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THE MOMENT

Design Miami/Basel 2012 | Something for Everyone

DESIGN | By FELIX BURRICHTER | JUNE 13, 2012, 4:45 PM | [Comment](#)



At Design Miami/Basel, Demisch Danant's stand is devoted to the work of the French designer Maria Pergay.

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 FULL SCREEN

Design Miami/Basel may originally have been conceived as a satellite to the annual art mega-fair Art Basel. But with nearly 40 galleries displaying furniture and objects from the 20th century to the present, and extracurricular activities that include Design Talks, **Design Performances**, the **W Hotel Designer of the Future Awards** and a book shop, to name but a few, Design Miami/Basel has grown to the point that some visitors might almost forget that there is an art fair going on a block away. Design Miami/Basel, which runs through June 17, is big on eclecticism, and as always there is lots to see. Here are some of this year's highlights:

Parlez-vous Design?

There is a strong French design presence at the fair. Not surprisingly, works by Jean Prouvé seem to be everywhere. But leave it to [Patrick Seguin](#) to outdo his competitors — and himself — by showing an even bigger Prouvé house than the one he showed at last year's fair. This one, the 1,000 square-foot Metropole Aluminum House from 1949, belonged to the local schoolteacher in Meudon, France, near Paris. Jean Royère, another favorite of collectors, is also omnipresent, with individual pieces at Jacques Lacoste and [Jousse Entreprise](#); an oak desk with pale pink latticework at [Galerie Chastel-Maréchal](#) is a particularly beautiful example. [Demisch Danant](#)'s stand is entirely devoted to the work of the 81-year-old French design icon [Maria Pergay](#), who could be seen the day before the opening on her knees at the beautifully-designed exhibition, carefully arranging silk flower bouquets.

But the biggest surprise among the French works is the mini-retrospective of the industrial designer Roger Tallon, who might be better known as the designer of Air France interiors, the French high-speed train TGV and other major public commissions (like the Mexico City subway). [Jousse Entreprise](#) shed light on some of Tallon's furniture pieces from the late 1960s and early '70s, like the "Nouvel Escalier," or the "Metamorphic Trapezoidal Bed," on which a young Jane Birkin lounged poolside in the 1969 film "La Piscine."

Break a Keg

Ceramics, or smaller decorative objects in general, are making a strong showing at the fair this year, from the larger-than-life pots — made by Hun-Chung Lee at sold at [Gallery Seomi](#) from Korea — which greet visitors arriving at the fair, to Betty Woodman's sizeable pieces at Salon 94, which are shown (to good effect) with Rick Owens's elegantly clunky furniture. Then there are six André Bloc sculptures made of plaster at [Galerie Downtown](#), and precious vases, bowls, and sculptures — including two particularly beautiful pieces by Ron Nagle — at the Brussels decorative arts gallery [Pierre Marie Giraud](#). At the [Heritage Gallery](#) — the first from Moscow to show at Design Miami/Basel — the almost four-and-a-half-foot-tall, Soviet-era faience sculpture "Fraternization" (1935-37), by Isidor Frich-Har, is a stunning example of Socialist Realism kitsch. For lovers of more conventional but no less beautiful pottery, [Hostler Burrows](#) has just the right selection of ceramic works by artists like Axel Salto, Hans Hedberg, and Birger Kaipiainen.

Other high points include the anthropomorphic furniture shown at [Galerie Franck Laigneau](#) (a newcomer to the fair); sideboards by Clemens Weisshaar and Reed Kram, and candelabra by [Bethan Laura Wood](#) at [Nilufar](#); Ron Gilad's "Glass Tube Bench" at [Dilmos](#); chess sets by young designers at [Gallery Libby Sellers](#), and almost everything at [Galerie Kréo](#), which is showing over 150 pieces of lighting from contemporary designers and from the collection of the gallery's co-founder, Didier Krzentowski.

A Satellite's Satellite

Perhaps the most telltale sign that Design Miami/Basel has arrived is the fact that it now has its own satellite fair, **Depot Basel**. Located in a former grain silo, Depot Basel is technically not a fair, “since we operate throughout the year,” as **Matylda Krzykowski**, one of Depot Basel’s organizers, puts it. But that might be to everyone’s benefit: with over 40 young designers participating (some of whom, like **Formafantasma** or **Philippe Malouin**, are also part of Design Miami/Basel), Depot Basel puts a much-needed emphasis on contemporary production, fostering and supporting young designers in a way that commercial galleries often cannot.