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Patrick Perrin, founder of PAD Art Fair: Trails of the Unexpected

BY TARA LOADER WILKINSON

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Patrick Perrin's eclectic art and design fair PAD has developed a reputation as something of a 'cabinet of curiosities'.

Every October, Berkeley Square is transformed from a Mayfair sandwich spot for local interns into something quite different.

For the last nine years a large marquee (once white, now black) takes over the green space for a week in October, always coinciding with the megalithic Frieze London. This quiet square becomes the home of PAD London, the art and design fair founded by Patrick Perrin in the mid-1990s.

Originally known as the Pavillon des Antiquaires et des galeries d'art, today PAD stands for the Pavilion of Art and Design. Considered to be an intimate alternative to Frieze, more a 'cabinet of curiosities' than a large-scale commercial art fair, PAD takes place annually in London and Paris.

"The major thing about PAD is its eclecticism and its taste," said Perrin, who is the fourth-generation member of a French art- and antique-dealing family. The main pillars of PAD have always been 20th century decorative arts and contemporary design, but it goes much further. With 63 exhibitors showing 24 centuries of art and design — from Hellenistic Greek marble busts to Japanese contemporary Origami-style lamps — expect the unexpected at PAD.

Here, *Billionaire* chats with Perrin on the week of PAD London 2015.

Tara Loader Wilkinson: Why do you like to juxtapose different genres together, when other fairs have separate sections for each type?

Patrick Perrin: This practice is nothing new, if you look at historical collectors such as Louis XIV, for example. For me, collecting one specialty, ticking a box, has no appeal. What do you do when you've collected everything? Sell it and start on something else? Just buying one type of anything is boring. Art is a question of passion and it's not a question of money. You should buy art that speaks to you, and fill your home with the things you love, whatever they are.

We noted that UTA, a Hollywood agency, recently launched a fine arts business to tap contemporary artists. What do you think about the commercialisation of art?

It's nothing to do with art. When I see a Louis Vuitton bag with little cherries or flowers [a recent collaboration with Japanese artist Takashi Murakami], I think frankly, as an artist, it's like selling your soul. The commercialisation of art is changing people; it's giving them a bad attitude. We all need to do commercial things but at a certain level it's getting ridiculous.

Do you worry that the contemporary art industry is a bubble waiting to burst?

I think there's going to be a big clean-up. It has to happen. Prices are ridiculous, meanwhile [the economy in] China, India and Brazil isn't going so well. The first thing that people will put back at auction will be contemporary pieces that they paid a lot of money



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for. Some of them consider it an investment, but art is not an investment, it's a pleasure. My collection is made of thousands of objects from Renaissance drawings to tortoise shells, and all sorts of quirky things in between.

What are your plans for the expansion of the fair?

We're thinking of having a second date in London to do an even more eclectic fair, which will range from Renaissance times to today. This could take place in July and also in Berkeley Square, but is still a work in progress.

Will you expand into Asia or other locations?

I'm 55 years old and have a wife and four kids. I'm building a house in Portugal and plan to spend more time there. I've seen too many people making lots of money and still working at 85; this is not my style. Frankly, I find life is too short. At a certain point when you have enough money to raise your children and live properly, you want a good life and that's it.