

# Lofty Heights

CAENLUCIER SOTHEBY'S REALTY

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# The Pursuit of Connoisseurship

Galerie Patrick Seguin  
by CAENLUCIER

Parisian dealers Patrick and Laurence Seguin built their eponymous gallery with a simple directive. Specializing in the talents of French designers Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier and Jean Royère, the couple became personal collectors, academic publishers, and out-right evangelists of this iconic group. Our recent visit with them at TEFAF New York illustrated the power of the gallery's "depth over width" program.



**Above:** Jean Prouvé, Métropole no. 305 chair, ca. 1950.  
© Galerie Patrick Seguin.

**Below left:** Patrick and Laurence Seguin at home in Paris. Red Polaire sofa and armchair, c. 1947, by Jean Royère. Guéridon bas table, 1952, and Swing Jib lamp, 1951, by Jean Prouvé. Tina Freeman, 1975, by Andy Warhol. On the pedestal is Untitled (Beggar's Cup), 2021, by Richard Prince © Galerie Patrick Seguin.



**CAENLUCIER:** What inspired your life's commitment to design and its history?

**Patrick Seguin:** I first came across Jean Prouvé's work in the late 1980s at the Saint-Ouen flea market in Paris. I found a Compas table and Métropole chairs. Their purity, functionality, and modernity immediately left a deep impression on me. That moment marked the beginning of a lasting passion.

Even before opening Galerie Patrick Seguin in 1989, collecting had already become an important part of my life. This passion naturally led me to become a gallerist, with Jean Prouvé at the center of my work. His designs quickly became the foundation of both the gallery and our personal collection.

Over time, my interest expanded from his furniture to his architectural work. His approach—combining craftsmanship, engineering, and social vision—helped me see design and architecture in a new light. Today, Prouvé's legacy continues to inspire everything I do. His work creates a unique dialogue between art, design, and architecture that I live with every day.



# THE LH INTERVIEW

**CL: How has specialization made your gallery what it is today?**

**PS:** Since opening our gallery in 1989, our specialized and narrow selection has been at the heart of our identity. We quickly chose to focus exclusively on five key figures of French mid-20th century design: Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, and Jean Royère. This clear direction has allowed us to develop a unique level of expertise, particularly in sourcing pieces of outstanding provenance, condition, and historical importance.

Jean Prouvé remains central to our approach — both his furniture and his architecture. In recent years, we've placed special emphasis on his demountable houses, such as the remarkable 6x6 meter model. Designed during the World War II to be quickly assembled on bombed sites, this house reflects Prouvé's ingenuity and humanist vision. It can be built in one day by three people and combines strength with flexibility — qualities that remain relevant today.

Above all, it's our passion for these visionary designers that drives the quality of our work. This specialization has allowed us to go deep, contribute meaningfully to ongoing research, and share their legacy with the collectors, institutions, and design enthusiasts worldwide.

**CL: How did Jean Nouvel come about to design your Rue de Taillandiers gallery?**

**PS:** Jean Nouvel is a friend of ours since 35 years, I deeply admire his work. He considers himself an architect who also creates objects, whatever their scale, without however his constructive approach being similar to that of Prouvé.

It was a natural choice to entrust him with the redesign of the gallery. He highlighted the key architectural elements: the façade, the high ceilings, the glass roof and the metal staircase. His use of the color black, a trademark of his style, fits perfectly with the gallery's identity.

He also designed our house in the South of France, where we've installed nine Prouvé demountable houses on our property, in the heart of nature.

**CL: How does being a private collector inform your experience as a dealer?**

**PS:** Being a collector is fundamental to my work as a dealer, and the two roles complement each other. It allows me to understand the expectations of fellow collectors and truly grasp the essence of a collectible piece.

I'm exacting about the pieces I buy and sell. There's no distinction; both the gallery and my personal collection prioritize pieces with exceptional provenance and patina. My commitment lies in curating works of enduring quality and historical significance. We also try to gather all the different types of seating (chair, stool, armchair) and furniture (rack, table, desk). It's a way to showcase the scope of work by the five names we represent.

**CL: How did the gallery get involved as the dealer of the newly created *Saint Laurent - Charlotte Perriand* prototype collection?**

**PS:** This collaboration began with Antony Vaccarello's desire to bring a sense of history into Saint Laurent's spaces—connecting fashion with design, just as Yves Saint Laurent himself had a passion for collecting art, objects, and furniture.

For us, it was a natural fit. It's also an opportunity to bring to life pieces by Perriand that had remained at the stage of prototypes or sketches. Presenting them in the context of a fashion house creates a powerful dialogue between disciplines and gives these designs a new stage.

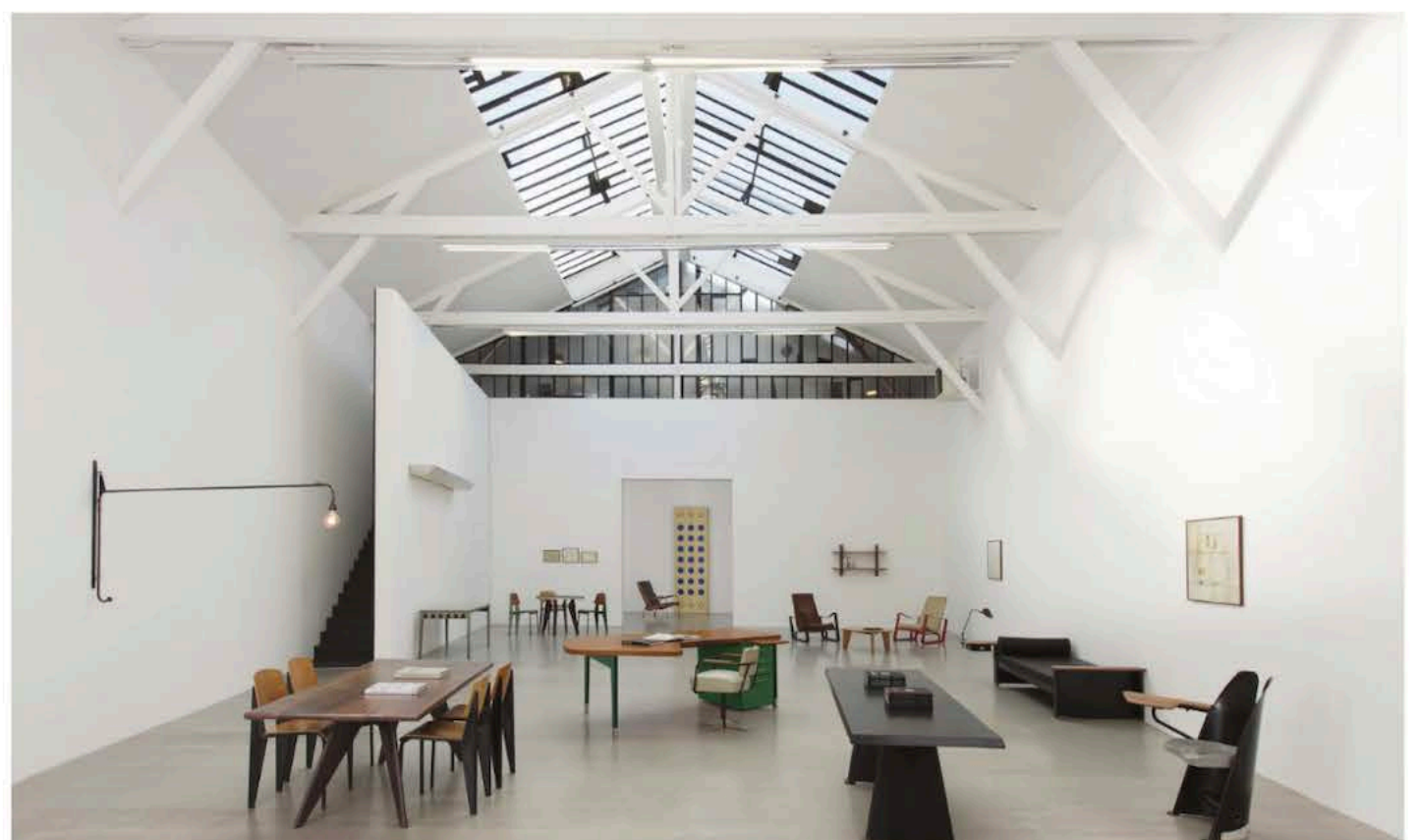


**CL: When the perfect marriage of art and design communicate what do they say to each other?**

**PS: We don't just decorate space — we give it meaning.**

**Above:** Façade of Galerie Patrick Seguin. © Galerie Patrick Seguin

**Below:** Jean Nouvel designed interiors of GPS gallery with museum-quality selection of Jean Prouvé furnishings. © Galerie Patrick Seguin







**CL:** Do you have a favorite art fair that your gallery participates in today?

**PS:** I think Art Basel Paris is one of my favorite. It's a leading contemporary art fair, directed by the brilliant Clément Delépine, who has a strong interest in creating dialogues between contemporary art with other disciplines.

For example, last October, we had the opportunity to install a 6x9 Demountable House (1944) in front of the Grand Palais during the fair. It was an incredible experience to showcase this historic demountable pavilion, made of prefabricated components in wood and metal, between the iconic Petit Palais and Grand Palais. The view through the bow window, framing the Alexandre III Bridge and the Invalides, added a truly magical touch.

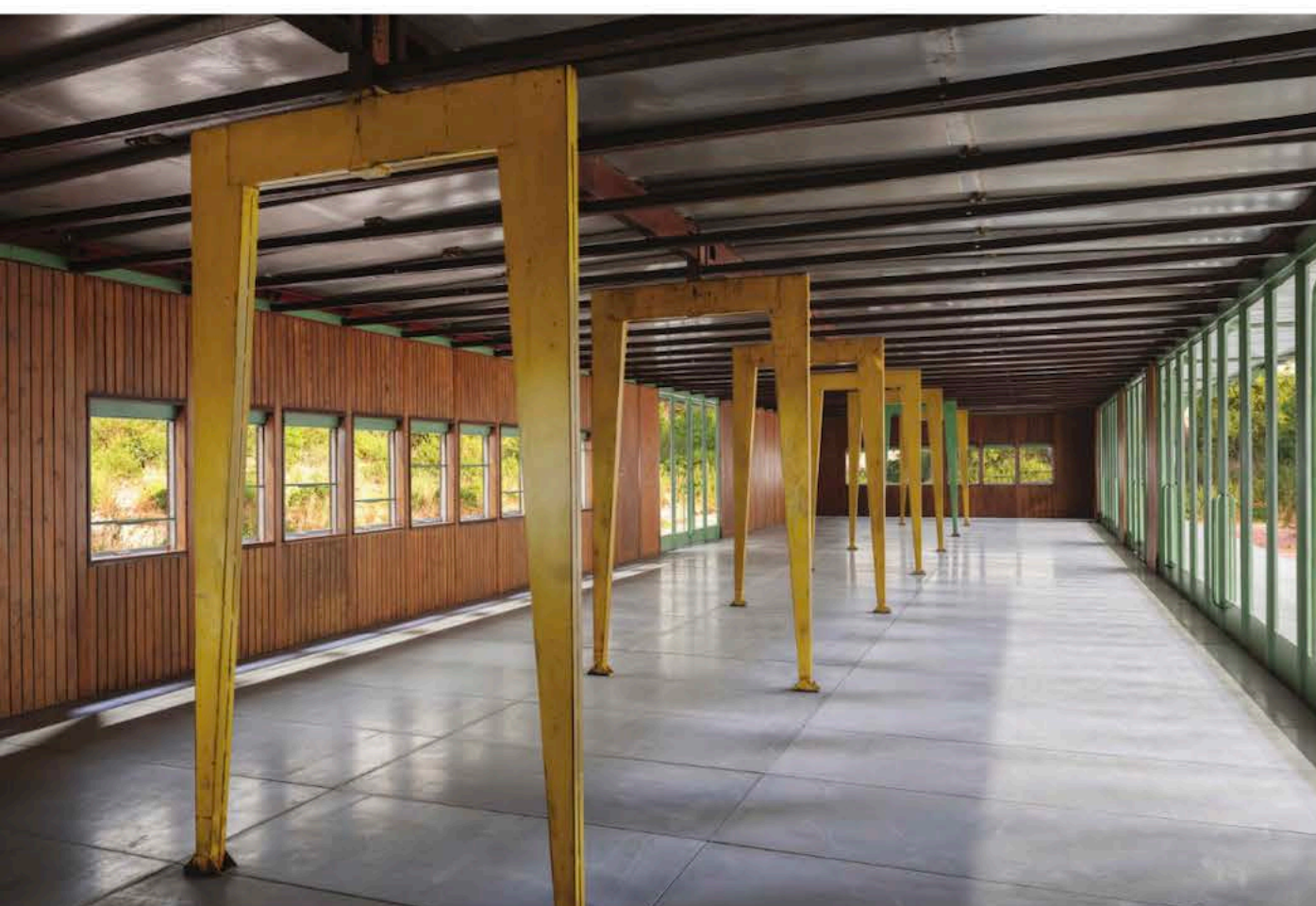
**CL:** How do you approach the process in organizing an engaging exhibition?

**PS:** I approach each exhibition as a unique event that highlights rare and meaningful pieces. For me, staying open is key — open to new ideas, new connections, and new dialogues around the works. This helps bring fresh perspectives and a deeper appreciation of both the aesthetics and meaning of Jean Prouvé's work.

For example, we created an immersive experience in VR around the central loadbearing core of Prouvé Better Days House, allowing visitors to explore the exterior and interior of the house as it was presented on the quai Alexandre-III in 1956.

I'm not looking for something spectacular. Our exhibitions are as educational as possible, and we always do a lot of iconographic and archival research. Jean Prouvé's heirs appreciate and support us.

More recently, we organized an exhibition in Hong Kong, in collaboration with AIG and NOT A HOTEL, featuring a 6x6 Demountable House and Prouvé furniture shown alongside contemporary Asian artworks. It was amazing to see how naturally Prouvé's functional designs connected with traditional artistic gestures found in Japanese art.





**CL:** Discuss the importance of publishing for you, both personally and professionally.

**PS:** I love books, especially art books. The experience of looking at images in a book is entirely different from viewing them on a digital screen. With a book, you need to take a moment, sit still, and give the images a bit more attention.

The latest book on Jean Prouvé is especially meaningful to me. It features our personal collection of his work, offering a more intimate perspective than usual. I appreciate the thought of people engaging with it quietly, as a tangible object with its own materiality—a unique experience that stands apart from reading online. I also collect art books, which is a passion of mine.

**CL:** How has the design gallery business changed since you opened in 1989?

**PS:** When we opened the gallery, design galleries were practically non-existent. Vintage furniture was sold at antique shops or flea markets. During the 90s, the market has changed a lot, especially about Jean Prouvé. His work gained recognition through integration into great collections, key publications and major exhibitions at MoMA, Centre Pompidou, and Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo in 2022. Exhibitions that combined modern art and design, like the “CALDER | PROUVÉ” exhibition in collaboration with Gagosian in 2013, also helped boost his influence.

Public collections and private collectors played a big role by including Prouvé pieces in their collections and positioning them at the crossroads of art and design. Today, his furniture is a cornerstone of major collections, and there's growing interest in his demountable architectures. It's exciting to be part of this ongoing evolution.

**CL:** If you had not become a gallerist/dealer, what would you have been?

**PS:** I honestly can't imagine doing anything else. Being a gallerist and a collector isn't just a job—it's a passion I live every day. Once you've experienced that kind of connection to art and design, it's hard to let go. Art changes your life.

**CL:** What are your favorite restaurants in Paris?

**PS:** I love going to Stresa, an intimate and exclusive place, run by brothers. There's Ogata, a Japanese restaurant in the Marais. The setting is sublime, as is the dishes. I also love Langosteria at the Hôtel Cheval Blanc, Le Duc, a restaurant serving only fish which is amazing, L'ami Louis, an institution, Les Enfants Rouges, a subtle blend of exceptional French and Japanese cuisine.

**CL:** Do you have a favorite weekend getaway?

**PS:** I would say the South of France. As I mentioned earlier, our friend Jean Nouvel designed our house, not far from Saint Tropez. It's a magical place, where our Jean Prouvé demountable architectures are on display.

I also enjoy spending a few days at La Colombe d'Or, a legendary hotel on the Mediterranean coast. And the new Hotel du Couvent in Nice, which is quite unique.



**CL:** What are you currently reading?

**PS:** *Souvenirs d'un marchand* by Ambroise Vollard

**Opposite page from top:** Jean Prouvé, 6x6 Demountable House, 1944 (exterior). Jean Prouvé, 6x6 Demountable House, 1944 (exterior). Jean Prouvé, Croismare School, 1948. © Galerie Patrick Seguin

**Above:** Jean Prouvé: S.A.M. no. 506 table, ca. 1951. Métropole no. 305 chairs, ca. 1950. Panel with portholes from Bouqueval school, 1950. Swing-jib lamp no. 602 from Brazzaville, 1952. © Galerie Patrick Seguin

**Right:** Jean Prouvé, S.A.M. Tropique no. 503 table, 1951. © Galerie Patrick Seguin

