DESIGNER OF THE DAY

Designer of the Day: Noé Duchaufour- Lawrance

A prolific talent who has proven his prowess across styles and disciplines, Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance approaches design with the sensibility to respect nature by experimenting with time-honored materials and simply creating pieces that last. The French-born multihyphenate splits his time between Lisbon and Paris and has attracted major brand collaborations from Saint-Louis, Montblanc, and Hermès, but none more important than with Maison Intègre founder Ambre Jarno, which has yielded an artful array of bronze and cork furnishings that speak to his fascination with handicraft traditions.

BY RYAN WADDOUPS
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Here, we ask designers to take a selfie and give us an inside look at their life.

Age: 48

Occupation: Designer.

Instagram: @noeduchaufourlawrance

Hometown: Lisbon.

Studio location: Lisbon and Paris.

Describe what you make: I'm a furniture designer who tries to link the objects with a context.

Burnt Cork table and chairs. Photography by Nuno Sousa Dias

The most important thing you've designed to date: Every project is the most important when you're working on it with sincerity and engagement. But when you take a bit of distance with what you do, design is not so important. So it's hard to answer with such distance. I had important moments in my work like designing the egg-shaped pods of the restrooms at London's Sketch restaurant, the Corvo chair for Bernhardt Design, the Manta desk for Ceccotti Collezioni, Ligne Roset's Ottoman sofa for a hotel that was never built but allowed me to meet one of my best friends… and more recently my "Made in Situ" project in Portugal that changed my life as my last work for Maison Intègre.

Describe the problem your work solves: It's a bit provocative to say, but most of the designs don't solve any problem. Since the beginning of the industrial era, we're generating more needs than answering them. Most of the time, an answer generates another problem. I sincerely believe that we can recreate a link between people and the environment through an emotional and contextualized approach. My work aims to create such links. The hardest thing in design is to generate positive factors without negative impacts. Production generally has a negative impact, but when it makes sense, and when we can interrogate ourselves to our relation with what's around us through an object, then the impact is positive.

Describe the project you are working on now: I'm working on several projects. The next collection for Made In Situ, called bronze and beeswax, is a set of bronze candleholders and beeswax candles that questions our relationship to time. A limited-edition piano for an amazing manufacturer, and some limited-edition pieces with master craftsmen in France. I'm also continuing projects with maisons like Saint-Louis crystal or Bernhardt Design, for which I'm designing a four hands project for the first time.

A new or forthcoming project we should know about: We're showing the first two collections of Made in Situ —Barro Negro and Burnt Cork—from Sept. 8 to Oct. 9 in the beautiful Demisch Danant gallery in New York. At the same time, we're presenting a selection of more than 50 limited-edition pieces designed for private clients during the last five years in our studio in Paris.

Barro Negro collection. Photography by Clément Chevelt

What you absolutely must have in your studio: A good playlist, my Parker lead pencil, and a Moleskine sketchbook. These are the basics, but I created one of my dreams in my Lisbon studio: a workshop where I can work by hand. When the sketchbook becomes too narrow of a space, I jump in my workshop! I also have a great team in my Paris and Lisbon studio without whom nothing would be possible!

What you do when you're not working: I always feel that work is in the air, but I have kids that take a lot of space in my life, and oblige me to disconnect. My other main occupation is strapless kitesurfing. As soon as the wind blows in Lisbon, I try to jump on the water!

Sources of creative envy: My father, who I didn't know but who had a short life as a sculptor.

The distraction you want to eliminate: All the emails that I don't have time to answer to, and social media that seems necessary to show our work but makes us waste so much time.

Azujelos. Photography by Clément Chevelt

Concrete or marble? Marble, a natural material that comes from billions of years ago even though we have to take care of massive extraction!

High-rise or townhouse? Townhouse. One floor, as horizontal as possible…

Remember or forget? Forget what you don't have to remember.

Aliens or ghosts? Ghosts are our best friends.

Dark or light? You can create the light you want in the dark, but I prefer natural light.