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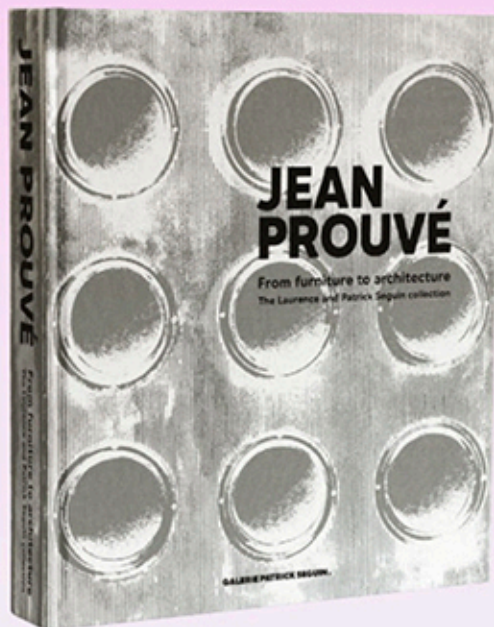- Cleaning Up the Great Lakes
- How Herman Miller Won Esports

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A Seat at the Table

Two books and a podcast offer a behind-the-scenes look at furniture design

by SYDNEY SHILLING

BOOK

Jean Prouvé: From Furniture to Architecture

BY LAURENCE AND PATRICK SEGUIN
Published by Galerie Patrick Seguin

Renowned for his innovations in bent sheet steel and aluminum, Jean Prouvé is an icon of 20th-century design. This fully bilingual publication showcases his work over three decades — from rarely seen pieces like the 1939 Saint-Brévin table to the now-prolific "Standard" chair in its many iterations — which hold pride of place in Laurence and Patrick Seguin's private collection. The French decorative arts dealers have long championed Prouvé's work, having acquired countless pieces since the late 1980s. "Over the years, Jean Prouvé has established himself as the cornerstone of this collection, because his modernity prefigured many contemporary approaches, and because we live with his creations on a daily basis. There is a real dialogue, a real synergy, between his furniture and contemporary art," they write in their preface. Previously unpublished archival drawings offer a peek behind the curtain at Prouvé's design process, while contemporary photos showcase his works in various settings: the Seguins' apartment, their Paris gallery (Chapter 3 highlights four standout exhibitions) and their estate in Var, France.

BOOK

The Blue Door

BY ISA KUKKAPURO-ENBOM
Published by Dodo+Books

Last fall, Swedish design brand Hem brought back the Experiment chair, an archival piece by Finnish designer Yrjö Kukkapuro that marries a clean-lined, ergonomic seat with a sculptural — and colourful — frame. The launch was accompanied by *The Blue Door*, a book about his life and work penned by his daughter, Isa Kukkapuro-Enbom. Its name nods to the entrance of his live–work studio, where he lived with his wife, painter Irmeli Kukkapuro. It opens with a biography that traces back to his grandparents' arrival in Finland. Later, we follow Kukkapuro from his hometown of Autio to Helsinki, where he enrolled in night classes at the Ateneum School of Art and Design — and cut his teeth as a draftsman at Paul Boman's furniture factory. As his story unfolds, so do the narratives behind key works from his oeuvre, including the competition-winning Sesam sofa bed, which launched his career in 1956, and the Karuselli chair, a revelation in fibreglass design. It also features a piece close to the author's heart: a bespoke rocking chair designed just for her.

PODCAST

Objects in Conversation

HOSTED BY MICHAELE SIMMERING
Presented by Kalon

"There are certain kinds of objects that seem imbued with the residue of the decisions that have gone into making them," says curator and writer Helen Molesworth in the debut episode of this podcast. "I'm interested in things that feel full of human investment." Presented by L.A.-based furniture brand Kalon and hosted by founder and creative director Michaele Simmering, the series explores how everyday objects shape our lives. Whether examining the design work that emerged from Black Mountain College or Kalon's AZ Award–winning Rugosa chair, Molesworth and Simmering consider the boundaries between art and design and the narrative potential of objects. "MoMA could collect that chair and put it out on view and give it a label and then, all of a sudden, that chair would be asked to stand in for not only chair-ness but a chair made in L.A. in the beginning of the 21st century," Molesworth explains. Future editions have been delayed due to the impact of the wildfires, but stay tuned for upcoming episodes — including a conversation with the last remaining Shakers that unpacks their relationship to the material world and their creative process as a form of worship.