



Inside the demountable house designed by Jean Prouvé. Photo: Antoine Lippens

Opening

Care to Sleep Inside a Cabin Designed by Jean Prouvé?

Fondation CAB, just opened in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, lets visitors experience modernist art and architecture—day and night

By Gay Gassmann

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A gallery space inside of Fondation CAB. Photo: Antoine Lippens

Some people buy art and hang it on their living room walls. Then there's [Hubert Bonnet](#)—an über-collector who creates entire foundations with the works he amasses, having established his first, [Fondation CAB](#), in Brussels in 2012. On June 24, he inaugurated another institution by the same name in the charming French village of Saint-Paul-de-Vence, tapping AD100 architect [Charles Zana](#) for the design—with stunning results. Both facilities exhibit minimalist and conceptual art.

Housed in a former gallery, the French iteration of Fondation CAB required a complete renovation of its 1950s modernist structure, with Zana and Bonnet working together closely. AD PRO caught up with Zana in Paris to discuss the project's history, his thoughts on mixing great design and art, and his experience working with a passionate collector.



Exterior of the Fondation CAB, renovated by AD100 designer Charles Zana. Photo: Antoine Lippens



Exterior of the demountable house designed by Jean Prouvé. A koi pond abuts the structure. Photo: Antoine Lippens

“We knew each other for a few years already, linked by our passion for design, but I only really discovered Hubert with this foundation project,” says Zana. “I hadn’t realized the depth and commitment he has for art and design and his profound desire to understand and share. This is really what it’s all about.” Zana’s mission was threefold: to preserve the existing structure, to work closely with Bonnet, and to stay on budget. The entire project took about a year and opened on schedule.

Bonnet’s dream was to fill this new space with previously unseen pieces from his collection. He also hoped to create a restaurant, a book shop, a sculpture garden, and several guest rooms that would incorporate great works by [Jean Prouvé](#), [Charlotte Perriand](#), Alvar Aalto, Pierre Jeanneret, and other historic designers. And for enterprising overnights, a special offering awaits: A house by Jean Prouvé—fully furnished and ready for a sleepover—stands outside in the garden.



A look inside the Prouvé pad. Photo: Antoine Lippens

Bonnet shares that all of this is “unique in the world of museums and foundations.” He explains that a few questions drove his efforts: Namely, how can one work, and live, with design? For his part, Zana hoped the project would be “in Provence without being Provençal.” The results are an expression of a love for craftsmanship, art, and buildings. Bonnet says it is all about “making the ordinary exceptional” and moving “beyond pure presentation.” He explains, “I want people to experience the rigorous creations and see how marvelous they are.”

The yearlong project involved making a few additions, as well as adding and removing windows. “Bonnet is minimalist in his collection but maximalist as a person,” says Zana. “He is expansive and outgoing. In fact, I have come to understand that he looks for the same thing in both his art and design collections. Remove all the unnecessary, simplify, and you are left with the sublime.” Joining a list of greats like the nearby [Fondation Maeght](#), Fondation CAB delivers a fresh point of view for the [southern French art scene](#). Aspiring travelers, take note—this one is a must-see.