

The PAD: tending to design

Last year, the PAD celebrated its 20th birthday, and its London counterpart its 10th. This mature exhibition, comfortably established in the design fair landscape, shouldn't disappoint its loyal visitors. While the London edition remains more international, France's role in the history of art gives it a legitimate place in design and the decorative arts that no other country can compete with. And so sixty-three galleries, mainly French, will be sharing the dedicated area in the Tuileries Garden in central Paris. The regulars will all be there, including Chahan, Scremini, Jousse Entreprise, and Mermoz. And though François Laffanour's over-booked fair calendar forced him to retire from the proceedings this year, a dozen new exhibitors are now joining in, including heavyweights like Marcilhac, Mingei and Alexandre Biaggi, the jeweller Lorenz

Baumer and Alexandre Frédéric: a dealer specialising in modernist Brazilian furniture who started up only last year. Why exhibit at the PAD in Paris? Pierre Dumonteil, founder of the eponymous gallery, emphasises the flawless organisation of the exhibition directed by Patrick Perrin, while Sophie Mainier-Jullerot, co-director of the Mouvements Modernes Gallery, praises the exhibition's visitors: "We take part in the Paris edition because you meet customers whose spending power may not be as extraordinary as in London, but who are incredibly loyal."

A yearning for nature

Trends are emerging on the stands. Wood features large, worked in innovative ways. Contemporary aesthetics and simple shapes bring out its decorative qualities, as with the "Gousse" furniture piece by the young cabinetmaker Benjamin Pagart, on sale at the Catzeflis Gallery for around €15,000. For the past few years, ceramics – another star material – has been the medium for many incredibly creative artists, who

PAD, from 22 to 26 March, Tuileries, Paris.
www.pad-fairs.com

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Japan, Edo Period
(18th-19th century),
"Jyubako", compartment
box to present the meal
of an aristocrat, gold
lacquer maki-e (detail).



Hubert Le Gall (born 1961),
"Lampadaire Autruche", 2016, varnished
bronze and ostrich-egg, edition limited to
8 copies, 180 x 60 cm.

exploit the material's poetic potential to the full in porcelain or stoneware. At the Dutko Gallery, a unique example is the intriguing "Black Hole" by ceramist Yoshimi Futamura, currently living in France. Visitors will notice several imposing metal tables, including those produced by the Garridos (a family of goldsmiths), edited by the Spanish gallery of the same name. Meanwhile, the Bourriaud, Catzeffis and Hayem galleries reveal a different trend focused on animals and

nature. Likewise with Dumonteil, exhibiting engineer Éric Pillot's moving zoo photographs, and the Heim Gallery, where Hélène Arfi captures a flight of flamingos in bronze. To quote Pierre Dumonteil: "Thanks to a new awareness of ecology and nature, animals have become a noble subject again." Because, in the end, don't design and the decorative arts reflect the latest tendencies of modern and contemporary society? We'll find out in Paris during March. **Agathe Albi-Gervy**

Three questions for **Marie-Laure Jousset**

Honorary Curator of the Centre Pompidou's design department and president of the 2017 PAD Prize Jury

This year, the number of exhibitors is stable at the Paris PAD, but there are fewer foreign galleries. Is this focus on France intentional?

I don't think this trend is intentional, but it certainly reflects the market's difficulties, due to a mixture of economic and political reasons. In addition, the French offering is so huge that foreigners may feel superfluous. The history of decorative art has made French galleries the backbone of the PAD. But I think it's a pity, because the more international an exhibition, the stronger it is. Paris is less desirable for tourists, but the PAD's success testifies to its quality. I am truly grateful to Patrick Perrin for maintaining his PAD, despite all odds.

You are replacing architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte as head of the jury. What do you aim to contribute?

I don't come from the decorative arts world and it benefits the exhibition to have a different, impartial outlook. I want our selection to be of museum quality, or full of promise. We need to be ambitious and single out powerful works, thus establishing the PAD even more firmly. Quality should prevail over technique, and this should serve the object. I hope to be dazzled by the choice.



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How do you see the Parisian design market and today's trends?

The French market is heavily influenced by its history; we have championed Art Deco since the 1950s, and these are the pieces now most sought-after in other countries. Today, design is still an experimental field. The most specialised designers are tackling questions like recycling, economical products and natural materials that don't destroy the environment. This is not a time for ostentation; what we are looking for is the truth of materials. One can't cheat when it comes to objects: they need to be functional and appealing.