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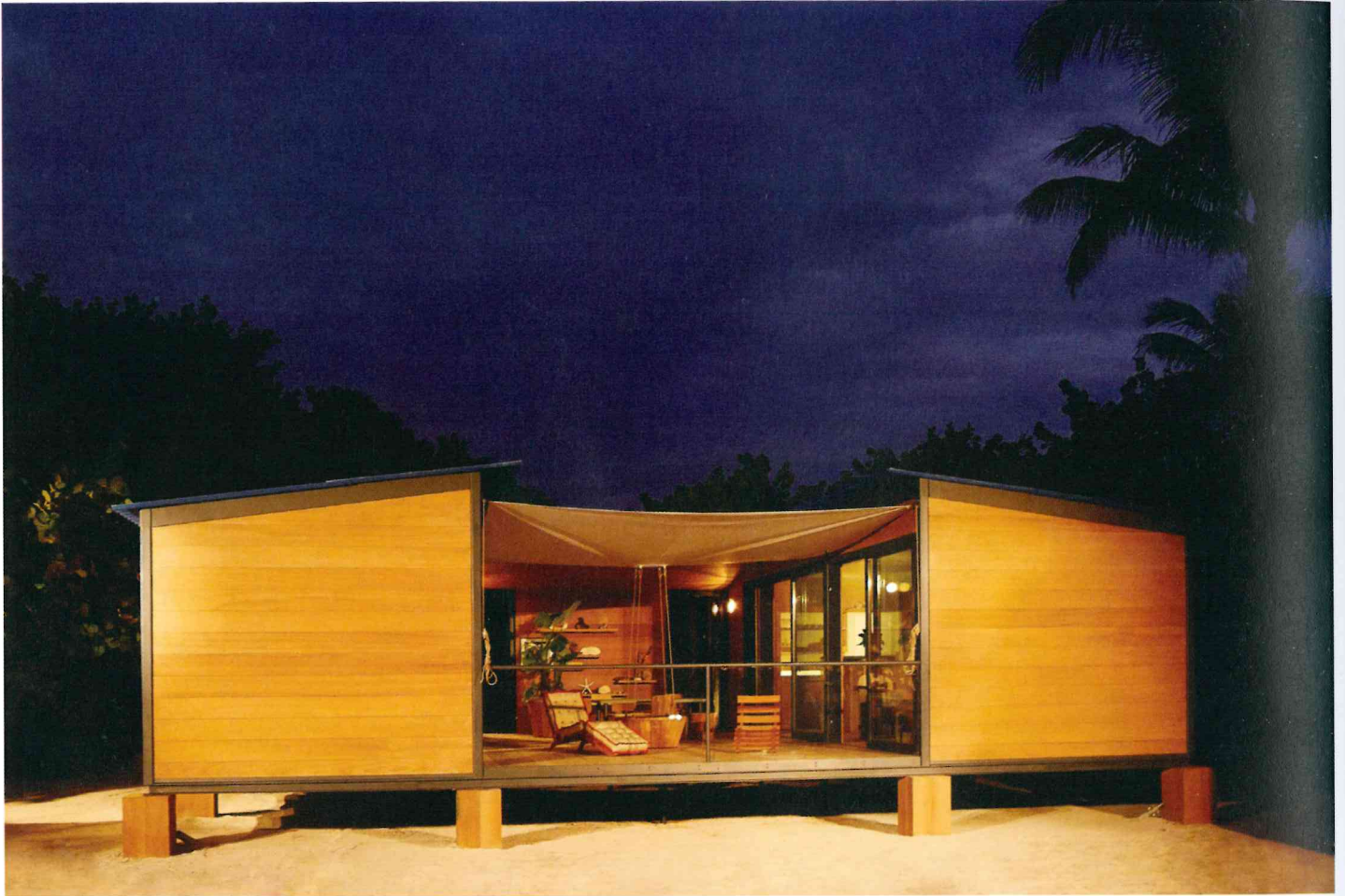
SPECIAL ISSUE / DECEMBER 2013

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*CHARLOTTE PERRIAND:
MAISON AU BORD DE L'EAU
IN MIAMI BEACH
LOUIS VUITTON TRIBUTE*
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CHARLOTTE PERRIAND, AN ICON

BY PHILIPPE RÉGNIER



Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*. © Photo: Frank Perrin.

Charlotte Perriand's *Maison au bord de l'eau* in Miami! The concept might never have been more than an unrealized dream, but thanks to the good fairy Louis Vuitton, the *Maison au bord de l'eau* is built on the Florida coast. Long detained in the planning stages, it has become a reality. In 1934, the designer/architect conceived the idea for a weekend and holiday haven in the spirit of lightness and modularity, a space on a human scale wide open to the outdoors. As always with Charlotte Perriand, everything is measured and elegant. Of a simplicity that goes to essentials, affording a unique atmosphere created with very little, though meticulous as ever in the selection of materials and the line of the design. The *Maison au bord de l'eau* was envisaged as a home to be lived in, a brightly illuminated space inspiring wellbeing. It also successfully introduces the exterior within the structure's perimeter, with its large airy terrace and views of the surrounding landscape. Though conceived nearly eighty years ago, this is a thoroughly

modern project. It reflects the designer's commitment, aged about thirty at the time, to providing her contemporaries with better living conditions and environments, enabling them to fully take advantage of the new culture of leisure and free time. Two years later, workers in France would enjoy paid holidays following the victory of the Popular Front in the 1936 elections. All the modernity of Charlotte Perriand's project may be read in light of the political and social context in the first half of the 20th century.

A liberated, dedicated and widely travelled woman, one of the major figures of modernity, Charlotte Perriand is unquestionably an icon. The word also supplied the title for the Louis Vuitton 2014 spring/summer "Icônes" collection, inspired by this refined designer and architect of enduring appeal. ■

CHARLOTTE PERRIAND, *LA MAISON AU BORD DE L'EAU*, 1934, LOUIS VUITTON, a satellite exhibition, Design Miami/, until December 8th, The Raleigh, 1775 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach

“SHE PUT A LOT OF WORK INTO THIS PROJECT”

INTERVIEW WITH PERNETTE PERRIAND AND JACQUES BARSAC

A. D. N. What's the story behind Charlotte Perriand's design for the *Maison au bord de l'eau* (house by the water's edge)?

P. P. In fact, she designed it for a competition organized in 1934 by *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* magazine whose theme was: a weekend home. She got 2nd prize. Her idea was to design a house that everybody could enjoy. Don't forget, this was before paid holidays came into vigor in France two years later in 1936. It was more or less a superior sort of tent: superior in that it was rigid and built on piles. As a result, you could make it larger as necessary, thanks to the space available underneath and a supplementary modular system. Afterwards, Charlotte designed a more elaborate version with sliding windows, which is the one we decided to build.

J. B. She put a lot of work into this project for an 'affordable' vacation home for everybody (to use a term which was common at the time). Then she modified it. Looking at the many drawings in our possession, it seems obvious that there must have been somebody in her entourage who wanted to build a more "luxurious" version. As an architect, this kind of pre-fabricated construction was Charlotte Perriand's specialty from the start. She had strong political ideas and firmly believed that organizing leisure time and activities should be one of the priorities of a modern industrial society in the 1930s: in short, that absolutely everybody, manual workers and the working class in general, should have the right to holidays and leisure. She was one of those avant-garde architects who were also designers and town planners and who thought about how they could help society progress. In her architectural work, quite a lot of projects used the most up-to-date techniques such as prefabricated elements, with the aim, or dream perhaps, of being able to build houses in the same way as automobiles were manufactured, thereby making them cheaper and more accessible to those with limited resources. She definitely had this idea in mind when she was working on her *Maison au bord de l'eau*. Her design allows for increasing the surface area, as the family gets



Charlotte Perriand, circa 1932. © ACHP201.

bigger, or has a better financial situation, with a third and fourth module to be built on the platform...

P. P. These parts of the building were equipped with large shutters that could be lifted up to form an extra roof over the terrace. Between them on one side, she imagined the "mur de collection" (collection wall) with different sized shelves, so that the occupants could arrange driftwood, stones and pebbles to decorate as they saw fit... This was something she liked to do herself and a way of revisiting the concept of the ready-made, but in the realm of nature.

A. D. N. If I understand right, the house doesn't have any foundations...

P. P. No. The platform is placed on the piles. Its height is chosen depending on your personal preference, and in order to adapt to the terrain: sand dunes, mountains, etc. A walkway connects to the outside.

J. B. This lack of foundations is based on some farms in Switzerland that Charlotte saw and photographed in 1933;

CHARLOTTE PERRIAND

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these wooden constructions built on top of huge stones, which were used to store the harvest or other agricultural equipment. It is also one of the principles of traditional Japanese architecture. And like in Japan, the house's dimensions are calculated in function of the length of the beds.

P. P. The whole house is designed in this way. She imagined it from the inside out. The result is small and on a human scale, a sort of vantage point from which you can observe nature.

J. B. The total surface area is just 87 m² [936 ft²], but Charlotte Perriand had a very functional approach and great technical skills: these volumes may be small, but they are truly wonderful. The interior is a cozy cocoon of a home, and the system of openings means you also feel like you are outside in contact with nature.

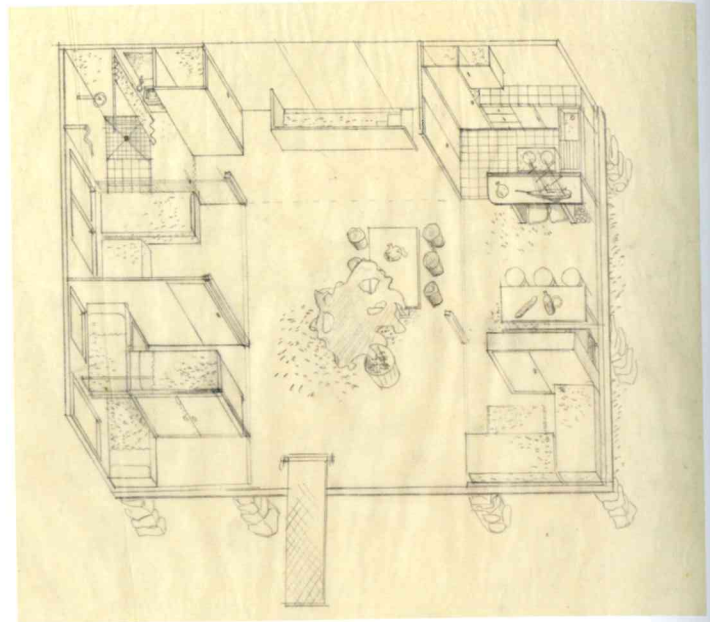
A. D. N. What sort of facilities does the house have?

P. P. A kitchen, bathroom and an open fire. Our only regret is that we couldn't use the fireplace for safety reasons. We installed electric heaters, which of course wasn't the case in 1934, as well as double-glazing for better insulation. If Charlotte had designed it today, she would surely have included such a feature.

A. D. N. What is the house made of?

P. P. It is made entirely of wood, with insulation between the cladding as was usual at that time. Today, she would have surely made use of the wider choice of green materials and techniques, because she always tried to take the environmental aspect into account. You know, I'm sure she would have equipped the roof with solar panels if she'd designed it today, but we preferred to stay faithful to her original drawings.

J. B. She also invented a sort of impluvium, a canvas that could be unrolled and positioned above the terrace to collect



Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934.
© Perriand, ADAGP 2013.

rainwater thanks to a hole placed above a basin: we decided to keep this feature.

A. D. N. How did you go about actually making the house from the plans? It had never been built before...

P. P. It was an extraordinary Italian firm, with some master craftsmen who were passionate about their work, which developed this project for us. They paid great attention to questions of quality, which was a key aspect: Charlotte Perriand may not have used luxurious materials, but she was uncompromising in terms of quality. We used all her sketches as the basis for the construction drawings, which were finalized in August so we could start building in September.

A. D. N. So had the project actually been developed to such an extent by Charlotte Perriand herself that you could actually build the house?

P. P. Absolutely. We only had to recalculate the stresses in the structural members, but in fact we found exactly the same results and dimensions that she had provided for at the start.

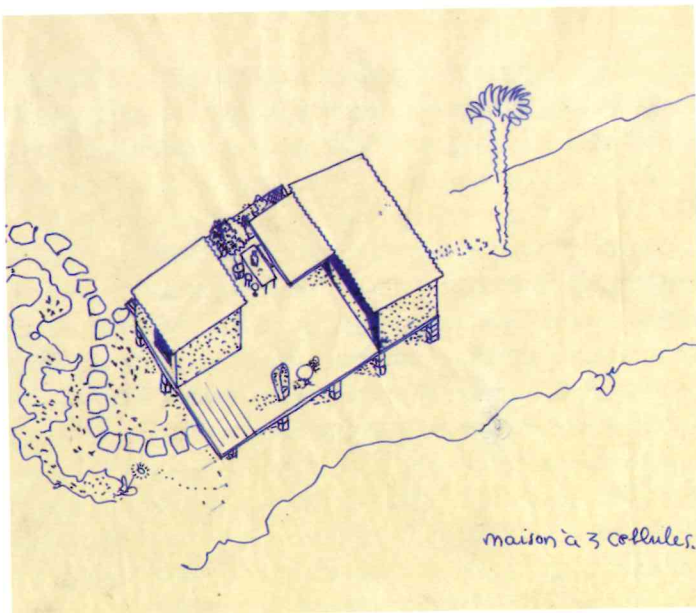
A. D. N. Did she also design the furniture?

P. P. In part yes: the storage and the beds... but not the movable elements. We added furniture that she designed during the same period, from 1934 to 1939 to be exact, which goes perfectly with the feel of the house.

A. D. N. What is the connection between Charlotte Perriand and Louis Vuitton?

P. P. Charlotte Perriand spent a lot of time studying the principle of trunks and how to store them. It was a major source of inspiration for both her furniture and architecture, in particular her first cupboards in 1928. She also loved to travel and was very aware of build quality and craftsmanship. ■

INTERVIEW: SYLVIE BLIN AND PHILIPPE RÉGNIER



Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934.
© Perriand, ADAGP 2013.

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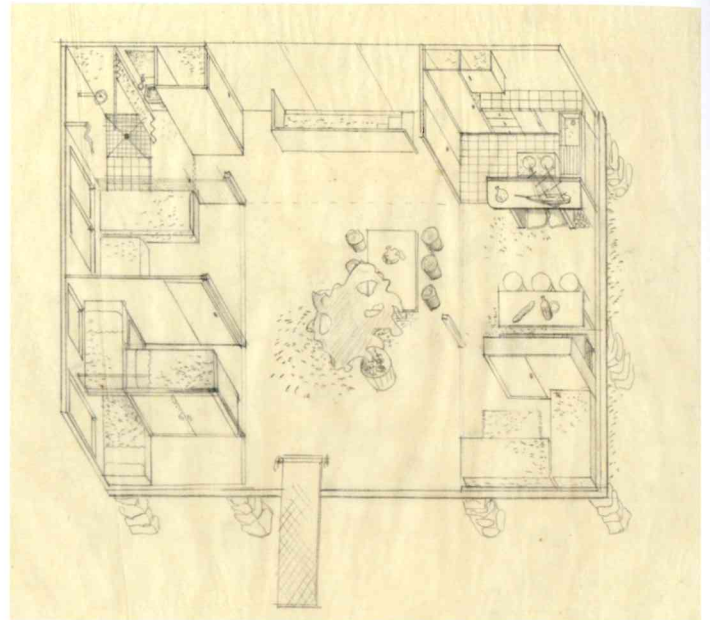
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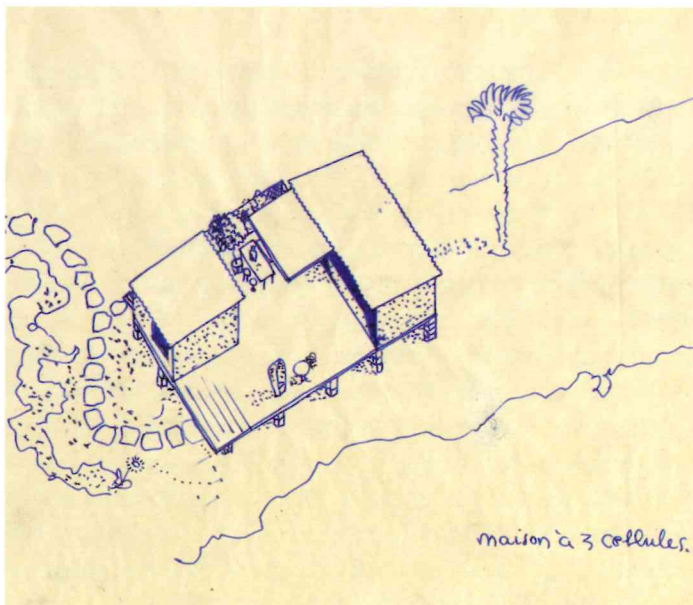
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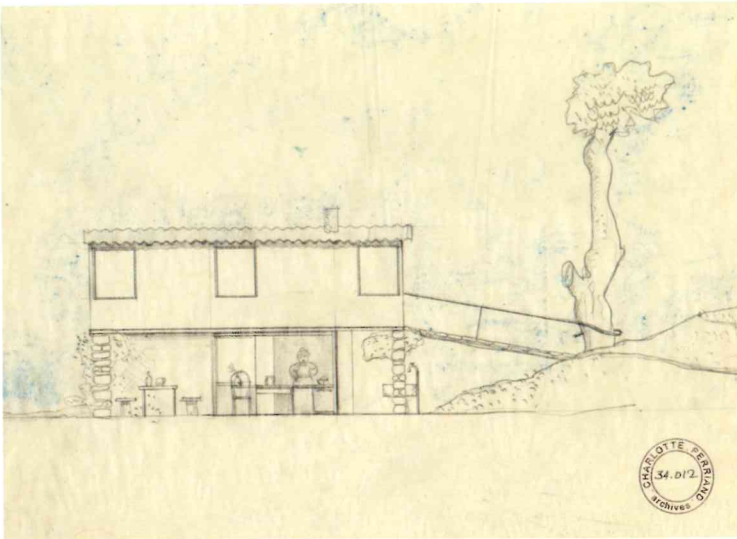
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INTERVIEW: SYLVIE BLIN AND PHILIPPE RÉGNIER



Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934.
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CHARLOTTE PERRIAND, UNE MAISON AU BORD DE L'EAU, 1934. CAHIER D'INSPIRATION

1: Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934.
© Perriand-ADAGP 2013.

2: Charlotte Perriand, circa 1930. © ACHP2013.

3: Charlotte Perriand and M. Clouzot in *Entre-deux-Eaux*, 1932.
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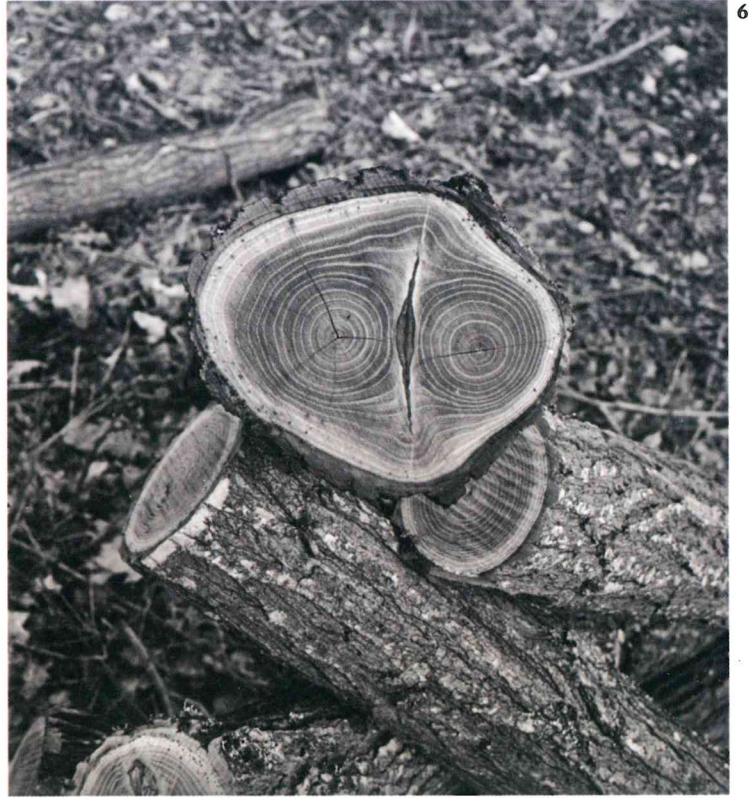
4: Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934.
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5: Charlotte in Japan, 1954. Photo: J. Martin. © ACHP2.

6: Photo: Charlotte Perriand, 1933. © ACHP, ADA.

7: Photo: Charlotte Perriand, 1933. © ACHP, ADA.

8: Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934. © Perriand-ADAGP 2013.

9: Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934. © Perriand-ADAGP 2013.

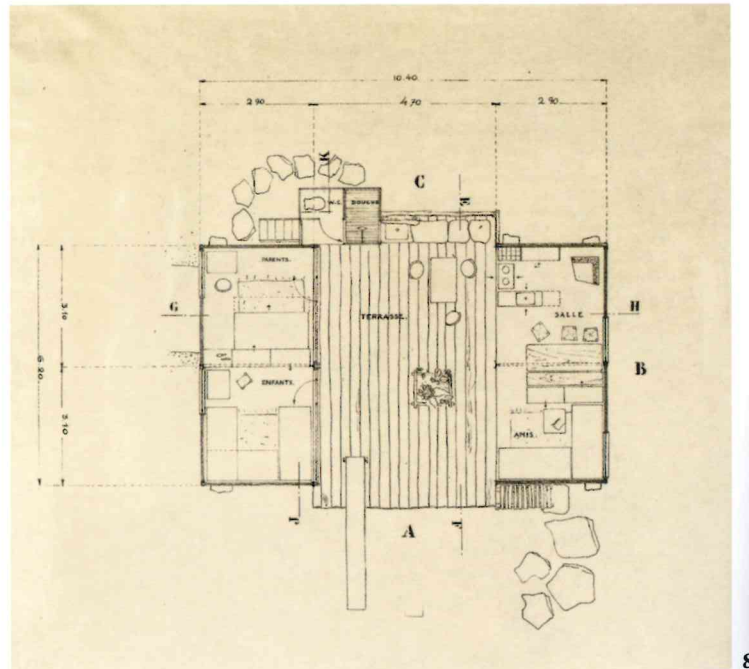
10: Photo: Charlotte Perriand, 1933. © ACHP, ADA.

11: Charlotte Perriand, *Maison au bord de l'eau*, 1934. © Perriand-ADAGP 2013.

12: Charlotte Perriand, *Le Corbusier hands with plate*, 1928. Photo: Jeanneret. © ACHP2013.

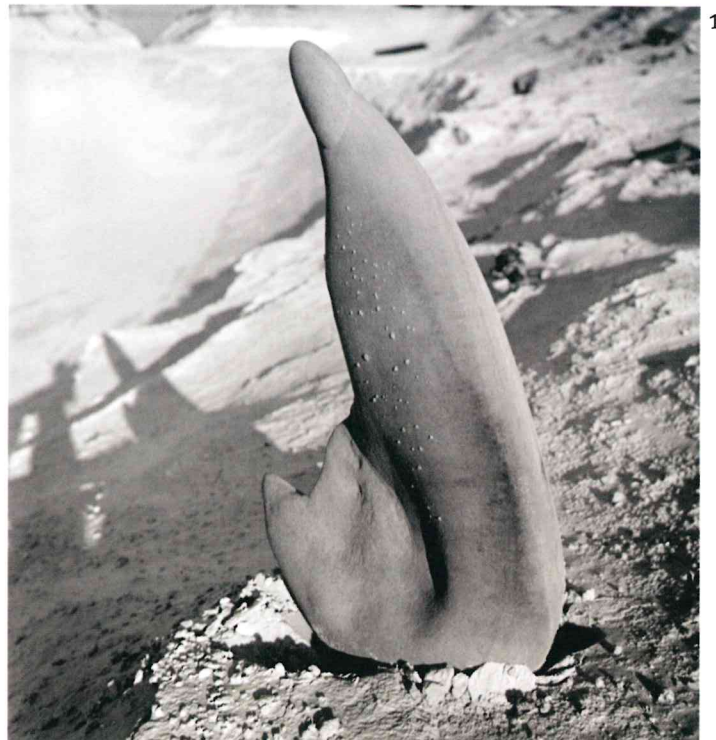
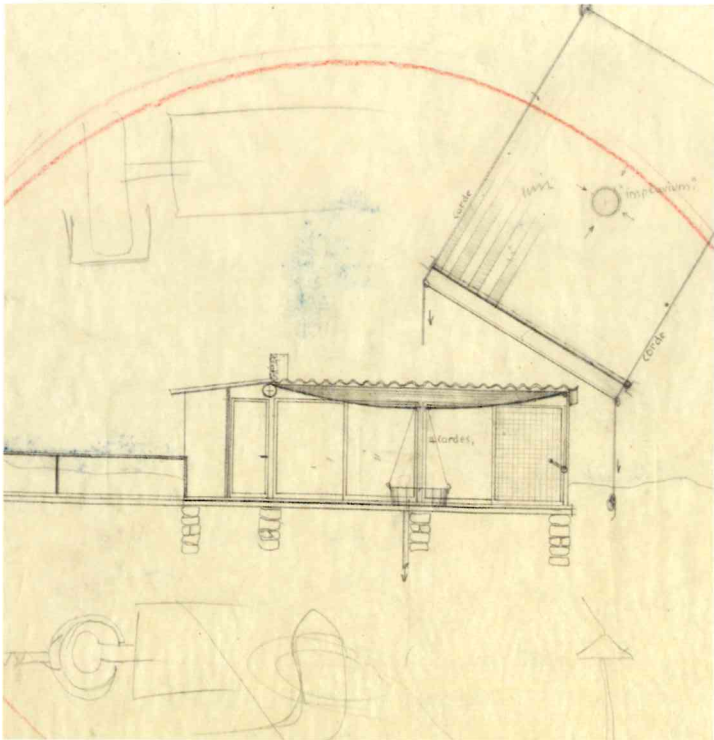


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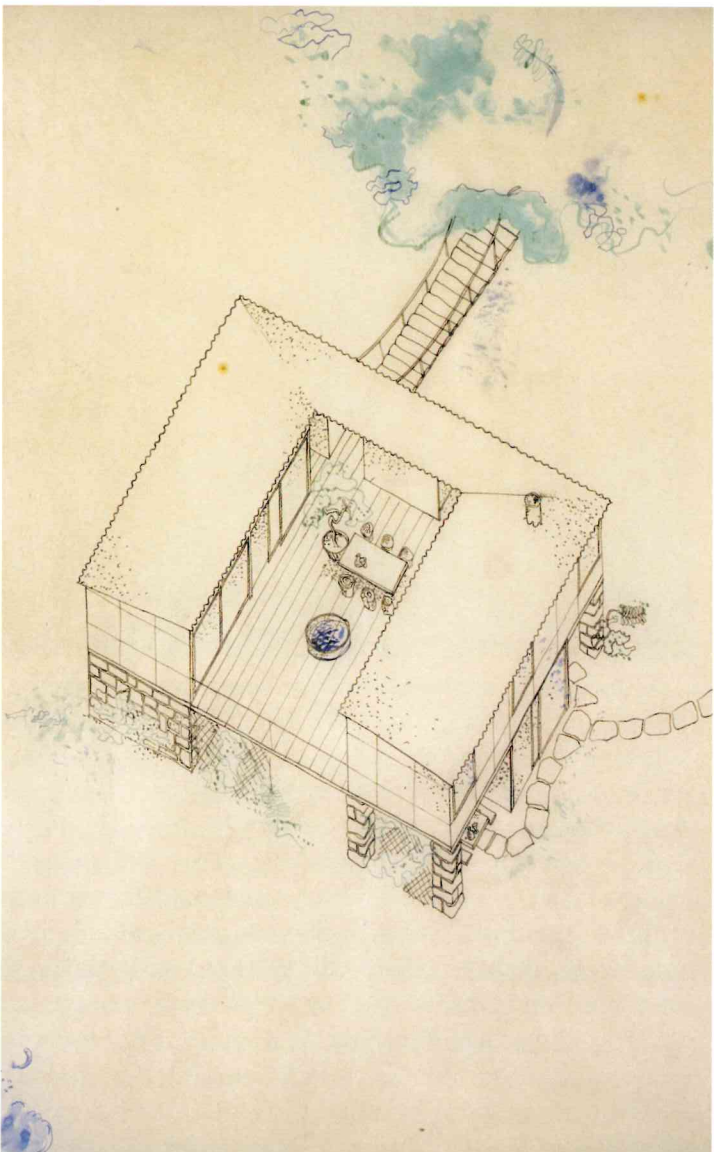


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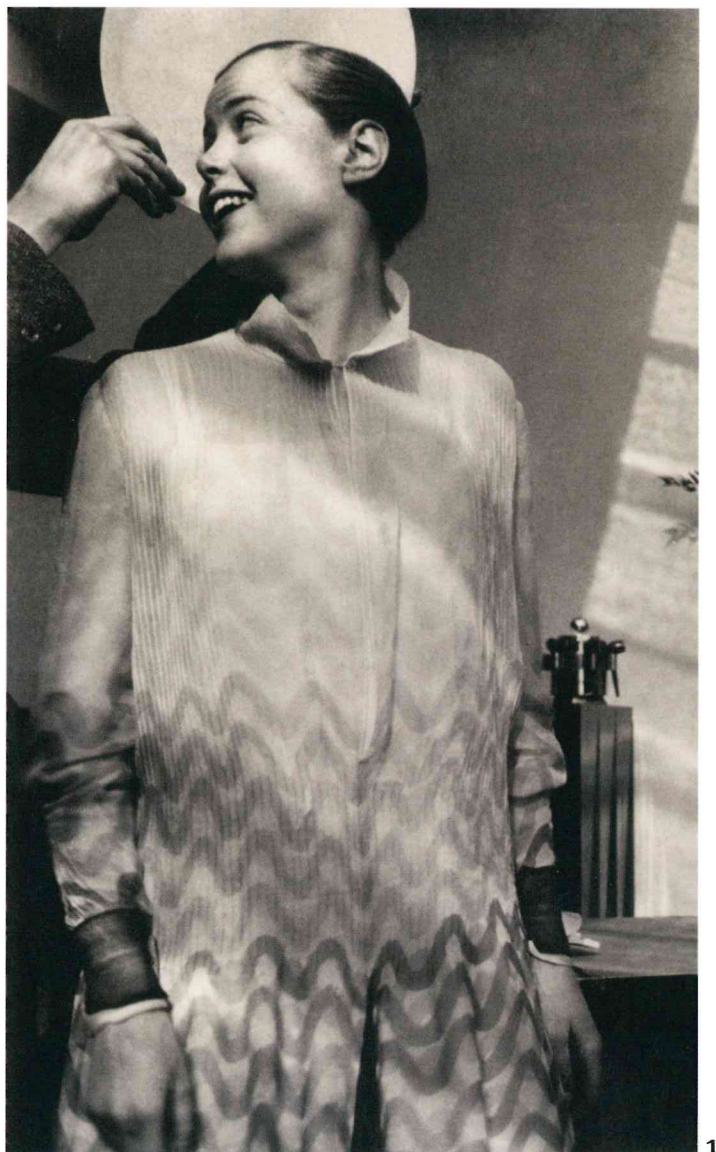
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"TO SEE THIS VACATION HOUSE ON MIAMI BEACH IS FANTASTIC"

INTERVIEW WITH CRAIG ROBINS, CEO AND PRESIDENT OF DACRA

A. D. N. How does it feel to discover a Charlotte Perriand house in Miami?

C. R. Louis Vuitton's Tribute to Charlotte Perriand brings a project to life which dates back to 1934, and was sadly not realized in Perriand's lifetime. She is a tremendously important artist and Vuitton's commitment to increase awareness of her talent will guarantee that appreciation of her entire body of work will expand - a great example

I have always loved her iconic three-legged stool, modeled after the simple device used by shepherds

of the brand's engagement in the cultural discourse. To see the vacation house materialize on Miami Beach is fantastic. Miami's combination of diverse modernist traditions is a wonderful context for the piece.

A. D. N. Does it confirm that Miami is a design capital?

C. R. I think that projects like Louis Vuitton's Tribute to Charlotte Perriand, and the other extraordinary installations, exhibitions and fairs associated with Art Basel Miami Beach and Design Miami/ reflect Miami's increasingly important role in the global design community. As a collector of design (and Miami native) it's exceptionally gratifying to me that our city's unique combination of multi-culturalism, creativity and innovation offers fertile ground for expressions of art and design.



Charlotte Perriand, Borot House, Montmartre, Paris, furniture. Courtesy Marie Clérin - Galerie Downtown François Laffanour, Paris.

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Cover photo: Charlotte Perriand, Maison au bord de l'eau. © Photo: Frank Perrin.

Photos pages 10-11: Frank Perrin.

A. D. N. According to you, which are Charlotte Perriand's iconic works?

C. R. Perriand's work spans a wide range of typologies and materials, since she developed site-specific furniture for private commissions as well as for serial production. I have always loved her iconic three-legged stool, modeled after the simple device used by shepherds. I'm eager to discover the pieces Perriand designed for the private home of the Borot family in Paris presented by Gallery Downtown at Design Miami/. ■

INTERVIEW BY FRANK PERRIN AND PHILIPPE RÉGNIER

"CHARLOTTE PERRIAND, A GENIUS OF LIFESTYLE"

INTERVIEW WITH FRANÇOIS LAFFANOUR, GALLERIST

F. P. Perriand's work ranges from furniture to architecture. Would it be correct to call this a kind of "Gesamtkunstwerk"?

F. L. Rather than "Gesamtkunstwerk" I would call it a genius for living, for interior design and the art of dwelling. She worked on an art of dwelling, an aesthetic of living that is almost a kind of philosophy. The house presented in Miami is an exception because it's the first architectural element that we know of, but her other projects are better described as interior design. The important thing about Charlotte Perriand and her circle is that they were geniuses of lifestyle.

F. P. How would you describe her visual idiom?

F. L. Her idiom begins with comfort, with an extraordinary feeling for the practical. She rounds her corners, not to make them beautiful, but so that they don't get in the way as you pass by. She creates recesses in her tables because they are more practical that way, she will make the foot oval in a certain corner to keep you from bumping your leg against it, always keeping both aesthetics and practicality in mind. When you visit her apartment in the rue Montalembert, in Paris, you find an extremely constrained little universe where she managed to nest stairs, tables, sofas, sideboards... always with that same practical sense, combined with a fantastic refinement. I think that's what really characterizes her work: a practical sense bound up with the highest quality of execution and attention to detail, and with a highly refined aesthetic, which surely comes to her, in large part, from her experience of Japan.

F. P. It is anti-luxury and anti-decoration. Function comes first.

F. L. Function, yes, but with a very strong aesthetic idea - to give beauty through soul. But it's not ordinary, otherwise we would say that of any kind of industrial or everyday furniture that, through its simplicity, without any evident intentionality, was simple and beautiful because it was simply practical. Whereas her objects are full of an extremely powerful soul that she was able to contain through concentration on detail, on form, and subtlety, which means that - however muted it may be - this soul is extremely present.

F. P. How would you describe the modernity of Perriand's work?

F. L. Modernity, in my view, is first of all a matter of history. What makes things modern, first of all, is their being right for the moment when they are created. In this case, Charlotte Perriand was modern when, in



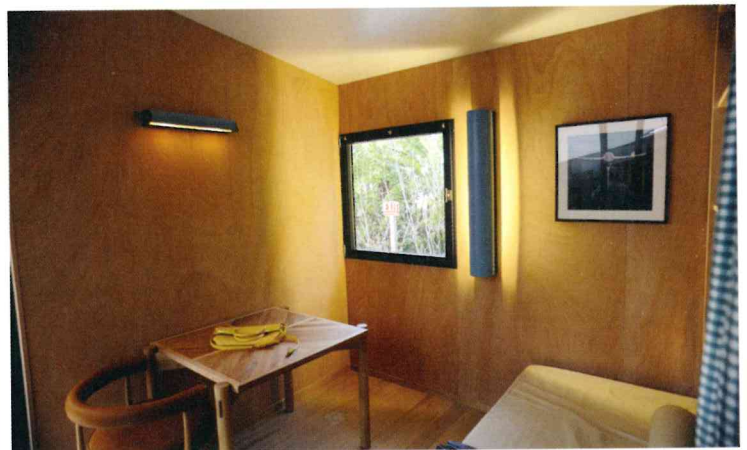
François Laffanour. © All rights reserved.

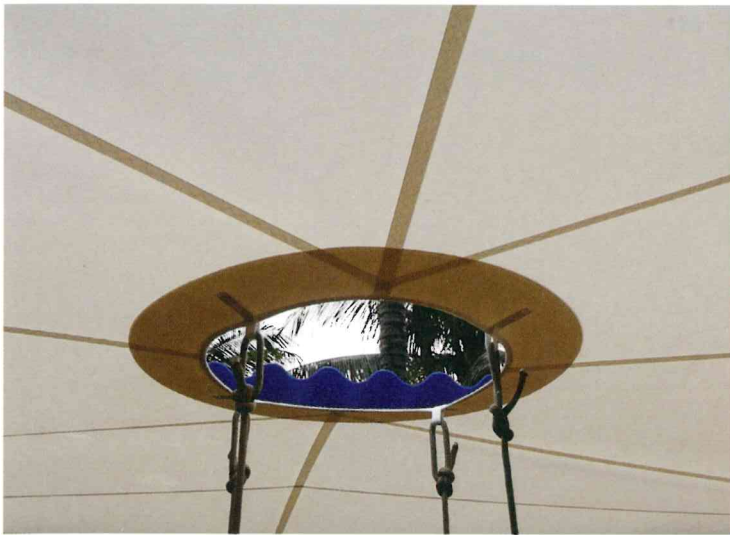
1928, she used chrome tubing to make a chaise longue with forms that are rounded and comfortable - even if, at the same moment, Bauhaus designers were already making chairs with rounded and supple forms. She uses modern materials. At that time, we are told, she liked to go look - not at paintings - but at the cars on the Champs-Élysées. At each moment in human history certain things are bearers of hope and modernity, in this case cars, industry, technology... These things all promised modernity at that time. Modernity is, I think, a matter of the one's historical moment. ■

INTERVIEW: FRANK PERRIN



MAISON AU BORD DE L'EAU IN MIAMI BEACH





“PERRIAND : A COMBINATION OF TECHNIQUE AND SOFTNESS”

INTERVIEW WITH XAVIER VEILHAN, ARTIST

P. R. How do you see Charlotte Perriand and her work ?

X. V. For women of her generation - whether you look at Niki de Saint Phalle, Eileen Gray, or Charlotte Perriand - it was so hard to get professional recognition that they tended to lead the lives of extraordinary people. That had to fight harder than men. I love the radicalism that emerges from this situation. One thing that interests

In design you must for example construct a chair, an object that has always existed, while using materials that are economically viable

me especially in Perriand's case is the combination of technique, modernity, and softness. I love the way she combines them. She is often grouped together with Le Corbusier or Jeanneret. But it would be good to immerse oneself in Perriand's work, which is sometimes slightly overlooked.

P. R. How has Perriand's work nourished your own ?

X. V. I have this door, which she designed and which is installed in my studio! Her work isn't chatty, there is a certain kind of minimalism which certainly comes from Japan and which I like. It wouldn't be true to say that she has been a direct influence on me, but I appreciate builders, engineers, or people who put things together and go straight to the point. She made things of great elegance. That's why her work is still relevant today.

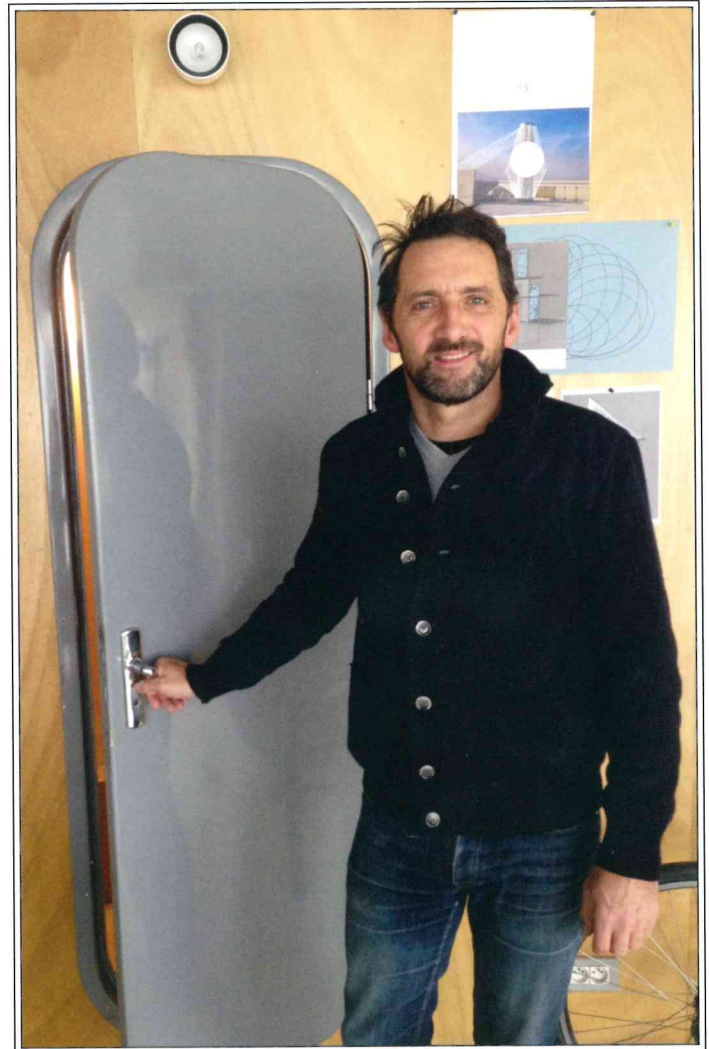
P. R. How are architecture, design, and art related for you ?

X. V. I like for a building to be like a big piece of furniture, placed like Charlotte Perriand's *Maison au bord de l'eau*. These questions are very close to those faced by

I am interested in the fact that the art object shouldn't be "sanctified" but instead should be integrated into public space

artists. We are witnessing an evolution in the work of art, in its size and in the way it embraces space, that reminds us of its situation in the Renaissance. We are at the limit of the object and environment, even when we're not talking about an installation. For example, I think that one reason cars fascinate us is

that they are objects we apprehend both from outside and from within. In the history of technique, there is a link between the evolution of utilitarian objects and that of artworks. I am interested in the fact that the art



Xavier Veilhan in front of a Charlotte Perriand's door in his studio in Paris.
Photo: Philippe Régnier.

object shouldn't be "sanctified" but instead should be integrated into public space. These pieces need to have a conceptual legitimacy and also a material resistance. In design you must for example construct a chair, an object that has always existed, while using materials that are economically viable. I take part in this economy, too: it has to last and must be possible to produce, there are multiple constraints. I really like the way designers like Martin Szekely or Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec reflect on these questions: how to go as quickly as possible from point A to point B in an elegant way? How to preserve some poetry, so that mere practicality doesn't kill the attitudes and feelings that objects can evoke in us? ■

INTERVIEW : PHILIPPE RÉGNIER