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FRENCH TWIST

A Joseph André Motte exhibition presents the French Modernist's furnishings in all their glory

BY HEATHER RABKIN



It is the rare designer who can make noteworthy works from rattan and plywood—not to mention Formica and plastic. French Modernist Joseph André Motte did just that as a young, postwar designer, making use of mass production and affordable materials to wondrous effects. In his first solo exhibition in the United States, Demisch Danant gallery highlights Motte’s versatility by presenting his work in two environments. In the first section, above left, his pieces from the 1940s and ‘50s, such as the sinuous rattan Sabre chair, illustrate his ability to

put a contemporary spin on traditional materials. In a second configuration, below left, the shapes are still modern but now the materials are too—opaline glass side tables, a vinyl bed, and a lacquered wood coffee table hold court. While the exhibition offers a fascinating glimpse into the past, gallery-goers will note that Motte’s furnishings would look equally at home in 21st-century interiors.

Click through the slideshow to see some of Motte’s classic furniture.

“Joseph André Motte: The Art of Living,” Demisch Danant gallery, through February 9, 2013; demischdanant.com.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Demisch Danant



PAIR OF TRIPOD CHAIRS

Rattan, 1949



DAYBED

Ash, 1954



PLEXI FLOOR LAMP

Plexiglas and brass, 1958



LIGHT TABLE

lacquered wood and glass,

1959



VANITY CABINET

Palisander and steel, 1962

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