Tapestry N50, Alexandra Mocanu; Flora Perma Coffee Table 197, Marcin Rusak; Eclipse Mosaic, Béatrice Serre; Conq Chairs, RoWinAtelier; Silver Mirror, Silver Bronze Coffee Table and Ronde-Bosse Semainier, François Corbeau; Meteorien Mirror, Hubert Le Gall; Floraines Lamps, Anne and Vincent Corbière; Digit Chandelier, Emmanuel Babled; Blue Sideboard, Valentin Loellmann.

CREATIVE INSTINCTS

Twenty First Gallery Celebrates its Legacy as a Pioneer Promoter of Collectible Design

by Benjamin Genocchio

Inscape
Twenty First Gallery
76 Franklin Street, New York
Through June 2023

The world of collectible design has ballooned in recent years, and the inclusion of these works that bridge the territory between art and design has become de rigueur in fine interiors. But only a short while ago, it was unexplored territory, the province of a few bold, visionary dealers looking to put their stamp on contemporary interiors. One of them was French furniture expert Renaud Vuaillat, who in 2007 founded **Twenty First Gallery** as one of New York's edgiest promoters of thought-provoking, innovative collectible design.

Fine craftsmanship was always important to Vuaillat, along with a preference for the use of quality materials. Both elements are on abundant display in this latest, idea-packed show, *Inscape*, which takes its title from poet Gerard Manley Hopkins and celebrates, according to the gallery press release, the "creative instinct, the poetic reflex in a person that defines their instinctual aesthetic choices."

***Left:** Tapestry N50, Alexandra Mocanu; Flora Perma Coffee Table 197, Marcin Rusak. **Right:** Orange & Yellow Vase, Blue Vase, Alice Gavalet; Etna Breakfast Table, Emmanuel Babled.*

The show features 35 works from almost two dozen designers (or design teams) who work with Twenty First. Designers are Nicolas Aubagnac, Emmanuel Babled, François Corbeau, Anne and Vincent Corbière, Jean-Marie Fiori, Victor Fotso Nyie, Alice Gavalet, Jean Grisoni, Hubert Le Gall, Valentin Loellmann, Alexandra Mocanu, Jean de Piépape, RoWinAtelier, Béatrice Serre, and Nathalie Ziegler-Pasqua.

Digit Chandelier, Emmanuel Babled; Splendor Solis Mirror, Nathalie Zeigler Pasqua; Blue Sideboard, Valentin Loellmann, Conq Chair, RoWinAtelier.

The presence of works by so many amazing makers celebrates the gallery's legacy as a pioneer promoter of collectible design. As a group show, it is an amalgam of innovative, idiosyncratic design artworks unified by their distinctiveness — expressive patterns, flowing organic shapes and vivid colors are the norm, with the eye darting from one amazing object to the next. Every piece in this show beguiles with its singularity and beauty.

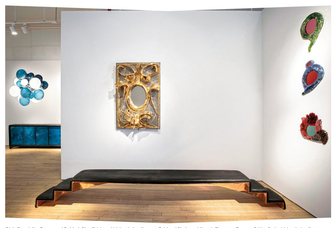
Color, matter, scale, and light are the themes the designers in the show explore in their work. Six spectacular pieces by French artist François Corbeau provide a welcome concentration of related ideas, with each work (a coffee table, a mirror, and a chest of drawers) as the gallery press release explains, "playing upon light as an active component in the space." Made of mirror-polished silver, they reflect the surrounding gallery space and other display objects, creating an "instant energy exchange," as the artist aptly describes it.

Silver Mirror, Ronde-Bosse Semainier, and Silver Bronze Coffee Table, François Corbeau, Meteorien Mirror, Hubert Le Gall.

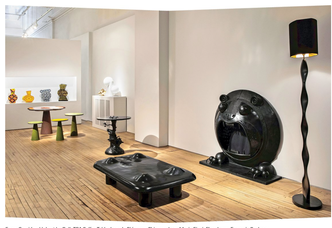
Orange & Black Vase, Orange & Yellow Vase, Blue Vase and Green Vase, Alice Gavelet; Etna Breakfast Table, Etnastone Gueridon III, Etnastone Gueridon II, and Etnastone Gueridon I, Emmanuel Babled; Nitilus Night Light, Francois Corbeau; Osmosi Lamp I, Emmanuel Babled; Esope Gueridon, Hubert Le Gall.

The show includes work by Giuseppe Ducrot, in particular a gold and platinum mirror with ribbons of shining asymmetrical ceramic and metal that simultaneously capture and reflect light. It is a shimmering out-there bright golden Baroque fantasy object by an artist who was aptly commissioned to design the facade of Christian Louboitin's new hotel in Portugal which will open in 2023.

Marcin Rusak has a unique floral-themed coffee table that is drop-dead gorgeous — would we expect anything less from one of the world's hottest designers? Equally special and desirable is another coffee table, in bronze, by Jean de Piepape. Both of these artists produce smart, fun, eye-catching designs, which is a hallmark of everything at this gallery.



Digit Chandelier, Emmanuel Babled; Blue Sideboard, Valentin Loellmann; Gold and Platinum Mirror I, Giuseppe Ducrot; Bridge Stairs, Valentin Loellmann; Jade Mirror, Paloma Mirror, and Esprit Mirror, Nathalie Ziegler Pasqua.



Esope Gueridon, Hubert Le Gall; TB1 Coffee Table, Jean de Piépape; Chimney, Jean-Marie Fiori; Floor Lamp, François Corbeau.

***Left:** Pavane Lamps, Anne and Vincent Corbière. **Top Right:** Nitilus Night Light, François Corbeau; Osmosi Lamp I, Emmanuel Babled. **Bottom Right:** Yaku Ash Lounge Chair, Saccomanno Olaviot; Silver Mirror, Ronde-Bosse Semainier, and Silver Bronze Coffee Table, François Corbeau; Meteorien Mirror, Hubert Le Gall.*

There is so much here to inspire and to love. A final word must be reserved for Alexandra Mocanu who makes paintings out of hand-woven wool on a flat cotton canvas. This is not a radical or new idea, but the artist uses weaving techniques to create the impression of a painted brushstroke on canvas. It is not until you get close to the picture that the viewer notices the illusion, along with realizing the enormous amount of work involved in the creation of these clever and visually striking pictures. A brushstroke is a mark, a gesture, an idea, and in some ways, her works sum up this show, which is all about taking chances on intuitive creative acts.