MAISON INTÈGRE'S DEBUT COLLECTION OF BRONZE WORKS REVIVES THE LOST WAX TECHNIQUE OF WEST AFRICA.

VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR JUNE 2, 2022 FEATURED, PRODUCT DESIGN

Mask Sconce by Maison Intègre. Photo: Ambre Jarno.

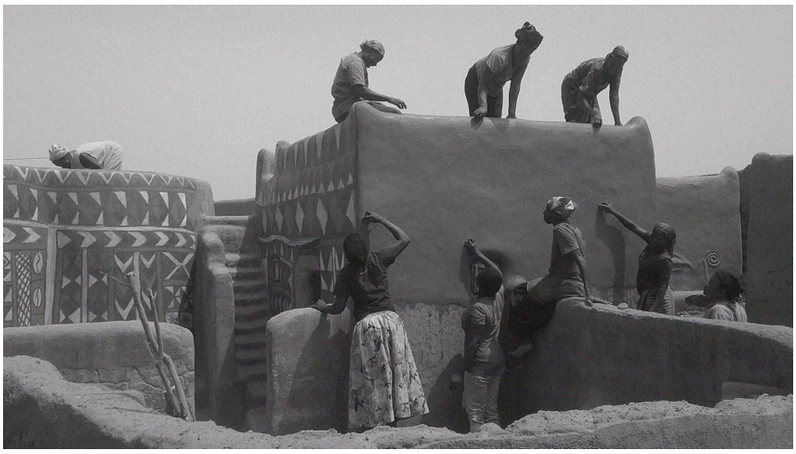
Maison Intègre's workshop in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Photo: Sophie Garcia.

Mask Sconces. Photos: Alexis Raimbault.

Ouagadougou workshop. Photo: Sophie Garcia.

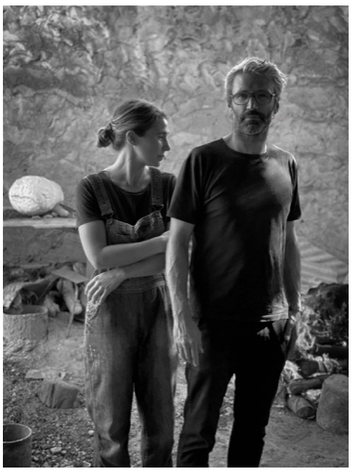
Gleaming bronze finishes, gentle curves and a bygone quality that whispers of ancient traditions—**Maison Intègre**'s maiden collection could easily belong in a museum. The Burkina Faso-based company's limited-edition bronze work line—designed by founder Ambre Jarno in collaboration with French designer **Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance**, and handcrafted by West **African** master artisans—revives the country's lost wax bronze technique. And now, for the first time, design lovers have a chance to get up close and personal at NYCxDesign 2022, by swinging by the Les Ateliers Courbets in New York until July 26.

Having visited Africa frequently as a child, and having lived and worked in Burkina Faso from 2012 to 2014, the continent and its people have always been special for Ambre. She had forged deep and meaningful relationships with the local craft community and antique dealers. So after five years of working with local craftspeople—*"from wax makers to welders"*—she decided to formalise a workspace that could provide long-term employment to bronzesmiths and keep their craft alive. She christened it Maison Intègre.

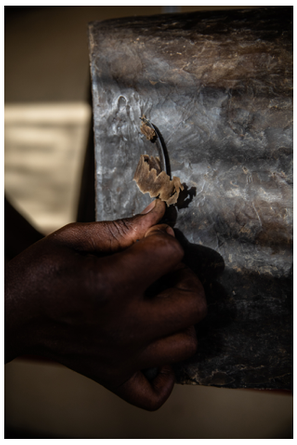


Cour Royale de Tiébélé at Burkina Faso. Photo: Nathalie Jacquault.

Ouagadougou workshop. Photo: Sophie Garcia.



Ambre Jarno and Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance. Photo: Sophie Garcia.



Making scenes from Maison Intègre's workshop. Photos: Sophie Garcia.

Maison Intègre's workshop. Photos: Sophie Garcia.

Then, in 2018, she met Noé. And after discovering that they shared a similar flair for design (Noé, on his part, had spent two years travelling through Burkina Faso, learning about the vernacular architecture and craft techniques of the region), one thing was clear—a collaboration was written in the stars. And so, she invited him to journey with her through the country, to peel back its layers and experience its native crafts.

"I showed him images of the quintessential shapes found in Tiebélé, a traditional Kassena village located in the south of Burkina Faso, a red zone impossible to visit nowadays but which I had had a chance to discover a few years earlier," recalls Ambre. These images, as well as other insights that the two exchanged, served as a springboard for the collection.

Y Lamp. Photo: Alexis Raimbault.

Retro Lamp. Photo: Alexis Raimbault.

Kassena Low, Side & Plain Table. Photo: Alexis Raimbault.

Maison Intègre's pieces are handmade in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital, by fifteen talented artisans. *"Around them, several small teams work on the various manufacturing steps: creating the moulds, extracting the wax, pouring the molten bronze, cleaning, welding and finishing. The pieces are born out of a desire to celebrate and support the craft heritage of West Africa, in particular, the lost wax bronze technique, which is a strong tradition in Burkina Faso. Remaining mindful of the importance of the legacy behind such crafts, Maison Intègre explores applications with bronze as a living, organic material that can be moulded into new forms to expand its recognition beyond the physical borders of the country,"* says Ambre.

With its US debut, Maison Intègre aims at spotlighting the artisans working behind the scenes—those whose lives and livelihoods are deep-rooted in the craft. *"The collection includes seven sculptural pieces—the Y Lamp, the Kassena Low Table, the Side Table & Plain Table, the Masks Sconces, the Retro Lamp, and the Palabre Chair,"* shares Ambre.

Denis the bronzer with Y Lamp in Maison Intègre's workshop in Ouagadougou.

"Living in Burkina Faso, there is a constant connection to crafts every day—you have to use what you have around you to produce and create. Everything is reused, repaired and transformed with grace and without compromise to function. Immersed in this way of life, I have developed a passion for collecting and learning more about traditional techniques, as well as the rich history of the ethnic groups that I have heard about. From the Senufo and Mossi arts to the different West African cultures, I know of a new world of symbols, objects and stories and have a desire to communicate them more widely," she signs off.