

**Exhibition**  
**27 June - 12 September 2015**

**Jacques Biny, Designer/Producer**  
*Light fittings from the 1950s*



Suspension 152 pendant light, Jacques Biny  
Producer- Jacques Biny,  
Photograph courtesy of the Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

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*Light fittings from the 1950s*



On the occasion of the International Year of Light launched by UNESCO and for the third participation in Design Miami/Basel, Galerie Pascal Cuisinier has dedicated its booth to a solo show of the work of Jacques Biny, presenting an exceptional collection of his lighting pieces, the fruit of eight years of research.

**Jacques Biny** was one of the most important French lighting designers from 1950 to 1970. Unlike most designers, he also manufactured designs and worked in partnership with some of the best designers of the time, including Michel Buffet, Jean Boris Lacroix and Gustave Gauthier. Together, they set out to forge a new future for this field.

A graduate of the École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris, Jacques Biny settled in his home town of Valence in order to practise his profession of interior designer. Confronted by a lack of light fittings on the sites he was working on, he decided to design his own, which he then offered to his clients. Following this experience, Jacques Biny returned to Paris in 1950, founding his own contemporary light fittings production workshop, *Luminalite*, three years later.

**Modern and pioneering**, Jacques Biny produced a range of sophisticated light fittings for the home, using new materials such as perforated sheet metal and Perspex. With each stroke of his pencil, shapes morphed into radical new forms, mostly divested of their decorative function. In the 1960s, he was appointed lighting designer for large-scale projects such as major cinema, Le Palace and the Préfecture (administrative offices) of Valence and the shipyards of Saint Nazaire.

This exhibition, organized by Galerie Pascal Cuisinier, will run from **16 to 21 June 2015 in Basel**, before moving to Galerie Pascal Cuisinier's exhibition space in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris, where it will be on display from **27 June to 12 September 2015**.

## LIGHT FITTINGS AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR



Luminalite, lamp 439  
Courtesy Biny Family

**French light fittings from the 1950s are without doubt amongst the most attractive, innovative and rarest designs of their kind to be found anywhere in the world. However, they are also amongst the least well-known.**

The late 1940s was a time of remarkable scientific progress in terms of research into lighting. Journalists brought these developments to the attention of the wider public, demonstrating how they could be applied to the domestic environment. A whole generation of designers including Pierre Disderot, Pierre Guariche, Jacques Biny, Robert Mathieu and Jean Boris Lacroix took a close interest in these happenings. Some were graduates of the Ecole Bréguet technical university, which specialized in electrical engineering, and they were fascinated with how they could organize and arrange light fittings in the shape of designs destined for use in the home. Others went as far as to set up their own production workshops where they could bring their own vision of modern light fittings to life.

At this time, the market was largely dominated by bronze light fittings or neo-forties style designs – all gilding and lampshades – not at all suited to the requirements of the modern age ushered in by the early 1950s. With memories of the war fading and a brighter future seemingly in store, comfort was what householders were looking for. Designers took this on board by creating their vision of what the modern apartment should be like – practical and sophisticated – as well as the furniture, chairs and light fittings it would need. Each practical and technological advance represented something of a mini-revolution, generating, in turn, new shapes and forms.

### To a specialization of the luminaire



Luminalite, suspension 260  
Courtesy Biny family

Although almost every designer from this period addressed the issue of lighting at one stage or other in their career, some, such as Pierre Guariche, made it their speciality, even their passion. Immediately after graduating from the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs in 1949, he began setting out the principles of lighting design and use in the home – principles that are still followed today. He also invented many modern lighting fixtures. Galerie Pascal Cuisinier is a real ambassador for this lighting genius, having devoted a retrospective exhibition to his work in 2012, which featured almost all of his designs.

His encounter with Pierre Disderot, who was also a graduate of an electrical engineering school, provided him with an opportunity to create and experiment with his designs. Pierre Disderot founded a light fittings manufacturing firm which produced many modern light fitting designs in France over a forty year period. His commitment to this field was such that he opened a workshop specifically for designers to develop their own models.

The Disderot workshop gave many designers the opportunity to work on their creations. However, some figures on the light fittings scene chose to go it alone, like Robert Mathieu, whose work is to be exhibited in two years' time at Galerie Pascal Cuisinier, and above all, Jacques Biny.

.../...



Courtesy Archives Gérard Hitier



Jacques Biny, Suspension 215



## Luminalite, birth of a brand and collaborations

Jacques Biny, who also graduated from the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs, found that the few light fittings manufacturers in existence in 1950s France did not really believe in him, either in relation to his interior designs or to the modern lighting designs he developed.

He began by subcontracting the production of his designs to Kobis et Lorence, but it quickly became apparent that this company's approach to aesthetics and its production tools would lessen his creative room for manoeuvre. It is very possible that this company, which was specialized in gilt bronze designs, found the production of chrome items difficult. Likewise, Kobis & Lorence did not possess the necessary press brakes to work with sheet metal, given that they were above all well-known for their castings. Biny decided to devote himself to light fittings, founding his own company Luminalite and setting up his own production workshops at rue de la Folie Régnault, Paris.

Jacques Biny recruited some of the best designers of the period. For instance, Jean Boris Lacroix, a star of the Modernist movement in the 1930s, produced a remarkable range of designs for Luminalite during the Fifties. Then there was Michel Buffet, a very young designer whose creations have something of an iconic status today, and are extremely difficult to find. A whole generation of interior designers like Louis Baillon and Gustave Gauthier were also involved. However, although Biny forged many partnerships, he nonetheless designed the majority of his creations himself.

## Practicality and simplicity, the signature Biny

His approach to designing involved a great deal of research. He played around with all manner of variations on a theme – whether a shape or form or a wider lighting design principle. His goal was to create a bedside lamp that would project a light strong enough to allow someone to read in bed without blinding the person they were sharing the bed with. This led him to create dozens of elegant wall-mounted lights which directed some of their illumination where it could be used by a reader. The subsidiary portion of the light was directed up the wall towards the ceiling. He worked obsessively at trying to improve the quality of the light created, using diffusing strips, Perspex and lenses that concentrated the light in one place.

These designs are seen as an aesthetic success today. At the time, they were most remarked upon for their practicality and simplicity. There were no decorative flourishes, rather carefully folded, lacquer-coated sheet metal which could be black, white or sometimes in other colours. The overall style was understated, elegant and certainly not flashy. The watch words were restrained and sophisticated, light and practical. Biny created variants to cater to different niches in the home – wall-mounted lights, floor lamps, ceiling lights and table lamps.

Galerie Pascal Cuisinier has set out to tell the story of this great French designer through its exhibition of his work, just as it did with Guariche and just as it intends to do with Robert Mathieu

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Overviews and detail of 93m2 ceiling in oxidized aluminum – Valence new prefecture  
Courtesy Famille Biny



Overviews and detail of 93m2 ceiling in oxidized aluminum – Valence new prefecture  
Courtesy Famille Biny

Although this exhibition focuses on the first phase of his artistic output, from the 1950s to the early 1960s, his career doesn't end there. Biny's expertise in designing lighting for homes led him to submit tenders for larger-scale local authority projects. As a result, in the course of the 60s and 70s he built up a range of highly-technical solutions, frequently for use in hospital environments. This was brought to an abrupt end by his untimely death in 1976.

### The desire to respond to a function

Jacques Biny's work is particularly noteworthy for its resolutely practical focus. Each light was designed with a particular location in the house in mind and the way in which the design projects its light was tailored to that specific location.

Light intensity and how the light is focused were driven by what would be the most appropriate use of light in a given situation. Light could be reflected, indirect or designed to create an ambience (360° projection). The fittings designed by Biny are made from sheet metal that is folded, curved, cut, welded, assembled together and then given a protective layer of lacquer.

Biny plays with angles and curves, blades, ribs, perforations, slits and veiling glare. Sometimes he added a brass tube, bronze fastenings, a mounting plate in contrasting materials, a glass sphere or a Perspex strip.

He put contrasts to good use: filled space and vacuums, black and white, light and dark, visible elements and hidden elements, core shadows and cast shadows... he was able to sculpt and shape light because he was completely at ease with his subject and medium.

Shapes are always simple, but not lacking in imagination. Finishing touches are never merely decorative. Although a thread may be seen running through his work and he frequently 'signed' his creations by means of a little conical bronze screw, his output cannot be categorized in terms of a clearly-defined style.

There is nothing superfluous in Jacques Biny's designs – everything is there for a reason, a function, all has been carefully thought out for a specific purpose. His driving force was to create designs that combined form and function. He created multiple variations on a theme to try to arrive at the best solution. The infinitesimally subtle differences to be seen in some models exemplify this painstaking approach, dare we say obsession, passion even.

## Biography Jacques Biny (1913 - 1976)



Jacques Bini (Biny) was born on July 10th 1913 in Valence in the Département of the Drôme. The son of an ornamental plasterer, from an early age Jacques was attracted to decoration and architecture and in 1932 began studying at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs. He was very enthusiastic about electrical lighting and designed his first light fittings shortly before his departure for Paris. He decided to return to his home town of Valence after graduating in 1935. Whilst working as an interior designer, he continued to design light fittings which were then produced by the plastering company Décoration Architecturale. He also created designs which were used in projects such as the Palace cinema, one of his first big jobs.

In **1950** he made a definite decision to pursue his new career and decided to move to Paris to devote himself exclusively to light fittings design. Omnilux manufactured his first lighting designs, which were exhibited at the Foire de Paris trade fair under the brand name *Luminalite*. His ceiling lights and wall-mounted lights were inspired by 1930s styles, in the shape of designs where glass featured as prominently as brass.

The next year the designer moved to 31, rue de Mogador in the 9th arrondissement. He entrusted the production of his designs to Kobis et Lorence. His designs were put on show during the very first 'Luminalite' exhibition. The perforated reflector made its debut, along with certain finishing touches and decorative elements that harked back to the 1940s, such as leather coverings and perforated lampshades.

From this point on, Jacques Biny dedicated himself to the quest for new shapes and formats tailored to very specific uses. He carried out scientific studies of how light behaved in building interiors and became famous for having designed lamps that harnessed the effects of both diffusion and refraction on light.

*'The quest to strike the right balance between technical requirements and a style that complements contemporary interior design is the driving force behind light fitting design'.*

**Jacques Biny**

Between **1951** and **1952** he called on the services of a young industrial designer, Michel Buffet, who produced some of the finest designs to come out of the Luminalite stable. This helped cement the reputation of the new brand. The *applique B206* wall-mounted light remains one of the most attractive wall-mounted lights to have been produced in France during the 1950s.

In **1953**, the designer from Valence founded the company Luminalite SARL, located at 38 – 40 rue de la Folie Regnault in the 11th arrondissement in Paris. The spacious premises made it possible to tender for projects in the healthcare sector and to fulfil the numerous orders coming from trade fairs and industry exhibitions. Wearing his designer's hat, Jacques Biny took part in the salon des Arts Ménagers (similar to the Ideal Home Show), where he exhibited both the Michel Buffet-designed range (*appliques B205* and *B206* wall-mounted lights, *B210* and *B201 lamps*), along with some of his own designs like the *suspension 152* ceiling light.

In **1954** he designed the *applique 193* wall-mounted light, 600 of which were manufactured to be fitted in the 450 bedrooms of the cité universitaire d'Antony (student halls of residence.)

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## Industry recognition

\*Active member of the Société des Artistes décorateurs (Society of decorative artists)

\*Member of the C.A.I.M (Créateurs d'Architecture Intérieure et de Modèles – Interior Designers and Model makers)

\*Member of the Institut Français d'Esthétique Industrielle (French Institute of Industrial Design)

\*Member of the Association Française de l'Eclairage (the French Lighting Association)

\*Member of the Société d'Encouragement à l'Art et à l'industrie. (The Association for the advancement of Arts and Industry)

\* Bronze medal of the Société d'Encouragement à l'Art et à l'Industrie

\*1960 Equip'Hotel Bronze medal

\*1957 Chosen to exhibit his work at the Milan Triennial Exhibition of Decorative Arts and Modern Architecture.

\*Chosen to exhibit his work in international exhibitions in the Netherlands and Germany

\*1953 -1964/1968 - 1969 Showcased in the Formes Utiles exhibition

\*1961 Second Prize, Mazda competition, the Equip'Hotel international hospitality trade fair

\*1971 First prize, EDF competition, the Equip'Hotel international hospitality trade fair

Biny's overriding concern when designing his light fittings was functionality. The form and composition of the fitting were of secondary importance and served essentially to ensure that light was distributed in the most effective way possible, this being his principal concern.

In **1956** he designed the *applique 212* wall-mounted light and the *lampe 231* free-standing light, made of six inclined strips of lacquer-coated metal placed one above the other and contained within a simple metal casing mounted on a steel stalk. This same design was used as a wall-mounted light which focused its light upon a book, leaving the rest of the room in shadow.

In **1957** Gustave Gautier began working with Luminalite with the aim of harnessing the versatility of Perspex for a new range of lights. He used this material in the design of his stand at the Salon des Arts Ménagers.

The next year, Jean Boris Lacroix joined forces with the producer, creating a desk lamp with a brass body and a coloured paper lampshade. This design was displayed at the Salon des Arts Ménagers.

The modernist designer threw himself into exploring the range of possibilities opened up by Perspex, in partnership with Gustave Gautier. In **1959** Gustave Gautier presented a new collection based on a semi-cylindrical metal body with randomly-placed horizontal slits creating a flickering light effect. The part which is pierced is closed off with a sheet of white Perspex. Together with Claude Fournel, he designed a light composed of cubes in two different sizes, made from coloured Perspex and featuring a patented stackable design. This design could be taken apart in minutes, and the customer had the option of assembling the lamp themselves. This is the beginning of the self-assembled light design.

From **1964** onwards, Jacques Biny began to tender for local authority projects, lending a fresh impetus to his production workshop. At the end of the 1960s, Louis Baillon's *lampadaire 340* light with its vertically-adjustable lampshade was showcased in the Formes Utiles exhibition, once again underlining the role played by Luminalite in promoting light fitting design in France.

Jacques Biny died in **1976**, leaving Luminalite bereft of a personage who stood out for his ability to bring together talented individuals like Michel Buffet and Jean Boris Lacroix, his mastery of production techniques and his entrepreneurial vision. His many skills enabled this designer and producer to position his company amongst the top three light fitting makers in France during the period of economic and technological development known as the 'Trente Glorieuses'.



## A solo exhibition fruit of eight years of collection



Booth Luminalite at Salon Equip'hôtel. Courtesy family Biny

Pascal Cuisinier has been collecting light fittings designed or produced by Jacques Biny for over eight years. He has tracked them down, purchased them and preserved them carefully with a view to putting on a solo exhibition. Some designs have only appeared on the market once during this time. The gallery has been able to build up a substantial body of documentation enabling them to be dated and their designer identified. The expertise developed as a result allows the gallery to confidently identify the works that are by Biny himself and which were produced by his designers. In fact, the market is full of light fittings that are inaccurately attributed to Biny. As his designs were an inspiration to many, numerous manufacturers looked to his work in the 1960s and produced metal designs that closely resembled models that came out of the Luminalite stable.

Galerie Pascal Cuisinier decided to put its collection of some thirty different designs on display, featuring the rarest and the most representative Luminalite designs of the 1950s – over fifty individual items in all. On display are the famous bedroom wall-mounted lights which will be familiar to all, along with numerous, highly-original variations on this theme, with metal or Perspex strips. That's not forgetting free-standing lamps such as the *model n° 265*, which seems to be composed of three open books made from metal and Perspex joined together. Pendant lights will also be on show in the shape of the celebrated metal cones (*model n° 215*) and the amazing *model n° 152 ceiling light*, which is lit from below and looks like a Manta ray. There are only two known examples of this design in existence.

Lastly, we have the renowned – and very rare – applique potence n° 163 wall-mounted light, which was so famous that it led to the phenomenon whereby any light that looked like a 1950s design with a perforated sheet metal cone was attributed to Biny.

Jacques Biny was also a producer. The Galerie Pascal Cuisinier views his approach to manufacturing as being both original and ahead of its time. (In fact, the gallery is devoting its second exhibition to the furniture manufacturer, Meubles TV).

Jacques Biny began a process of separating the design stage from the production and marketing phases. At the beginning of the 1950s this approach to furniture design became widespread in France and the role of the designer changed, making the transition to designing models destined for mass production: a new role thus appeared, that of the 'éditeur' (a designer who promotes and produces the work of other designers).

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Biny was a **trailblazer** in this respect. He was unable to find anyone to produce his own designs, so he set up his own business to remedy this situation and to offer other designers the technical resources they needed and the chance to see their designs turned into reality.

Part of the exhibition is devoted to this aspect of Biny's career as **a producer and to Luminale**. It will showcase a number of superb items, such as some of the finest **Jean Boris Lacroix** designs, including one of a very few pairs of appliques n° 302 that we currently know about, and a world-famous model of a light in the modernist style made from coloured Perspex, which has spawned many imitators on today's market.

Visitors will also have the chance to see some designs by **Michel Buffet**. This designer is not that widely-known amongst the general public, but he created a dozen or so highly-influential light fitting designs at the beginning of the 1950s, including the so-called 'conche' (shell) appliques B206, a kind of metal origami design which shapes light and shadows. The gallery will also display the Modèle N°B201. Only one other example of this design exists (private owner). It has never been put up for sale on the open market. There will also be a previously unknown design by **Louis Baillon** and works by **Gustave Gautier**.

We would like to stress once again that the gallery's aim in holding this exhibition is to offer a comprehensive overview of the work of a visionary designer who succeeded in creating the vehicles that would allow him to fulfil his ambitions – a workshop, a company, a design, marketing and production firm.

This exhibition aims to be educational in nature and is the largest yet to focus on this designer. Its objective is to bring this talented individual to the attention of the wider public and major art collectors worldwide alike by giving them a sneak preview of his work at Design Miami/Basel. The works on display will be chosen with two goals in mind: firstly to offer a sweeping panorama of his output from the 1950s, including some of his best-known designs, and secondly, to offer a glimpse of his more rare designs, such as his floor lamps - most of which are untraceable nowadays – and some models of wall-mounted lights by Lacroix, Michel Buffet and Biny himself.

Galerie Pascal Cuisinier is well-known for its carefully-prepared exhibitions and its painstaking approach to its displays. Here it has created a stand resembling something out of the theatre or a contemporary operatic production, with lighting playing the starring role. The work of Bob Wilson and James Turrell has had a significant influence on the end result: panels in the wings, upon which the lights will be mounted, will draw the eye towards a luminescent screen. The bare ground will be criss-crossed with coloured lines. Upon it will be placed the free-standing lamps and two very beautiful items of furniture (a Président range desk by Pierre Guariche and a large sofa by Dangles and Defrance) will complete the décor. The ceiling lights will be backlit in front of the luminescent central screen. The stand will be arranged so that the light from the lights mounted on the panels will appear when the light from the screen lessens in intensity, whereas the décor will appear in silhouette form when the screen is at its brightest.



Galerie Pascal Cuisinier – Design Miami Basel 2014 - Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

## FOCUS ON THE PAIR OF APPLIQUES 302



Applique 302 – Jean Boris Lacroix  
Produced by Luminale – 1957  
Lacquer-coated metal and Perspex  
Courtesy of Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

This pair of appliques 302 wall-mounted lights by Jean Boris Lacroix is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular and rare works on display in the exhibition.

A simple arrangement in the form of a folded piece of metal and a folded sheet of Perspex fitted snugly together has created a glowing, highly-original and extremely modern-looking piece of sculpture. Energetic, light, symmetrical and asymmetrical at one and the same time, abstract and evocative, this design offers a masterclass in the use of contrasts that's truly striking.

Conjuring up images of birds, yet totally abstract, this playful design also has a quasi-religious aspect. It brings shadow and light, black and white, the opaque and the translucent together. It's fixed but appears to move. It's triangular but the points describe two perfect semi-circles.

Its form is suitable for all dimensions. It could be a tiny gem or a work of art in a public space. It is emblematic of the 1950s but it could equally well have been produced now, or in the 1930s (see the light fittings of Pierre Chareau). This will undoubtedly be one of the most beautiful objects at the fair.

## FOCUS ON THE APPLIQUE 163



Applique 163 - Jacques Biny - Produced by Luminalite - 1953 - Lacquer-coated metal and brass - Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

This wall-mounted light (applique modèle N° 163) is one of Jacques Biny's best-known designs, and almost certainly his largest, at least as far as his mass-produced designs are concerned.

It's composed of a light upon a long, wall-mounted arm which is made from two lengths of metal which cross over each other. One of them holds a perforated cone holding a light bulb, the other a triangular reflector made from folded metal.

The bulb cover is perforated to diffuse the light and reduce the glare from the bulb. Above the bulb cover, the sophisticated form of the reflector sends the light downwards.

The materials used are simple (perforated or folded sheet metal), but the effect created is striking. Its sheer size, the design of each individual component, the use of flattened metal stems and their crossed-over design all combine to invest this light with a great sense of airiness. The perforated cone creates an interplay of light and shadows upon the wall, which hitherto had all too often been simply ignored, but which here is used almost as a decorative backdrop.

As was common during this time, a choice of colours was available. In this case, the light fitting itself is bright yellow, whereas the mounting is always black.

## FOCUS ON THE APPLIQUE B206 AND THE LAMPE B201

These two very similar objects are amongst the most beautiful and the rarest to be produced by Luminallite.



Applique B206 – Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminallite – 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

The so-called ‘Conche’ *applique B206* wall-mounted light is a much sought-after item which is even more popular when it comes in a set of two. It’s composed of a simple, flat strip of metal that has been shaped and folded back so as to hide the light bulb, creating a really spectacular effect. The minimalist simplicity of this object projects an aura of clarity, restraint and unity.

The soft, reflected light and the shadow it casts make for even more elegance. The metal strip is set slightly out from the wall (making room for the wiring), which creates an even more dramatic, clear-cut shadow. Designer Michel Buffet has undoubtedly given as much thought to shadows as to light in this design. This style draws its inspiration from the 30s and 40s, a period when shell-shaped wall-mounted lights in plaster were common, but Buffet’s design is much more than just a copy. In this model he created a light, modern, restrained and unfussy design which was typical of the early 1950s in France.



Lampe B201 - Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminallite – 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal and brass  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

The *lampe B201* free-standing light was designed along similar lines, at least, it adopted the same form. The upper part of the design folds down to form the reflector and the whole is carefully conceived to create maximum impact from every angle. It boasts a slightly drawn-out shape (necessary to form the reflector), with the light curling back upon itself. The ‘shell-like’ appearance is further emphasized by the seeming instability of the whole design, which is remedied by the two small feet at the back which steady it.

There is a wonderful unity of form, with only the two feet standing out through their composition in a different material. The light from the lamp is all reflected, rather than direct. The source of the light is hidden from sight.

## FOCUS ON THE SUSPENSION 152



Suspension 152, Jacques Biny  
Produced by - Jacques Biny, 1952  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

This remarkable ceiling light is not very well-known, with good reason, given that there are only a few examples of this model known to be in existence, none of which have ever come up for sale.

This 'flying sculpture' has now been identified as model N°152, its 'sail' resembling a Manta ray. This design has its roots in a simple concept that grew in popularity during the 1950s, that of the use of **reflected light**.

Here, a bulb cover attached to a metal rod intersected by another rod houses the light bulb and hides it from sight. Inside, a curved **Fresnel lens** concentrates light downwards and masks the lower section of the bulb, thereby protecting the user's eye from excessive glare.

The light is projected onto the large curved 'sail' which reflects it back into the surrounding room. This sail is only attached to the ceiling at one point; as a result it projects a sense of **freedom, almost as if it has taken flight**.

This elegant, understated design is very effective. It produces a very pleasant light which is strong where it hits the lens yet gentle upon the reflective surface of the 'sail'.

## Galerie Pascal Cuisinier Championing the first modern French designers

**Galerie Pascal Cuisinier** strongly promotes the first generation of modern French designers born between 1925 and 1930 such as P. Guariche, J.A. Motte, M. Mortier, G. Dangles et C. DeFrance, A. Philippon et J. Lecoq, J. Abraham et D. Rol, A. Monpoix, A. Richard, R.J. Caillette, and P. Paulin

Since 2006, it has defended their furniture, produced between 1951 and 1961 as well as the work of key light fitting designers J. Biny, P. Disderot and R. Mathieu.

Born for the most part between 1925 and 1930, this first generation of modern designers followed largely similar paths, usually beginning at the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs or Arts appliqués à l'industrie (the schools for Decorative Arts or Applied Arts and Industrial Design). They shared a common vision with regard to the form and function of production furniture. Their designs were characterized by their practicality, technical innovations and elegance.

Located on the Rue de Seine, **Galerie Pascal Cuisinier** has helped shed light on the avant-garde spirit behind these young designers.

Its founder, **Pascal Cuisinier**, takes care to select only the best works from this period and presents them on show in the gallery and at the biggest art fairs around the world such as PAD London and Paris, Design Miami/, Design Miami/Basel.



Lampe 316, Jean Boris Lacroix, Lampe 238 Jacques Biny, Lampe 201 M. Buffet  
Producer Jacques Biny, Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Applique 163, Jacques Biny  
Producer Jacques Biny, Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

#### DESIGN MIAMI/ BASEL

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## INTERVIEW WITH PASCAL CUISINIER



*'The most important aspect of his work is the concept of producing other designers' creations, something that Pierre Disderot also did. This represents both their confidence in the quality of the work of these designers, as well as being a demonstration of humility – helping individuals whose work they valued by providing them with the technical resources and marketing support they needed to make their projects succeed. I find that very modern!'*

**Pascal Cuisinier, why are you so keen to set up a solo exhibition devoted to the light fitting designer and producer Jacques Biny, both at Design Miami/Basel and Paris?**

I feel that this desire is normal for a gallery that is serious about what it does. It's the duty of a gallery to promote the work of the artists that it represents. This sometimes involves a long process of searching for and collecting hard-to-find examples of their work and then exhibiting them in various trade fairs. I've always loved French light fittings from this particular period and Jacques Biny is one of the most gifted designers in this field. I've collected his work for years and I display them a few at a time in exhibitions at the gallery. As I'd like to raise awareness of these designers outside of France, major exhibitions are an ideal way of doing this.

Given the importance of Jacques Biny and of some of the pieces which will be on display in this exhibition, I felt that the best place to exhibit them was in the best design show in the world. By continuing the exhibition in the gallery, we're offering those who weren't able to get to the show the chance to see these works. I suspect that this will be the one and only time such a collection of work will be put on display, because it's getting harder and harder to find most of these designs.

**What are the key works by Jacques Biny that will be on display at Design Miami/Basel?**

There are two distinct parts to this exhibition. There's Biny, the designer, and Biny the producer. This is not just an insignificant detail – at this time it was something of a new departure to put oneself in the role of producer for other designers. To do this was to accept that design should be independent of other parts of the manufacturing process. Today we take this for granted, but at the time this wasn't the case.

As for Jacques Biny's own designs, there's the wonderful ceiling light (modèle n°152). There are only two or three known examples of this model in the world today, which is like a kind of 'sail', suspended in the air and lit from below. We also have one of his finest – and most sought-after – lights in the shape of the 231, which is designed to illuminate a desk without causing discomfort to the user.



Paradoxically, the wall-mounted version of this light is one of the most common of his designs, whereas the desk model is one of the rarest. Also on display - naturally - will be the famous wall-mounted light, the 163, which is attached to an arm that's more than one metre long. It's rather like a kind of huge metal flower, an orchid perhaps. The example here has retained its original colour – a very fine yellow.

In relation to designs that he produced, the exhibition will feature some of the very finest examples of these works: Michel Buffet's B201 free-standing light was derived from his famous 'shell' wall-mounted lights (B206). There is only one other example of this model known to be in existence. To the best of my knowledge, there is only one example of the even rarer B210 still in existence. There are also two of the most striking works produced by Jean Boris Lacroix – the 316 coloured Perspex free-standing lamp, with its amazing, modernist-inspired design, and the 302 wall-mounted lights which are as spectacular as they are rare.

What stands out about these works is just how scarce they are. We all think we know these designs well, that we've already seen them somewhere before. However, I've been running around trying to find these models for ten years and I've come to realize they're practically impossible to track down. It's likely that they weren't produced in great numbers, but I also think that their owners have probably decided they don't want to let them go so they've never come onto the market.

**Jacques Biny first started to mass-produce light fittings by founding his company Luminalite. What has been the legacy of his work in the field of contemporary light design?**

It would probably be best to put this question to an expert in contemporary light design – I can't specialize in each and every field! I'd probably say that yes, of course, like many other designers from this period, the designers working with Luminalite invented new shapes, functions and approaches to lighting which are used today by modern designers and manufacturers of light fittings. Fittings made from folded sheet metal are still commonplace in mass-produced designs. The real innovation lies above all in indirect/reflective lighting. Although this wasn't invented in the 1950s, it became much more widespread during this period.

The idea of working on the quality of the light, rather than just its intensity or simply the shape of the light fitting itself, had its roots in this time. Modern lighting has drawn very widely from this way of thinking.

Last, and most important of all, dozens of designs which are wrongly attributed to Jacques Biny can be found online. This demonstrates just how much of an inspiration he was, both during his life-time and in the years afterwards. Folded sheet metal, perforated with large holes and small, metal wall-mounted lights – such elements expressed Biny's vision, elements that were used time and time again by numerous manufacturers throughout the 1960s.

The most important aspect of his work is the concept of producing other designers' creations, something that Pierre Disderot also did. This represents both their confidence in the quality of the work of these designers, as well as being a demonstration of humility – helping individuals whose work they valued by providing them with the technical resources and marketing support they needed to make their projects succeed. I find that very modern!

**What position does Jacques Biny occupy on today's art market?**

Like many French designers of this period, Jacques Biny is known for just a small number of his designs. The easiest to find and the most iconic and the rarest alike are largely unknown and circulate amongst a small number of collectors who are 'in the know'. However, over the past few years it's become apparent that a market in his work is gradually appearing.

Although his finest designs hardly ever come onto the open market, they are starting to attract serious money. Furthermore, in recent years, light fittings have begun to occupy pole position in the French market for design objects of this period, thanks to their understated elegance, originality, beauty, scarcity and practicality in the home.

Biny's work is set to become increasingly sought after, and this will be especially the case for certain key designs. I have no doubt that this exhibition will be something of a turning point – as we saw with Pierre Guariche's light fittings in his October 2013 exhibition at PAD London. Once I've sold them, their value will be sure to shoot up!



Jacques Biny, Lampe 238 - Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

The Galerie Pascal Cuisinier is well-known for its commitment to promoting the first generation of modern French designers. There was a very high profile exhibition on 'The French chair from 1951 to 1961' and now this one dedicated to light fittings – up next is a show on Pierre Paulin's works scheduled for October 2015. What approach will you be taking to this particular exhibition?

My approach has something 'museum-like' to it. I really want our exhibitions to be meaningful, in the true sense of the word. If you're just displaying what you've got in stock, you're no different to a salesman or shopkeeper. It's important for me to keep these pieces safe, sometimes for years on end, so that I can one day show them as individual aspects of a united whole, based around either a designer or a theme. This is what I mean when I talk about exhibitions. By bringing together in one place, at the same time, a collection of works by a single individual or focusing on a specific idea, we help to set up a dialogue between individual works and different periods in time. This creates meaning and helps us towards a better understanding of the designer, their works, and perhaps even the period of history in which they worked.

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The exhibition on the French chair brought around a hundred designs together, offering a sweeping overview of chair design and design technology in the 1950s. It may even have offered a window onto this period in general. The Joseph André Motte exhibition is similar to the Biny exhibition in that it was held in Basel before coming to the gallery in Paris. I think that it offered a really vivid, accurate picture of the designer at work – his ideas, the creative process, his interests, his way of approaching the design of an item of furniture at a particular point in time...The Jacques Biny exhibition will do likewise.

The exhibition that we're organizing on Pierre Paulin's work will focus on his early work. We often talk about his designs from 1960 to 1980, but very little about his work from the 1950s, which is nonetheless quite fascinating. I wanted to show just how accurately he judged and expressed the spirit of his times. Even when he was still very young, his work was very similar to that produced by his contemporaries such as Guariche, Motte, Richard, Simard and others.

Furthermore, a lot of the designs from this period are currently being reproduced, and I thought it was important for the public to be able to see the originals that have inspired the designs that you can now buy new from the shops or see in today's magazines. In some ways, this is also a rather 'museum-like' task...

## Jacques Biny, Designer/Producer

### Light fittings from the 1950s

**16 to 21 June 2015**  
Design Miami / Basel 2015

**27 June to 12 September 2015**  
Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

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## Visuals available for use by the press



Lampe 231 - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminallite - 1957  
Lacquer-coated metal and gilded bronze  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Lampe 231 - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminallite - 1957  
Lacquer-coated metal and gilded bronze  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Lampe 258 - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminallite  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Lampe 258 - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminallite  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

## Visuals available for use by the press



Lampadaire 183 free-standing light - Gustave Gauthier  
Produced by Luminelite - 1954  
Lacquer-coated metal, polished brass and paper lamphade  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



lampadaire 265 free-standing light - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminelite - 1958  
Lacquer-coated metal, matt nickel and Perspex  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Lampe 258 Jacques Biny, Lampe 316 Jean Boris Lacroix, Lampe 238 Jacques Biny, Lampe 201 Michel Buffet, Lampe 210 Michel Buffet  
Produced by Jacques Biny, Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Applique 163 wall-mounted light - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminelite - 1953  
Lacquer-coated metal and brass  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

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## Visuals available for use by the press



Suspension 266 ceiling light - Louis Baillon  
Produced by Luminelite, 1958  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Suspension 266 ceiling light - Louis Baillon  
Produced by Luminelite, 1958  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Lampe B210 - Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminelite - 1952  
Black and white lacquer-coated metal, polished brass  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier



Suspension 152 ceiling light - Jacques Biny  
Produced by Luminelite - 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal, brass  
Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier

## Visuals available for use by the press



Applique 267 wall-mounted light - Louis Baillon  
Produced by Luminelite - 1958  
Perspex and brass



Applique 267 wall-mounted light- Louis Baillon  
Produced by Luminelite - 1958  
Perspex and brass



Applique 245 wall-mounted light - Louis Baillon  
Produced by Luminelite - 1960  
Lacquer-coated metal and Perspex



Applique 245 wall-mounted light - Louis Baillon  
Produced by Luminelite - 1960  
Lacquer-coated metal and Perspex

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## Visuals available for use by the press



Applique 302 wall-mounted light – Jean Boris Lacroix  
Produced by Luminale – 1957  
Lacquer-coated metal and Perspex



Applique 302 wall-mounted light – Jean Boris Lacroix  
Produced by Luminale – 1957  
Lacquer-coated metal and Perspex



Lampe B201 – Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminale – 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal and brass



Lampe B201 – Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminale – 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal and brass

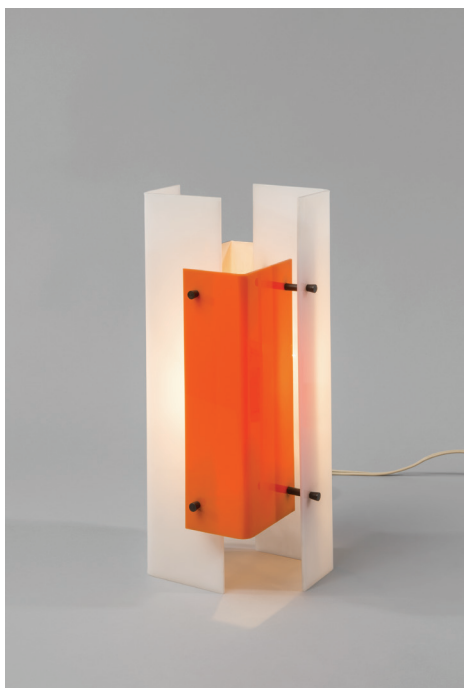
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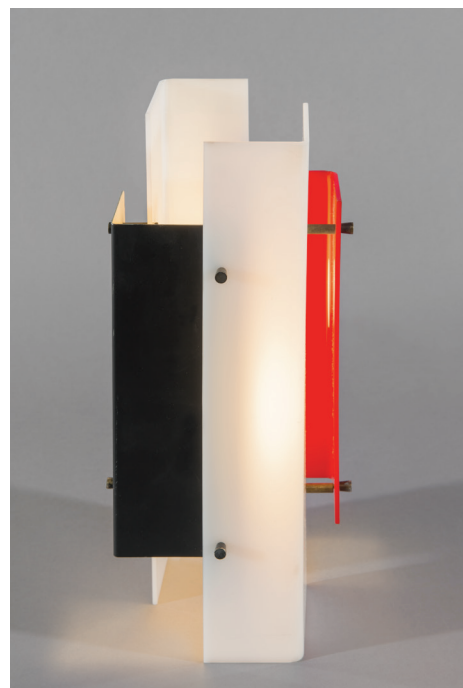
Applique B206 wall-mounted light – Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminelite – 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal



Applique B206 wall-mounted light – Michel Buffet  
Produced by Luminelite – 1952  
Lacquer-coated metal



Lampe 316 – Jean Boris Lacroix  
Produced by Luminelite – 1958  
Lacquer-coated metal, Perspex and polished brass



Lampe 316 – Jean Boris Lacroix  
Produced by Luminelite – 1958  
Lacquer-coated metal, Perspex and polished brass



## SAVE THE DATE

Continuation of the exhibition

**Jacques Biny, Designer/Producer**

*Light fittings from the 1950s*

at the

**Galerie Pascal Cuisinier**

**27 June - 12 September 2015**

The exhibition 'Jacques Biny, Designer/Producer' will continue at the Galerie Pascal Cuisinier's exhibition space in Paris, from 27th June to 12th September 2015.

The exhibition preview will be held on **26th June, from 7 to 9pm** at the Galerie Pascal Cuisinier, located on rue de Seine, in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés district.



Courtesy Galerie Pascal Cuisinier.

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