



Pierre Paulin: Life and Work

Nadine Descendre

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Playfully rejecting the orderly restraint of midcentury design, the French avant-garde designer and architect Pierre Paulin (1927–2009) imagined sleek departure lounges for the jet set, perfume bottles for Courrèges, and unforgettable Pop-era pieces like the Orange Slice chair, the shell-shaped Oyster chair, and the Tongue, a wavy, low-slung chaise. Paulin's signature innovation was to wrap his pieces in colorful stretch jersey, softening them and concealing their inner steel and wood. In their casual, kinetic sprawl, his chairs not only offered an invitation to relax and lounge; they also took the temperature of Paris in the late 1960s. Fascinated by the possibilities of new materials, Paulin was both a modernist and a traditionalist, a designer who took equal care designing ordinary objects such as fans, razors, and fondue pots as he did outfitting the private quarters of French presidents Pompidou and Mitterrand. This vibrantly illustrated book draws from previously unpublished archives a wealth of vivid drawings, models, and photographs to reveal the restless energy of this midcentury icon, whose works are finding new popularity today.



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