

Great Expectations!

With a massive show season upon us, we talk to five interior designers about what they are most looking forward to. Blanca Sanchez of Halo Design Interiors, Clare Pascoe of Pascoe Interiors, Hugh Jamieson of At Home Interior Design Consultants, Cambridge, Ros Wilson of Roselind Wilson Design and Nico Yiannikou of Y2DC share their survival tips!

Is there anything specific you are most looking forward to at this September's show season?

Blanca: I am looking forward to finding new products and to seeing existing suppliers moving their collections on. In particular, I am searching for more British product. I enjoy making links with and supporting home grown talent. This not only helps the local economy but also brings our projects to life as we work alongside gifted creative people. We also avoid the summer shut-down issues which affect Continental supply.

Clare: I'm always looking for emerging British talent and designers who focus on chic sustainable design. Realistic pricing is also a consideration – but this does not necessarily mean cheap; the price should reflect the individuality, effort and skill – but I also want to see evidence of commercial sensibility and not just an over inflated 'designer' price tag for the sake of it. It's a fine balance; but those who get design and commercial economics right are onto a winning combination.

Hugh: We have such a great mix of design inspiration from the various Autumn Exhibitions, now referred to as London Design Festival. designjunction is rather

more edgy now that 100% changed its look last year and thinned down on quantity of exhibitors but went up several notches in quality. Decorex has the usual mix of mostly traditional and/or classic products – again rather more interesting last year and of course a new venue this year. Maison&Objet is timed for a perfect visit to Paris!

Ros: I'm hotly anticipating the stylish new venue for Decorex at Kensington Palace. This refreshing change will no doubt be host to a flurry of new suppliers, new talent, new ideas and loads of inspiration. For the past two years I have visited Maison&Objet and the creative display of the exhibition stands is an absolute must for designers. This year I was astounded by an exhibit entitled "First Foods" which showcased homeware designs by various designers relating to food.

Nico: Nothing specific, it's more the chance to see the innovative designs which are coming through from new designers. Some shows have become too commercial and are overrun by the big brand names. It's a shame we don't have more independent designer shows which focus more on the upcoming designs/designers. 100% used to have a spin off exhibition at one point that was more focused on this but I am not sure if this is still part of the current scenario. Having said that of all the shows my

particular favourite would be Maison&Objet. Also keen to see how Decorex will work in Kensington Gardens this year.

Do you plan an itinerary or do you simply wander?

Clare: I tend to walk quite swiftly up and down the aisles. There is often a plethora of the same exhibitors at these design shows mixed in with sales lead stalls looking to sell volumes of products. I avoid both – I have no desire to have my badge scanned by all and sundry as I get too much junk email as it is. Instead I scan the stands ahead of me ▼



Clare Pascoe



Sitting room by Clare Pascoe



Playroom by Ros Wilson

▲ so I can plan those I wish to investigate further.

Hugh: It's obviously great to see suppliers you already know for a quick catch up, but that has to be balanced with having enough time to seek out something different. There might be specific things I am looking for to use on current or future projects, or I could be looking for inspiration; whichever the case I always have a 'system' to ensure I don't miss a 'lane'!

Ros: Given my existing commitments and

workload I usually cannot attend the shows for longer than one full day. As a result I do not have an itinerary but I strategically plan my route around the exhibition halls to ensure I can get it all done on one day.

Nico: Not so much an itinerary, but I like to go around the exhibits in a methodical way, though you inevitably bump into friends/colleagues so that doesn't always work out!

Blanca: I plan an itinerary – ensuring that I cover all aspects of the show in question. Depending on how long I have at the ▼



Ros Wilson

▲ particular show, and the size of the exhibition, I may earmark particular areas as the most important, to ensure that I get maximum benefit from the show.

Do you follow Twitter feeds, blogs etc in the run up to the shows?

Hugh: No. I use LinkedIn and take my hat off to anyone who has time to follow Twitter and blogs!

Ros: I read the emails that get sent to assess if there are any exhibitions or suppliers I really want to see/meet and I note this information. I also download the app showing the Hall map so that I know where I am at all times should I need to change my planned route to see everything.

Nico: No, not really though we have recently been a great deal more active on the social media front especially with our Twitter account. ▼

Blanca Sanchez



Office above garage by Blanca Sanchez

▲ **Blanca:** I don't tend to follow Twitter feeds etc in the lead up to the show. However, having recently started a Twitter feed myself, I intend to search out show Twitter feeds this year for the first time and get more connected to what's happening behind the scenes as the September show scene starts.

Clare: No, this isn't really my thing. Making it to the shows is achievement enough; even when I was based in London it was a concerted effort to find the time, with most shows easily absorbing half a day. Now I am based in West Sussex it is even more of a mission, hence why I target emerging shows and those who focus on more individual products.

Have you ever made a really useful contact/discovery at one of these shows?

Ros: At Milan I was thrilled to learn initially that all the Halls are located off one avenue making it very easy to navigate to where you want to go. Later I also learned that the big suppliers have stands in both the Classic and Contemporary Halls so if you are looking for big suppliers, you can bypass some of the Halls accordingly. I always make very useful contacts at these shows so there is no one name that stands out.

Nico: I did many years ago. I recall meeting Based Upon when they were just starting their business and have since watched them grow their South East London business into a worldwide product used by designers near and far. We have also developed strong bonds with a number of furniture suppliers whom we have stumbled on over the years.



Dining room by Hugh Jamieson

Blanca: I have made many useful leads through the years. One particularly memorable one was finding a Spanish furniture manufacturer at Maison&Objet in Paris a few years ago. They not only make the most beautiful luxury furniture, but they are based on the outskirts of Salamanca in Spain, down the road from where my family comes from, and I have since been to visit them in their factory and used their product in many projects.

Clare: Granorte – who supply cork flooring and amazing sustainable boards for making furniture. I love products that inspire you to design a piece simply to use the product.

Hugh: Definitely! It's like all these shows – if you come away with one new contact ▼



Hugh Jamieson

▲ or discovery, then I think it's time well spent.

Any tips for surviving the events intact?

Nico: Make sure you drink plenty of water and have a strong bag for carrying all the literature, catalogues and samples you are given. Also have plenty of business cards to give out.

Blanca: Wear comfortable shoes and carry water!

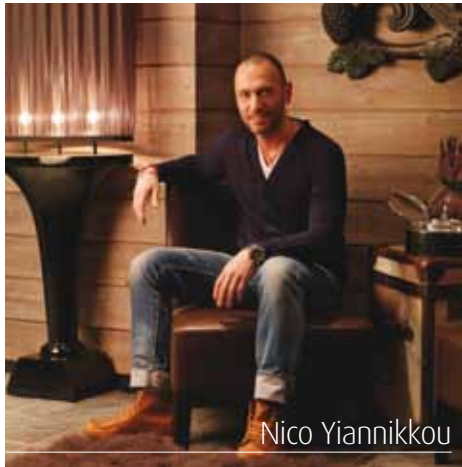
Clare: Resist picking up every brochure, it kills your shoulder, encourages unnecessary waste and clutters up your office. I instead use my phone to take photographs of the company contact details of those I want to investigate further from the comfort of my office, adding them to our source library if I feel they're a product that could benefit our projects.

Hugh: Comfortable shoes, yes even for us chaps! I wish all exhibitors had zappers, but they don't so you still need lots of business cards. We prefer to have brochures sent to us – a bag/briefcase can get rather heavy

towards the end of a good day!

Ros: For the big shows like Milan and Maison, drink water and have a bottle with you at all times as you get really dehydrated. Wear comfortable shoes and

take a comfortable backpack for all your brochures and business cards as your hand bag can get very heavy. Take a break for lunch and step outside of the Hall so that you can feel rejuvenated when you go back in. I promise you will get show fit in no time.



Nico Yiannikkou



Courchevel salon entrance by Nico Yiannikkou