

Must-see highlights from PAD London Design + Art 2023

PETER MARTIN · OCTOBER 12, 2023 · 11 MIN READ

Europe's chicest design fair returns to London for its 15th edition, having celebrated its 25th anniversary in Paris earlier this year

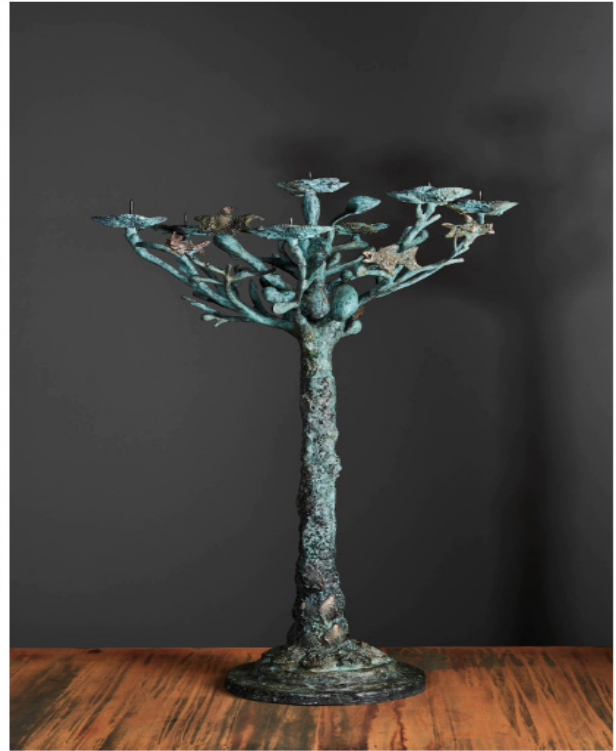
A packed and confident PAD returned to London this week, bringing what the design fair's founder and CEO Patrick Perrin describes as "a place of boundless inspiration, dedicated to creativity, quality, learning and discovery" to the British capital. PAD London – which occupies the same magnificent marquee in Berkeley Square vacated by LAPADA a few weeks earlier – has many similarities with PAD's Paris edition back in March (not least that that that one felt like the first day of summer, and this one the last); but it also has its own flavour – partly from a larger British contingent than Paris, and in part from the new exhibitors joining PAD for the first time.

There's a sense that Londoners enjoy PAD for its distinctly continental vibe, while the continental-European exhibitors value London's cosmopolitan nature and the truly global window it offers. Walking around, contemporary design is in ascendency – particularly with a strong artisanal, storied feel; though there is no shortage of superb 20th-century work to admire. There is also a lacing of surrealism, from the bronze animals of Richard Texier at Galerie Downtown Paris to Picasso's *Nu Couché* at Galerie von Vertes – not enough to tell whether this is an emerging trend, though perhaps a clue is that surrealism is the official theme of next year's BRAFA in Brussels.



PAD London 2023; 'In Bloom' by Claire Lindner at Florian Daguet-Bresson; 'Triple Cube' by Hans Kotter at Adrian Sassoon

Contemporary work attracting attention from preview collectors included some spectacular sculptural brass furniture by Vikram Goyal (more on this later) and a red metal vase by Korea's Woosun Cheon at Adrian Sassoon that could have been spun from silk. These shared a stand with a brilliant Hans Kotter LED light box that was pure future-retro. And Galerie Philia lived up to their A1 booth number with their otherworldly collection of art-sculpture-furniture – with their *Void Floor Mirror* by Boldizar Senteski attracting much interest.



'Void Floor Mirror' by Boldizar Senteski at Galerie Philia and a surrealist Richard Texier bronze at Galerie Downtown Paris at PAD London 2023

Here are some of the stand-out exhibits from this year's show:

Vikram Goyal X Nilufar



'Picasso's Quartet' sconce and hammered brass console by Vikram Goyal, showing at PAD London 2023 (Photo: Federico Floriani)

Encountering the work of artists such as Vikram Goyal is in many ways the point of going to fairs like PAD. Goyal – whose presence at PAD London is the result of a collaboration with gallerist Nilufar – is a New Dehli-based designer (and one-time Princeton economist) with a focus on metalwork. But that's only half the story, because it's the ambition of these pieces that really stuns. Goyal's creations are sculptural pieces of art-furniture of audacious scope.

His bench, for example, is like no bench you'll have seen before. Goyal explains to *Effect* how it's made: "Typically, when people work with metal around the world, they work with cast metal – like bronze, which is easily castable. We work in sheet metal – and brass is the most the valued, for all of its wonderful qualities." Pointing out the smooth, invisible joins, he says: "It has no weld marks – that's the beauty of this kind of joinery."



Brass chair, bench and metal wall panels by Vikram Goyal at PAD London 2023 (Photo: James Harris)

The bench forms a series with a console, desk and coffee table; and Goyal explains that their shapes, with their columns and arches, are informed by the architecture of India.

Another dramatic piece is a console created from hammered brass sheets, welded together. "Hammering takes a long, long time," says Goyal. "A team of six people worked for three months on this piece."

Other highlights from the Vikram Goyal studio at PAD London include a set of four brass wall sconces – "We call them *Picasso's Quartet* – the bench is defined and structured, whereas these are organic," says Goyal. And then there is a dramatic quad of black metal wall panels, created by repoussé, the highly skilled process of hammering low-relief designs into metal from the reverse, which Goyal calls "the hallmark of our studio."

Carpenters Workshop Gallery



The Carpenters Workshop Gallery booth at PAD London 2023, including 'Plain Cuts Stone and Steel #6' by Wonmin Park, 'Double Bubble Tigre Plywood' by Rick Owens and 'Flood Tree' by Nacho Carbonell (Photo: ...)

Carpenters Workshop Gallery has come a long way since establishing themselves in a small Chelsea workshop in London back in 2006. They now have galleries in Paris, New York, LA – and what may be the brand new jewel in the crown – their just-opened Ladbroke Hall showroom in North Kensington. Ambitious in scope and impressive in delivery, its founders Loïc Le Gaillard and Julien Lombrail have carved out a bold vision with uncompromising functional sculptural art that has stayed ahead of the zeitgeist.

Le Gaillard and Lombrail explain to *Effect* the thinking behind this year's PAD London show: "We've made a selection of some of our most important artists to try to showcase their most important artworks – including by Rick Owens and Wonmin Park – so this is the core structure of the gallery, and we wanted to show some powerful pieces," says Lombrail.

These include *Flood Tree* by Spanish artist Nacho Carbonell – a floor light by function, but in reality, an industrial sculpture whose concrete and iron construction is made transcendental by a cloud-like canopy of oxidised gauze. Then there's *Plain Cuts Stone and Steel #6* by Korean artist Wonmin Park – a desk that manages to be both monolithic and delicate – an extraordinary piece of sculpture. And the *Double Bubble Tigre Plywood* by Californian Rick Owens completes the triad, a dramatic piece with a flaming woodgrain.



'Buffettes Facettes' (rear wall) is an impressive solid-bronze cabinet by Ingrid Donat

And as a special highlight, Lombrail points out a solid bronze cabinet, *Buffet Facettes* by Ingrid Donat (who happens to be his mother). The doors – each heavy enough to break your foot – glide effortlessly on their hinges; it's a beautiful and impressively engineered piece of furniture and sculpture.

Rose Uniacke



The Rose Uniacke booth at PAD London 2023 includes a rare Chandigarh settee and teak and cane chairs by Pierre Jeanneret with vintage Japanese pendant lights by Ingo Maurer

That Rose Uniacke is also a celebrated interior designer certainly comes across in her booth, which is one of the most attractive at PAD, and without any sense of ostentation. It's composed very much as an apartment – albeit one with extremely good taste.

"We want to show exceptional pieces in a way that makes you understand how life can work with them," Uniacke tells *Effect*. "So, it's less about a showroom, more about life." She adds: "I'm interested in first-class pieces which are not intimidating."



The B35 Marcel Breuer tubular steel and leather armchair at the Rose Uniacke booth, PAD London 2023

Stand-out pieces include a wonderful late-1920s B35 Marcel Breuer tubular steel and leather armchair. It's a great example of its kind and the leather is original. On the opposite side of the booth, a rare Chandigarh settee and teak and cane chairs by Pierre Jeanneret – all in superb condition – are paired with a contemporary sectional wood table and bamboo mirror – "which adds a lighter note," says Uniacke. Vintage Japanese pendant lights by Ingo Maurer cast an ethereal glow over both compositions, pulling them together beautifully.

That everything works together as a whole so well is down to the singular eye of Uniacke, who says: "I would never sell anything that I wouldn't make room for myself."

Spazio Nobile



Spazio Nobile at PAD London 2023, with four Vincent Fournier artworks on the right-hand wall (Photo courtesy of Say Who and Ayka Lux)

Belgian gallery Spazio Nobile caught our eye for the commendable reason that their booth featured a series of dazzling inkjets by French photographer and visual artist Vincent Fournier, who has an ability to render familiar objects – whether architectural or from the natural world – as alien creations, allowing us to see them in a completely new way (we featured his Brutalist series earlier this year, having spotted his work in the Saatchi Gallery's *Civilization* exhibition).



Gallery co-founders Lise Coirier and Gian Giuseppe Simeone have worked with Fournier since founding the gallery back in 2016. "He's an artist and photographer that fits the gallery because he's relating to nature and creating a new kind of typology – flowers, insects, animals," says Coirier.

Simeone adds: "His interest in natural history is something very important for us because there is this dimension of a 'cabinet of curiosities' that is very close to our own aesthetics. We've known Vincent for a very long time and he was the first artist in our gallery."

Galerie Philia



Galerie Philia's 'Contrasts' show at PAD London 2023

Galerie Philia is another enormously impressive gallery that spans continents while successfully maintaining a highly focused aesthetic. With a presence in New York, Mexico City, Geneva and Singapore, Galerie Philia represents a diverse collection of artists, emerging and established, and can seriously lay claim to fostering a global creative community.

The gallery has named this year's PAD London show *Contrasts* – and there is indeed a monochromatic look that heightens the drama and scope of the pieces. Standouts among the exhibits are a cluster of *Nautilic Floor Lamps* by Elsa Foulon – delicate plaster and ceramic sculptural lights with shell-like forms; and the aforementioned *Void Floor Mirror* by Boldizar Senteski, the silvered glass creating ghostly depths that feels like one is peering into a different world (and another reading of the *Contrasts* show name is its straddling of this earthly realm and another).



Galerie Philia at PAD London 2023

The gallery's aesthetic has been described as exploring the tension between Brutalist and organic forms. "They are two styles of design that I love," the gallery's co-founder Ygaël Attali tells *Effect*. "The juxtaposition of organic, irregular pieces and minimalist, futuristic pieces is extremely interesting to me because it's the underlying contrast you can find in everyday life." The organic is more evident in this year's Galerie Philia PAD London show, but the collection is a compelling insight into the dazzling aesthetics of this exciting global gallery.

Willy Rizzo



Willy Rizzo at PAD London 2023

It's impossible not to love Studio Willy Rizzo – a gallery which so perfectly evokes the glamour of 1960s and 70s Rome and Paris while remaining as relevant and sought-after in 2023 as it was in 1973. Willy Rizzo's legacy is being expertly stewarded by his charming wife Dominique and their children; and it's important to note that while the works are wonderfully authentic to the period in which the great man was working, these are 'living designs' in that they are still being created to order and where necessary, updated (the fabulously retro music system docks the latest smartphones, for example). Furthermore, Dominique is still discovering negatives from the famed photographer, so their catalogue of work continues to be updated.



Love Lamp Triangulaire, Opal Table and Bar Furniture at Willy Rizzo (Courtesy of Studio Willy Rizzo)

Dominique tells *Effect* that their collection at PAD London "aims to create a work with only noble materials, a very strong 'Willy Rizzo' identity, furniture with avant-garde finishes, iconic shapes from Rizzo's DNA and photographs with a very personal and optimistic mood. The colours chosen are pink tea, white, black. The materials are grand antique marble, opal, brass and steel, as well as wild boar, dark velvet." Of particular note is an elliptical table in opal, which was purchased by MoMa in New York in 1973. Dominique describes it as "a living material, with a discrete transparency, but at the same time a stone with a beautiful iridescent light. Opal is a material that Willy Rizzo had never used before and it is also a stone that is very rarely used in the world of interior design."

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