

how to spend it

Pearl Lam at Porsche Design, London

The art doyenne revs up for a boundary-pushing design show



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The doyenne of the Chinese art scene, Pearl Lam, is about to show London just why her reputation for championing the best emerging designers is so formidable. For some years now, she has invited established and emerging designers to embrace and explore the boundaries of Chinese art and craft techniques – some of which date back 5,000 years or more. The results have been eagerly snapped up by the international collectors who scour fairs such as Design Miami/Basel and PAD for the Next Big Thing. André Dubreuil, Maarten Baas, Philip Michael Wolfson and Martin Szekely are just a few of the Europe-based big hitters of design and architecture who have produced cross-cultural, collaborative projects at Lam's instigation.

Now she has teamed up with Porsche Design to present a pop-up exhibition at the new Porsche Design concept store in London – the brand's biggest flagship in the world – opening to the public on Friday October 17 and running until Friday November 7. The typically diverse show will include work by Studio Reinier Bosch, Bouke de Vries and Studio Swine – as well as Lam's own Chinese talents, including XYZ Design and Danful Yang. Having visited Lam's booth at Design Miami/Basel earlier this year, I can vouch for the fact that design enthusiasts are in for a treat. Yang's *Packing Me Softly* series of hand-embroidered on canvas "cardboard" boxes (from \$12,000, example in third picture) was a virtual sellout, but it was Studio Swine's Hair Highway – an entire collection of beautiful luxury objects (\$1,300-\$45,000, dressing table in first picture and combs in second picture) made from human hair sourced in China's biggest hair market – that created the most column inches.

The event is certainly likely to make other London-based galleries sit up and take notice. "This collaboration is a celebration of design where there is no discrimination or segregation between the handmade and the machine-made, from the beauty of imperfection to absolute precision," Lam says. "It embraces the purist approach of Porsche Design with the narrative of Chinese traditional techniques – something that is at the heart of all my galleries."

For Porsche Design, which has championed luxury, world-class design since its formation in

1972, the collaboration with Lam is absolutely right for the new store. Sophie Charbonneau, UK manager for Porsche Design, was instrumental in persuading Lam to exhibit: “I know Pearl well and consider her to be a very special force within the art world. Porsche Design is not just a shop – we want it to be a destination to enjoy, and being able to offer a Pearl Lam exhibition to my customers is a great treat for them.”

Looks like Lam is about to hit the capital’s fast lane.

Friday October 17 to Friday November 7 2014 at Porsche Design Concept Store, 59 Brompton Road, London SW3 (020-7581 4442; www.porsche-design.com). Pearl Lam, www.pearllam.com.