

THE SPACES

INTERIORS I | BY ELLEN HIMELFARB

Saint Laurent X Charlotte Perriand: four forgotten designs get an outing in Paris

Anthony Vaccarello curated the show at Galerie Patrick Seguin



Photography: courtesy of Galerie Patrick Seguin.

The work of Charlotte Perriand, the perennially popular architect and designer, is part of the 20th-century design canon. Her chaise longue and bookcase are among the most widely imitated pieces in the modernist sphere; originals are coveted by collectors. Yet many of her designs were never produced at all in her lifetime, at least for public consumption.

The 1967 Banquette, the 1963 Table Mille-Feuilles... these are two of the pieces that Saint Laurent creative director Anthony Vaccarello has selected to honour in a new exhibition at Galerie Patrick Seguin, scheduled to coincide with Art Basel Paris. 'Saint Laurent / Charlotte Perriand' showcases four pieces of furniture designed between 1943 and 1967 as one-offs and prototypes. And the Charlotte Perriand estate has produced a very limited edition of each, using archival drawings, original models and its command of the designer's original vision.



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'I was very touched that Anthony Vaccarello and Saint Laurent proposed this collaboration to us,' says Seguin, whose Bastille gallery was designed by French architect Jean Nouvel. 'Anthony Vaccarello is a reserved person, but his talent is by no means confined to fashion. He is extremely creative and interested in many different fields, always with the same attention to detail, quality, and pursuit of excellence. I was therefore very confident in his choice of Charlotte Perriand's pieces for this limited edition and in the way they have been reinterpreted.'

Throughout his life, Yves Saint Laurent collected Perriand's pieces for their radical purity and timeless modernity, while his partner Pierre Bergé backed major international retrospectives of her work. So today's Saint Laurent-Perriand partnership is just the latest example of the fashion label's commitment to bringing her work and design culture to a wider public. The same goes for Seguin, who built his reputation on promoting the 20th-century's brightest lights. 'The gallery's mission was to introduce, or bring wider recognition to, the creations of French designers from the 1950s,' says Seguin. 'Charlotte Perriand is a central figure of that period and of design history.'

Vaccarello's choices highlight the rigorous and unrestrained qualities of Perriand's oeuvre. The monolithic five-seat rosewood banquette, commissioned by the Japanese ambassador for his Paris reception room in 1967, appears almost to float with wings that function as side tables. The 'mille-feuilles' of the table refer to the 10 layers of rosewood and cherry that make up the bevelled circular top, which proved too difficult to manufacture but now appear in a few unique iterations.

On display are examples of the 1962 Rio de Janeiro rosewood bookcase, designed with sliding cane doors for Perriand's husband Jacques Martin and remained part of their private collection. Also on show is the chrome-frame Indochina Guest Armchair Perriand designed in Southeast Asia in 1943. The original piece was lost, but Perriand's estate recreated it according to one surviving sketch.

On view at the Paris gallery from 23 October to 22 November, the furnishings offer fresh perspective on materiality, craftsmanship and historical relevance, and tell a wider story about their author's legacy.



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