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Generous pieces, sinuous lines and luxurious materials: designer Paul Mathieu is exhibiting at Château La Coste

On the estate of Château La Coste, in Bouches-du-Rhône, the "Still Motion" exhibition presents the works created over the last ten years by the Lyonnais designer based in New York. A unique opportunity to see his work in France.

By Véronique Lorelle • Published April 25, 2019 at 11:33 • Updated April 25, 2019 at 11:44 am



Paul Mathieu in his studio in New York in February 2019, with the floor lamp The Grace for the gallery Ralph Pucci. ANTOINE BOOTZ

At Château La Coste, in the Bouches-du-Rhône, organic vines compete for a haven of greenery with the works of artists and architectural constructions. Visitors to this 200-hectare Provençal estate near Aix-en-Provence can admire buildings by Tadao Ando, Frank Gehry, Jean-Michel Wilmotte and Jean Nouvel, not to mention this spider by Louise Bourgeois, this giant mobile Alexander Calder or that purple glass cross by Jean-Michel Othoniel. It is also sometimes question of design, with this demountable house (1944) of Jean Prouvé, transformed into a luxury lodging by Richard Rogers

(2015), which sits not far from the five-star hotel-spa of the castle. And, in the pavilion of Renzo Piano, inaugurated in 2017, this exhibition "Still Motion" by Paul Mathieu, which gives the rare opportunity to see the work of this French designer established in the United States since 1985.

Generous pieces, sinuous lines and luxurious materials: Paul Mathieu offers sculptural objects before being functional. Mirror molded by hand, organic lamp clinging to the wall like an ivy, gold meridian Aria or small openwork table in marble, called "Jali", the name of the carved stone screens that the creator has discovered in India, including the Taj Mahal ... each piece that is born under Paul Mathieu's pencil is distinguished by its power and freedom from fashions. This exceptional furniture is available in polished or patinated bronze, in Murano glass and in leather, such as this amazing Reflet pendant, mixing cognac-colored skin and glass tassels, edited by the Italian Luxury Living Group.



Exhibition at Chateau La Coste with bronze or aluminum chairs from the Aria collection, and a Murano glass wall lamp named Madeleine, inspired by the chandelier created by Paul Mathieu for the Madeleine church in Aix-en-Provence. Sebastien Normand

"I discover my pieces in a new light in this minimalist space, dug in the ground and yet so bright, designed by Renzo Piano," notes Paul Mathieu, a man in his 50s with half-length hair and porthole glasses. *"These are all creations of the last ten years that I present for the first time in France, to reconnect with this country where we do not know me anymore.* The Chateau La Coste is both a suspended time (hence the title of the exhibition, "Still Motion") and a homecoming for this designer born in Lyon, and that André Putman, great Priestess of Design, had taken under her wing in the 1990s.

Moreover, in the entrance of the pavilion throne, posed on a stele, the little chair Ice which allowed their meeting, only piece "vintage" of the exhibition. Made in aluminum in 1987, for one of the last Salons des Artistes Décorateurs, in Paris, this seat caught the eye of Andrée Putman. Not only does the interior designer buy it, but she will publish the work of Paul Mathieu and his accomplice, who died in 1997, the American Michael Ray. In 1991, she launched on the market a dozen of their pieces, including the iconic chair Charles Foster Kane, edited by his house, Ecart International. Thanks to her, Paul Mathieu, a graduate of the National School of Fine Arts in Lyon, then the College of Arts and

Design in West Surrey, UK, and Michael Ray, fashion designer, enter the galleries international and are referenced by collectors.

Bucolic walk

The tandem, which founded his studio of interior architecture in Los Angeles, multiplies the collaborations with the gallerist Ralph Pucci, the houses of decoration Holly Hunt, Stephanie Odegard, Donghia ... Paul Mathieu reappears in France, in 2005, charged with the renewal of the liturgical furniture of the Baroque church of the Madeleine, dating from the seventeenth century, in Aix-en-Provence, and in which was baptized the painter Paul Cézanne. *"This work has been crucial in my creative journey. I had made a lot of wood furniture for Ralph Pucci, but for this command of the late Father Gontier, I wanted to use bronze for its weight, its resistance, its eternal appearance. By confronting me with this material, I discovered that I could go further in the delicacy of the lines and the swaying shapes that I adore."*



The Aria chaise longue in polished bronze is covered with a linen fabric. Claude Weber

Thus was born the Aria collection, a line of elegant and slender bronze furniture and lighting, proposed by the London gallery Willer and visible at Château La Coste. Or this suspension Murano glass lace, declined the famous chandelier flame of the Church of the Madeleine, itself was inspired Paul Mathieu by a fresco of the eighteenth century wall of the religious building.

To see the liturgical furniture and the processional cross, imagined by the creator, it will be necessary to wait until 2022, when the Aix church - which threatened to collapse - will reopen its doors to the public after renovation. The exhibition dedicated to Paul Mathieu at Château La Coste lasts until 22 May. The occasion is beautiful to decline bucolic walk in the middle of vineyards, olive trees and cypresses, with cultural and tasty discoveries. In the program design, architecture and art, but also visit the cellars with wine tasting. Or a gourmet break at the Villa La Coste restaurant, with seasonal cuisine using Louis Benech's garden produce, the famous landscape gardener recently responsible for restoring the grove at the Théâtre d'Eau in Versailles, and the Victor House garden. Hugo, in Guernsey.

☞ "Still Motion" by Paul Mathieu , until May 22, Château La Coste, 2750, Route de la Cride, 13610 Le Puy-Sainte-Réparate.
Such. : 04-42-61-92-92. Free entry. Chateau-la-coste.com