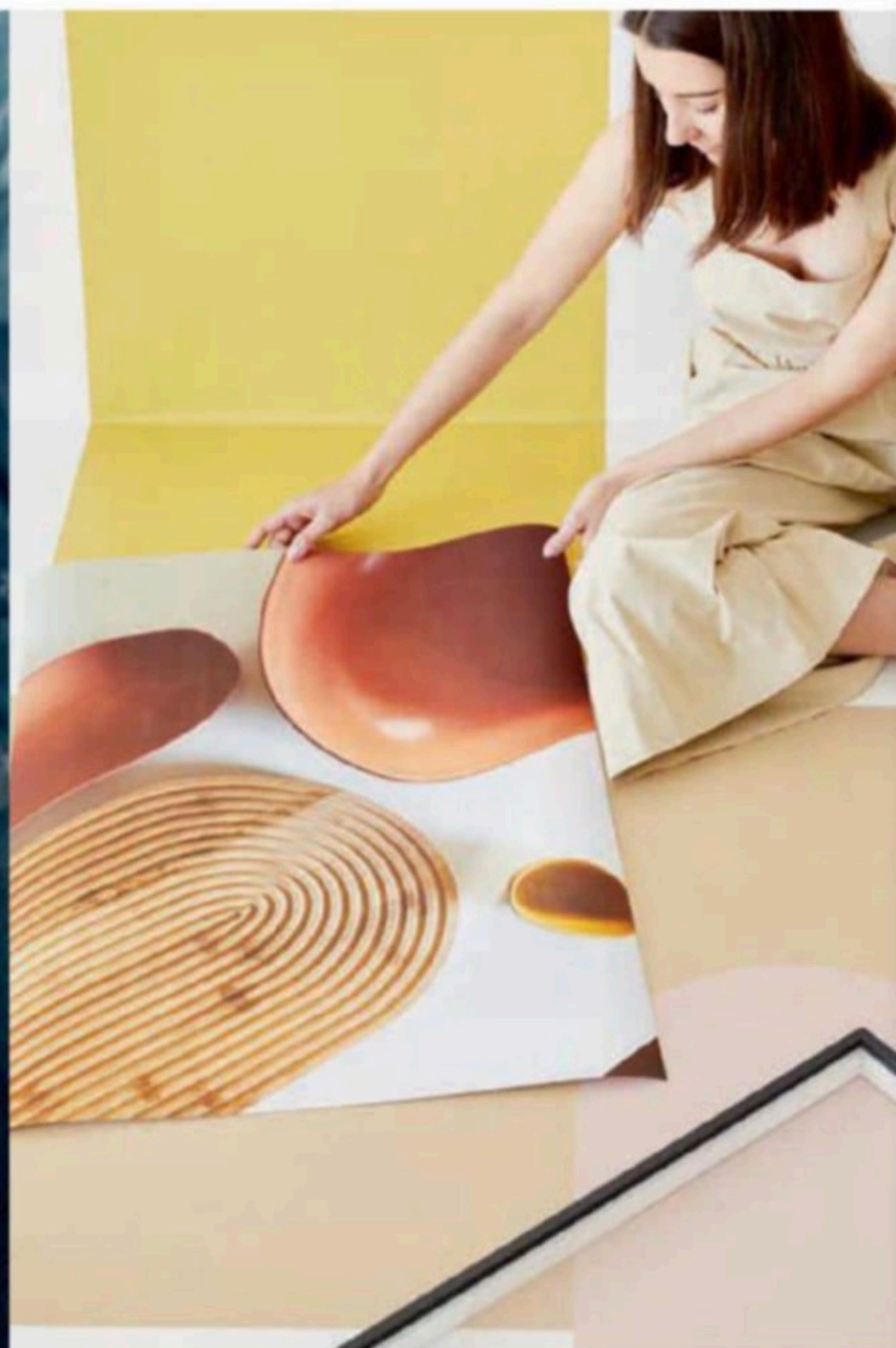


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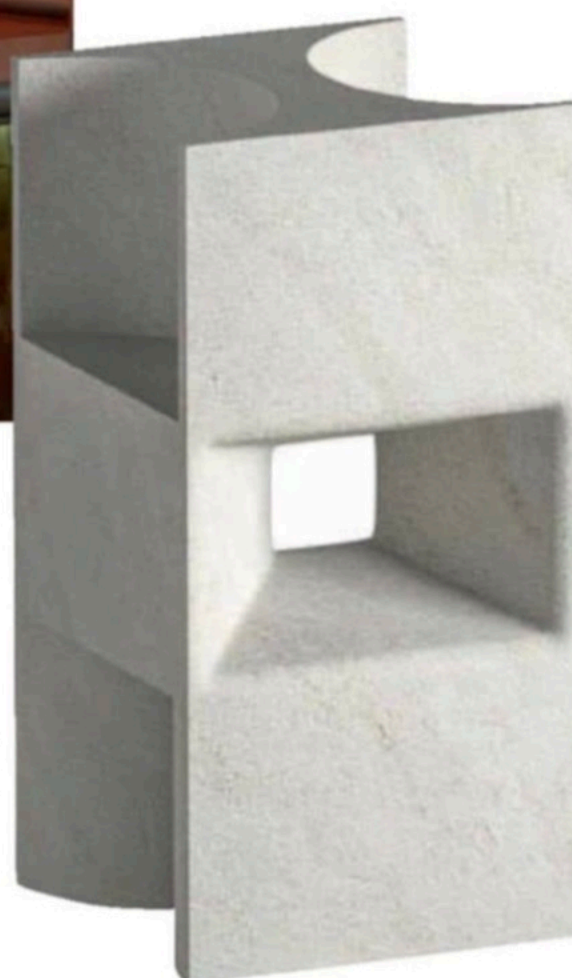


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High Style

Interior designer Aline Asmar d'Amman reveals the intricacies of designing iconic venues and how emotion and cultural influences feed her creative process *By Cheryl Lai-Lim*

If you were to take a peek at Aline Asmar d'Amman's desk, you would find a treasure trove of material samples, jewellery and crystals, as well as books about different disciplines. "Reading feeds my work; that, and a relentless thirst to discover and embrace the unknown," says the Lebanese designer and architect, who runs her studio Culture in Architecture, with offices in Paris and Beirut.

The design powerhouse made her mark in 2017 by masterfully orchestrating the renovation of the historic Hôtel de Crillon in Paris. D'Amman worked with many collaborators on the project,

including the late fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld. She hand-delivered her proposal on the hotel renovation to Lagerfeld's office as a request to collaborate, and her sincerity paid off; he phoned her the very next day. Together, they designed Les Grands Appartements, the signature suites at the Hôtel de Crillon, to "embody the best of what Paris has to offer".

Since then, her career has gone from strength to strength; in 2019, she completed the stunning renovation of the iconic Parisian restaurant Le Jules Verne at the Eiffel Tower. Her next project is as noteworthy—she will transform the Palazzo Donà Giovannelli,





This page, clockwise from top left: These counter seats in Le Jules Verne look out to the industrial beauty of the Eiffel Tower; mirrored panels and metallic trimmings add a subtle shine to the restaurant's interiors; a view of the Parisian skyline from Le Jules Verne

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Architectures, a collection of marble tables, mirrors and lights that d'Amman designed in collaboration with Karl Lagerfeld; Lebanese designer Aline Asmar d'Amman; the circular motifs and rounded furnishings in Le Jules Verne stand in contrast to the angular form of the Eiffel Tower

a 15th-century landmark in Italy, to house the new hotel, Rosewood Venice.

Tell us more about the recent renovation of Le Jules Verne.

Together with Michelin-starred chef Frédéric Anton, we wanted to tell the story of a magical encounter between the decorative arts and French gastronomy, in a soft heart veiled in metal lace. Every space was conceived as weaving a link with the City of Lights.

It was such a thrill to stand 125 metres up in the heart of the Eiffel Tower and start from scratch; we built a new layout, gained valuable ceiling height, and added seating with scenic views of the pulleys and the mechanical perfection of the Eiffel Tower. The furnishings are all bespoke; guests are greeted by a literary plate on the table, engraved with excerpts from French author Jules Verne's *The Voyages Extraordinaires* novels as a way to induce conversation using humour and imagination.

What is one design trend you're currently obsessed with?

Upcycling with a very curated eye

for material reuse and the heartfelt imprint of meticulous craft. I'm obsessed with brutalist textures; it's not about looking for the perfect piece, it's about the soulful material presence and an unpredictable natural beauty.

Who are the design icons that you admire?

I gather inspiration from women who have paved the way for future generations: Charlotte Perriand, Simone de Beauvoir, Coco Chanel, Elsie de Wolfe, Andrée Putman and Zaha Hadid, to name a few. There's a sense of moral duty in continuing their legacy, with women supporting one another in

the architecture and interior design industry, and beyond.

I use every project as a platform for the empowerment of women and raising awareness of their extraordinary talents. For instance, at Hôtel de Crillon, I imagined Marie Antoinette as a modern working woman who embraced action; someone who is far from the cliché of a pampered French queen. I also invited women artisans and artists to express their skills through mediums such as bronze, paint and sculpture (for the hotel interior). Sharing achievements with the many brilliant women I know gives me joy and makes every adventure a humanistic one!

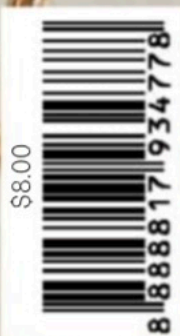
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Mood Board: How Aline Asmar d’Amman Takes Inspiration From Iconic Women

Words by CHERYL LAI-LIM | February 01, 2022



Interior designer Aline Asmar d’Amman reveals the intricacies of designing iconic venues and how emotion, women leaders and cultural influences feed her creative process

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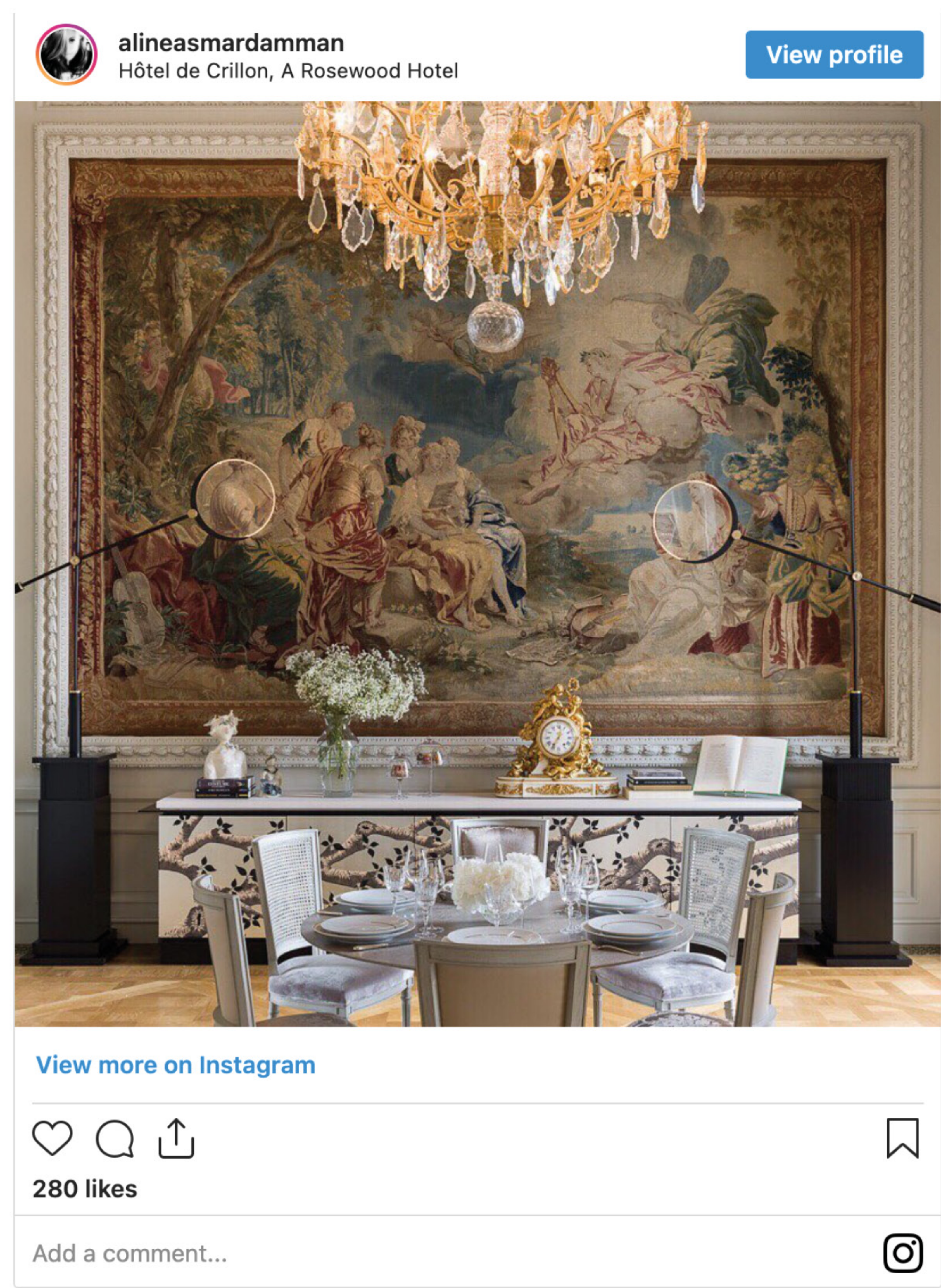
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ABOVE Lebanese designer Aline Asmar d’Amman

ABOVE D’Amman skilfully helmed the renovation of iconic Parisian restaurant Le Jules Verne at the Eiffel Tower



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ABOVE These counter seats in Le Jules Verne look out to the industrial beauty of the Eiffel Tower



ABOVE A view of the Parisian skyline from Le Jules Verne

Since then, her career has gone from strength to strength; in 2019, she completed the stunning renovation of the iconic Parisian restaurant Le Jules Verne at the Eiffel Tower. Here, she shares more about her creative journey so far, as well as the one thing that we’ll never find in her home.



ABOVE The circular motifs and rounded furnishings in Le Jules Verne stand in contrast to the angular form of the Eiffel Tower



ABOVE d'Amman used the symbol of the tower's architecture as a hope for women designers in every space and design decision

Tell us more about the recent renovation of Le Jules Verne.

Aline Asmar d'Amman (AAD): Together with Michelin-starred chef Frédéric Anton, we wanted to tell the story of a magical encounter between the decorative arts and French gastronomy, in a soft heart veiled in metal lace. Every space was conceived as weaving a link with the City of Lights.

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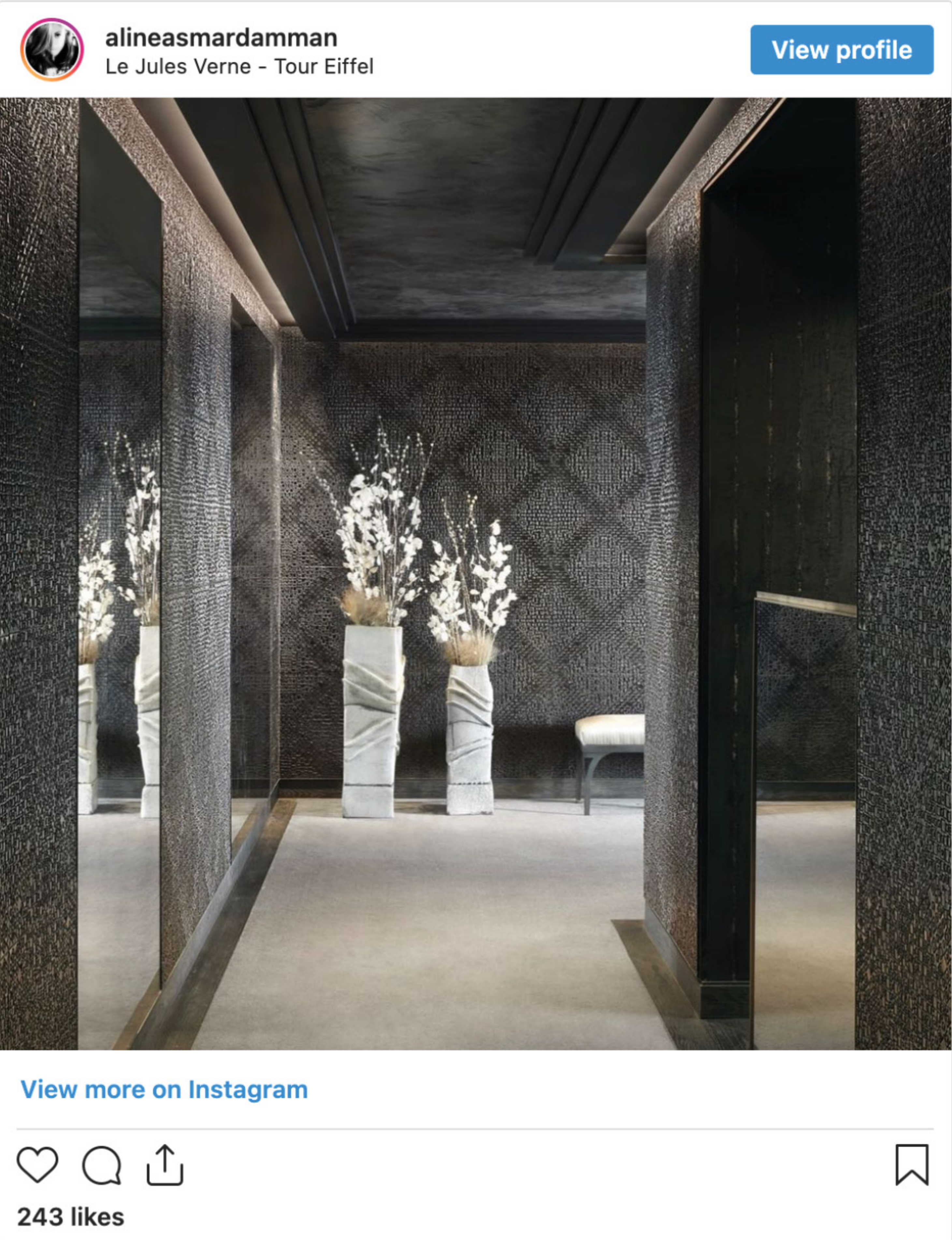


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What is one design trend you’re currently obsessed with?

AAD: Upcycling with a very curated eye for material reuse and the heartfelt imprint of meticulous craft. I’m obsessed with brutalist textures; it’s not about looking for the perfect piece, it’s about the soulful material presence and an unpredictable natural beauty.



Pick one: bright colours or neutral hues?

AAD: Fifty shades of grey! Light grey, pearly silvers, muted whites, stormy and bright greyish tones are my neutrals. I love to add colour in accessories, art, and accent pieces of functional sculptures, but my heart always goes to the rich layers between tinted whites and charcoal grays.

Complete the sentence: You’ll never see ____ in my home.

AAD: Plastic. I’m obsessed with brutalist textures and honest craftsmanship qualities. I simply can’t adopt any form of resins and ultra-processed materials. Physicality and materiality invoke poetry. It’s not about looking for the perfect piece, it’s about the soulful material presence, with the trace of a hand gesture and an unpredictable natural beauty.



Architectures, a collection of marble tables, mirrors and lights that d’Amman designed in collaboration with Karl Lagerfeld

Photo 1 of 2

What has been the most memorable point in your career thus far?

AAD: I believe in the magic of human encounters and I feel blessed by many that have had an impact on my daily thinking, work and life. Working with Karl Lagerfeld was a highlight and an immense privilege in my career; not only because he’s a design maverick with multifaceted talent, but also because he shared his knowledge with great generosity.

I met Karl when I was in charge of the artistic direction of the Parisian hospitality gem, Hôtel de Crillon in Paris. Later on, after this first realisation, we embarked on another journey: Architectures, a collection of functional sculptures such as tables, mirrors and luminaries.

Made exclusively in rare arabescato marble and black-and-white marquina, they’re a tribute to Karl’s love of Greek mythology and culture, which he considered as the origin of beauty. I feel utterly privileged to have developed this last collection with him. I have a very fond souvenir of the opening night in 2019, at the Carpenters Workshop Gallery in Paris, where I was by his side.




ABOVE Aline d'Amman pictured together with fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld (Photographed by Stephane Feugere)

Who are the design icons that you admire?

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Tell us more about your favourite designs that have been serving as a source of inspiration recently.

AAD: Furniture with an evocative presence and a soulful story inspire me the most. Living with pieces that have an emotional impact improves our well-being and the sense of mental escape we all need.

1. Memory of stones by Aline Asmar d'Amman



ABOVE Aline Asmar d'Amman's The Memory of Stones is a series of sculptural pieces of Vicenza stone featuring transplanted marble elements(Photographed by Marco Zorzanello)



ABOVE The designer aimed to bridge human and nature with the poetic collection (Photographed by Marco Zorzanello)

AAD: This is a collection I created with the idea of beautifying scars and elevating discarded pieces of forgotten marble with high-craft and bold compositions. Stone and marble are pieces of eternity. I imagined these functional sculptures as fragments of an endless imaginary shelter, an intuitive and poetic upcycling approach deepening one's personal landscape.

2. Volumetric bronze chair by Voukenas Petrides



AAD: I find myself drawn to the organic world of curves and primitive shapes by Voukenas Petrides, a brilliant design duo made up of Greek furniture designer Andreas Voukenas and American architect Steven Petrides, who are creating furniture that are true works of art from their workshop in Athens. I recently purchased their golden bronze volumetric chair and it feels so special to see my boys nested in it.

3. Smoking by Aline Asmar d'Amman



AAD: When it comes to lighting, I love to layer in different scales and lighting types in a room; it's like drawing a new horizon: sconces on a wall, a floor lamp, a table lamp contribute to the intimacy feeling and the idea of waking up every corner in a special way.

I was looking for jewellery-like pieces that had the androgynous silhouette of a timeless haute-couture suit when designing Smoking, a collection of sophisticated contemporary luminaries, all in black metal, brass, onyx, and white silk lampshades, made in France. There's something utterly chic about black and white with a touch of gold that feels unsurpassable.

4. Antiques in Paris



AAD: Hunting for antiques and the thrill of finding treasures at galleries anywhere in the world is one of my favorite pastimes! Being in Paris is, of course, a treat as the flea market is one of the best in the world. The adventure is real and there’s no specific reference, but I would definitely love to leave the Parisian antique scene with a spectacular hand carved patinated vintage mirror frame to nurture the magical combinations of old and new objects in ones’ room.

5. Zaha Hadid's designs



AAD: Last but not least, I am grateful for Iraqi architect and designer Zaha Hadid paving the way in design for generations to come. I tend to obsessively select a piece of hers in my interiors, from my home to a client’s residence or on a shelf of a special hotel project, they have a distinctive presence and pay tribute to a great woman.