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légèretés manifestes

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françois
azambourg - designer

Born in 1963, François Azambourg dreamed of becoming a pilot to touch the clouds and ride the winds. But after studying at the School of Fine Arts in Caen and at the Ensaama Olivier de Serres school of art and design in Paris, he became a designer. For over thirty years, his work has been driven by the concept of lightness, as he explores unique manufacturing processes and the shaping of materials. There is no waste in his projects. Every component has its virtues, nothing is discarded. As much inventor as poet, he expresses simplicity and joie de vivre in his work, as well as a determination and rigor that make his design stand out in a world of its own.

To leave nothing but light traces, through a clear and simple aesthetic, this has been François Azambourg's journey from the beginning. This exhibition was conceived and designed in accordance with the designer's research on lightness. The production process of such an event was taken into account in order to reduce its impact on the environment. In consultation with the curators, François Azambourg sought to create a scenography with the least possible impact on the environment.



a. Chaise *Very Nice*, 2003 creation, 2022 refabrication. Plywood and silk pongee
 © Les Arts Décoratifs / Photo: Charlaïne Croguennec / Hom project
 b. Fauteuil en bois fendu, 2015. Split chestnut, wood soot, amber varnish.
 Paris, musée des Arts décoratifs © Les Arts Décoratifs / Photo: Jean Tholance
 c. Chaise *Pack* « loupée », 1999. Polyester fabric, polyurethane foam
 © Les Arts Décoratifs / Photo: Charlaïne Croguennec / Hom project
 d. Vase *Douglas* 153, 2020. CIAV edition. Blown and molded glass.

① The birth of ideas

François Azambourg's works would not be so light if he did not regularly draw on his childlike spirit. He returns to it again and again, like a refrain, building imaginary worlds as he did as a child. While childhood plays an important role in his creative process, aviation, painting, sculpture, and music are also what guide his explorations.

② Lightweight creation

Emptiness and fullness are recurring themes in François Azambourg's design, and finding a balance between them is how he achieves sobriety and lightness. But how can we make objects and furniture light and at the same time make them a supple and durable? The designer loves impossible equations and answers them with extraordinary proposals. This is how he developed his "light structures", inspired by the architecture of airplane wings, such as his *Very Nice* chair.

③ Questioning processes

François Azambourg likes to question and reinvent industrial processes. When mass production usually requires a mold to make a chair, he immediately wonders how it could be done without one. From the prototype, to the failed attempts, to the final result, he questions the entire creation process. While working on the polyurethane-foam-filled fabric chair *Pack*, he encountered what he calls 'slip-ups', that ultimately served as inspiration to rework the material and make it even lighter.

④ Surface as landscape

When François Azambourg turned to sheet metal, he imagined a new pattern, in this case made of metal rather than fabric. The first prototype was made of tin-welded steel and inflated with foam. But it expanded too much and took up all the space, putting undue pressure on the too-thin material. The seams tore, and the material wrinkled. The *Bugatti* chair was born. The sheet metal, deformed but now all the more rigid, composed a new landscape. The surface of the chair became a series of horizontal lines, hills and valleys.

⑤ Place as inspiration

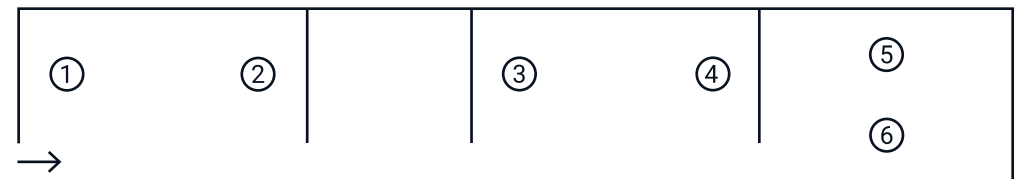
When he created the *Douglas* vase for the Centre International d'Art Verrier de Meisenthal (CIAV) in 2007, François Azambourg worked with the spirit of the place, the Vosges mountains, and one of its prominent tree species, the Douglas fir. Blown in a form made of this wood, the vase took on its grained pattern, like an imprint of the surrounding nature. The molten glass burned the walls of the mold, giving the next vase an interior imbued with the memory of the previous one. And so from one comes many, each one differentiated by the gradual burning of the mold.

⑥ The artisanal future

In 2015, as the designer in residence at the Villa Kujoyama, in Japan, he captured the spirit of the place as in Meisenthal. After visiting a carpenter's workshop in Kyoto, Azambourg became interested in the wood waste. Wood chips became his material of choice because they were both environmentally friendly and lightweight. By weaving, braiding and gluing, he made an extremely fragile material incredibly durable. He rethought assembly methods and came up with a new idea for split wood that did not involve waste.



Exhibition map



- ① Emergence of ideas
- ③ Questioning processes
- ⑤ Place as inspiration
- ② Lightweight creation
- ④ Surface as landscape
- ⑥ The artisanal future

Workshops

'Light as a feather!'

> 7-10 and 11-14 years

Inspired by objects and François Azambourg's approach to design, workshop participants are invited to imagine and create a light and delicate construction.

Guided tours

'légèretés manifestes.

François Azambourg, designer'

> Adults, 15 years and up

From the prototype to the object, this tour explores the world of designer François Azambourg and his creative process. It reveals the creator's endless quest for lightness and sobriety, as well as his sources of inspiration: music, aeronautics, the living world, childhood. It examines the objects on display to explore the designer's thoughts on materials, industry and craftsmanship.

Conferences

Find the program on madparis.fr.

Dates & reservations



Groups

Guided tours and workshops for schools, universities, associations, and companies can be arranged in French, German or English at convenient times.

To make a reservation, please contact us at +33 (0)1 44 55 57 66 or at reservation@madparis.fr.

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