

## Paris+ Art Basel: How Luxury Houses Are Leveraging Art And Culture

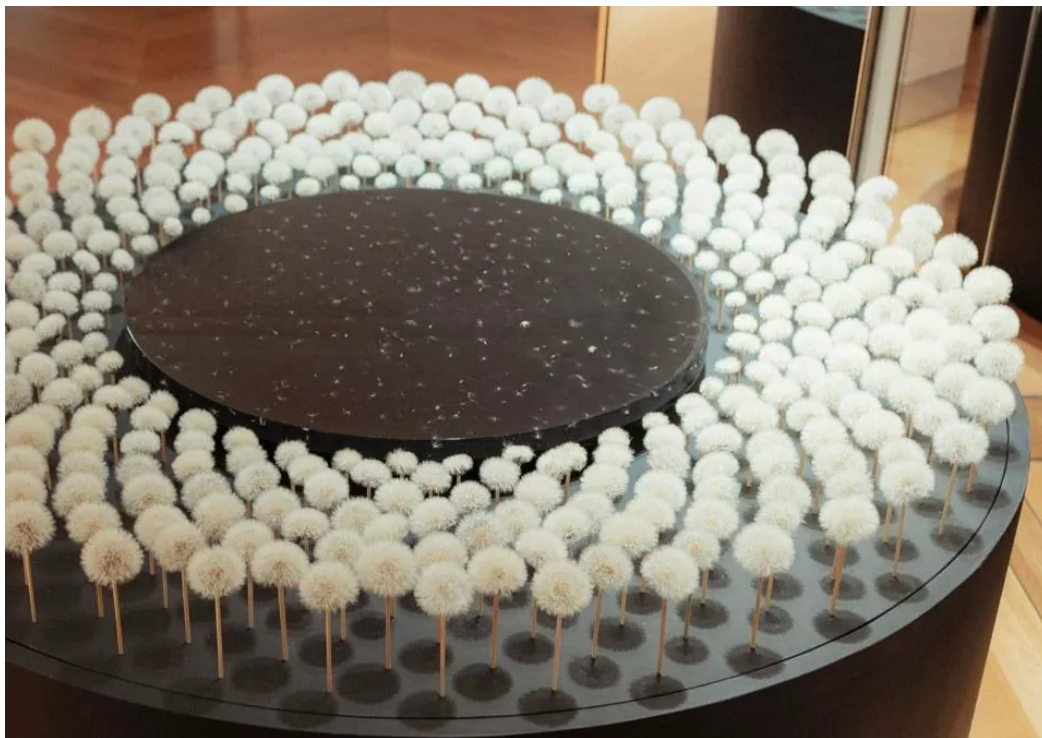
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Constellation, Duy Anh Nhan Duc, Guerlain Les Fleurs du Mal, Paris+ Art Basel GUERLAIN / TOMY DO

Luxury houses need to keep their finger on the cultural pulse to broaden their appeal and ensure they stay relevant in changing times. And while, most recently, with the appointment of [Pharrell Williams](#) at Louis Vuitton Men's, the focus has been on music, art has long been an important ally.

To coincide with Paris+ Art Basel, [LVMH](#) owned beauty house Guerlain is hosting ‘[Les Fleurs du Mal](#),’ its 16th annual exhibition of contemporary art at its sprawling Paris flagship on the Avenue des Champs Élysées.

The exhibition has been conceived as a tribute to the poetry of Charles Baudelaire. It features works by 26 contemporary artists who have all explored Baudelaireian themes of life, death, beauty and sensuality, expressing these via renderings of flowers and vegetation in a wide range of artistic media.

Curated by art consultant Hervé Mikaeloff, the show features an inspired mix of established names and emerging talent in mediums taking in painting, sculpture, photography and multi-sensory installation.



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A stunning erotic watercolor hails from Anselm Kiefer's *Extases Féminines* series and dramatic gelatin silver prints by Robert Mapplethorpe featuring an orchid—a signature ingredient of the brand—and a cactus.

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Particularly arresting is *Venus Flytrap* a verdant, large-scale canvas depicting a female form by Spanish artist Marcella Barceló that's done in acrylic, oil pastel and nail polish.

Vietnamese artist Duy Anh Nhan Duc's, *Constellation* offers a take on the fleeting nature of time. It's a sculpture made from dandelions and, according to the artist, illustrates the barely there movement of breath and "the idea that a breath can disseminate life."

Elsewhere, a spellbinding multi-sensory installation entitled *Hymne à la Rose* by buzzy Madagascan creative Joël Andrianomearisoa features 42 wrought iron roses alongside text by Hindi Zahra that's sung in a mixture of French, English and Tamazight.

Andrianomearisoa's work was also featured in [Diptyque's Paris+ Art Basel exhibition](#) in the Grand Palais Éphémère and the windows of the maison's Paris boutiques have been decorated with the artist's poetry.

Guerlain's Baudelairean theme plays back to the house's heritage, which is, of course, the whole point. When it was first published in 1857, 'Les Fleurs du Mal' provoked great outrage and the author was subsequently prosecuted and fined. He petitioned the Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III who intervened on his behalf—establishing her reputation as a patron of the arts.

A few years prior in 1853 house founder Pierre-Francois Pascal Guerlain was appointed perfumier to the court, creating its Eau de Cologne Impériale as a gift for the empress. The scent was housed in a bottle which variously drew inspiration from the top of the Colonne Vendôme, women's pannier dresses of the period and the gilding of Second Empire palaces. This became known as the bee bottle as the shape recalled a honeycomb. 2023 marks its 170th anniversary.