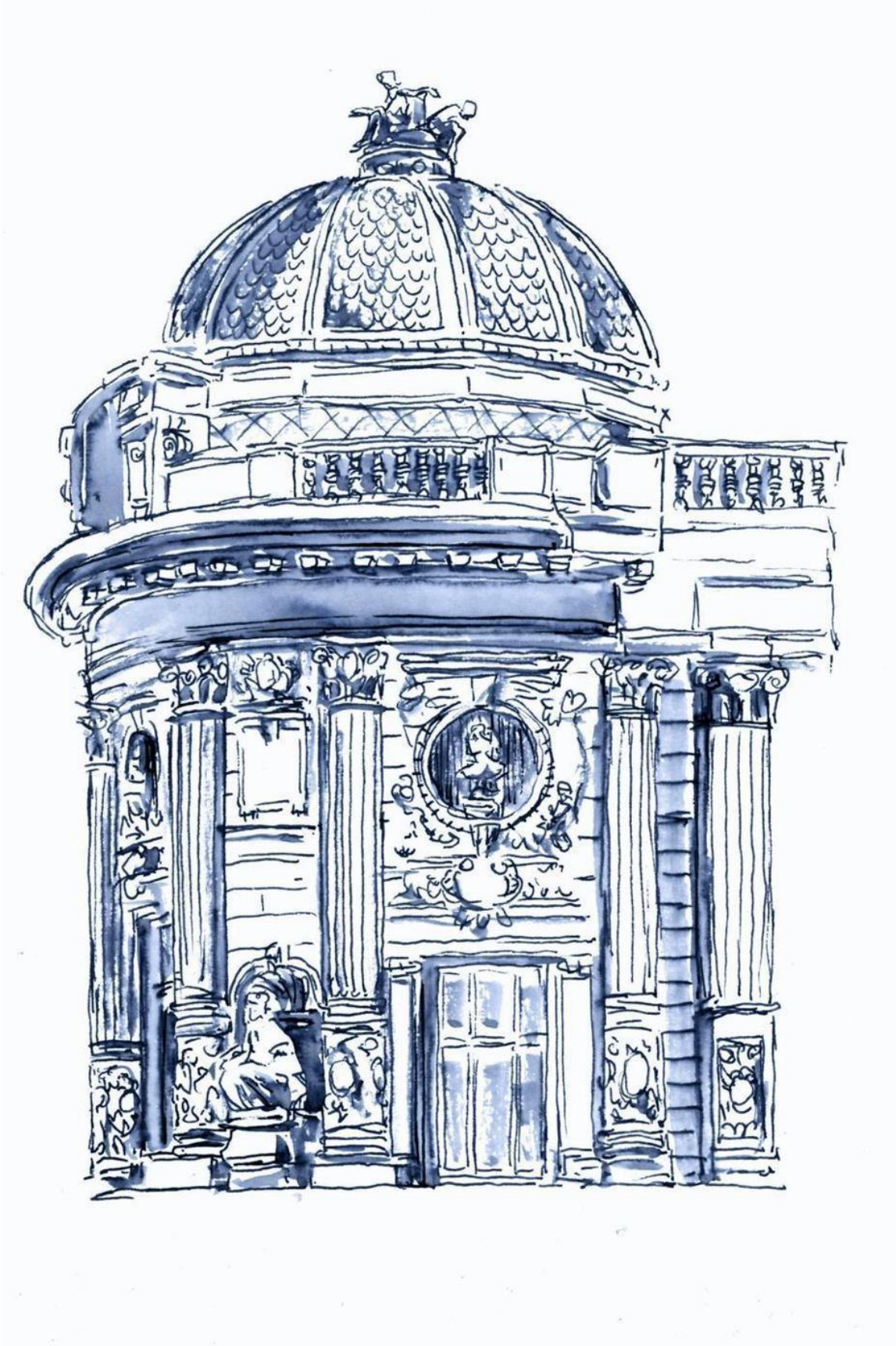


The river through the trees

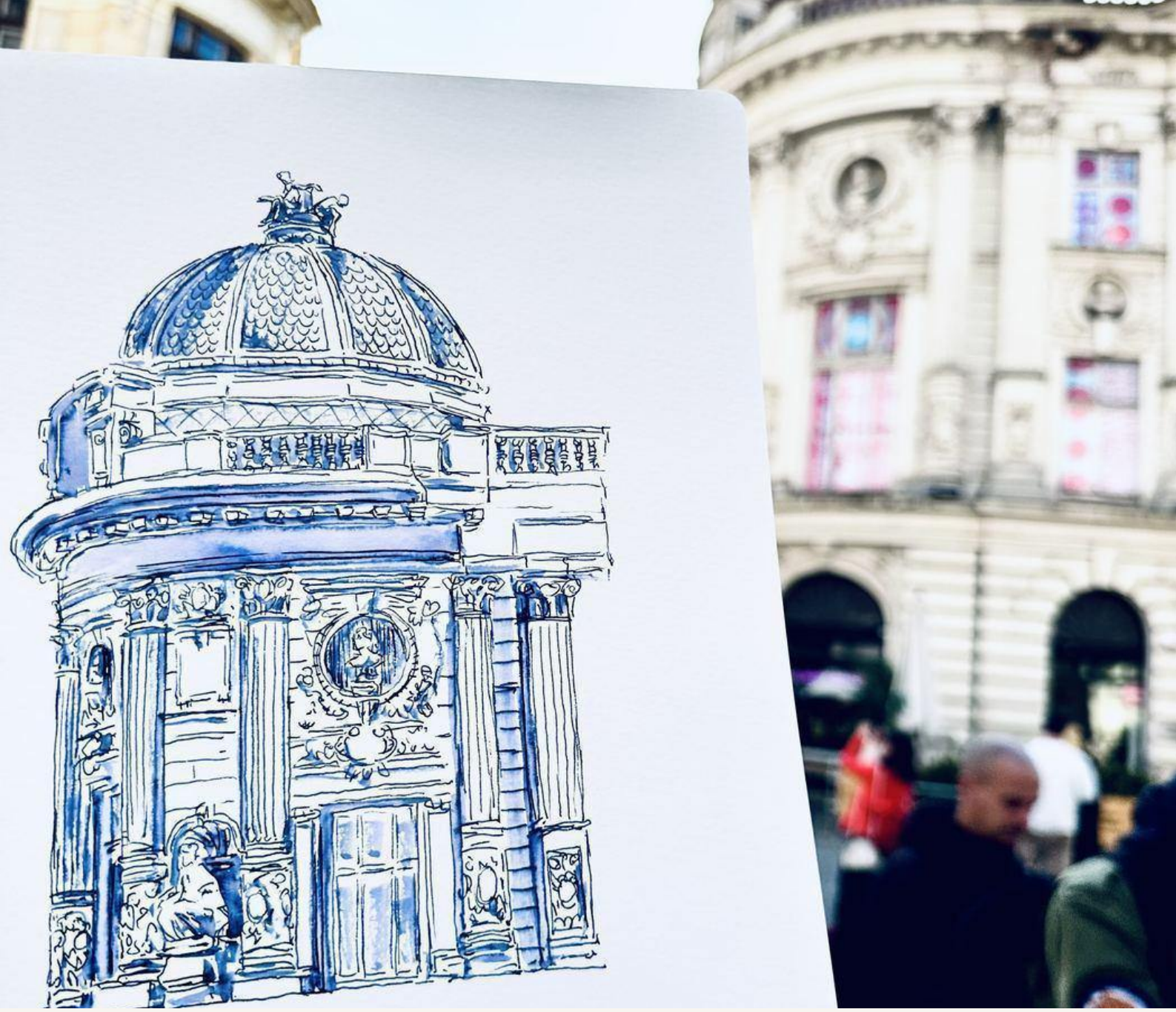
Along the riverbank, closely spaced trunks interrupt the water's horizontal marks; open paper carries light between denser passages of ink. Bark, roots and reflections share the same drawn surface. In Mauro's account of the work, these river drawings connect with his interest in the reflections of relatively calm water, also explored through the film ***Aubade***.



Ink on location



Architectural study · Complete drawing



Reading a façade

The drawing gathers the façade around its curved central bay. The dome, columns and sculpted panels are described through repeated short marks; darker passages distinguish recesses from projecting stone. Seen beside the building, the sheet reveals an act of selection: surrounding traffic and neighbouring façades fall away, leaving a concentrated study of architectural rhythm. The city provides the subject, while the drawing establishes its own limits.

On site

The photograph places the drawn façade against its architectural subject. The complete drawing is reproduced separately.

Architectural study · Drawing and on-site photograph

Portraits

Selected framed works



01 **Giada**
Original sheet · 56 × 76 cm



02 **Giada**
Original sheet · 56 × 76 cm



03 **Antonia**
Original sheet · 56 × 76 cm



04 **Antonia**
Original sheet · 56 × 76 cm

Works shown in editorial frame presentations.

Letter to Time

Selected framed works



05 **Jaeger-LeCoultre**
Reverso Hybris Artistica



06 **Daniel Roth**
Tourbillon



07 **ArtyA Complexity**
The blue field



08 **Jaeger-LeCoultre**
Atmos Hybris Artistica Tellurium
by Marc Newson

Works shown in editorial frame presentations.

We both express ourselves through the rhythm of space: I through handwriting, you through your constellations. For the first time we inhabit the same cosmos, made of letters and tiny planets, held in perfect balance and harmony.

From a letter to
Atmos Hybris Artistica Tellurium



Atmos Hybris Artistica Tellurium

The written surface around the drawing.

Photograph: Johann Sauty · AI-assisted editorial version

Transmission

The Shared Gesture



Mauro displaying a portrait · Floraïku workshop · Paris · July 2026

At the workshop table, a finished image becomes a point of departure. Looking closely at the drawing, handling the materials and returning to the sheet connect observation with practice.

In a separate setting, at L'Astuce Beaux-Arts in Geneva, Mauro led a portrait-drawing workshop on 20 May 2025. The video records close attention beside a participant and work in progress. A completed portrait provides a point of reference within the shared working space.



The shared workshop table · Floraïku · Paris · July 2026

The gesture demonstrated

Two workshops formed part of the Floraïku collaboration in Paris in July 2026. Mauro presented a finished portrait drawing; at the table, prepared bottle drawings provided a surface for blue wash and metal leaf. The finished image and the means of making it could be considered together.



Metal-leaf application on a prepared drawing support · Paris

The gesture interpreted

A prepared printed outline gave the workshop a common starting point. Blue wash and metal leaf cover some passages and leave others open. The worked sheet holds that shared drawing structure and its later material interventions together.



With the work

Watchmaking study and paper gilding inform different stages of the work: observing a construction, then giving its drawn image a physical surface.

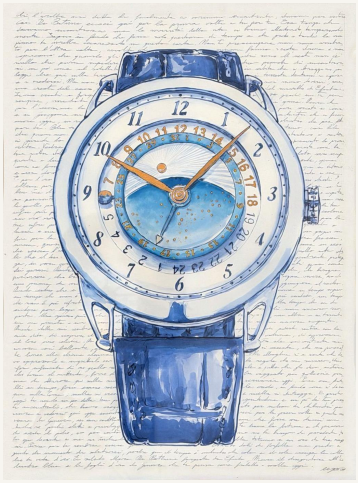
Studio photograph: Johann Sauty

Beginning a conversation



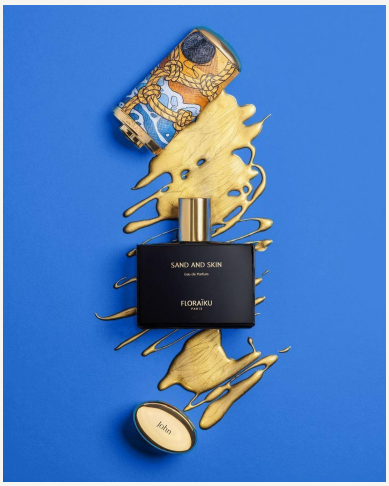
Live portrait encounters

An original portrait drawn with the guest present. Format and presentation are agreed for each occasion.



Originals & commissions

Original works developed in the studio around a person, an object or an occasion, from an individual brief.



Objects & editions

Illustrations for objects and editions. Sand and Skin shows the passage from an original drawing to a manufactured surface.

Antonia · Independent Letter to Time original · Sand and Skin

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Mauro Carraro

Blue Ink & Golden Leaves · Geneva

Autumn 2026