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The Highs of Salon: Art + Design, From Art Deco to the Aztecs

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Robilant + Voena's booth at Salon: Art + Design
(Photo: Photo by Terttu Uibopuu)

Following its 2012 debut, the **Salon: Art + Design** is back at the **Park Avenue Armory** for a second round, delivering, as expected, all things modern. With design, pristine lines, right angles, and rich woods abound, one example being the beloved Eames storage units that mid-century specialist **Mark McDonald** has brought back; as well as the Art Deco of **Galerie Vallois**, where a hybrid circular bookcase and table by French architect **Pierre Chareau** packs such startling magnetism for its compact (double-duty and space-efficient, even) size; and even the wondrous tables, shelves, and lamp French designer **André Sornay** was able to craft out of mere rectangular slabs of wood in the 1930s, on view courtesy **Galerie Alain Marcelpoil**. In art, there was no

shortage of **Chagalls**, **Picassos**, and **Schieles** (**Waterhouse & Dodd** brought two

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out of three, and more).

For all its promised modern-centricity, the Salon offers far more to visitors; with its breadth of movements, media, and periods reaching into the distant past and extending to the near future, the new fair is an ostensive mini-museum with many, many different wings. Exhibits not dominated by Europe or the Americas include **Lucas Rattón**'s array of West African 19th- and 20th-century objects; another that reaches into a more ancient past is that at **Galerie Mermoz**, with pre-Columbian works by the Aztec, Maya, and Olmec, among them a slate-gray Olmec terracotta vessel engraved with a dragon dating back to 900 B.C. In the contemporary wing, **Junko Mori**'s urchin-like, matte-black ceramic sculptures are a highlight at **Adrian Sassoon**. And for the future of design, see the **R 20th Century** booth, featuring works by the up-and-coming **Haas Brothers**, whose hedonistic aesthetic somehow comes across in an object as simple a lamp, voluptuously sculpted and extravagantly laid with hexagonal brass tiles.

What's interesting about the Salon is that, in addition to its mish-mash of time periods, visitors will also find a blurred distinction between art and design, and even architecture, so closely juxtaposed that they nearly seem to bleed into each other. New York's **Menconi + Schoelkopf**'s solo booth of **Charles Biederman**, showcases colorful geometric abstractions made manifest in sculptural wall hangings and architectural paintings, with bold forms that bring to mind postmodern design. Similarly, at the entrance of the fair, brilliantly colored, blown-glass works of Italian architect **Ettore Sottsass** line the booth wall of the **Friedman Benda** booth. (**Marc Benda**, for the record, says that despite partner **Barry Friedman**'s recent retirement, "Nothing is going to change.")

Nearby, "100 Years of Nudes" is written on the wall of Swiss heavyweight **Galerie Gmurzynska**'s booth, where the women of **Pablo Picasso**'s "Femme debout" (1969) and **Yves Klein**'s "ANT" (1960) hold court. There's a surprise hanging on the wall directly opposite: Three of the little-known and seldom-seen collages of architect **Richard Meier**.

Stray observations, for the more whimsical: **Mary Ryan Gallery** has a collection of **Laurent de Brunhoff** and **Jean de Brunhoff** illustrations of beloved French elephant prince Babar. And furs — whether they be the cow hide on **Galerie Downtown**'s **Oscar Niemeyer** Low Armchair and Ottomon, the white alpaca on **Vallois**'s Chateau armchairs, or the sheepskin of **Modernity**'s **Flemming Lassen** armchairs — make excellent seating.

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