



Experts Corner

 Arabia
Weddings

The Architect of Emotion: Tomas De Bruyne on the invisible Soul of Design

Interview

In the world of ultra-luxury events, there is a distinct line between decoration and design. While many can fill a room with flowers, very few can command the air within it. Tomas de Bruyne belongs to that elite tier of creators who don't just dress a space—they architect its soul.

With a career that spans the globe—from the high-contrast palettes of India to the grand, hospitable palaces of the Middle East—Tomas has become the definitive voice on how physical structures translate into human emotion. His approach is rooted in a rare duality: the technical precision of a master craftsman and the intuitive sensitivity of an artist. It is a methodology he has finally codified in his seminal new book, **"The Art of Design."**

In this book, and throughout his prolific career, Tomas introduces the concept of the **"Architecture of Atmosphere."** He argues that true luxury isn't found in the sheer volume of stems or the price tag of the materials, but in the "invisible thread" of rhythm, proportion, and intention that guides a guest through a journey. For Tomas, a wedding is a sequence of unfolding moments, where height is used to inspire awe, distance to build anticipation, and light to direct the heart.

In this exclusive interview, we sit down with the world-renowned floral architect to discuss the philosophy behind his new book, the necessity of "unlearning" industry habits, and how he navigates the complex, beautiful intersection of cultural tradition and modern global design.



Q1: In your new book, *The Art of Design*, you speak about the "architecture of atmosphere." For a luxury wedding, how do you balance the physical elements, like proportion and light, with the invisible "emotions" that make a celebration feel truly soul-stirring?"

In many of the weddings I design - whether in the Middle East, Europe, or for international families - the starting point is never the decoration, but the experience we want to create.

Before we speak about flowers or materials, we define the emotional intention of the celebration. Is it meant to feel intimate, majestic, calm, or theatrical? That decision becomes the foundation.

From there, the physical elements as proportion, scale, light and rhythm are not aesthetic choices, but instruments.

For example, height creates awe, distance creates anticipation, and light directs attention. These are architectural tools that shape how guests move, where they look, and ultimately how they feel.

In large-scale weddings, especially in the Middle East where celebrations are both generous and deeply meaningful, this balance is essential. Without structure, emotion becomes overwhelming. Without emotion, structure becomes empty. The role of design is to bring these two into alignment.

When proportion, light, and composition are resolved with precision, emotion doesn't need to be added; it emerges naturally.

That is what I describe in the book 'The Art of Design' as the "architecture of atmosphere": not designing what people see, but carefully shaping what they experience and remember.



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Tomas de Bruyne



Q2: You've noted that luxury is not just how a wedding looks, but how it is experienced. When designing for the world's most elite clients, how do you use "rhythm and material" to guide the guests' emotional journey throughout the evening?

In the weddings I design, the experience begins the very first moment guests encounter the event; whether that is the entrance or the initial reveal. I intentionally design that first glimpse with maximum impact. It is a clear and immediate statement of scale, intention, and atmosphere; capturing attention, setting expectations, and defining the emotional tone for everything that follows. From there, rhythm becomes about progression.

After a strong opening, the experience cannot remain at the same intensity. It needs to evolve. I guide guests through a sequence of moments such as for example refinement, intimacy, expansion, and celebration; each with its own tempo. This variation allows the energy of the evening to breathe, build, and reach its peak at the right time.

Material is what gives rhythm a physical presence.

Bold, architectural elements create clarity and strength, defining the space with a more structured, masculine energy. On the other hand, softer textures, more organic compositions that interact with light and movement in pure balance introduce a more refined, feminine quality.

Florals are essential within this balance. They bring life and emotion into the structure, bridging the architectural framework with a human, sensory experience.

For high-level clients, this orchestration is what defines true luxury.

Not in excess, but in control ; how every moment is carefully shaped from the first impression to the final experience.

Because in the end, guests don't remember individual elements.

They remember how the evening unfolded and how it made them feel from the very first second.



Working in the Middle East and India requires more than adapting a design style; it requires understanding the meaning behind the celebration.



Tomas de Bruyne

Q3: You have worked extensively across the Middle East and India, two regions known for their grand scale and deep cultural heritage. How do your design principles adapt to these vibrant environments, and what unique challenges do they present for a floral architect?

Working in the Middle East and India requires more than adapting a design style; it requires understanding the meaning behind the celebration.

Both regions are defined by scale, yes, but more importantly by depth. Weddings are not just events; they are cultural expressions, often spanning multiple days, involving family structures, rituals, and symbolic details that carry real significance.

My role is to enter that context with respect first.

In India, for example, color, layering, and ritual moments are essential. There is a natural richness and complexity that you don't simplify; you structure it. The challenge is not to reduce, but to bring clarity within abundance.

In the Middle East, there is often a strong sense of grandeur and refinement. Scale plays a major role, but always combined with elegance and precision. Here, the challenge is to create impact without losing sophistication.

Across both regions, one of the key challenges is operational.

We are often working at a very large scale, within tight timelines, with high expectations and multiple stakeholders involved. This requires not only creativity, but strong structure, planning, and the ability to make fast, accurate decisions on-site.

Florally, it also means working with volume while maintaining quality and detail. Every arrangement, even in large quantities, must feel intentional.

My design principles remain consistent: structure first, emotion through execution.

But how they are expressed changes depending on the cultural context.

Ultimately, the goal is not to impose a signature style, but to elevate what is already there - translating local culture, scale, and expectation into a coherent, immersive experience.

That is where the role of a floral architect becomes essential: not just creating beauty, but organising complexity into something that feels effortless.



IMAGINATION AT EVERY SCALE

Imagination operates at multiple levels simultaneously—from the grand gesture to the smallest detail. And the skill lies not in choosing between them, but in guiding each with equal precision.

The piano installation required imagining functionality alongside spectacle. Flowers cascading as though the music itself had taken physical form—but the piano had to remain playable. The child of the couple getting married would perform on it during the ceremony. So imagination had to account for keys that could be reached, pedals that could be pressed, sightlines that allowed the musician to see and be seen. Beauty that didn't obstruct purpose.

This is where imagination becomes practice: translating vision into workable reality without abandoning either.

Then there is detail. A single flower. A small, considered gesture that most guests might not consciously notice—but would subconsciously register. The detail that signals care, that completes the narrative established by the larger installations. Imagination here is quieter, more intimate. But no less essential. Both scales demand the same discipline: sensing what wants to exist, then shaping it with intention. The grand installation and the perfect detail are not separate acts of imagination—they are expressions of the same coherent vision, applied at different magnitudes.

This is the practice of imagination in design: learning to hold the entire spectrum in your mind at once. To imagine the moment guests enter and see the piano transformed. To imagine the moment they unfold their service and pause, just briefly, to notice.

When imagination is guided—not forced, but consciously directed—it reveals itself at every level. From the monumental to the minute. And the design becomes complete not when one element succeeds, but when all of them breathe together.

Q4: Specifically looking at your work in the Middle East, how do you honor the region's rich traditions of hospitality and opulence while still pushing the boundaries of modern, global design? Is there a particular project in the region that best illustrates your "architecture of atmosphere"?

In the Middle East, hospitality is not a detail, it is the foundation of the entire experience. Generosity, attention, and a deep sense of welcome are embedded in the culture. Opulence, in that context, is not about excess, but about how care is expressed through scale, refinement, and detail.

My role is to work within that tradition, not against it.

I begin with what I describe in **The Mental Universe** chapter of the book; defining the intention behind the celebration. How should guests feel the moment they arrive? That clarity becomes the starting point.

From there, the design moves into **The Art of Structure** and **The Emotional Blueprint**.

In regions where scale is significant, structure becomes essential to organize that richness, while the emotional layer ensures the experience remains human and connected.

Pushing boundaries happens through precision, not disruption.

Rather than adding more, I refine; how space is composed, how movement flows, how moments are revealed. This reflects **The State of Flow** chapter of the book, where the guest experience unfolds naturally, without friction.

A strong example of this approach can be seen in large-scale private celebrations I've designed in the region, where floral installations are not decorative elements but spatial tools. Grand entrances create an immediate emotional impact, while layered environments guide guests through the evening with intention and clarity. This is what I define in the book as the "architecture of atmosphere."

It sits at the intersection of **The Art of Imagination** and **The Art of Unlearning** chapters of the book; where you respect tradition, but reinterpret it through a contemporary lens.

In the Middle East, when these principles come together, the result is not just impressive; it feels effortless, welcoming, and deeply aligned with the culture.

And ultimately, that is the goal: to create an experience that honors where it is, while quietly moving it forward.



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Q5: What was the "lightbulb moment" or the specific gap in the industry that led you to write this book now? Is there one specific lesson within these pages that you feel every wedding professional needs to "unlearn" to truly master their craft?

The decision to write this book did not come from a single moment, but from a pattern I kept seeing across the industry.

For years, I have been working on large-scale weddings across different cultures, and I noticed a consistent gap: many professionals focus on what they create, but not on why it works. There is a strong emphasis on decoration, trends, and visual inspiration; but less understanding of the structure behind the experience.

That realisation became the foundation for the book.

I felt there was a need to articulate what sits behind beauty; how proportion, rhythm, space, and intention come together to shape how people actually feel within an environment. Not as theory, but as a working framework.

If I had to define one key lesson that every wedding professional needs to unlearn, it would be this: The idea that more creates more impact.

In many weddings - especially at the luxury level - there is a tendency to add. More flowers, more elements, more layers. But without structure, more often leads to noise.

In **The Art of Unlearning** chapter of the book, I address this directly.

True mastery begins when you start removing instead of adding, when you create clarity within complexity.

That shift changes everything.

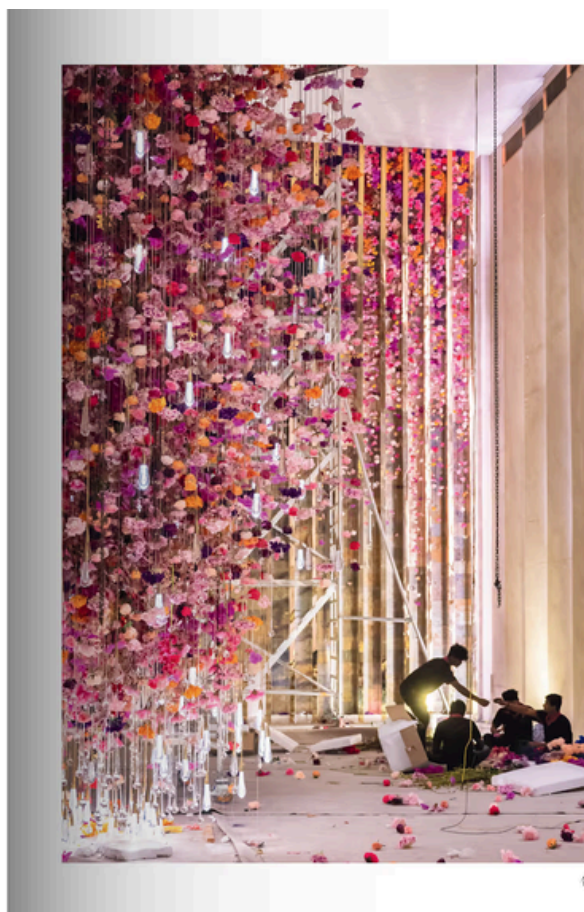
Because once you understand structure, you no longer rely on excess to create emotion. You can design with precision, where every element has a role, and every decision supports the overall experience.

That is the difference between decoration and design.

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*FLOW IS
WHERE
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12



13

Q6: In 2026, the luxury market is shifting toward more intentionality and legacy. How does your book address the balance between creating "majestic grandeur" and being mindful of the materials and floral resources we use?

In today's luxury landscape, grandeur is no longer defined by how much you show, but by how consciously it is created.

That shift is something I address directly in the book.

In **The Art of Structure** chapter, I explain that scale does not require excess, it requires precision. A space can feel majestic not because it is filled, but because it is composed correctly. Proportion, placement, and spatial clarity allow fewer elements to create a stronger impact.

At the same time, **The Art of Unlearning** challenges the industry to rethink its habits. We have been conditioned to equate luxury with abundance, but true refinement comes from knowing what to leave out. This naturally leads to a more mindful use of materials and floral resources.

For me, this is not about limitation, it is about intention.

Florals remain a powerful medium, but they must be used with purpose. Every stem, every installation should contribute to the experience, not just to volume. This approach not only elevates the design, but also respects the resources we work with.

In chapter **Legacy and the Invisible Thread**, I also touch on what we leave behind; not just visually, but in terms of impact. The next generation of luxury is not only about creating unforgettable moments, but about how responsibly those moments are produced.

So the balance between majestic grandeur and mindfulness is not a compromise. It is a recalibration.

Where grandeur comes from clarity, and responsibility comes from awareness; and together, they define a more evolved standard of luxury.

