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WHAT'S NEXT

The 8x8
house.



SQUARE DEAL

A small-scale home by an iconic French designer gets a second look

The annual Design Miami fair celebrates the new and the groundbreaking, but the centerpiece this year might just be a 69-year-old house. Galerie Patrick Seguin of Paris, largely responsible for bringing the work of Jean Prouvé back to the public's attention, is exhibiting—and offering for sale—a prefabricated house by the mid-century architect and designer. Prouvé had been experimenting for two decades with sheet metal to create everything from sleek office furniture to vacation cottages when he won a commission in 1944 to design temporary housing for those displaced by World War II. The wood and metal parts that made up the structures could be sent to locations in need and assembled by three people in a day. The project didn't get much past the planning stage, but Prouvé went on to use the same design to fashion prototypes for more permanent homes. Only a few examples of his "8x8" houses (each is eight square meters, or roughly 86 square feet) were created, and one of only two existing models will be on display in Miami; it was purchased by the Seguin gallery 10 years ago, after having been used as a warehouse. (The other stands on the property of Prouvé's home in Nancy, France.) With its simple clothespin-shaped internal support and an innovative bay window, the 8x8 is as elegant—and efficient—today as it was during Prouvé's lifetime (December 4–8; patrickseguin.com).



Prouvé at home
in Nancy, France,
circa 1963.

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