



Béatrice Serre with a bespoke wall installation made of rough gems, marble, minerals, and fossilized ammonite.

Glam Rock

The otherworldly beauty of Béatrice Serre's mosaics stems from her mastery of a storied craft

With her ingenious use of raw stones, minerals, and even fossils to create exceptional mosaics, Béatrice Serre has injected glamour and whimsy into an art form that dates back thousands of years. “The famous technique of marteline and block cutting has not changed for purists,” explains the artist, who chips away marbles and granites in a labor-intensive process that often lasts days to collect a plethora of smaller jagged, imperfect shapes that she reassembles into textural expanses. “The stones have hidden treasures,” she asserts. “The most difficult phase is not the endurance of the manual cutting exercise, but rather knowing how to find the right alchemy of all these materials.” Every element has a special place in the composition, “down to the smallest sparkle,” Serre adds, “which can transform everything.”

The ethereal mirrors, tables, lamps, and bas-reliefs that result from this painstaking method have earned Serre a legion of admirers. Among them are Julie Hillman, Thierry Lemaire, and interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot, who commissioned her to create several bespoke works, starting a decade ago with a wall sculpture—a stunning explosion of slate and minerals—that caught the eye of Renaud Vuailat, owner of Twenty First Gallery in Manhattan. “I was blown away by the strength and beauty of the piece,” says Vuailat, who will show Serre’s work at Salon Art + Design in November and Design Miami/ in December. “It was like she invented a new language.”

Vuailat immediately added her to his roster and now regularly shows her spectacular



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BÉATRICE SERRE

FROM LEFT: A radiant Sun mirror features golden chalcopyrite, lava stone, black garnet, and slate, among other materials. One of Serre's new mirrors for Twenty First Gallery, made of opal, Carrara marble, and white onyx.

creations at his booths on the design fair circuit. At Salon Art + Design last November, visitors to the gallery's display could find a low table topped with a swirling galaxy of geodes, lava stone, granite, and metallic accents. “Collectors of Serre's works are attracted to them like magnets,” he adds. “They purchase them without a second thought. I believe they are attracted to the power of the stones.”

Serre can relate—the artist herself was drawn to the energy of these earthly materials starting at a young age. Born in Paris, she spent her childhood constantly on the move, relocating from Gabon to China to Brazil with her family, finding that collecting stones and minerals provided her with a reassuring constant. Ultimately settling in the French capital, Serre

crafted her first compositions while studying at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Appliqués*. “The mosaic is a symbol of reconstruction, rebirth, and re-creating,” she says. “It is beyond an art; it's like therapy, with ever more elaborate techniques uniting the old to new technologies.”

Following the recent launch of a capsule collection of jewel-encrusted Cosmic bags with Aquazzura, Serre is working on custom installations for retail clients such as Cartier, for whom she's already created an Art Deco-inspired wall work composed of marble, onyx, travertine, and gold enamel tesserae. She is also gearing up for a highly anticipated solo show this fall at *Galerie Yves Gastou* in Paris that will explore her ongoing fascination with opals and turquoise. “They transport me to miniature constellations and large spaces of serenity,” she says. “Certain pebbles that have been scarified and damaged by time also particularly affect me, because they carry within them the authenticity of their journey, like wrinkles and wounds for humans. They are more powerful because they have stood the test of time.” *21stgallery.com, galerieyvesgastou.com* —GEOFFREY MONTES