



233 RUE ST HONORE, 75001 PARIS
T +33(0)1 4271 2046
www.favoriparis.com
amy@favoriparis.com

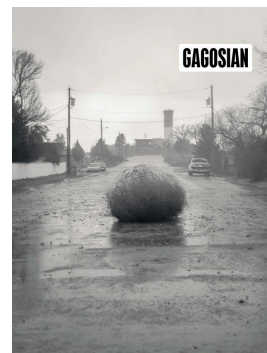
LAFFANOUR GALERIE DOWNTOWN/PARIS

Hiver 2019

GAGOSIAN

pages 59 - 61

William Middleton



Art is in everything," insisted Charlotte Perriand, the pioneering French architect, designer, and multidisciplinary creative force. "It is in a gesture, a vase, a cooking pan, a glass, a sculpture, a piece of jewelry, a way of carrying yourself. Making love is an art." Perriand, whose work is a high point of French modernism, had a broad vision of creativity. She termed it "synthesis of the arts," an approach that expanded to include all of the fine and applied arts. Throughout the seven decades of her career, this idea became her manifesto.

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Perriand's death, the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, is giving her a major retrospective, *Le Monde nouveau de Charlotte Perriand 1903-1999* (retitled in English *Charlotte Perriand: Inventing a New World*), on view now and into February 2020. An ambitious exhibition four years in the making, it brings the full scale of her vision into focus for the first time. "Shortly after she died," says Pernette Perriand Barsac, Perriand's daughter and one of the show's curators, "a friend of mine said that you have to wait fifteen or twenty years after the death of an artist to understand fully their place in art history."

The Fondation Vuitton's Perriand exhibition incorporates a vast amount of design and architecture—200 objects, seven "reconstitutions" of historic rooms, four recreated structures, and twenty-five architectural models—as well as 200 works of art, lent by museums and private collectors around the world, by such artists as Georges Braque, Alexander Calder, Henri Laurens, Fernand Léger, Jacques Lipchitz, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso: paintings, sculptures, photographs, photomontages, and tapestries. "This is the largest exhibition we have ever dedicated to a single artist," explains Jean-Paul Claverie, the director of the Fondation and for thirty years the cultural advisor to Bernard Arnault, chairman and CEO of the Vuitton parent company LVMH. "It marks the five-year anniversary of our Frank Gehry-designed building, which is itself a work of art. It is the first time we have focused on a female artist, and it is our first exhibition that incorporates design. If you ask me if this is a design exhibition, I will say that you are right. But I will also say that you are wrong."

One curatorial goal was to contextualize Perriand's work. The Fondation Louis Vuitton has had a relationship with Pernette Perriand and with her husband, Jacques Barsac, who is overseeing the ongoing publication of a multivolume catalogue raisonné. "When Pernette mentioned to me that the anniversary of her mother's death was approaching, I spoke with Bernard Arnault and he was immediately enthusiastic," Claverie explains. "We worked very closely together because we agree that the genius of Perriand, her extraordinary designs, took place in the context of a variety of movements—intellectual, social, political, artistic, and philosophical—during a time of profound transformation, the birth of modern society in the twentieth century. This had been suggested in earlier exhibitions but not developed in detail."

The paintings and sculptures, selected for their connections with Perriand, explore her sense of a "synthesis of the arts"—in fact that was the exhibition's working title. "The term is connected to the nineteenth-century utopian ideals of a total work of art," says Olivier Michelon, the Fondation's chief curator, "but Perriand makes the concept more precise. It is not a totality of art but a



union of different artistic expressions, integrating a vast range—of works, of artists, of media—within a universal need, the lived environment." As Jacques Barsac suggests of his mother-in-law, "Every time Charlotte presented her work, she included tapestries by Le Corbusier, paintings by Léger. Whenever she organized an exhibition, she called her friends—Miró, Calder, etc.—to loan works. She believed that art should be everywhere, that it needs to be part of daily life."

The tone is set from the first galleries, where two pieces in tubular steel—the iconic reclining lounge chair *Chaise longue basculante*, B306 (1928), and the equally significant swiveling armchair *Fauteuil pivotant*, B302 (1927), stand in front of a monumental machine-age painting by Léger, *Le Transport des forces* (Transport of forces, 1937), and Picasso's *Femmes devant la mer* (Women by the sea, 1956), underscoring the designer's connection with the artist and her fascination with nature. "Right away, you see where the exhibition is going," Barsac explains. "Without Picasso, you cannot understand modern architecture. When you see Charlotte's chaise longue, chair, and tables in front of that immense Léger, you cannot imagine the design without the art—it is a global vision."

On an adjacent wall, *Collier roulement à billes chromées* (1927)—a silver choker made from automotive ball bearings that Perriand not only designed but wore—is placed next to a Léger painting, *Nature morte* (Le Mouvement à billes) (Still life [Movement of ball bearings], 1926), which shows the same objects. Perriand's 1925 drawing and watercolor of the American dancer Josephine Baker, whose sense of freedom fascinated the designer, hangs next to Calder's *Josephine Baker* (III) (c. 1927), a wire sculpture of the same subject.

A few steps beyond is one of the complete interiors, *La Maison du jeune homme* (House for a young man), a rigorous reconstruction based on drawings and archival documents. Originally built for the 1935 Exposition Universelle in Brussels, the rooms were intended to show how a young bachelor could live and work. A sixty-three-square-meter space (about 680 square feet), it encompassed a studio apartment and an adjacent gym. Perriand,

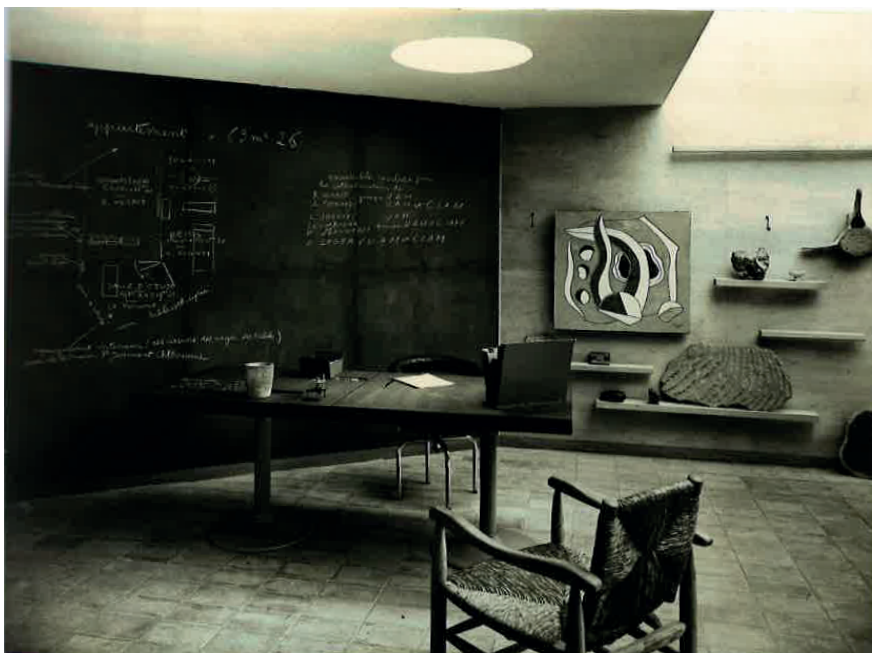
Previous spread:
Charlotte Perriand in
her studio on the place
Saint-Sulpice, 1928. The
hands holding a plate
halo-like behind her head
are Le Corbusier's. Archives
Charlotte Perriand

Opposite:
Charlotte Perriand, *Travail
et Sport* (Work and Sport),
project, pl. 22, published in
*Répertoire du goût moderne
II*, 1929, printed plates, 12 1/2
x 9 1/2 inches (32 x 24.3 cm)

Above:
Charlotte Perriand in the
Chaise longue basculante,
B306, 1928, Le Corbusier,
P. Jeanneret, C. Perriand
© F.L.C./ADAGP, Paris
2019; © ADAGP, Paris
2019; © Archives Charlotte
Perriand

Below:
Charlotte Perriand, *Fauteuil
pivotant* B302 (Swivel
armchair), 1927, chrome-
plated tubular steel, metal
springs, sheepskin cover,
and down padding, 28 1/2 x
24 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches (72.7 x
62.5 x 55.5 cm). Vitra Design
Museum, MST-1009-1.
© ADAGP, Paris 2019





Left:
La Maison du jeune homme
(House for a young man),
Exposition Universelle,
Brussels, 1935. Archives
Charlotte Perriand ©
ADAGP, Paris 2019. Photo:
© C. Vanderberghe

Below:
Charlotte Perriand,
Bibliothèque Nuage (Cloud
bookcase), Steph Simon
edition, c. 1958, wood,
folded sheet metal, and
plastic, 64 1/4 x 131 1/2 x 15
inches (163 x 334 x 38 cm).
François Laffanour—Galerie
Downtown. © ADAGP, Paris
2019. Photo: © Studio
Shapiro/Galerie Downtown—
François Laffanour

Perriand was born and raised in Paris, the daughter of a tailor and a seamstress. "Her parents were originally from the country but they worked in the field of luxury, so there was a sense of quality, an appreciation for beautiful fabrics, beautiful craftsmanship," explains Jacques Barsac. Her drawing talents were clear during high school, and from 1920 to 1925 she was a student at the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, studying the applied arts as well as painting and drawing. Two of her student projects—the binding of an architectural book by Paul Valéry, *Eupalinos ou l'architecte*, and a wrought-iron gate—were displayed at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, the event that gave the world the term "Art Deco." Within two years she had broken with the more decorative school, pursuing functional furniture designs in sheet metal and tubular steel. She designed the interior of her own small atelier and apartment, tucked into an attic on the place Saint-Sulpice, and joined the architectural office of Le Corbusier and Jeanneret, Le Corbusier's cousin, where she was responsible for residential interior furnishings and furniture from 1927 until 1937.

In 1929, Perriand was a founder of the Union des Artistes Modernes (UAM), the French answer to the Bauhaus, joined by such other modernists as Prouvé, Le Corbusier, Pierre Barbe, Pierre Chareau, Sonia Delaunay, Eileen Gray, René Herbst, Robert Mallet-Stevens, and Jean Puiforcat. In 1930 she met Walter Gropius and Léger, who became a very close friend and joined the UAM. That year, at the first public exhibition of the UAM group at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, the metal furniture credited to Le Corbusier, Jeanneret, and Perriand was shown for the first time. Seven pieces were promptly produced by Thonet, including four that Perriand had created entirely.

By 1930, she was designing furnishings for Le Corbusier, including those for his Villa Savoye, west of Paris, and overseeing construction of her first complete work of architecture, an airline building at Le Bourget that would become the earliest Air France terminal. The '30s marked the beginning of Perriand's political engagement: along with figures such as André Gide, Louis Aragon, André Breton, Max Ernst, Robert Capa, and René Crevel,

she joined the Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires, a leftist group that advocated for revolutionary acts in culture. In those years she made trips to Moscow, where she encountered the Russian avant-garde; to Cologne, where she met the German modernists; and to Athens, to participate in the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, a group of progressive European architects. In 1932 she moved from the place Saint-Sulpice into a photographer's atelier in Montmartre, above the studio of Léger, where she would work with the artist and Jeanneret on her photography—primarily images of rocks, shells, and tree trunks that she would find on walks in forests around Paris and shoot in place or back in her studio.

In 1936, Perriand met Picasso and Josep Lluís Sert, architect of the pavilion of the Spanish Republic at the Exposition des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne, in Paris in 1937. Sert's building housed Picasso's *Guernica* that summer. In 1938, she worked on her first projects in the Alps—interiors and architecture—and designed such innovative pieces as a free-form desk for her studio in Montmartre, and, for the editor of the daily newspaper *Ce Soir*, the *Boomerang* desk and a coffee table, which

