

# Design Dealers: Hugues Magen, Magen H Gallery

BY JANA PERKOVIC | APRIL 13, 2016



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Magen H Gallery, PAD LONDON art fair, 2015.

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Magen H Gallery XX Century Design

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Le Corbusier

A former principal dancer with the Dance Theater of Harlem, Hugues Magen opened Magen H Gallery in New York with the intention of offering rare and one-off pieces that straddle the worlds of art and design. The gallery specializes in post-war European decorative arts – ceramics, sculpture, and design – with a focus on French design. Interested neither in industrial production nor in trends, Magen H Gallery has built a profile for its careful selection of decorative objects, sometimes collected over many years, and

exhibitions of influential movements little-known in the US, such as the French ceramics movement La Borne.

**Name:** Hugues Magen

**Hails from:** France

**Owner of:** [Magen H Gallery](#), 54 E 11th Street  
New York NY 10003

**Gallery's Specialty:** French Mid-Century ceramics, sculpture and design

**Designers presented:** Jacques Adnet, Andre Borderie, Pierre Chapo, Jim Cole, Marino Di Teana, Alain Douillard, Pierre Jeanneret, Georges Jouve, Le Corbusier, Terence Main, Charlotte Perriand, Jean Prouve, Jean Royere, Pierre Sabatier, Francois Stalhy, Pierre

Szekely, La Borne, Philoloas, Zimbacca.

First show: Alain Douillard: Le Forgeron de Fer, in October 2010, the first retrospective of the sculptor Alain Douillard in the US.

## What shows do you have planned for 2016?

We are pleased to announce the retrospective of French sculptor Pierre Sabatier. This comprehensive exhibition will be his first in the United States and feature previously unseen works. Sabatier's work is an exploration and enfoldment of the marriage of materials and movement. From large-scale works to functional design, the virtuous nature and range of Sabatier's work lends itself to an inquiry-into the adaptation of forms and materials. A reflection of our willingness as a society, to remain flexible and sustain a level of adaptability in a consistently changing world.

## What was the vision behind founding the gallery? How is the program developed?

I have always followed my instinct. I acquired pieces with passion, little by little over the years. My knowledge of craftsmanship has been refined over time, but my intuition and passion for an object is the initiative of pursuing an object. The Gallery was founded with the intention of providing the most important and singular pieces of French design to my collectors.

## What have been some of the most significant achievements of the gallery?

The first significant achievement was the exhibition and publication of ceramics from La Borne in 2012. I was very proud to show this unique collection of ceramic pieces from the artists of La Borne, that I had passionately collected for over 15 years. I wanted to address the importance of this innovative movement within the decorative arts and design market. Last year, I was equally happy to present more than 50 pieces from the collection of Art et Industrie, an avant-garde New York movement.

## How has the design market changed since you entered the business? What trends are you seeing, and what trends should disappear for good?

The market has become more polarized, the middle ground is disappearing. Because of the fragility of the market, collectors are looking for extremely relevant pieces - this is elevating the market and creating a more refined and specialized arena.



**Berto Lardera** (1911 - 1989)

*Coffee table sculpture*, c. 1950

Glass, metal

16.7H x 30.1W x 38.2D inches

42.4H x 76.5W x 97D cm

Courtesy of Hugues Magen and Magen H Gallery

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Magen H Gallery, installation shot February 2016.

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**What qualities must a good gallerist possess? And what should a good gallerist never do?**

A gallerist must be a visionary. I think it is also important to be persistent in the search of the best pieces. It took me more than 15 years to collect the ceramics of La Borne ! Also, a good gallerist should try not to fall prey to market swings. I seek to acquire the best objects instead of following the market trends.

**If the constrictions of ordinary existence were not a problem, what one work of design would you love to own?**

The chapel of Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp. It is one of the finest examples of the architecture of Franco-Swiss architect Le Corbusier.

**If you weren't a gallerist, you'd probably be...**

...A sculptor.

**Design is....**

A perspective.