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**LAFFANOUR**  
GALERIE DOWNTOWN/PARIS

HOW TO SPEND IT

07 juillet 2020

How To Spend It

web

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# The Aesthete: François Laffanour's black book of style

The design collector and founder of Paris's Galerie Downtown adores historical biographies, kite surfing and Japanese maple trees. By Alice Cavanagh



François Laffanour at home in Paris | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

**My personal style signifier** is to dress predominantly in navy blue. My father always wore navy blue, so I must get it from him – but I also like it because it's elegant and not as harsh as black. I always wear **sneakers** too. I remember it used to be shocking 10-15 years ago and now it's the new normal. At the moment, I have a pair by James Perse that I wear on high rotation.



Part of his shoe collection | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans



**The last thing I bought and loved** was a Japanese maple tree for my house in **Normandy**. I already have around 20 of them. I love the way they branch out horizontally and the way the colour of their leaves transforms throughout the year.

**On my wishlist** is a little house by the sea on one of the Cyclades. I was born in Algeria and I think Greece shares a similar atmosphere, with all the sunshine and the coastal lifestyle. I love the simplicity of the food and the way of life.



In his garden, wearing his orange scarf | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

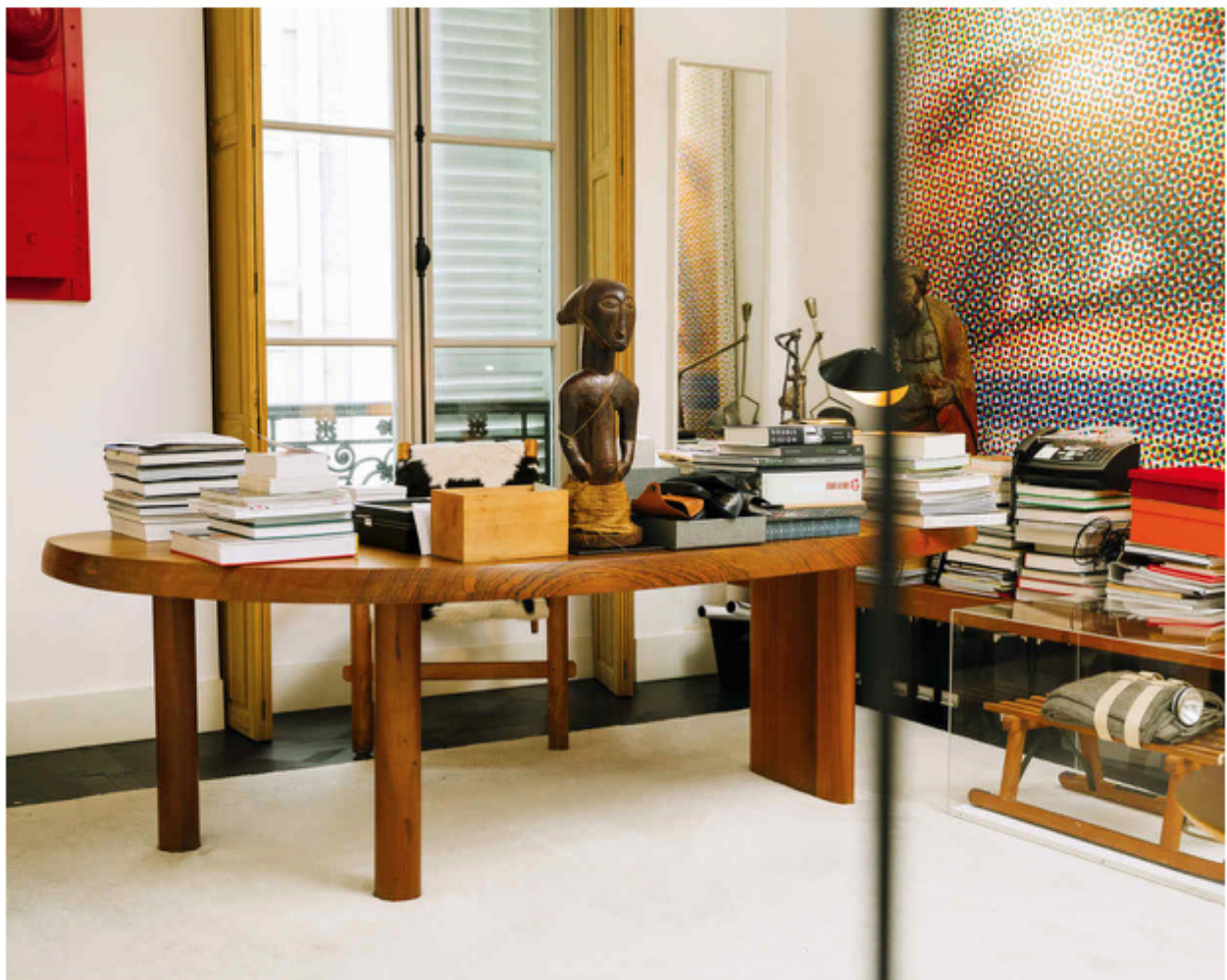
**The best gift I've given recently** was a pair of gold **earrings** by the **Belgian** sculptor Pol Bury, which I gave to my partner, Alexandra. He only made a few pieces of **jewellery** so they're very rare, but I met his wife recently and she sold them to me. They are incredible but also, unfortunately, a little too heavy.



His artwork painted on a one-dollar bill by Hans-Peter Feldmann | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans



**The best gift I have ever received** was given to me by Alexandra about five years ago – an artwork painted on a one-dollar bill by the German **artist** Hans-Peter Feldmann. It was hard to find but she tracked it down. I was very touched.



His Charlotte Perriand Free-form table (with a Joseph Beuys Sled to the right) | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

**In my fridge, you'll always find** sheep's milk yoghurt, a great Comté cheese and a bottle of Jacques Lassaigne champagne. It is a small champagne producer, not easy to find, but I buy it from the Paris restaurant Le Dauphin.



The Pol Bury earrings he gave his partner, Alexandra | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans



**My favourite room in my house** is my kitchen. It opens into the living room, which has a fireplace, so I can entertain guests and **cook** at the same time. I love food and I love to cook. I had a Polish grandmother and an Italian grandmother, and they both taught me. One opened my eyes to Eastern European dishes, such as veal with peas, and the other taught me how to cook pasta.



Cherries from his garden | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

**The last album I downloaded** was Nick Cave's *Skeleton Tree*.  
I like the nostalgia in his music. Alexandra is a musician, and she has introduced me to a world beyond The Rolling Stones.



Laffanour's Perriand stools, Serge Mouille desk lamp and Isamu Noguchi side table |  
Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

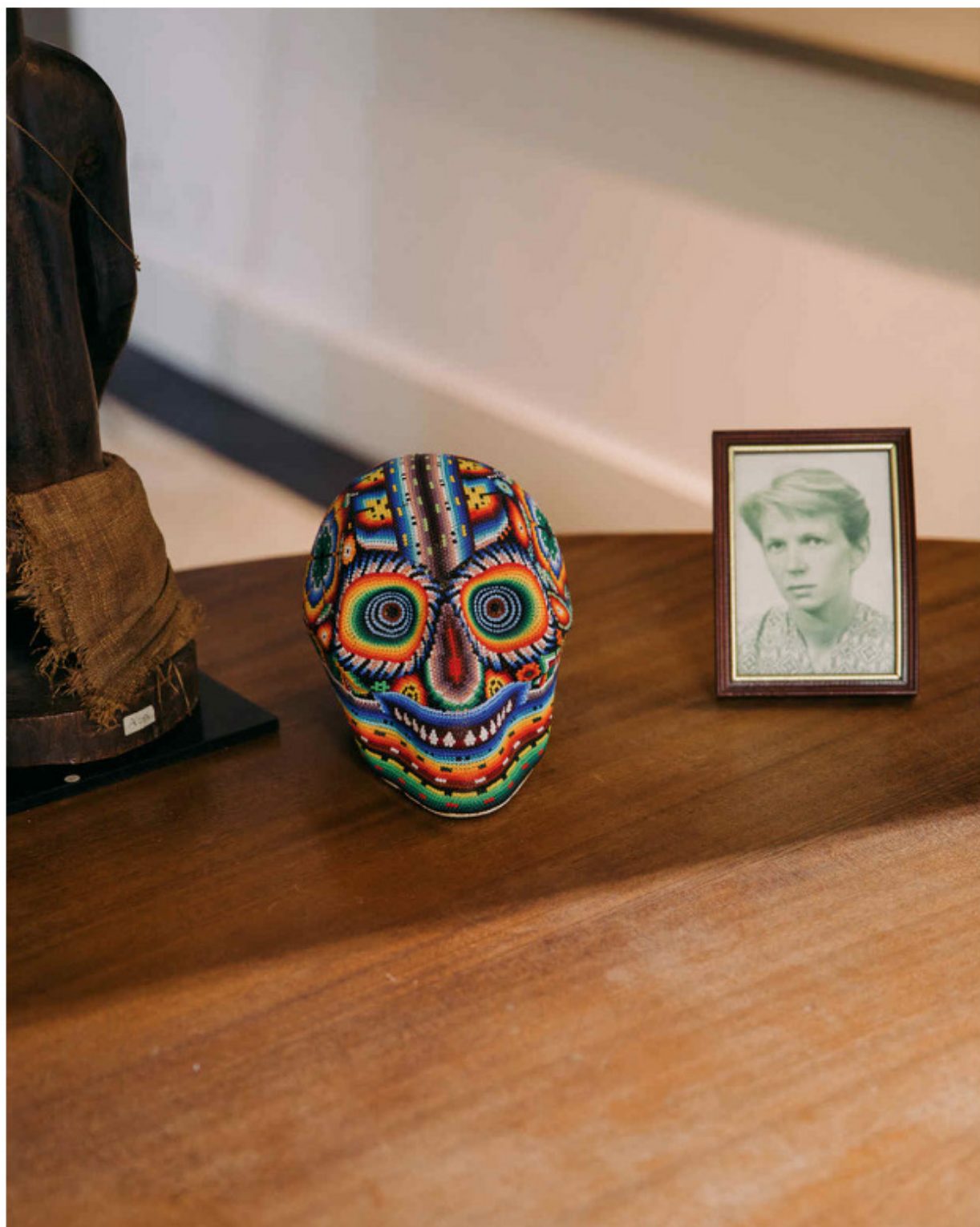


**I have a serious collection of shoes:** around 250 pairs. When I discover a style I like, I buy it in all different colours. It is a disease. The floor of my dressing room is covered with shoes. I used to buy Italian shoes, such as **Gucci's** – they are so easygoing – but I have since changed my style. I like something less sophisticated but still good quality.



Laffanour's Living with Charlotte Perriand book (on a Le Corbusier/Pierre Jeanneret tree trunk coffee table) | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

**An object I would never part with** is a table by **Charlotte Perriand** and **Jean Prouvé** that I bought in the late '80s. I've always lived with it. It was made for university libraries, so it has a light above it, but you can work on it, you can cook on it. It is both industrial and comfortable.



His tabletop ornaments | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans



**An unforgettable place I've travelled to in the past year** is Dakhla in Western Sahara, where I went kitesurfing. I love the way the desert meets the sea. It feels isolated from everything.



Head by Iwamoto Masakazu hangs on a wall of his home | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans

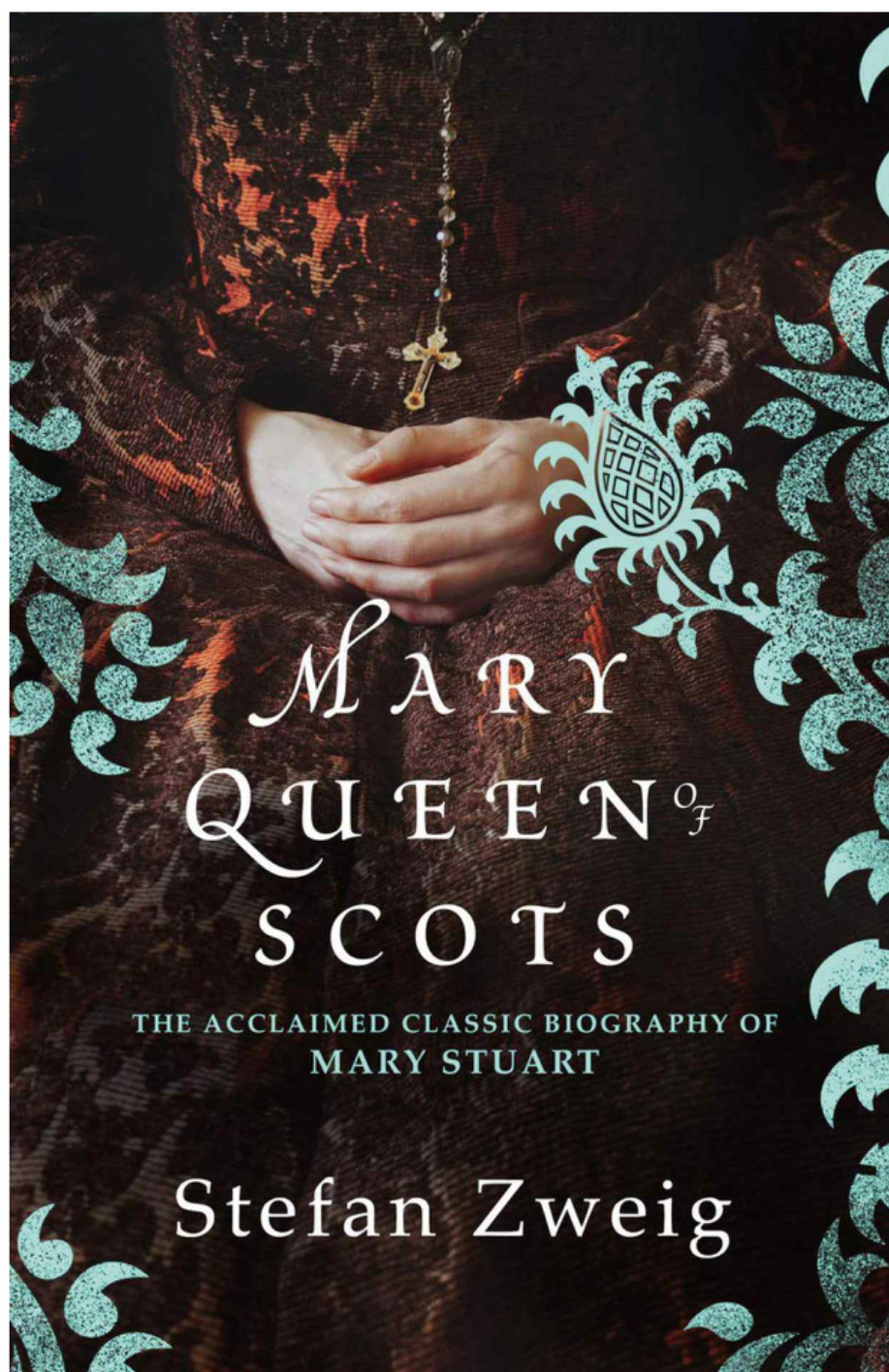
**The best souvenir I ever brought home** was a beautiful orange scarf I got in Dharamshala in **India**. I went there about 15 years ago and met the Dalai Lama.



Laffanour's Jean Prouvé armchair | Image: Alex Cretey Systemans



**Recently I've been reading with difficulty** – I had a hard time with it throughout the lockdown. I started reading a Murakami book but didn't finish it. I did read my book *Living with Charlotte Perriand*, which was published last year, as a way of staying in touch with the collectors and **interiors** I love. I didn't watch or listen to too much news either – I was very much absorbed by nature.



His favourite recent read

**The best book I've read in the past year** is *Mary Queen of Scots*, a biography by Stefan Zweig. I like reading fiction, but I am always very inspired by real-life stories, and am endlessly curious about how people lived in the past. This book is so insightful; it is as if Zweig knew all these people personally. The relationship between Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart was fascinating and complex.



Rōzu by Aesop



A recent “find” was the Hotel Delano in Miami, where I stay during Art Basel. It was designed by Philippe Starck, and it has his particular blend of design and comfort. Starck has a unique interpretation of our contemporary world, and in the future I think he will be popular with collectors. He is always looking for something inventive and different.



Jacques Lassaigne champagne

**If I could, I would collect** Italian Renaissance art. In particular, I love *The Duke and Duchess of Urbino* by Piero della Francesca and *The Procession in St Mark's Square* by Gentile Bellini.

**I had a memorable meal** at Atelier Joël Robuchon in **Paris**. My daughter took me there for my birthday, and we ate lobster pasta and drank a great bottle of burgundy.

**My style icon** is the actor John Cassavetes. He had a kind of fragility, as well as an elegant and intelligent sensibility. He looked so chic in a navy-blue **blazer**, light-blue trousers and white moccasins.

**My grooming staples** are products by Aesop. I am fond of its strong aromatic scents and I recently discovered its new fragrance, which pays homage to Charlotte Perriand, who has been so important in my own life. *Aesop Rōzu, £130 for 50ml EDP.*

**My favourite apps** are taxi apps, because they make me feel like I have my own personal driver.

**If I weren't doing what I do, I would have been** a **landscape designer**. People say I have a green thumb. I'm not sure I do, but I get very excited every time I go to a garden shop. When you're planting a **garden**, it's like making a **sculpture**. I love that relationship with nature.

**I can't wait to get back** to kitesurfing with my wife. We love going to the **Dominican Republic**, but I think that this summer we will have to cancel. Every year, Galerie Downtown takes part in Design Miami in Basel and TEFAF **New York** and as the two fairs have been postponed, it feels like something is missing. There is so much uncertainty about travel, but I am coming to terms with the reality that we have other priorities at the moment, and that the gallery will work differently in the future, working more online to communicate with **collectors** around the world.



# Circulation & Audience

## CIRCULATION <sup>1</sup>

**254,897** - Worldwide  
**97,279** - UK & ROI  
**76,880** - Cont. Europe  
**37,320** - USA  
**43,418** - Asia

## Monthly Reach for howtospendit.com <sup>2</sup>

**220,000** - Unique users  
**1,321,000** - Page views



The How To Spend It audience spends **33 minutes** on average reading the magazine and read it because it is unlike any other lifestyle magazine.<sup>3</sup>



How To Spend It readers have a combined net worth of **£1.4 trillion**.<sup>4</sup>



Our audience is exclusive and hard to reach as **1/3** do not engage with other magazines and websites.<sup>3</sup>



Our audience is highly engaged **100%** of our regular readership reads the FT Weekend 3-4 times a month.<sup>1</sup>

How To Spend It magazine has won National Colour Supplement Of The Year an unprecedented 15 times.

1. FT Global Commercial Update Q4 2018  
2. FT Internal Figures (Average Jan-Dec 2018)  
3. How to Spend It Reader Survey 2016  
4. FT Global Survey 2017