

Very grand designs

Design Miami Paris | The fair

features rhubarb tables and Virgil

Abluh thrones. By *Caroline Roux*

It was an experiment, and one that worked 90 per cent," says Grela Orihuela, senior VP of Design Miami. She is talking about the US design fair's first Parisian edition, which took place last October. (The mother-ship, as the name suggests, was launched in Miami in 2005.) Its success can be measured by the reaction of those who are coming back for its second round. "This year we have 24 galleries taking part," adds Orihuela, "and 15 of those are returns."

Among the latter is Galerie Kreo, the cutting-edge Paris design gallery founded by Didier and Clémence Krzen-towski. "For us it was fantastic," says Clara, their 29-year-old daughter, who is beginning to influence the 30-year-old business. "The location helps. It's full of natural light, and the house itself is a Paris gem." Indeed, the 18th-century Hôtel de Maisons on the city's Left Bank, which Design Miami will occupy for five days, maintains much of its historic splendour. With its wood-panelled rooms and rich parquet, it was deemed sufficiently well-appointed by style arbiter Karl Lagerfeld to be his home. Here are some highlights.

■ Clotilde Ancarani at Giulia de Jonckheere

Ancarani trained as a sculptor, but now spends equal amounts of time making art and design in her Brussels studio. In fact, her real passion is her



■ 'Les Trois Grâces' ('The Three Graces') (1970) by Jean Touret

— Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gastou



garden, which infuses her work completely. "Plants have always been my subject," says the 58-year-old, who searches out leaves to cast in bronze. "I like the contradiction between the fragility and organic properties of plants and the cold, hard characteristics of bronze as a material."

In the garden of the Hôtel de Maisons, visitors will find her low, curly edged Gunnera Table, cast from the huge leaves of a rhubarb plant that was growing in a neighbour's garden, and earlier sculptural pieces based on other leaves.

"I'm not consciously influenced by Art Nouveau," says Ancarani of the 20th-century style that looked to nature for inspiration. "But I do live in Brussels, where it's everywhere, so I probably feel its presence every day."

■ Jean Touret at Galerie Gastou

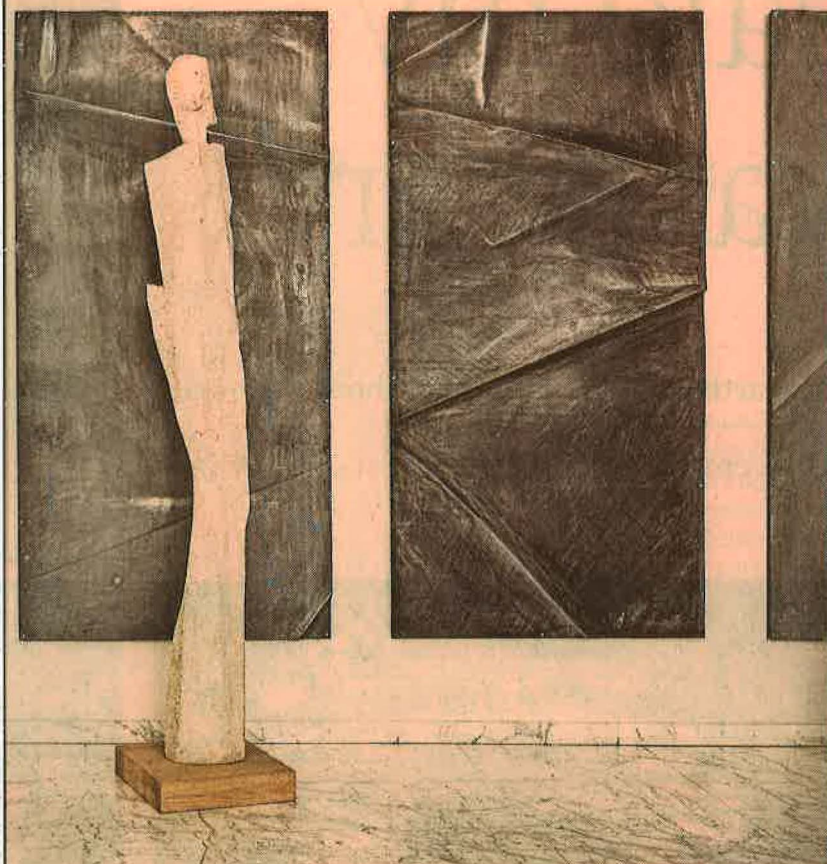
"Jean Touret believed in the poetry of the handmade, and the direct relationship between man and material," says Victor Gastou, the second-generation director of the eponymous Parisian gallery. After the second world war, during which he had been taken prisoner, Touret ditched his life in insurance, and



Above: Gunnera Table and other bronze work by Clotilde Ancarani. Left: Tower Hills chair (2019) by Virgil Abluh. Right: a piece by Ettore

Sottsass — Courtesy the gallery; courtesy Giulia de Jonckheere; courtesy of Galerie Downtown, Francois Laffanour

Collecting



1964, and carried on making his own totemic sculptures in acacia wood, which he never sold in his lifetime, some of which will also be on show. "He was inspired by Matisse and Cubism," says Gastou. But most of all he was inspired by his faith, and continued to make a living from religious commissions.

■ Paul Dupré-Lafon at Maxime Flatry

Maxime Flatry, 32, opened his Left Bank gallery two years ago. He specialises in the French furniture masters of the 1920s and 30s, including Jean-Michel Frank, whose pared-down aesthetic upturned the fancier rules of the day.

At Design Miami Paris, Flatry will show a suite of furniture by Paul Dupré-Lafon made in the 1930s – a sofa, armchairs and a table. The seating was originally upholstered in red velvet, but Flatry has replaced this with a glowing white. "Dupré-Lafon's work was as reductive as

Frank's in one way, but more expansive in another," says Flatry. "The chairs are wide and generous and sit low to the floor, like a 1930s Rolls-Royce. The lines and the dimensions are so modern."

■ Virgil Abloh at Galerie Kreo

The American Virgil Abloh had a sadly brief life – he died in 2021, aged just 41 – but he packed a lot in. Trained as an architect, he went on to work as a fashion designer, launching his own brands Pyrex Vision and Off-White, and ultimately becoming the creative designer of Louis Vuitton's menswear in 2018.

"The Hôtel de Maisons was deemed sufficiently well-appointed by Karl Lagerfeld to be his home"

He also DJ'd and designed furniture.

Galerie Kreo is showing one of his last works – the monolithic Tower Hills chair, which, like his fashion, synthesises luxury and the street. It's a chunky, robust cube of a chair, made in bronze, but cast in OSB (oriented strand board, or chipboard) which makes it look more disposable. "It feels right to put this throne-like piece into the mansion's luxurious interior," says director Clara Krzentowski. "To bring together the contemporary and the historic."

■ Italia at Downtown+

While François Laffanour holds the fort at Design Miami with blue-chip French names, his daughter Luna, 28, has gone rogue. She is showing a selection of

historic Italian work at the nearby Hôtel de l'Industrie on Place Saint-Germain-des-Prés, which she is pairing with contemporary painting by Nicolas Mehdipour – richly pigmented abstracts and eerie figurative paintings of lost adolescents. His vibrant palette coincides with that of Italian masters such as Gaetano Pesce and Ettore Sottsass, who from the 1970s were delving into new materials and ways of living.



Design Miami Paris, Oct 16-19, designmiami.com. Italia, to Oct 16, plusdowntown.com

headed to the Loire Valley. There he assembled craftsmen into a guild called the Ateliers de Marolles, and set about designing handcrafted oak furniture that ran counter to the prevailing industrialisation and mass-manufacturing. "The work was sold in Galeries Lafayette," says Gastou. "It appealed to a sophisticated clientele who appreciated its artisanal qualities." The pitted "honeycomb" surfaces, created with a gouge, certainly have a very rustic appeal.

Touret resigned from the Ateliers in