

Design Miami/ Basel VIPs Eye Ai Weiwei's Gold, Arad's Pavilion



Design Miami/ Basel has jump started, with some of the world's biggest art collectors spotted along the alleys. Among the notable attendees at the opening were Jose Mugrabi, known for his massive trove of more than 800 Warhols; Peter Brant; and Kamiar and Leila Maleki.

Design aficionados in attendance included architect Luis la Place; artists such as Dustin Yellin, known for his sculptural paintings; the businessman Noam Gottesman, listed on Forbes lists as among the richest people in America; and art dealers such as Gordon VeneKlasen, Stellan Holm, Cathy and Paolo Vedovi.

Rodman Primack - director of Design Miami/ Basel for three years and a collector of both art and design in his own right - was constantly touring around the booths on the opening day, greeting collectors, gallerists, designers, and VIP badge holders.

The choice of having Martina Mondadori Sartogo, the editor of Cabana Magazine, as curator of the oversized installation Design at Large on the ground floor proved successful. Ron Arad's "Armadillo Tea Pavilion" and Kengo Kuma's "Owan," a nomadic folly in metal, are joined by Kiki van Eijk's tent exhibiting items belonging to "Civilized Primitives" and Dimorestudio's "Verand." The Stone Tea House by Masatoshi Izumi and Koichi Hara calls for the visitor to meditate on the relationship between the constructed and natural worlds. The most effective work is Alexandra Kehayoglous's carpet "No Longer Creek," which visitors can lie on and experience on a screen an environment where human activities leave no trace. Something for visitors to think about, before re-immersing themselves into the design world of collectables.

Out of the 46 selected galleries exhibiting on the first floor, 15 are based in Paris or have a space in the French capital, most of them showing French design. They reaffirm that the backbone of the market remains mid-century French. There seems an unquenchable interest in Pierre Paulin, whose Verre Lumiere lamps are showcased by Demisch Danant from New York, as well as in André Motte and Maria Pergay. Jacques Lacoste has brought a real museum piece, a Diego Giacometti

and 1969, and still in his apartment until recently. Patrick Seguin has predictably installed another Jean Prouvé structure, originally at Maxéville factory near Nancy. This has a fascinating story because it was intact but had been incorporated into a development which then became a sex club.

We expect that Zaha Hadid (/artists/215638-zaha-hadid)'s limited edition works, presented by the Zaha Hadid (/artists/215638-zaha-hadid) Design Gallery, London, will do well, especially with her extensive retrospective continuing in Venice at Palazzo Frchetti through November 26. It is also certain that Ai Weiwei (<http://www.blouinartinfo.com/artists/7821--ai-weiwei>)'s wearable art presented by Elisabetta Cipriani, London, will intrigue the artist's admirers.

A noticeable feature is the gallerists' attitude of not being just dealers but patrons, commissioning works to well known or emerging designers and establishing a deep link with them. The most interesting pieces can be seen at Maniera, Brussels, where Studio Mumbai's "Brick Study" seats dominate the booth, together with Christopfer Hefti's mask rugs. At Gallery Fumi, London, Lukas Wegwerth shows his crystallization vases and Faye Toogood shows her mantelpiece carved as a fabric. Joy Mardini Design Gallery, Beirut, has the "Leatherscapes" installation of bespoke pieces exclusively created by Marc Baroud. At Galerie Kreo, the British duo Barber and Osgerby presents a special dining table. Erastudio, Milan, has Ettore Sottsass's exquisite "Flying Carpet" armchair and sofa; Nanda Vigo's recent lighted mirror; and works by Carlo Trucchi, who has been hailed as an Italian contemporary alchemist because of his specially-developed techniques that imbue surfaces with further patina.

Apart from discovering or rediscovering the classic masters of design, the most exciting part of visiting the fair is looking for new works that embrace new techniques or explore new territories. This is true of pieces by Joris Laarman, presented by Friedman Benda, New York. It equally applies to the fantastic crystal blind by Studio Brynjar & Veronika, one of the Designers of the Future Awards by Swarovski. Finally, the works by Chinese authors exhibited by Gallery ALL are also groundbreaking.

Design Miami/ Basel will run through June 19, in Basel.