

# Design Now

by Jean Bond Rafferty

Invention and ingenuity are the hallmark of Didier and Clémence Krzentowski's **Galerie Kreo**, whose avant-garde limited editions have long blurred the line between design and art. This time what's most original is the format of the exhibition devoted to the collections of **Marcel Brient**. At home, the Krzentowskis are surrounded by a profusion of contemporary art, vintage lighting and Kreo's fast-forward designs. Their friend, collector and client Brient, however, lives with only a Sam Francis engraving and photo albums of his acquisitions, all of which are kept in storage: contemporary art, design works and rare manuscripts of such renowned poets as Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine.

"It's all here in my head," Brient insists, citing an imaginative "marriage" of "a coat rack by designer Naoto Fukasawa with my portrait by Felix Gonzales-Torres, made of 85 kilos of bonbons." The hefty bonbon pyramid "portrait" didn't fit into the Kreo show, but similar poetic pairings of art and design works from Brient's storeroom demonstrate the exhibition's title, *Ensemble*: Konstantin Gric's Podify table is mated with the late Luxembourg artist Michel Majerus's graphic painting *Burned Out*; Wieki Somers's Bathboat bathtub is

matched with Carsten Höller's hairless Orang-Outang, and Marc Newson's Carbon ladder with *Escalade*, by young American artist Nate Lowman. *Until Nov. 24. 31 rue Dauphine, 6th. www.galeriekreo.com*

French furniture and lighting designer **Christophe Côme** made his mark at the **Cristina Grajales Gallery** in New York with his signature contemporary designs in wrought iron and thick roundels of cast glass. With his second solo exhibition, *Material Transformations*, the Paris-based artist/designer introduces new materials to his repertoire. He sets bright red- or green-glazed lava-stone ceramic tiles into cabinets with hand-forged iron frames, and uses both onyx and mirror in his Onyx cabinet. Other new elements combined with iron include enamel and red cast glass in the Pierrot table; and rock crystal for the Jewel Box. As elegant as they are forceful, Côme's sculptural designs are prized by art collectors, and are found in Chanel boutiques in Paris, Beirut and Shanghai. *Nov 8-Jan 25. 10 Greene Street, New York. www.cristinagrajales.com*

## CRAFT AND CREATIVITY

Architect and designer **Jean-Michel Wilmotte** stepped into

the spotlight in 1982 as one of five designers of President Mitterrand's private apartment at the Elysée Palace. Next came a 20-year adventure with I. M. Pei designing interiors for the Louvre. Since then, the sophisticated simplicity of Wilmotte's interior architecture has triumphed in museums from Lisbon to Doha and Beijing, including the brilliant renovation of Paris's Musée d'Orsay and ongoing work for Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. The super-luxe hotel La Réserve in Ramatuelle, near Saint Tropez, exemplifies his stunning take on contemporary—and very comfortable—interiors. Now that he has linked up with US luxury furniture distributor Holly Hunt, Americans can discover the allure of his sleek geometrical designs: the Hadrien desk in cinder-toned American walnut with lacquered interiors; the Hadrien daybed and chair, both in ebonized

walnut and leather; the De Stijl dresser in solid oak and brushed chrome; and the Frame coffee table in patinated bronze metal and swamp oak. [www.hollyhunt.com](http://www.hollyhunt.com)

In a revival of the much admired CFOC (Compagnie Française de l'Orient et de la Chine), which merged the best of Asian craftsmanship with



*Burned Out*, a painting by Michel Majerus and Konstantin Gric's Podify table at Galerie Kreo



The Hadrien daybed by Jean-Michel Wilmotte, in ebonized walnut and leather



Benoit Lienart's calligraphic Guo chair at CFOC



Red-glazed lava-stone ceramic tiles on a hand-forged iron cabinet frame, by Christophe Côme at Cristina Grajales Gallery



A wide-eyed owl in a lantern cage by Joy de Rohan-Chabot

Parisian chic, the new owner—real-estate developer and art patron Laurent Dumas—has concentrated the business in one sleek, newly renovated, €1.5 million emporium in CFOC's former HQ on the Boulevard Haussmann. Interior architects François Schmidt and Sarah Lavoine created a spacious, light-flooded, two-level 5,380-square-foot space whose natural woods and pale colors were inspired by a Japanese, rather than Chinese, aesthetic.

New, too, is the active participation of young French and Asian designers. Lavoine and Schmidt are behind the collections of tableware, household linens, lighting, outdoor furniture, stationery and jewelry using traditional celadon, lacquer, Vietnamese embroidery, wood and ceramic from Yangtze and porcelain from Jingdezhen. Chinese designer Li Naihan created a wardrobe-trunk closet; Gallic duo A+A Cooren designed a massive wood dining table; and Benoit Lienart's black-lacquered Guo chair echoes strokes of calligraphy. East also meets West in CFOC's Yoko restaurant—along with sushi, sashimi and Tuna Tataki with citrus fruit sauce, there are burgers and club sandwiches

on Japanese bread. 170 blvd Haussmann, 8th. [www.cfoc.fr](http://www.cfoc.fr)

#### INVENTION AND WHIMSY

Jewelry design is not just about dazzling gems, as the exhibition *Van Cleef & Arpels, L'Art de la Haute Joaillerie* at the **Musée des Arts Décoratifs** demonstrates. Their invention of the Serti



A Van Cleef & Arpels minaudière designed for Florence Gould

Mystérieux (Invisible Setting) revolutionized the world of precious stones. The virtuoso technique, patented in 1933, allows stones to be mounted side by side without visible claws or bezels holding them in place. Two Americans also had a hand in Van Cleef & Arpels innovations. In the 1930s, Florence Gould, daughter-in-law of robber baron Jay

Gould and a literary personage and philanthropist in her own right, used a metal Lucky Strike cigarette carton as an evening bag. As the story goes, Frank Arpels, startled at the sight, invented a luxurious replacement, the minaudière—a jeweled gold and lacquer case with compartments for Gould's necessities.

The Duchess of Windsor suggested the remarkable Zip necklace in 1938, but the first one, in platinum and diamonds took 13 years to perfect—an adjustable necklace that could be “zipped” into a bracelet. *Until Feb. 10.* [www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr](http://www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr)

No season would be complete without touches of delightful Gallic whimsy. At the **Galerie Matignon**, artist **Joy de Rohan-Chabot's** dream world *Féerie* offers such captivating creatures as a winged lizard curling up a candlestick or an irresistible owl peering from a silvery ivy-twined lantern cage.

Nov 22–Jan 26. 18 ave Matignon, 8th. [www.galeriematignon.com](http://www.galeriematignon.com)

In their latest collaboration for Alessi, designer **Christian Ghion** and three-star chef **Pierre Gagnaire** conferred over the chef's preoccupation with the egg—“an elementary ingredient at the base of cuisine,” he asserts. They came up with *Le Nid*, a small enameled ceramic “nest” on a base of steel sticks, symbolizing an egg resting on twigs—a ramekin for gently cooking and serving eggs. [www.alessi.com](http://www.alessi.com) ■

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Ceramic ramekin by Christian Ghion and chef Pierre Gagnaire for Alessi

Cabinet photo © Emmanuel Pierrot; lantern cage Courtesy Galerie Matignon/Joy de Rohan-Chabot; minaudière © Patrick Griesi/Van Cleef & Arpels; ramekin © Jacques Gavard; Courtesy Alessi