

DOWNTOWN

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ART AND DESIGN COME TO LIFE IN RENAUD VUAILLAT'S TWENTY FIRST GALLERY

BY [NICOLE HADDAD](#) | DEC 21, 2018



"Immersion" exhibition of work by Emmanuel Babled at Twenty First Gallery. Photograph by Costas Picadas.

Tribeca is a growing mecca for the art and design-minded. Over the last year an influx of galleries and concept houses have opened, not the least of them being [Twenty First Gallery](#). When gallery founder Renaud Vuillat decided to make the jump from Chelsea to Tribeca earlier this year, he brought an unexpected depth to the neighborhood. Limited-edition collections, made-to-order pieces, and an ever-changing display of art and furnishings created by a beautifully curated roster of fascinating artists line the floors of Twenty First Gallery.



Eclipse Mobile by Anne et Vincent Corbiere

DOWNTOWN: When and why did you decide to move your gallery, **Twenty First Gallery**, to Tribeca from its previous destination in Chelsea?

Renaud Vuillat: We moved from Chelsea's townhouse last year to open a vast, welcoming space implanted in the heart of New York's most dynamic neighborhood in term of design and contemporary art. What sought a place that would shape the identity of the gallery, and that we could play with and infinitely rearrange. That is what we found at 76 Franklin Street. The space is half industrial and half dance training room—and it perfectly enhances the work of our artists.

DOWNTOWN: What can you tell us about yourself?

Renaud Vuillat: As a gallery owner, I have a well-defined taste and knowledge in design and art, along with a great understanding of how to run a business, a process I learned over the years. What's more, I relate well to people, including with the artists whose work

I showcase—I have very close relationships with many of them. I also make sure to always be understanding and reliable—that is a key to Twenty First Gallery, along with functioning well, and of course, you always need a good sense of humor.

DOWNTOWN: How has your past experience helped differentiate Twenty First Gallery from other galleries in the neighborhood?

Renaud Vuillat: Before I opened my own business in New York, I had a lot of experience in France. Thanks to my years working in the Serpette Flea Market and at my gallery in Saint-Germain des-Prés, I became acquainted with a large and diverse group of talented people, including artists such as **Hubert Le Gall**. I also developed a refined and eclectic taste for contemporary decorative arts. As a result, the selection of French artists I represent in New York are quintessential to the art world.

DOWNTOWN: Can you show us an example of a made-to-order piece you have created?

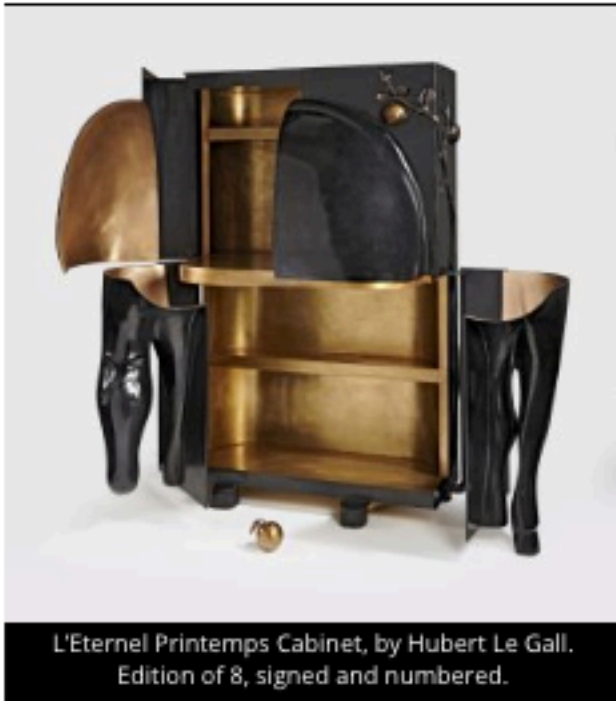
Renaud Vuillat: One project we loved being a part of was the renovation of the Kennedy's "Winter White House," in Palm Beach by a famous New York interior design firm. The 11-bedroom, Mediterranean-style villa had 17 living rooms and was quite a design challenge, as it was an historical, landmarked property in need of a complete interior renewal.

We contributed to this project by providing two very special pieces made by French artist Erwan Boulloud. They consisted of a pair of brass cabinets, called Extralucide, decorated with rock crystal inlays delicately running from top to bottom. To open each cabinet, you had to secretly push one of the semi-precious stones, giving the design a magical, mysterious resonance.



3 Petites Fleurs by Helene de Saint Lager.

DOWNTOWN: You recently curated a space in the prestigious **Salon + Art & Design** for the second year in a row. Tell us about that experience and your Golden Eye installation.



Renaud Vuillat: The Salon Art + Design is a very special and eclectic event. Each year is a fabulous challenge and we were once again very enthusiastic and proud to rise to it. This year's booth showcased great pieces composed of bronze such as the Hierophane Mirror by **Erwan Boulloud** which centered both the booth and the astonishing Eternel Printemps Cabinet by Hubert Le Gall. Complementing the bronze works were white marble pieces including the Diaphane Mirror by Beatrice Serres and the Supernova Lamp by **Emmanuel Babled**. The palette of white and gold formed a beautiful rhythm between the two.

DOWNTOWN: What are some of the more unique pieces you have on display in your showroom right now?

Renaud Vuillat: We are currently presenting the work of artist Emmanuel Babled in an exhibition called *Immersion*. Among his installed works are exclusive pieces that we love: an amazing Quark coffee table made of elm wood that is over 11 feet long; two Supernova ceiling lights carved in marble floating in the air; the Jangada armchair made of leather and marble which in combination resembles the sail of traditional Brazilian fishing boats. They are part of an organic, dream-like world you want to dive in.

DOWNTOWN: How do you source your artists and designers?

Renaud Vuillat: Each new acquaintance comes with a story. Some date back to my years in Paris, some are from New York. Whether we meet through a recommendation, an unexpected opportunity, a finding in design school, or through a design fair or via social media, each collaboration is a new adventure, and no path resembles another.

DOWNTOWN: What are some staple designers you like to carry and why?

Renaud Vuillat: We represent internationally acclaimed designers such as Hubert Le Gall, a renowned French artist, and Renaud's oldest collaboration. However, my passion for discovering talent makes me feel that the term "staple designer" does not quite correspond to Twenty First Gallery's outlook. Each of our artists are chosen for their unique aesthetic, hence the eclectic range of designers we are proud to represent.



Bougeoir Chardon by Hubert Le Gall.

DOWNTOWN: We are quite obsessed with Hubert Le Gall's and Erwan Boulloud's pieces. What draws you to their work?

Renaud Vuillat: With his unique, whimsical and humorous approach to design, Hubert Le Gall is definitely a must-have. His poetic and playful pieces have shaped my collections throughout the years. That is why we are so excited to showcase his first solo exhibition in the U.S. next May at the gallery.



When Renaud met Erwan, he was struck by a piece that defines Boulloud's work and talent. The Metempsychose cabinet was a mix of a sculpture and abstract painting. It had the look of a primitive art piece but it was still a functional cabinet—a rare and complex one. This surely was the right call as Erwan's work has continued to evolve in a very promising way.

DOWNTOWN: What is next for Twenty First Gallery?

Renaud Vuillat: Twenty First Gallery is currently working on finding new talent, which is key to the forward-thinking ideal behind Twenty First, some of whom you will probably soon hear of.

We would also love to exhibit a rotation of the gallery's roster through chosen themes to create a discussion surrounding the works of various artists. Not to forget our very special solo exhibitions, which will undoubtedly give the gallery an amazing start to 2019. As mentioned before, we will host an exhibition dedicated to Hubert Le Gall's work at the gallery. Opening on February 7th, the exhibition will present a range of work exploring the progression of the artist's career over the past 25-years, drawing a faithful portrait of Le Gall, along with presenting his new book, *Fabula*, which retraces his fabulous collaboration with the American collector, Pamela Mullin. Finally, look out for Twenty First Gallery at international art fairs.





Twenty First Gallery.