

Robert Couturier Is a Curator, Too

The AD100 designer channels his French roots in his latest collaboration, an exhibition at New York City's Twenty First Gallery

By Stephanie Sporn

March 11, 2020



François Corbeau, 4 Doors, 2019, Polished Bronze. Photo: Stephane Briolant

Robert Couturier has long been fascinated by the idea that furniture can be art. So it's no huge wonder why the interior designer and architect felt an instant connection to fellow French-born New York resident Renaud Vuailat upon meeting him years ago. While Vuailat, [founder of Twenty First Gallery](#) in TriBeCa, typically presents a single artist's work during shows, this spring he turned to the AD100 designer to try something new. For their exhibition "French Connection," which opens today, Couturier shopped Vuailat's rich collection of decorative items by contemporary European makers (who are exclusively represented in America through Twenty First Gallery) and created three vignettes: a living room, a dining room, and a small sitting room.



Pierre Gonalons, *Studio 1-4*, 2017, Tinted Ash Wood. Photo: Jean-Luc Petit

Though he does not play curator often, Couturier tells AD PRO he enjoys doing so “when the choices are so refined.” He adds that he loves the artists Vuailat represents and has been a “forever” fan of [Twenty First Gallery](#). Including pieces by [François Corbeau](#), [Marcin Rusak](#), [Alexandra Mocanu](#), [Erwan Boulloud](#), and [Anne and Vincent Corbière](#), each of the show’s works could stand on its own as a sleek yet graphic conversation starter. Geometric, metallic mirrors and lamps meet plush seating and whimsical accents, all given room to breathe in Vuailat’s expansive, high-ceilinged gallery. The show also marks the gallery debut of [Farfelus Farfadets](#), the collaborative practice of Laurent Poumarat and Anne Friesz, who work primarily in paper mâché. [Fort Street Studio](#) has provided hand-knotted carpets to complement each vignette.



Hubert Le Gall, *Oiseaux*, 2017, Polished Bronze and Patinated Bronze. Bruno SIMON - +33 (0) 1 48 00 00 50 - studio@photobruno.com

Become an AD PRO Member

Buy now for unlimited access and all of the benefits that only members get to experience. →



When Vuailat suggested collaborating a few months ago, Couturier approached the gallerist’s inventory as he would a client’s apartment, abiding by the theme of “comfortable living with art as furniture.” Some of Couturier’s favorites are a bronze mantel by [Jean-Marie Fiori](#) in the form of a cat, which Couturier calls “heaven, poetic, and so beautiful.” He also points to a red velvet [Hubert Le Gall](#) sofa, and [Mattia Bonetti](#) armchairs, which feature gold leaf, patinated, sculpted

wood pebbles, as other must-see works.



Jean Marie Fiori, *Darius*, 2019, Patinated Bronze, Fabric Upholstery. Photo: Antoine Duhamel

“I truly love all the pieces [Vuillard] is showing. Each of them has intrinsic value interest and particular beauty,” says Couturier, whose current projects include [Alice + Olivia CEO Stacey Bendet's](#) apartment at the famed [Dakota building](#), as well as psychology and politics writer Andrew Solomon's house in Rhinebeck, New York. “I just wish a client with such a big living room let me assemble such a collection!”



Beatrice Serre, *Copper Skin*, 2019, Carrara Marble, Gold Enamel, Quartz Crystals, Brass. Photo: Courtesy of Twenty First Gallery