

# Sight Unseen

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## Galerie Néotu Was Legendary In Its Heyday. A New Show in NYC Invites You to Experience the Radical Furniture That Put it On the Map.

By Deborah Shapiro



In 1984, Gérard Dalmon and Pierre Staudenmeyer co-founded Néotu in Paris — a now-legendary project existing somewhere between a gallery and a furniture producer, a home for designers who considered furniture to be a fine art medium, and a mode of emotional expression. Néotu wasn't beholden to any particular aesthetic, though you could loosely and retrospectively apply the Postmodern descriptor. Rather, they sought to put divergent styles in conversation with one another and provide a singular home for a multiplicity of voices. They also wanted to challenge the then-dominant production and distribution models. The name itself is a phonetic wordplay on “néo-tout” or neo-everything.

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Dalmon and Staudenmeyer opened a New York location in 1990, in a 300 square-meter industrial loft in SoHo when the neighborhood was still home to art venues, launching with show dedicated to the avant-garde, sometimes surreal work of Elizabeth Garouste & Mattia Bonetti. Over the course of ten years in the city (and a decade of rising rents) they'd move three times, all the while putting on over 100 exhibitions. They became known for partnering with designers long-term, encouraging the creative evolution of Martin Szekely, Pucci de Rossi, Francois Bauchet, Dan Friedman, Olivier Gagnère, Patrick Naggar, and Kristian Gavaille. Néotù also teamed up with Godley-Schwan, exhibited the sole furniture collection by Jean-Paul Gaultier, and Dalmon and Staudenmeyer worked with clients on interior design projects, including Lou Reed.

A new show, *Néotù: The Visionary Years*, now gives the gallery its due. Sophie Mainier-Jullerot — who worked with Staudenmeyer and is the founder of Mouvements Modernes — and Nancy Gabriel, the founder of Galerie Gabriel, spent years deeply researching the Néotù archives, and invited interior designer Michael Bargo to collaborate on the show's curation. "He naturally understands the dialogue between design, image, and style," says Gabriel. "He doesn't just curate furniture, he creates an atmosphere around it, which resonated perfectly with the vision I had for this exhibition." Together, they've assembled a number of rare pieces, many of which are being shown for the first time in the U.S. Works by Szekely, Garouste & Bonetti, Friedman, Pucci de Rossi, and collaborations from Patrick Naggar and Dominique Lachewsky, Paul Mathieu and Michael Ray, and Staudenmeyer and Julio Villani mingle with artworks selected by CMS Collection, in Galerie Gabriel's penthouse in Manhattan's Sutton Tower. There's the suite of Pucci de Rossi furniture, with built-in ashtrays in its arms, that once belonged to a French plastic surgeon; a cabinet by Garouste & Bonetti, capped by a ring of silver prongs, which once sat in the New York bedroom of Marithé and François Girbaud; and a stained glass console with a different colored drawer for outfits each day of the week. On view, by appointment, through mid-October.



















































































