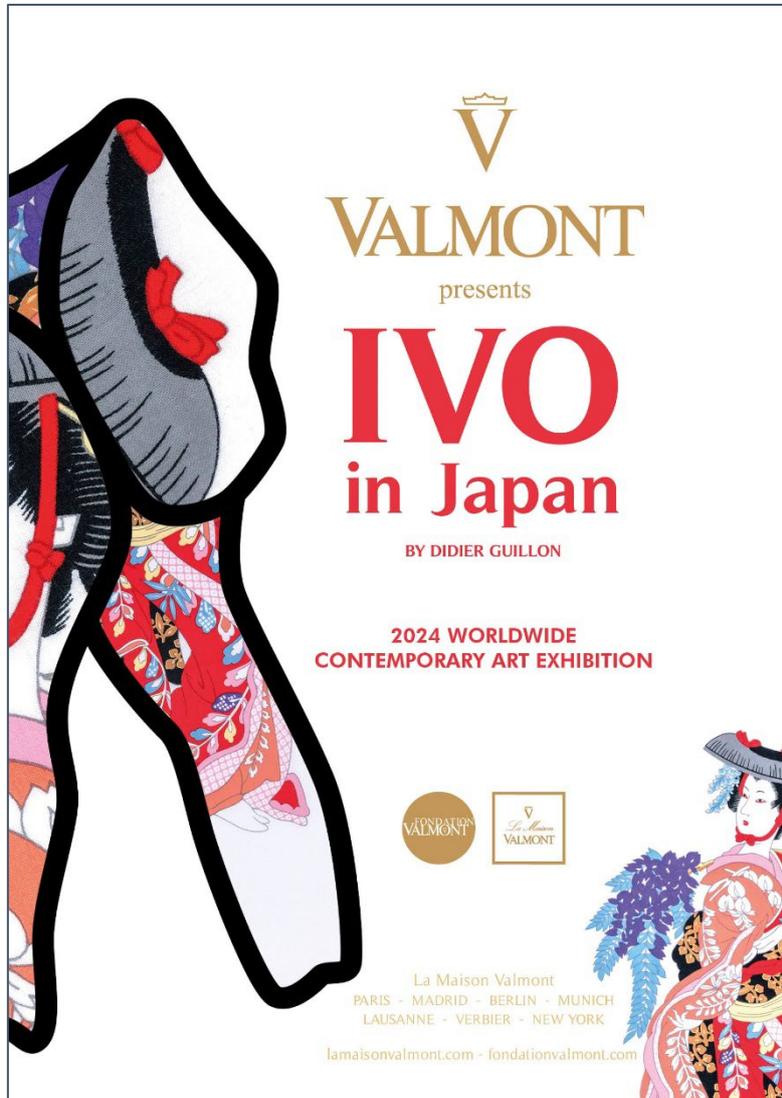




Press release  
Ivo in Japan  
December 2023



*Valmont presents an exhibition of contemporary art*

**LA MAISON VALMONT**  
Paris - Madrid - New York  
1.02.2024 - 28.04.2024

*Munich*  
23.05.2024 - 15.09.2024

*Berlin*  
20.09.2024 – 31.12.2024

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## Preface: Ivo, Harmony & Melancholy

Japanese aesthetics and the sensitivity of mono-no-aware, so subtle, delicate, and complex, wholeheartedly approve of the stylized, almost abstract silhouette of Ivo, Didier Guillon's playful gorilla.

When Ivo, in order to present himself in Japan, dons the timeless patterns of kimonos or obis, the refined motifs of Imari porcelain, the ever-moving Fuji-san, or the poignant fragments of ukiyo-e and Hokusai, the strange and elusive beauty of mono-no-aware in turn embraces the transient Ivo and his judicious borrowings.

It was in Venice that I discovered the whimsical silhouette of the globe-trotting gorilla. I have encountered it often, in Amsterdam, London, New York, or Tanzania. In Tokyo, upon returning home, I am surprised and amused to find his figure so sumptuously tatamied. In his continual metamorphoses, Ivo encapsulates all of Japanese culture at once; he has understood it in his own way, becoming the natural expression of mono-no-aware that he reproduces and spontaneously synthesizes.

Ivo feels at home in Japan, I can see it; he is perfectly welcomed and happy to live here. An ideal of harmony. Sweet melancholy. It makes one envious.

*By Kimiko Yoshida, friend of Didier Guillon and Japanese artist.*

## Ivo and the Empire of the Rising Sun

2024: the year of Japan. Ivo, Fondation Valmont's icon, adorned with colors and stories from various cultures throughout Didier Guillon's travels, embraces this year the ancestral traditions and contemporary panorama of the Land of the Rising Sun.

Following Morocco, South Africa and Tanzania, Ivo has now turned to Japan for inspiration, for an immersive and innovative *Ivo in Japan* exhibition. Far from the samurai land, his journey will begin in the heart of La Maison Valmont boutiques in **Paris, Madrid, Berlin and New York**. A larger-scale exhibition will be presented at La Maison Valmont Munich from **May 23<sup>rd</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.



*Didier et Valentine Guillon*

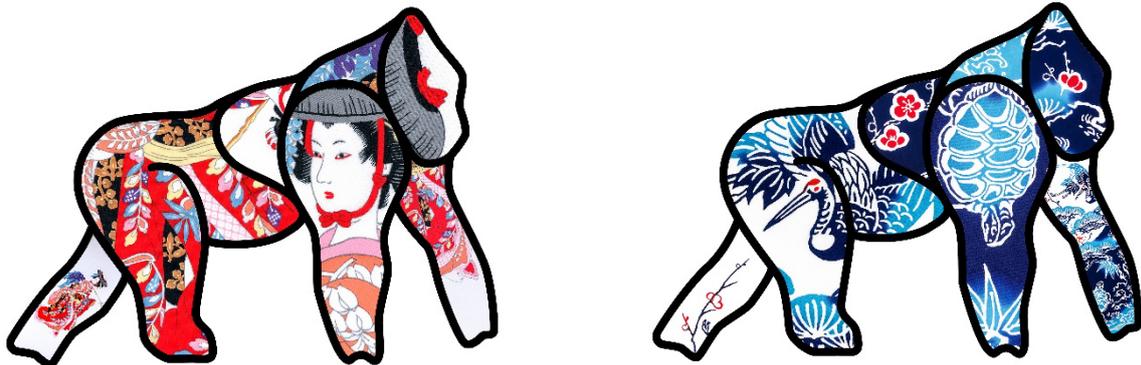
The origin of this exploration dates to the journey undertaken by Didier Guillon and his daughter Valentine in 2023 within the Japanese archipelago. United by a common fascination for Japanese art, design, and centuries-old craftsmanship, they go back to Europe imbued with traditional fabrics and visual emotions. Laden with evident memories, they embark on this return as a tribute to the unique alliance between tradition and modernity that characterizes the beauty of Japan.

## Ivo in Japan, contemporary art meets design

Like shodo - the art of calligraphy - Japan's age-old heritage, contemporary art, design, and architecture have undergone spectacular development in recent decades. Influential figures of international renown have left an indelible mark on the artistic landscape. Names such as Isamu Noguchi, a multidisciplinary artist of universal talent.

*Ivo in Japan* pays tribute to this cultural reference from the Rising Sun through its works. Far from confining itself to Japanese trappings, this new exhibition inherits the genius of one to create an intimate and personal reinterpretation specific to Valmont.

Fondation Valmont presents a comprehensive exhibition, featuring a sophisticated scenography and carefully considered lighting effects. It begins with an adaptation of the *Ivo in Japan* motifs, inspired by one of Japanese design's great legends: rice paper lamps inspired by Isamu Noguchi's creations. These light sources will themselves be accompanied by folding screens, also made of rice paper and framed in wood. And while Ivo will be wandering through the space using media new to him, he will also wear well on the walls, with 22 silkscreen prints of himself in the 22 Japanese fabrics' colours brought back by Didier Guillon.



## A tribute to Isamu Noguchi's work

A protean Japanese American creator and unclassifiable sculptor, known in Europe for his design pieces and famous paper lamps, Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) was a complete artist. Initially an assistant to Brancusi in Paris, he was fascinated by the formal purity and unprecedented spatial relationship of the Romanian sculptor's Endless Column. Until one day, while visiting the Japanese town of Gifu, he fell under the spell of the traditional handmade lanterns, consisting of a bamboo structure covered in washi paper made from the bark of the mulberry tree. On his return to the United States, he created around a hundred of them, with their strange silhouettes and free-form shapes. The Akari lamps were born.

In the realm of this Japanese term used to express light, as well as a certain notion of lightness, lies an icon that has journeyed. And it is from this concept of travelling, returning, and bringing back a touch of creativity from elsewhere that the desire to envision *Ivo in Japan* lamps and

folding screens was born, both as collectible works and scenography elements. They, too, play with contrasts, of shapes, sizes, and colors, mirroring the patterns of Didier Guillon's Japanese fabrics; paying tribute to their "big sisters" while upholding the traditions and materials employed. A unique perspective on the interplay between man and his environment.

### Screen-prints motifs steeped in history

The exhibition *Ivo in Japan* begins with 22 Japanese fabrics acquired by Didier Guillon and his daughter Valentine from the SENSO JI Temple in Tokyo. Known as wagara, these are exceptional fabrics, most of them brightly coloured, with unequalled weaving quality and poetic motifs. Traditionally used to make kimonos, they carry a deep symbolism linked to Japanese culture.

Rooted in nature and island tradition, the motifs tell stories to express emotions. Visitors will discover the majestic crane and the Koi carp, symbolising strength, as well as floral motifs such as the emblematic Sakura, the chrysanthemum, and the peony. Not forgetting the legendary samurai's presence, kabuki actors and revered sumo wrestlers.

Filled with history and symbolism, they were an invaluable source of inspiration for shaping Ivo's new clothes and bringing to life the 22 screen prints in the exhibition. These works will all be brought together at La Maison Valmont in Munich, after having travelled beforehand to the various La Maison Valmont boutiques in Europe and the United States.

### Lumicity by Valmont, light filter



As Ivo adorns itself in colour and plays with light, Valmont launches Lumicity by Valmont. An ultimate beauty filter, protecting against UV rays and boosts the complexion's radiance. With a high protection factor of 50 against UVB and UVA rays, and an ingenious formulation rooted in the Swiss Alps, this day care product is as complete as addictive. A new, modern, and sensorial partner, designed for urban women with hectic lifestyles and daily exposure to environmental stress. A deliciously melting cream to be discovered exclusively in La Maison Valmont boutiques during the *Ivo in Japan* exhibition.



*LA MAISON VALMONT*

*1.02.2024 - 28.04.2024*

*6, rue de Castiglione - Paris  
C. de Jorge Juan 13 - Madrid  
35E 76<sup>th</sup> St - New York*

*23.05.2024 - 15.09.2024*

*Maximilianstrasse 22 - Munich*

*20.09.2024 – 31.12.2024*

*Berlin*

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