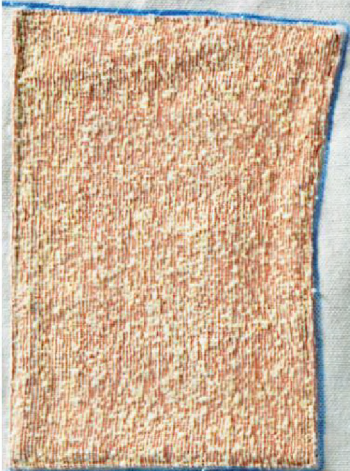


AD

The
Artisans
Issue

Laurence Leenaert
Brunello Cucinelli
Faissal El-Malak
Rama Duwaji
Timi Hayek
David/Nicolas
Salama Nasib
Sultan Al Ramahi
Lison de Caunes
Frances van
Hasselt





ABOVE:
A dramatic
mural in the
garden suite of
the Hotel de
Portales.
TOP RIGHT:
A detail of a
heritage
building in
Beirut by
illustrator
Timi Hayek.



The World is going through seismic attitudinal changes. Ideas about what should be exhibited in galleries and museums - and who owns those exhibits - are shifting along with value systems built on flawed ideas about supremacy and savagery. What is beautiful and who is the beast now?

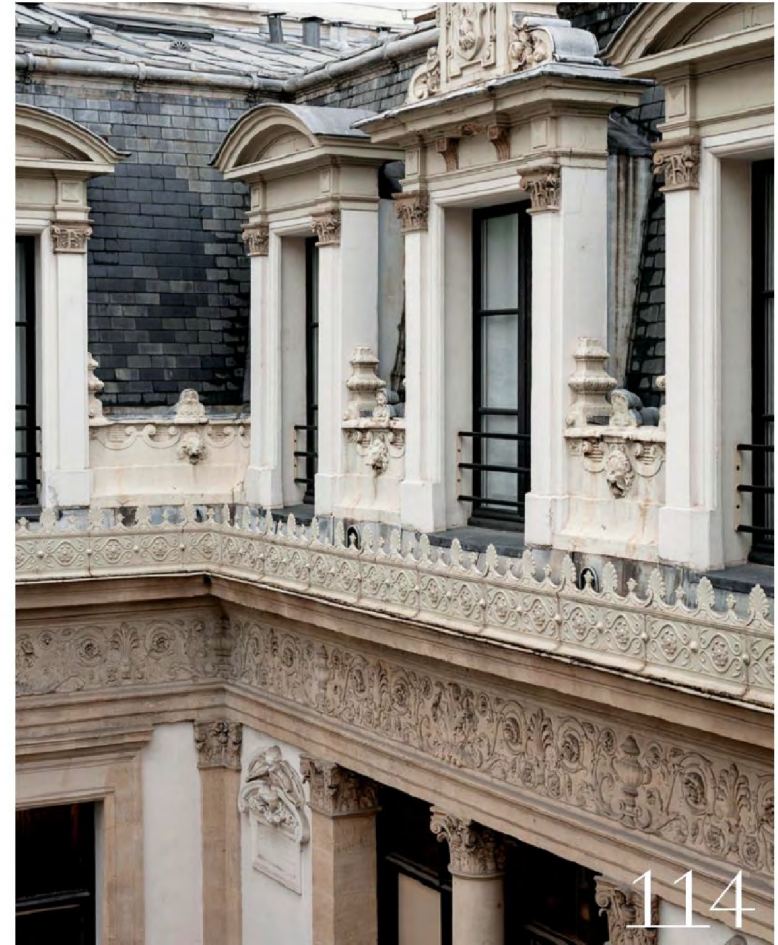
In these uncertain times, one thing is for sure. The pandemic has made us cherish our homes more and want to fill them with things that have longevity and meaning. And as we have become more isolated, relying heavily on virtual meetings to connect (the Zoom fatigue is real), natural materials and skilfully crafted objects have renewed desirability. It's also important to bear in mind how the lives of artisans around the world have been affected by lockdowns and decrease in demand. They need support and recognition. Buying less but better can help.

This issue is full of inspiring stories which prove that craft is as relevant, vital and necessary as ever. Several of the most intriguing designs involve collaboration - from Beirut design duo David/Nicolas' resurrection of Thirties furniture designs for Pierre Frey, to hand-drawn illustrations of rooms in the new Arts Club Dubai by emerging Middle Eastern artists, and revered French artisan Lison de Caunes' straw marquetry interior for a luxe electric car. Also in Paris, interior designer Agatha Labaye has enlisted the talents of muralists to transform apartments at the new hotel Hotel de Portales. It's at the top of my travel wish list. Enjoy the issue.

Talib Choudhry
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PHOTO: STEPHAN JULLIARD

Escape



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“THE HOTEL IS FOR PEOPLE WHO PREFER ANONYMITY. EACH SUITE IS ARRANGED LIKE AN APARTMENT”

PHOTO: STEPHAN JULLIARD



Private Residence

A grand, historic Paris home has been transformed into a hotel with discreetly luxurious apartments



In 1839, Félix Duban, the architect of Paris's Ecole des Beaux-Arts, built a grand home in the French capital for the Swiss diplomat, Count James-Alexandre de Pourtalès. Nestled between the Madeleine Church and the Boulevard Haussmann, it was designed in a neo-Renaissance style with arches, pilasters and friezes designed to evoke the ideal Tuscan palazzo.

The property was linked to the adjoining contemporary building in 2010 and transformed into the ultra-discrete No Address hotel, attracting an A-list clientele that included Madonna. It hit the headlines four years ago when it was the scene of Kim Kardashian's jewellery heist. Since then, the property has been reborn again; just before Paris went into lockdown earlier this year, it reopened as Hôtel de Pourtalès after being completely refreshed by young French architect and designer, Agathe Labaye.

"I was asked to create a place where everyone could feel at home, which was elegant, light and soothing," Labaye recalls. "I don't like things that are spectacular. I prefer a space to dazzle through its details. I really love going to hotels and think they should be restful and help you ground yourself quickly in an unfamiliar city. They ought to be surprising but reassuring at the same time."

The seven-floor hotel consists of nine suites and two rooms with a lush courtyard garden and planted terraces on both the first and top two floors. Labaye's main focus was to create an aesthetic coherence between the different architectural typologies of the original 19th century building and the 21st century addition. "The hotel has a really incredible diversity of volumes," adds Labaye. "It's split up into spaces of very different sizes, from small rooms to the penthouse with a 360° view of the whole of Paris from its terrace."

The spaces are linked by common visual cues including dramatic chromatic gradations. The most striking example is a monumental fresco in the double-height Garden Duplex, created in situ by the Parisian decorative painters, Redfield & Dattner. "I wanted a vast landscape as a reference to the presence of large-format paintings in the interiors of the 19th century when the hotel was built," says Labaye. "Austin [Redfield] and Violette [Dattner] opted for a palette of brick, sage and charcoal tones, which they made vibrate by adding flashes of gold. It feels like you could almost be in a wood."

The furnishings include iconic pieces by Charlotte Perriand, Gerrit Rietveld, Carlo Scarpa and Le Corbusier, which rub shoulders with creations of a new generation of French designers, such as Garnier & Linker

“
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dazzle through
its details
”

and Studio Pool. They are mixed with a sculptural custom line of furniture, which Labaye created especially for the hotel in tandem with the artist, Florian Sumi. Their design approach juxtaposes an industrial aesthetic with that of craftsmanship. To this end, they called upon the renowned Belgian marble specialist, Van Den Weghe, to create coffee tables, consoles, desks and benches, fitted with lacquered-metal legs. They also worked with the French Maître d'art Pierre Bonnefille to devise special finishes for certain pieces, which sparkle softly in the sunlight.

The overall effect gives the feeling of entering a grand private home. "The hotel is for people who prefer anonymity," adds Labaye. "Each suite is arranged like an apartment and the service is also remarkably high-level and bespoke – they're capable of responding to just about any request." hotelpourtales.com; agathelabaye.com - T.C.

PHOTOS:STEPHAN JULLIARD

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: The Garden Suite with its dramatic mural; a bedroom; each private apartment is unique; furniture by Agathe Labaye and Florian Sumi.