

# Cassina

## **Cassina supports Fondation Louis Vuitton's exhibition dedicated to Charlotte Perriand with reconstructions of her works and loans from its archive**

**Paris, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

### **Cultural DNA**

Cassina, the only company authorised to manufacture furniture designed by Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999), is delighted to support Fondation Louis Vuitton's exhibition "Le monde nouveau de Charlotte Perriand" with reconstructions of her works and loans from its archive.

Cassina has always had a special interest in the diffusion of the works of the designers and architects of its collections, promoting cultural initiatives and creating exceptional collaborations.

Through careful and rigorous philological reconstruction in collaboration with Pernette Perriand Barsac, the company has produced the interiors of the *Salon d'Automne* (1929) featuring reissues to faithfully represent this revolutionary project. It has also reproduced some items of furniture for the *Maison du Jeune Homme* (1935), the *Proposition d'une Synthèse des Arts* (1955) and a selection of other pieces designed during her time in Asia. The futuristic *Refuge Tonneau* (1938), an authentic masterpiece of mobile architecture envisioned with Pierre Jeanneret for the mountains, has also been loaned from the Cassina HQ for this occasion.

"Le monde nouveau de Charlotte Perriand" is not only an extraordinary occasion to view visionary design masterpieces but also a chance to discover an innovative historical period that permits a wider reading and further interpretation of the pioneering figure of Charlotte Perriand and her relationship with 20<sup>th</sup> century arts and an evolving social and political order.

### **Salon d'Automne**

The *Salon d'Automne*, the annual art exhibition held at the Grand Palais in Paris, was the staging for the *Équipement intérieur d'une habitation* by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand, exactly 90 years ago in 1929. This was the trio's first public presentation of the iconic tubular metal furniture, at the time received with much scandal due to its unexpected and criticised minimalism, today produced by Cassina.

Thanks to Cassina and with the guidance of Pernette Perriand Barsac and design historian Arthur Rüegg, the interiors of the *Salon d'Automne* have been completely reconstructed for the first time for this exhibition and, for a truly immersive experience, can be visited in part by the public.

Metal cabinets, known as *casiers*, have been reconstructed according to the original project thanks to the philological study of drawings and prototypes. These cabinets trace the living, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom areas while also acting as multi-functional containers.

Characterised by fluid spatial articulation, this modern habitation has been furnished with armchairs, tables and chairs that later became the central core of Cassina's *LC Collection*: the *LC1* armchair, the *LC2* and *LC3 Grand Confort* armchairs, *Petit and Grand Modèle*, the iconic *LC4* chaise-longue, the *LC6* table, the *LC7* swivel chair, the *LC8* stool and the *LC9 Siège Sallè de Bains*. The single bed has on the other hand been especially produced for the exhibition. These models, created for the exhibit in the specific colours and materials applied at the time, were imagined as essential home 'equipment' for various uses from study to relaxation and conversation.

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In order to guarantee a thorough and in-depth analysis of the interiors of the Salon d'Automne, Cassina first developed a series of study models, in agreement with Pernette Perriand and the Le Corbusier Foundation, made with the same production techniques from the 1920s. This specific reconstruction process gives a complete view of the technical details and formal choices made at the time in relation to the means available to Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand. These prototypes are now part of the Cassina Historical Archives at the company's Headquarters in Meda, Italy, as tangible evidence of the company's research capacity.

## **Maison du Jeune Homme**

The *House for a Young Man* (1935) was a housing project that Charlotte Perriand proposed for the French section of the Universal Exposition in Brussels. The space was designed for 'an intellectual athlete' where the study area was separated from the area dedicated to sport by a freestanding *casier* and a net functioning as a transparent partition.

For this section of the exhibit, Cassina has reconstructed the *Table en ardoise*, a variation of the table designed by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand for Le Corbusier's apartment in Paris in 1934. Instead of marble, this version has a slate top with a series of functional grooves made to hold pencils and pens. The *casier* or *bahut manifeste* has the same supporting base as the *Table en ardoise* and a neatly organised interior to classify documents. The central door of this modular system has a decorative zinc plated panel that depicts an engraving of a detail from Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* urban plan while a second decorative panel on its side includes drawings from Le Corbusier's *Précision sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme*.

## **Proposition d'une Synthèse des Arts**

The *Proposition d'une Synthèse des Arts* (1955) installation by Charlotte Perriand was part of an exhibition that took place in Tokyo. In 2013, for the exhibit *Charlotte Perriand et le Japon* in Saint Etienne in France, Cassina authentically reproduced prototypes of a series of bookshelves that were part of this project. Now part of the company's Historical Archives they are on show together with new reconstructions including the ingenious *Double chaise-longue*. This piece was originally designed in 1952 for the villa of Maurice Delage, the Director of a company that produced mines in Conakry. Designed to encourage conversation, it has an inclined seat that raises one's feet above heart level in order to rest swollen legs in tropical heat.

## **Refuge Tonneau**

Charlotte Perriand loved the mountains and in particular the Alps where she spent a lot of her time walking, skiing and climbing. In 1938, together with Pierre Jeanneret, she developed a unique scale model of a portable mountain shelter, the *Refuge Tonneau*.

Inspired by a merry-go-round that she photographed in Croatia, its lightweight structure was envisioned with industrial materials: easy to assemble aluminum panels and metallic frame with a central pole and a roof reminiscent of a large umbrella with twelve spokes. The true genius behind the design however is its natural pinewood interiors, warm and welcoming they skillfully combine beauty and functionality.

Its space-shuttle shape and porthole openings remarkably recall the aeronautic world and it impressively anticipates projects designed decades later such as the *Concordia Stations* in Antarctica (2002) and the *Mars Society Desert Research Station* (2011).

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The *Refuge Tonneau* was produced for the first time by Cassina in 2012 in collaboration with Pernette Perriand Barsac and Jacques Barsac on the basis of sketches and original notes to make public this visionary project that would have otherwise remained unknown. Today, this authentic construction has been loaned from the Cassina HQ to be part of this Charlotte Perriand exhibition.

On entering the refuge, one immediately notes how it is exemplary of Charlotte Perriand's capacity for organization and micro-architecture, facilitating the everyday gestures that create a bond between man and furniture in confined spaces.

Designed to host eight people, every detail has been studied and a place found for everything; the heater inside the central steel pillar warms the entire environment, the seating on the lower floor folds and transforms into beds thanks to a system of leather belts inspired by the train sleepers of the time, a bucket with a tap over the sink melts snow into running water and ski holders are neatly placed behind the door to keep the entrance tidy.

## A new modernity

A pioneer of modernity, architect and designer Charlotte Perriand was committed to defining an entirely new *art de vivre* that would break with the traditional codes of her era. Her objective was to put human needs at the centre of each single project, often using local materials and craftsmanship she designed interiors and furniture both for commissioned projects and personal use.

Considering this, Cassina has meticulously reproduced faithful reconstructions of some of her most interesting works for this exhibition. The *Banquette Méandre* (1937/40), for example, was designed during Charlotte Perriand's time in Japan where she was called as a consultant for industrial art in 1940 to give a modern drive to Japanese production. Presented for the first time at the *UAM - Union Artistes Modernes* (1937), this model was updated for an exhibition in Japan in 1940 to advise how to furnish a modern home. The bench, composed of modular elements with a wooden structure and bamboo slats, has seats that are assembled perpendicularly thanks to the junction of low square tables on which photographic images taken by Charlotte Perriand have been arranged.

This piece, like the *Fauteuil en bambou* (1940) armchair and the essential day-bed *Lit bambou et bois avec appui-tête* (1940), are perfect examples of how Charlotte Perriand used the natural materials that were available to her during her stay in Asia (1940-1941 /1953-1955 in Japan, 1942-1946 in Indo-China).

Commissioned pieces such as the wooden dining table *Table à gorge* (1935) and the *Bureau boomerang pour Jean-Richard Bloch* desk (1938) have also been specifically researched and reconstructed by Cassina for the exhibit.

The latter was designed by Charlotte Perriand for the office of Bloch, an intellectual, writer, co-director of the newspaper *Ce Soir* and founder of the Supervisory Committee for anti-fascist writers. Charlotte Perriand proposed this boomerang shape so that Bloch could sit at the centre while his employees were able to give him full attention by sitting along the convex part of the desk. Thanks to its organic shaped top and the position of its three legs, eleven people could comfortably sit together without disturbing each other. The boomerang design cleverly set out two different work areas, one for writing and one for consulting documents or reading, and it featured a suspended filing cabinet and a functional compartment to hold the telephone, paper and pens.

Behind the desk the *Rangement mural* (1938) bookshelf was positioned for Bloch to comfortably reach and consult his documents. This has also been produced by Cassina for the first time for this exhibit.

On top of these authentic reconstructions, a selection of works from the *Cassina I Maestri Collection* furnish the galleries for the general public to use while pondering on the exhibit, these include the *Refolo*

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bench by Charlotte Perriand and the *LC2* armchairs by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand.

“Le monde nouveau de Charlotte Perriand”

Scientific committee: Jacques Barsac, Sébastien Cherruet, Gladys Fabre, Sébastien Gokalp and Pernette Perriand Barsac.

Scientific advisor for the reconstructions: Pernette Perriand Barsac and Arthur Rüegg.

## Charlotte Perriand

Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999) holds full membership of that avant-garde cultural movement which, from the first decades of the twentieth century, brought about a profound change in aesthetic values and gave birth to a truly modern sensitivity towards everyday life. In this context, her specific contribution focuses on interior composition, conceived as creating a new way of living, still today at the heart of contemporary lifestyle.

At the beginning of her professional career she was acclaimed by critics for her *Bar under the roof*, exhibited at the *Salon d'Automne* in 1927 and constructed entirely in nickel-plated copper and anodized aluminium. In the same year, when she was just twenty-four years old, she began a decade-long collaboration with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, at the famous design studios at 35, rue de Sèvres in Paris.

Her presence at the studio is visible in the furnishings designed with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret: Charlotte Perriand was a cornerstone in the reformation project that they promoted, adding a distinct humanist dimension to the often cold rationalism of Le Corbusier. In her creations she animates the fundamental substance of daily life with new aesthetic values, in particular her talent and intuition in the discovery and use of new materials manifest themselves to their full extent.

The ten-year long association with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret together with her experience in Japan represent intense creative effervescence in the life of Charlotte Perriand. During her long stay in the Far East (1940-1946), she reveals her artistic talent to the full, through a reinterpretation of the reality of life to echo both tradition and modernity. By way of example, worthy of mention are the furnishings produced with traditional bamboo processing techniques that enhance the new forms that were already experimented with steel-tubing.

As a professional, she also concentrates on a series of original and balanced productions commissioned by top-level authorities and leading companies of the calibre of Air France and by a number of foreign organisations, authenticating the fame she had by now gained on the international scene.

Cassina detains the exclusive worldwide rights to re-issue the works of Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand through attentive philological research carried out in accordance with the official foundations and heirs. The company signed the contract to produce the first four pieces of the *LC Collection* in 1964 while Le Corbusier and the co-authors were still alive and Charlotte Perriand continued to work in close contact with Cassina on the development of this collection until her death in 1999.

In 2004 Cassina launched the *Charlotte Perriand Collection* in collaboration with Pernette Perriand Barsac, her only heir and assistant for twenty years, to provide an extensive and complete vision of her multifaceted work. This collection, in continuous evolution, captures the creative heart of each design, enhancing it and bringing it into today's world in a balanced combination of past and present.

## Cassina

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

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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.

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