

IMAGICASA

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CABINET

DE VIRTUOSITÉS



Since early November, Paris has been the setting for an exhibition by the international design gallery Galerie Philia. The exhibition unites the work of more than thirty contemporary artists around the central idea of virtuosity and has been appropriately named *Cabinet de Virtuosités*.

Galerie Philia is an international gallery for contemporary design and modern art, uniting established names with emerging talent. The gallery is the brainchild of two brothers who share a passion for art, literature and philosophy. This shared love eventually led to the start-up of Galerie Philia in 2015 and immediately inspired the name. Philia, in fact, means 'the highest form of love' in Ancient Greek, also 'affection' or 'friendship'. It exhibits a collection selected through rhizomatic and transcultural methods, meaning that it transcends formal, stylistic, national or historical barriers. The objects come from various cultures and periods and are presented in the form of different and multiform media. The collection is free from any trend. The only criteria that run through the collection are the aesthetic timeless qualities of the works and the feeling they convey. The gallery does not want to limit itself to one single

style, but rather embraces the heterogeneous character of the collected works. It wants to build bridges between different artistic continents to highlight works with a distinct artistic depth. This is the only way to do justice to the beauty of each unique creation, according to the inspirers.

In addition, the gallery takes great pride in discovering and highlighting new talents, among which also the Belgian designer Arno Declercq. Although, Galerie Philia does not only promote the newest generation of collectibles, but also works with many established names such as Jérôme Pereira, Rick Owens and Alain Ellouz. These talents are exhibited internationally, as the gallery has branches in Geneva, Singapore and New York. In addition to their permanent spaces, the gallery also organises temporary group exhibitions and artist residencies in the best locations around the world.

SCULPTURAL & AESTHETIC VIRTUOSITY

For the first time in the gallery's history, one of their temporary exhibitions is landing in Paris. For this special occasion, an exceptional collection of over one hundred works by more than thirty contemporary artists and designers will be exhibited in the city of lights under the catchy title *Cabinet de Virtuosités*. As its name suggests, the exhibition, which opened on 8 November, takes a look at several cabinets that present an eclectic set of curiosities. The central idea of the selection of works is virtuosity: both technical and sculptural, but also, or even especial-

GEOFFRATTE, Nils & Wolf



ly, aesthetic virtuosity. The artists exhibited in Paris represent different movements in sculpture: from organic and minimalist to brutalist and virtualist. Seemingly contradictory works are brought together and presented together. In this way, the gallery aims to create a resonance effect, so that the public discovers the flourishing innovation of functional sculpture. The majority of these works were created for this occasion and have never been shown before.

The *Cabinet de Virtuosités* exhibition takes place in the new building of the renowned studio Atelier Alain Ellouz, both on the four floors of the building and in the surrounding 4,000m² gardens. Among the designers are also some acquaintances of Imagicasa, such as Hermine Bourdin, Pietro Franceschini and Elisa Uberti. We would now like to show you around this 'Cabinet of Virtuosités' and get to know some of the artists present.



Data table ebanisé, Thomas Serrays

NICLAS WOLF

Niclas Wolf is one of the designers who is part of the exhibition with his **GEOPRIMITIVE** series. In his daily life and work, the artist feels a deep connection with the natural world. He always looks for elements that touch him and captures them in his work. In this way, he designs the resources of the earth and makes the invisible material. Tectonic structures and geological phenomena are great sources of inspiration for Wolf. Experimentation is the essence of his work, resulting in creations that are filled with layers consisting



Buffet Faute, Frédéric Saulou



Wood Ivories, Elissa Leconte

of everything that surrounds him. He describes his collections as 'speculative results of an ongoing investigation into how formative processes in nature can be adapted into creative methods.'

THE EXHIBITION PRESENTS AN ECLECTIC SET OF CURIOSITIES

PIETRO FRANCESCHINI

Readers who have been following our magazine for a while, undoubtedly know that Imagicasa is a big fan of Pietro Franceschini. The architect and designer, who has studied in Italy, Portugal and the United States, is based in New York and Florence. His latest project PF|Studio, an interior and furniture design practice, saw the light of day in 2020. Franceschini's collections can be described as minimalist, refined and raw at the same time. He works with different media to create his inspired imaginations and visualisation and narrative are important elements within his studio. For example, he designed the Los Tres Deos series (or Three Wise Men series) – on display at the exhibition – which consists of **DESEO N1**, **N2** and **N3**. Each of these three pieces has a beautiful graphic design and can function as a side table or stool.

THOMAS SERRUYS

Arno Declercq is not the only home-grown designer who is part of the exhibition, also Thomas Serruys is present. For nine years he ran a vintage design gallery in the centre of Bruges and for four years a studio in the port of Ostend. In mid-2020, the company

moved to one of the remaining late 19th-century brick warehouses in Bruges. Once the restoration is complete, this authentic location will house the studio and a selected collection of refined vintage design. His Data table in an ebonised version is now part of the *Cabinet de Virtuosités*. The design consists of a free-form top in solid Oregon with smooth rounded edges and three hand-turned trapezoidal legs.



Native Floor Light, Hot Wire Extensions, © Marco Bosasco Photography

ELISSA LACOSTE

The instinctive works of Elissa Lacoste reveal her feelings. The unconventional and lively texture of her sculptural works is on the dividing line between the real and the surreal, while retaining a hint of functionality. The artist, whose Wood Ivories chair can be admired at the exhibition, likes to mix the mineral, the vegetal with the animal, thus giving a grotesque aesthetic to her objects. For this, she draws inspiration from natural landscapes and human forms. In her work, silicone and polystyrene come together and are sculpted into various inexplicable shapes.

FRÉDÉRIC SAULOU

Frédéric Saulou is a leading French contemporary designer, whose Fauve Buffet Cabinet is part of the exhibition. He is curious about the post-industrial heritage of local mineral

material, which he explores in his works, as well as his interest in slate material and decorative stones. He wants to broaden the range of possibilities for functional objects for the home by questioning the history, the material and its usual influence between art and design. In this way, he wants to transform the material, make it more democratic and increase its value as a future heritage and, above all, as food for thought. He juxtaposes traditional and industrial know-how, reinterpreting the material in formal and conceptual ways to give it a new understanding. Each of his works comes from research and partnerships with local workshops.

HOT WIRE EXTENSIONS

As mentioned before, Galerie Philia also likes to give a platform to young talents. Hot Wire Extensions, which is led by Fabio Hendry, belongs to this group. It is a young and sustainable design brand, which creates works through a daring and innovative production process. Exploration plays a central role in their philosophy and creation process. The result is a varied range of products, furniture and installations, as well as custom-made

assignments. They work with waste Nylon **SLS** 3D powder, a material that is currently not yet recycled. Inspired by the way a vine grows around a tree, they reuse this material to create organic bone-like structures built around a wire, like their Native Floor Light.

CEDRIC BREISACHER

Designer-sculptor Cedric Breisacher has taken a rather atypical path. He is completely self-taught, although he did follow an industrial training course for five years where he graduated with a mention and a jury prize. His work focuses on the problems of local manufacturing, trying to design all objects in local distribution. After a five-month internship with artist Valentin Loellmann, he decided to open his own studio, where he sticks to his own vision of production. His Slice Table is now one of the designs to be admired in Paris.

The *Cabinet de Virtuosités* exhibition runs until 29 April and is the first of many lasting collaborations between Galerie Philia and the Parisian showroom of Atelier Alain Ellouz. (Text: Nathalie Van Laer)



Galerie Philia, Cabinet de Virtuosités, Coffee Table 001 + Armchair 001, Atelier Carles Demanquet & Caramiclamp, Pia Chevalier

Images courtesy of Galerie Philia