

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Jean Prouvé: Constructive Imagination

Saturday, 16 July – Sunday, 16 October 2022

Jean Prouvé: Constructive Imagination is a large-scale exhibition introducing the oeuvre of Jean Prouvé (1901–1984), whose influence remains significant in the 20th-century architecture and industrial design. Organized thematically, the exhibition will feature over a hundred pieces of emblematic furniture and architectural works along with archived materials.

Born to painter and musician parents active in Nancy school, a group of the Art Nouveau movement that flourished in the late 19th century in France, Prouvé began his career as an artist–blacksmith. In the 1930s, he expanded his field of production from furniture to architecture, turning to a more experimental, avant-garde approach by using new materials such as steel.



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During and after the Second World War, he produced a number of innovative pieces such as prefabricated housing for post-war reconstruction in France, while being active in the resistance movement and serving as the mayor of Nancy for a brief period during the war.

The exhibition begins by unfolding the chapters of Jean Prouvé's life, followed by the presentation of a wide selection of iconic pieces. They include *the "Centrale" table* (1956), "*Présidence" No. 201 desk* (ca. 1955), *Lighting ramp* (1954), *Rolling step-ladder* (1951), and a unique prototype of *Lift-up table with drawer* (1943), which was a milestone in Prouvé's move towards industrial production, and panels with portholes.

In response to growing market demands for mass production, he designed furniture for public authorities and universities in the 1930s. Among all furniture, chairs remained particularly significant for Prouvé, for they require meeting imperatives of solidity and ergonomics, as well as preserving their aesthetic qualities. As he stated that



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“...a viable structure for a piece of furniture is as difficult and skilful to compose as a structure for a large construction,” chairs are a perfect example of Jean Prouvé’s constructive principles. The exhibition dedicates a large section to the presentation of his chairs that underwent evolutions over the years including “*Cité*” armchair (ca. 1932) and “*Conférence*” No. 355 chair (1954), among many other models.

In the 1950s, Jean Prouvé sought markets overseas and created furniture and aluminum facades for French colonial territories in Africa. The exhibition includes the series called “variant for Africa,” which includes “*S.A.M.*” No. 506 table, variant for Africa (1952), “*Tropique*” No. 351 armchair (1950), and Sun shutters made for Guinea and Cameroon.



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Furthermore, over thirteen architectural projects will be on display, highlighting Prouvé's approach to architecture as a "constructor" as he called himself. *F 8x8 BCC house* (1942), and *6x6 Demountable house* (1944), "*Métropole*" house (1949)– Prouvé's emblematic projects of dismountable architecture – will be one of the highlights of the exhibition. The structure of "*Métropole*" house will erupt in the middle of the gallery and its facades will be displayed on the wall. The *F 8x8 BCC house* designed and built by Prouvé and Pierre Jeanneret during the Second World War will be re-assembled in the Atrium. The piece attests to the two men's extraordinary faculty for adaptability and is a brilliant example of their unceasing quest for modernity. The *6x6 Demountable house*, designed by Prouvé in 1944 as temporarily housing for the refugees in Eastern France, will be presented as parts laid out on the wall. All of these occupy an important place in the architectural history in France.

The exhibition comes to an end with a screening room with Prouvé's lecture hall benches, which visitors are invited to sit in order to view the archival footage that includes Prouvé's interview. During the exhibition, a series of public events such as a symposium, gallery tours, a children's workshop and talk sessions will be organized.



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About the curators of the exhibition

This exhibition is co-curated and designed by Patrick Seguin from Galerie Patrick Seguin which specializes in 20th-century design and architecture, and the graphic designer Tamotsu Yagi from Tamotsu Yagi Design. The exhibition gathers the pieces of the collections of Yusaku Maezawa, Patrick Seguin, Tamotsu Yagi and from the Prouvé family.

Student Day Supported by Bloomberg

From 30 August to 2 September, students can visit Jean Prouvé exhibition for free with a valid ID.

Exhibition Catalogue

The catalogue will be published from millegraph after late-August 2022.

Information

Exhibition Period	Sat. 16 July – Sun. 16 October 2022
Closed	Mondays (except 18 Jul., 19 Sep., 10 Oct.), 19 Jul., 20 Sep., 11 Oct.
Opening hours	10:00 – 18:00 (Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing.)
Admission	Adults – 2,000 yen / University & College Students, Over 65 – 1,300yen/ High School & Junior High School Students – 800 yen / Elementary School Students & Younger – Free *Student Day Supported by Bloomberg: 30, 31 Aug., 1, 2, Sep., student can visit Jean Prouvé exhibition for free (with valid ID).
Venue	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Exhibition Gallery 1F / B2F
Organizers	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture, Contemporary Art Foundation
Curators	Patrick Seguin (Galerie Patrick Seguin), Tamotsu Yagi (Tamotsu Yagi Design)
Academic support	Tatsuo Iwaoka (Tokyo University of Science)

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- 1 Jean Prouvé in his office at the Ateliers Jean Prouvé, Maxéville, ca. 1955
© Centre Pompidou-MNAM/CCI-Bibliothèque Kandinsky-Dist. RMN-Grand Palais
- 2 Flyer design by Tamotsu Yagi Design
- 3 Demountable wooden chair CB 22, variant, 1947
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- 4 "Cafétéria" No. 300 chair, ca. 1950 Laurence and Patrick Seguin collection
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- 5, 6 "Métropole" house, 1949 Galerie Patrick Seguin
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- 7, 8 Images can only be used for printed media. Please contact us for further information.