



Perfume Painter

BESPOKE AND CONTEMPORARY PARISIAN PERFUMER
FRANCIS KURKDJIAN GIVES HIS VIEWS ON THE ARTISTIC
DETAILS OF HIS WORK



EVOKING THE SENSES

Every bottle from the maison that bears his name is imbued with Francis Kurkdjian's inspired touch

MAISON FRANCIS KURKDJIAN fragrances are available in a majority of the world's most notable stores such as Bergdorf Goodman and now in its own boutique at Grand Hyatt Hotel in Kuala Lumpur – a great success indeed considering the fact that the brand has only been on the scene for approximately five years. A co-founder of the maison alongside his business partner Marc Chaya, Francis Kurkdjian is the creative spirit behind the brand's delightful potions. He had worked with some of the world's biggest brands such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, before starting his own bespoke workshop fragrance atelier and maison. From the clean and fresh scent of his Aqua Universalis to the warm and

comfortable scent of Cologne Pour le Soir, his fragrances are highly sought after by ladies who wish to be different from others.

The arts have always been a childhood dream of this talented perfumer, who is of Armenian descent. Born in Paris, he learned classical ball and piano from a young age and he enrolled at ISIPCA, an international perfumery school, to become a perfumer. Often viewed as an object of beautification, olfactory items rarely transcend into the realm of performances, art displays or installations. Kurkdjian has participated in a number of collaborative and artistic projects, such as a re-creation of Queen Marie Antoinette perfume and playing a part in an olfactory ballet with Christian Rizzo for Fondation Cartier. The latter had ballerinas performing their graceful pirouettes while a scent he crafted for the evening lingered in the air – a true sensorial treat.

The topic on perfumery being a form of art was a subject of debate that Kurkdjian took away from his schooling days. "Most perfumers see themselves as artists. To some extent we are, but think about it, an artist does not place a price on their paintings. The market does. Yet, we do put a price on perfume. Then again, I do feel like an artist when I create a perfume and put it out. It is bizarre," he muses.

Kurkdjian views having his own brand and then working on artistic projects and collaborations on the side as akin to expanding his work into a bigger picture to form what he believes is art. "If you are a photographer, you do photo shoots for a brand that hires you and you can also have an exhibition at a gallery. So that's why I decided to do things on the side that is related to perfuming that is not commercial," he explains.

He always has an idea of a scent in his head before the work starts. "My teacher used to tell me, 'If you do not have anything to say, it is best to be silent'. So as a perfumer, like a writer or painter, you need an idea as a starting point. So you nurture yourself enough so at some point you could have an inspiration. Only then you are willing to say something and then the work begins," he says. He then asserted that the ingredients are the 'colour' that he uses to compose his work. In a way, he uses the term 'reverse engineering' to achieve the scent he envisions; he then picks the ingredients to 'paint the picture he has in his head'.

His perfuming philosophy is simple to grasp "When you are a child, you have diverse things to know and learn. It is the same thing. I have seen people of creative arts do the same thing over and over again. Even more so, if it is your own brand, you should not repeat yourself and your ideas," he opines. It is no wonder then why his fragrances are so well received. **T**