

# VK

*visits on art, design, architecture and  
literature*

## Basel; “Maxeville Design Office” by Jean Prouvé unveiled by Galerie Patrick Seguin

by Venetia Kapernekas

This last June at Design Miami/Basel, Galerie Patrick Seguin, frequent purveyors of Prouvé’s work unveiled the Jean Prouvé’s Maxéville Design Office to the public for the first time, lovingly restored down to the last screw. It was presented at the Design Miami/Basel collectors’ fair in Switzerland, taking place from 14 to 19 June 2016, along with documentation of the restoration process.



JEAN PROUVÉ  
 MAXÉVILLE DESIGN OFFICE | 32.8 X 39.3 FT | 1948  
 BUREAU D'ÉTUDES MAXÉVILLE | 10 X 12 M | 1948  
 Provenance : Maxéville, France.  
 JP1695

(<https://venetiakapernekasblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/bureau-etude-jp1695a.jpg>)

photos@Courtesy Galerie Patrick Seguin

This piece of architecture was originally produced in 1948 as a prototype for the reconstruction after the war. Prouvé decided to place the house in his own plant in Maxéville, where it became the Ateliers Jean Prouvé Design Office; as demountable houses were still a little too avant-garde then, no serial production were made. However, the buildings of the plant were demolished except for the Design Office who luckily survived; it might now be considered as a rare witness of XXth century modern architecture.

*Born in Nancy, France, in 1901, Prouvé rose to become one of the most important architects and designers of the mid-20th century. In 1947 Jean Prouvé moved his workshop to Maxéville, a suburb outside of Nancy, in eastern France, and his company became a hotbed of innovative constructional thinking in France. Technicians, draftsmen and laborers worked together in an ambience of mutual respect. This version of 10 x 12 meter demountable house with a 2 x 2 canopy was originally produced in 1948 as a prototype for the reconstruction after the War. Intended as a demonstration model that would convince the public of the virtues of prefabricated housing, this was a copybook model: the use of structural axial portal provides an open, fluid plan rendered highly adaptable by interchangeable partitions and one-piece glazed or solid facing panels. (Galerie Patrick Seguin press)*

set up of the house <http://www.patrickseguin.com/en/videos/maxeville-design-office/>  
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Thanks to Patrick Seguin, the French design dealer who owns the world's largest collection of Prouvé architecture – 23 houses. Founded in 1989 to promote 20th-century French design, Galerie Patrick Seguin has been leading the resurgence of interest in Prouvé's work recently. They have hunted down and restored a variety of examples of his demountable houses. With 19 of these structures ranging from 172 to 2054 sq. ft., the gallery has worked strenuously to promote Jean Prouvé's architecture through numerous exhibitions and fairs throughout the world, including at the MoMa in New York, DesignMiamiBasel/, the Venice Biennale, and the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli in Turin.



photos @Courtesy Galerie Patrick Seguin

Patrick Seguin discovered the Maxéville which was covered as a club called Le Bounty, in an industrial suburb of the French city of Nancy. *Seguin knew the Maxéville Design Office might still exist. He had driven by the original site where it had stood. And he had seen Le Bounty without realising that it was indeed the Prouvé structure – for it was now covered in blue aluminium siding and stuck on top of another building. Unrecognisable, it was hiding in plain sight.* (Amy Serafin, in *Wallpaper*, June 15, 2016)

Accompanying its exhibitions, Galerie Patrick Seguin (<http://Accompanying its exhibitions, Galerie Patrick Seguin> has also developed an editorial line of comprehensive publications and is currently releasing a set of 5 monographs dedicated to Jean Prouvé's demountable architecture, illustrated with archival and contemporary photographs. These 5 volumes are the first of 15 that will be released in 3 separate boxed sets over the course of 2015 and 2016.) has also developed an editorial line of comprehensive publications and is

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