

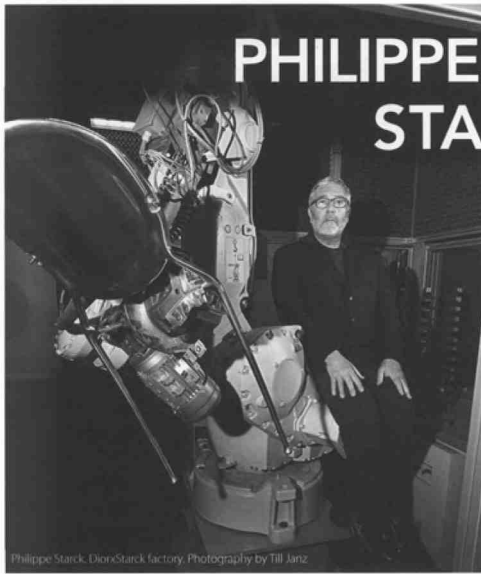
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## PHILIPPE STARCK

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Philippe Starck, DiorStarck factory. Photography by Till Janz

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**Dior** has partnered with renowned industrial architect and designer Philippe [Starck](#) to reinterpret the iconic *Medallion* chair, an emblem of Dior that has been used to welcome guests since the Maison was founded. [Starck's](#) contemporary *Miss Dior* has realised 24 interpretations through luxurious materials such as gold, chrome and copper.

▣ **What were your first thoughts when approaching the *Medallion* chair?**

Philippe Starck: The *Medallion* chair was considered the chair of always and forever. Christian Dior had an extraordinary instinct, which embodied modernity, durability, continuation and timelessness. Working on an icon always interests me because icons are not designed by anyone – they are made by our collective subconsciousness. Originally, it was the seat of a king, one of the first chairs that people saw, and was revered by everyone. Today it is 'common', in the good sense of the word. So, I tried to find the reason for the icon's existence. When Dior asked me to work with them, I worked on the basis of the icon. My idea was to purify until there was nothing left, until we had the elegance of the minimum.

▣ **How did you bring your architectural background and industrial design into the reinterpretation?**

My father was a famous plane engineer and manufacturer. I learned to draw with him and I understood that in order for an airplane to fly, it must be created in such a way that it does not fall, and for that you need rigour. He taught me that the absolute minimum is the only intelligence, the only modernity. I am extraordinarily rigorous, I work alone, obsessed. My goal is always to go to the minimum. I like to get to the bone of things, to the square root. The work done on this chair is schizophrenic, like a maniacal craftsman, ready to put on 20,000 layers. Except that instead of adding to the layers, I took them off until I was sure I couldn't remove anything else. This is what my Holy Grail really is, my centre of operation.



**What makes the *Medallion* chair the perfect starting point for artistic collaborations and interpretations?**

The responsibility of reimagining this icon of Christian Dior is an honourable and gigantic one, because it is the entirety of French Haute Couture, this French spirit and elegance that needed to be highlighted. As the couturiers and Christian Dior in particular always had, in a corner of their minds, the little black dress, on my side I have always had – in an almost obsessive sense – this idea of the little chair designed as perfect and forever.

**How do you see the personality of the chair and what new dimensions do you feel you have brought to its character?**

In addition to being the unconscious icon of the West, the interest of today is that there is no more diktat. Everyone has

the right to look at things as they wish. Someone can see this chair as a work of art, while others can see it as a chair and someone else will see it as a cultural symbol. All of them will be right. That's the point of our time. All the myths and the diktats have collapsed. I didn't do it to make art, I did it to simply reach the minimum of something. *Miss Dior* is an eternal chair. I found the spirit, the shape, the comfort, the resistance, the lightness and the right weight.

**Can you say something about the materials you chose to use?**

The manufacture of this chair required the use of a very technical form of aluminum that we found in Europe. As a European of French origin, it seemed important to me to work in Europe and we made it with the help of an Italian manufacturer.





DiorStark factory. Photography by Tili Janz. All images courtesy of DiorStark.

The material is noble, ecological in itself, and of course aluminum is an indestructible material, which ensures the extreme longevity of the object. Every gramme of material is counted to reach the minimum of the minimum. The less material there is, the more humanity there is. The aluminum version is the sign of a neutral modernity and it is then declined in three versions: in black chromium, which refers to the technology and corresponds to a more austere atmosphere; in pink copper, offering a softer colour;

and finally, the sacred as defined by Lacan or Freud, is embodied in a gold version.

**Why did you choose the title Miss Dior for the piece?**

While designing the chair, I always thought about a young woman, a "Miss", and so Maison Dior decided to call it Miss Dior. It is the perfect name; it fits and it's easy to imagine this Miss: elegant, young, happy, whimsical.