

MONOCLE

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The Monocle Minute On Design



Image: Peter Flude

Main event

The tent is up and the autumn sun is shining as the latest edition of Pad London kicks off in Mayfair. Nic Monisse brings us the latest, from **conversation-making tableware** to **party-proof furniture**. Plus: we dial in on a **1960s device that has a ring to it** and meet with an **architecture studio that's using nature's teachings** to inform its approach to design.

OPINION / NIC MONISSE

Fun of the fair

"I don't think that I've ever seen it this busy," said one harried PR agent dashing between client booths at Pad London's opening day yesterday in Mayfair. Running until Sunday, under a marquee in Berkeley Square, the fair is dedicated to 20th- and 21st-century furniture and art. Its calendar overlap with Frieze is helping to cement its status as an essential entry in the diary of collectors, interior specialists and design enthusiasts. It's a combination that is, no doubt, contributing to its increasing popularity and making for an event that appeals to gallerists and homemakers alike. Here are Monocle's five takeaways from the fair.

Compact is best: With 62 galleries from 16 countries setting up shop, the event is compact – and that's a good thing. It lets you easily browse the entire offering in an hour and then return at a leisurely pace to the booths that are most interesting.

Talk furniture to me: Placement of your furniture, artwork and other accoutrements is as important as its selection. “I try to put my pieces in conversation with one another,” says Nina Yashar, founder of Milan-based Nilufar Gallery. At Pad London, she arranged new pieces by contemporary designers, such as Objects of Common Interest, alongside vintage pieces by the likes of mid-century Italian creative Osvaldo Borsani. “I worried that it was too colourful before we opened but everything has now come together.”

Tell a story: “Our gallery’s name explains our ethos,” says Robbe Vandewyngaerde, co-founder of Objects With Narratives. “Style doesn’t matter to us, we just want a good story behind every piece.” At Pad London, the emerging Swiss-based gallery is showing gravity-defying wooden furniture by Mircea Anghel and bronze lighting pieces by Vladimir Slavov – a combination that has seen them pick up an award for best booth.

Dress the part: Furniture fairs aren’t known for their fashion – and while the crowds aren’t necessarily runway-ready like those at recent fashion weeks, they’re certainly gearing up to give them a run for their money. Suits were sharply tailored and a smattering of streetwear looked to suggest that a younger generation of buyers are making their way into the market.

Go cold: “There’s a trend towards colder materials, such as steel,” says Frédéric Ormond, founder of Geneva-based gallery Ormond Editions, whose showpiece at Pad London was a brushed stainless-steel table by Garnier & Linker. “People have been working with warm finishes, such as bronze, for a few years but there has been a movement back towards steel.” Expect more metal tables in homes – a welcome addition for dinner parties that need a sturdy surface to dance on come night’s end.

For more reports on the latest from Pad London, continue reading below.

Nic Monisse is Monocle’s design editor. For more news, insight and analysis [subscribe to Monocle today.](#)

THE PROJECT / 'COMMUNE SHOWS', US

Material success

The line between art and design can often be blurred. You only have to look at Frieze and Pad London this week for proof. Further blurring is taking place near San Francisco at Blunk Space, a gallery and research centre dedicated to celebrating the legacy of JB Blunk, a 20th-century American sculptor who worked primarily in wood and clay. Here, the exhibition *Commune Shows* is on until 15 October. It features art and design works by Steven Johanknecht (*pictured*), co-founder of Los Angeles-based studio Commune, and Niles Wertz, a local woodturner and longtime Commune collaborator.



Image: Rich Stapleton, Molly Haas



Image: Rich Stapleton, Molly Haas

Johanknecht's paintings, inspired by abstract movements such as constructivism, are on display alongside a line of rugs and blankets that was created in collaboration with Christopher Farr and R+D Lab. This work is complemented by a collection of more than 30 wooden bowls and platters, a large walnut coffee table and a stool, designed by Wertz. To create continuity with Johanknecht's approach, the bowls are designed to be nested, ensuring a visual flow from one to another. "Steven and Niles are both part of a conversation through different mediums and craft techniques," says Roman Alonso, the *Commune Shows* curator. "Steven applies patterns to materials, while Niles makes them using the material itself."

blunkspace.com

DESIGN NEWS / PORTUONDO GALLERY AT PAD LONDON, UK
Show and sell

At Pad London, Portuondo Gallery provided a masterclass in mixing. Established by brothers Diego and Hugo Portuondo, with outposts in Madrid, London and New York, the gallery fearlessly blended materials and eras – an effect that made their booth appear more like a playful living room than a point of sale. “We want to show that you don’t have to have a showroom home with only new furniture,” says Diego. “Our range includes everything from contemporary pieces to works from the 1940s. It’s a whacky, eclectic mix, such the work of English interior decorator and designer David Hicks.”



Image: Peter Flude



Image: Peter Flude



Image: Peter Flude

Highlights of Portuondo Gallery's booth include boxy white armchairs from the 1960s by Maison Leleu and a new brass coffee table by Jean Yves Lanvin, upon which a ceramic pitcher by Pablo Picasso has been carefully placed. A curving green sofa from 1975 by Germany's Burkhard Vogtherr (*pictured, middle*) feels like it could have been newly designed or created at the height of postmodernism. "We only buy and sell items that we would put in our own homes," says Diego. "We're selling a taste and an atmosphere rather than individual pieces."

portuondo.com

AROUND THE HOUSE / THOMAS FRITSCH – ATRIUM, FRANCE

Ware it's at

While much of Pad London focuses on large furniture items, there's still plenty of room for accoutrements and artwork. Case in point is the showcase by Paris-based gallerist Thomas Fristch. A specialist in French decorative arts from the 1940s to the 1970s, his showcase in the UK capital includes a silver-black enamelled ceramic jug by Pol Chambost from 1956 (*pictured, bottom*) and a collection of orange, enamelled ceramic bottles by Jaquet and Dani Ruelland from 1960.



Image: Peter Flude

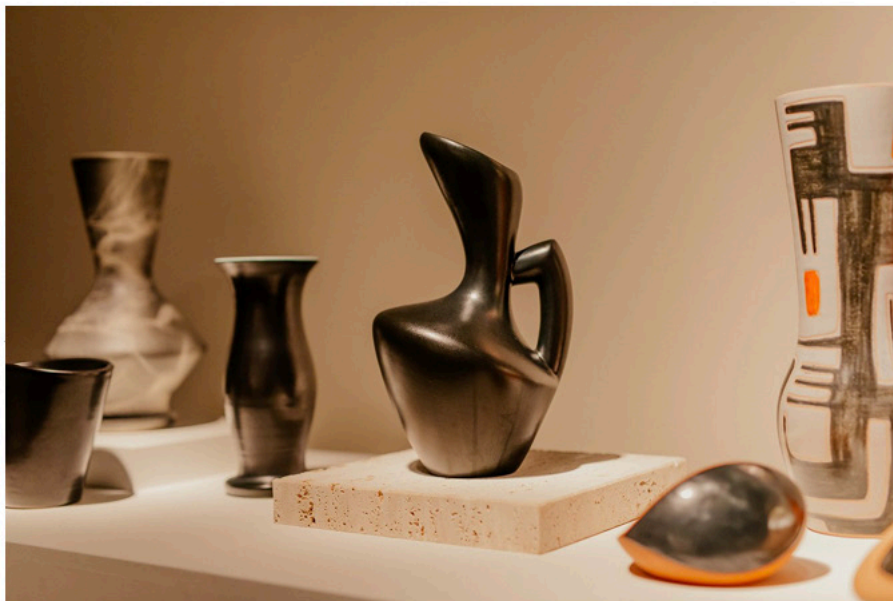


Image: Peter Flude

For buyers at the fair, Fritsch's presence offers a chance to purchase wares that complement statement pieces, such as sofas and dining tables. It's also a reminder that while the rooms in our home might be defined by the largest items, they're not complete until they're furnished with smaller pieces that help build the atmosphere.

thomasfritsch.fr