

RETAIL

The window is the frame and the perfumery a work of art: it's JAKOB + MACFARLANE's strategy to pull in Parisians from one of the city's busiest streets









PARIS — Frédéric Malle sells perfume but rejects the high-decibel hype of leading brands. Instead, he likens himself to a publisher, seeking new talent, nurturing creative work and producing it in uniform bindings. As the nephew of movie director Louis Malle and the grandson of the man who launched Christian Dior's perfume company, he has a solid grounding in business *and* in the art of seduction. He previously hired André Putman to design a Parisian boutique and turned to Steven Holl for an outpost in New York; now he's given Dominique Jakob and Brendan MacFarlane carte blanche to come up with another original showcase for his family of 12 perfumers. 'He loved our interiors for the Florence Loewy bookstore and Georges restaurant,' says MacFarlane, 'but for this project he wanted to incorporate elements from his other stores and do something different.'

MacFarlane goes on to say that 'the challenge was to transport shoppers to another world within a 25-m² retail space on one of the most visited streets in Paris'. Upscale boutiques and contemporary art galleries compete for the attention of well-heeled locals and tourists on this stretch of the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois in the Marais. That gave the architects their first cue: dispense with the froufrou of most perfumeries and turn the interior into a work of art framed by the store window. To expand the space, Jakob + MacFarlane mirrored the side walls and ceiling, clad the rear wall in polished stainless steel and chose brushed stainless for the floor. Niches for each of the chunky, uniform vials are built into raw-plywood display units, along with portraits of the scents' makers. The architects brought in L'Observatoire from New York to create subtle lighting effects that change through the day and glow like hot coals after dark. 'It's a shoebox that extends to infinity, with shelf units floating in a void,' says MacFarlane. 'The forms are sensual and tactile, offering a physical and psychological experience.' — MW

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Jakob + MacFarlane used reflective materials to visually expand Frédéric Malle's 25-m² Parisian perfumery.