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Design

Design Miami/ Basel 2012



'Weighing Up The Competition', a chess set by Rolf Sachs for the olympic-inspired Games exhibition at Gallery Libby Sellers, which saw several designers create their own contemporary take on the traditional chess salon

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By Henrietta Thompson

Last week, one of the world's biggest art fairs flung open its doors to collectors, curators and the otherwise curious in their tens of thousands in Basel, Switzerland. And for the seventh year its glamorous younger sibling, [Design Miami](#), proved that the appetite for 20th century and contemporary design collectables is as hearty as ever.

Walking into Design Miami has been compared to walking into the pages of an artfully-edited aspirational magazine. The organising team is rightfully proud of their ruthless selection process which, while keeping the fair 'boutique' in size, also makes sure that every piece on show is of high enough quality to grace the permanent collection of a world-class museum

Like many magazines too, a working (if predictable) running order has now been established amongst the galleries, which



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this year numbered 30, with a solid turn out from the loyal repeat exhibiting dealers including [Eric Philippe](#), [Patrick Seguin](#), [R 20th Century](#) and [Nilufar Gallery](#), among many others - fresh input this year also came from the likes of [Galleria O](#), from Rome, [Maria Wettergren](#) from Paris and [Salon 94](#) from New York.

There were a few notable highlights in the form of especially-commissioned works for the fair too. New exhibitor [Galerie BSL](#) from Paris, for example, delivered a stunning collection of nature-inspired works from French designer and interior architect [Nobé Duchaufour-Laurance](#).

Meanwhile, London's [Gallery Libby Sellers](#) invited a number of emerging and established designers to pay homage to the game of chess. Then there was the Brazilian Baroque Collection from [Fernando and Humberto Campana](#) at [Galleria O](#), a collection that was developed for the astonishingly opulent interiors of the Cortona Gallery in Palazzo Pamphij in Rome, and produced with materials and techniques celebrating traditional Italian craftsmanship.

At [Cristina Grajales Gallery](#), an especially strong collection featured a wall of 'Occupy Chairs' by [Sebastian Errazuriz](#): folding seats that double as protest placards. Alongside them, [John Paul Philippe's](#) series of lamps were simply and quietly beautiful.

For those more interested in innovation and inspiration, the upper deck of the hall offered uplifting refreshment in the shape of Eyal Burstein's [Beta](#) designs for [Swarovski Crystal Palace](#), [Fendi's Craftica](#) and the brilliant installations from the [W Hotels Designers of the Future](#), [Tom Foulsham](#), [Markus Kayser](#) and [Philippe Malouin](#).

There was also another outing for the intriguingly evolving new [BeOpen](#) initiative - a global mission geared to fostering creativity and innovation - that was launched in Milan with generous funding from Russia's Elena Baturina to the tune of \$150m.

Between the selection on offer, the reportedly strong sales of the rest of the fair, and the buoyant mood, Design Miami Basel sent out a clear message. Which is that while the fiscal woes of the world might be providing much fodder and inspiration for artists and designers everywhere, they don't seem to be discouraging the market for the work.

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