

# DEMISCH DANANT

## DEMISCH DANANT TO PRESENT *PROVENANCE*, CELEBRATING THE ROLE OF CONNOISSEURSHIP IN FRENCH DESIGN HISTORY

### PROVENANCE

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TEFAF Maastricht Stand# 610

Maastricht Exhibition & Congress Center, Forum 100

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**New York, NY**...Beginning March 11, 2016, Demisch Danant will present **Provenance**, an exhibition reflecting upon the special relationships between artists and collectors that influenced connoisseurship in the field of French design of the 1970s. This exhibition includes rare furniture and functional objects of the period by **Michel Boyer, César, Claude de Muzac, Pierre Paulin, and Maria Pergay**, along with artworks by celebrated artists **Arman, César, and Sheila Hicks**.



**César.** *Expansion Table*, 1977

Bronze

28.35 H x 40.16 x 86.61 inches ; 72 H x 102 x 220 cm

On view through March 20th, **Provenance** is the latest in an ongoing series of exhibitions curated by Demisch Danant to explore innovation and influences in French post-war design of the 1950s through 1980s.

“In simple terms, the provenance of an object provides a documented history that helps prove ownership, assigns the work to a known artist, and establishes authenticity,” said gallery principal Stephane Danant. “But beyond these basics, provenance is actually a repository of deeper meaning. It contextualizes an object within its era and beyond, and it enriches our understanding of design breakthroughs that have been encouraged by personal relationships. For passionate experts and for collectors who aspire to true connoisseurship, provenance is deeply significant as a means to measure value.”

Most of the works on view in **Provenance** were commissioned directly from the artists and designers who created them, revealing histories that include personal narratives, important information about the unique processes of their making, and facts about the steps of acquisition. These objects also reflect the evolution of French taste in the second half of the 20th century: Between the late 1960s and mid-1970s, France witnessed the emergence of a new era of artistic energy, marked by leaps of creative daring, which included forms of expression and mediums that challenged previously accepted boundaries.

César's rare and highly baroque bronze *Expansion Table* (1977), one of the highlights of **Provenance**, exemplifies the bold experiments artists undertook in the 1970s, to push beyond the confines of 'fine art,' express themselves through functional objects, and introduce their most radical ideas to the realm of domestic design. Furthermore, the excitement of the 1970s in particular encouraged formative new relationships between artists and collectors.

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A stainless steel and walnut desk (1970) is a unique piece created by **Michel Boyer** for Élie de Rothschild's personal office at Rothschild Banque in Paris – a legendary interior that stands as an enduring representation of 20th century French style. As part of his collaboration with Boyer, Rothschild also commissioned acclaimed American-born, Paris-based artist Sheila Hicks to make several architectural installations for the private salons in the bank, as well as Hicks' *Prayer Rug* (1969), on view in **Provenance**, for his private collection.

**Sheila Hicks'** *Textile Fresco* (1969) in the exhibition was commissioned for the Paris apartment of Mr. Rotcajg, designed by internationally admired decorator and tastemaker Alberto Pinto. *Tapisserie* (1980), a blue fiber sculpture by Hicks, was made for the personal collection of French designer Claude de Muzac, creator of three sculptural lamps on view that come from her personal collection. Each lamp is a unique work of functional design that achieves the authority of sculpture.

A low table (1985) by **Pierre Paulin** is a treasure from the collection of Marc le Bailly, Paulin's long time friend and director of workshop Segransan, which produced the designer's pieces in the 1980s.

Works by **Maria Pergay** find a designer channeling the spirit of her relationships with clients and friends. The designer's *Sofa* (2009) was commissioned by Adam Lindemann, a noted collector, for the interior of his New York townhouse, designed by architect David Adjaye. Lindemann is a longtime collector of Pergay's work and a host of the designer in New York. The sofa is juxtaposed in **Provenance** with Pergay *Side Tables* (1970) from the collection of Odette and Lino Ventura.



**Sheila Hicks.** *Textile Fresco*, c. 1969  
Five panels formed from twisted skeins of linen, silk and cotton  
118.11 H x 133.86 inches; 300 H x 340 cm

One of the exhibition's most personal and unexpected object is Pergay's ebullient *Oursin/Sea Urchin* (1970) created for the Baron Gourgaud to present his prized collection of important minerals at his residence in Porto Vecchio, Corsica. Studded with glimmering specimens, this steel sea urchin gives form to the spirit of collaboration between a visionary designer and a connoisseur that is the very essence of Provenance.

## About the Artists

After studying under renowned decorator André Arbus, **Michel Boyer** (1935 – 2011) began his career specializing in office furniture, corporate offices and banks. Boyer utilized the materials of his era and privileged architectural forms, often playing with solids and voids. Boyer established certain standards of 1970s style with designs such as the foam-covered linear chauffeuse - a chair made of metal tubes and rolls of leather - and is well known for his stools in stainless steel and lighting designs of great simplicity. Boyer received many significant commissions of the 1970s, including the Rothschild Bank in Paris (1970), the Hotel PLM Saint-Jacques (1972), the French Embassies in Brasilia and Washington (1975), and a number of corporate offices. He worked with fashion designers including Lanvin, Dior and Balmain. His private clients included Élie de Rothschild, Liliane Bettencourt and Karim Aga Khan.

Known universally as simply **César**, the artist César Baldaccini (1921 - 1998) was an internationally celebrated French artist who achieved acclaim for his truly radical approach to sculpture in the years following World War II. Less known for his imaginative and expressive furniture designs, César nevertheless applied

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the same passion for new materials and forms to his furniture and objects. Indeed, the artist considered his functional objects and jewelry to be sculptures – extensions of his art practice.

Born in Hastings, Nebraska, **Sheila Hicks** (b. 1934) has lived and worked in Paris since 1964. After studying fine art at Yale under the tutelage of Josef Albers, Sheila Hicks established herself as one of the most innovative textile artists of the 20th century. Hicks is renowned for her painterly approach to textile design and an ability to craft environments through the unlikely medium of fiber. She has collaborated with prominent architects including Luis Barragán, Ricardo Legorreta and SOM. Her work defies categorization, simultaneously addressing several related mediums including painting, sculpture, design and installation. Hicks' work is included in such collections as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre George Pompidou, Paris; and the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Claude de Muzac** (b. 1935), also known as Princesse de Broglie, is perhaps best known for her legendary galleries in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where she sold her exquisite lamps, frames, pedestals, jewelry, and objects d'art alongside antiquities and found objects. In addition, de Muzac collaborated with such noted designers and artists as Maria Pergay, Sheila Hicks, Serge Poliakoff, Max Ernst, and Arman. De Muzac's shops, filled with fantastical curiosities, were frequented by top collectors and discerning aristocrats, including President George Pompidou and Edmond de Rothschild. De Muzac closed her shops in 1997. She still lives in Paris.

**Pierre Paulin** (1927 - 2009) is perhaps best known for his innovative designs for Artifort of the 1960s - the famed *Mushroom Chair* (1959), the *Ribbon Chair* (1965) and the *Tongue Chair* (1968). He is widely regarded as one of the most significant designers of the 20th century. Though he was clearly influenced by his German roots as well as the work of early modernists, Paulin has said he was greatly inspired by the work of George Nelson and Charles Eames and the significance of the social component of modern design. In 1970, Paulin was invited by the Mobilier National to decorate the private apartments of George Pompidou in the Palais de l'Élysée, and to furnish the office of Francois Mitterrand in 1984. Today, Paulin's designs are found in the collections of major museums across the world such as Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; and London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

Born in Moldavia, **Maria Pergay** (b. 1930) opened her first shop in the Place des Vosges in 1960 and designed small objects in silver and special pieces on commission for fashion houses including Christian Dior and Jacques Heim. In 1968, Maria Pergay presented her first collection of stainless steel furniture at Galerie Maison et Jardin, including the now-iconic *Flying Carpet Daybed* (1968) and *Tambour Table* (1968). This seminal exhibition established Pergay as one of the most innovative French furniture designers of her time, a visionary who almost single-handedly transformed stainless steel from a commercial industrial material into a principal component of modern furniture. Pergay has exhibited internationally and has embarked upon significant commissions for Pierre Cardin, The World Trade Center in Brussels, the Royal Family of Saudi Arabia, and other esteemed clients. In her 85th year, after a half-century of creation, Pergay continues to surprise both herself and her collectors.

## About Demisch Danant

Demisch Danant was founded in 2005 by Suzanne Demisch and Stephane Danant. The gallery specializes in twentieth century French design with an emphasis on the late 1950s through the 1970s and represents the work of Maria Pergay, Pierre Paulin, Joseph André Motte, Pierre Guariche, Michel Boyer, Philippon & Lecoq and René Jean Caillette. Curated exhibitions on historical work are presented within environments that reference architecture and interiors of the era.

The gallery also features exhibitions concerning the intersection of architecture, design and art, including the work of Sheila Hicks, Felice Varini, Krijn de Koning.

Demisch Danant is dedicated to research and scholarship on French design and has published and authored monographs including *Antoine Philippon and Jacqueline Lecoq* and *Maria Pergay: Complete Works 1957-2010*. Current projects include a compilation of sketches by Maria Pergay and comprehensive monograph on seminal designer Joseph André Motte.