

# Julien Vermeulen

A MODERN FEATHER MASTER



Yin & Yang, 2023 ©maison parisienne

The unique artist, Julien Vermeulen, has chosen the feather as his medium of expression, a fragile material that he brilliantly grants both visual and symbolic strength.

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PRESS RELEASE



Julien Vermeulen ©Antoine Lippens

Trained at the Lycée Octave Feuillet, a French school of feather work, Julien Vermeulen holds a BTS in Fashion Design and a degree in Visual Arts and Art Sciences. Since 2015, he has collaborated with prestigious fashion and jewellery houses including Dior, Givenchy, Lanvin, Schiaparelli, Repetto and Bulgari.

Winner of the prestigious Liliane Bettencourt Foundation Prize in 2018 for “Intelligence of the Hand – Exceptional Talents”, the designer has been represented by maison parisienne since 2020 which, in January of the same year, exhibited his work for the first time at the Hôtel Solvay in Brussels.



Black Gem. 2020 ©Christophe Dellière

In 2021, the goose and pheasant feather wall panel *Black Gem* joined the collections of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. In 2022, the Mobilier national in Paris also acquired one of his pieces as part of the exhibition “Les Aliénés”: the *Eden* console, which evokes a lost paradise. Reinterpreting an Empire style furniture piece, Julien Vermeulen replaced the mirror with a panel representing a landscape of moss and leaves from which the silhouette of a black feathered snake with blue tinted reflections emerges surreptitiously.



## REDEFINING THE FEATHER

Julien Vermeulen discovered the feather as an artistic medium in 2013 during an internship with fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier. He was amazed to see how, through the interplay of dyes and cutaways, goose feathers could be used to create a *trompe l'oeil* leopard pattern. This is how his vocation was born.

Trained in the traditional techniques of feather work, Julien Vermeulen has acquired an exceptional level of craftsmanship that he continues to transcend and modernise.

He grants the feather daring innovations, by using ancient, manual tools of the utmost simplicity: a pair of scissors, a trimming knife, a curling knife, tweezers... not to mention a machine designed to make steam dating from the Napoleonic era.



StormTrooper Pixel Art, 2022 ©maison parisienne



Totem, 2021 ©maison parisienne

To begin his process, peacock, ostrich, goose and pheasant feathers are meticulously selected and sorted. No two feathers are identical, so Julien Vermeulen identifies their natural imperfections to create what he terms “a harmony of defects”.

They are then carefully steamed and reshaped before the artist determines their transformation according to his inspiration and the desired effect.

The feathers can be burned, curled, coloured, woven and glued to become artworks, wall panels, sculptures and decorative ornaments. Each unique piece reveals its own texture, a subtle combination of lightness and density.





Black Ocean, Palais de Tokyo, 2017 ©Antoine Lippens

## AN ARTISTIC APPROACH

Julien Vermeulen's eagerness to experiment has led to a multiplicity of modes of expression. His collaborations within the luxury realms of haute couture and jewellery enable him to dream up works of pure refinement. The feather master also enjoys designing projects for institutions as diverse as the Lido and the Comédie Française, culminating in the creation of veritable artistic performances.

For example, for the Toguna space at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2017, the artist created *Black Ocean*, a 20m<sup>2</sup> wall made up of more than 12,000 hand-cut turkey feathers, coloured with Indian ink and then glued one by one in just 15 days (i.e. 1,000 working hours). This feat was honoured with the Bettencourt Prize for "Intelligence of the Hand" in 2018.





Black Dahlia, 2022 ©maison parisienne



Nova BR, 2021 ©maison parisienne

## CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Regardless of the medium or format, Julien Vermeulen sketches each work with a few strokes of an acrylic felt-tip pen before starting a long process of application in order to create a movement, to capture a radiance while remaining abstract with a degree of the monochrome.

Julien Vermeulen is inspired by some of the great masters of modern art such as Kasimir Malevitch, Mark Rothko, Yves Klein, Lucio Fontana and Pierre Soulages.

For maison parisienne's anniversary exhibition "15 years, 15 artists, 15 works" in April 2024, Julien Vermeulen presented *Black Argos*, a wall artwork made of feather marquetry, whose spiral construction generates a powerfully hypnotic effect.



Black Argos - 15 years, 15 artists, 15 works, 2023 ©Vincent Leroux



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