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CARDBOARD DREAMS



Lilian Daubisse is a masterful storyteller, an archaeology enthusiast with a passion for exploring distant cultures and civilizations, and an artist who creates magic from an unexpected material—cardboard! But it's not just any cardboard. Daubisse works with corrugated cardboard, the kind usually used for packaging, and transforms it into something extraordinary. Think of Daubisse as a magician. He takes this everyday material and, with incredible skill, shapes it into chimeras, fantastical creatures, and a whole imaginary world filled with poetic beauty. Represented by the Maison Parisienne Gallery, Daubisse has also been designing mesmerizing exhibitions for the Hermès house around the world for the past few years.



Les Aliénés
Table Récif, 2023
© Isabelle Bideau

You discovered corrugated cardboard by chance, a material that changed your career. Can you tell us more about that?

I stumbled upon corrugated cardboard while studying at the Beaux-Arts in Nantes. It was easily accessible, available in large quantities, and inexpensive—qualities that initially drew me in. As I began experimenting, I realized how incredibly versatile this humble material could be, and it quickly became my go-to medium. The creative possibilities with cardboard are endless, from exploring new shapes and cuts to playing with finishes and even colored variations. I've been working with it ever since, and its potential continues to inspire me. Plus, its use aligns with the ecological concerns that resonate in my work.

What inspires you, and which cultures or geographies influence your work?

As a self-described fabulist and archaeology enthusiast, I'm captivated by the myths and legends of ancient civilizations. I love delving into storytelling traditions that reveal how people once made sense of their world. Inuit culture, with its deep connection to nature and survival in extreme environments, has always fascinated me. I'm also inspired by the diverse cultures of Africa and symbolic use of materials.

Can you tell us about your latest work?

My most recent work, Corail, was created for the 15th anniversary exhibition of Maison Parisienne at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Made from corrugated cardboard, rattan, and nylon thread, this work represents a significant step in my artistic journey. Since 2014, my collaboration with Florence Guillier Bernard and the gallery has led me toward a more sculptural practice, which Corail exemplifies. For this work, I wanted to explore an interconnected world where botanical, animal, and mineral elements merge. It's both figurative and abstract, and the material itself plays a central role in shaping its meaning. Corail reflects my fascination with the boundary between nature and abstraction, challenging viewers to perceive familiar elements in new and unexpected ways.

