



*Charlotte Perriand on the chaise longue basculante B306, 1929 | AChP/ ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2021*

# Charlotte Perriand: The Modern Life

19 June – 5 September 2021  
the Design Museum

#PerriandLiving  
@DesignMuseum

## **NEW EXHIBITION PHOTOGRAPHY**

The Design Museum, London puts a spotlight on the work of one of the giants of 20th century design, a free spirit who championed good design for all

Marking 25 years since the last significant presentation in London, follow Charlotte Perriand's creative process through sketches, photographs, scrapbooks, prototypes and final pieces

Step inside recreations of some of her most famous interiors, such as the apartment designed for the Salon d'Automne in 1929, and sit on furniture she designed, including the iconic Chaise Longue Basculante and the Fauteuil Pivotant

The exhibition also shines a light on Perriand's life as a fiercely independent woman – pioneer, sportswoman and global traveller – who helped define the modern interior

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Opening in June 2021, the Design Museum presents a retrospective on the pioneering designer in *Charlotte Perriand: The Modern Life*. The

exhibition charts Perriand's journey through the modernist machine aesthetic to her adoption of natural forms, and later from modular furniture to major architectural projects. Featuring large-scale reconstructions of some of her most famous interiors, as well as original furniture, her photography and personal notebooks, the exhibition sheds new light on Perriand's creative process and her rightful place in design history.

Curated in collaboration with the Perriand family and the Fondation Louis Vuitton, this exhibition falls on the 25th anniversary of the designer's last significant presentation in London, held at the Design Museum in 1996. As a female pioneer of modernist design, Perriand's work was often overshadowed by her more famous male collaborators, who included Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Jean Prouvé. However, in recent years her reputation as a furniture designer and architect has matched the stature of her peers – her furniture in particular has become highly prized by collectors.

The exhibition is divided into three sections: The Machine Age, Nature and the Synthesis of the Arts, and Modular Design for Modern Living. Starting with the design of her own studio apartment in Saint-Sulpice, Paris, expect to see Perriand's early mastery of metal furniture before she joined Le Corbusier's studio. Explore the notebooks in which she developed the tubular steel furniture designed with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, which would define 1920s modernism. Transported into the world of Perriand, sit in vivid one-to-one room recreations of the Salon d'Automne interior from 1929, reconstructed by Cassina, and the London branch of the Air France office designed in 1957.

*"Dwellings should be designed not only to satisfy material specifications; they should also create conditions that foster harmonious balance and spiritual freedom in people's lives."*

**– Charlotte Perriand**



*Proposition d'une synthèse des arts (Proposal for a Synthesis of the Arts), Takashimaya department store, Nihonbashi, Tokyo, 1955 © AChP/ © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2021*



*Bookcase for the Maison du Mexique, Charlotte Perriand, 1952 © AChP/ © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2021*

**Justin McGuirk, Chief Curator said:**

*“Charlotte Perriand was a hugely influential figure in design. Her life spanned the twentieth century and her career reflects the twists and turns of the modernist movement. Yes, she was long overshadowed by her male counterparts, but this exhibition presents her not just as a brilliant designer who deserves wider recognition – she was also a natural collaborator and synthesiser. There is so much to admire not just in her work but in the way she lived her life.”*

The exhibition charts Perriand’s shift from machine aesthetic to wooden natural forms. Collecting and photographing found objects in nature, her work begins to assume an organic quality from the late 1930s. Later she displays her vision of how art, design and architecture come together in the interior through her notion of the ‘synthesis of the arts’. This personal manifesto is represented through items from her 1955 exhibition of the same name in Tokyo, drawing on her collaborations and friendships with Le Corbusier and Fernand Léger.

Explore Perriand’s development of modular designs for more affordable and adaptable interiors. Modular furnishing systems were seen as the way forward during the post-war reconstruction of Europe. Most famously Perriand designed her iconic bibliotheques, or bookcases, for fabrication by Jean Prouv ’s metal workshop. Originally intended for student dormitories such as the Maison du Mexique – recreated in the exhibition – these egalitarian metal shelving systems have ironically become highly prized collector’s items.



*Charlotte Perriand, Perspective drawing of the dining room in the Place Saint-Sulpice apartment-studio, Paris, 1928 © AChP/ © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2021*



*La Cascade residence, Arc 1600, Charlotte Perriand, Gaston Regairaz (architects), Guy Rey-Millet/AAM (site manager), 1967-1969 © AChP/ © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2021*

*“Better to spend a day in the sun than to spend it dusting our useless objects.”*

**– Charlotte Perriand**

Perriand was a keen hiker and skier, and the exhibition traces her love of travel and the outdoors in her work. It delves into her architecture, which mostly catered to the growing demand for leisure and tourism, especially in her beloved mountains. Through architectural models, photographs and sketches, discover how Perriand sought to make the pleasures of nature accessible. The exhibition culminates in her grandest architectural project, the Les Arcs ski resort in France. Developed over two decades, this resort for 30,000 skiers called for easily transportable components to be prefabricated, and drew on all of her creative and collaborative skills. Take a virtual tour of the resort and see how the buildings fit seamlessly with the contours of the mountainside, and how Perriand makes thousands of mini apartments feel warm and generous.

*Charlotte Perriand: The Modern Life* opens on Saturday 19 June 2021 at the Design Museum. Early bird ticket vouchers for this exhibition are available to book now. The exhibition will be accompanied by an audio tour available on the free Bloomberg Connects App featuring interviews and insights from designers and architects who have been inspired by her work. To download, visit the Apple App or Google Play stores and search "Bloomberg Connects".

**-Ends-**

#### **Notes to Editor**

##### **Curated by:**

Justin McGuirk, Chief Curator, Design Museum

Esme Hawes, Assistant Curator, Design Museum

Pernette Perriand & Jacques Barsac

Sébastien Cherruet

##### **Exhibition 3D Design:**

Assemble

##### **Exhibition 2D Design:**

A Practice for Everyday Life

##### **PRESS ENQUIRIES:**

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### **Bloomberg Connects App**

As part of ongoing support for cultural institutions, Bloomberg Philanthropies launched the Bloomberg Connects app in November 2019. A free digital guide to cultural organizations around the world, Bloomberg Connects makes it easy to access and engage with arts and culture from mobile devices, anytime, anywhere. The app offers the ability to learn about current exhibitions at a portfolio of participating cultural partners through dynamic content exclusive to each organization. Features include expert commentary, video highlights, pinch-and-zoom capability, and exhibition and way-finding maps.

The Design Museum App will launch in June 2021

### **Charlotte Perriand Biography**

Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999) was one of great designers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the age of 24, Perriand produced a number of critically acclaimed innovative pieces of metal furniture, which drew the attention of [Le Corbusier](#) and [Pierre Jeanneret](#). As a result, she was given a position at [Le Corbusier](#)'s studio where she developed a series of tubular steel chairs, among them the famous chaise longue basculante. In the mid 1930s, she started to experiment with natural materials such as wood and cane. She travelled to Japan in 1940 as an official advisor on industrial design to the Ministry for Trade and Industry and became inspired by traditional Japanese materials and techniques. She also had a keen interest in the synthesis of the arts, and was friends with Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger who she collaborated with on projects. Her work aimed to create functional living spaces in the belief that better design helps in creating a better society. In the 1950s she designed modular furniture systems and storage solutions including bookcase/space dividers which could be assembled in a number of different ways. She was an advocate for leisure activities and an outdoors lifestyle, designing various mountain refuges throughout her career which culminated in major architectural projects such as Les Arcs ski resort.

### **About Cassina, Reconstruction Content Partner:**

Founded in Meda by Cesare and Umberto Cassina in 1927, Cassina launched industrial design in Italy during the 50's by taking a completely new approach which saw a shift from handcraftsmanship to serial production. Cassina was pioneering in the way that it showed a striking inclination for research and innovation, combining technological skill with traditional craftsmanship. For the first time important architects and designers were involved and encouraged to envision new designs to be transformed into projects, a characteristic that still distinguishes the company.

Today 'The Cassina Perspective' unites the company's values to express the best contemporary design - avant-gardism, authenticity, excellence and the combination of technological capacity with skilled handcraftsmanship – and offers a broad panorama of configurations for the home where innovative products and Modern icons come together to create complete and, above all, welcoming environments, dialoguing according to a unique design code based on excellence.

[cassina.com](http://cassina.com)

### **Official Drinks Partner, Rémy Martin**

#### **Rémy Martin XO Artwork | 17 – 28 June 2021**

Supporting the exhibition, Official Drinks Partner Rémy Martin will host the Rémy Martin mobile sculpture designed in collaboration with artist and designer Charles Kaisin and Atelier Thiery in the Museum's Central Atrium. The impressive work of art represents Rémy Martin's iconic centaur and is made of 1724 origami centaurs expertly gilded one by one by Atelier Thiery. The number of centaurs is a nod to the year the House of Rémy Martin was founded. It is built as an impressive, light and bright mobile, and intertwines the talents and expertise of the specialists of their craft.

Rémy Martin has long been an advocate of craftsmanship and savoir-faire and this year, they are thrilled to bring together a collective of work to be on display alongside this exhibition, celebrating the alliance of craftsmanship and creativity.

#### **About Rémy Martin:**

Founded in 1724, the House of Rémy Martin specializes in the creation of Cognac Fine Champagne, an "appellation d'origine contrôlée", defining a blend of eaux-de-vie originating from the two central crus of the Cognac region: Grande Champagne (for a minimum of 50%) and Petite Champagne. The grapes growing on those crus are known to yield wines of exceptional quality and finesse. Distillation on the lees and long ageing then reveal the full potential of the eaux-de-vie, creating the elegant and opulent aromatic signature of Rémy Martin cognacs.

#### **ALL – Accor Live Limitless, Exhibition Hotel Partner**

##### **About Accor Live Limitless:**

ALL - Accor Live Limitless is a daily Lifestyle companion. ALL harnesses and enhances the brands, services and partnerships offered by Accor's ecosystem. ALL delivers meaningful experiences and rewards to its most engaged customers while enabling them to work live, and play, far beyond their stay, at home and around the world. Thanks to this rich value proposition, Accor is bringing its Augmented Hospitality strategy to life with

new digital platforms, iconic partnerships (Credit Cards, Mobility, Airlines, Entertainment with AEG, IMG, Paris Saint-Germain) and a global roll-out plan for all its guests and 68 million loyalty members.

**About the Design Museum:**

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to contemporary architecture and design. Its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. Since it opened its doors in 1989 the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to high heels designed by Christian Louboutin. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over seven million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, The Design Museum relocated to Kensington, west London. Leading architect John Pawson has converted the interior of a 1960s modernist building to create a new home for the Design Museum giving it three times more space in which to show a wider range of exhibitions and significantly extend its learning programme.

In October 2020, the Design Museum was awarded £2,968,634 by Arts Council England from the Culture Recovery Fund announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

In July 2020, the Design Museum was awarded nearly £1 million National Lottery funding through the Arts Council's Emergency Response Fund.

[designmuseum.org](http://designmuseum.org)