

World's Fair

An international fair showcasing the best in contemporary furnishings and art makes its American debut

Written by Vicky Lowry

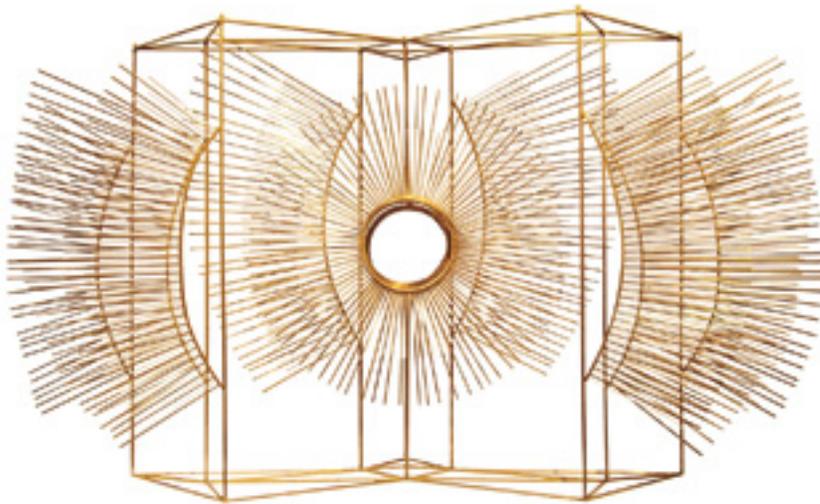


Photo: courtesy of Chahan Gallery

November in New York heralds the arrival of holiday decorations along Fifth Avenue, the occasional snow flurry, and important art sales at the auction houses. Another kind of sale is making its debut, one that should be alluring for collectors and dealers alike: the [Pavilion of Art and Design](#). For four days, beginning November 11, standout works—with an emphasis on modern and contemporary furniture and paintings—will be the stars in the stalls at the Park Avenue Armory.

The fair, commonly known by its pert acronym, PAD, comes with a pedigree. It originated in Paris in 1998, the brainchild of Frenchmen Patrick Perrin and Stéphane Custot, who sought to bring together the choicest dealers in Europe and the U.S. A London edition soon followed. Despite a seesawing economy, these fairs—which showcase everything from tribal sculpture to futuristic prototypes by the Campana brothers—have been a resounding success.

The Manhattan event couldn't be more timely, given the thirst for contemporary designer furnishings. "For historical pieces, it's extremely difficult to find a great object," says New York dealer Barry Friedman. "You have maybe 30 to 40 people looking for that one piece coming up at auction. Contemporary design, on the other hand, is often created in limited editions, so there might be as many as eight masterpieces available."

Cristina Grajales, whose New York gallery specializes in postwar superstar designers such as Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvé, is also expanding to the here and now. “I take my cues from Perriand, who was very interested in the future and what materials designers were working with then. She wasn’t working from the past; she was thinking about what was next,” Grajales says. At PAD, she’s spotlighting the work of Israeli artist Ayala Serfaty, who creates dazzling light fixtures made from materials like polymer and mohair.

It’s an exciting time for the design world. “There was an explosion of creativity around the last turn of the century,” Friedman explains. “And now there’s another one.”