



A Showcase For Browsers And Buyers

"The Salon: Art & Design," the toniest of the November fairs (and certainly the one with the most aristocratic title), reminds you how the categories of art and design tend to blur in the rarefied world of ultra-high-end décor.

KAREN ROSENBERG
ART REVIEW

Installed at the Park Avenue Armory for a third season, it caters to browsing design aficionados as well as trophy-condo buyers and their interior designers with a mix of furniture from the 18th to the 21st centuries and an even wider range of art (and in the lounge, for those with V.I.P. cards, caviar "made by hand from sustainably farmed white sturgeon.")

The Salon's 55 exhibitors skew European, with nearly half coming from Paris (the fair is a sibling of the Paris Biennale). This makes it an excellent source of Art Deco antiques, Jean Prouvé furniture and other French specialties. But its understated gray-and-white booths also hold Japanese ceramics, German Expressionist drawings and African and

"The Salon: Art & Design" continues through Monday at the Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Avenue, at 67th Street; 212-777-5218, thesalonny.com.

pre-Columbian sculpture.

Many exhibitors, alas, were still unpacking when I was there (opening night was Thursday), meaning that the main virtue of this fair — the sense of booths as veritable period rooms or carefully chosen collections — was not yet in evidence. (Complicated construction and staging was underway at the Belgian dealer and interior designer Axel Vervoordt and at the Parisian 18th-century furniture specialist Kraemer Gallery, to name two that looked particularly ambitious.) What follows is a necessarily incomplete list of highlights, generally single standout pieces of art or furniture and, in a few cases, entire booths that were close to finished.

At Ulrich Fiedler, a Berlin gallery new to the fair and prominently situated by the entrance, the precisely placed high-modern offerings include a red wooden armchair by Gerrit Rietveld (one of just five known examples). Also here is a red, yellow and blue stained-glass window by Theo van Doesburg (a de Stijl disciple with Rietveld and others), and a striking black-and-white tapestry by the Bauhaus artist Gunta Stözl.

Across the aisle, Brussels's Yves Macaux has all things Wiener Werkstätte: notably, a pristine set of 10 dining chairs (and



TOP LEFT, HENROD MASURE; THE NEW YORK TIMES, ABOVE AND BELOW, DAVID HARRIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



two armchairs) designed by Josef Hoffmann for the Viennese arts patron (and Klimt portrait subject) Sonia Knips.

Over at the booth of the Tiffany

specialist Lillian Nassau, a clever little trompe l'oeil table by the American contemporary woodworker Wendell Castle stands somewhat incongruously among

The Salon: Art & Design This fair at the Park Avenue Armory includes, clockwise from top left, a chair from Ulrich Fiedler, a Berlin gallery; a cityscape by Ena Swansea; and a trompe l'oeil table by Wendell Castle.

the stained-glass lamps. (It has a carved-walnut "tablecloth.")

The Salon's art-meets-design ethos notwithstanding, the design offerings tend to overshadow the art. This is especially true of the contemporary furnishings, which are quite adventurous. At the Paris-based Scandinavian specialist Galerie Maria Wettergren, Mathias Bengtsson's wooden "Growth Table" dazzles with its intricate base (which seems to owe something to Mr. Castle and something to an algorithm). And in his own organic-looking table over at Todd Merrill Studio Contemporary, the young Irish designer Joseph Walsh makes a sensuous marriage of ebonized ash and amber resin.

The painting selections are less stimulating, though pleasant enough: a late Chagall, "Le cirque dans le ciel bleu de Paris," (1978-81), at Connaught Brown; Balla, Boetti and other Italians at Mazzoleni Galleria d'Arte; a large, sunny Charles Burchfield

watercolor and two small, wintry John Marin oils at Bernard Goldberg Fine Arts.

Contemporary art by living artists is generally not a big category for the Salon, but significant exceptions seem to have been made for art-design crossovers. One is the outstanding Japanese ceramist Ogawa Machiko, at Joan B. Mirviss, whose porcelain vessels cradle shallow, sparkling pools of cracked-glass glaze.

Another is the American painter Ena Swansea, who is branching out from paintings to upholstery in her panoramic solo at Friedman Benda. Her two curved sectionals echo her atmospheric New York cityscapes, one of which is a treetop-skirting view of Madison Square Park (identified by the signage on the top of the Snake Shack kiosk, in the foreground). It's a rare down-to-earth New York moment in a fair that's still defined by its Parisian pedigree.

albertz benda

515 W 26th St | New York, NY | 10001
Tel 212.244.2579 | www.albertzbenda.com