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Château La Coste Presents An Exhibition Dedicated To French Designer And Architect Jean Prouvé



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f Celebrating three decades since the opening of their eponymous 20th-
t century collectible design gallery in Paris, [Galerie Patrick Seguin](#), French
in decorative art dealers Laurence and Patrick Seguin have dedicated their
lives to rediscovering the pioneering work of Jean Prouvé (1901-1984). The
French engineer and builder famous especially for his contributions to the
art and technology of prefabricated metal construction is considered a key
figure in the history of 20th-century architecture and design, whose works
are today in the permanent collections of the world's most important
museums and private collections. Through exhibitions in international
galleries, museums and institutions as well as the regular publication of
books, the Seguins have helped to reveal the extraordinary nature of
Prouvé's creations – once ignored by the design cognoscenti – firstly his
furniture designs, then his architecture such as his prefabricated structures
(6x6 and 6x9 Demountable Houses, Ferembal House, Métropole House, Les
Jours Meilleurs House, Bouqueval School and Villejuif Temporary School),
while building their own personal collection of Prouvé furniture and
architectural components.



The chairs on display at the Jean Prouvé, *l'Âme du Métal* exhibition at Château La Coste were of utmost importance in Jean Prouvé's oeuvre as they epitomize his unrivaled understanding of and innovation in construction PHOTO COURTESY OF GALERIE PATRICK SEGUIN

A stalwart of the hospitality industry who managed Café de la Plage in Leucate in southern France and Distrito restaurant in Paris, Patrick Seguin first spotted Prouvé's Standard school chair at Paris' Saint-Ouen flea market in the late '80s, fell in love with it and decided to make a career change, tired of working late nights. Although postwar furniture was largely out of favor at the time, he and his wife have been instrumental in inciting interest in 1950's design and today specialize in five Modern masters: Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Jean Royère. Their gallery has since assembled the world's most important collection of Prouvé's demountable houses, which are either unique or extremely rare.



Jean Prouvé, *l'Âme du Métal* exhibition at Château La Coste PHOTO COURTESY OF GALERIE PATRICK SEGUIN

Their latest exhibition *Jean Prouvé, l'Âme du Métal* running until March 5, 2019 in the exhibition pavilion designed by [Renzo Piano](#) at the art and architecture Eden known as [Château La Coste](#) near Aix-en-Provence in southern France showcases 60 pieces from their private collection. They are mainly prototypes and one-off or highly-limited pieces including a Centrale table with sculptural bent sheet steel legs and laminated wood top (1955) that is probably Prouvé's most emblematic creation; table no. 506 in bent sheet steel, steel tube and African wood (1952); a refectory table in galvanized sheet steel and Granipoli (1939); a Présidence desk in bent sheet steel, wood and stainless steel (1955); a brise-soleil in ribbed aluminum (1957); ramp lighting in aluminum and glass (1952); and a swing-jib lamp in steel tube, sheet, cable and wood (1952). There are also various types of facades such as an iconic porthole panel in aluminum and glass (1951) or a sliding door in aluminum from the Pavillon du Centenaire de l'Aluminium (1954), alongside a mobile by Alexander Calder and a gouache by Fernand Léger, both given by the respective artists to Prouvé as a token of friendship. Rows of chairs line the walls – variations of the Standard chair from 1934 to 1953, the Antony chair, the Cité chair, the Colonial armchair – which epitomize Prouvé's unrivaled understanding of and innovation in construction due to the many challenges it presents to its designer, who must meet criteria of strength, ergonomics, esthetics and technical virtuosity. Additionally, there are two 1940's Prouvé wooden houses sold by the Seguins permanently exhibited at Château La Coste.



Exhibition pavilion by Renzo Piano set amidst the vineyards at Château La Coste PHOTO COURTESY OF CHÂTEAU LA COSTE

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The most impressive display, however, is an entire Prouvé experimental house showing his commitment to the notion of prefabrication, where he invented new structural techniques to allow the efficient and inexpensive construction of buildings with prefabricated elements, while maintaining architectural quality and identity, which will open next month as a suite of the château's five-star luxury hotel, [Villa La Coste](#), where guests can check in for a unique immersive Prouvé experience. The 6x6 Demountable House originally designed in 1944 by Prouvé for war victims in the French region of Lorraine was transformed in 2015 by architectural firm [Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners](#) to introduce electricity, hot water, a kitchen and a bathroom, making it fully autonomous. The architectural firm [Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners](#) to introduce electricity, hot water, a kitchen and a bathroom, making it fully autonomous. The flexible elements can be dismantled to echo the spirit of the original concept, which formed the perfect archetype of a nomadic house. The hotel

suite is adorned with historic chairs, tables, cabinets and lamps by Prouvé, Pierre Jeanneret and Serge Mouille. It is interesting to note that Prouvé had left his mark on architectural history again in 1971 when he played a pivotal role in choosing Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers' design for the Centre Pompidou as chairman of the competition jury, thus offering the young architects their first major project that has since become a Parisian landmark.



Galerie Patrick Seguin's Jean Prouvé 6x6 Demountable House with additions by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners that has now been converted into a Villa La Coste hotel suite PHOTO COURTESY OF GALERIE PATRICK SEGUIN