

MASTERPIECES

## Présidence Model No. 201

### Desk

*Design Miami*

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Jean Prouvé's robust and refined design is a hallmark of the social, technical, and aesthetic ambitions of its time



Jean Prouvé (1901-1984) was one of the great innovators of 20th-century design whose utilitarian, industrially-produced furniture, prefabricated structures, and architectural components have become hallmarks of design that embody the social agendas and technical and aesthetic achievements of his period.

From his base in Nancy, France, Prouvé's furniture, especially designs employing folded sheet metal like his now-iconic Standard Chairs, formed part of an expansive, egalitarian vision that saw it supplied for hospitals, schools, government offices, and even refugee housing throughout France and its then-colonies in Africa. Prouvé was raised in progressive, avant-garde circles—his father was an artist of the Art Nouveau movement, and his mother was a pianist—and he remained among design's leading thinkers and practitioners throughout his life, counting Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand, and Pierre Jeanneret among his many collaborators.



*Présidence Model No. 201 Desk by Jean Prouvé*



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The example shown here is one of only approximately 30 Présidence Desks that were made. While the design proved especially popular among French architects in the 1950s—it could be found in the studios of Bernard Zehrfuss, Jean de Mailly, Jean Sebag, André Remondet, Louis Sainsaulieu, and Prouvé himself—this version was produced for the director of the Paris-based Fondation Santé des Étudiants de France (Student Health Foundation of France). Like an example of the desk that's in the collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, it does not have a set of drawers. However, instead of the design's usual oak veneer, its top is in an exotic wood, while its demountable frame retains its original green enamel finish, features which make it all the more rare. ♦

*This Présidence Model No. 201 Desk by Jean Prouvé is available in the Design Miami/ Shop through Galerie Patrick Seguin. Images courtesy of Galerie Patrick Seguin.*

Both within and outside the public sector, Prouvé's work attracted the attention of prominent clients, for whom his Présidence Model No. 201 Desk was designed. First designed in 1948, and later sold through the influential Steph Simon Gallery in Paris, it was conceived with company directors in mind and features a kidney-shaped top large enough to be used as both a personal workspace and a conference table. Its wide-angle return accommodated a secretary when needed. Mounted on the tapered, folded-metal legs for which Prouvé is known and offered with or without a set of drawers, the desk brought an industrial sensibility that was both efficient and flexible, robust and refined, to the office interior.



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