

DESIGN

Pure style: Aldo Bakker's tea set for Puiforcat

Puiforcat's Fluidité tea set displays the purity of form that has become the signature aesthetic of Dutch designer Aldo Bakker



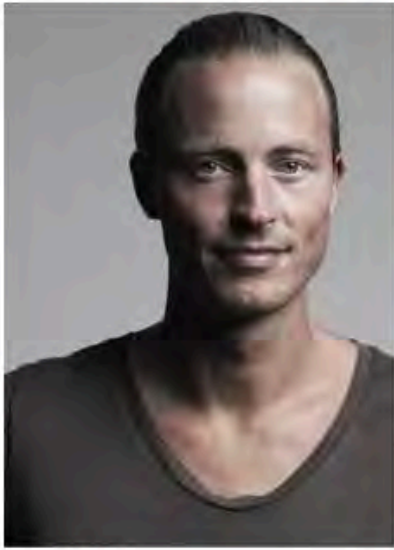
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It's not very often that a tea set invites much philosophical contemplation. But if you're lucky enough to be partaking in a ceremony involving these strikingly beautiful [Puiforcat](#) pieces designed by Aldo Bakker, you're much more likely to want to linger over the Lapsang.

The eight-piece set, which takes Puiforcat mastercraftsmen hundreds of hours to make, has just been launched at Atelier Courbet in New York as part of its latest exhibition: "Puiforcat: 200 Years of Silversmithery" alongside other sought-after works from the venerable French workshop.



Fluidité, Bakker's poetic and highly decadent coffee and tea set, is characteristic of both his own and Jean Puiforcat's approaches: to create



Aldo Bakker

[Enlarge](#)

pieces in which "purity of form transcends and invites contemplation" and every single experience of the day can become "a moment of contemplation and appreciation".

Signed and available in a limited edition of 20 numbered pieces, Fluidité is a continuation of Bakker's ongoing exploration of service rituals. Comprising eight handcrafted pieces, in sterling silver, ebony and porcelain, no single element is alike, yet – with their delicate proportions, and juxtaposed sharp and curved surfaces – they fit together on their tray like a sculpture park in miniature.

"The challenge for me was to create objects that linked to each other by one design principle: the interaction between two parts," says Bakker. "Each product needed to express this principle in its own way, but I wanted to avoid a repetition of shapes."



Products worth getting emotional about are still hard to find in the global design scape. Though its long been fashionable to talk about making products users can build a relationship with, that people can grow to love, or that age well over time, it's still usually the established rules of form and functionality that get first billing. The difference with Bakker's work is that beauty is always given top billing. Far beyond run-of-the-mill nice-looking aesthetics, Bakker pursues a can't-look-away-gorgeousness where materiality, texture, proportion and ritual are everything.

Practicality maybe not so much, but who minds about that? Anyone can make a workable tea set, after all.

Aldo Bakker, son of Droog founder and renowned Droog designer [Gijs Bakker](#) and jewellery designer Emmy van Leersum (1930 –1984), Bakker began his career making jewellery and models for his father in 1987. Since then he has created pieces for Danish metalware brand [Georg Jensen](#) and exhibited work at Spazio Rosanna Orlandi and Gallery Libby Sellers. While he still maintains a quiet profile, those familiar with his work will understand when I say his work is best known for being quite unfamiliar.



Aldo's 3dwn1up stool (2010-11) in elm wood

[Enlarge](#)



Constantly questioning an object's parameters, Bakker's pieces de-construct and re-construct in strange ways such that the resulting pieces – whether it be a jug, a stool or a saltshaker – aren't always immediately recognisable. A creative who is determined to follow his own trajectory rather than follow in the well-trodden paths of designers and artists before him, his pieces are determined by a fascination for form, not function. Design as problem solving isn't of any interest, unless the problem is how to bring more poetry and eye-watering loveliness into the physical world.

While Bakker has much to say on the matter of design, and teaches regularly at the Eindhoven Academy, he still prefers that any analysis of his pieces come from the user: "It has become very clear to me that my process of designing always starts from the belly instead of from the mind," he told me once. "To start a process of creation, one needs to feel instead of to know." Explaining that people are now more aware of the "dynamics" of a design, Bakker's search is a different one: he looks for character: whether that's in a line, shape or material. "One cannot escape from the attitude or behavior of an object."

Something to think about, perhaps. More tea?

Fluidité tea set comprise four pieces: tea pot, coffee pot, creamer and sugar bowl, £59,500 in sterling silver and ebony, plus rose gold immersion for the creamer and sugar bowl; porcelain and sterling silver tea cup, £630; porcelain and sterling silver coffee cup, £555, Puiforcat.com



