

CONSTRUCTION

MARTIN
SZEKELY

EXTENDED UNTIL
OCTOBER 7, 2018
2018

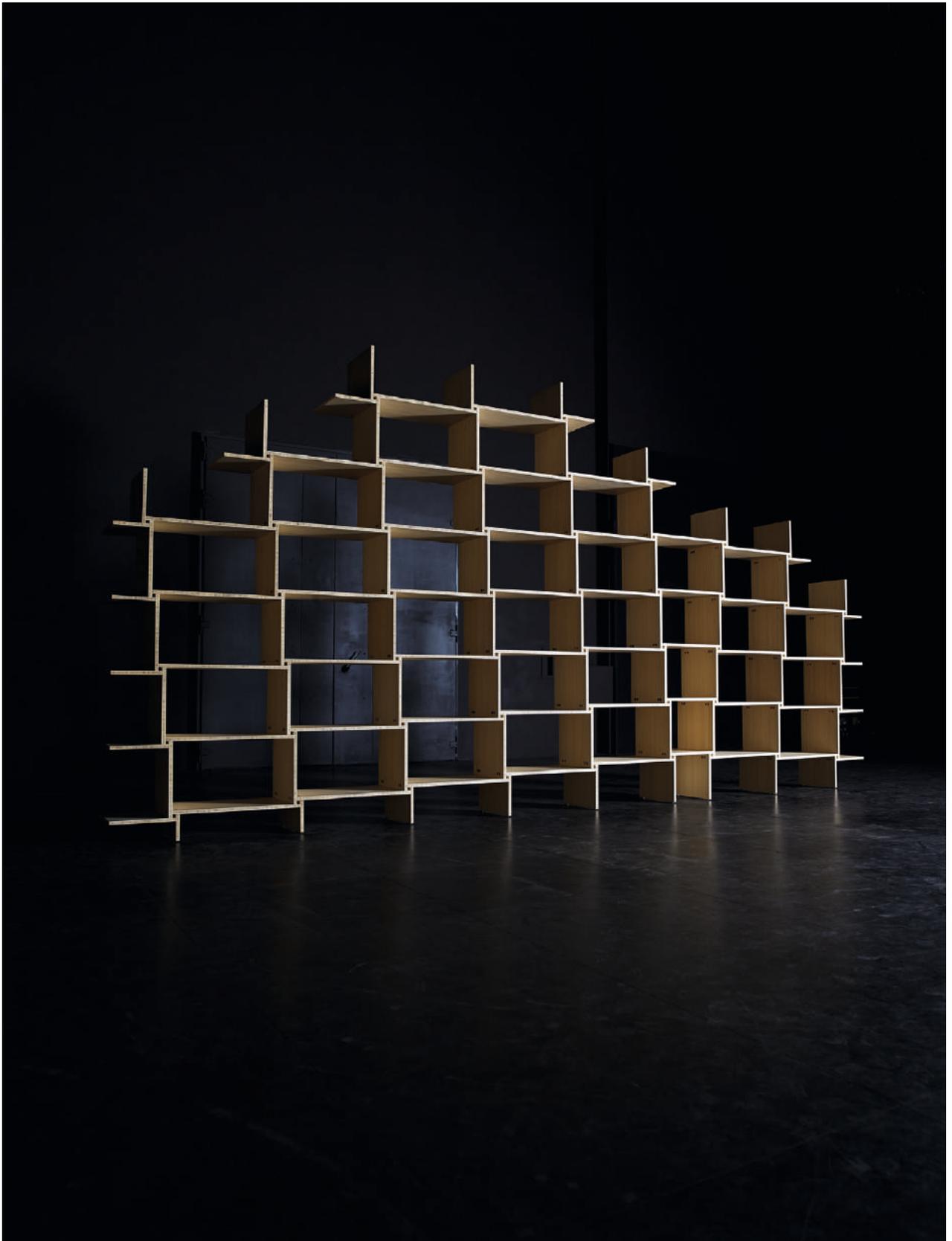
*musée du design
bordeaux* *musée des
arts décoratifs*
madd-bordeaux.fr

BORDEAUX
culture

press kit

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Martin Szekely, *Construction*, 2015
Bamboo plywood, brass
© Fabrice Gousset

Construction - Martin Szekely Extended until October 7, 2018

"Let us call beauty, in the strictest sense, the adjustment of all parts proportionately so that nothing can be added, removed or changed without impairing the harmony of the whole. Such is great beauty, worthy of the gods..." Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria*, 1452

The Musée des Arts Décoratifs et du Design (madd-bordeaux) has invited the designer Martin Szekely to show his work in its new exhibition space, a former jail located behind the *hôtel de Lalande*.

The event will offer 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*, is still in the production process as of this writing and will be seen at the museum for the first time), these 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, as opposed to the artist, for whom ideas alone can suffice – evokes the history of structures and their underlying technologies."

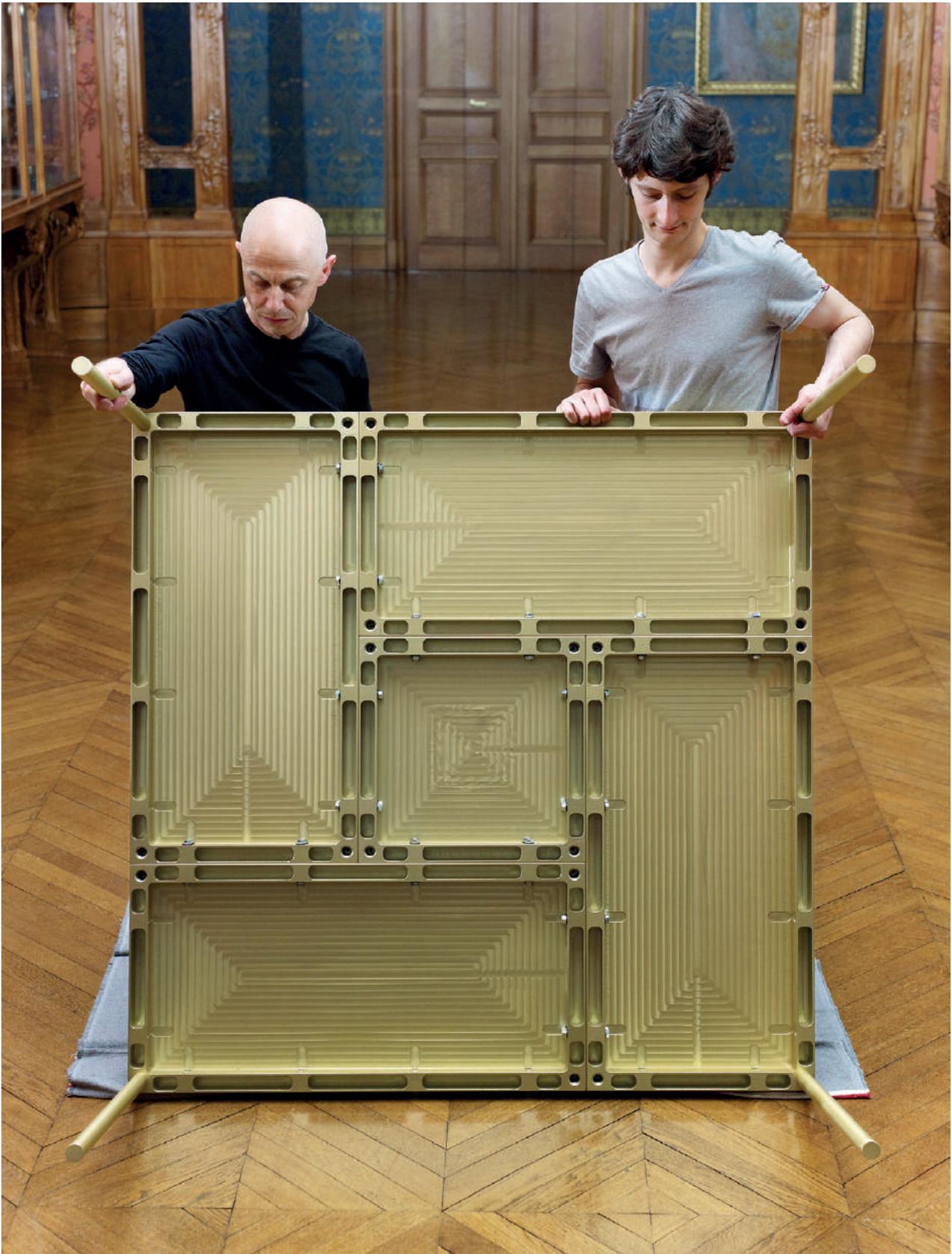
Experimenting with all materials, both new and traditional, Martin Szekely approaches each project as a fresh start, a re-examination. His pieces shed light on physical principles that question our relation to the material world. Within the space, his furniture and objects reveal their mathematical precision, 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 in 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.

Opening: Thursday April 26, 2018, 7:00 pm



Martin Szekely, *MAP-TBL*, 2013
Anodized aluminium
© Fabrice Gousset

Martin Szekely

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 chair 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 and 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 by 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/Centre de Création Industrielle, Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Fonds National d’Art Contemporain, Paris; the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; MAC’s / Site du 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 Israel 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 - Manière Noire - Far* and *Construction*.



Martin Szekely, *Opus*, 2015
Anodised aluminium, aluminium honeycomb
© Fabrice Gousset

The Musée des Arts Décoratifs et du Design has invited Martin Szekely to show, in its new exhibition space, a former jail, some 40 pieces united under the theme of “Construction.”

“Construction is a specialist’s language, even though we have all had the experience of building at some time in our lives. For example, building sand castles involves a multitude of questions and problems that are hardly touched on by the specialists. My own approach in this area is based more on intuition than knowledge. When a new question is raised, my response is informed by a multitude of past experiences. I don’t have the ability to calculate a structure in the project stage, but I can sense how it will work from both a physical and cerebral point of view. I have often found myself in disagreement with engineers who were predicting utter failure, but ultimately our respective approaches complement each other to reach the desired result. Intuition and science make good bedfellows.

At the origin of any construction is the material, which itself is made up of complex interacting forces that are often invisible to the naked eye. Engineers try to translate a structure into a mathematical model, but experimenting with the material is the only way to encompass all of the elements involved. My job is to figure out what will happen to my *a minima* structural system in a dynamic situation or bearing a load.

The material is one important element among others. A material, by its nature, dictates the way it must be envisioned and manipulated, depending on its history, its connotations and its physical makeup. A material is a kind of organism ruled by its intrinsic qualities. In the past, objects were usually made from either a single material (earth, leather, wood, stone...) or from juxtapositions or assemblies of materials. In more recent years there has been a revolution with the advent of glue, which has made it possible to develop ‘composite materials’ (resin and carbon fiber, aluminum honeycomb and sheets, high-density plaster, bamboo blockboard...). A composite material is more solid and resistant than any of its components alone. Their cohesion produces an unprecedented material with new qualities. This opens the perspective of infinite possibilities for each case. As a result, we can envision the material according to the object to be created, instead of adapting the object to the existing material, thus radically changing the approach to the project.

As for building ‘at the limit,’ from my point of view that means working right at the leading edge of technical development. The limit changes with the arrival of new inventions and experiments. This can be seen in the evolution of my approach to the theme of the shelf in light of all the experiments conducted around the world. As you will understand, it’s a matter of keeping abreast of, and examining closely, the inventions and modifications that emerge. It is in fact a specialization, linked to the reality, the materiality, of the tangible world. But rather than a specialization in the sense of a quantity of knowledge in a circumscribed field, I think it’s more of a focus in a limitless field.”

Martin Szekely

Excerpt from a conversation in correspondence between Martin Szekely and Constance Rubini (October 2017 – January 2018), to be published as part of the exhibition catalogue.

Constance Rubini had the idea to accompany the presentation of Szekely’s works with music, allowing visitors to create correlations between visual, sound and tactile elements of the exhibition. She and Martin Szekely chose to use the music of American composer Morton Feldman (1926-1987).

For the designer, “Music, like light, is a kind of fluid that seeps into all of the openings in the available space, reaching the inner depths of our auditory system. As one moves away from the source, the effect becomes more and more diffuse. Depending on its proximity or remoteness, it can become physically unbearable – one must be at the right distance to experience it comfortably. Because it is above all a physical experience, music can turn into an instrument of torture. It’s a question of quantity, quality and

intensity – it can lead to disorientation, deafness and madness.

Listening to the music of Morton Feldman is a different experience: it is, no more and no less, to breathe or move within the space, a vitalizing act that requires no prior reflection. It illustrates nothing and leads nowhere. A sonic background analogous to the landscape that surrounds us. Music that is not intrusive, that allows the listener to come and go, a presence that fills the void and makes us aware of the distance that separates us from the things of the world. Significantly, this music is born of no dogma or school of thought, and it made Feldman an isolated exception. An isolation that encompasses the universal. What I set forth here remains to be proven by playing this music for people from far and wide, but I have confidence.”

Works on display



Cornette chair, around 1978
Steel, unwoven nylon cover
Prototype by Siègeair, restored with a
polyurethane and polyester fabric cover by
Domeau & Pérès
Marion Meekel collection



Reine de Saba necklace, 1996
Silver
Hermès
Cnap, Centre national des arts plastiques,
inv. FNAC 99635
© Frédéric Dumas



L'Armoire, 1997
Alucobond®
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Atelier Satragno
Cnap, Centre national des arts plastiques,
inv. FNAC 99166
© Camille Vivier



L'Armoire (before folding), 1997
Alucobond®
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Atelier Satragno
Cnap, Centre national des arts plastiques,
inv. FNAC 99167
© Camille Vivier



Des plats, 1999 - 2000
Two pieces from "des plats" collection
Glass
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by CIRVA, Centre International de
Recherche sur le Verre et les Arts plastiques
CIRVA, inv. SZEK2006-2 (15 et 17)
© Mauro Davoli



Cork chair, 2000
Cork and birch plywood
Edited by Galerie kreio / unlimited series
Made by Atelier Hubert Weinzierl
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



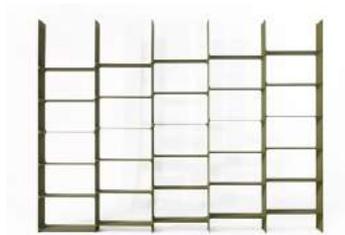
Table 00, 2000
 White birch plywood
 Edited by Galerie kreio
 Made by Atelier Hubert Weinzierl
 Cnap, Centre national des arts plastiques,
 inv. FNAC 01-257
 © Mauro Davoli



Parpaing seats, 2002
 Twelve pieces
 "Six constructions" collection
 Cork and birch plywood
 Edited by Galerie kreio / unlimited series
 Made by Atelier Hubert Weinzierl
 © Fabrice Gousset



Domo low chair and footstool, 2004
 Wood, leather and foam
 Edited by Domeau & Pérès
 Domeau & Pérès collection
 © Patrick Gries



T5 shelves, 2005
 "Des étagères" collection
 Aluminium, Nextel®
 Edited by Galerie kreio
 Made by TPU
 Private collection
 © Fabrice Gousset



Bing One side table, 2005
 Crystal
 Edited by Contrats Gallery / Galerie kreio
 Private collection
 © Marc Damage



Bing Square side table, 2007
 Crystal
 Edited by Contrats Gallery / Galerie kreio
 Private collection
 © Fabrice Gousset

Works on display



Heroic Shelves 365, 2009
Anodized and honeycomb aluminium
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Euro-Shelter
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



GlassGlass table, 2009
Glass, stainless steel
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Hi-Tec-Glas/Transparent techniques
Donated by the designer and Galerie kreio 2010-2011
Centre Pompidou, Paris
Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle, inv. AM 2010-1-159 and AM 2010-1-159 (2)
© DEIS



Cork 3 storage unit, 2009
"Simple boxes" collection
Cork, Corian® and nylon
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Tino shelves, 2009
Aluminium, steel and Nextel®
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by TPU
Private collection
© Mauro Davoli



Unit Shelf storage unit, 2011
"Units" collection
Technical plaster, glass
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Unit tower storage unit, 2011
"Units" collection
Technical plaster
Edited by Galerie kreio
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Manière Noire Tower 3 storage unit, 2013
"Manière Noire" collection
Carbon fiber, resin
Edited by MSZ
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Manière Noire Tower 1 storage unit, 2013
"Manière Noire" collection
Carbon fiber, resin
Edited by MSZ
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Manière Noire Shelf 1 wall shelf, 2013
"Manière Noire" collection
Carbon fiber, resin
Edited by MSZ
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Artefact low table, 2013
Quarzite, gold-plated stainless steel
Edited by MSZ
Made by Marbrerie Rétégui
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Artefact side tables, 2013
Quarzite, gold-plated stainless steel
Edited by MSZ
Made by Marbrerie Rétégui
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



MAP-TEX #3 table, 2013
"MAP" collection
Anodized aluminium
Edited by MSZ
Made by Marzorati Ronchetti / Chastagner
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



MAP-TBL #2 table top, 2013
"MAP" collection
Anodized aluminium
Edited by MSZ
Made by Marzorati Ronchetti / Chastagner
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset

Works on display



FAR mirror, 2014
Silicon carbide
Edited by MSZ
Made by Mersen
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



Construction shelves, 2015
Multi-ply Bamboo and brass
Edited by MSZ
Made by Atelier Hubert Weinzierl
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



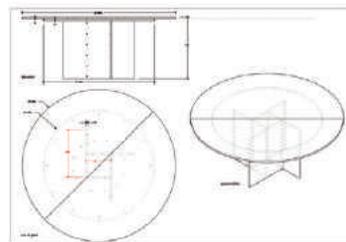
MoonWood containers, 2016
Nine pieces of "Moon Wood" collection
Carbon fiber, black resin
Edited by MSZ
Made by Cogitech
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



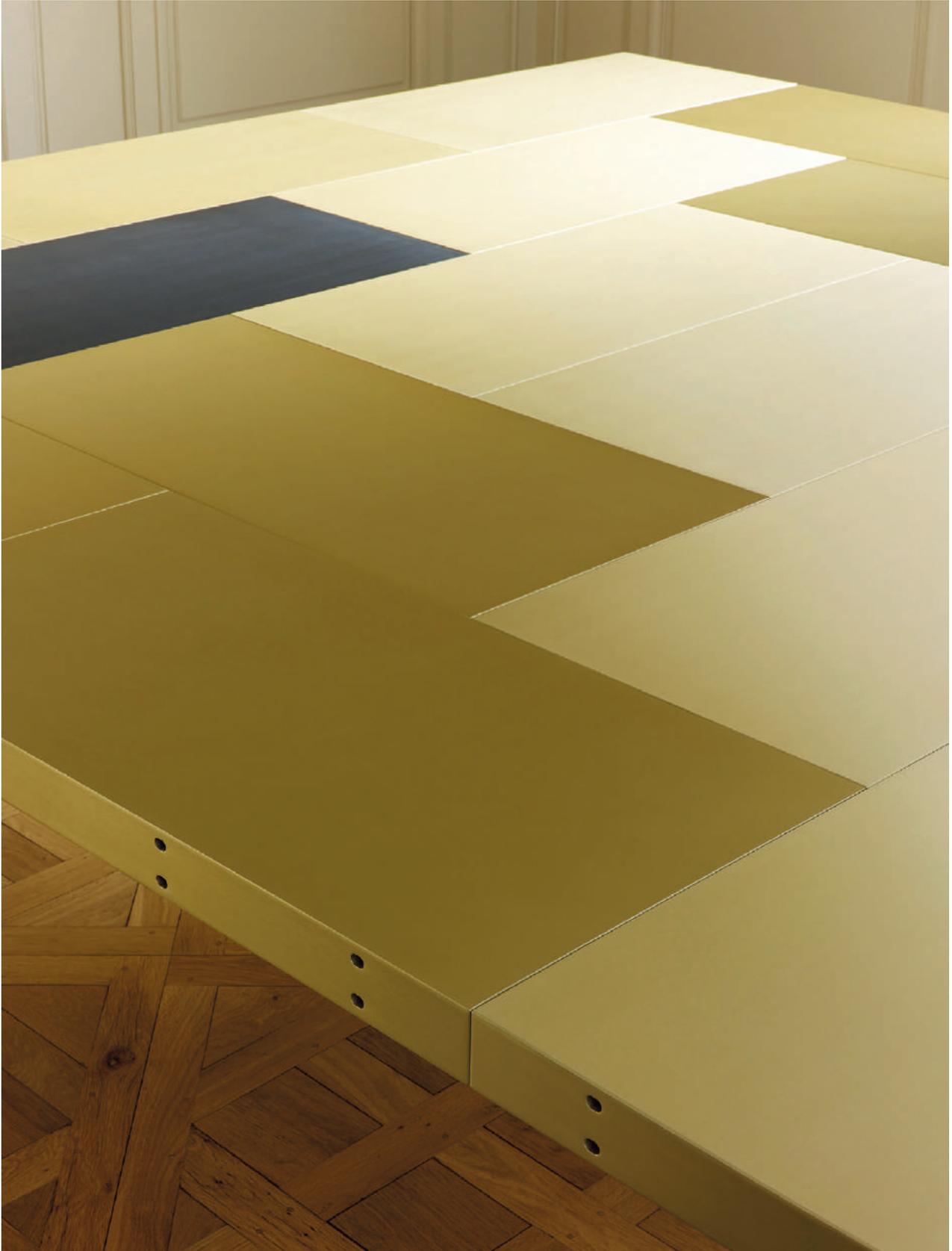
Opus shelves, 2016
Anodized and honeycomb aluminium
Edited by MSZ
Made by Euro-Shelter
Private collection
© Fabrice Gousset



The Drawers and I storage element, 2017
Solid oak multi-ply, metal
Edited by MSZ
Made by Atelier Hubert Weinzierl
Private collection



Kids table, 2018
Birch multi-ply
Edited by MSZ
Made by the technical department of Bordeaux Métropole
Donated by the designer to madd-bordeaux, 2018



Martin Szekely, *MAP-TEX #3*, 2013
Anodized aluminium
© Fabrice Gousset

Young visitors / school groups / students

Team junior du madd, the club of the young friends of the museum (6-11 years old)

- **Junior opening, meeting with the designer Martin Szekely – Wednesday April 25, 2 pm**

Preview tour of the exhibition with Martin Szekely, followed by the workshop *Construction*.

Free admission for the members of the *Team junior du madd*. By registration.

- **Scheduled workshops in July and August related to the exhibition.** Program in progress.

Workshops and activities

- **The workshop *Construction* for kids as part of the exhibition, free access, no reservation needed**

A workshop, conceived by designer Martin Szekely himself, will offer young visitors surprising and fun ways to experiment with the properties of the materials in the world around us. You don't need to be an athlete to break a single piece of dry spaghetti, but when they are configured in a precise construction, those strands can support loads much heavier than themselves!

- **Booklet for kids**

- **Special workshops for children's outdoor, leisure and activity centers.** By registration.

- **Custom tours and activities** for school and student groups throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Informations and registration at +33 (0)5 56 10 14 05 / artdeco.publics@mairie-bordeaux.fr

City tours

In parallel of his experimental projects, Martin Szekely collaborates with prestigious French companies : Alaïa, Parrot, Weston, MK2, Heineken, Christofle, Dom Pérignon, Hermès, Bernardaud, Perrier, JCDecaux, Swarovski...

Between May and July, discover a selection of his works at different places in the city : Jardin Public (from June 19th to July 15th), at the Grand Hôtel (June-July), place Pey-Berland (May), at the Halles de Bacalan (May) and at the Cafemadd.

Rendez-vous with

Special moments, these meetings are a unique opportunity to talk with the designer and better understand the singularity of his work.

Thursday May, 5, 2018, at 4 pm - Friday June, 15, 2018, at 3 pm - Friday June, 29, 2018, at 3 pm

Guided tours

Individuals

- During school terms

Saturdays and Sundays at 3 pm

Price: museum ticket + 3€ - No reservation needed

- During school holidays

Everyday at 3 pm, except on Tuesday

Price: museum ticket + 3€ - No reservation needed

Groups

- All year round: On demand > 10 people

Prices: 50€ + 3€ per person during the week / 65€ + 3€ per person during the week-end

Registration: +33 (0)5 56 10 14 05 / artdeco.publics@mairie-bordeaux.fr

Guided tours (groups or individuals) in English on demand.

Guide booklet for adults (french and english) and game booklet for kids.



Martin Szekely, *Manière Noire Tower 1*, 2013
Carbone fiber
© Fabrice Gousset

Martin Szekely **Construction**

Publication supervisor

Constance Rubini
Director of the Musée des Arts décoratifs
et du Design, Bordeaux

Graphic design

SpMillot, Paris

Exhibition views and images

Fabrice Gousset

Edition

madd-bordeaux and Norma Editions

272 pages

29€

Summary

The eloquence of silence

Introduction by Constance Rubini, director of
the Musée des Arts décoratifs et du Design, Bordeaux

A conversation in correspondence

Between Martin Szekely and Constance Rubini
October 2017 – January 2018

Exhibition

Traveling margin by Cecil Balmond

Works on display

Facts



Martin Szekely, *Opus*, 2015
Anodized aluminium, aluminium honeycomb
© Fabrice Gousset

Construction

*An exhibition devoted to the designer
Martin Szekely*

Curator of the exhibition

Constance Rubini,
director of the museum
assisted by
Camille Perrot
Conservation assistant,
contemporary collections

Spatial installation

Martin Szekely

Graphic conception

Signage and catalogue

SpMillot, Paris

Graphic communication

Studio deValence

Lighting

Géraud Périole

Thank you

**Château Haut-Bailly,
mécène d'honneur**

This exhibition is sponsored by

Atelier Hubert Weinzierl
Bordeaux Métropole
COGITECH
Domeau & Pérès - Éditeur et fabricant
InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hôtel
JCDecaux
Perrier

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Mr and Mrs Léopold Meyer

Media partners

Le Monde
Junkpage
Station Ausone

For their fidelity, the museum would like to thank

Les Amis du musée des Arts décoratifs et du Design
Le Chapon Fin
Château Nairac
Les Crus Bourgeois du Médoc
Les Galeries Lafayette
La société de négoce DIVA
Texaa®



Outdoor furniture designed by Muller Van Severen
© madd-bordeaux - F. Griffon

The Musée des Arts décoratifs et du Design

The Museum is installed in a former private residence, the hôtel de Lalande, built in Bordeaux between 1775 and 1779 for the parliamentary councillor Pierre de Raymond de Lalande. The status of the house would change over the years. In 1880, it was purchased by the City, which first of all installed its police department in it, and built a prison behind it, where the garden used to be. Then the City established in it a Musée d'Art ancien (Museum of Ancient Art) in 1924, which became a Musée des Arts décoratifs (Museum of Decorative Arts) in 1955. In 1984, the museum was converted to evoke a wealthy aristocratic residence, typical of the Enlightenment in Bordeaux.

Recently, in 2013, the institution was renamed Musée des Arts décoratifs et du Design on Constance Rubini's initiative, thus indicating the wish to turn it into a major place for disseminating the culture of design.

www.madd-bordeaux.fr

The former prison: a new exhibition space for the museum since 2017

Like many of these handsome private mansions, the hôtel de Lalande was in fact built between courtyard and garden. The City of Bordeaux purchased this private residence in 1880 and the building was used to house the city police department. The garden was levelled in order to build a prison. Women, men, children, sailors and prostitutes were all imprisoned there, pending a verdict by the local public prosecutor, then installed in the mansion's former reception rooms, alongside the Police and Vice Squad department. Despite the opening of the first museum in 1924, the prison remained in operation until the 1960s. Reorganized to house the storage in 1983, this building is a fine example of functional architecture. Surrounded by the prisoners' cells, the two symmetrical walled courtyards have been roofed. Numerous graffiti on the walls still conjure up that past history.

In 2016, the former prison was entirely cleared out to extend the exhibition space.

The exhibition *Oh couleurs! Design through the lens of colour* was the first show to be held in this new venue. It was the most visited exhibition in the museum history and also the most visited in Bordeaux in 2017 (43 239 visitors). This new venue, which double the available exhibition space, provides a new dynamic and a greater visibility for the madd-bordeaux.

Construction is the second exhibition presented in this exhibition space.

café*madd*, the museum's restaurant

*café*madd** serves healthy, delicious, seasonal dishes, home-cooking style, in an inviting and original setting. Its terrace in the main courtyard of the hôtel de Lalande is a unique haven in the heart of the city. The restaurant's outdoor furniture was designed by Fien Muller and Hannes Van Severen, who created the color harmony especially for the place.

Open Tuesday through Saturday (reservations recommended) and evenings for groups by reservation only.

Tea salon open 3:00 to 6:00 pm.

Informations and registrations: +33 (0)5 57 34 28 46

Facebook page [café*madd* Bordeaux](https://www.facebook.com/café.madd.Bordeaux)



Musée des Arts décoratifs et du Design, Bordeaux, 2016
© Patrick Faigenbaum

Iconography / practical informations / press contacts

Iconography

All the images and credits are available on DropBox following this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/evlts5kk4xrnms4/AAAXAihJEIGc5XLsp6T5DNUea?dl=0>

or on demand on WeTransfer.

The museum

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39 rue Bouffard
33 000 Bordeaux
+33 (0)5 56 10 14 00
madd@mairie-bordeaux.fr
www.madd-bordeaux.fr

Openings hours

11 am - 6 pm. Closed on Tuesdays and on holidays (open on July 14 and August 15)

Admission fees

Full rate 5€ / reduced 3€*

Musées Bordeaux pass: Single 25€ / Double 37.50€

** for jobseekers, students (other than those in the sectors mentioned below), holders of the Large Family Card, annual subscribers to the Cité du Vin, in the event of partial closure of the establishment, and groups of more than 10 people*

Access for person with reduced mobility in the former prison and only on the 1st floor of the hôtel de Lalande.

Free admission: on the first Sunday of the month (except in July and August), for the Friends of the Musée des Arts décoratifs et du Design, for those under 18, for holders of the Carte Jeune (under 16) and the person accompanying them, for handicapped persons and the person accompanying them, for those receiving minimal allowances (RSA, ASS, ATS, ASPA and ATA), for journalists, for holders of the Musées Bordeaux Pass, a Pass Pro issued by the City of Bordeaux, or of a Bordeaux Métropole City Pass, for employees of the City of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Métropole, for art students at universities and public art schools: architecture, art history, archaeology, visual arts, graphic arts, design and industrial creation, crafts, photography, fashion and fashion design, patrimony and landscape, holders of the Grand Donateur card, and holders of the ICOM card or Icomos, and Opération Sentinelle.

All the latest news about the madd can be followed on:

[Facebook](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Instagram](#)

@madd_bordeaux #madd_bordeaux

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CHATEAU HAUT-BAILLY
MÉCÈNE D'HONNEUR

