

JEAN PROUVÉ
4 X 4 DEMOUNTABLE MILITARY SHELTER, 1939
DESIGNMIAMI/
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From 2 to 6 December, on the occasion of DesignMiami/ 2015, Galerie Patrick Seguin is pleased to present the 4x4 Demountable Military Shelter designed in 1939 by Jean Prouvé.



JEAN PROUVÉ - 4X4 DEMOUNTABLE MILITARY SHELTER, 1939

«We think we should point out the ongoing value of these little houses which, after the War, will find all sorts of uses. They are so well made that they could readily be turned into permanent accommodations.»

Jean Prouvé, 1939

Jean Prouvé came to architecture indirectly, via the development of technically innovative building components which enabled him to move on to overall building design and the honing of new construction procedures. The virtues he stressed before and during the War found fresh expression in the postwar reconstruction drive, aimed at providing mass-produced, permanent housing for all.

In 1939 the preparations for the war effort provided Prouvé with just the right circumstances for getting his venture underway. General Dumontier, head of the 5th Army, ordered 300 small housing units for 4 to 12 people, to be assembled in record time.

Adapting the external frame system developed for a holiday camp the previous summer, in only a few months the Ateliers Jean Prouvé turned out several hundred 4x4 meter connectable units, whose external bent steel frame, to be filled in with simple wooden panels, could be quickly assembled and demounted by two men.

These «campaign buildings» followed the movements of the 5th Army during the first months of the War.

In anticipation of finding other outlets, extra 4x4 demountable military shelters were made by the Ateliers Jean Prouvé, one of which was sold to the Ferembal plant in Nancy for use as a gatekeeper's hut. Access to the premises was controlled from the hut with a bent steel drop-arm barrier also made by the Ateliers Jean Prouvé. For various reasons—shortage of materials, transport difficulties, bureaucratic stonewalling—this initial venture into mass production never matched Prouvé's hopes for it.

The disused Ferembal plant was demolished in the early 1980s, but fortunately Prouvé's two buildings—the gatekeeper's hut and the manager's office—survived.

Of the 300 or so 4x4 units manufactured in 1939, only the one that served as the gatekeeper's hut on the Ferembal site is still in existence. It is shown for the first time at DesignMiami/.

GALERIE PATRICK SEGUIN

Founded in 1989, Galerie Patrick Seguin is located in Paris's Bastille district in a 300 sqm (3200 sq ft) space, renovated by Jean Nouvel, a 2008 Pritzker Prize winner.

Since its opening, the gallery has brought the talents of French designers such as Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier and Jean Royère into the international spotlight.

With a particular specialization in the work of Jean Prouvé, Galerie Patrick Seguin works rigorously to promote both his furniture as well as his demountable houses. The gallery currently presents the largest collection of Prouvé's demountable houses (20) and publishes a series of monographic books to accompany the exhibitions.

In October 2015 Galerie Patrick Seguin opened a second space in Mayfair, London.

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STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE 4X4 DEMOUNTABLE MILITARY SHELTER

