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Esprit Porcelaine Exhibition
«Contemporary art porcelain»
Design Museum Gent (Belgium)
July 9 to October 16, 2011



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Foreword

Immersed in a two-hundred-year-old tradition, ceramic artists in and around Limoges cannot fail to be inspired by an area where making porcelain is an art in its own right, refreshed by continuous advances in technology or techniques.

Porcelain is an exciting material for producing and designing objects because the casting process lends itself so perfectly to duplication. Long-established for its fine tableware, Limoges porcelain has also found its place in other fields such as lighting, where translucency can be exploited to magical effect, in architecture as long-lasting waterproof cladding, and in kitchenware where added alumina to porcelain clay produces strong, fireproof oven dishes and utensils.

Over the past 25 years, Esprit Porcelaine's designers have pushed materials and skills to their limits, pursuing the goal of "making contemporary products that respect a tradition of quality and expertise specific to porcelain". Porcelain has been combined with glass, enamel, wood and metal and produced using a variety of experimental manufacturing processes. White, translucent, hard and pure... porcelain contains its own fascinating alchemy of elements that fire the imagination of designers. For industry to benefit, manufacturers and designers must pool their skills and promote creativity if they are to remain relevant in the modern world. One of the tasks undertaken by Esprit Porcelaine has always been to facilitate this cooperation.

The design group from its beginnings has also regularly shown in exhibitions outside France, actively seeking the spiritual nourishment of encounters and exchanges with other cultures or traditions.

Here in the prestigious surroundings of the Design Museum Gent, we are delighted to present a wide range of works, many made especially for the occasion, on a commonly agreed theme of the "feast". The show brings together some very different artists and designers, but all are united in their singular passion for porcelain.

Christian COUTY
Chairman of Esprit Porcelaine

Presentation

ESPRIT PORCELAIN is the name of a collective of ceramicists based mostly in and around Limoges, France.

The group includes designers, craft workers, decorators and artists all united in their fascination with porcelain and whose individual talents combine to provide a broad palette of products, rich in different styles and approaches.

Harnessing the industrial potential of Limoges manufacturers, Esprit Porcelaine also helps create a bridge between creative artists and factories, acting as a catalyst for innovative lines of products and quality in design as well as an impetus in the field of contemporary tableware. Certain projects involve remarkable technical mastery, marrying porcelain with glass, wood, enamels on copper and a range of different ceramic types. Others offer fresh interpretations of more traditional decorative techniques such as low- or high-fire colours and glazes or pigmented clays.

Whether practical or decorative, these objects reflect the passions of a pool of skilled creators in pursuit of quality and innovation in Limoges porcelain.

Previous Exhibitions

Since 1985, Esprit Porcelaine has exhibited in many galleries and trade fairs worldwide.

Art and Design Exhibitions

France:

- Paris, *Maison du Limousin* ; Perpignan, *Ecole des beaux-arts* ; Limoges, *Musée National Adrien-Dubouché*, *Opéra-Théâtre*, *Bibliothèque Francophone Multimédia*...

Other Countries:

- Italy: Vigevano, *Palazzo Roncalli*; Torgiano, *Lungarotti Foundation*; Russia, *Museo dell'Arredo*; Cervia, *Magazzino del Sale*...
- Germany: Karlsruhe *Gallery*
- Portugal: Lisbon, *French-Portuguese Institute*
- Wales: Cardiff, *Howard Gardens Gallery* ;
- England: Stoke-on-Trent, *Flaxman Gallery*
- Spain: La Bisbal, *Ceramic Museum*; *Castel Palau*
- USA: New York & Los Angeles, *French Consulates*

Trade Fairs

France:

- Paris, *Maison et Objet*, *Horse Show*, *Chocolate Show*...
- Limoges, *Bellissimo*

Other Countries:

- Italy: Bologna, *Arte Fiera*; Milan, *Macef*; Verona, *Abitare il Tempo*; Florence, *Craft*; Perugia, *Eurochocolate*

Gent Museum Exhibition

The works on show are organised by theme, reflecting some of the areas in which our designers are currently involved. Matthew Bussereau, member of Esprit Porcelaine, designed and curated the exhibition.

«Replicas»

Bowls and cups from twelve production series are presented here in multiples of 9, 16 or 25 pieces. Shown in separate displays, each group includes one piece that differs from the others in colour or glaze, hinting at potential transformations of the original model.

«Incandescence»

Translucent fine porcelain with its sculpted surfaces and subtle combinations of textures naturally lends itself to lamps and lighting appliances. Our collection ranges from table lamps to pendants and ceiling fixtures displayed here with the utmost simplicity in this exclusive section dedicated to light.

«Domestic Interiors»

Porcelain is not restricted just to traditional tableware. Practical and decorative objects shown here naturally contribute to stylish living throughout the home.

«Out-of-the-Blue»

Beyond the bounds of common ceramic practice, this display illustrates some of the more unusual applications and adaptations members of Esprit Porcelaine have produced. Included, for example, are outsized chandeliers, furniture made of porcelain, ceramic room dividers and even excursions into the realm of high fashion.

«Chocolate for Breakfast»

The unique collection of chocolate pots shown here, reflects our group's personal responses to the pleasurable ritual of making and drinking hot chocolate. Some of the models evoke nostalgic childhood memories whilst others approach the subject from a humorous angle or purely on functional terms. The result is a varied range of attractive chocolate pots, offering a contemporary take on preparing and serving cocoa for breakfast, or indeed any other time of day !

“Le Festin” (The Feast)

The centrepiece of the exhibition is an animated table commissioned from the artist Fabrice Cotinat in collaboration with Esprit Porcelaine ceramicists.

All the pieces have been made exclusively for this occasion in Gent, then set in motion as part of an 8 meter-long display, a mechanical ballet orchestrated by the artist and designed as a feast for eyes... and ears.

■ *The Designers*

■ *Joao Alcatrao*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

His pieces employ curves and clean-cut ridges to represent the innate contradictions of porcelain; its characteristic fragility and pure whiteness yet unyielding hardness to the touch. He often engraves the surface of his works, modulating the way they reflect light, playing with the effects of translucency. In short, Joao hopes to communicate his own pleasure in playful creation as he gleefully overcomes all the technical challenges he sets himself.



■ *Marion Bontemps*

Lives and works in Paris.

“Puzzle” was inspired by Lebanese culinary traditions and in particular *mezze*, a meal made up of many side dishes where guests freely help themselves and can have a mouthful of everything.

Making pieces of a puzzle fit together presents a major technical challenge due to the uneven reduction in size of porcelain during firing in the kiln. However the final milky transparency and elegance of the pieces made the effort worthwhile.



■ *Matthieu Bussereau*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Pure and fragile, porcelain fascinates for its technical and creative potential. Matthieu enjoys making double-walled vessels because of the way they undermine perceptions. For example, a large-volume piece made of porcelain may appear imposing but is in fact quite light, the surprise, once discovered, serving only to reinforce our perception of the object's fragility and subtlety. He also often tries to communicate this effect through photography.



■ *Corinne Ché*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Inspiration often comes from being aware of her environment and feelings, whether a detail found in Nature, a specific atmosphere or a fleeting thought. For her, form speaks to us as eloquently as any words, so creating pieces is all about sharing and exchange. She makes pieces that ultimately express individual voices and counteract society's standardisation. Perhaps in the process they also convey a little poetry and joy.



■ *Christian Couty*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

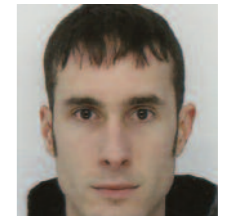
Christian Couty sees porcelain as a thoroughly contemporary material enabling him to produce a wide variety of objects, from porcelain dolls and trophies to frescoes, ornamental fountains and architectural elements. His ceramic dress design for fashion shows illustrate perfectly how imagination and observation can open up whole new fields of applications for porcelain, how innovative forms can be generated by thinking beyond established.



■ *Guillaume Damry*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

The current series shown here derives from research into notions of modularity. The objects are constructed from repeated elements fitted together to make a whole yet aesthetically, their final appearance negates or deconstructs any image we might have of their original mould or model. His aim in applying this principle is to make objects that are ultimately utilitarian.



■ *Emilie Flöge*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Attracted by the translucency, whiteness and smooth glossiness of porcelain glaze, Émilie approaches her material as if exploring an infinite universe full of hidden spaces... She may adopt forms that are very different in character but a poetic streak runs through all her pieces giving voice to her own expression. Porcelain, she says, with its technical difficulties that must be overcome, is like a mysterious wild animal that is hard to tame but all the more beautiful and interesting for that.



■ *Mette Galatius*

Danish, foot-loose and free, currently living in the region of Poitiers. Porcelain is a noble material. Even when provoked, it remains elegant. It offers a vast playground to let loose your imagination and gallop away on the back of creativity. It has quirks and a character all its own... Technically it has to be tamed, artistically it needs to be seduced.



■ *Catherine Hervé*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Inspired by Nature, Catherine Hervé is often drawn towards organic forms and extreme delicacy. Her current work melds wood with porcelain, seeking harmony between wood grain and sculpted ceramic surface. This she hopes to develop by playing with thickness and light to suggest fragility. Her relationship with porcelain is physical, exploring tactile sensations, the effects of firing, diaphanous whiteness, the sense of expectation waiting for pieces to come out of the kiln.



■ *Delphine Jobard*

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Plants, natural forms and the effects of texture can all be sources of inspiration. Delphine aims to convey emotion, striving to create novel pieces that play with the characteristics of porcelain, working with surface effects through careful choice of brilliant glaze or matte biscuit finishes.



■ Gilles Méraud

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

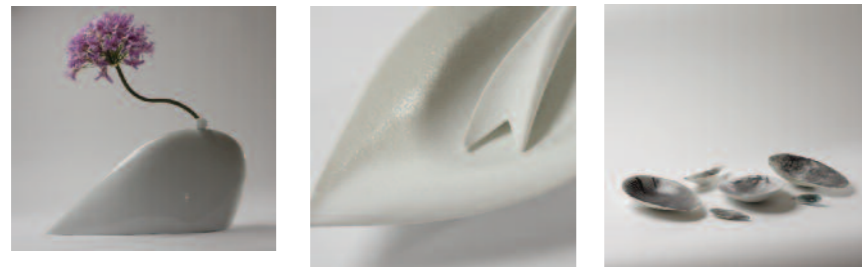
Gilles Méraud draws inspiration from the basic principles of physics and geometry all around us, claiming they are so obvious that we no longer see them. His work raises many questions about the creative act itself and in the context of design seems to reflect on how an object can come to life.



■ Anne Merlet

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Anne Merlet is uncertain about the reasons behind her pieces. They often spring from a deep urge, perhaps to share a dream, communicate an emotion engendered by beauty, but not beauty for beauty's sake. A quote she cites from Bachelard gives an intimation of what she may be driving at;- *"The soul of an object takes us to the cradle edge of a great vastness"*.



■ Guy Meynard

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

The aim of his work is to produce objects that stimulate the imagination and are designed in a contemporary idiom. Surrounded by porcelain everyday, his vision is to establish a harmony between the hollow spaces and imbalances of the shapes he creates. Form and function are of central importance, his guiding principle to obtain harmony through asymmetry.



■ Maxime Morinière

Lives and works in Paris.

The idea of using porcelain foam for lighting applications first came to him when he was still a student. Testing the effect of light through different porous materials, he discovered that porcelain, which is itself translucent, could be fired with other substances that made it porous. He was captivated by this delicate and natural ceramic and delighted to discover the techniques that enable him to transform experimental prototypes into finished objects that can become commercially available.



■ Claudia Napoleone

A Swiss-Italian, Claudia lives and works in Switzerland. After training as a ceramicist at the School of Applied Arts in Vevey, she began working part-time in her own studio. She intends persevering in her ambition to design utilitarian ceramics and would much prefer her project *brocca trottola* (spinning-top pitcher) to be on tables in private homes than in public exhibitions.



■ Camille Nicaud

Lives and works in the Limousin region. After a professional lifetime spent making ceramics designed by others, Camille decided to use his acquired skills, follow his instincts and start creating his own pieces. The latter are frequently characterised by the combination of porcelain with other materials.



■ Joo-Hyun Park

Joo-Hyun came to study in Limoges because of its porcelain and now lives near Agen. For her, porcelain is a unique material that has existed for thousands of years and through contemporary objects will continue existing over time. The objects she creates, hopefully provide happiness and raise artistic desires in our everyday environment. She likes the idea of creating contemporary pieces that reserve a measure of interaction and surprise for the viewer.



■ Louise Pédel

Currently in residence at the School of Art and Design in St. Etienne. Her passion for design comes from a relationship to objects that is never neutral. Every object conveys a message, has a meaning and language of its own. Transforming or creating new designs multiplies these voices and increases opportunities for expressing messages through them.



Jean-Louis Puivif

Lives and works in the Limousin region.

Decorative elements for the home and garden are this designer's speciality. His pieces often undermine expectations and take on an artistic significance through atypical situations or uses.

His approach comes from extensive hands-on experimentation, imbuing his porcelain with personal emotions particularly in response to the natural environment.



Marie-Evelyne Savorgnan

Lives and works in Toulouse, Italy and Limoges.

A private world of shapes and meanings lends poetry, magic and enchantment in this artist's work. The pieces she makes are normally large in scale, designed for specific sites and often take the form of murals, exploiting the whiteness of porcelain for its contrast with coloured enamels, and using its translucency to reveal the nuances of textured reliefs.



Sophie Villalonga

Lives in the Quercy and works in the Limousin region.

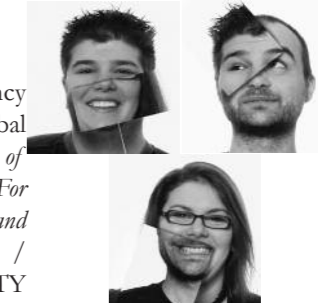
Sophie Villalonga is slowly being drawn away from designing tableware by her passion for the world of fashion accessories. She is attracted by the potential for mixing ceramics with other materials and the freedom to express fantasies, luxuriousness and extravagance. Her approach consists not only of exploiting the intrinsic characteristics of porcelain but also of surprising us with unsuspected uses, extracting magic and wonder by making us look with renewed eyes.



L'Air de rien

Lucie Baudat, Gabriel Dufour, Samuel Prigent

L'AIR DE RIEN (*Despite Appearances*), initially a product design agency founded in Paris in 2005, now specialises in industrial design and global design concepts. "We try to develop a model of everyday life and create a poetry of the mundane to restore meaning to the purely aesthetic aspect of our environment. For us, practical use is the cornerstone of our designs which are self-evident, simple and humorous." The agency's watchwords include (IM)PERTINENCE / HUMOUR / POETRY / CREATIVITY / INNOVATION / CLARITY / REACTIVITY / SENSITIVITY.



Fabrice Cotinat

Born 1968. Lives and works in Châteauroux, France.

Fabrice Cotinat is best known as an inspired tinkerer, the creator of playful yet strangely beautiful machines that subvert normal modes of making and viewing images, particularly as works of art.

A graduate of ENSA Art School in Bourges, he was awarded several residencies that included stays in Spain and the Netherlands.



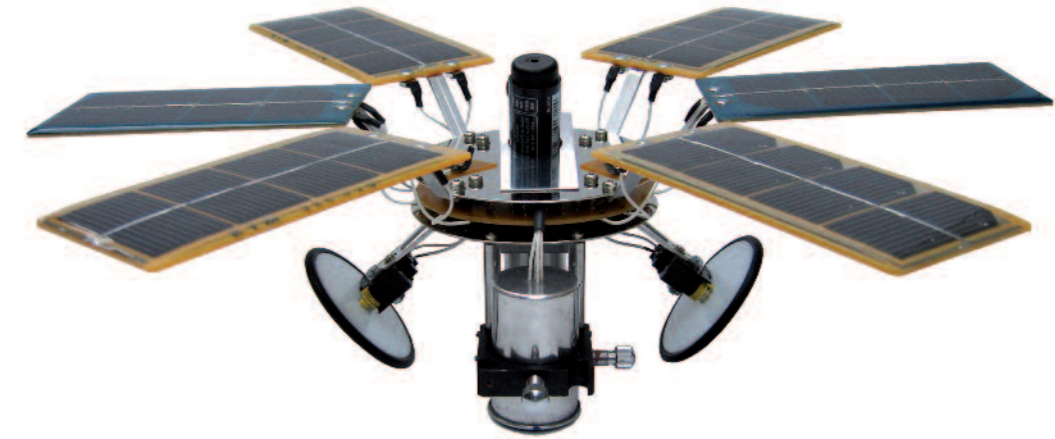
Between 1992 and 2002, Fabrice Cotinat contributed to the development of video-artists' cooperative *Bandits-Mages* in Bourges and helped run its international festival of multimedia events, still going strong today. Together with David Legrand et Henrique Martins Duarte, he founded *Galerie du Cartable* (Schoolbag Gallery) in 1999, an organisation specialising in screening experimental videos from a portable projector device carried in a satchel-like backpack. The artists involved in this gallery-on-the-move have since carved out a reputation for their distinctive low-tech style of filming and DIY approach. In 2007, Fabrice Cotinat founded *Châteauroux Underground*, a registered foundation whose aim is to nurture and promote collective art projects. Since 2007 he has been working with *Galerie du Cartable* and Isabelle Carlier on a pilot project to set up an experimental audio-visual studio at Luang Prabang School of Fine Arts in Laos.

Christian Couty, the director of Esprit Porcelaine, commissioned Fabrice Cotinat to make a work for this exhibition at Gent Design Museum: a mechanical table sculpture to display Esprit Porcelaine's latest creations. Among the required specifications, the table had to be big enough (8 m x 1.5 m) to accommodate several porcelain sculptures made especially for the event and set in motion by a system of electric motors.

The following is a list of arrangements, associations and movements envisaged by Patrice Cotinat for his animated table.

- Installation of porcelain on platforms with motorised wheels. The works can then be made to move around the table following pre-determined or random paths, back and forth, in circles, criss-crossing and bumping into each other.
- Flaps built into the table, tip up as objects move over them, provoking (relatively) controlled runs and slides.
- The works could be lit by lamps or photophores, flashing on and off, varying brightness and changing colours.
- Miniature pumps produce fountains or cause liquid to pour from one vessel to another.
- Objects designed in two or more sections can be made to split apart then reassemble in an endless cycle.
- The acoustic properties of porcelain could add sound to the installation, either by activating small hammers or making pieces ring when colliding or clinking together. Maybe making a musical composition?

These methods hopefully will bring the porcelain display alive, the pieces interacting with each other and their audience. Perhaps that is the essence of my artistic approach. The whole work is conceived as a Feast for eyes and ears.



Confusion (1994-2005)
FRAC Limousin collection



Archeiropoietographe
FRAC Poitou-Charentes
collection

● Partners

Providing help for the project

● *The Limousin Region:*

Trade between the Limousin region in France and the Belgian Province of East Flanders.

Cooperation between the Province of East Flanders and the Limousin region is the result of a European project called 'COTOUR' which was funded under the Interreg IIIc programme. The project theme was the enhancement of regional skills and tourism as a means of regional economic development.

The Limousin Region and the Province of East Flanders wanted to develop bilateral economic exchanges.

The working areas were defined in Gent in November 2007. Since then, several activities have been conducted:

- In November 2008, Limousin was invited as a “guest of honour” at the winter market in Sint Lievens Houtem, which annually hosts 50,000 visitors. 16 producers and craftsmen sold their products, as well as the Regional Union of Horses Breeders. The Regional Tourist Board was also present. Some students on a “BTS Commerce International” course in Limoges (2-year Advanced Vocational Diploma in International Trade) conducted a market study for a collective farm of 'AOC' apples in Limousin (apples registered under a controlled designation of origin).

- Chef Alain Longeval of the 'Abattoir' restaurant in Limoges, a specialist of Limousine meat, participated in the 'Flemish Taste Week' in November 2008.

- In 2009, the Belgian Textile Center and the Laboratory of Natural Substances Chemistry of the University of Limoges exchanged information on 'smart' textiles.

- The European SME week was an opportunity for a mission of East Flanders in the agri-food sector to visit Limousine companies in May 2009: Monteil Champignon de Bois à Brive, Conserves Lapperies in Mansac, Distilleries des Terres Rouges and Salers in Turenne, Wine Production Cooperative from Branceilles, Pôle de Lanaud in Boisseuil, Porcelain Haviland in Limoges, Pâtisserie Charcutière Lise Robert in Limoges, Brasserie Michard in Limoges, Apples Limdor and Décojus at Saint Yricix La Perche.

- Contacts have been established between the competitiveness cluster Elopsys and IBBT (Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology).

- 4 Limousin companies exhibited their products at the HORECA Expo trade fair in Gent on 21-25 Nov. 2010: the “Laiterie de la Voueize” in Gouzon, “A la pointe du gout” in Feytiat, “Confiserie limousine” in Saint Léonard de Noblat and “Les parfumables” in Limoges.

- The Regional Tourism Committee of Limousin participated in the show Country Side fair in Gent in October 2010.

- **The Design Museum of Gent will host the exhibition of the “Esprit Porcelaine” collective from 9 July to 16 October 2011,**

These actions are imagined as opportunities and interest centres of Limousin and Flemish economic actors. The Limousin Region coordinates this programme, implemented with economic actors, including the Chambers of Commerce and Crafts to set up the actions.

EROV (Economic Council of East Flanders) is responsible for organizing this cooperation in East Flanders.

- **Région Limousin & Pôle Economie et Emploi** helped develop, realise and publicise **Une scène d'Intérieur** . In particular, they helped fund participation in fairs and exhibitions. www.regionlimousin.fr

- **The Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication : Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles du Limousin** frequently supports projects of Esprit Porcelaine and specially this exhibition at the Design Museum in Gent... www.culture.gouv.fr

- **The City of Limoges** has funded Esprit Porcelaine since its beginnings. It has also provided help for all actions at both national & international level. www.ville-limoges.fr

- **Conseil Général de la Haute-Vienne** provides funds for projects organised by Esprit Porcelaine. www.cg87.fr

- **Comité Régional du Tourisme Limousin** collaborated with Esprit Porcelaine for the exhibition at the Design Museum in Gent to promote skills that have originated in Limoges and as an invitation for tourists to discover the Limousin region. Tourist brochures in Dutch are provided by the Comité Regional du Tourisme Limousin. www.tourismelimousin.com/NL

- **Chambre Régionale de Métiers et de l'Artisanat & Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de la Corrèze** have mobilized food companies the Limousin whose regional specialities will be proposed on the menu of Brasserie Pakhuis during the exhibition. www.crma-limousin.fr & www.cci.correze.net

- **Les Ateliers d'Art de France** Ateliers d'Arts de France federates 5400 artists, artisans and manufacturers in France. Its mission is to assist professionals and promote their levels of excellence in France and abroad. Ateliers d'Art de France is a partner of Esprit Porcelaine at the Design Museum Gent. www.ateliersdart.com

● Public Institutions



● Porcelain Manufacturers



● **Practical informations**



Design Museum Gent

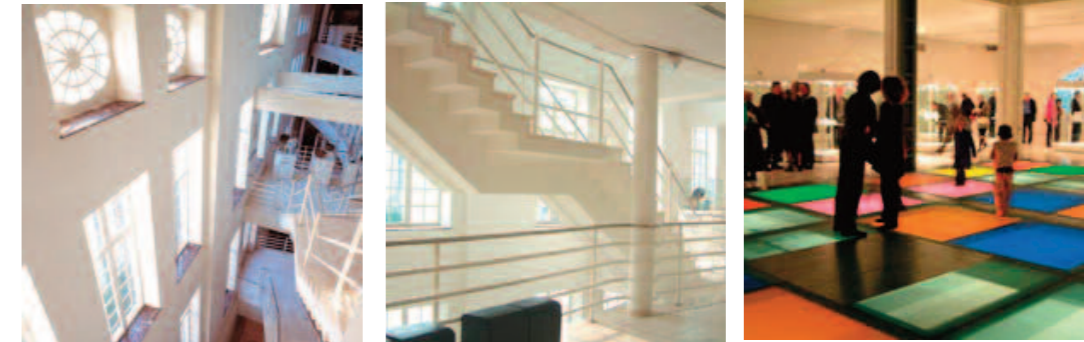
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The Design museum Gent is a cultural institution of the City of Gent. Since January 1999 the museum has been recognized by the Ministry of the Flemish Community in the highest category. Together with important financing by the city of Gent, other resources are subsidies by Ministry of the Flemish Community and the Province of East-Flanders.

The Design Museum Gent is unique in Belgium. The accent in the collections and exhibitions lies on 20th century and actual design.

The new extension to the Ghent Museum of Decorative Arts and Design was officially opened in May 1992. It was designed by the architect Willy Verstraete. The unique pieces that have been patiently collected and preserved since the mid-seventies can now finally be exhibited.

This new section of the museum is in itself a sight worth seeing. The 18th-century facade facing the inner courtyard has been completely restored. Behind it there is a light and airy modern building. The one brilliant invention is a huge hydraulic lift in the central section of the building. This makes the floors adaptable. The possibilities for the involvement of visitors in an exciting play of changing levels are almost unique.



Opening Times

Every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed on Mondays.

Accessibility

Walking distance
3 minutes from the Korenmarkt.

Public Transport

Gent-St. Pieters station, tram 1,
Korenmarkt stop.
Gent-Dampoort station, tram 3,
Korenmarkt stop.

Nearest Car Parks

Vrijdagmarkt
Sint-Michiels

