

Discover the Most Extraordinary Furniture, Jewelry, and Art from PAD Paris

At the fair's 25th edition, a love of a nature and textiles was in the air—and the 1980s were back

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At the risk of sounding cliché, the Pavilion of Art and Design fair, known as PAD, really is the chicest of them all. Now in its 25th edition, and held in a temporary tent in Paris's Tuileries Gardens, it is the natural home of l'art de vivre. Galleries bring their A game, and visitors sip champagne, but in elegant moderation. There is a little art and a little jewelry, but the event is unequivocally dedicated to very fine furniture, mostly European, mostly 20th Century.

On the opening day serious collectors and society names, including the fashion designer Simon Porte Jacquemus and Queen Noor of Jordan, were there for the 11am kick off. By midday, the American designer Roger Thomas, whose Venice home embellished the cover of *Galerie* last fall, was cruising the aisles, having already snapped up two Maison Dominique chairs from the Parisian gallery Patrick Fourtin. "They're going to the house in Portugal," he said, of the 1930s wood-framed armchairs, upholstered in olive green velvet.

"That's the thing about PAD in Paris," said Florian Daguet-Bresson, who recently founded the city's youngest gallery for contemporary ceramics. "People come here to buy beautiful things for their homes, not to put things in storage. You can see them re-arranging their rooms in their heads. They know where their purchases are going to go."



PAD Paris.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAD PARIS

While the focus in Paris is still historic work, there are new pieces here and there. A long resin bench by the Turin-based Studio Nucleo, for example, had arrived the day before. “It had to be sanded so many times to achieve the finish” explained gallerist Gabrielle Amman, of the piece where an aged plank of wood appears to float in the resin block. “I love the narrative it contains, of bringing some love and new life to something old and abandoned.”

If the bench showed what can happen when man and nature combine forces—the resin was full of big, silvery bubbles formed by gasses and liquids emitted by the plank—the installation at the opening of the fair did too. In a forest-like installation by Diane de Kergal (who is represented by Galerie Gosserez) the lampstands were made from branches she’s found on the forest floor. For the lamps themselves, de Kergal allows silkworms in the Cevennes to weave their cocoons over her sculptural forms to form the milky-white translucent shades.

Scattered among the heroic pieces (a set of 8 Mollino chairs; a truly unique Jouve vase; a bespoke Perriand bookcase) was a growing trend for textiles. Gosserez had worked with fabric specialists Lelievre to create stunning ceiling-to-floor hangings as scenography for its stand, while Chastel Marechal was showing a stunning work by Sheila Hicks from 1982 of thickly roped wool and silk skeins in pink, orange and pale gold. At Maniera a tufted hanging by the Christophe Hefti (textile designer for Dries Van Noten) created a warm backdrop.

Elsewhere, it was starting to look like the 1980s were most definitely on the way back, doubtless helped along by the excellent 1980s design exhibition at the nearby Musee des Arts Decoratifs, and a Philippe Starck exhibition that opened on 29 March at the Musee Carnavalet. As the delightful design and art advisor Simon Andrews said: “Most of the best post-war has been circulated now. The 1980s are in the post.”

Below, discover six special highlights discovered at the fair.



Charlotte Perriand bookcase shown at Laffanour Galerie Downtown.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF LAFFANOUR GALERIE DOWNTOWN

4. Charlotte Perriand Library at Laffanour (Paris)

A show-stopping one-off piece by Charlotte Perriand had sold within 30 minutes of the fair opening, said Laffanour director Hellin Serre. The nearly 10-foot wide book case had been made to measure in 1965 for the Paris apartment of a specialist book collector. Mixing metal, plastic and wood, a section of brilliant red filing trays occupy its centre like a beating heart. “It’s been in Paris since the day it was made,” said Serre, “but as soon as the fair finishes it will be on its way to the United States.”