

Dealers' Diary

# The world pops into PAD fair

Wealthy shoppers from across the globe keep returning to London for this established event

Report by Frances Allitt

"PARIS, New York, Turkey," says Lucas Rattton of Galerie Lucas Rattton, ticking off the places his clients come from when they meet him at PAD London.

Now in the 10th year of its current format, PAD has a formidable price point and is geared toward a set of wealthy shoppers who make a habit of swooping down on the city in early October for some concentrated shopping.

The list of regularly returning clients is a big draw for tribal art specialist Rattton, who is preparing for his third slice of the London fair.

"I can invite 50 people and 48 will show up," he says, making it clear that this has not always been his experience at other events.

But for him, PAD also offers the ideal opportunity to pick up a new client who might initially come to look for a table or a photograph rather than a piece of Ivory Coast sculpture.

Rattton says London has the potential to be the "number two" location for his trade (after Paris where he is based). And PAD is a good place to set up once a year because the clients are keen to pick up an item they like, even if they aren't experts in the field.

"They want to collect, they want to buy and they don't need to ask a hundred questions."

Rattton adds that people often tell him it's a "cute and charming show" where people can spend anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours.

It's a surprisingly laid-back description of a show where prices stray past the million-pound mark, but, 10 years in, the formula works for many of the returning exhibitors.

"It's our best fair and has been for quite a few years," says Andrew Duncanson of Modernity (Stockholm) who have been exhibiting at PAD for six years.

**Good timing**

A lot of this is down to timing. The fair from October 3-9 is consciously positioned during *Frieze Week* to attract shoppers who have the spare moments and resources to engage in a bit of the cross-over buying on which PAD prides itself.

Duncanson describes it as a "drop-in fair". Positioned in Mayfair's Berkeley Square (it takes over the



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space from the LAPADA fair which ends several weeks earlier), it can bring in members of the crowds wandering to or from the big October auctions or residents of Mayfair who find the time to go "right round the corner" to the square.

But, like Rattton, Duncanson stresses that at PAD he finds an "international market when you compare it to Paris or New York".

**Design slant**

This year, 66 exhibitors bring a mix of items with the typical design slant.

The fair is organised by Patrick

Perrin, who also oversees PAD Paris, the fair's older sister which runs in March. He sums up the fair's identity as "an elegant salon in the style of a cabinet of curiosities".

But with dealers from around the world bringing some of their most serious pieces of stock, it is rather bigger and more commercially commanding than the cabinets first created by Renaissance scholars.

Among the 14 new faces at the fair this year are fine art specialist Opera Gallery (London), ceramics and glass specialist Clara Scremini (Paris), jeweller Hemmerle (Munich) and

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### PAD London

**1.** Available at the stand of **Opera Gallery** is this 1954 painting by Fernand Leger, *Les Quatre Acrobates*, which is priced at approximately **£4.5m**.

**2.** This Alaskan fossil walrus skull is for sale with **Peter Petrou**. It is 2ft 5in (74cm) high and is ticketed at **£28,000**.

**3.** **Lucas Ratton**, returning for his third year at *PAD London*, brings this 19th century Senufo figure from the Ivory Coast. The wood carving is 12in (31cm) high and is priced at **€70,000-90,000**.

**4.** **Modernity** bring this Swedish chest of drawers made in the 1930s and attributed to Oscar Nilsson. Measuring 2ft 9½in (85cm) high and 2ft 10½in (88 cm) wide, it is priced at around **£30,000**.

**5.** **Siegelson** bring this pair of c.1930 platinum, emerald, ruby and diamond tutti frutti clips by Cartier, Paris. They are priced at approximately **£1m**.

painting and photography specialist **Sarah Myerscough** (London).

Returning exhibitors include fine art specialist **David Gill** (London), interior design firm **Nilufar** (Milan) and Pre-Columbian specialist **Mermoz** (Paris).

With exacting standards for the quality of stand design, it is a fair that tends to look good – Ratton describes it as “not so many dealers and more design”.

Drawing in a raft of clients with plenty of buying power, business remains good a decade on. ■

[pad-fairs.com](http://pad-fairs.com)

[antiquetrade gazette.com](http://antiquetrade gazette.com)

## 5 Questions

Design and works of art and design specialist **Peter Petrou** is exhibiting at this year's *PAD London*. He gives his thoughts on growing up with antiques and the changing market.



[peterpetrou.com](http://peterpetrou.com)

### 1. How did you start?

Fascinated with the history of 'old things' since early childhood, my after-school hours were spent quizzing the elderly French gentleman who owned our local antiques shop. This hero of the French Resistance agreed to train me as an apprentice after I had decided that I was unsuited to the law degree which I had been pursuing.

### 2. How has the market changed?

During the early '70s the art market was a thriving area with the majority of dealers being multi-disciplinary. They had a wide knowledge in many fields but, increasingly over the years, a concentration of expertise in one area has become the norm.

The biggest threat to the market in the UK is probably the lack of emphasis on history in schools resulting in a generation for whom there is little excitement to be found in an object which to many of us in the trade will make our pulses race.

Also the lack of interest by local councils in supporting this international business.

### 3. Fairs vs shops?

Nearly 20 years ago I closed my gallery in Notting Hill as I came to the conclusion that the majority of clients preferred the 'fair' experience and my efforts were better spent curating striking visual exhibitions at prestigious fairs in the UK and US.

Obviously *PAD* falls into this category with a wide and interesting combination of design, art and antiques.

### 4. One secret for success?

Always remember that we are equally subject to the foibles of fashion as any other area of consumerism.

### 5. Real ale or espresso martini?

Definitely a Scottish malt whisky.

If you would like to be featured in 5 Questions, please contact [francesallitt@atgmedia.com](mailto:francesallitt@atgmedia.com)