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The founders of the COLLECTIBLE design fair reflect on their position in an ever-evolving industry

Brussels Mussels

By Adrian Madlener • Originally published as an Online Feature



Returning to Brussels's historic Vanderborght Building next week is the third edition of the annual COLLECTIBLE gallery fair. A newcomer to the ever-saturated international design calendar, this event stands apart by only exhibiting 21st-century wares and embodying the avant-garde approach that continues to define its hometown.

On view from March 5 to 8, COLLECTIBLE is set to bring together 40 of the world's leading emerging and established galleries. In addition, the fair will host a number of special exhibitions that highlight young experimental talents. This year's roster includes Atelier Jaspers, Rademakers Gallery, Todd Merrill, ToolsGalerie, Ben Storms, Charlotte Kidger, Christian + Jade, musing-sellés, Naz Yologlu, Philipp Weber, Sayar & Garibeh, Sophia Taillet, STUDIO RAW MATERIAL, Sight Unseen, and Ben & Aja Blanc (featured in AN Interior Fall 2019). AN Interior's editor Adrian Madlener spoke to COLLECTIBLE's founders Clélie Debehault and Liv Valsberg about what makes this event different.

AN: In your mind, where should we draw the line between art and design?

LV: Functionality is our guiding principle. It has to be the start point, regardless of the result. For us, this mindset is a way of differentiating ourselves from the art world. We've noticed that whenever an art fair attempts to incorporate functional pieces, they lose value. It's all about context. A collector will not hold a collectible design piece up to the same esteem as a work of art nor a contemporary work up to the same caliber as a historical piece. Our aim to change both outdated perceptions but within a dedicated context.



Lawless Sofa by Evan Fay (2019) (Courtesy Galerie Philia)



Anker Sofa Twist by Nina Edwards (2019) (Courtesy of Galerie Philia)