

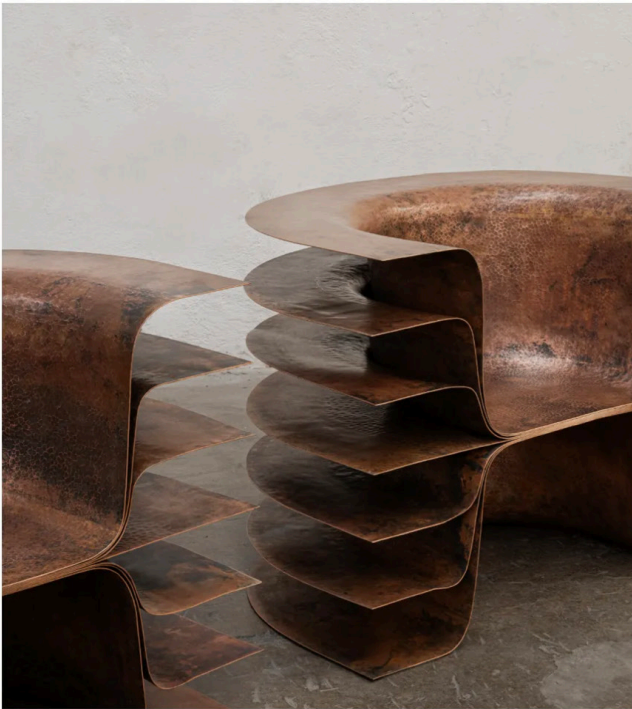
Wallpaper*

DESIGN & INTERIORS

Manuel Bano shows metal's softer side at PAD London this year

PAD London 2026 preview: Manuel Bano talks steel, recycled copper and why, when it comes to making, Mexico City has his heart

By Aditi Sharma | Published 4 hours ago In [Features](#)



Manuel Bano, right, on his 'OBJ-05' chair
(Image credit: Alejandro Ramirez Orozco)

Creativity may be instinctive, but it can also be passed down through the way parents think, create and teach. This is the story of Manuel Bano, the Mexico-based designer who runs his own practice and is also part of the collectible design studio EWE Studio. 'My love for design comes from my parents,' shares Bano. 'My father, a designer, and my mother, an artist,

shared a studio in our home in Valencia, Spain. Later, they both taught at the university where I studied: my mother taught art and my father product design.'



Manuel Bano's Mexico City studio

(Image credit: Alejandro Ramirez Orozco)

Early in his career, Bano interned with London-based designer Magnus Long learning the workings of industrial design and the nuances of producing commercial furniture for brands. But a year later, he was ready for an adventure of his own and set his sights on Mexico. He began speaking with Héctor Esrawe, a designer and architect who invited him to join his studio in Mexico City in 2013. Bano spent several years there in various roles, and their collaboration eventually grew into a partnership, and in 2017 they, along with Age Salajõe, founded EWE Studio, a collective dedicated to exploring Mexico's rich natural materials, techniques and craftsmanship (previously spotlighted by Wallpaper* when they showed at Dubai's Gallery Collection in 2024).



'OBJ-01' floor lamp

(Image credit: Alejandro Ramirez Orozco)

So, what is it about the country that kept Bano hooked? 'Mexico inspires me in every field, from architecture and cinema to music and, of course, food. Craftsmanship is alive everywhere, from small carpentry shops to stone workshops, and people continue to make things using techniques passed down through generations.'

His love of making deepened during the pandemic, when the 'OBJ' collection began; an evolving body of work. Bano found himself drawing and exploring new ideas, even as workshops remained closed. 'I had a friend who had a laser-cutting machine. It was essentially the only workshop where I could produce something,' he says. He made that constraint his starting point, creating the 'OBJ-01' table lamp – the first piece he produced independently. The series has since grown to include a floor lamp, chair, bench and stool, while his fascination with metal – stainless steel, brass and oxidised steel – has remained constant.

'Mexico inspires me in every field: craftsmanship is alive everywhere'

MANUEL BANO

'What I value about working with metal is the directness of the process. In many of my pieces, I can work with a single material, and I like knowing from the beginning how the finished piece will look. There is an honesty to metal. That doesn't always happen with stone, glass or other materials, where surprises can occur along the way,' says Bano.



(Image credit: Alejandro Ramirez Orozco)

Thoreen introduced Bano to Raúl Rauda, an artisan in Santa Clara del Cobre, a town whose copperworking tradition dates back to the pre-Hispanic era and is rooted in Purépecha craftsmanship. In fact hand-hammered copper shapes around 250 local workshops, filling the town with the constant, rhythmic sound of metalworking. There, Bano realised how this recycled copper could be cut, bent, stretched and hammered, opening up possibilities that led to pieces including the 'OBJ-12' dining table, 'OBJ-10' cabinet and more.



'OBJ-09' pendant lamp

(Image credit: Alejandro Ramirez Orozco)

Today, Bano divides his time equally between his own practice and EWE Studio. 'Some designers love to discover a piece through experimentation,' avers Bano. 'My process is almost the opposite: I tend to know what I'm looking for from the beginning, and from there the work is about refining and resolving the piece.'

At PAD London 2026, he is eager to hear how people respond to his work, particularly as he is based on the other side of the world. He is pleased to have found an exhibition partner in Objects with Narratives. As people will notice in his work, there is something very romantic about materials ageing and changing over time. 'I think many designers can relate to that, regardless of the materials they work with.'

Manuel Bano is at Objects with Narrative, Booth A8, PAD London, 13 to 18 October 2026 at Berkeley Square. ✱