

# INTERIOR DESIGN

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designers on the rise  
Gensler at the Top



# crosslines



## The Basel Bandwagon

With a new fair, Design.05, two entrepreneurs aim to capitalize on the crowd gathering at Art Basel Miami Beach



THE FIRST WEEKEND IN DECEMBER, Art Basel Miami Beach is the place to snag a Pablo Picasso or a Roy Lichtenstein—or just party like an art star. And it has suddenly dawned on two entrepreneurs that those 33,000 art collectors converging on the city may have just as much interest in work by Le Corbusier, Ettore Sottsass, or Marc Newson.

Interior designer Amy Lau, the former director of Aero in New York, and Ambra Medda, a furniture consultant, had never organized this kind of event before, but that didn't stop them from aiming high. They're launching Design.05 with an invite-only list of 15 furniture and decorative-arts dealers.

Design.05 runs December 1 through 5, in a Design District building owned by Medda's boyfriend, developer Craig Robins. To ratchet up the prestige another notch, she and Lau invited Zaha Hadid to transform the building's atrium with an installation. Did somebody call these two beginners?

**How did you pull together a debut show with such star power?**

AM: My mother's a design dealer, and I was raised in that world in London, Milan, and China.

AL: I worked for Aero for nearly two years. After that, I was design director of the Lin/Weinberg Gallery.

**What elevates Design.05 above other shows?**

AM: For one thing, Zaha's installation. It looks like a substance being stretched and pulled—as if you stepped on gum and pulled it up with your shoe. And the Moore Building makes a perfect backdrop, with its Italianate columns, chinoiserie touches, rococo finishes, plate-glass windows, and amazing four-story atrium. As you walk in, you see all the dealers at once—up, down, across.

AL: The installation starts in the middle of the lobby. Then it makes a kind of tunnel with the volume expanding as it goes up. It's not the usual convention center with dealers in cubicles.

**That sounds rather elaborate.**

AL: Zaha has done wonderful site-specific installations. Take the international garden show Landesgartenschau in Weil am Rhein, Germany, and the tram station and parking lot in Strasbourg, France. She knows how to reinvent spaces.

**How will this treatment work with the dealers' pieces?**

AL: The eclecticism works well with contemporary and vintage furniture. On the first floor alone, we have Barry Friedman from New York, showing Marc Newson, Ron Arad, and Droog Design's Tejo Remy as well as Galerie Patrick Seguin in Paris, with Le Corbusier.

**What has it been like to collaborate with Hadid?**

AM: We haven't gone into the philosophical aspects of her installation. We talked about the



Clockwise from top left: Mattia Bonetti's Cut-Out sofa in hand-stitched leather, being presented by London's David Gill Gallery; Ettore Sottsass's Cabinet 55 in Japanese ash, ebony, and acrylic, previously on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and now shown by Barry Friedman of New York. A preliminary rendering of Zaha Hadid's installation in the Moore Building's atrium. Furniture consultant Ambra Medda, the show's cofounder; Interior designer Amy Lau, the show's other cofounder.





From left: Pierre Szekely's sandblasted-pine screen, presented by New York's Magen H. Gallery; The Casati Gallery of Chicago's stainless-steel desk by Mario Cecci.

idea behind Design.05 and told her we'd be presenting a mix of pieces ranging from postwar to the most contemporary things imaginable. Zaha has designed furniture herself, and she knew most of the dealers we chose. AL: And, of course, it was also a great pleasure to work with another woman. AM: A kick-ass woman!

**Can you explain the tie-in with Art Basel Miami Beach?**

AM: The boundaries between fine art and design have blurred. And serious collectors hunt for both. The VIPs at Art Basel will come to our parties, and our VIPs will go to theirs.

**What was your first step in planning Design.05?**

AL: We drew up a list of the most important design dealers. Then we attacked it.

**How will the galleries present themselves?**

AL: It's not just about filling a booth with inventory.

AM: They must have a vision, be able to create an environment at their stands. For many, it was a chance to be an interior designer. Nina Nilular, for instance, might bring a wild mix of pieces—an antique Middle Eastern carpet along with modern Italian furnishings. Patrick Seguin, on the other hand, creates beautiful architectural vignettes.

**And satellite exhibitions?**

AM: They'll be throughout the Design District during

the show. In the Buick Building, the Moss gallery from New York is showing Gaetano Pesce, Fernando and Humberto Campana, and Tord Boontje. The Collins Building will have a Ron Arad installation presented by Barry Friedman.

AL: We're also ripping up the parking lot next to the Moore Building to build a temporary tropical-garden bar and lounge.

AM: That's where dealers will consult with their clients—every night, we hope. —Tom Austin



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