

## PAD buyers jump the starting gun

*The eclectic London art and design fair recorded its first sale before it had even officially opened. Caroline Roux reports*

**B**y lunchtime on Monday at the Pavilion of Art and Design, which this week occupies a fine white marquee in London's Berkeley Square, a pneumatic ivory-coloured chaise longue by the Swedish designer Uno Åhrén, made in 1923 and priced at £120,000, had already sold. And a shaggy brown sheep created by Claude Lalanne in 1992 – as grungy and adorable as the real thing – had been reserved. "It's €650,000," says Jean-David Botello, its dealer, standing amid a flock of four. "The brown ones are rare, you see."

The fair hadn't yet officially opened (VIPs were expected later in the day) but the trading had begun.

PAD, as the event is known, roams freely across art, design, jewellery, decorative and tribal arts. Though its London edition started in 2007 with 30 galleries dedicated exclusively to design, it has grown to 65 galleries showing an eclectic mix of collectibles. There is no room for monotony here. Contemporary ceramics and glass (at Adrian Sassoon) rub shoulders with a fine showing of Miró and Calder (Mayoral) and work by young designers, such as exuberant glass chandeliers by 30-year-old Bethan Laura Wood at Milan gallery Nilufar and walls of aluminium sunshields by Jean Prouvé at Jousse Entreprise.

Last year a number of visitors left in possession of Japanese helmets in iron and lacquer dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. According to their dealer Jean-Christophe Charbonnier, most of these customers were new to the genre, but were charmed by the exquisite nature of the objects – and clearly untroubled by the £24,000 to £60,000 price tags. Unsurprisingly, Charbonnier is back this year and would probably agree with Jean-David Botello, who says: "If it's good they'll buy it," pointing to a wall of highly decorated Line Vautrin mirrors from the 1960s (Madonna is a big fan).

If the fair's big claim is to bridge the gap between collecting both art and design, then no piece of work could be more succinct than the



Paul Cocksedge's rolled steel table, 'Poised' (2013), at Friedman Benda, won the Moët Hennessy-PAD London contemporary design prize. Below: Yinka Shonibare's 'Windy Chair' greets visitors to PAD

Tom Dymond

billowing "Windy Chair" by British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare which greets every visitor as they head into the PAD tent. Located on the Carpenters Workshop stand, it is priced £150,000 (from an edition of just three). The folded, sinuous aluminium piece is printed with the batik fabric design for which Shonibare is known (his was the ship in the bottle that landed on Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth in 2012, also with batik sails), a comment on identity, craft, trading and colonisation. Here Shonibare has created a usable sculpture, though no one would care to sit on it for long, joining a handful of artists such as Franz West who have successfully blurred boundaries between furniture and conceptual art.

Elsewhere it is pure design that carries the cultural messages. Take the furniture created by Pierre Paulin for the Élysée Palace in 1972, a table and two chairs which are on display (and on sale) at Paris gallery Jousse Entreprise. Georges Pompidou commissioned six of the palace's reception rooms to be transformed into radically contemporary spaces – an advertisement for modern France – and Paulin created a whole new curvaceous fabric shell for each room (the 18th-century panelled walls could not be touched) as well as contents. This was a period when design and technology were liberally used to highlight France's new progressive spirit – on a small scale the optimistically blobby chairs and the flower burst table; on a larger one the Pompidou Centre, which eventually opened in 1977.

In fact, it is stories such as these that PAD is best at. At Galerie Flak proprietor Julien Flak is showing tiny 2,000-year-old Inuit ivories as well as a Native American mask of unknown age. The mask had once been in the possession of William Oldman – one of the great collectors of tribal art, who set up his own private ethnographic museum in his house in Clapham Park, south London in 1927 – before passing into the hands of André Breton. Now it is on sale in London for £1m.

Flak is one of several French dealers in tribal art who have come to the fair for the first time. "Paris is the centre for this work, but we need to extend our client base," he says. "And London, which this week is full of curious art collectors, here for Frieze and the big auctions, is the place to do that. I'm looking upon this as an awareness campaign, to introduce people to something new." Even if it is, as in this case, something very, very old.

PAD runs to Sunday. [pad-fairs.com](http://pad-fairs.com)

