

MARKETING

## Herms, Baccarat artisans awarded for contributions to French heritage

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Still from Herms' *La Fabrique de la Soie* film

By STAFF REPORTS

The French minister of culture and communications has awarded six artisans with the distinguished Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres insignia for their dedication to France's cultural heritage.

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Audrey Azoulay, France's minister of culture and communications, presented the award to six artisans on April 12 as recognition for their contributions to traditional hand crafts. The artisans work at French luxury houses that belong to the Comite Colbert, an organization that advocates and supports France's skilled artisans.

### Carriers of craft

The six individuals awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres were selected based on their career dedication to hand crafts. The individuals are hailed as role models for the younger generations who may be hesitant to follow a professional artisan career path.

Honorees include Nathalie Blaise, a model maker at Baccarat; Arnaud Davenne, a Puiforcat silversmith; Yves Delorme's head of weaving and jacquard atelier, Jacqueline Deverchere; expert weaver at Herms, Josette Gonnot; Eric Lebel, cellar master at Krug Champagne and Celine Vergne, head of the hand painted and glazing ateliers at Les Faienceries de Gien.

This year's award recipients come from all corners of France, showing the breadth of French craftsmanship. The honorees work in Lorraine, Seine-Saint-Denis, Loire, Rhone, Marne and Loriet.



*Yves Delrome factory*

"With this decoration, the French Republic honors outstanding crafts, rare talents and impeccable techniques," said Ms. Azoulay in a statement. "It also salutes the willingness of these artisans to preserve our national heritage by perpetuating time-honored gestures, reinventing them daily and, above all, transmitting them to the younger generations."

Elisabeth Ponsolle des Portes, president/CEO of the Comite Colbert, echoed the minister's statement, saying, "In decorating artisans from Colbert houses with the insignia of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, the French minister of culture honors the contribution of luxury crafts in promoting French culture worldwide.

"This year's group had a high feminine component, which will encourage all of the young women choosing to work in hand crafts today," she said. "This group of outstanding artisans covers the map of France in terms of regional craft skills."

The Comit Colbert was established in 1954 by Jean-Jacques Guerlain, founder of the perfume house of the same name, "to promote the concept of luxury," and today it counts 78 maisons and 14 cultural institutions as members ([see story](#)).