PERROTIN

PRESSBOOK

Wim DELVOYE

The Japan Times

January 2018

The elaboration of decoration as art

Nynke Koster's 'Elements of time' (2015) | PHOTO BY DAVID IN DEN BOSCH

ART

The elaboration of decoration as art

BY **JOHN L. TRAN**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In the setting of what is probably Tokyo's most stylishly decorated art museum, curator Kasumi Yamaki explains the theme of the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum's latest exhibition "Decoration Never Dies, Anyway."

"I've always wondered what the audience are thinking when they use the word 'decoration. Does it mean something positive? Rich? Extraordinary? Of course beautiful. Is it something they think is necessary to life, though? I doubt it," she says. "Also, this is an art museum, and art people use the term 'decorative' in a very negative way — contemporary art is focused on concept, and 'decorative' is like a dirty word. For audiences though, decoration is very positive, so where does that difference in attitude come from?"

The narrative of decoration as "low" and art as "high" culture is tackled in exhibits for which the issue is central, but also indirectly by virtue of their inclusion in the show, all of which plays beautifully with the museum's art deco interiors. Belgian-born serious prankster Wim Delvoye's exhibits make a point of extraordinary, ornate detailing — model trucks turned into Gothic fantasies, Rimowa aluminium suitcases covered with elaborate Islamic patterns and car tires turned into delicate medieval illuminations. British-born Kour Pour references his Iranian heritage with life-size riffs on Persian rug design. Using silk-screen printing and painting, Pour mixes imagery from ancient Egypt, Medieval Europe, Japan and other cultures, one result of which is to offer a critical distance to different social practices.

JAN 9, 2018

ARTICLE HISTORY

🖶 PRINT ⮕ SHARE

PHOTOS

🔍 CLICK TO ENLARGE