



British designer Naomi Paul makes an impression in New York

Fast facts

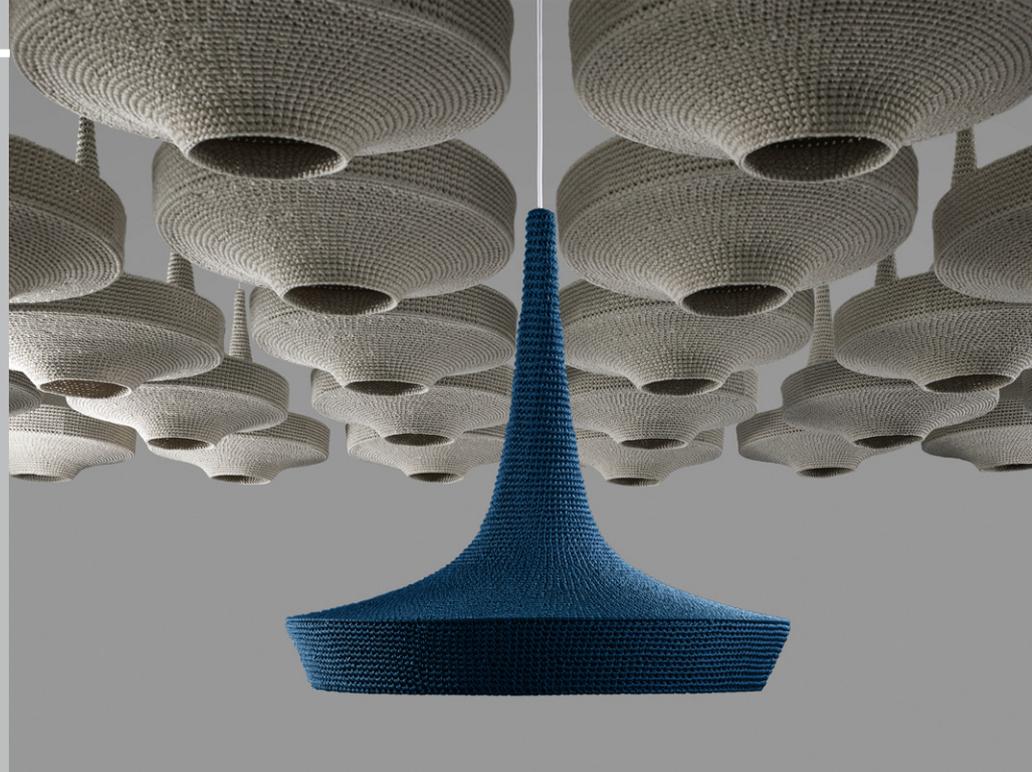
Company: Naomi Paul Studio Ltd

Industry: Creative - furniture and fixture design

Target Market: USA

UKTI Service: Tradeshow Access Programme

www.naomipaul.co.uk



UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) provided funding to help award winning designer Naomi Paul to attend her first overseas trade show. This has resulted in several US clients, a £3000 commission to make a light fitting and plans for a new line in outdoor lighting.

Naomi Paul grew up on a farm in Sussex and dreamed from an early age of becoming a designer. She studied Graphic Design at Central Saint Martins, part of the University of the Arts, London. Then she completed a degree in Constructed Textile Design at Chelsea College of Art and Design. Naomi started out as a fashion designer but found her calling in interior design when jewellery designer Solange Azagury Partridge commissioned her to make a sculpture for her home. In 2008, she started her own studio, specialising in hand-crafted, innovative objects and materials for interior spaces. The studio, which is based in East London, is best

known for its lighting designs. These have been commissioned by high profile clients such as Pullman Hotels, Vodafone, and Nando's.

In September 2011, Naomi Paul Studio launched on a larger scale at the Tent London trade show during British Design Week, where Naomi exhibited her designs. This led to an enormous amount of press coverage, which got picked up in the USA and Australia. These 2 markets went on to become Naomi's main client base, with 90 per cent of her work sold in the USA, and 10 per cent sold in Australia, Holland and Germany. Relatively little of her work is commissioned in the UK. In 2012, Naomi Paul Studio became a limited company, and in the same year Naomi was named 'Young Designer of the Year' by Homes & Garden Magazine.

"I have been overwhelmed by the response to my designs," says Naomi. "A year and a half after Tent London, I

still had jobs coming in from contacts I made there. I hadn't exhibited at a trade fair since then – they are very expensive and there's no guarantee they'll generate new business. As a small company, I wanted to make sure I didn't run before I could walk."

First overseas show

Feeling that the time was right and that she would be able to meet the associated costs, Naomi attended the contemporary living and design show, Maison & Objet Paris, in January 2013.

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While there, she met a representative from the British European Design Group who recommended that she get in touch with UKTI to find out about funding available for British businesses to attend tradeshows.

Naomi researched international fairs that would be relevant to her. As most of her clients are based in the USA, she decided to apply to UKTI for funding through the Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) to exhibit at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair due to take place in New York in May 2014. Naomi’s application was accepted, and 6 weeks later she was exhibiting at her first overseas show.

“The TAP funding covered the cost of the stand and was pivotal in my decision to exhibit at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair,” says Naomi. “The fair was a great starting point to increase my profile in the US market with interior designers, architects and showrooms. I got a lot of feedback with regards to what they want, a key area being outdoor lighting which I am now researching and developing. We also got some great press coverage, which has raised our profile. We have a number of features coming out in the next few months, in magazines like Luxe and Elle and broadsheets like the Wall Street Journal, which will keep up our exposure in my absence.”

New commission

Within 3 weeks of the International Contemporary Furniture Fair, Naomi received a telephone call from a design company based in Texas. They commissioned her to create a large pendant lighting piece to hang over a dining table in a private residence. The contract was worth £3,000. She has since won a further 5 jobs from contacts made at the fair, with more quotes and purchase orders in the pipeline.

Meanwhile, Naomi Paul Studios was selected to be showcased at the

Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July 2014 as part of UKTI’s British Business House for overseas delegates. UKTI covered all costs including transportation and exhibition stand. Whilst designers did not themselves attend the event, Naomi credits the occasion with helping to raise her profile as an up and coming British designer.

“People like to have unique and special interior design features, and the US market also loves the fact that I am British,” says Naomi. “UKTI’s assistance has definitely helped to increase my overseas sales. Having the chance to speak directly to potential clients at trade shows is invaluable. No small businesses should go abroad without contacting UKTI. I look forward to applying for funding again for my next show and will also look into other UKTI services.”

The UK and the USA

The UK and the USA are each other’s single largest investors and most important partners in science and innovation. In fact, more than a quarter of new investment projects in the UK come from US investors, and bilateral trade between the UK and the USA is worth around £120 billion per year.

In 2013, the USA continued to strengthen its relationship with the UK, funding 501 projects and creating 32,488 new jobs. About a million people in the USA work for British companies, while a further million in the UK work for American firms.

The US economy is integrated and largely self-contained, with every major industry represented. The sheer size of the USA means it should be treated as a series of regional markets with varying characteristics.

For further information about business opportunities in the USA, please go to gov.uk/ukti

Helping you attend tradeshows

Taking part in overseas exhibitions is an effective way for you to test markets, attract customers, appoint agents or distributors and make sales. UK Trade & Investment’s Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) provides grant support for eligible SME firms to attend trade shows overseas.

Participation is usually as part of a group, a great advantage for inexperienced businesses, and is usually led by one of our Accredited Trade Organisations (ATOs). ATOs work with UK Trade & Investment to raise the profile of UK groups and sectors at key exhibitions.

For further information please visit www.gov.uk/ukti

UKTI was delighted to support Naomi Paul Studio Ltd in its business overseas.

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