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Moncler

Gilles & Boissier
Bardula Studio
By Alex Klimoski

ON THE elite retail strip of Madison Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side, a lustrous, dynamic light installation titled *Solaris* serves as the gateway to a new flagship store for luxury-fashion purveyor Moncler. The idea, according to Patrick Gilles of the French interior design firm Gilles & Boissier, was to create a display that would draw in passersby "like a lung." Working with Paris-based Bardula Studio, his vision came to life.

Bardula, a pseudonym for a Belgian artist (with gold- and silversmith training), collaborates with her architect

husband to produce what the pair calls "abstract geometries"—dynamic artworks made from mostly metal, mirrors, and LEDs. Gilles had worked with the studio in 2015 to create a series of light-infused volumetric sculptures for New York's Baccarat Hotel, so he knew that the couple would be the right fit for the Moncler project.

"When Patrick Gilles said that he wanted a physical structure integrated into the entry alcove, and that it had to signal a progression, I knew it was our cup of tea," says Bardula, whose name originates from a character in a children's fairy tale. The piece also had to provide a contemporary contrast to the store's dark, classical décor—including its Italian marble floors and walls, oxidized tarnished brass fixtures, and wood paneling.

Drawing upon one of their past works, a digital LED and Plexiglas sculpture called *Dome*, the husband-and-wife team used a spherical form as a starting point. "We wanted

RADIANT PORTAL
Paris-based Bardula Studio's glimmering installation of anodized aluminum and LEDs surrounds the entryway to Moncler's new Madison Avenue storefront, bathing customers in sequences of golden light.



SUN FLARE

Twenty-four carved metal fins were placed on either side of the foyer to form an open spherical volume intended to evoke the sun. Behind each fin, elongated LED fixtures shift color temperature every six seconds, creating a subtle gradient effect.



to work off of the image of the sun as the heart of the solar system,” Bardula says. The concept was to create a radiating orbicular volume out of a sequence of metal fins, so customers could immerse themselves as they enter the store—like being pulled into the center of the Moncler universe, according to the artists.

Although the fins, which were cut with a CNC water jet machine in France and installed on-site, were to have a golden hue, using gold was out of the question due to its high price and heavy weight. Brass had similar limitations, so the artists used golden-tinged anodized aluminum. The electrochemical process, which was done by hand, also lends a craftlike feel to the fins, giving each piece a slightly different shade and enriching the overall work’s glistening effect.

To simulate the pulsing magnetism of the sun, LED fixtures spanning the 13-foot height of the installation were placed behind each of the blades (there are 24 on each side), and controlled to shift color temperature every six seconds, progressing through the full range of white light to form a gradient effect. Working with the lighting manufacturer KKDC, the team programmed two main “scenes”: the first features warm at the center and cold at the extremities, then shifts to cold at the center and warm at the extremities; the second switches back and forth from cold on one end to warm on the other.

As a result, “Solaris” offers a hypnotic spatial experience that pulls you into Gilles & Boissier’s interior, which opens up to the right of the main corridor, into a series of sumptuous, interconnected rooms where merchandise is displayed. The glowing entryway also frames a monumental bust by sculptor Christophe Charbonnel that anchors the far end of the passage.

“Bardula Studio’s piece represents a dynamic airlock between the street and the inside of the shop,” says Gilles. “It offers those who come into Moncler a real experience.” ■

credits

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Gilles & Boissier – Patrick Gilles, principal

LIGHT-INSTALLATION DESIGNER: Bardula Studio

CONSULTANT: LightIQ (lighting); Michel Delarasse (fabrication)

CLIENT: Moncler

COMPLETION DATE: October 2016

SOURCES

LIGHTING: KKDC (linear LEDs)