

IMAGICASA

ARCHITECTURE - INTERIOR - DECORATION - ART - DESIGN - TRAVEL - CARS - LIFESTYLE / **WINTER 2022** / BE-NL €16 / UK £14



APPROACH AS KINTSUGI



WA Design Gallery gets its name from the Japanese 'wa', which stands for the search for harmony. The Parisian gallery brings together Japanese, French, and American design that radiates aesthetic purity across time periods and borders. Genres are broken up here, trends are abandoned. Instead, opposites are deliberately brought together to create a new space for dialogue.

In 2017 WA Design Gallery was founded by friends Christophe Magnan and Philippe Riecaillard. Magnan has been an art collector for more than three decades and managed to convey his passion to his friend. In 2018, design historian and connoisseur of the art world Thibaut Vanailon joined the team. Their showroom is situated in the heart of the Marais in Paris, near the Place des Vosges, where many important contemporary art galleries are situated. The gallery, which is only open on appointment, is actually an apartment where all pieces, going from historical works to contemporary creations, are displayed. It is a cosy, inviting place which radiates a warm, pure atmosphere. The interior of the spaces is changed as often as pos-

sible and should justify customers' desire to live together with the works on display. In this way, a true universe is created and the vision of the three art lovers completely comes into its own. For them, art forms an important part of our daily life and can change our residence. Art pieces are not just objects, but products that are created with much care after a long reflection process and connect with us. We are happy to show you how that vision is brought into reality.



CELEBRATING OPPOSITES

The land of the rising sun and the modern west do show a number of similarities regarding art. The aim of the gallery is to prove that Japanese, French, and American design can be brought together in a logical way. The love for asymmetry is celebrated here and the importance of details, which allows many interpretations, is fully praised. Fully in line with Japanese philosophy, the artist's creation and the work of a craftsman are considered equal. Design does not always have to be complicated, on the contrary. Simple forms are put in the spotlight, just as the quality materials that are used and even display imperfections. With the gallery, the three art experts want to transfer their love for a subtle balance to their audience, as well as the idea that art can be something extraordinary in our daily lives. They compare it to a moment that is frozen in time. Opposites are central in their design: by finding the right balance between beautiful and functional, art and craft, years of knowledge and innovation, refinement and rustic elements, they can offer pieces with just that little extra. WA likes to compare itself to a *kintsugi*, someone in Japanese culture who fixes broken ceramics with gold or silver lacquer. In the same way, the gallery brings together elements that at first sight would appear to be opposites, in order to create space for dialogue.

LOVE FOR AKARI

The connection between all works is of the utmost importance. Materials, forms, and simplicity are central and receive a prominent position in the gallery's vision. They always work hard to create something new. In the gallery, the team tries to develop something new and follow their own path. One of their specialisations is Akari, a light sculpture from the Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi. He designed the lamp in 1951 and worked on the model until his death in 1988. Since their creation, WA has been focusing on this model and emphasising the importance of this work in Noguchi's career. The artist considered his Akari to be just as important as all his other works, and that idea is defended by the gallery as well. WA only sells early and vintage models of the lamp and organised a large exposition last year to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the model, with the same number of early models, a first in Europe. According to them, Akari is a concept, and not just a lamp. Design and sculptures are effortlessly connected with each other, so that the differences between diverse forms of art fully disappear. This perfectly aligns with the gallery's vision.

That Japanese design is relatively unknown in Europe is not perceived as a difficulty by the team, but rather as an interesting challenge. In the gallery, they can discover the creative intensity of Japanese design since 1900, and they always go on the search for new pieces and discover rare, unknown works. WA considers it their mission to make new discoveries. Buying those pieces that no one knows and defending them to the public is very stimulating. They do not want to display only renowned designers, but also, in line with Charlotte Perriand's vision, display objects and furniture that





are not even signed but radiate the same atmosphere. That also makes clear what the three experts consider to be their task. Namely, they want to share their passion for art with others and defend their vision. The way in which they discover new pieces and connect and display them is a challenge every time, but one that gives them much satisfaction. This is done with a lot of pleasure at important design fairs such as 1001 in London and Paris, where they won the 'Best Stand Prize' in 2012. Moreover, the gallery is very present on social media and has built a close community throughout the years. In that way, they can share their concept with the world not only physically, but also online. Their new website, which was launched in September, certainly contributes to that, and they will also launch a blog very soon, where they will share stories and histories with their clients and followers. With one interesting article each month, they will be able to share even more of their knowledge with the public.

DISTINCT COLLECTION
We are happy to show you a number of magnificent pieces from their collection. Some of those are Akari models. The Akari 21N, 31N, and 95EN models are all made in the original washi colour and have rims in bamboo

and a black-painted metal structure. They are early models with the familiar red logo of the sun and moon. The difference between the three lies in the height and diameter of the pieces. Like those pieces, the rare Akari 125F also embodies the spirit of W&A. It is one of the largest models Noguchi designed

and is presented here above a pine bench by Riki Watanabe, which was made by Tendo Mokko, Japan's leading furniture maker, and a chair in bamboo attributed to Hosoi Yokota. The chair was designed for the Takashimaya department stores in Japan. In fact, the same model was also exhibited at the Salon des Arts Ménagers in 1957 for the Japanese house designed by Charlotte Perriand and Sori Yanagi. With its simple, historic and unusual design, the Akari 125F fits right into the gallery. We also find a very rare and early Akari A column. Displayed next to a bamboo armchair by Japanese master furniture maker Ubanji Kidokoro from 1935, it is obviously a design that Perriand drew a lot of inspiration from during her first trip to Japan in 1940. She even based her own bamboo creation on it, which she later exhibited during her famous 'Sélection, Tradition, Creation' exhibition. Next to the chair, we find a Tendo Mokko table with grey blue bottles by the Roseland couple, and a white bottle by Georges Jouve. The Akari 31N has also been given the perfect frame in the gallery, in front of Alexander Calder's beautiful 1971 Sun Tapestry. The lounge set testifies to the gallery's love of beautiful materials and their ideas around form and function. Daisaku Cato's coffee table's simplicity matches perfectly with Sori Yanagi's Elephant chair and Isamu Kusunoki's burgundy rattan stool. Finishing things off are George Nakashima's Conoid free-edge sofa and Ubanji Kidokoro's cantilever armchair. Finally, let us not forget the perfectly curated dining room, which





is a nice mix of Japanese, American, and French design. A large Minguren II dining table by George Nakashima in American walnut dominates the space. We also find here a set of chairs by Isamu Kenmochi, an Akari 55L, and an Akari 70EN. On a table by Tundo Moliko is a unique mug by André Borderie, while the fireplace accommodates a unique Ruban lamp by Agnès Debizet, a white bottle by George Fouves and a sculpture by Lehman. On the wall shines the 'So' painting by artist Michiko Istanti.

The artist's creation and the work of a craftsman are considered to be equal

The love for art in general and Japanese, French, and American design in particular immediately become clear in this gallery. The team is happy to share their knowledge and ideas about art with their audience and manage to surprise them time and time again. The specific attention they pay to Isamu Noguchi's Akari works and the ways in which they combine the different models with other pieces is impressive, to say the least. Their unique vision will inspire many and continue to draw them to the gallery. © 2021 2022 Atelier

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Top Interieur Maastricht | Herestraat 123b

Closed on Thursdays

top@interieur.be - 060 600 1000

topinterieur