

“efflorescence”

VIRGIL ABLOH

Exhibition | Paris

from 15th January 2020
to 10th April 2020

Opening Reception | Paris

Tuesday, 14th January 2020
6 pm - 8.30 pm

Open from Tuesday
to Saturday 11 am - 7 pm

Let's simply talk about what you are going to see: designed in 2019 by Virgil Abloh for Galerie kreO, the «efflorescence» Collection consists of twenty pieces: round and coffee tables, consoles, seats, vases, and mirrors.

Efflorescence: the collection's name seems paradoxical for what appears at first to be solid blocks of reality to sit, gather, and look at oneself. Beyond the sharp fact that it is always fruitful to deal with paradoxes, this botanical term reflects the production method of the pieces. Like these wildflowers that fit into the interstices and corners of urban space, the holes, formal accidents, and graffiti that cover and personalize—in different ways each time—the concrete surface offers a visual and emotional texture to recharge our immediate environment: a landscape where the rigidity of structures and urban planning meets the randomness of organic growth and human appropriation and mark-making.

Bench 2: its length of nearly three meters reminds us of skate ramps; its presence best embodies the designer's desire to bring urban language into the gallery's white space. Drilled with irregular holes at regular intervals, covered with graffiti—this ancestral gesture of marking is emblematic of Virgil Abloh's practice—*Bench 2* is a Trojan Horse dedicated to the deconstruction of the generic and conversations on the here and now.

2019: the pieces designed by Virgil Abloh express (the aspirations of our) his time. It is no longer a question of «high» and «low,» of legitimacy, of avant-garde, or of being an outsider. It is a question of producing an interaction design, where the dialogue between the producer and the user is horizontal, where past references are filtered by the experience of a present questioning future uses. “To me, design always has the inherent idea of being a bridge from the past, with an eye towards the future,” says Virgil Abloh. Here, the heritage of the Brutalism, its forms and ideas, are literally perforated, extruded to serve as a pedestal for the creative expression of the street. He continues: “In conclusion, architecting a language of adverting the norm that a purist and a tourist can both comprehend,” and use.

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Virgil Abloh: Born in Rockford, Illinois, in 1980, he is an artist, architect, engineer, creative director, and fashion designer. After earning a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he completed a Masters degree in Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology. It was here that he learned not only about design principles but also crafted the principles of his art practice. He studied a curriculum devised by Mies van der Rohe, who also designed the core campus. Currently, Virgil Abloh is the Chief Creative Director and founder of Off-White and Artistic Director of Menswear at Louis Vuitton. He has recently collaborated with Vitra for the exhibition *Twentythirtyfive* and the "Spin-off" collection. Last summer, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago dedicated to his manifold practice a comprehensive exhibition entitled *Figures of Speech*. Currently presented at the High Museum of Art Atlanta until March 8, 2020, the exhibition will continue at the ICA - *Institute of Contemporary Art* - of Boston and at the Brooklyn Museum of New York. Conceived by Alaska Alaska, "a research-based design and creative service practice tooted in contemporary landscapes, essentially questioning design while designing 'design'," four «efflorescence» pieces were shown there: *Bench 1*, *Bench 2*, *Round High Chair*, and *Mirror 2*. In January 2020, «efflorescence» will be his first exhibition in a gallery dedicated to contemporary design.

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Clément Dirié

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