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# Investec courts the art and design worlds with PAD sponsorship



Joseph Walsh Enignum II Dining Table, 2010 CREDIT: COURTESY OF SARAH MYERSCOUGH

By Colin Gleadell

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**A**rts sponsorship is never easy to come by, so when a new player comes into the field it inevitably causes a ripple in the pond. The latest ripple has been caused by South African Bank, Investec, which has some £120 billion under management for clients.

Investec will be known as a sponsor for its association with sport - English Test Cricket, the Derby, and Women's hockey, which received a huge boost with the winning of Olympic Gold in Rio. "These are all long term arrangements which reflect the brand values of extraordinary energy and stamina," says Investec's head of group marketing, Richard Harris. Recently, however, they have been branching out into culture, or what Iain Clark, Investec's head of retail bank marketing describes as the "passion points" of his clients.



Fausto Melotti, *L'uscita delle valchirie* 1980 CREDIT: COURTESY OF REPETTO GALLERY

Visitors to the Holland Park Opera over the last few years will have been greeted by Investec's wealth & investment logo as they passed the main entrance to the stage. On my visit to a raucous modern interpretation of Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* in June, I found myself amongst a sea of well-heeled senior citizens, perfect potential clients for an investment bank, all bobbing away in time to the insistent rhythms of the Viennese waltz.

Being a South African bank, it has not been surprising to see Investec behind the scenes at some of Bonhams South African Art sales. Last year they supported a selling exhibition at Bonhams of John Meyer's Boer War paintings to raise money for the African elephant and rhino charity, Tusk. This evening they are sponsoring the sale of 12 huge animal puppets made for the highly successful dramatisation of Michael Morpurgo's novel, *War Horse* helping to raise funds for the Handspring Trust and its puppet-making company in South Africa.



The War Horse puppet is being sold by Bonhams on the 13th September 2016

At the beginning of July Investec moved into the more competitive art market arena sponsoring a debate between art critics Louisa Buck and Adrian Searle at Phillips auctioneers on whether art had sold out to the market or not. Leaving the arguments aside, the audience, having enjoyed a few drinks, voted that it had not - a good result for Investec which now makes its first real art market move by sponsoring the opening event of Frieze Week at the beginning of next month, the high-end Pavilion of Art & Design fair in Berkeley Square (PAD).



James Plumb, Indigo Luminaire , Burnished Indigo series | UK | 2014 CREDIT: COURTESY OF FUMI GALLERY

“We have a number of clients who collect modern and contemporary art and design, and that is where the impetus came from,” says Clark. “PAD seemed like just the right ‘niche’ event to be associated with. As a business founded by ‘restless spirits’, Investec champions the like-minded, such as the fair’s gallerists, artists and collectors,” he says. Adjectives like "extraordinary", "creative", "innovative", "unconventional" and "entrepreneurial" spill from his lips.



Christopher Duffy, Abyss Table, 2015 CREDIT: COURTESY OF SARAH MYERSCOUGH

But what are the actual components of PAD with which Investec will be associated? When it began in London in 2007, Pad was a craft-orientated modern and contemporary design fair, reflecting a bull market which saw prices escalating as they were for modern and contemporary art. In 2009, all markets were hit by the credit crunch, but PAD expanded to include modern art, photography and tribal art, though not contemporary art. “There are too many fairs for contemporary art,” says PAD founder, Patrick Perrin.



Fernand Leger Les Quatre Acrobates, 1954 CREDIT: COURTESY OF OPERA GALLERY

Since 2012 and the launch of Frieze Masters in the same week, however, while the design sectors of PAD have remained consistent, exhibitors in the other disciplines have been torn between the two. Top class modern art dealers like Dickinson Roundell, Richard Nagy, Lefevre and Christophe van de Weghe from New York no longer show at PAD. The gap has been partly filled this year with Richard Green, Opera and Aktis, but the general feeling is that while the design sections are still strong, the modern art is weaker.

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Reinier Bosch 2016 CREDIT: COURTESY OF PRIVEEKOLLEKTIE

“Our specialisation was always the decorative arts and design,” says Perrin. “Unless we can attract galleries that fit in with the spirit of PAD, I’m not sure we will continue with modern paintings.”

So Investec is really making its bed with the design world. “We’re very keen on that,” says Clark. “A lot of our furniture is designed by Tom Dixon.” But they still have their work cut out. Perrin says a sponsor’s success depends on what they can bring to the table in terms of potential clients for the galleries in the fair. “A lot of banks want to come in with us,” he says, “but if they are only wanting to sharpen their image by association with us, I’m not interested.”

*PAD is on from October 5-9 in Berkeley Square, WI*

[pad-fairs.com](http://pad-fairs.com)