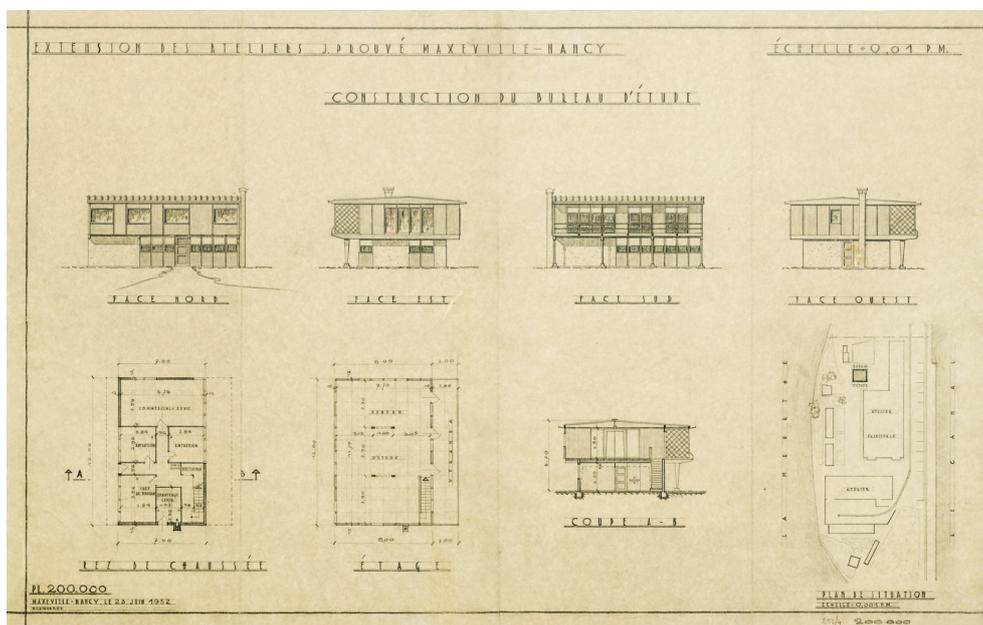


Press Release - April 2016

JEAN PROUVÉ  
MAXEVILLE DESIGN OFFICE, 1948  
GALERIE PATRICK SEGUIN  
DESIGN MIAMI/ BASEL 2016

From 13–19 June 2016 Galerie Patrick Seguin will be presenting Jean Prouvé's *Maxéville Design Office* (1948) at DesignMiami/Basel.



In 1947 Jean Prouvé moved his workshop to Maxéville, in inner-suburban Nancy, and his company became a hotbed of innovative constructional thinking in France. Technicians, draftsmen and laborers worked together in an ambience of mutual respect.

Strategically placed opposite to Prouvé's office at the entrance to the Maxéville plant, the *Design Office* was where the Ateliers Jean Prouvé prototypes were honed with series in mind. It symbolized the new thrust Prouvé wanted to give the company by entering the mass production market generated by France's enormous need for infrastructure and housing after the War.

This version of the **10x12 meter demountable house** was originally produced in 1948 as a prototype for 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 the structural axial portal provides an open, fluid plan rendered highly adaptable by interchangeable partitions and one-piece glazed or solid facing panels. The house failed to find the success that had been hoped for and it was ultimately set up in 1952 at the Maxéville plant, where it became the Ateliers Jean Prouvé *Design Office*.

After Prouvé's departure in 1953, following fundamental differences of opinion with the majority shareholder in the Ateliers, the buildings bearing his stamp were demolished or demounted. The only one to remain was the *Design Office*, whose original panels were clad over.

It subsequently served as the premises for a heating company, a restaurant, and lastly the «Bounty» swingers' club, until it was demounted by Galerie Patrick Seguin in 2015.

## JEAN PROUVÉ

Jean Prouvé (1901–1984) was a twentieth-century pioneer in the innovative production of furniture and architecture. Son of one of the founders of the Ecole de Nancy and godchild of Emile Gallé, he was imbued with the creative philosophy of a group whose principal aim was an art/industry alliance offering access to all.

Determined to be a man of his time, Prouvé explored all the current technical resources in metalworking, soon abandoning wrought iron for bent sheet steel: in the thirties he produced metal joinery, his early furniture, architectural components and knockdown buildings, all in small series.

The same principles were applied to the making of furniture – often intended for the public sector – and to the architecture of the postwar boom. Astute assembly systems for hardwearing structures meant that furniture and buildings alike could be readily dismantled, moved about and modified.

The Prouvé blend of avant-garde spirit and humanist concerns has lost none of its relevance.

The originality of his different periods is repeatedly rediscovered, from the first items for the University dormitory in Nancy in 1932 through those for a similar facility in Antony in 1954; the furniture for Africa; and the knockdown postwar schools and «little architecture machines» of the sixties.

Working with the best architects, Jean Prouvé left his stamp on many famous examples of twentieth-century building, most of which are now classified historic monuments.

## GALERIE PATRICK SEGUIN

Founded in 1989, Galerie Patrick Seguin occupies a 300m<sup>2</sup> (3200 sq ft) space architecturally rehabilitated by Jean Nouvel, winner of the Pritzker Prize in 2008. Since then the gallery has given international exposure to such talented 20th-century French figures as Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, and Jean Royère, whose works are now acknowledged worldwide as major contributions to the history of Design.

For over 25 years Galerie Patrick Seguin has been campaigning internationally for recognition for Jean Prouvé's demountable buildings, of which it currently possesses 23 examples—the largest collection in existence.

At the same time the gallery has been publishing a series of monographs to accompany its exhibitions.

In October 2015 Galerie Patrick Seguin opened a second space in London's Mayfair neighborhood, featuring exhibitions of architecture, historic design, and contemporary art.



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