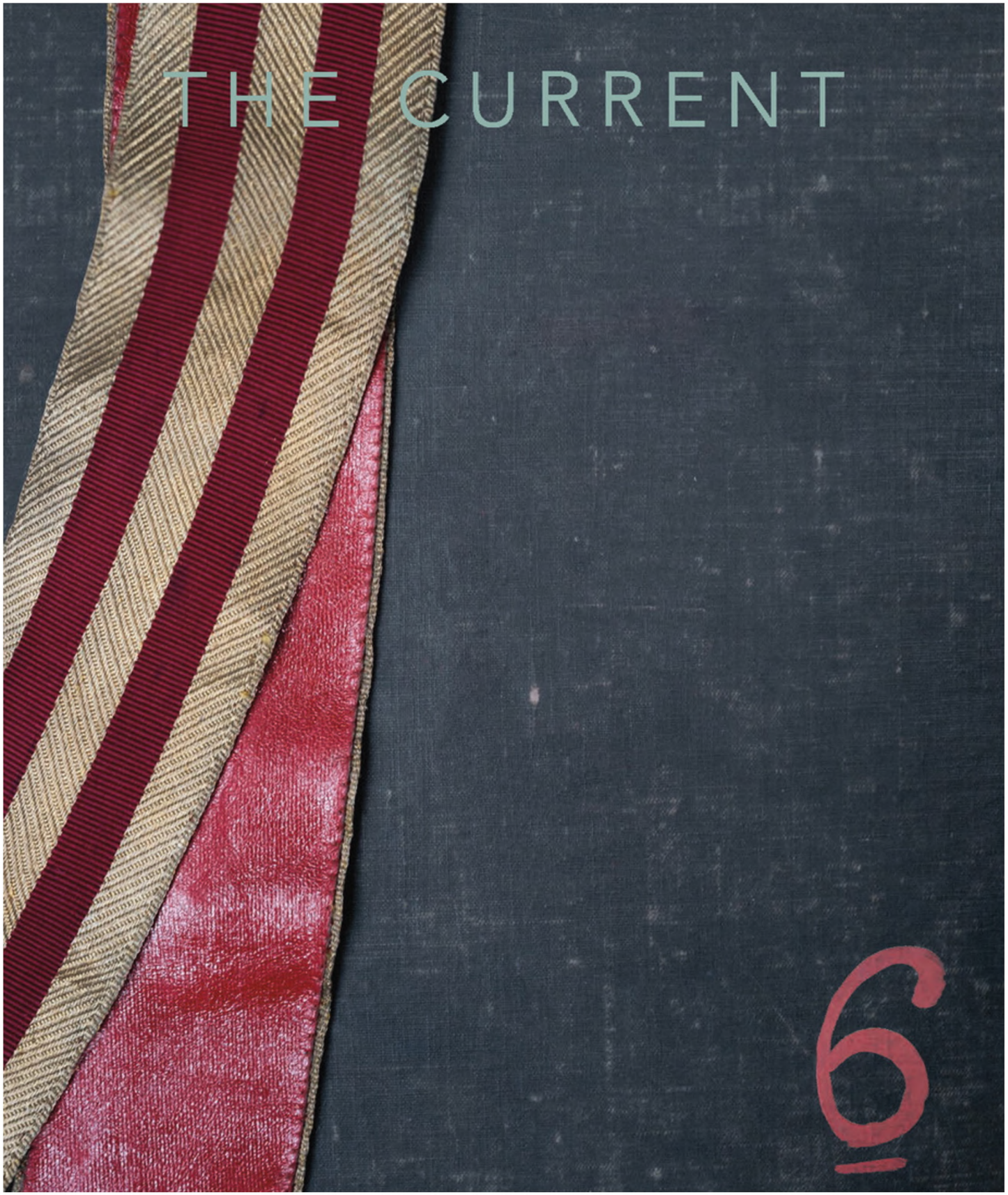
THE CURRENT

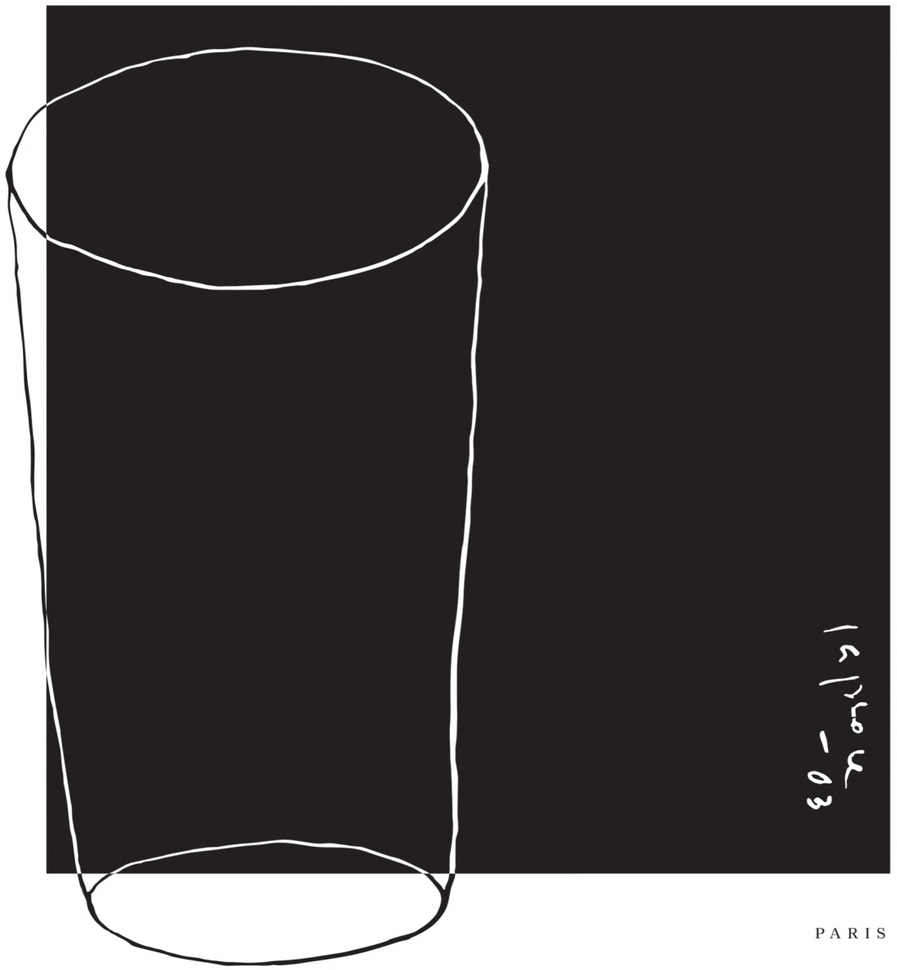


PLACE SAINT-GEORGES

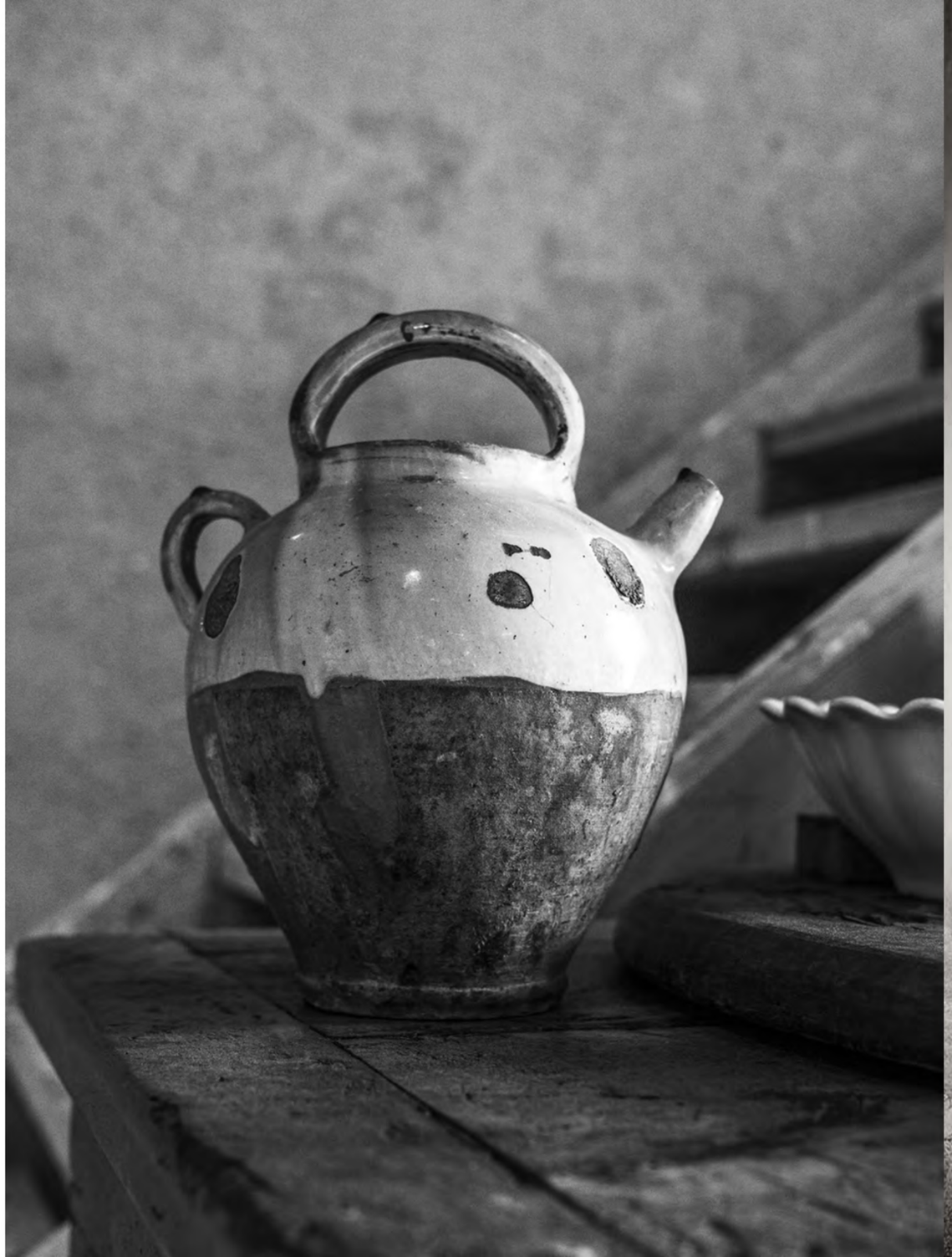
DAY	MONTH	YEAR	CITY	COUNTRY
25	09	24	PARIS	FRANCE



LAPLACE



PARIS



LUIS LAPLACE + CHRISTOPHE COMOY

A LIFE IN GREAT DETAIL

GIANTS IN THE WORLDS OF ART AND DESIGN, LUIS AND CHRISTOPHE'S STORIES AND PASSIONS DETAIL THEIR EVER-EVOLVING, AUTHENTIC DEDICATION TO THEIR WORK, CREATING NUANCE AND INTEREST IN SOME OF THE MOST ICONIC AND COMPELLING RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD.



LUIS LAPLACE AND CHRISTOPHE COMOY



Ribustem volliqu istium ra sincil mossimint
Apo Pruaunld Ma cnCdaitritahmy, loitfhfoicgiar anpohn secc ptatque preersiaid qeusi oavfiearm a etxapbelell ao ef pcteartaumr iacus t voluptiatis idne tlehnei mcaorleuftu llilqyu ciua rparteerdib sua lsoanp eorfi on pa voles Lduoilso raenmd pCohrreisrtoo dpehset'iso no fnfiicaetu r.

UTILITY

GESTURE

CONTEXT

In the world of Luis Laplace and Christophe Comoy, partners in business and in life, these three words—utility, gesture, context—might be thought of as a rubric that guides their architectural and design work. But they also signal a collective understanding; a roadmap for how, in the end, their Parisian design firm, Laplace, approaches a project as both a process and an intellectual exercise.

Our conversation with Luis and Christophe showed their world as highly interactive—and experiential. Their days are hands-on; fast-paced but somehow slow moving too. In their Paris atelier, a team of 50-plus focuses on the architecture of the house. The furnishings, the landscape, the art and the objects too. This is what is worked on and talked about. A lot. But Luis tells of a team member who also calls the work a réveillé—an awakening. And it's here that you realize that for the pair, for their studio and clients, this is where the real focus is. A sense of connectedness, how one thing relates to the next. A sum of the parts with the common goal in every project: to awaken, though this awakening is no single tap on the shoulder. Instead, it appears as a developing story, one that requires an awareness on the client's part as there is no signature Laplace style. An astute client will feel an ease and an interest in the environment Laplace has created for them. It's a unique approach that has earned the firm international acclaim.

The two grew up 7,000 miles apart: Luis was raised in Argentina and Christophe in France. They met in 2001 at a Christmas party in NYC, where Luis was working for Selldorf Architects after earning his masters in Architecture and Urbanism in Buenos Aires. Christophe was on the cusp of attending Columbia Business School. So while the cultural differences and distance between their childhood homes and worlds were profound, they discovered they shared remarkably related family values. Both had close relationships with their grandmothers—strong, independent women, who, it turns out, shared an uncanny fondness for hats and reptiles. Luis and Christophe each have a photo of their respective grandmothers, wearing similar hats and each is holding—a snake! What are the chances that these grandmothers would both have such specific fearlessness? And that one day, their grandsons would meet and fall in love on NYC's Lower East Side and begin a life working together.

After the tumult of 9/11, moving together to Paris felt a natural next step and the right time to establish their company. Luis had worked on a project for Hauser & Wirth's Ursula Hauser on Mallorca when he was at Selldorf. Upon establishing his eponymous firm, she gave him a small project at first, growing their relationship to the breadth it is today. Museums, private residences, commercial spaces and gallery projects abound, but Laplace's studio practice, regardless of a project's scale, is noted for its intense enterprise. When one hires Laplace, you don't simply receive a set of plans and put it out for construction bids. Rather, it is completely the opposite. Laplace delivers a nuanced body of works— a series of designs and activations that will touch on every aspect of the project's final outcome. It is why a Laplace building is full of Laplace furniture, decoration, soft furnishings, and most importantly, the spirit that goes along with it. Why as a studio they never repeat a design, and Luis, with warmth, will report that he goes to trade exhibitions to remind himself that he is not interested in trends nor, what they both call, "ticking the boxes." This is why being with them in their studios and own houses is so thrilling. The pair is *certainly* not phoning it in. →

A vintage pendant light from Studio BBPR hangs over the seating area in the Laplace offices; a work by Gary Simmons commands the back wall.



The silhouette of a statue that lights the way for guests visiting the Laplace atelier.



The entrance to Luis and Christophe's personal office is through the garden.



The open plan studio of multidisciplinary designers and architects.



Luis at his worktable.





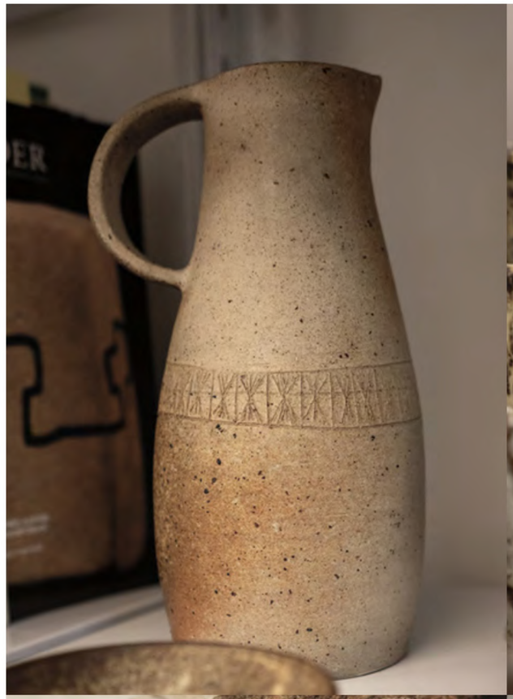
Christophe reviews project details with a client beside a large Suzanne Ramié for Atelier Madoura pot.



The entrance to Laplace's Viewing Room on Rue du Bac, a renovated hôtel particulier in the 7th Arrondissement.

The staircase of the former L'Hôtel Samuel Bernard, an 18th-century building on Rue du Bac that Laplace is converting into a chic gallery and entertainment space. The storied building once housed the workshop of the taxidermy institution, Deyrolle, which still operates an adjacent shop.



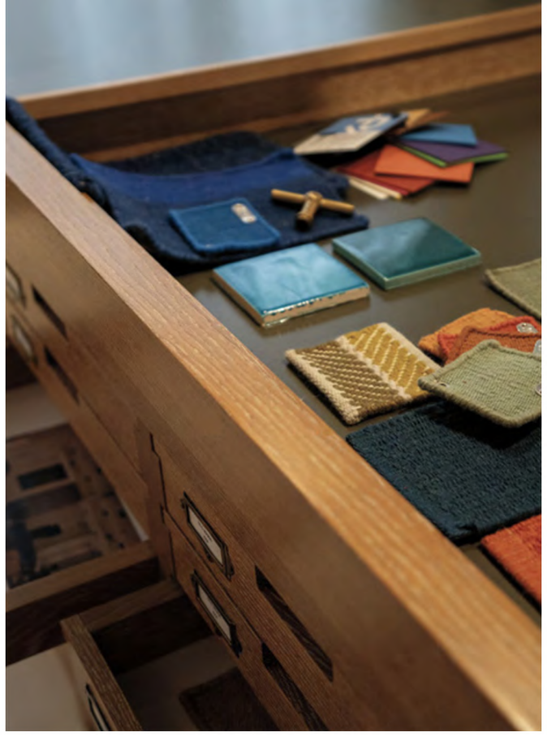






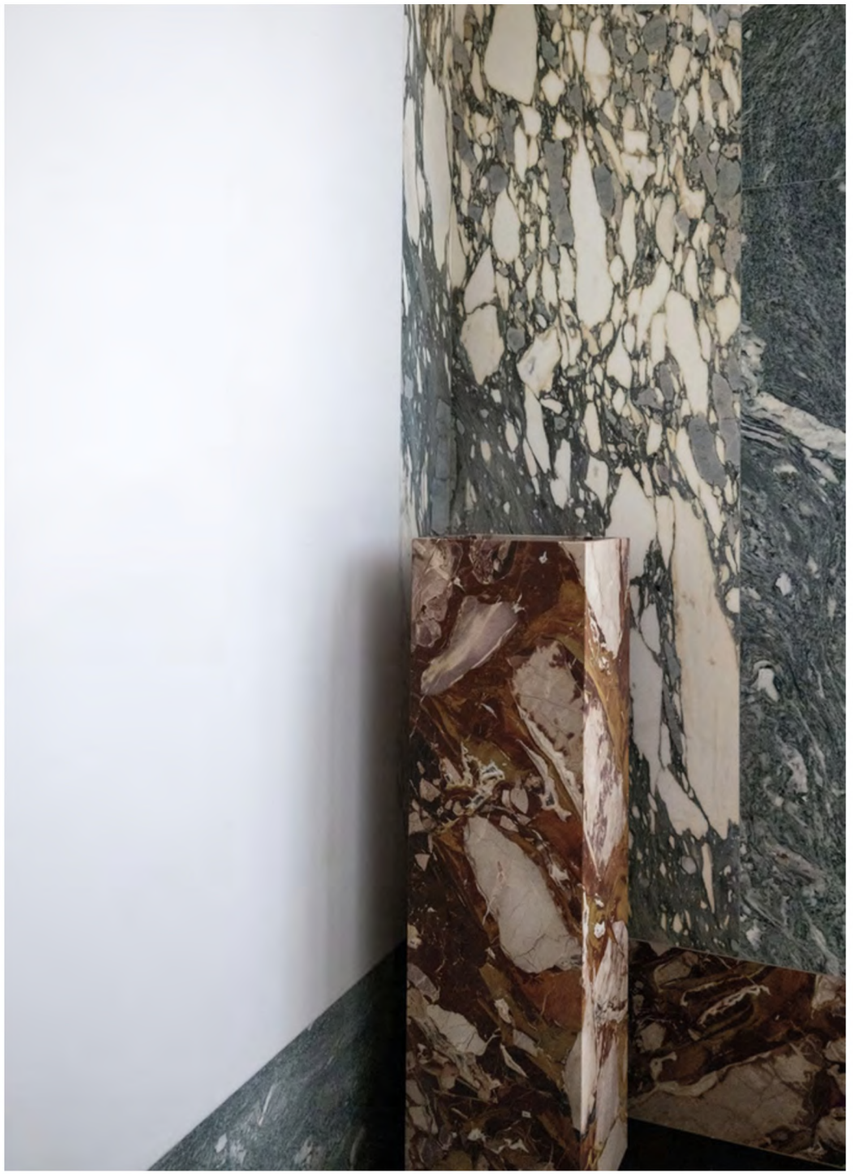


























An Armand Albert Rateau gilded wood pendant light, once owned by Lanvin and then Lagerfeld, hangs above a bathtub in Luis and Christophe's private residence.



Luis Laplace

Luis and Christophe's Paris flat, which looks out in a kind of flatiron aspect to views that divide up Rue Notre Dame de Lorette and Rue Saint-Georges is replete in the tensions found in their studio work, a fine-tuned balance of antique and modern. A highly decorative Armand Albert Rateau gilded wood pendant light, once belonging to Lanvin (and then Lagerfeld) hangs over the bathtub. A set of 1970s velvet upholstered Francesco Pasinato wooden *Sculpture Chairs* in the dining room were originally designed for a restaurant and a Jacques Adnet column light that once lived in Andy Warhol's Paris flat sits against a wall in the main salon. Ceramics fill tables everywhere, though their collection is never complete—Christophe mentions they may like to find some 18th-century porcelain. They are forever curious and additive.

"I can't stop working," admits Luis. "It's not because something is bad. It's that I'm discovering ideas and solutions to many different things all the time. Something will inspire me—'Oh, I like that color,'—and then I'm off." The pair are rampant collectors, though modest compared to many of their clients who possess world-class art collections. As a child Luis collected empty cigarette boxes and soda cans, "things a mother would get in trouble for letting their child collect today," Luis admits. But that's given way to an affinity for collecting vintage and antique tools—implements full of humility and, of course, utility, speaking of the gesture or the meaning of the design of each implement and its intention. Christophe, on the other hand, is more apt to turn to the natural world. He collects trees and and tends to a small arboretum outside their office and at their country retreat in Southern France. "Oak Trees" he specifies. "I like to be outside. It keeps me grounded." The pair also has a fine collection of furniture from all periods, acquired over time. Their collections are scattered between their city flat and farmhouse in Toulouse. Luis also takes drawing classes and recently created a private ceramics studio just steps away from their offices with a wheel and kiln—perhaps he'll add some of his own work to their collection soon. →



Christophe Comoy

In Luis and Christophe's flat, Rick Owens' **Curial Chair** in aluminum pairs with voluminous brown velvet chairs designed by Laplace and a bright red Jacques and Dani Ruelland ceramic lamp.



The main salon in Luis and Christophe's flat features a Jacques Adnet column light that once lived in Andy Warhol's Paris apartment and a Laplace-designed coffee table made of lavastone.



"I QUICKLY READ THE DNA OF A HOUSE TO UNDERSTAND THE HISTORY, WHERE THINGS COME FROM. THE LAYERING AND HOW THINGS ADJUST OVER THE YEARS, OVER DIFFERENT GENERATIONS AND WHAT OTHERS HAVE CHANGED TOO."
–LUIS LAPLACE




COMBENÈGRE
EST 1661
UN COUP D'OEIL A TRAVERS
LES VOLETS
TOULOUSE, FR



YVES BRAYER (1907-1990)

A French painter known for landscapes of the countryside evocative of the topography of Toulouse.

RHYTHMS OF THE COUNTRY

COMBENÈGRE TOULOUSE, FR

In their work, Luis will tell you that “reading the DNA of a house helps to understand its history.” And Christophe might add that it “helps us understand our own too.” At the couple’s country house near Toulouse, a 17th-century blue-shuttered farmhouse with roots to the original vineyard on the property that has been in the Comoy family for generations, the layering and how things adjust over the years shows how people and times have changed. But the constant? That this house is a retreat from a life lived elsewhere. This is where Luis and Christophe, like generations of Comoys before them, return to a simpler rhythm. Outings to brocantes or fairs, mostly full of junk, is where Luis looks for the tools he collects, “beautiful because they are designed with specific intention,” he says, whereas Christophe savors walks in nature, perhaps channeling Proust.

As one stands in the central room, the colorful family stories flow—of Luis’s grandfather in Argentina who had a penguin that would follow him home to stretch out in front of the fireplace. Or a grandmother in France whose pioneer spirit gave the young Christophe a deep affinity and reverence for the natural world.

Toulouse’s slow pace and the home’s unique heritage provide Luis and Christophe with the artistic inspiration to fashion the house’s contemporary design narrative. They fill it with what interests them, inside and out, to make it authentic and resonant. As a couple, they remain warmly tethered by their family history and their funny and charming stories, even while they have their eyes clearly fixed to the future.



Looking through into a colorful sitting room; nature's bounty decorates the hanging light in the foyer.



The central staircase showcases a collection of avian prints amidst other heirlooms.











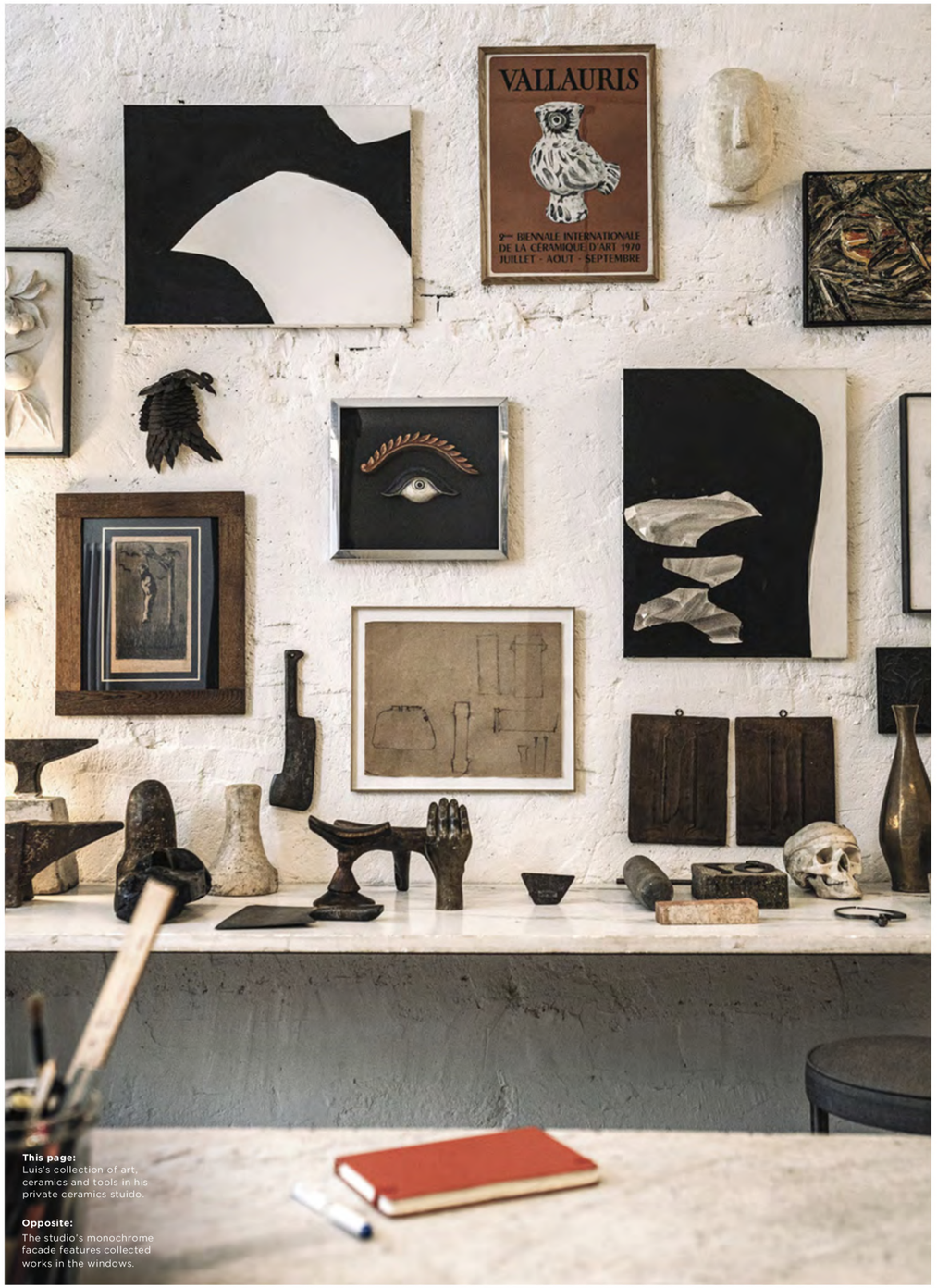

The rustic setting of Luis and Christophe's restored stable makes for idyllic dinners overlooking the French countryside.



Les 2 Potiers
Pot avec anses a cordes

THE CURRENT

Vol. 6



This page:
Luis's collection of art, ceramics and tools in his private ceramics stuido.

Opposite:
The studio's monochrome facade features collected works in the windows.











This spread:
The ceramics studio is a true artist's workshop.

Context, that helps explain and give meaning, appears in the conversation too. Near Toulouse, a series of simple farm buildings has been in the Comoy family for generations, at first used as a summer retreat, but since winterized by Christophe to enjoy year round. When you visit, it's clear that you are in a traditional agricultural home in the southwest of France, but Christophe and Luis have had their way with it, too.

Here in the countryside, both partners appreciate the unexpected while honoring the soul of a place, an exercise they have practiced in projects the world over—from a centuries-old bakery in Mexico to a naval hospital-turned-art gallery in Menorca. The academic tendencies in Luis can give way to an unpredictable combination of things and as a couple, they seem in a beautiful coordinated step as their private and work worlds travel a parallel path.

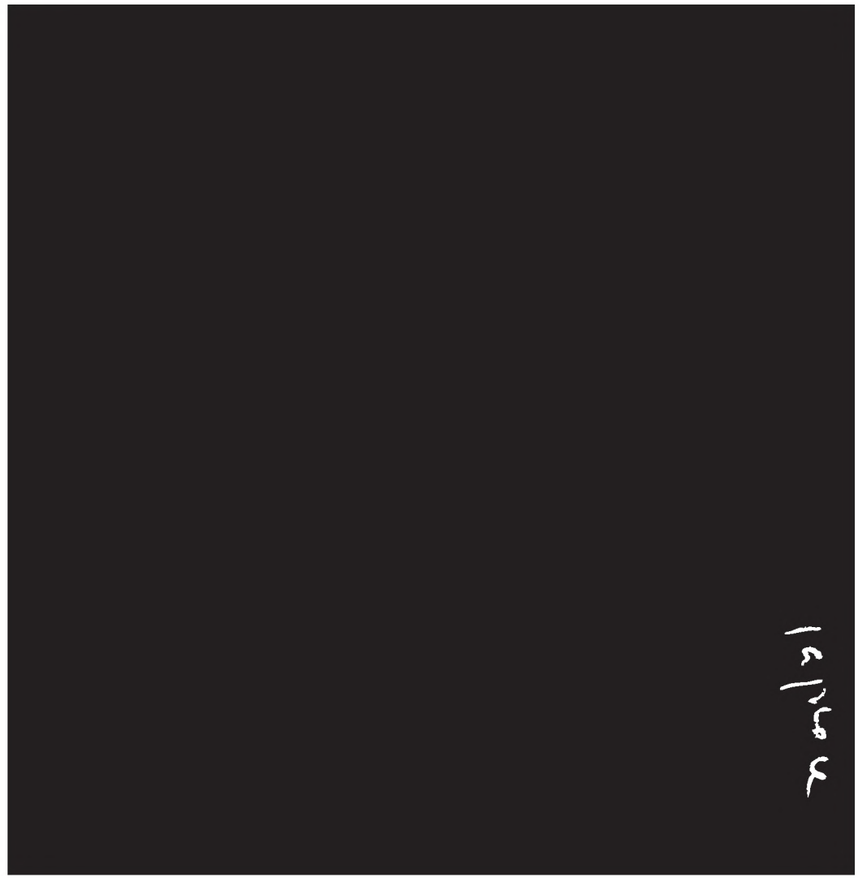
Over the course of our story, we'd met several times stealing moments in their bustling schedule, but our final meeting was back in Paris on a cool and serene November afternoon. We returned again to their postural words—a *utility* of work, the *gesture* of design, a *context* to provide meaning—as we walk back into Laplace headquarters, through one of Christophe's arboretums, a small, fairly dense clump that casts a spell at Place Saint-Georges from sidewalk to atelier.

Is this small urban forest there to give visitors and clients a way to shift gears into the world they are about to enter, preparing them for the experience they will have? Surely, it is like a group of trees anywhere—full of possibility and interest, no two ever the same. Taking patience to grow and flourish. This is Laplace.




32
30
ENTREE AU 32





“Sometimes I just like to break the rules. I cannot even explain why, but I like the unpredictable combinations of things.”

-LUIS LAPLACE