

DEMISCH DANANT



Demisch Danant x Paulin, Paulin, Paulin present
FORMAL DISRUPTION | Pierre Paulin and the State Commissions of the 1980s
With Participation from the Mobilier National
April 27- May 27, 2023

Manhattan, New York – Demisch Danant in collaboration with Paulin, Paulin, Paulin are pleased to present **FORMAL DISRUPTION | Pierre Paulin and the State Commissions of the 1980s**, an iconic showcase of the radical French designer Pierre Paulin’s lesser-known era, premiering Thursday, April 27, 2023.

Revered for his influential, sculptural forms and modular developments of the 1960s and 70s, Pierre Paulin (1927-2009) is often boxed into the first decade of his prolific career. However, it was the latter half of his creative trajectory that took many by surprise. Introducing some of his most avant-garde works and limited edition collections, he revived notions of classicism and savoir-faire, in materials and design alike.

Previously celebrated at Demisch Danant in 2011 as part of the ‘Mobilier National’ group show, and in 2015 with the ‘L’Homme Moderne’ (or ‘The Modern Man’) solo exhibition, Paulin’s rich legacy is one of continuous and poetic innovation. As stated by his son Benjamin Paulin, who now co-manages the estate together with his wife Alice, “The essence of my father’s work was the absolute need for modernity – his uncompromising approach was mixed with a very rare sensitivity.” Longtime advocates of Paulin’s perspective and output, Demisch Danant co-founders Suzanne Demisch and Stéphane Danant have proudly presented select works from his catalog since the inception of their gallery in New York in 2005, fostering an ongoing relationship with the Paulin family.

“We’ve been dedicated advocates of Paulin’s work for the last twenty years, having displayed the furniture he created for President Georges Pompidou for the Élysée Palace (1972) at our gallery in 2005. On a personal level, we’ve had a warm relationship with the Paulin family ever since we met Pierre and his wife Maia nearly two decades ago. When Benjamin and Alice arrived, we continued our work with them, looking forward to one day

DEMISCH DANANT

doing a project together. We're thrilled that the day has finally come with this exhibition, presenting models that have never before been commercially produced," says Suzanne Demisch.

Paulin is one of the most influential French designers of the 20th century. Trained initially as a sculptor, his foray to furniture design was colored by the influence of early modernists and, even more so, by the work of George Nelson and Charles Eames. Most notably, starting in 1970 Paulin became a regular collaborator of the Mobilier National, the national service agency under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, whose role is to administer state furniture by way of direct commissions to French designers. Throughout his career, Paulin received public commissions to design the residences of multiple government officials and national institutions. He conceived furniture and interiors of private and public spaces including the presidential office of the Elysée Palace (for Presidents Pompidou and Mitterrand), the Denon Wing of the Louvre Museum, the Hall of Tapestries in Paris City Hall, the hypostyle room in the Iena Palace, the Economic and Social Council Assembly Room, and the Green Room of the state radio's Broadcasting House ("Maison de la Radio").

"In the early 2000s, Paulin wasn't known in the United States, the knowledge on his work was only limited to several Artifort seats like the iconic Ribbon chair – we knew we wanted to change that," says Stéphane Danant. "It took us years to establish lesser-known designs like the ones for the Mobilier National and Paulin's production for the French company, Mobilier International."

At the center of FORMAL DISRUPTION is the beloved and astounding Mitterrand office set – a total of five pieces – commissioned by then French President François Mitterrand in 1985. Put into production for the very first time, it's with this series of works that Paulin redefined his practice, shifting his aesthetic from the industrial to the artisanal. Adorned in Tyrian pink and *bleu de France* – colors inspired by a Charles Le Brun tapestry hanging in the Salon Doré or 'The Golden Room' at the Elysée Palace – these works surprised and delighted the design world given their unique pairing with the likes of such a serious and official setting. This iconoclast character was synonymous with Paulin's practice which was ever-evolving and non-linear, from his choices in material and use of artful color to the meticulously thoughtful and practical construction of his pieces.

Given the exclusive nature of these historic commissions, the works have never before been produced for public viewing until now. It's with the considered partnership between Demisch Danant and Paulin, Paulin, Paulin that these pioneering pieces are being premiered for the first time for design enthusiasts to experience first hand.

"Presenting the Mitterrand collection today is an opportunity to showcase a highly symbolic achievement, both for its modernity and for what it represents in my father's illustrious career. A synthesis of his knowledge of period furniture and his industrial experience, this collection is the pinnacle of his legacy," says Benjamin Paulin.

Demisch Danant will present Paulin's works in a modern manner featuring the triangular elevations that Paulin had initially designed and intended for the Bureau Doré. FORMAL DISRUPTION contains works including pieces from the following collections:

- Mitterrand Office Set ('83)
- Iéna ('85)
- Hôtel de Ville ('86)
- Cathédrale ('81)
- Musée des Arts Décoratifs ('83)
- Diwan ('91)
- Tapis-Siège ('68)

DEMISCH DANANT

- Amarante ('80)
- Baker (late 80s)

At the heart of this exhibition is the recognition and reaffirmation of Pierre Paulin's legacy in-full as an enduring figure in the history of modern design. A legacy that – hand in hand with the family's estate, Paulin, Paulin, Paulin – Demisch Danant is committed to continue to support.

“Paulin, Paulin, Paulin has always aimed to highlight certain lesser-known periods of Pierre Paulin's work, such as the 1950s or 1980s. This is also what Demisch Danant has been able to do over the years in their exhibitions and on their stands, sparking interest among new audiences. We find ourselves here, with the desire to reveal a vision and a body of work beyond the obvious,” says Benjamin Paulin.

FORMAL DISRUPTION will be unveiled Thursday, April 27, 2023 and will remain on view through Saturday, May 27, 2023 at Demisch Danant in Manhattan.

About Pierre Paulin

Pierre Paulin (1927-2009) was born in Paris to a French father and German-Swiss mother. Paulin began his career working in the studio of Marcel Gascoïn, whose dedication to functional, mass produced designs strongly resonated with Paulin's developing interest in Scandinavian furniture and its emphasis on the social component of modern design. Paulin's connection to his German ancestry accentuated his interest in production furniture, and he was greatly influenced by American counterparts such as George Nelson and Charles Eames. In 1959, Paulin began a partnership with the Dutch manufacturer Artifort that lasted through the mid-1970s. He is perhaps best known for the innovative designs he produced for Artifort in the 1960s, which are today considered some of the most significant designs of the decade. Paulin's prolific career included industrial design, furniture, interior design, and he received some of the most significant commissions of his era. Most notably, he was commissioned by the Mobilier National to design the private apartments of President George Pompidou at the Palais de l'Élysée in 1970, and to furnish the office of President François Mitterrand in 1983. Pierre Paulin's work can be found in the collections of major international museums, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

About Paulin, Paulin, Paulin

Paulin, Paulin, Paulin is a family business that circulates, develops and preserves the works of Pierre Paulin. It aims to offer a heightened panorama of the designer's oeuvre to bring to light the amazing modernity of a creator who was constantly researching new concepts and ideas.

Paulin, Paulin, Paulin produces and sells rare pieces from the work of Pierre Paulin. Most of the models we present have never known commercial editions at the time of their design for technical or economic reasons. The company's vocation is to bring into existence or prolong some of Pierre Paulin's most cherished dreams.

www.paulinpaulinpaulin.com
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About Demisch Danant

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 and César. 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 comprehensive monograph on seminal designer Joseph-André Motte.

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Archival image of the Mitterrand office set at the Elysée Palace, Courtesy of Paulin, Paulin, Paulin.