





Some women, through their work, are striking for their talent and commitment. In her show room on the Rue Las Cases, in Paris, the interior architect, designer and furniture producer composes a narrative according to a singular vocabulary. In her work, colours are flamboyant; materials, sensual; and lines, curved. Her vision is extremely feminine. Like her iconic design *Bishop*, variously a stool or side table depending on its cover or mood, recognisable for its undulations, which suggest the shape of a woman's body. Sensual, therefore. That's India Mahdavi's signature. When she was invited to create an exclusive collection for the table for Dior MARDON, which was presented at the opening of the House of Dior store in London, she designed tableware in powder-toned porcelain and organic shapes. Plates in white, grey and pink – Christian Dior's favourite colours – evoke floral designs in reference to the couturier's passion for gardens. One finds, in their openwork motifs and soft appearance, an homage to the delicate handwork in Dior haute couture. "When I work on a project, I treat my sensibility, I listen to a space and I draw inspiration from the person. It guides me and allows me to compose something that resembles them," she explains. The *Alber* table comes to mind, which was created for the designer Alber Elbaz, who needed a piece large enough to spread out his papers however he pleased, so does the *Bition*, an asymmetrical, graphic *chaise longue* bedside chair made for the photographer Bettina Rheims and designed to melt into an interior rich in family history. "I also describe my work as a modern comfort, something that's reassuring, where modernity resides in the treatment of materials or the clash of colours," Mahdavi continues. With not a single false note, she combines, pairs and mixes in abundance, creating spaces with deep reflections thanks to her favourite fabric, velvet, which is so sensual to the touch. India Mahdavi is at ease with her slightly extreme choices. Take, for example, the restaurant *Sketch*, in London, which comes to life in a palette of pinks. "In that masculine atmosphere, I had to take a stand in a cube space decorated with 250 David Shrigley drawings," she interior architect confides. "I wanted to take a woman's stance, and bring my vision and softness to the space."

When she was a little girl, her father taught her to stand up for her convictions with confidence. "Today, my independence is my strength. It's what I built. I'm very free in my work. I create, produce and distribute. To my mind, it's a sort of passive feminism. I assert myself as a woman through a very feminine perspective." Naturally, she was delighted to learn of Maria Grazia Chiuri's appointment as Artistic Director of the haute couture, ready-to-wear and women's accessories collections for Dior. "She proved with her first collection, for spring-summer 2017, that she was capable of integrating Dior's history into her vision. She did not make a clean break with the past, quite the opposite, she glorified it." India Mahdavi looks for balance in her own projects, so when she speaks of the Artistic Director's ethos, she can't help but remark the cleverly balanced quality of their inspirations. To her eye, the delicate embroidery and airy materials parallel the sporty theme – sewing, to be precise – a discipline in which the uniform is, save for the absence of special protective elements, identical to those worn by real forces. Dior's collection must be interpreted in its globality, like Mahdavi's own work, in sum.

## India MAHDAVI

HER WORK IS RENOWNED THE WORLD OVER AND HER SIGNATURE, UNMISTAKABLE. INDIA MAHDAVI IS A DESIGNER OF SOARING IMAGINATION AND ENVELOPING, COMFORTING ATMOSPHERES. SHE IS ALSO A QUIET FORCE WHO ASSERTS HER FEMININITY WITH PRECISION AND RELEVANCE.

BY MORGANE PAULISSEN  
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