



The hotel's rooms and suites are crowned by a terrace with a romantic view of the rooftops and church towers of Saint-Germain.

Louis Vuitton

PARIS

Design, Decoration

TWO DECORATIVE ARTS NAMES TO WATCH

While the economic crisis rages, two Paris gallery owners are braving the storm and taking risks. One, Armel Soyer, deals in France's proud tradition of fine decorative arts; the other, Isabel Mesnil of Next Level Galerie, takes a fascinating stroll on the margins of the art and design worlds. Soyer presented her latest project at the latest Art Basel fair: Pierre Goncalves' Pavillon collection features a table and chandelier, a bookcase, and a pair of pedestals, crafted in brass, Brazilian granite, and cracked palladium leaf. Flying in the face of contemporary ultra-minimalism, Soyer advocates ornament and lyricism, with the emphasis on fine, decorative materials. Her lofty ambition? To continue the great French decorative art tradition, with a commitment to innovation. Take, for example, Emmanuel Bossuet's extraordinary Dandelion wallpaper, handcrafted with a thoroughly modern, original, adaptable motif, produced by France's last artisan *décorateur* (a specialist maker of decorative colored paper). Soyer's Christmas displays often feature delightful designer pairings: Bossuet with decorative sky painter Mathias Kis, for example.

In 2011, Isabelle Mesnil opened the Next Level gallery on the ground floor of a private town house in the heart of the Haut-Marais, opposite the Hôtel de Betz. Trained as a company lawyer, she attributes her love and knowledge of art to her eclectic, connoisseur grandmother. After an initial spell at Galerie Claudine Papillon, at her own gallery she promotes designer "art" objects by a stable of visual artists and designers, all dedicated to working across a wide range of artistic disciplines. Mesnil's inquisitive, warm personality and attentive support of artists and collectors alike have quickly earned her an enviable reputation and an enthusiastic following. Next Level showcases poetic, hybrid objects by Bina Baitel; porcelain, enamel, and platinum mirrors by Elise Fouin, on the theme of aging; and stone and aluminum structures by Philippe Malouin. Anything but ordinary.

Armel Soyer: 19-21, rue Chappe, 3rd. Map 2 E3.

Metro: Arts-et-Métiers. Tel: 01 42 55 49 72. www.armelsoyer.com

Open 2pm to 7pm. Closed Sunday to Tuesday.

Next Level Galerie: 8, rue Charlot, 3rd. Map 2 G4.

Tel: 01 44 54 90 88. www.nextlevelgalerie.com

Open 11am to 1pm and 2pm to 7pm, and by appointment.

Closed Sunday and Monday.