



## for The BACCARAT HOTEL NEW YORK : THE HARCOURT VITRINES

### WHEN ART MEETS DESIGN

Words by Brogan Hough

In March 2015, 53rd Street, New York's Baccarat hotel became the centre point of unique French art by presenting the Harcourt Vitrines devised by Parisian interior designers Gilles & Boissier - who were also honoured with task of designing the entire hotel. The collection takes place among the hotel's specially curated collection, by art connoisseur Frédéric Chambre, director of art auction house Piasa, rue du Faubourg St Honoré in Paris. Other selected French artists Eva Jospin, Gilles Barbier, Cécile Meynier, Armand Jonckers, Vincent Fournier, Mathieu Mercier, Marianne Guely, François Houtin, Ludovic Sauvage and Bardula were given carte blanche to create works on the theme of the Harcourt Glass, a timeless Baccarat icon.

Bardula, the creative genius behind Harcourt Vitrines focusses his five piece collection of fire, air, water, earth, and quintessence around brushed aluminium installations which form a kinetic geometric whole magnified by permeating light. Asked to give a reference to the idea of explosion within his work, Bardula uses simple geometric shapes to incorporate the symbolism of the elements, and portray their explosive energy through the materials ability to deflect light. With fire being the cone, air – the cube, water – the hexagon, and earth – the sphere, the elements also all feature the hotel's symbolic Harcourt glass as their centre point.

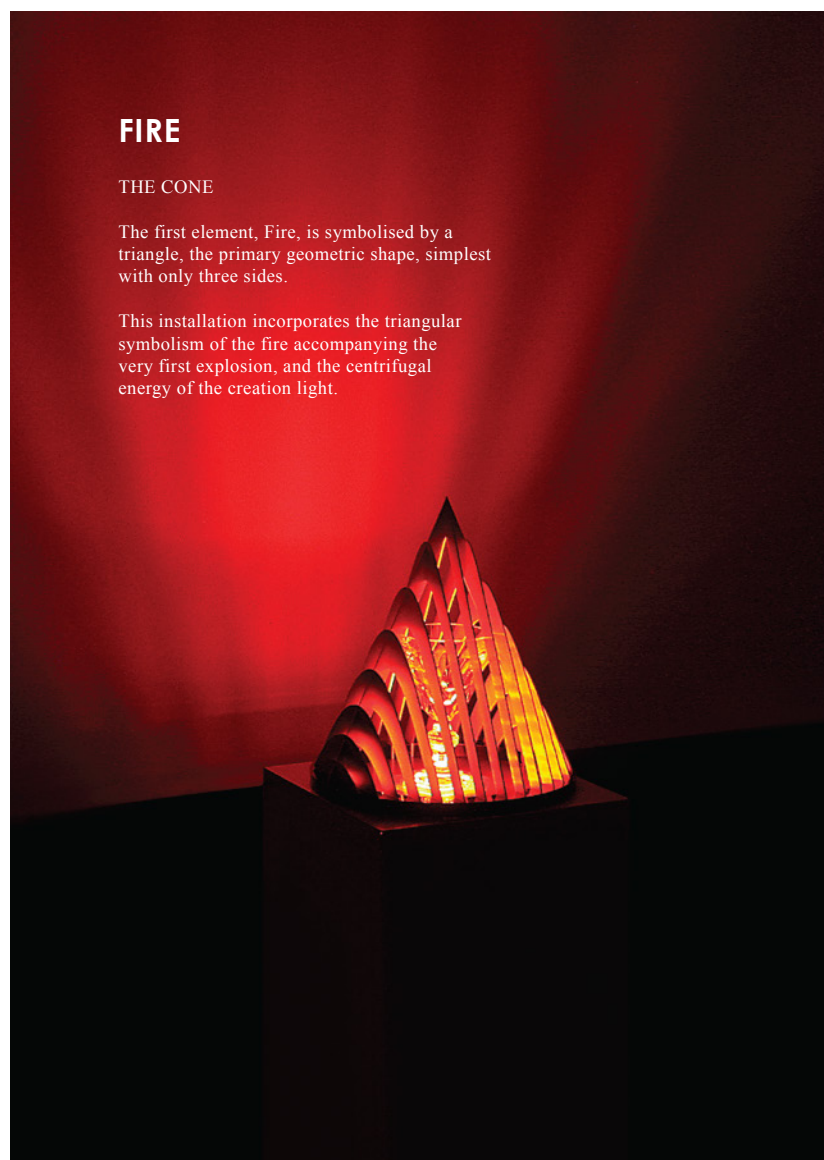
The final element, quintessence, also known as 'the force of life' links them all together. Demonstrating a sphere inscribed inside a cube, this particular piece represents a universal symbolism of the squaring of the circle. "Quintessence" was the name given by the ancient philosophers to the element which filled the universe, expanding beyond fire, air, water and earth and holding everything in its place. Like the other elements, the Harcourt glass is also quintessence's centre point, and all five pieces are placed in glass display cases in front of the hotel's suites, representing a complete symbiosis of contemporary French refinement, creativity and expertise of the Baccarat heritage. The works belong to the hotels private collection and are exclusive to the viewing of hotel guests, also considered to be amongst the most expensive in New York.

### FIRE

#### THE CONE

The first element, Fire, is symbolised by a triangle, the primary geometric shape, simplest with only three sides.

This installation incorporates the triangular symbolism of the fire accompanying the very first explosion, and the centrifugal energy of the creation light.







## WATER

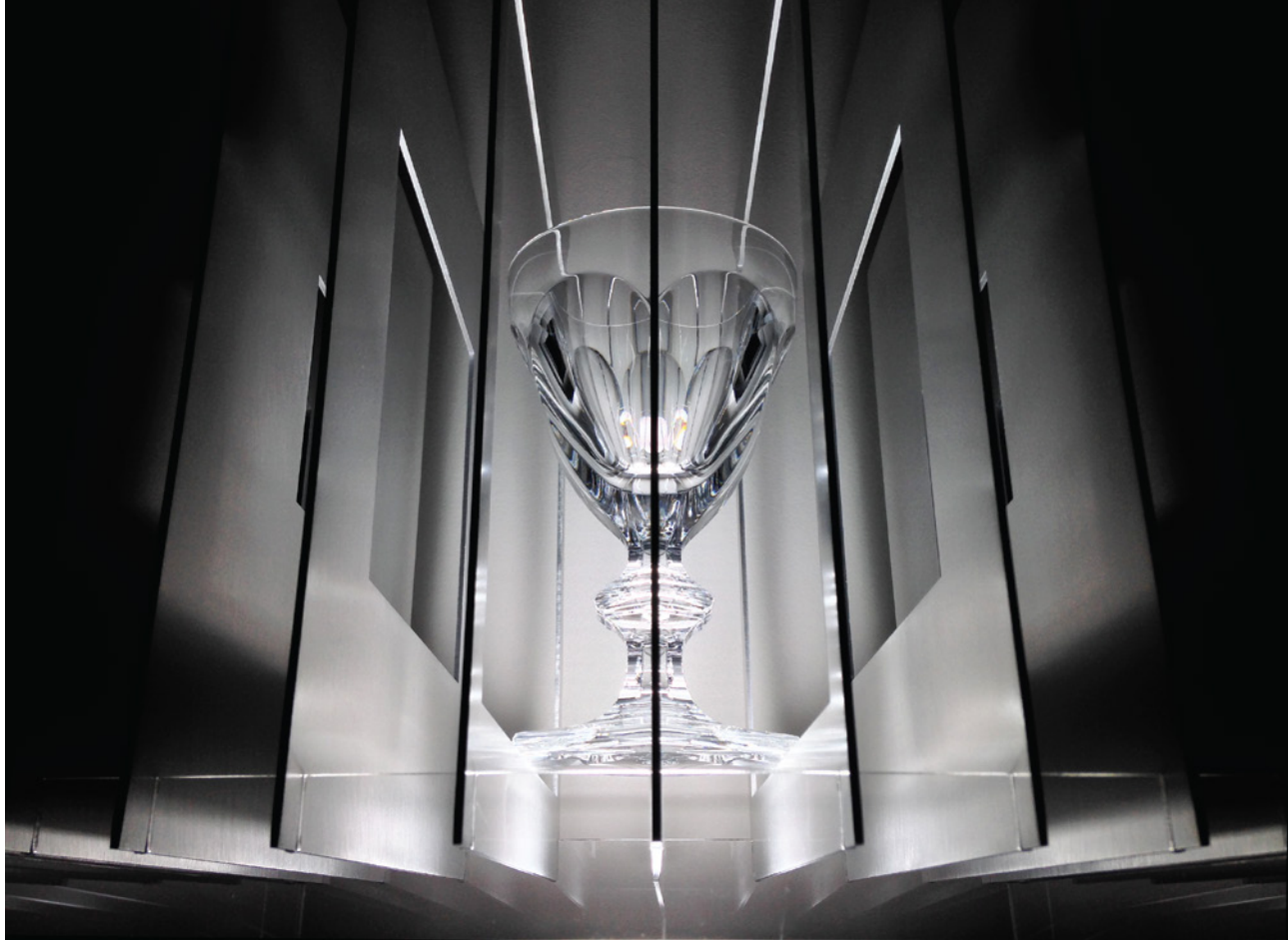
### THE HEXAGONE

The six-sided hexagon follows the square in the geometric sequence. Water is the third element and the sine qua non condition for life on earth. Symbol of France, the country where Baccarat was founded, and one where a long tradition of excellence in the fields of art and craftsmanship has yielded a brilliant cultural heritage.

The symbol of water mirrors the fundamental nature of a glass as the natural receptacle for the substance, and the outline of the installation, which echoes the Harcourt Glass's hexagonal base and highlights the formal links between the two.







## AIR

### THE CUBE

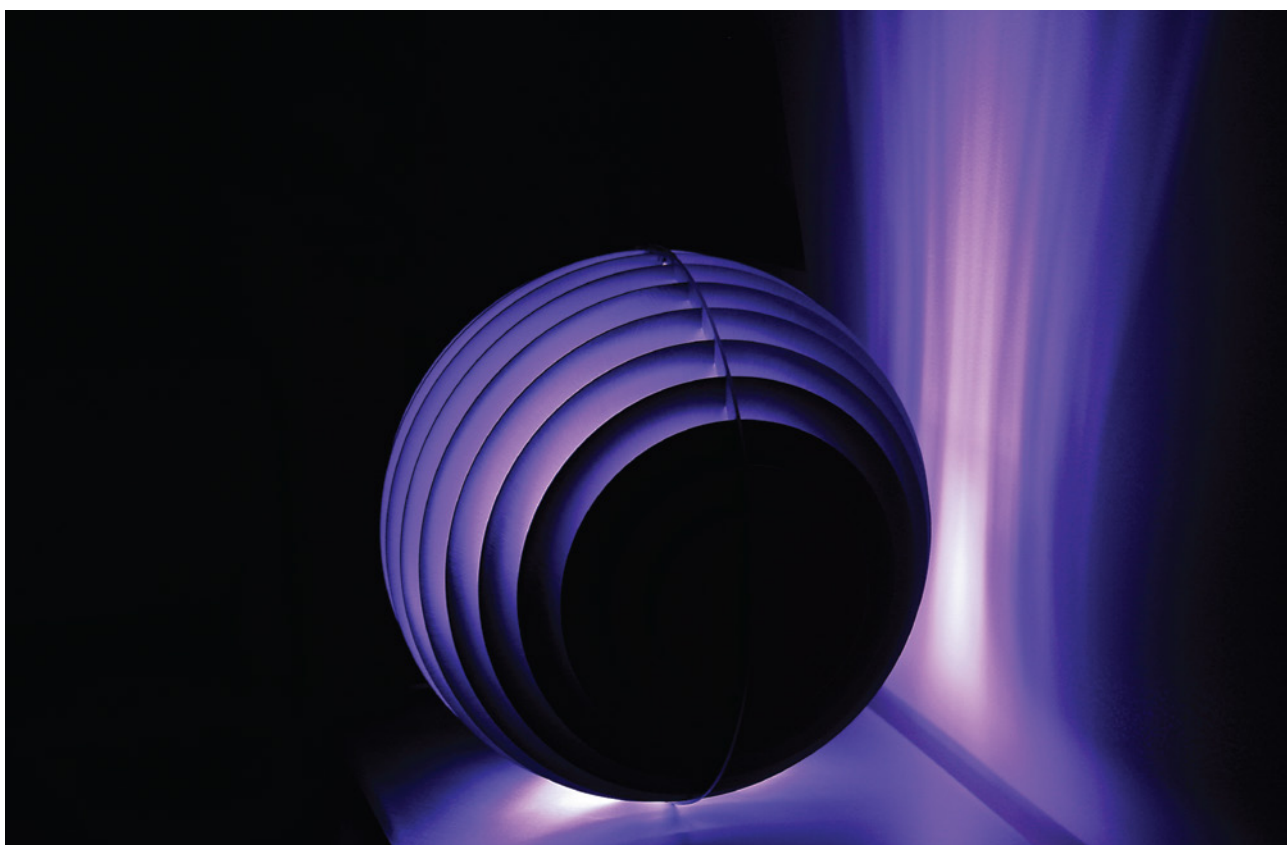
In Euclidean geometry, the four-sided square follows the triangle. The cubic volume is made up of a succession of hollow squares symbolising a breath of air.

This kinetic installation, the second element, presents the Harcourt Glass as though it were a gem in a jewelled setting. The empty space in each successive layer is akin to light radiating from the magnified, diamond-like Glass.

## EARTH

### THE SPHERE

The sphere in this installation stands for Earth, the last of the four elements. The Harcourt Glass appears to be suspended in the centre of this sphere, radiating outwards as though from the centre of the earth.





## QUINTESSENCE

### THE SPHERE INSCRIBED IN A CUBE

This installation is a reinterpretation of the universal symbolism of the squaring of the circle. "Quintessence" was the name given by the ancient philosophers to the ether – the element which filled the universe and the infinite expanses beyond fire, air, water and earth, and which held everything in its place. By way of tribute to the Renaissance's humanist ideas, the Harcourt Glass is symbolically inscribed in a circle like Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.