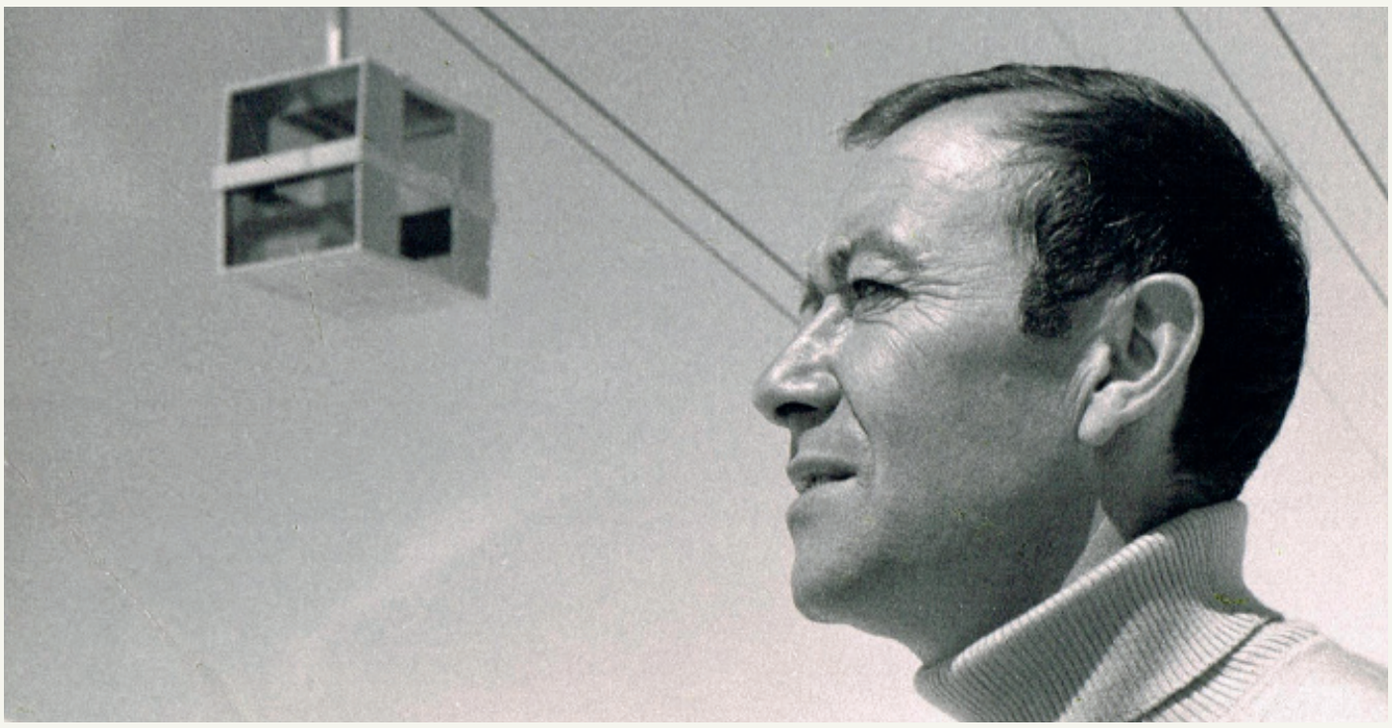
la platine
cité du design saint-étienne

PRESS RELEASE
Saint-Étienne, 20 october 2026

pierre guariche, un éclaireur de la modernité

A major retrospective to mark the designer's centenary

4.12.26 – 2.5.27



Portrait of Pierre Guariche in La Plagne © Jean Biaugeaud

To mark the centenary of Pierre Guariche's birth (1926–1995), the Cité du design is dedicating a major exhibition to one of the leading figures of post-war French design. Entitled Pierre Guariche, a Pioneer of Modernity, this landmark retrospective in Saint-Étienne is jointly presented by the Cité du design, French companies Cinna and Sammode, and the Société des Éditions Pierre Guariche. Staged in a region with which Pierre Guariche had deep ties, notably through his work at Firminy-Vert, building on Le Corbusier's legacy, the exhibition aims to restore his work to its rightful place in the history of design and interior architecture. Although his name remains relatively little known to the wider public, his work accompanied the profound transformations of French society during the post-war boom, from reconstruction to the emergence of new ways of domestic living.

Curator: Lionel Blaisse
Exhibition design: Marie Christine Dorner

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shaping everyday life

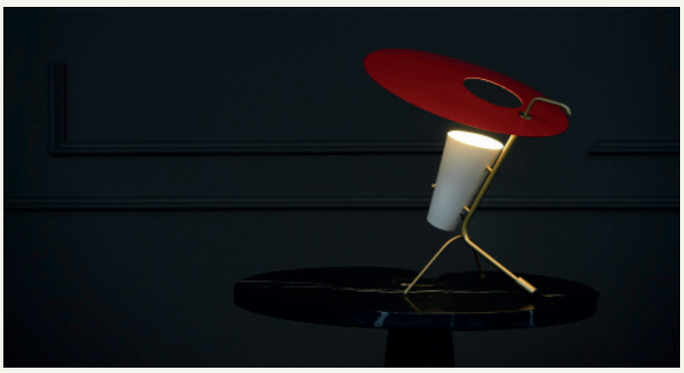
Furniture, lighting, interior architecture and innovation: the exhibition reveals the diversity of a body of work that profoundly transformed everyday living during France's post-war boom.

A designer at the crossroads of furniture, lighting and space

Curated by Lionel Blaisse, a specialist in the history of design and architecture, the exhibition draws on his extensive knowledge of Pierre Guariche's work. Together with Delphine Jacob and Aurélien Jeauneau, he co-authored the definitive reference book on the designer.

The exhibition brings together 30 original pieces of furniture and 15 period lighting designs, alongside 47 reissued pieces of furniture and 27 reissued lighting designs, as well as a selection of photographs, catalogues, plans, drawings and films. Bringing historic designs into dialogue with contemporary reissues, the exhibition highlights the remarkable coherence of a body of work developed over more than three decades.

Through an accessible, thematic approach, visitors can discover how Pierre Guariche developed a holistic vision of objects, spaces, lighting and the ways in which they are used. From iconic designs to lesser-known projects, the exhibition reveals an approach in which furniture, interior architecture and technical innovation all contribute to a unified vision of everyday life.



G24 table lamp, Pierre Guariche reissue, Sammode © Sammode



Mezzanine living room and study in the house and studio, Rue Dombasle, Paris, 1973-74 © Jean-Pierre Leloir



Vallée Blanche chaise longue, Galerie M.A.I. sideboard and *G21* floor lamp, Pierre Guariche, reissued by Cinna and Sammode © Cinna

Reissues: a story that continues

The exhibition places particular emphasis on reissues, seen not simply as reproductions, but as a way of keeping design heritage alive and passing it on to future generations. This approach is led by two major names in French design publishing: Cinna for furniture and Sammode for lighting.

For several years, both companies have been reissuing some of Pierre Guariche's most iconic designs, remaining faithful to the designer's original vision and intent while adapting them to contemporary uses, standards and technologies. This work enables designs created more than sixty years ago to continue to find their place in today's interiors.

Through these reissues, the exhibition shows how Pierre Guariche's work continues to transcend generations, evolving alongside industrial and technological developments. Educational displays, testimonials and comparisons between original and contemporary versions shed light on the challenges involved in this process and reveal how the designer's legacy continues to live on today.

inside pierre guariche's creative approach

Conceived as an immersive journey, the exhibition invites visitors to discover the research, methods and convictions that shaped the work of a major figure in French design.



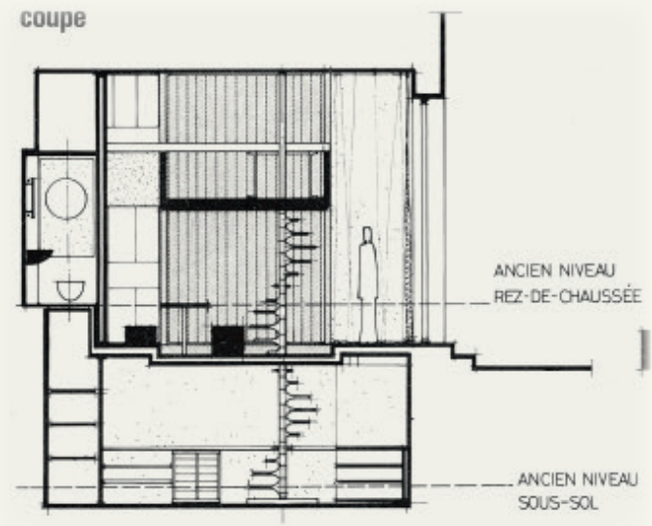
Pierre Guariche in his studio, Rue Dombasle, Paris, 1974 © Archives Pierre Guariche

An exhibition design inspired by the designer's thinking

Conceived by Marie Christine Dorner, in collaboration with Lionel Blaisse and Jean-Marc Villiers, President of the Société des Éditions Pierre Guariche, the exhibition design guides visitors through a progressive exploration of Pierre Guariche's world. From the outset, a portrait of the designer is displayed alongside an original piece and a contemporary reissue, introducing one of the exhibition's central themes: the ability of a design to stand the test of time. Visitors are then invited to explore the extensive archives brought together for the exhibition, including drawings, sketches, plans, photographs, catalogues, advertisements and working documents. Together, these materials reveal Guariche in his many roles as a designer, teacher, entrepreneur and theorist, while highlighting his constant attention to use, production methods and the wider dissemination of design.



House in Trouville, 1972 © Archives Pierre Guariche



Plan and section of the house in Trouville, 1972 © Archives Pierre Guariche

designing for use, shaping spaces

The first section is devoted to contemporary reissues. Five podiums recreate different living spaces, including a dining room, living room, study and reading area. These settings illustrate how Pierre Guariche conceived complete environments in which furniture, lighting and spatial organisation were guided by the same approach to use. A number of pieces are also presented individually, highlighting their formal qualities, the precision of their construction and the refinement of their execution.

At the heart of the exhibition, a large viewing and consultation area offers visitors an opportunity to pause and delve deeper into Guariche's work. Seated on furniture produced by Cinna and surrounded by floor lamps reissued by Sammode, visitors can explore audiovisual content devoted to Pierre Guariche and to those who have contributed to the rediscovery of his work.

The exhibition continues with an extensive section devoted to interior architecture, perhaps the lesser-known aspect of his career. Through numerous original pieces and landmark projects in Firminy, Bandol and La Plagne, it reveals how Guariche considered interior layouts, furniture, lighting and circulation as interconnected elements. Photographs, plans, catalogues and period documents place these projects in context and highlight their influence on the transformation of living environments during France's post-war boom.



Living room of Pierre Guariche's apartment, Place Adolphe-Chérioux, 1967 © Archives Pierre Guariche



Tonneau chair, version with wooden base • *Tonneau* armchair, version with armrests and metal base • *Tonneau* chair, version with metal base, 1954 © Benjamin Chelly

Finally, a section devoted to innovation explores the technical research conducted throughout Pierre Guariche's career. Exposed seating structures, educational displays and explanatory materials highlight his interest in new materials, manufacturing processes and the continuous improvement of everyday use. This exploration is accompanied by a gradual progression of colour that intensifies throughout the exhibition, further immersing visitors in the designer's world.

a living legacy

More than a retrospective, the exhibition highlights the enduring relevance of an approach rooted in innovation, quality of use and accessibility, principles that continue to resonate strongly today.



Hall of the Conseil général, Cité administrative de l'Essonne, 1970 © Archives Pierre Guariche

A pioneer of design for all

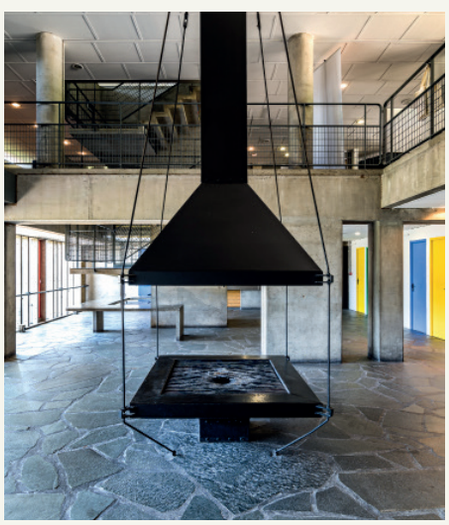
Designer, interior architect, teacher and entrepreneur, Pierre Guariche belonged to a generation that profoundly transformed post-war ways of living. A graduate of the École nationale supérieure des Arts décoratifs in 1949, he was an early advocate of modern furniture designed to be accessible to as many people as possible.

Convinced that design should improve everyday life, he developed an approach based on quality of use, technical innovation and the careful control of production costs. This ambition notably took shape in 1954 with the creation of the Atelier de Recherche Plastique (ARP), alongside Michel Mortier and Joseph-André Motte.

His work in furniture and lighting fully embodies this vision. Today considered one of the leading lighting designers of the 20th century, Guariche developed an innovative approach to visual comfort and the quality of light, always placing use at the heart of the design process.

A remarkably contemporary vision

From the 1960s onwards, Pierre Guariche broadened the scope of his work to include interior architecture and the design of large-scale developments. From Firminy to La Plagne, via Évry, Créteil, Bandol and Isola 2000, he developed a holistic approach in which furniture, lighting, signage and architecture formed a coherent whole.
His ability to consider both an object and its surroundings as a whole feels remarkably contemporary. Questions of sustainability, quality of life, resource efficiency and responsible design resonate particularly strongly in his work. By highlighting the enduring relevance of his designs, the exhibition shows that Pierre Guariche's legacy extends far beyond its historical context.
More than a figure of France's post-war modernity, Guariche emerges as a designer whose pioneering ideas continue to inform contemporary thinking about design and the way we inhabit the world.



Foyer and bar, Maison de la Culture, Le Corbusier Site, Arnaud Frich © F.L.C. / ADAGP

"Both a pioneer and a visionary, Pierre Guariche developed an exceptionally broad vision of design, from the chair to the pylon, throughout France's post-war boom. He took the same wide-ranging approach to interior architecture, working at every scale, from individual apartments to ski resorts and the major administrative institutions created through decentralisation. His furniture, lighting and interiors give form and space to function, optimise and inhabit space, and anticipate new ways of living that he always sought to make accessible to as many people as possible at an affordable cost, without ever sacrificing good taste. This long-awaited first retrospective devoted to his work by the Cité du design in Saint-Étienne reveals just how strikingly modern his work remains today, as demonstrated by the many reissues of his designs featured in the exhibition." **Lionel Blaisse**, exhibition curator

About Cinna

Since 1975, Cinna has been exploring contemporary design with a bold and free-spirited approach. Based in Briord, in the Ain region of France, the French furniture brand creates collections that combine creativity, comfort and character, reflecting changing ways of living and making a home. Shaped by an ongoing dialogue with designers from a wide range of backgrounds, its collections bring together sofas, armchairs, furniture, lighting and decorative accessories. Each creation offers a distinctive vision of the home, where forms, materials and uses interact to create spaces that are both personal and welcoming. Curious and unconventional, Cinna champions a vibrant approach to design, open to individual tastes and lifestyles. A particular vision of the home, where the freedom to shape one's own interior is part of the pleasure of living in it.

About Société des Éditions Pierre Guariche

Société des Éditions Pierre Guariche is dedicated to promoting greater knowledge and appreciation of the work of Pierre Guariche, a major figure in 20th-century French design, and to passing on his legacy. It contributes to documenting his career and creations, preserving his heritage and making his work accessible to professionals, researchers and the wider public.

About Sammode

Founded in 1927 in Châtillon-sur-Saône, Sammode is a family-owned industrial company specialising in high-performance lighting solutions for industry and architecture. With full control over its production chain, Sammode is firmly committed to manufacturing in France and has established a distinctive position as both designer and manufacturer, enabling the company to guarantee the performance, functionality and quality of its lighting. Sammode often collaborates with architects, designers and artists to revisit its iconic luminaires. Since 2019, Sammode has brought its exceptional expertise to French design, exclusively reissuing a selection of Pierre Guariche's most iconic designs.

With the support of Balsan, exhibition design

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also on view

Le Corbusier Site in Firminy

A major partner of the exhibition, the Le Corbusier Site in Firminy invites visitors to discover several of the architect's iconic works, including the Maison de la Culture, Saint-Pierre Church and the Unité d'Habitation. The latter, on which Pierre Guariche worked in the early 1960s, can only be visited as part of a guided tour.

sitelecorbusier.com

La Platine

Cité du design
3, rue Javelin Pagnon
42000 Saint-Étienne

Concours Cinna, de l'idée à l'édition
(Cinna Contest: From Idea to Production)
Exhibition from 4 December 2026
to 2 May 2027

Le Crêt de Cerf, Louna Fellot-Biard
(The Deer's Ridge)
Installation from 4 December 2026
to 28 February 2027

Galerie nationale du design

Cité du design
14, esplanade Jacques Bonnaval
42000 Saint-Étienne

Design en main. Du langage à l'objet
(Design in Hand: From Language to Object)
Exhibition from 11 June 2026
to 7 March 2027

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday
10 am–12.30 pm and 1.30–6 pm
Closed on public holidays

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