

Critic's Choice: The Purity of Prouvé

ON FEBRUARY 18, 2023 • ([LEAVE A COMMENT](#))



Installation views of the exhibition *La Cité Universitaire de Jean Prouvé* at Perrotin Matignon organized in collaboration with Galerie Downtown/François Laffanour, Paris 2023. Courtesy Galerie Downtown/François Laffanour, Paris and Perrotin. ©All Artists/ADAGP Paris, 2023. Photo:Tanguy Beurdeley. Handout via The Gourmet Gazette

Paris, France — Architect, engineer, builder and designer, Jean Prouvé conceived practical and elegant furniture that aimed to combine art and industry. He was guided by the principle that “there is no difference between building a house and making a piece of furniture”. The post-war context prompted France to find innovative solutions for equipping university residences—the most common type of housing for French students at the time. The Cités Universitaires, as the university residences are known in France, occupy a central place among the major projects undertaken by Jean Prouvé who was based in the eastern French city of Nancy.



Installation views of the exhibition *La Cité Universitaire de Jean Prouvé* at Perrotin Matignon organized in collaboration with Galerie Downtown/François Laffanour, Paris 2023. Courtesy Galerie Downtown/François Laffanour, Paris and Perrotin. ©All Artists/ADAGP Paris, 2023. Photo:Tanguy Beurdeley. Handout via The Gourmet Gazette

The Parisian gallery Perrotin Matignon is showcasing Prouvé's university residence project in collaboration with another Parisian gallery, Downtown/François Laffanour. These iconic creations are juxtaposed with other works and paintings by among others Keith Haring and Ed Ruscha. Prouvé's famous Antony armchair, circa 1954, is on hand with its lacquered bent steel structure and molded plywood seat. His furniture, like his architecture, leave their systems of articulation and assembly visible.



Installation views of the exhibition *La Cité Universitaire de Jean Prouvé* at Perrotin Matignon organized in collaboration with Galerie Downtown/François Laffanour, Paris 2023. Courtesy Galerie Downtown/François Laffanour, Paris and Perrotin. ©All Artists/ADAGP Paris, 2023. Photo:Tanguy Beurdeley. Handout via The Gourmet Gazette

He first designed the furniture for seventy rooms at the Cité Universitaire Monbois in Nancy in 1933 combining modernity, sobriety, and ergonomics, before furnishing the law faculty at the University of Aix-Marseille in 1952. The Jean Zay university residence in Antony, near Paris, was designed between 1954 and 1955 in a particularly modern American style, involving several designers and architects, including Jean Prouvé who designed 148 rooms there with a symmetrical arrangement of beds, chairs and desks. The Antony series embraced the hallmarks of his project: simple, economical furniture that could stand the test of time as well as the students. The exhibition is running until February 25th. ©Trish Valicenti for The Gourmet Gazette.

<https://www.galeriedowntown.com/> <https://www.perrotin.com/>