



Miss Dior

EXPOSITION
GRAND PALAIS
DU 13 AU 25 NOVEMBRE 2013
ENTRÉE LIBRE DE 11H À 20H

esprit
Dior

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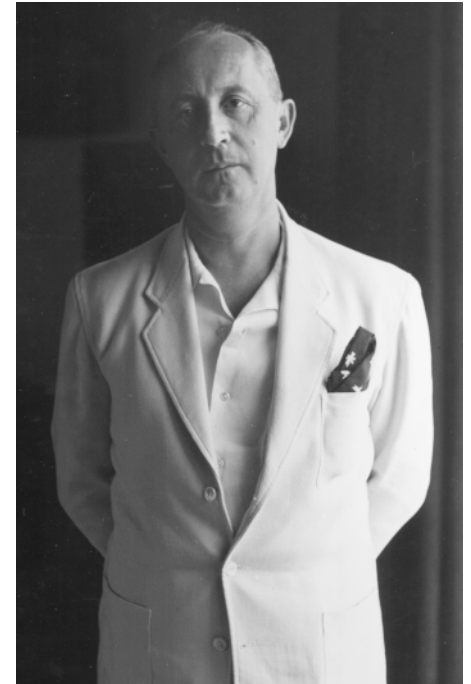
'MISS DIOR' EXHIBITION

Christian Dior has been inspiring the look and allure of the world's most elegant women since 1947. Dior is all about the magic of elegance and style, incredibly modern yet also timeless, inimitable and always avant-garde. This magic was brought to the world by one man, Christian Dior. A creative genius who graced the beauty of women, whose dream was to "make women more beautiful and happier". He built up a worldwide house and invented today's global luxury. His ability to weave magic was something he worked on for many years, absorbing the cutting-edge cultural and artistic influences of his day and age. He also fostered a passion for France and her history, especially the 18th century, Versailles and Marie-Antoinette, a character of considerable importance for his designer mind and talent.

Many other influences were to leave their mark from his childhood, for example nature, gardens and architecture. They all contributed to the spirit he created and which the House of Dior continues to symbolize today.

It is this magic that the Esprit Dior Miss Dior exhibition has set out to share, attempting to understand the genesis of an ethos, fostered by cultural, artistic and historical movements that marked and inspired Christian Dior throughout his life. To illustrate his passion for art, it also presents the works of fifteen contemporary women artists, who were inspired by his first fragrance Miss Dior.

Polly Apfelbaum, Lara Baladi, Carole Benzaken, Lee Bul, Karen Kilimnik, Carla Mattii, Maria Nepomuceno, Shirin Neshat, Tomoko Shioyasu, Alyson Shotz, Hannah Starkey, Joana Vasconcelos, Ionna Vautrin, Liang Yuanwei and Nika Zupanc each designed an original piece, installation, sculpture, video or photography, inspired by one of the ageless codes of this legendary yet still so contemporary fragrance. Through the eyes of artists, here is Miss Dior glorified by inspirations, cosmopolitan influences, colors and passions that make the fragrance a contemporary icon.



Left page: Miss Dior Eau de Toilette bottle and box with houndstooth motif © Laziz Hamani

Anonymous, *Christian Dior at Milly-la-Forêt*, circa 1954 © All rights reserved; Emile Savitry, *Christian Dior designing his new collection*, circa 1950 © Savitry / Rapho

CHRISTIAN DIOR AND ARTIST FRIENDS

Christian Dior lived through the exciting 1920s or “Années Folles”, attracted by a world of young people meeting up at venues like the “Boeuf sur le Toit”. He built a number of lasting friendships, like the “Groupe des Six”. His musician friend Henri Sauguet introduced him to Christian Bérard, and his brothers in arms were the likes of Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc and Jean Cocteau. In 1928, he teamed up with Jacques Bonjean then Pierre Colle to open his first art gallery, an exciting venture that fell foul to the economic crisis. They will exhibit artists such as Salvador Dali, Man Ray, Max Ernst, Max Jacob and Alberto Giacometti. The links between Christian Dior and artists grew stronger by the year, where elective affinities nurtured the same openness of mind and taste. In turning his back on art gallery ownership, Christian Dior worked on his fine eye for beauty. This is doubtless the forte of all great artists, the art of seizing the essence of a style. The rose garden – his favorite flower – and the gray cliffs of Granville in Normandy in the house of his childhood, were to be the sources of endless magnetic appeal seen with both gowns and perfumes.



Man Ray, *Pierre Colle Gallery exhibition*, June 1933 © Man Ray Trust / ADAGP, Paris 2013



Pablo Picasso in his workshop, 1920 © Hulton Archive / Getty Images



Left page: Bernard Buffet, *Portrait of Christian Dior*, 1954. © Bernard Buffet ADAGP / Paris 2013; Marc Chagall, guest book from the Château de la Colle Noire, 1957 © Marc Chagall ADAGP / Paris 2013



FROM GRANVILLE TO GRASSE, THE GARDENS & HOUSES OF DIOR

The world of Christian Dior equates perfectly with the power of attraction produced by gardens, the first of which was that of his childhood at the Villa Les Rhumbs in Granville. No other couturier has ever given quite such force and expressiveness to flowers, featured on his gowns in prints or embroideries like a language of new-found femininity. Flower shapes and corollas magnify the memories linked to three of his favorite places: Granville, Milly-la-Forêt and Grasse. Perched on the ridge of a Norman cliff overlooking the sea, the Villa Les Rhumbs always was the designer's undisputed paradise, laid out English style by his mother, Madeleine Dior. It remains one of the few early 20th century "artist gardens" that have been perfectly preserved.

In 1948, Christian Dior created a garden at his residence in Milly-la-Forêt, where he would go and spend every week-end. In 1951, he moved south to Montauroux, near Grasse, in a house where he spent the second part of his existence. "It is the house where I'll finally be able to live very close to my memories." In the sunshine of Provence, Christian Dior was able to do what he loved best, "swimming in the immortal and heady perfume of nature at her best".

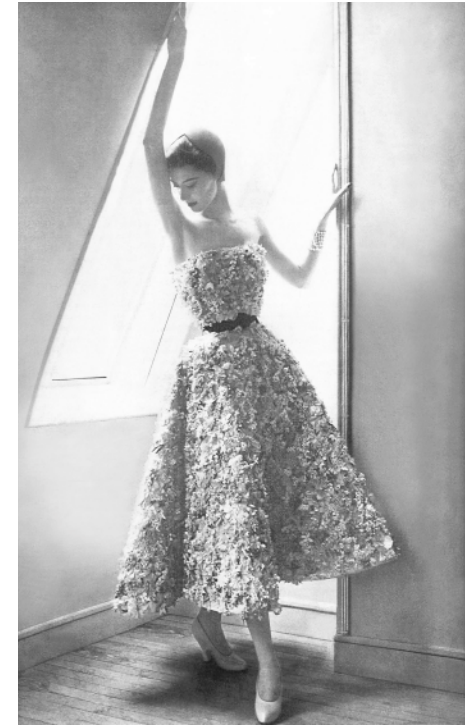


Anonymous, Christian Dior and his brother Raymond in the Les Rhumbs garden pergola at Granville, 1925 © All rights reserved

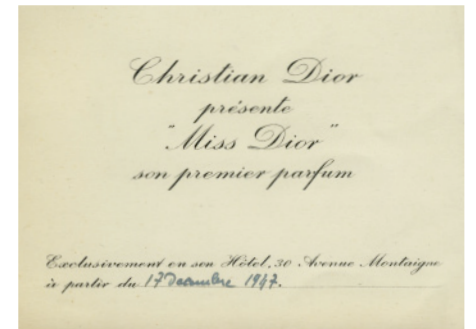
1947, THE FRAGRANCE OF LOVE, OF THE FIRST RUNWAY

"One day I was talking about perfumes with Serge Heftler Louiche [...]. For four years, we worked and researched [...]. And then Miss Dior was born [...]. Because you see, for a fragrance to last, it firstly has had to endure quite some time in the heart of the people who created it."

Miss Dior was the first fragrance created by Christian Dior. A fragrance of love, of a privileged dialogue between Couture and Perfumes, the immaterial expression of a style established for ever as a universal reference, an olfactive conversation prolonged by every creation the House has ever produced, from Diorissimo to J'adore to Poison. It is a talisman fragrance, as precious and as present as his love for Catherine, the designer's beloved sister. She was an extraordinary character, who joined the Resistance in 1941, was arrested by the Gestapo and deported on the last train to leave for Ravensbrück, from where she miraculously returned in May 1945. Miss Dior celebrates her beloved presence and, through her, a love for all women and the spirit of rebirth of which Paris would be the epicenter. Miss Dior glorifies the quintessence of the Dior spirit, the scent of which pervades the premises. On February 12, 1947, the day of the first runway and the launch of the New Look, Miss Dior was sprayed through the salons of N° 30, avenue Montaigne. "A runway is a celebration, the décor around it has to exude joy and fantasy. Even scents: spray more perfume!".



Pat English, Bar Suit show, February 12th 1947 © Photography by Pat English



Lillian Bassman, Miss Dior gown, Spring-Summer 1949 © Lillian Bassman, published in Harper's Bazaar, Hearst Corporation; Invitation card, Miss Dior December 17th 1947 © All rights reserved

THE “MISS” OF N° 30



At N° 30 avenue Montaigne, every single nuance of the spirit of Dior is inspired, enhanced, even embodied by the women who were and are the “Muses” of Christian Dior. One such woman is Mitzah Bricard, officially responsible for hats but blessed with unique creativity and a unique look. The Dior spirit would be nothing without the presence of all these models, who built the Dior “booth”. *“Renée is perhaps the one who best represents my ideal”, said Christian Dior. “Every gown on her looks great, there is such perfect equivalence between her proportions and the proportions I dream of.”* In the neo-Louis XVI salons, these models emerge like apparitions. There is France, the fresh-looking spicy blonde with her epic stature, Lucky the Brunette, the radiance of Lia with her face splashed with freckles, and the hieratic Alla with her Slav beauty. *“We don’t just walk up and down a runway; you also have to spin around in small salons a couple feet away from customers.”* remembered the girl whose singular temperament earned her the new name of Victoire from Christian Dior. Her perfume is none other than Miss Dior, which she still wears with the same undying affection.

Cecil Beaton, *Mitzah Bricard*, 1962 © Courtesy of the Cecil Beaton Studio Archive at Sotheby’s

MISS DIOR AND THE STARS

On February 12, 1947, the salons of N° 30 avenue Montaigne were alight with unparalleled glitz and glamour. *“The return to the art of giving pleasure”*, the manifesto the designer was celebrating, was graced by the presence of stars who were to become his ambassadors. Olivia de Havilland, Rita Hayworth and Vivien Leigh. The history of Christian Dior is inseparable from a life that linked him to movie stars. From Marlene Dietrich, customer and dear friend, to Ava Gardner, the divine idols of Hollywood were a part of this new-found magic. As an olfactive expression of enchantment, Miss Dior graced every appearance of movie stars. It will always be the absolute expression of a great classic, of a dream dimension synonymous with the infinite charm movie icons pass on to the rest of the world. The House of Dior was their showcase. Jane Russell, Liz Taylor, Ingrid Bergman, Lauren Bacall, Grace Kelly, Gina Lollobrigida Sophia Loren and princess of Wales Lady Diana. They were all there, dream faces today portrayed by Natalie Portman, Charlize Theron, Sharon Stone, Marion Cotillard, Jennifer Lawrence or Mélanie Laurent.



Miss Dior gowns worn by Elizabeth Taylor and Gina Lollobrigida, Spring-Summer 1961, Slim Look line © Elizabeth Taylor / Berkowitz & associates

ALL ABOUT A BOTTLE

In 1947, two years after the end of World War II, Paris was an open stage where everything was possible, like a playground for new-found joy and pleasure. With his childhood friend Serge Heftler-Louiche and perfumer Paul Vacher, Christian Dior created a fragrance that had love written all over it. He chose to go for a green “chypre” with a complex composition – bunches of neroli from Tunisia, Turkish and Bulgarian rose, patchouli from Indonesia. A real olfactive revolution which comes to life and fills out on the woman who wears it, put inside a geometric showcase sporting all the codes of the House of Dior, cut with the precision of a couture tailor. Engraved with a hound’s tooth motif favored by the designer, it was decorated with a little satin knot, still there today in the more contemporary version of silver-plated metal. As immutable and precious as ever.

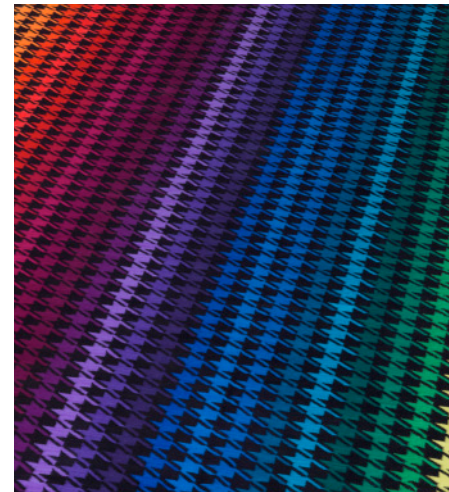


Miss Dior, bottle engraved with the houndstooth motif, circa 2005 © Christian Dior Parfums; Miss Dior, study sketch for the Miss Dior bottle. Christian Dior Parfums collection



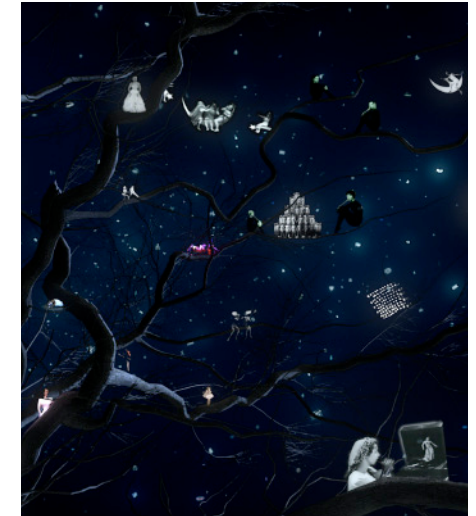
POLLY APFELBAUM

It was the hound's tooth pattern that inspired Polly Apfelbaum's "Rainbow Nirvana Houndstooth", a large-scale installation, fully hand-woven in Mexico using the traditional weaving techniques of Oaxaca: "I decided to create a work that reflected Dior's audacity and the brand's tradition of allying the new with the classical," says the American artist, born in 1955 in Pennsylvania. "Taking the classical motif of the hounds-tooth and one of my recently devised color systems from a work initiated in 2012, I blended the two systems to create something completely new for this project." With hand-dyed fabrics and no fewer than 32 vibrant saturated colors, this monumental work cross-references abstract painting and sculpture. The piece designed for the Miss Dior exhibition measures 5 x 6 meters and is a centerpiece of the artist's work. The winner of the prestigious Joseph H. Hazen Rome prize, Polly Apfelbaum's way of working with color is obsessive, almost physical. Here, hound's tooth, traditionally woven in wool, is interwoven with a system of raised-relief shades and produces a monumental floor installation. Horizontality is the high point of the artist's creations.



Polly Apfelbaum, *Rainbow Nirvana Houndstooth*, 2012 © Jason Mandella

LARA BALADI



Lara Baladi collects and assembles archives to create vivid fragmented works that combine front-page news with back-page anecdote. *Don't Touch Me Tomatoes & Chachacha*: this is the name of the artwork created for Miss Dior, a video installation which brings together all the interests of this artist, born in Beirut and now living in Cairo. Anna Pavlova, Alice Guy and Isadora Duncan are some of the female anarchists, activists or artists in presence, like fireflies darting around and lighting up this wonderful carousel inspired by a quote from Christian Dior: "Miss Dior was born from those evenings in Provence, lit up by fireflies, when green jasmine is like a counter-melody to the night and the earth". With Lara Baladi, the visitor embarks upon a journey, transported by unlikely references of the mind that are open to re-interpretation. "This work illustrates the contrast between the experience of Egyptian women fighting today and the struggle of women portrayed during the first half of the 20th century," explains the artist. "The period that Christian Dior described and captured in his Miss Dior fragrance."

Lara Baladi, *Don't Touch Me Tomatoes & Chachacha* pour Miss Dior, 2013 © Lara Baladi 2013 / Courtesy Lara Baladi & Urubu Films

'MISS DIOR' BY

CAROLE BENZAKEN

With Carole Benzaken, media – drawing, painting, photography, video – intertwine and overlap each other – drawing, painting, photography and video film. The winner of the Marcel Duchamp prize in 2004 and future exhibitor in 2014 at the Fine Arts museum in Nancy has designed a mysterious incandescent piece. *“I wanted to visually magnify a scent by working on its stratifications: the construction of a perfume, its archeological layers, its top notes, its middle and base. I thought of the notion of essence and quintessence. A perfumed architectural piece. It can leave its print, its mark, on a place. It leaves a sensation, in the order of a memorial trace that implies that a body has passed through there.”* The result is a majestic but fragile opalescent glass sculpture spanning one meter, surrounded by seven back-lit vats decorated with wooded landscaped drawings, like the idea of a liquid and immaterial fragrance that takes up and appropriates space. *“In Miss Dior, I don’t see woman, I see colors and landscapes. It is a relationship between skin and veins, heart and heart-beat, music, life.”*



Carole Benzaken, *Arborescence*, 2012 © Photo Guillaume Herbaut

LEE BUL



An unmissable figure from the Asian artistic scene, she created a dozen monumental sculptures in crystal and aluminum around the theme of history and memory. <the works of Lee Bul were for instance displayed in the Korean pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 1999. For this exhibition, she has taken a new look at the olfactory memory of Miss Dior, its light and modernity at the center of an installation designed as a manifesto, standing 5 meters high and weighing almost 500 kilos. A true visual experience in the shape of a crystal made from polystyrene and steel, covered entirely with Hanji traditional Korean paper. The visitor is invited to step inside this suspended cocoon for a private journey, calling on memory and self-reflection. *“Smell is the most closely related sense to memory”, says Lee Bul. “A sense that appeals to emotions more than to reason.”*

Lee Bul, *Cella*, 2012-2013 © Jeon Byung-cheol

KAREN KILIMNIK

Born in Philadelphia, Karen Kilimnik, her paintings and lyrical installations dramatize today’s consumer society and the world of images with a profound sense of romanticism. In 2006, her work was exhibited at the Paris Museum of Modern Art and she won acclaim for her now famous portraits of Leonardo DiCaprio as a prince charming (1998) and Paris Hilton as Marie Antoinette (2005). Inspired by the 18th century Drottningholm Theater in Sweden and the design sets for Alexei Ratmanský’s production of *Psyche*, but also fascinated by the Dior archives and first models, she has taken a new look at the follies and displays. The result is a lavish and romantic installation decorated with ribbons, clouds and flowers. Says the artist: *“when seeing this piece, I would like visitors to the exhibition to want to take a look through the archives of Dior.”*



Karen Kilimnik, *Sans titre (Folly for Dior)*, 2013 © Stefan Altenburger Photography, Zurich

CARLA MATTII



Under a venomous hybrid appearance, the works of Carla Mattii are about nature and reality, the world and its virtual dimension. This young artist, born in the Marches region of Italy and now living in Milan, was the winner of the *“Premio internazionale Giovane scultura”* award from the Fondazione Francesco Messina. She uses both new technologies and traditional sculpture techniques, aptly reflected by her work *“Type Garden #5”*, designed for the Miss Dior exhibition. *“I chose to interpret the theme of Dior’s beloved rose in my own poetical way.”* Scanned then recomposed and computer printed in 3-D, the legendary Miss Dior rose is transformed into a sculpted rose garden full of original flowers taken from a blend of five different rose varieties - the Dog Rose (*rosa canina*), Gallic Rose, *Rosa Foetida*, Musk Rose and *Rosa Rugosa* (also known as Japanese Rose). *“These hybridizations are a reflection of man intervening with nature, as the rose is the perfect example of a flower created by human hands [...] The arbitrary combinations of natural elements are metaphorically speaking the fusion between technology and nature, and consequently the denaturing that ensues.”*

Carla Mattii, *Type Garden #5* © Marco Bianucci

MARIA NEPOMUCENO



Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1976, Maria Nepomuceno transcends the Miss Dior bottle to create an organic and sensual installation using her favorite materials: *“lately my work has been a way to question the physical and architectural limits of shapes and spaces. I chose to bring the bottle of Miss Dior perfume, which for me is an object related to elegance and delicacy; to my own universe. I transformed the shape of the bottle into an object made of clay; from which tentacles and roots protrude, but also crevices with emerging organic elements.”* Spirals of nylon rope, straw and woven pearls are rolled up in an endless process, like a living sculpture, moving matter that bonds everyday life, cosmology and genetics.

Maria Nepomuceno, *Delilah*, 2012-2013 © Pepe Schettino

SHIRIN NESHAT

True to her absolute principles, Shirin Neshat chose to film Natalie Portman, the “face” for Miss Dior, in a magnificent video film that is a model of intimist and artless beauty. Filmed by Shirin Neshat, an Iranian living in New York, the radiant actress is the heroine of a dark dream who then recovers the force of life. *“With Natalie Portman, you have to return to what is essential”*, explained the winner of the Golden Lion at the 48th Venice Biennale. *“She is so beautiful, she has already been portrayed in every glamorous way. You have to find the balance between the interior and exterior of a person. With a woman like Natalie, you have to highlight her beauty in another way: Not only her body, her face and her eyes, but also her inner beauty.”*



Shirin Neshat, *Illusions and Mirrors*, 2013 © Shirin Neshat, Courtesy Shirin Neshat et Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels

TOMOKO SHIOYASU



Specializing in sculpture at the University of Kyoto, Tomoko Shioyasu tirelessly uses soldering irons to meticulously cut out huge paper tapestries. Born in Osaka, the artist turns them into large totally hand-made tableaux that conjure up the most extraordinary creations of nature, like clouds or water. *“For me, Dior is another world of admiration”*, she admits. Her *“Spiral Rose”* was thus inspired by the legendary rose of Miss Dior, a fragile and monumental work of synthetic paper formed into a swirl of petals. *“The beautiful shape and streamlining by nature such as spiral and eddy is one of the wellsprings of my creativity. The layers of rose petal to the center in spirals inspired me. I found the beautiful movement of nature inside a rose.”*

Tomoko Shioyasu, *Spiral Rose*, 2012 © Nobutada OMOTE/SANDWICH

ALYSON SHOTZ

For New Yorker Alyson Shotz, the rose theme, a flower dear to Christian Dior, also inspired her sculpture *“Infinite Rose”* with its reflections of steel and dichroic film, which changes color and shape depending on the movement of light, and that of the observer. A piece designed by computer using digital grids before being patiently assembled by hand by this artist who specializes in working with light, and who had one of her piece exhibited at the Guggenheim: *“I love that idea of there being no surface, no inside or outside. Surface is structure, and vice versa. These shapes are created by assembling a large whole, piece by piece. The observer visually combines all the little parts and when he walks around the sculpture, his eyes and brain assemble these shapes in different ways.”* A piece that multiplies curves and surfaces to explore space and its perception, between absence and emptiness.



Alyson Shotz, *Infinite Rose*, 2013 © Jean-Christian Bourcart

HANNAH STARKEY



Hannah Starkey likes to photograph women in a theatrical style. Staged on the street or at the terrace of a café, her subjects are often loners prone to inner thoughts and emotions. The young artist, born in Belfast, whose work has just been exhibited at the Tanya Bonakdar gallery in New York, was inspired by the knot and the story of Catherine Dior, Dior's beloved sister and inspiration for Miss Dior. The artist built a symbolic photographic image paying tribute to the life of resistance of Catherine Dior during World War II. "My challenge was to honor values and Catherine's story in the most eloquent and poetic way possible. I would like for the photo to procure tactile but also gut emotions and reactions. The floating ribbon is a path towards the story of Catherine and its signification." This picture lies between abstraction and roundness, strength and lightness. For the Miss Dior exhibition, the work is a take on lucky charm ribbon and absolute freedom.

Hannah Starkey, *Bow*, 2013 © Hannah Starkey / Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

JOANA VASCONCELOS

Joana Vasconcelos has imagined a carbon fiber knot some 3 meters wide adorned with almost 2,000 perfume bottles and LED lights for the Miss Dior exhibition. Inside, LEDs light up and change from pink to red. "I thought it might be interesting to play upon the title of *J'Adore* (the other iconic fragrance of Maison Dior) by infusing my own Miss Dior bow with its meaning. I wanted to convey both the childish innocence and passionate audacity of Miss Dior via one of the most vital strategies in my work: the use of everyday materials in a completely unexpected way." Produced entirely in her Lisbon studios, this joyous and exuberant creation is in the image of her multi-colored pieces that were set up in the Château de Versailles in 2012: "I enjoyed being able to merge with the Miss Dior spirit, and its combination of extremes, that engage the world of couture and playfulness, architectural rigor and cotton candy lightness."



Joana Vasconcelos, *J'Adore Miss Dior*, 2013 © ND Imagem Unidade Infinita Projectos

IONNA VAUTRIN



After working with George J. Sowden (co-founder of the Memphis Group) in Italy and the twosome of Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec in France, Ionna Vautrin is the new champion of organic color design. Winner of the Paris Grand Prix de Création in 2010, she designs objects the way she might tell stories and secrets, bordering on the lyrical. For the Miss Dior exhibition, she has designed a piece that is 3 meters in diameter, somewhere between design and couture, inspired by the glove theme: "This vast shelter skirt is based on a simple structure composed of a podium and four white-lacquered wooden posts. The four posts support a huge crinoline that deploys an infinitesimal accumulation of gloves. They cover the structure with an amazing plumage made up of 864 pink gloves, 592 white gloves and 504 black gloves, in the colors of the Miss Dior fragrance." It invites visitors to stroll beneath the rosette, imagined like a place of sharing and serenity.

Ionna Vautrin, *Gloriette*, 2013 © Michel Giesbrecht

LIANG YUANWEI

"Dior is the first international fashion brand I came to know," explained Liang Yuanwei, painter and designer artist who represented China at the Venice Biennale in 2011. "For me, it is the perfect fusion between the notion of fashion and a feeling of eternity. The first impression it gave me was the curvy shape of the Dior dress."

Born in 1977, Liang Yuanwei has always painted moving, textured flowers composed of several layers of superimposed colors in raised relief. Here, a gown from the Haute-Couture collection in 1949 reminded him of a poem by Rilke, *All Who Seek You*. "I painted flowers fading into the dust, to present the feeling of the moment turning to the eternal. It was a happy experience. An unexpected but wonderful encounter of the mentality behind my art and that of Dior."



Liang Yuanwei, *In to the dust*, 2012 © Surface

NIKA ZUPANC

Recognized the world over for her objects midway between fantasy and narration, the Slovenian designer Nika Zupanc explores femininity from every angle with a series of pieces and collaborations highlighting sensuality and seduction. *"Here, pink recalls the color of flesh, life, skin texture, its absolutely feminine charm..."* She has designed this *"Room of One's Own"*, a fairy-tale pavilion dedicated to women and their aspirations, inspired directly by Miss Dior fragrance and a pamphlet by Virginia Woolf: *"Starting out with a vision of the idealized and somewhat conservative Dior woman, I wanted to shake up her image. I didn't want to distort it, I just set out to highlight the strengths of her unique, singular character."*



Nika Zupanc, *Room of one's own*, 2013 © Sasa Hess

PRactical INFORMATION

VISITOR ENTRANCE

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Rotonde Alexandre III Entrance,
Angle avenue Winston Churchill, Cours la Reine
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From 13 November to 25 November 2013

Free entrance from 11am to 8pm

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