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Design Art London: Capital collection of creative ideas

Whether seeking an original or just inspiration, Design Art London is the place to go, says Kate Watson-Smyth

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The fashion world has gone back to its atelier and this month, London plays host to the arts. Collecting art is no longer just about acquiring paintings to hang on the wall; nowadays it's about the design itself becoming the art. Which means that instead of just buying something to sit on while you watch television, you are investing in a piece of furniture that is also a work of art. It's also a way of spending eye-watering sums of money on a chair – but that's not the point.

There are several art fairs in the capital this month, from Frieze – billed as the UK's most important contemporary-art event, to Zoo and the Affordable Art Fair, but it all comes together at Design Art London, in Berkeley Square. For the second year running, 32 of the most prestigious galleries in the world will showcase modern classics, vintage one-offs and limited-edition cutting-edge contemporary pieces.

For most of us, it will be a question of buying a ticket to see something inspiring rather than investing in something to take home, but it's no less important for that. Loic Le Gaillard, owner of the Carpenters Workshop Gallery, says: "We hope that this will paint a picture of what the world will look like in 2010. These are the best artists in the world.

"I can't say if the high street will be producing these pieces in two years' time, but we are showing high-quality design and it is bound to have an influence.

"Our exhibitors are creating beautiful sculptures, either by using modern technology and computers, like Zaha Hadid does, or by hand, using traditional marble, then you look more closely and discover they have a function as well. So you first see a piece of art and then you realise that you can sit on it, or dine off it, and that it has a function as well as form."

Galleries from Paris, Milan, Brussels, Copenhagen, Chicago and New York will all be at the fair, showcasing designers from Le Corbusier, Arne Jacobsen and Jean Prouvé, to modernists such as Ron Arad, Marc Newson and Hadid. Not forgetting Marc Quinn at the Carpenters Workshop.

The artist, better known for his sculptures made of blood and his marble statue of Alison Lapper on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, has produced a collection of furniture. "This is the first time a major artist has moved into furniture design, and it is very exciting," says Le Gaillard. Quinn has made five pieces in a limited edition of eight, including a side table, bench and desk.

The fair also includes lighting, ceramics and glass, as well as sculpture as furniture. Now, as you will need at least £3,000 in your pocket if you are thinking of investing, here are the highlights of the show – and how to get the look for a fraction of the price.

Design Art London, Berkeley Square, London W1 (020-7436 6086; www.designartlondon.com), 15-19 October, 10am to 8pm, admission £15

Origin 2008

If all this is too pricey, check out the Origin craft fair at Somerset House, showcasing furniture, textiles and ceramics by 300 British designers, with prices from £10. For £100, you should find something really good. To 19 October (020-7806 2500; www.craftscouncil.org.uk)

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