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Saved From Being A Swingers Club, Jean Prouvé's Design Studio Goes On Display at Design Miami/ Basel



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An instrumental building in French architect Jean Prouvé's oeuvre is currently on view at [Design Miami/ Basel](#), which takes place through June 19 at Hall 1 Süd, Messe Basel in Switzerland. Paris-based [Galerie Patrick Seguin](#) is presenting the structure, along with several instrumental pieces, like a 1936 bed and a 1955 desk, by the French architect in the front of the fair at Booth G45.

In 1948 Prouvé created the prototype of a prefabricated 10 X 12 meter demountable house meant to be for the reconstruction of Saint-Dié-des-Vosges. That project went unrealized, and the following year Studale, an affiliate of Aluminum Français invested in Studio Jean Prouvé. Finally, in 1952 the prototype of the house was built on the site of Ateliers Jean Prouvé in Maxéville, just outside of the city of Nancy in Northeastern France. It would later become his bureau d'études, or design office, where every decision of his studio, from the architecture to design to engineering to constructing prototypes and models, would happen, until June 1953, when due to conflicts with Aluminum Français, Prouvé would leave Ateliers Jean Prouvé indefinitely.



Ateliers Jean Prouvé (Galerie Patrick Seguin)

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“When Prouvé lost his factory in 1953, they never liked the building,” said the gallery’s namesake, Patrick Seguin, referring to the people in the town. Pechiney would close the Maxéville campus in 1983, and it would remain run by the state, but abandoned for a decade, until an individual who would rent the various building to a number of different businesses purchased it. The bureau d’études would go on to be a restaurant called Les Rives Bleues. Then it was taken over by a heating engineering company in 2004, and then from 2006 to 2012, a hammam and spa called Le Bounty, and finally between 2013 and 2015 a swingers club called XY. “They covered it with an arch made of wood,” said Seguin. “And they put a bar.”



Jean Prouvé’s Bureau d’études at Design Miami/ Basel (Galerie Patrick Seguin)

Seguin, who owns the most Prouvé homes in the world — 23 — came to the rescue, and in 2014, he began going through the process of purchasing the structure. “. In the French law, you have to agree on the price, but also on what it is, so I went to see the guy, and I say that my guys arrive by 6 am, but I need to survey the panel, and then I test inside and outside, and then the guy said you can test whatever you want, but your guys have to go by 5 because I open my club at 6.”



The interior of Jean Prouvé's Bureau d'études at Design Miami/ Basel (Galerie Patrick Seguin)

Jean Prouvé's bureau d'études at Galerie Patrick Seguin is no doubt one of the biggest standouts at this year's Design Miami/ Basel, and considering that all the exhibitors are leaders in the world of design, that's a tough feat. Seguin said that's the reason why he chose to exhibit the structure at the fair. "This fair is the most important design fair in Miami and in Basel, they are the two best design fairs," said Seguin. "I think it's important for me to bring historical furniture or architecture in a museum display."

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