

ART | NEED TO NOW

PAD London: striking Sèvres porcelain

Contemporary artists
reinterpret the iconic
tableware



Image: Courtesy of Sèvres-Cité de la céramique

OCTOBER 13 2014
CATHERINE MILNER

It has been almost three centuries since kings, emperors and presidents started using Sèvres porcelain to impress their guests – whether dining on chicken Marengo or foie gras. Now, still supported by the French government, the factory outside Paris has become a platform for contemporary art as much as a manufacturer of gastronomic accoutrements.

A new range of works made by artists in conjunction with Sèvres artisans using traditional techniques is going on sale this week at the Pavilion for Artistic Design (PAD) in London. Among the most striking are Aldo Bakker's black gravy boat, whose lunging form is reminiscent of a cockerel about to strike (€1,500, second picture) and an elongated teapot (signed edition, €2,600) that could have fallen out of an El Greco painting.

The celestial blue glazes that gave Sèvres such popularity among royalty make a reappearance in some of Bakker's other designs – but in radical form. His *Dôme* (edition of eight, €9,300, third picture), glowing with an almost ultraviolet light, is intended to sit in the centre of a table like a crystal ball or simply to be something to fondle.

SHARE THIS ON...



EMAIL THIS

Canadian artist Kristin McKirdy has made a range of pod-shaped baubles inspired by ancient Mediterranean votive sculptures that she has beautified with motifs taken from 18th-century Sèvres plates. A pair of these in a piece called *Boudoir* (signed edition of five, €20,500, first picture) look like Cinderella's slippers on their porcelain cushion.

In the 18th century, artists such as Boucher worked at Sèvres, where, under the patronage of Madame de Pompadour, they rejoiced in the colours of the boudoir in the brightly painted wares they designed. The artists working there today, however, often favour using the blank, unadorned biscuit porcelain before it is glazed. Pucci de Rossi's *Ecrous et Boulons* (edition of eight, €25,000, fifth picture), for instance, has the stark majesty of a baptismal font. Equally, a dress (€120,000, fourth picture) made of sheets of paper-like porcelain – the brainchild of Brazilian haute-couture designer Gustavo Lins – gives this ancient medium a contemporary twist and might just, at a pinch, be worn – but only if you are as thin and delicate as the artwork itself.

15-19 October 2014, PAD London, Berkeley Square, London W1 (www.pad-fairs.com/london).



Courtesy of Sèvres-Cité de la céramique



Courtesy of Sèvres-Cité de la céramique



© Gérard Jonca for Sèvres-Cité de la céramique



Courtesy of Sèvres-Cité de la céramique