

DESIGN

Kris Van Assche's Lustrous Bronze Vessels Fashion a Sublimely Peaceful Forest in Paris

"Nectar Vessels Bronzes," on view at Laffanour | Galerie Downtown, evokes a mysterious thicket of tree trunks and vases imbued with an appreciation for "old-world beauty"

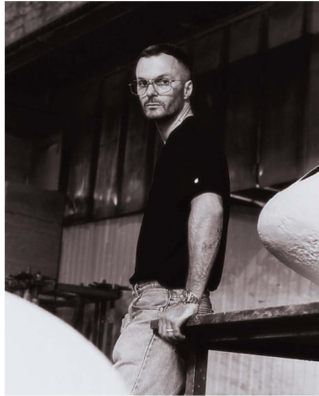
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"Nectar Vessels Bronzes."

PHOTO: IVAN EROFEEV



Kris van Assche.
PHOTO: JEREMY BARNIAUD

When Belgian fashion designer Kris van Assche takes a beat, the “in between” moments are quickly full of new ideas, new ways of creating, and a step towards art and design. Known to fashion insiders for his gigs as artistic director at Dior Homme and Berluti, the ever-curious van Assche is totally at ease talking about his just-opened exhibition of bronze vases, “Nectar Vessels Bronzes,” at Laffanour | Galerie Downtown in Paris. *Galerie* met up with the polymath creative to tour his show and learn about not fitting into boxes and the allure of what he calls old-world beauty.

That world is one of surprising and sublime beauty. “There are two different stories,” van Assche explains of the multicolor vessels, which are perched curiously on tree trunks. “I wanted to create a moment of quiet, of peace, in the city. With all the mirrors, it becomes a huge forest.” There’s also a trunk where visitors can sit and rest their feet in the leaves. He envisioned the scenography as a dazzling immersion into an imaginary forest of flower vases, but without the flowers.



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Learning about traditional bronze-making techniques—the vases were produced in partnership with the Fodor foundry in Port-sur-Saône—also proved to be a revelation. Each object is coated in a matte, powdery lacquer with contrasting yet complementary shades adorning the polished rose gold interiors, visible via gaping, oversize apertures.

“I love colors and the tension between colors,” says van Assche, who likens the presentation to a fashion show: beautifully paced, curated, and with a strong point of view. “The finishes create a tension between matte and shiny. For me, contrast always makes an idea stronger. Black is more interesting to me when the inside is pink. These are traditional shapes, but by giving them all the same square base, this is a contrast again.”



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Speaking about inspiration, van Assche notes a current obsession with he describes as old-world beauty. "We don't concentrate enough on beauty. Everything is too fast, too violent." The bronze vases, he notes, may not get the most likes on Instagram, but he refuses to let social media and immediacy culture derail his creative impulses. In a calm, soothing manner, he says, "If people don't take the time, they won't see." Wise words.

"Kris van Assche: Nectar Vessels Bronzes" is on view at Laffanour | Galerie Downtown (18 Rue de Seine, Paris) through July 19.