

# CULTURED

ART COLLECTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

## Here's How Collectors Laurence and Patrick Seguin Moved 8 Jean Prouvé Houses Onto Their Property in France

Ahead of a new book highlighting his collection, the Parisian gallerist and collector shares how his passion for Prouvé was first sparked.

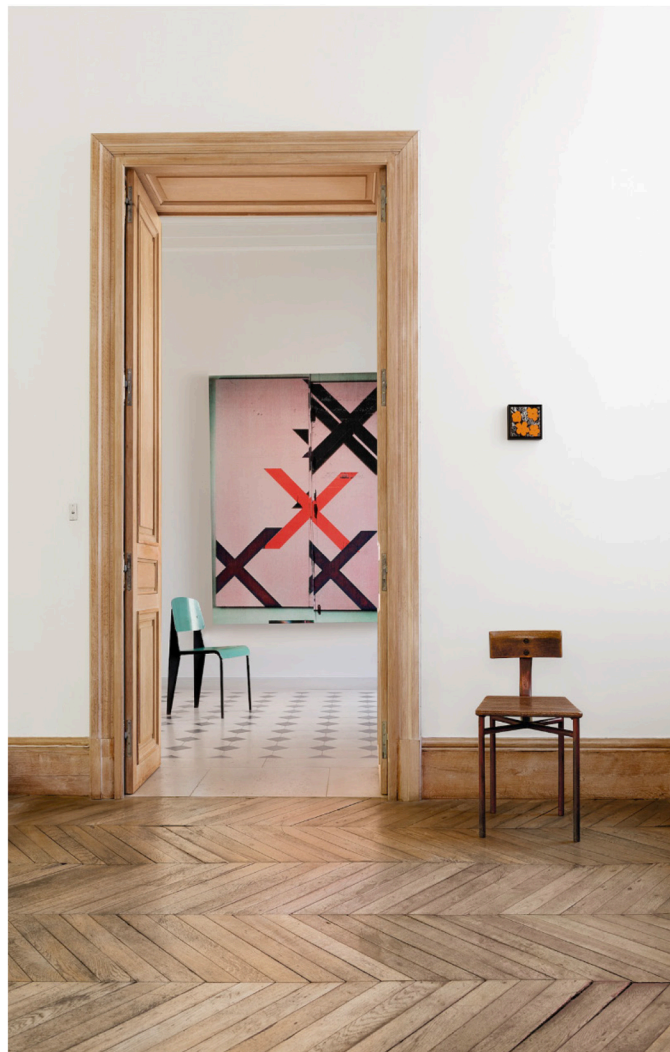


Laurence and Patrick Seguin at home. All images courtesy of Galerie Patrick Seguin.

"I was immediately struck by their inherent beauty," recalls Patrick Seguin, describing his first encounter with pieces by Jean Prouvé in the late 1980s. Decades later, the gallerist and his wife, Laurence, are foremost collectors of the late architect and designer's work. At home in Paris, the pair are surrounded by Prouvé's work, as well as a few select pieces from artists including Alexander Calder, Damien Hirst, and Richard Prince.

Today, they're also celebrating the release of *Jean Prouvé: From Furniture to Architecture. The Laurence and Patrick Seguin Collection*, a tome dedicated to their life amongst art, both with Galerie Patrick Seguin, their Paris apartment, and their home in Southern France. What began as an appreciation for Prouvé's industrial furniture expanded to encompass his rare demountable houses now populating the Seguins's property. In the 400-page publication, historian and Columbia University architecture professor Mark Wigley guides readers through Prouvé's expansive career and how his work has taken on new life in the Seguins's collection.

Ahead of the book's release, Patrick sat down with *CULTURED* to share insights into his collecting habits, advice for aspiring patrons, and his take on Paris's ever-expanding art scene.



Chairs, left to right: Jean Prouvé, Métropole no. 305 chair, 1952; Jean Prouvé, Cité chair, 1932. Artwork, back room: Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2023. Artwork, right: Andy Warhol, *Flowers*, 1964.

## Where does the story of your personal collection begin, particularly your Jean Prouvé collection?

My passion for collecting began even before I opened the gallery in 1989. It was this enthusiasm that guided my career toward becoming a gallerist. However, my first encounter with Jean Prouvé dates back to the late 1980s, when I discovered a Compas table and Métropole chairs. I was immediately struck by their inherent beauty. His designs stand out for their remarkable ability to address specific functional needs while being made for industrial production. Originally designed for administrative buildings in the 1950s, these pieces marked the beginning of a lifelong passion. From that moment, Prouvé became both the focus of the gallery and the centerpiece of our personal collection. Over the years, this enthusiasm has extended to his architectural works. Jean Prouvé has become the cornerstone of this collection, which includes art, architecture, and design in a unique dialogue. His modernity prefigured many contemporary approaches, and today, we live with his creations on a daily basis.

## How does your work as a gallerist shift the way you think about collecting? Are you ever tempted to take pieces from the gallery home?

Our professional life as gallerists is intimately linked to our private life. The two are inseparable—my perspective as a collector and my role as a gallerist constantly influence each other. In fact, there's no real distinction between the pieces displayed in the gallery and those in the personal collection. They are all rare pieces, with unique histories, great patinas, and good provenance. This personal connection to the pieces is what makes curating and collecting such an exciting and fulfilling experience.



Desk: Charlotte Perriand & Pierre Jeanneret, Desk, 1948. Chairs, left to right: Charlotte Perriand & Pierre Jeanneret, Swiveling armchair, 1948; Jean Prouvé, Cafétéria no. 300 demountable chair, c. 1950; Jean Prouvé, Direction no. 353 Swiveling armchair, 1951. Desk lamp: Serge Mouille, 1955. Round table: Jean Prouvé, Demountable Guéridon, 1950. Shelf: Jean Prouvé, ENP shelf, Metz, 1936. Artwork, right: Mark Grotjahn, *TBC Pure Crimson red Butterfly*, 2011. Stool: Jean Prouvé, Wood stool, 1941. Floor shelf: Pierre Jeanneret, File rack, c.1957-58. Artwork, left: Jonas Wood, *Pink Plant with Cardboard Still Life*, 2015.

## What do you think makes the Parisian art scene distinct? How has it influenced your personal taste?

Paris has always been a major city in the art world, a cultural crossroads where history, innovation, and creativity converge. In recent years, its global influence has deepened further, with prestigious international galleries establishing here—first Gagosian, then Zwirner, White Cube, and Hauser & Wirth. Additionally, fairs like Art Basel have expanded to include a Paris edition. Since 2022, the Paris edition has grown significantly, contributing to the city's increasing internationalization.

Laurence, my wife, and I opened the gallery in the Bastille district of Paris in 1989. Since then, we've focused on just five names, showcasing French mid-century design and architecture, which is deeply connected to our personal taste, particularly works by Jean Prouvé. However, our collection is shaped by a variety of influences that transcend borders—artists from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and eras have all contributed to the eclectic and international nature of our taste. While our interests lean towards contemporary and modern art, as well as mid-20th-century design, it's this blend of influences that truly defines our aesthetic.



Chair: Jean Prouvé, *Visiteur* no. 352 armchair, c.1952. Bed: Jean Prouvé, *SCAL* no. 450 bed with swivel tablet by Charlotte Perriand, 1955.  
Lamp: Serge Mouille, *Floor Lamp*, c. 1953. Artwork: Damien Hirst, *Momentary Love Blossom*, 2018.

## Which work in your home provokes the most conversation from visitors?

We attach great importance to the arrangement of the furniture, paintings, and objects. However, we prefer the warmth of a home to an excessively polished look. I think it's a combination that people always feel without really identifying it. Among the designers we represent is Jean Royère, who is the antithesis of Jean Prouvé in his decorative, handcrafted approach. For example, we have a set of his famous Polar Bear sofas and chairs, whose generous shapes and bright red mohair leave no one indifferent.

If I had to choose one piece with a special history, it would be Alexander Calder's mobile, which he gave to Prouvé as a gift, and which Prouvé kept in his house in Nancy. Now it's here, among Prouvé's many emblematic pieces, giving it even greater significance and extending its history.

## Which artist are you currently most excited about and why?

We've recently redone the hanging and hung in the dining room a painting by Richard Prince, a dear friend and one of the best living artists, which we're now enjoying even more. We've also made some new acquisitions, including a self-portrait by Rudolf Stingel and a great "X" painting by Wade Guyton that I've wanted to have in the collection for a long time. We also got a beautiful work by Akeem Smith, a young artist whom our daughter, Pauline, represents through her own contemporary art gallery in Berlin.



Table: Pierre Jeanneret, Library table, c. 1955-56. Chairs: Jean Prouvé, Métropoleno no. 305 chairs, 1950. Artwork, left to right: Rudolf Stingel, *PlanB #1381*, 2011; Ed Ruscha, *Red Ball*, 1975; Andy Warhol, *Guns*, 1981-82.

## What factors do you consider when expanding your collection?

When expanding our personal collection, we focus on a few key factors that reflect our taste and the way both design and art evolve. As I mentioned earlier, we are drawn to pieces of furniture with a unique history, striking a balance between the best condition and the traces of the past. When it comes to contemporary and emerging artworks, it's about an emotional connection—i.e. whether a work resonates with us in relation to the collection as a whole. It's not just about owning objects; it's about adding significant works that combine with other pieces, enriching the collection.

## What piece of advice would you give someone who wants to get into collecting?

Follow your passion and choose pieces that truly interest you. Stay curious, keep learning, and trust your instincts. Art enhances life.



Models of the Prouvé houses on the property.

## **How has your collection changed as your home and space has changed?**

In 2009, we moved to the Marais into a historic *hôtel particulier*, which gave us better possibilities for displaying our collection. The larger space, with high ceilings, allowed us to hang bigger artworks. The contrast between the 17th-century architecture and our mid-20th-century furniture also led us to rethink our interior design, right down to the selection of furniture. Whether in our Paris apartment or in our house in the south of France, built by Jean Nouvel, the works—art and design—integrate perfectly into our daily lives. For example, we have installed eight Prouvé demountable houses on our property. These houses, which require no foundations—Prouvé said he wanted an architecture that left no trace on the landscape—are nestled in the hills for our own enjoyment.

We began collecting these iconic pavilions over 30 years ago. Most of these structures are either unique or produced in very limited numbers, giving them exceptional historical value. That's what makes them so inspiring and emotionally resonant. These pavilions, combining technical ingenuity and material innovation, addressed the challenges of their time. They represent a major advancement in architecture, and their continued utilization demonstrates both their modernity and undeniable relevance. Prouvé himself said, "There is need to point out the enduring value of these little houses, which will find all sorts of uses after the War. They are so well made that they could readily be turned into permanent accommodation."