

The recently launched Design Miami/ Shop offers over 800 collectibles for purchase

Design Miami/ CEO Jen Roberts and curatorial director Aric Chen talk to AD India about the Design Miami/ Shop, their support for GlobalGiving's charitable efforts for COVID-19 relief, and the possibilities of a more accessible post-pandemic design fair

[Avantika Shankar](#) Published: Aug 17, 2020 | 10:00:59 IST



Alloy Bench by Betil Dagdelen at Cristina Grajales Gallery

As the design industry is looking for creative ways to work around the vacuum left behind by cancelled summer fairs, Design Miami/ has used the time to launch a long-awaited new venture. Design Miami/ Shop, an

online platform that connects buyers to rare collectible design objects, went live in late June—and in the process, has raised money for COVID-19 relief, and initiated a conversation about the future of the fair itself.

A Welcome Addition

“This pandemic hasn’t changed the world so much as it has accelerated processes that were already underway,” says Design Miami/ curatorial director Aric Chen over a Zoom call from Shanghai. “I think pre-Coronavirus, there was already a sense that the whole fair system needed to evolve.”

A Treasure Trove

Chen brings up the term “fair-fatigue,” in reference to the over-saturated summer calendars of global design fairs, biennials and conferences. “It was clear that the system needed to evolve, and this pandemic has given greater impetus to rethinking how fairs operate.” While Design Miami/ is hoping to permanently incorporate digital platforms in the fair landscape, the Design Miami/Shop was put together relatively quickly—considering it brings together 52 galleries from around the world and offers over 800 collectible design objects for purchase.



Rare Works

The most significant portion of the Design Miami/ Shop is the Design for GlobalGiving initiative, a collection of specially commissioned works on paper donated by some of the world's most renowned designers. "The Design for GlobalGiving initiative was a result of both Design Miami/ wanting to give back and do something at the very beginning of the pandemic, and also a lot of independent designers feeling at a loss for a way to contribute," says Design Miami/ CEO Jen Roberts, over video chat from Miami. Design Miami/ partnered with Anava Projects, an organisation run by Anna Carnick and former Design Miami/ acting director Wava Carpenter, to commission limited-edition and one-of-a-kind prints and drawings from both established and emerging designers. The collection includes a Smithsonian sketch print by David Adjaye, a one-of-a-kind drawing by Yves Béhar and an original photograph by Annabelle Selldorf aptly titled "We Need the Tonic of Wilderness." Some pieces, such as Peter Marigold's "Small Paper Shelf" design (which is emailed to buyers as a digital file, complete with instructions for

assembly) are priced as low as \$25 dollars (₹1,870). On the other hand, an original Gaetano Pesce ink drawing titled "La Montagna di Cuori" goes for \$15,000 (₹11,22,562). 100% of the proceeds from this collection will go towards GlobalGiving's COVID-19 relief efforts.



Easy Access

“This is really the first time that at this level, the materials are offered with price transparency and so much detailed information about the work in the description,” says Roberts. In this way, the digital space offers audiences something the actual fair does not—time. “When we produce a fair for six or seven days, there is so much content, and it is really hard to absorb it when you’re walking through,” says Roberts, “But so much work goes into creating and curating for the shows, which the audience never gets to see.” The website changes that, allowing viewers to take their time getting to know the products, the processes, and finally the designers themselves.



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EXPERTISE/

Twentieth-century French design
and the demountable architecture of
Jean Prouvé

Galerie Patrick Seguin

Galerie Patrick Seguin showcases the talent of twentieth-century French designers, including Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, and Jean Royère. For thirty years, Galerie Patrick Seguin has worked to promote Prouvé’s demountable houses. The gallery currently presents the largest collection of his houses and publishes a series of monographic books to accompany the exhibitions.

ALL ITEMS

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DESIGNERS/

Jean Prouvé
Charlotte Perriand
Pierre Jeanneret
Le Corbusier
Jean Royère



Galerie Patrick Seguin
Jean Prouvé Lit Cité n° 456 Daybed
\$125,000



Galerie Patrick Seguin
Le Corbusier - Pierre Jeanneret - Chandigarh, India Book
\$79



Galerie Patrick Seguin
Jean Prouvé 6x6 Demountable House
\$1,500,000



Galerie Patrick Seguin
Jean Prouvé Chaise Dactylo CD 11
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Galerie Patrick Seguin
Pierre Jeanneret Pair of Advocate Chairs
\$60,000



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Pierre Jeanneret Pair of Easy Armchairs
\$40,000



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Pierre Jeanneret Table
\$150,000



Galerie Patrick Seguin
Jean Prouvé Guéridon Bas GB 11
\$100,000



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Prolific Content

In addition to the GlobalGiving initiative, the Design Miami/ Shop is an attempt to promote and encourage independent designers who may

otherwise struggle for visibility. "At this moment, it seemed important to give this channel over to independent designers," says Chen. "We opened up the Design Miami/ Shop to non-gallery represented designers, mostly young and emerging—which shows how a design fair, virtual or not, can contribute to a broader ecosystem for design."

Chen draws attention to a special section titled TheForum/, which includes photo essays and interviews with leading designers from around the world. The editorial content is overseen by Anava Projects, and essentially allows audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the design process. "It is really important for people to understand what it is that Design Miami/ does but more importantly what the designers are trying to say, why this work is important, and what the work contributes to broader dialogues."

Digital + On Ground

There is talk of Design Miami/ coming back in December—although several factors need to fall into place before any big decisions can be made. "There's still some big questions that we have to get to, like travel, and whether or not the restrictions are going to ease," admits Roberts, "We are preparing to do a live event, but it will go over a longer period of time to try and account for the social distancing." Roberts also indicates that private viewings for museum and gallery benefactors may serve the dual purpose of social distanced-live viewing of artwork, and fundraising. This year, Design Miami/ was also looking to launch a "leaner, meaner" version of the fair to take on the road called Design Miami/ Podium, but the project will have to be revisited post-COVID-19. "The pandemic has given us more confidence to pursue this as a compliment to the show," says Chen, implying that restrictions on travel and a stronger focus on the digital space can only serve to boost the appeal of smaller, localised conventions. "As they say, necessity is the mother of invention," he adds. "When this pandemic is over—and it will be over—people will still want to gather, and see things in real time, and interact with each other—that's

just the way we're wired. But digital platforms will continue to grow in importance, and it is up to us to completely explore the possibility they offer."

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