



"Good Morning America", 1992. Alkyd paint on canvas. 300 x 450 cm / 118 1/8 x 177 5/32 inches. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli  
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## Pierre Paulin

with videos by Iván Argote, Erró, Jesper Just and Xavier Veilhan

June 22 – August 19, 2016

Opening Reception: Wednesday, June 22, 6-8pm

**"I was aiming to show just how far we could make modernity go." Pierre Paulin**

The exhibition displays (after the one at Galerie Perrotin, Paris in 2015) Pierre Paulin rare original designs produced in limited editions by Paulin, Paulin, Paulin : "La Déclive" from 1966, "Dos à dos" & "Face à face" from 1968 ; "Jardin à la française" armchairs, coffee tables and carpets made specially for the Palais d'Iéna in Paris in 1985; "Tapis-siège" for the Herman Miller project in 1970; "Rosace" coffee table, 1971; "Diwan" rug, 1984; Table "Cathédrale" from 1981.

Paulin, Paulin, Paulin, the firm founded by Pierre Paulin's family in 2008, aims to promote his work by producing limited editions of his designs that never got beyond model or prototype stage, or that were made unique for special state commissions, and hence that were never produced before. They collaborate with the finest craftsmen in Europe and are backed by the expertise of Michel Chalard, Paulin's closest collaborator and technical adviser.

The official names of Pierre Paulin's creations evoke the inventory or industrial models numbers (F560, F437, F582, F577, etc.), but we are more familiar with the descriptive titles of these pieces among others – Mushroom (1960), Orange Slice (1960), Ribbon (1966), Tongue (1967) – that MoMA New York acquired in 1967. These colourful iconic objects by the most famous French designer of his day heralded the new society being shaped by the massive cultural, economic and technological changes of the early 1960s. Paulin's furniture fitted the forms of the human body as it freed itself of social constraints. His rigorous research into new materials (elasticated fabrics and polyurethane foam, for example), associated with innovative construction methods placing wellbeing at the heart of the process, authorised all kinds of arrangements and made space malleable. Paulin's radical artistic stance conjoined formal modularity with sensuous functionalism. His travels in Scandinavia (1951) and Japan (1963) made a lasting impact on his work and aesthetic approach, which he also applied to the interior commissioned for the private apartments of Georges Pompidou at the presidential palace, the Elysée, in 1971 (an ensemble that was even more audacious than the "modern, but classical" pieces commissioned by President François Mitterrand in 1983). The luminous coffee table « Rosace » is the core of the dismantled fumoir by Paulin that fitted in 1971 the hemicycle shape of the Salon Napoléon III in the Elysée Palace, with a structure conceived as a reminiscence of a gothic cross vault, suggesting also an igloo or a yurt. The shape of the table recalls the ribbed nave of the dining room, which is still onsite, as a grotto from which springs a rain of 9000 luminescent cristal stalactites.

The body must be one with its surroundings, or rather, the opposite: the floor, walls and ceiling were imagined as a harmonious whole, on the edge of art, design and architecture. A low centre of gravity echoes the interiors of Japanese houses and nomads' tents such as the geometrical "Diwan" rug (1984) that falls along the wall onto the floor of the Gallery, lying between a tapestry and a rug.

The modular undulations of the "Déclive" (1966), a serial succession of curving foam seating bars interlinking on two articulated aluminium spines,

give it a weightless quality. To date, there existed only two prototypes of this piece, one of which entered the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne/Centre Pompidou in 2003. Atypical, half sculpture and half furniture, the "Déclive"'s voluptuous silhouette contrasts with its precisely crafted and captures its creator's quest: "I am what you could call a para-artist. Someone somewhere between the artistic and the technical spheres. And this only works if it excels in both." Indeed, all the Pierre Paulin's creations have these sculptural qualities that enhance the outline.

The "Tapis-Siège" designed by Pierre Paulin in 1970 for a housing project formulated as a manifesto for a new art of living was commissioned by the Herman Miller company, which produced pieces by Charles et Ray Eames, whose work Paulin had long admired. The subagent idea was that people could combine different elements, assembling them or disconnecting them as the mood took them, and thus be the architects of their own interior. The maquette for this project, which was never produced, also entered the MNAM//Centre Pompidou collection in 2003. The prototypes have been displayed for the first time by Louis Vuitton and Paulin, Paulin, Paulin, during Design Miami 2014 at Miami Design District.

From 1985 to 1991, Paulin worked on a commission for the French Ministry of Culture/Mobilier national, for the monumental colonnaded hall in the Palais d'Iéna built by Auguste Perret in 1939, and now the home of the Conseil Économique et Social. His "Jardin à la française" rugs divided this immense hall into seven spaces for intimate conversation, each comprising low tables in sycamore wood (previously existing only as a drawing), flecked maple and aluminium with chairs in sycamore, aluminium and foam. The geometrical lines echo the coffered ceilings, fitting discreetly into the imposing, majestic architecture. The patterns on the rugs partially reprise the project for a stone garden in the Palais Royal, in a competition won by Daniel Buren's columns in 1986.

The "Dos-à-dos" (1968), evocation of the classical double chair Boudeuse that was popular in the 19th century, and the "Face-à-face » (1968), reinterpretation of the confident chair, result from the studies for his first public collective chairs commission with Mobilier National/Ministry of Culture. They are contrived for two very intimate people who wish to talk head to head & back to back or very closely, legs intertwined, face to face. They can even be combined in multiple 'conversations'.

Finally, the table "Cathedral" in aluminium and glass, which Paulin considered his masterpiece, combines the precision of engineering with the highly wrought curves of Gothic architecture. The "Cathedral" has been developed by the Atelier de Recherche et Création du Mobilier National and edited in 1981 by Artcurial.

The pieces by Pierre Paulin seem to evolve in a suspended time. Here in New York, they dialogue with videos by the following artists of the Gallery : Iván Argote, ERRÓ, Jesper Just, Xavier Veilhan.

A retrospective of Pierre Paulin is organized at Centre Pompidou in Paris until August 22, 2016 (curator Cloé Pitiot).



View of the exhibition "Paulin, Paulin, Paulin" at Galerie Perrotin, Paris, 2015.  
Photo: Claire Dorn. Courtesy Paulin, Paulin, Paulin and Galerie Perrotin



Pierre PAULIN. "Tapis-Siège", 1970  
Lacquered wood, foam and textile 80 x 210 x 210 cm / 31 1/2 x 82 3/4 x 82 11/16 inches. Photo: Claire Dorn  
Courtesy Paulin, Paulin, Paulin and Galerie Perrotin

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