

ART REVIEW

A Globetrotting Display With American Flair



Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

Pavilion of Art and Design Barry Friedman's booth displays Ian Ingram's "Pierrot," left, and "Embers Under Flame," with Wendell Castle's black walnut chair and Ron Arad's bookcase, "Restless," in front.

By KAREN ROSENBERG
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Europe may be a drag on our economy, but at least it continues to send us some of its better art fairs. Miami's version of Art Basel, returning next month for its 10th edition, has been enormously popular; a stateside London's Frieze will have its debut on Randall's Island this spring. And now the [Pavilion of Art and Design](#), which began in Paris 14 years ago and expanded to London in 2007, has made a [high-profile](#), auction-week entrance at the Park Avenue Armory.

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The fair, known by its acronym PAD, is more design focused than its aforementioned peers. Although there's plenty of 19th- and 20th-

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century painting and sculpture on hand, it's often upstaged by bold pieces of furniture and decorative artworks.

The mix caters to a new kind of shopper, one who's just as apt to be looking for a sofa to go under the painting as a painting to go over the sofa. And it acknowledges a certain blurring of the traditional categories, at the auction houses, on Web sites like [1stdibs](#) (which is a sponsor of the

fair) and at institutions like the Museum of Arts and Design.

As the collector Adam Lindemann writes in a preface to the fair's catalog, "What used to be called the 'decorative arts' has now been dubbed 'design' and is often marketed as limited edition 'art,' or sometimes referred to as 'design/art.'"

All of those labels seem to fit Beth Katleman's three-dimensional "wallpaper," [called "Folly."](#) at Todd Merrill. A clever take on the classic toile-de-jouy pattern, it floats [tiny porcelain sculptural tableaus on a turquoise wall](#) and incorporates elves and Barbies in lieu of frolicking aristocrats.

Just across the aisle the dealer and interior designer Chahan is exhibiting two bold, architectural ceramic sculptures by Peter Lane. And around the corner Barry Friedman's booth highlights Ron Arad's "Restless" bookcase: a swollen and warped grid of stainless steel.

Most of the 54 exhibitors hail from Europe; only about a fifth are from New York. Many pride themselves on being international tastemakers, showing you not only what to buy but also how you might live with it. The prominent booth of L'Arc en Seine, for instance, is a minimalist fantasia of pale-wood furniture set against ivory walls and carpeting.

Some exhibitors have created highly specialized tableaus, the equivalent of period rooms. If you are looking for French Art Deco, Vallois has nearly an entire booth of Ruhlmann furniture and archival photographs to match. And if you'd rather turn the clock back to the Vienna Secession, Yves Macaux can supply a stiff-backed living room set by Josef Hoffmann.

The art, by and large, is more conservative than the design. But much of it is of museum quality: a wintry Monet landscape at Boulakia, a Morandi still life at Robilant & Voena and a Modigliani double portrait ("Bride and Groom") at Landau.

And although Pierre Bonnard, Jean Metzinger and Christian Schad may not be quite as sought after, all are at their best in paintings at Custot, Béraudière and Macaux. These three works show women seated in front of windows, though the similarity ends there.

The contemporary art is strictly blue chip or safely contextualized (as Wade Guyton's inkjet prints are with Koons and Warhol, at Stellan Holm). But that doesn't mean it can't be fun; at Van de Weghe, Duane Hanson's "[Bus Stop Lady](#)," a scarily lifelike sculpture of a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., shopper, is flanked by a punchy yellow-orange Frank Stella and a late Warhol that reads, "Somebody Wants to Buy Your Apartment Building!"

Some diversity would have been welcome, beyond the two booths offering African sculpture (Entwistle and Alain de Monbrison) and the smattering of Latin American modernists, including the Venezuelan Op-artist Carlos Cruz-Diez, at the Mayor Gallery.

And at times I wished that the fair's organizers, the French dealers Patrick Perrin and Stéphane Custot, had embraced a more expansive definition of "good taste." Many of the

booths look as if they had been plucked from the pages of Elle Décor or Architectural Digest: a Gio Ponti here, a Richard Prince there.

I found at least one riotous exception at Jason Jacques, where a swirly Art Nouveau fireplace by Hector Guimard — made from reconstituted lava — shares space with spiky, animelike creatures by the contemporary Danish ceramicist Michael Geertsen.

And I marveled at the audacity of Gmurzynska, where paintings by the Dadaist Kurt Schwitters and an assemblage of a wagon wheel and a cigar-store Indian by the Pop artist Robert Indiana sat incongruously in a gray-walled booth designed by Karl Lagerfeld. The combination suggested a jet setter with some classic modern baggage and an American accent — which is not a bad description of this newly arrived fair.


The Pavilion of Art and Design continues through Monday at the Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Avenue, at 67th Street; (212) 616-3930, padny.net

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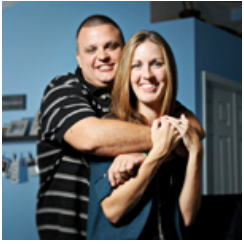
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