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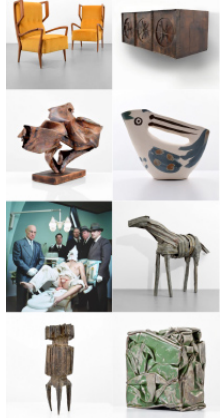


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Martin Szekely, étagère Opus, 2016. Aluminium anodisé, nid d'abeilles d'aluminium. Édition MSZ Fabrication Euro-Shelter Collection particulière © Fabrice

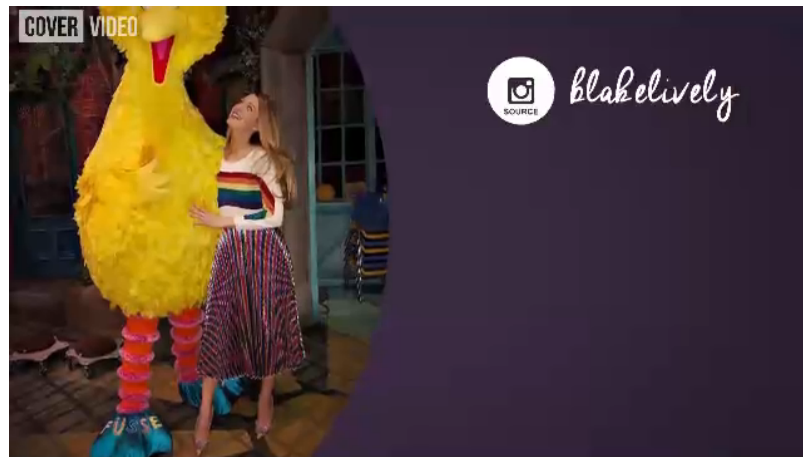
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**BORDEAUX.** - The [Musée des Arts Décoratifs et du Design](#) has invited the designer Martin Szekely to show his work in its new exhibition space former jail located behind the hôtel de Lalande. The event offers the public an opportunity to discover some 40 pieces by the designer, united under the theme of "construction." Created between 1981 and 2018 (the most recent, *The Drawers and I*, can be seen at the museum for the first time), the objects and pieces of furniture seem to reinvent their own composition: all are the result of a structural challenge.

For Martin Szekely, construction is the very essence of the designer's profession:

"I perceive my activity from the point of view of the builder and the use that will be made of what I build, which by definition involves the users, their bodies and their environment. Involving the user necessarily evokes the history of modes of use. And building – which is the role of the designer, opposed to the artist, for whom ideas alone can suffice – evokes the history of structures and their underlying technologies."



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Experimenting with all materials, both new and traditional, Martin Szekely approaches each project as a fresh start, a re-examination. His pieces light on physical principles that question our relation to the material world. Within the space, his furniture and objects reveal their mathematical principles as the result of experiments in balance based on the data of mass, gravity and the interaction of forces, most often imperceptible to the naked eye.

His creative thinking correlates to a quest for simplification in order to approach, with care and caution, the limit state of the materials. In this process of reduction, even of deletion, the designer tends toward a minimal structural configuration. The pieces seem simple and obvious, with a universal dimension. Martin Szekely sees this concept of the minimum, whether visual or structural, as something that can be shared by everyone.

The works on view – all conceived for practical use – adapt perfectly to the jail, not merely occupying the space but making it their own. Simplified to the extreme, they unveil the very quintessence of their form, allowing a hidden dimension to emerge.

The goal of the exhibition is to present, through a historical and thematic effort, the singular path pursued by this major designer.

Born in 1956, Martin Szekely studied at the *École Boulle* and *École Estienne*. He gained attention for his first furniture collection, *Pi*, developed between 1982 and 1985 with the backing of the *VIA* (Valorization of Innovation in Furnishing), which gave him carte blanche for the project. The *Pi* lounge has become one of his emblematic creations. Since then, Szekely has been active in all aspects of design: industrial, urban and environmental, in addition to pure research. Today he is one of the most prominent figures in French design.

After an early period during which he created pieces in a highly expressive "drawn" style, exhibiting them at *Galerie Neotù*, in the 1990s his approach evolved toward a practice emphasizing economy of means. Seeking to dispense with all personal expression, which he considered superfluous, he began to base his process on the culture of the object, its mode of production and its intended use. He began to see his job as the reconciliation and unification of objective elements linked to the function and practical use of the object. Szekely has elaborated this approach from project to project in collections exhibited at *Galerie kreo* from 1999 through 2013 and currently shown at *Blondeau & Cie* in Geneva, the galleries *Salon 94* in New York, *Pierre Marie Giraud* in Brussels, and, in the autumn of 2017, the *Hôtel de Clermont-Tonnerre* in Paris.

In 2011 the *Centre Pompidou* hosted the exhibition *Ne Plus Dessiner* ("No More Drawing"), the first major monograph devoted to Martin Szekely in a French museum, and in a sense an extension of the retrospective of his work seen at *Grand Hornu*, Belgium in 1998.

Today, with the exhibition *Construction*, the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs et du Design* is sharing with the public some 40 pieces by this illustrious designer, more than one quarter of which have never before been seen in a French public institution.

Szekely's pieces are included in the collections of many major national and international museums, including the *Musée National d'Art Moderne/de Création Industrielle*, *Centre Pompidou*, Paris; the *Fonds National d'Art Contemporain*, Paris; the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs*, Paris; *MAC's / Grand Hornu*, Boussu (Belgium); the *Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean*, Luxembourg; the *Museu do Design e da Moda*, Lisbon; the *Museum of Modern Art*, New York; the *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*, San Francisco; the *Winterthur Museum*, Winterthur (Delaware, USA); the *Isra Museum*, Jerusalem; the *Victoria & Albert Museum*, London; and the *Musée des Beaux-Arts*, Montréal.

In 2010, *JRP|Ringier* (Zurich) published *Martin Szekely*, a book retracing his production from 1998 to 2010, with an essay by *Elisabeth Lebovici*.

In 2017, *Éditions B42* (Paris) published the first three books of a collection dedicated to Szekely's work: *Ne Plus Dessiner*, *Artefact - MAP - Mani Noire - Far* and *Construction*.

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