

EXPERT EYE

Design Miami/Basel

Design Miami branches out in Basel

Thought the fair was all about French Modernism? Director Rodman Primack, who has doubled the size of its cutting-edge Design Curio section, wants you to think again.

Interview by Hannah McGivern

Design Miami/Basel is "diversifying a little bit more every year", says Rodman Primack, the director of the Miami Beach and Basel-based sister fairs since 2014. Although three new exhibitors are participating in the 11th Basel edition this year, the emphasis is on quality – and variety – over quantity, he says. With 46 galleries in the main section and eight (up from four last year) in the more experimental Design Curio programme, the fair aims to look beyond the mid-century French "backbone" of the collectible design market to present "a broader perspective on the 20th and 21st centuries". Here, the director selects some of the highlights on the stands.

1 Al Weiwei, Rebar in Gold (2013)

LIMITED EDITION IN TWO LENGTHS (EXACT NUMBER UNKNOWN); €50,000 FOR 20CM, €120,000 FOR 60CM
Elisabetta Cipriani, London

The 2013 collection of delicate, 24-carat gold jewellery by the Chinese artist Al Weiwei refers to one of his most emotionally and physically weighty works, *Straight* (2008/12). The installation of 90 tonnes of straightened steel rebar, salvaged from the ruins of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, commemorates more than 5,000 school children who died in the disaster. *Rebar in Gold* – shown by Elisabetta Cipriani, a London-based dealer in artists' jewellery, in Al's vitrines of Chinese huaili wood – invites the wearer to twist a 20cm or 60cm length of soft gold into a bracelet. Each hand-cut length is unique and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

2 Studio Mumbai/Bijoy Jain, Illumination Study I (2016)

UNIQUE ITEM; €22,000
Maniera, Brussels

Two-year-old Maniera gallery from Brussels, which has graduated to the fair's main section after participating in Design Curio last year, works with architects and artists on limited-edition furniture and design objects. Half of the duo commissioned for its 2016 programme is the Indian architect Bijoy Jain, whose team at Studio Mumbai includes as many craftsmen as architects. Jain drew inspiration from the *tazia*, a symbolic bamboo tomb carried in Muslim processions in India, to make this conceptual light fixture with no bulb. Bound by pink silk threads, the object's slender frame is "illuminated" by gold leaf.

3 Poul Henningsen, fluorescent lamp (1959)

TWO OF FIFTEEN EXAMPLES;
€120,000 EACH

Dansk Møbelkunst, Copenhagen and Paris

The late Danish lighting designer Poul Henningsen created 15 experimental fluorescent lamps for *The House of Tomorrow*, a 1959 exhibition in Copenhagen of a futuristic home. Never intended for mass production, the lamp was based on his layered, light-diffusing *Artichoke* pendant from the previous year. The undersides of its aluminium "leaves" were painted in white, yellow and red shades that glow blue, green and orange when lit by an ultraviolet bulb. The Danish design gallery Dansk Møbelkunst is showing a pair of the lamps to best psychedelic effect in its darkened, photocopied-lined booth, as part of the Design Curio programme.

4 Alain Richard, 816 sideboard (1961)

ONE OF FIVE EXAMPLES; €60,000
Galerie Pascal Cuisinier, Paris

The French post-war public was not ready to appreciate the charms of chipboard when the young designer Alain Richard produced this 3m sideboard in the then-new material in 1961. Based on a design for Richard's 800 series (1957), it is the only known survivor of a set of five. The 2.4m-long version of the sideboard is a permanent fixture at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. The high tubular frame was intended to spare housewives the indignity of bending to open the doors, the dealer Pascal Cuisinier says.

5 Faye Toogood in collaboration with Lapicida, Archetypes/Loose Fabric Fireplace (2014)

EDITION OF EIGHT PLUS ONE ARTIST'S PROOF; £52,000
Gallery FUMI, London

Commissioned by London's Gallery FUMI to produce a limited-edition fireplace, the young British designer Faye Toogood made tactile maquettes in materials including cardboard, clay, paper, wood and black packing tape. The UK-based specialist stonemasons Lapicida 3D-scanned and scaled up Toogood's arc of thick, loosely draped fabric into this Portuguese limestone design, which is reminiscent of a sculpture by Louise Bourgeois. The piece reflects Toogood's growing interest in experimenting with textiles. In 2014, the designer launched a capsule collection of unisex coats during Paris Fashion Week with her sister Erica, a Savile Row-trained pattern cutter.

6 Diego Giacometti, Chambre à livres (bedroom of books, 1967-69)

UNIQUE ITEM; €2.5M
Galerie Jacques Lacoste, Paris

The Parisian dealer Jacques Lacoste has transformed his stand into the elegant *le St-Louis* apartment of Marc Barbezat, the first publisher of the existentialists, including Jean Genet and Jean-Paul Sartre. Almost a decade after printing Genet's essay about Alberto Giacometti's Montparnasse studio, Barbezat commissioned a suite of furniture from the Swiss sculptor's younger brother, Diego. This gold-patina bronze corner library was designed to display the publisher's personal collection of books and manuscripts in his bedroom. Giacometti, who often worked with natural motifs inspired by the Alpine landscape of his childhood, topped each leg with a bird or miniature tree.

