



Erwan Boulloud examines the geometry of time, microscopic patterns and the cosmos

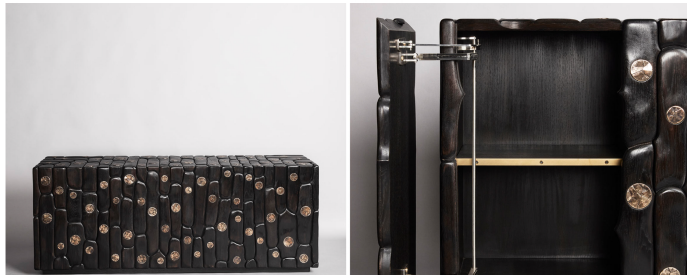
Boulloud returns to Twenty First Gallery with his solo exhibition *Touching Time*, showcasing modern-day alchemy inspired by cells and space through wood and metal objects.

by STIRpad

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French designer and artist Erwan Boulloud's creations blur the boundaries between art and science, tradition and technology, the ephemeral and the eternal. His inspirations are as diverse as they are profound, ranging from microscopic cells to astronomical phenomena, obscure botanical species to medieval jewellery. Yet, at the heart of his work lies a deep reverence for the passage of time and the traces it leaves behind. "For me, the success of a piece is not just measured by its aesthetic qualities; it must above all be justified by an intellectual approach, the expression of an idea," the France-based artist asserts. It is this passionate rigour, paired with his exceptional craftsmanship, that transforms his objects into captivating narratives encapsulating the microscopic and the grand.



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Brass patinated *Noyau Enfilade*, 2024, Erwan Boulloud
Image: Harry Matenaer

From February 13 - April 18, 2025, Boulloud returns to [Twenty First Gallery](#) with *Touching Time*, his first solo exhibition in the [United States](#) since 2019. The [design exhibition](#) showcases 15 new and recent creations that delve deeper into themes intrinsic to the [French artists](#) practice, such as the origin and expansion of the universe, the distinct passing of time in different places, the inception of creation and more. Each piece builds on a lineage of ideas, something Boulloud describes as 'Darwinian logic' in his work. "For each of my furniture lines, I can establish a sort of family tree," he explains. "A 'source' piece generates different branches of creation," he adds.



The bejewelled *Jupiter Console* takes inspiration from striated cells and planetary rings
Image: Harry Matenaer

Among the standout pieces at the exhibition is the *Ecaille* sideboard, clad in a geometric, scale-like motif embedded in patinated and polished brass marquetry. The surface appears warped as if distorted by the gravitational pull of a black hole, a nod to Boulloud's fascination with the mysteries of time and space. The *Jupiter* console, on the other hand, features a striated pattern dotted with semi-precious stones, evoking the planet's rings.



The organic-shaped *Yareta II chair*, 2024, Erwan Boulloud
Image: Harry Matenaer

The botanical world is another rich source of inspiration for Boulloud. The *Yareta* sofa, named after a slow-growing moss-like plant native to [South America's](#) altiplano, features a bulbous, organic-shaped seat that seems to envelop a cubic built-in [side table](#). In contrast, the *Pezizes* sconces are redolent of both the delicate forms of mushrooms and the intricate patterns found on the insect chrysalides that live on Amazonian tree trunks.



The bulbous *Pezize* sconce is inspired by mushrooms and insect chrysalides on trees
Image: Harry Matenaer

Boulloud's most persistent muse, however, lies in the microscopic. For over two decades, he has explored the patterns and structures of cells, giving rise to designs that evoke ripples on water or the intricate whorls of biological formations. Pieces such as the *Rosanna* vase, *Romane* cabinet and mirror, *Roeco* [coffee table](#), and *Noyau Enfilade* are

adorned with concentric motifs, some studded with semi-precious gems like lapis lazuli, tiger's eye and malachite to represent the cell's nucleus. "I appreciate how Erwan's patterns always have a purpose," notes Renaud Vuailat, founder and director of Twenty First Gallery. "There's nothing random to them. They can be inspired by fascinating stories and mythology or take the form of 'mathematical lines' grounded in a physical phenomenon he has observed. That makes them both intriguing and meaningful."



(L-R) *Romane cabinet*(2021) and the *Romane mirror*(2022)
Image: Harry Matenaer

Boulloud's innovative use of materials further elevates his practice. The usage of metals such as patinated bronze, [stainless steel](#) and brass marquetry are long-standing staples for the artist. Beyond the usage of metals, Boulloud introduces works made using [concrete](#), burnt wood and alabaster for his solo exhibition. Referring to the usage of alabaster for his [lamp designs](#), Boulloud shares, "As a stone, it carries its entire history within it. It's the result of a very long process." This, too, speaks to his reverence for time. His fusion of artisanal techniques with cutting-edge technology is particularly noteworthy. The *Rosanna* vase and *Pezize* sconces were created using 3D-printed moulds, while the stainless steel components of the *Roeco* coffee table were laser-cut. "I'm an artisan, but also a firm proponent of 21st century craftsmanship," Boulloud affirms. "Today, [digital technology](#) makes a significant contribution. It increases the scope of possibilities."

With *Touching Time*, Boulloud once again demonstrates his mastery of materials, form and narrative. Through his work, he invites us to marvel at the intricacies of creation, the mysteries of the cosmos and the enduring beauty of the natural world—all while anchoring the *savoir-faire* of the past firmly rooted in the present.



Erwan Boulloud and his team in the workshop studio
Image: Harry Matenaer

Erwan Boulloud's *Touching Time* is on view at Twenty First Gallery, New York, from February 13 - April 18, 2025.

(Text by Arryan Singh, intern at STIR)

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