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Concept of the “Selection, Tradition, Creation” Exhibition (1941) by Charlotte Perriand

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to clarify the concept of the “Selection, Tradition, Creation” Exhibition (1941) by the French furniture decorator and architect Charlotte Perriand (1903–1999), to analyze her interpretation of Japanese “folklore” during her one-year stay in Japan to teach export crafts. Perriand’s works (mainly tables, chairs and carpets) exhibited were directly influenced by Japanese folk crafts. However, almost all of them were variations on the prototypes of forms Perriand had developed in France. In other words, Perriand made a shift in materials and techniques (bamboo, straw materials and weaving techniques), a reduction in the size of furniture (a reference to traditional Japanese lifestyle) and a transfer of patterns (Japanese symbolic signs) in order to interpretate the Japanese “folklore” discovered by the modern Japanese through their own forms. It was both a way of understanding Japan and a reflection on her own design methods.

1 | Introduction

This paper is a study of the interpretation of Japanese “folklore” by the French furniture decorator and architect Charlotte Perriand (1903–1999). Perriand spent a year in Japan instructing export crafts, during which she became familiar with Japanese folk crafts and craft works, which had a major influence on her own creation.

In particular, this paper focuses on the exhibition “Selection, Tradition and Creation” (1941), in which Perriand was responsible for the works exhibited as well as the organization of the exhibition as a result of her stay in Japan in 1941. First, as background, this paper systematically identifies the major exhibitions that Perriand organized and clarifies the characteristics

of the exhibitions held in Japan (Chapter 2). Next, the process of formulating the idea for the 1941 exhibition is analyzed from the descriptions in the notebooks of her visits to various parts of Japan (chapter 3). Furthermore, the logics of creation of the exhibited works are analyzed using records of roundtable discussions after the exhibition (chapter 4) and, finally, an analysis of the exhibited works reveals aspects of Perriand’s creative method (chapter 5).

The significance of “Japan” in Perriand’s creation has been pointed out in the past¹, but it has not been fully analyzed as a continuity in her creation, not only during her stay in Japan. At first glance, the Japanese influence on her work is clear, but the relationship between the modern and the folk has to be seen in light of the fact that for a decade prior to her stay in

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TABLE 1 | Exhibitions in which Perriand participated.

Date	Name of Exhibition	Exhibition Components	Materials
1925	International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts	Nine panels representing the nine muses.	Coating material
1926	Corner of the Salon, presented at Salon des Artistes Décorateurs	Art Deco style small tables, chairs, cabinets, carpets, wallpaper	Industrial materials and woods
1927	The Bar in the Attic, Salon d'automne	Built-in sofas (with lighting), small tables, bunks, built-in cabinets, carpets and chairs.	Industrial materials
1929	Interior Equipment of a Housing	Tables, cabinets, chairs, bunks, lavatories	Industrial materials
1935	The Youth House	Built-in cabinets, tables, chairs and stand-alone cabinets	Industrial materials, wood and straw
1936	Popular Budget Living Room	Built-in cabinets, tables, folding chairs	Industrial materials and woods
1937	UAM Pavilion, International Exhibition of the Arts and Techniques of Modern Life, Paris	Sanitary equipment	Industrial materials
1941	Selection, Tradition, Creation	Stand-alone cabinets, tables, chairs, tapestries, carpets, photograph walls, blinds, mosquito nets	Industrial materials, wood and straw
1944	Exhibition of Applied Arts at the Crafts Pavilion	Stand-alone cabinets, tables, chairs, tapestry walls, carpets	Wood, textiles
1949	“Useful Forms, Objects of Our Time” at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs	Built-in cabinets ('cloud'), tables, chairs, carpets, blinds	Wood, straw
1951	The Milan Triennale	Table, chairs (in collaboration with Jean Prouvé)	Wood
1952	“Useful Forms” at Salon des arts mé-nagers	Sanitary equipment	Industrial materials
1955	Proposal for a synthesis of arts	Built-in cabinets and stand-alone cabinets ('cloud'), tables, chairs, tapestries (art works), carpets, photograph walls, blinds)	Industrial materials and woods
1957	The Japanese House at Salon des Arts Ménagers	Table, chairs, built-in chairs, sliding doors	Wood, grass (tatami mats)

Source: Made by the author.

Japan, she was engaged in architectural and furniture studies in the atelier of the architect Le Corbusier. Therefore, the context of Perriand's work in Japan, in particular, is also examined in this paper.

2 | Perriand's Presentation of Living Spaces in the Exhibitions

The main exhibitions in which Perriand was involved as an interior decorator and architect are listed in Table 1, all of which are proposals for interior decoration (the setting of living spaces).

At the International Exposition of Contemporary Decorative and Industrial Arts in 1925, the interior decoration of the music

room, consisting of impulse panels and other pieces made during Perriand's school years under the influence of Art Deco, was exhibited.

Shortly afterwards, she began to exhibit at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, but at the same time started to produce steel pipe furniture, gradually breaking away from the Art Deco style and pursuing new forms of expression. Beginning with the renovation of the kitchen and dining room of her own residence with self-made steel pipe furniture, she presented the Bar in the Attic, envisaged as her own residence, at the Salon d'Automne in 1927. With the exception of the bar counter chairs in the corner, small tables, built-in cabinets and chairs were all made of industrialized materials, and the space was composed of furniture elements with few decorative details.



FIGURE 1 | “Interior Equipment of a Housing” at the Salon d’Automne (1929). *Source:* AChP; Jacques Barsac, Charlotte Perriand, *L’Œuvre complète*, Volume 1, Scheidegger & Spiess, Zurich, 2014, 148.

The works exhibited in this exhibition were appreciated by French modern architect Le Corbusier, which led Perriand to enter his atelier in 1927. She has since exhibited more comprehensive interior decoration with Le Corbusier.

Perriand had been holding exhibitions of interior decoration before joining French architect Le Corbusier's atelier in 1927, but the more synthetic interior decoration exhibitions originated from her collaboration with Le Corbusier. Perriand began researching steel tube furniture (chairs, cabinets and tables) in Le Corbusier's atelier, studied the typology of gestures when using the furniture, fabricated prototypes and actually installed them in several villas by Le Corbusier (The chairs and tables that she had created before meeting Le Corbusier were also adopted). In 1929, Perriand exhibited “Interior Equipment of a Housing” at the Salon d’Automne under the joint name of Le Corbusier (Figure 1). Since Le Corbusier was away on a business trip, she handled almost all the organization of the exhibition², (“Autobiography”, pp.37–38). In this exhibition, the soft division of the kitchen and dining room by independent cabinets and the free combination of cabinets are a fundamental feature of Perriand's later spatial construction methods.

The “Youth House” for the 1935 World Exhibition in Brussels was a project commissioned by Perriand, with the help of Le Corbusier, for which she was mainly responsible for the library space. She created a large table with steel pipe chairs as well as wooden chairs made of woven straw, which contrast with the industrialized materials. Fernand Léger's frescoes, stones and whale bones were placed as objects on the “collection wall”. The interior decoration is aimed at the economic capacity and tastes of the “youth”, but it already shows her preference for natural materials.

As a proposal for a popular budget living room for the “masses”, rather than the “youth”, Perriand exhibited alone at the Exhibition in 1936. Using ready-made cabinets painted and reused, and a steel-tube-framed sofa (1928), which folded into



FIGURE 2 | “Selection, Tradition and Creation” (1941). *Source:* AChP; Jacques Barsac, Charlotte Perriand, *L’Œuvre complète*, Volume 2, Scheidegger & Spiess, Zurich, 2015, 81.

a stool and expanded into a mattress, and a low wooden table (1935) created the previous year, which matched it, she studied the interior space of the “masses”, using space efficiently.

Later, Perriand left Le Corbusier's atelier and came to Japan, where the 1941 exhibition “Selection, Tradition, and Creation” was organized entirely by herself (Figure 2). As the name of the exhibition suggests, it was not an exhibition of her works alone, but it contained Japanese folk crafts and craft works that she had “selected” as well as those that she had “created” herself in Japan, and through these works, she redefined “tradition”. The exhibited pieces were not only displayed on partition walls and independent cabinets that divide the space, but also furniture and fixtures were displayed as part of the living space, with Japanese blinds (Sudare) and mosquito nets (Kaya) that referenced traditional Japanese spatial compositions.

After returning from Japan to France, Perriand carried out a number of projects, from architecture to furniture. Three exhibitions on the theme of “useful forms” were held in 1949, 1951 and 1952 by the Union des Artistes Moderne (UAM), which was founded in 1929 and of which Perriand was a member from the beginning. The exhibition included steel pipe furniture, straw furniture and contemporary art works. It was a summary of her furniture work, including the results of her work in Japan, and the exhibition space structure also achieved a soft spatial division, as in the Japanese exhibitions. The exhibitions in 1955 and 1957, both on the theme of “Japan”, basically followed the 1941 exhibition in Japan, where modern works and folklore were mixed.

In tracing the chronological order of the major exhibitions by Perriand, as described above, it is clear that her 1941 exhibition in Japan was a major turning point in terms of “folklore”. It also influenced her work on furniture afterwards. In other words, the 1941 exhibition was not a particular solution to the “Japanese”, but related to the fundamentals of her method of creation.

3 | Perriand's Contact With Japanese Workshop Artisans and Farmers: The Genesis of the Idea for the Exhibition

Perriand arrived in Japan in August 1940 and shortly afterward met Yanagi Muneyoshi, the leader of the “Mingei (Folk-Craft)” movement, who advised her on the beauty of Japanese folk crafts. She immediately made an inspection tour of folk crafts and craftworks of artisans in Tokyo, and later, of private houses in Kyoto, and also visited farm villages in the Tohoku region, where she came into contact with traditional folk craftsmanship. Regarding the visits to Tokyo and Kyoto, the first basic ideas that led to the exhibition were represented directly and indirectly in the memorandum in her notebook.

There were only a limited number of Japanese folk crafts and craft works that Perriand could appreciate from her energetic visits to department stores and specialized shops in Tokyo.

Visit a Japanese furniture shop. Japanese chests of drawers are very good. Other furniture is no better. But the lacquer and wood of the furniture—but the workshop crafts that keep the techniques and materials the same—are excellent. Let us use these techniques to make stools out of bamboo.³

Her criteria for evaluation related not to the beauty of form, but to technique and materials. In terms of materials, she was particularly interested in bamboo, and she appreciated the fabrication technique that respects the characteristics of the material, rather than the elaborate decorative skills. She immediately came up with the idea of having Japanese craftsmen make them use these materials.

The materials are excellent. What are they used for? How can we use this material? How can we use this fine craftsmanship? Then I take a breath. Just by doing that, my imagination already is working. What will I do with these materials, ceramic, porcelain, straw, wood, metal? What do I draw from them?⁴

Perriand knew how to deal with wood and metal. But for ceramic, porcelain, and straw, she would have to leave it to the artisans.

At the same time, she tried to make her own work with bamboo.

In fabricating bamboo chairs, I need to do my own research on different shapes. The resilience of bamboo should be utilized to the maximum. Instead of using iron rivets, use wooden fasteners (need to find a water-resistant glue and have the rivets removed from the lower part of the chair). Asked for models to test suppleness (saw bamboo floorboards). (useful for making trays).⁵

However, as bamboo was an unknown material to Perriand, she needed to know the knowledge and skills of the artisans, and

her work actually took on a new creative way: collaboration with the artisans. This became the guiding principle of export crafts. In other words, she tried to demonstrate the teaching of export crafts by her own practice.

Thus Perriand had already formulated a hypothesis for the exhibition's framework structure on 19 September 1941.

“The first section: educational” consisted of “simply selected objects” and “improved versions”. The “selected objects” to be exemplified were in principle traditional Japanese folk crafts made by artisans and farmers. “Improved versions” were exhibited in collaboration between Perriand and artisans to improve on existing folk crafts.

“The second section: examples” was a creation by Perriand, inspired by Japanese folk crafts, and was at this point “a study of new forms of bench and bamboo stools”. In other words, the exhibition consisted of two sections, but strictly defined, the exhibits could be divided into three main categories: folk pieces selected by Perriand, their improvements, and her own work.

It was not only fixtures that Perriand inspected. As well as continuing to visit shops and workshops, she also visited Katsura Imperial Villa and Shugakuin Imperial Villa in Kyoto, focusing on furniture as a spatial device. Particularly at Katsura:

■ Color-painted, sliding door, removable.

■ Wind-up blind. Fine refined woven bamboo, see-through.⁶

(Figure 3)

Sliding doors had already been used frequently in Perriand's cabinets, which she had studied in Le Corbusier's atelier (Kunio Maekawa of the Atelier suggested the Japanese sliding door system). However, this was the first time she had seen a device such as a screen, which softly divides the area both visually and spatially. At this time, she was thinking about the composition of the exhibition space.

■ Instead of screens that separate and compose the landscape, storage cabinets can be used. But be careful: the shelves must be installed facing the front, even at the back. Hang the blinds of natural or decorative material on the front, for example, tapestry cloth or even wood. Sliding doors with pictures.⁷

The method of dividing space with freestanding storage cabinets, which was also the methodology of Le Corbusier's interior decoration in his atelier, could be used in place of the folding screen. Or, the blind could be replaced by a tapestry. Tapestries and “picture walls” were also her methods used in interior decoration in Paris.

Furthermore, at the Shugakuin Imperial Villa:

■ The cabinet plays freely, like a cloud. Wooden furniture divides space.⁸

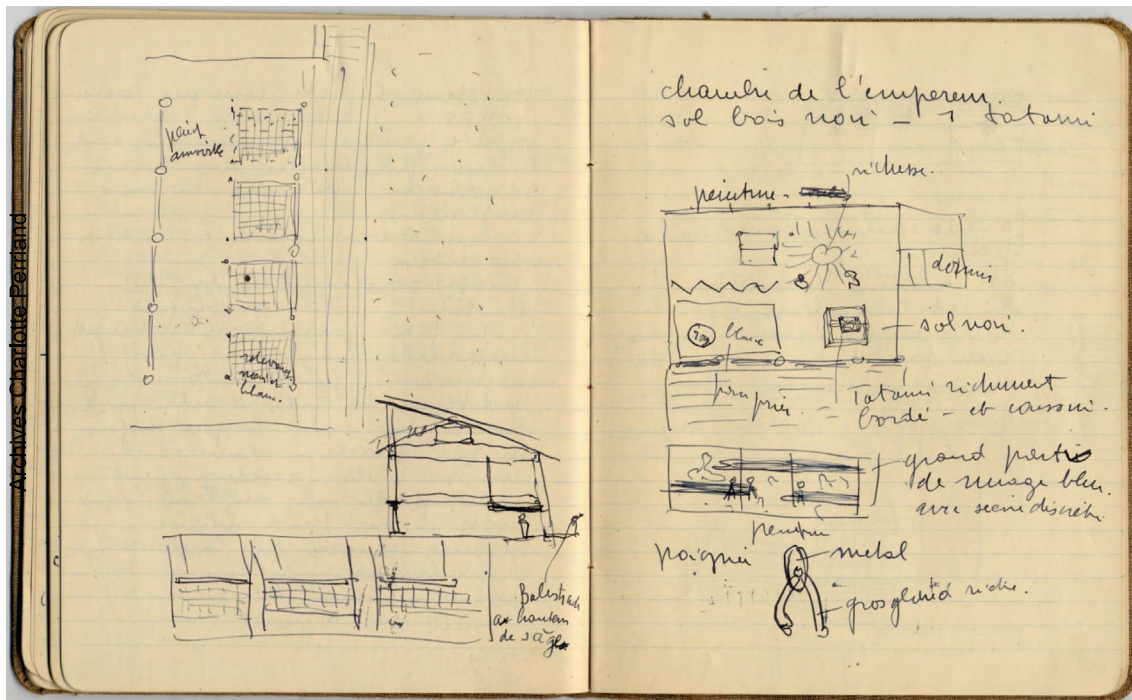


FIGURE 3 | Perriand 's notes from her visit to Katsura (1941). Source: AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook.

The Shugakuin's Difference shelf composition was referenced in the freestanding *Bibliothèque Nuage* (Bookcase: "Cloud") after the return to France, and was to be created as a stand-alone cabinets (not prototyped in the 1941 exhibition, perhaps due to time constraints).

During her subsequent tour of the Tohoku region, Perriand did not leave detailed notes in her notebook, nor was there any photographic record of her visit. This is because she did not feel the need to modify the exhibition policy. She solely came into contact with the artisans who made the crafts in their workshops and the farmers who made them for their daily lives. Thus, through contact with Japanese folk objects, artisans and farmers, she found that Japanese "techniques" and "materials" were closely connected to life and to the gestures of life.

4 | Logic of Creation in the Exhibition

Perriand categorized "selection", "improvement", and "creation" as exhibition methodologies (memorandum of 19 September 1941), though, the "improvement" of folk crafts is in a sense a "creation" based on what has been "selected". In this sense, except for her selection of folk crafts, many pieces in the exhibition are "creations" (Table 2).

In the roundtables and lectures held in Japan in the immediate aftermath of the exhibition, the "materials" and "techniques" of folk art and crafts are emphasized, but the logic of "creation" behind the exhibition's selection criteria was also discussed.

The first thing I would like to point out when looking at this exhibition is that the ideas should

not be far removed from the materials. There are no ideas in this exhibition that show any attachment to the material itself. There are no designs that seem to be the result of a well-developed and beautiful technique. It is impossible to make a design that is not based on the skills acquired in practice, and that is not based on the materials that should be used. Of course, it may be fair to point out that the fact that the designs shown in the exhibition are being produced is partly the result of the mistaken education in art schools, where the so-called "design on paper" was taught. There may be beautiful designs, but they have nothing to do with real life. I would first and foremost like to emphasize that such designs must not be devised apart from the technology and materials.

You have made simple, clean, and respectable products. With your own sensitivity to things, and based on your own philosophy of life, you have created various beautiful things, such as tea ceremony rooms, houses, farms, pottery, vessels, textiles, and many other things that I do not yet know but can imagine from now on. Then there are your traditional meals, where all the delights of steel, steel of sight, and steel of taste are experienced together.⁹

According to Perriand, it is in "life" that the human senses come into play, and their honest sensitivity to materials and forms is created, leading to the gestures of eating in daily life. This extends to everything from fixtures to architectural spaces. And

TABLE 2 | Perriand's Three Methodologies of the Exhibition in 1941.

Photo number	Logic of creation in the exhibition			Methods of creation			
	Selection	Improvement	Creation	Material conversion	Application of technology	Dimension reduction	Transcription of patterns
Photo 1							
Photo 2							
Photo 3							
Photo 4	*						
Photo 5	*		*	*	*		
Photo 6		*				*	
Photo 7			*	*	*		
Photo 8			*				
Photo 9		*		*	*		*
Photo 10	*						
Photo 11	*						
Photo 12	*						
Photo 13	*						
Photo 14	*						
Photo 15	*						
Photo 16	*						
Photo 17	*						
Photo 18	*						
Photo 19	*						
Photo 20	*						
Photo 21	*		*				*
Photo 22	*		*				
Photo 23							*
Photo 24	*		*				*
Photo 25			*				
Photo 26	*						
Photo 27			*	*			
Photo 28	*						
Photo 29	*						
Photo 30	*						
Photo 31			*	(*)	*		
Photo 32	*	*					
Photo 33			*	*			
Photo 34		*		*			
Photo 35			*			*	
Photo 36			*	*	(*)		
Photo 37			*				*
Photo 38			*	*	(*)		

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

Photo number	Logic of creation in the exhibition			Methods of creation			
	Selection	Improvement	Creation	Material conversion	Application of technology	Dimension reduction	Transcription of patterns
Photo 39			*		*		
Photo 40			*	*	(*)	(*)	
Photo 41			*		*		
Photo 42			*				
Photo 43			*	*			*
Photo 44			*	*			*
Photo 45			*	*			
Photo 46			*	*			
Photo 47	*		*	*	*		
Photo 48			*				
Photo 49							
Photo 50							
Photo 51	*						
Photo 52			*				
Photo 53			*				

Note: Photos referred to in the text have been highlighted. Source: Made by the author.

nothing is wasted in this life. Similarly, the forms of folk crafts are naturally simple. With this in mind, she tried to select the works for the exhibition.

The true basic idea behind my selection was to choose the simplest form that I could take with me and that I could use very effectively. So to speak of the first case, there is the square tray (1), which I happened to see at an exhibition of folk art from the San-in region held at Takashimaya when I went to Osaka. It was an old one, but the way it was inlaid with only one type of shell and then set into the lacquer was very effective. I used it because I found an example of a very simple yet effective method of placing a single object in a very simple place.¹⁰

The criteria for choosing a form that is “very simple form and can be used very effectively” is not just to choose a form that is easy to use for everyone without any decoration. To be able to “use very effectively” means to be able to “use it effectively in the life” that is lived there. Moreover, it is equally linked to the life of the aristocracy, such as that of the isolated palace, as well as to the life of farmers.

However, in the pieces actually exhibited at the exhibition, they were mostly related to folk crafts made by farmers, and not highly sophisticated handicrafts. And it is the “gestures” of farmers’ lives that link “life” and “creation”, which has been Perriand’s thinking since her visit to the Japanese regions:

Extension of practical needs, search for better conditions, struggle with nature. The same habits, the same movements, the same production methods that have been followed for generations. Tradition. A way of life with integrity, not influenced by money or prestige.¹¹

The above-mentioned logic of Perriand sensibility of creation is shown in Figure 3. Within the dotted line are the dimensions of the creation of “forms” using “materials” and “techniques”, and in the case of the “farmer”, the “no waste gesture” is the gesture of the one who creates and at the same time the gesture of the one who lives.

5 | Methods of Creation

The photographic illustrations in the Catalog vary—some show multiple artifacts, some are collages, some are two or more photographs, and some are fragments of the venue scenery. In typifying her intentions for the exhibition explained by her in the *Catalog*, four methods can be extracted: Of course, these sometimes overlap in a single exhibited work (Table 2).

5.1 | Material Conversion (Bamboo, Straw, Wood)

The largest number of exhibited pieces in Perriand’s “creations” are based on forms that she had studied before coming to Japan, and which she created (or instructed Japanese artisans to make)

by converting the original furniture forms into Japanese materials. Most of the materials converted are bamboo and straw. Bamboo was a material that she was interested in the shop and workshop in Tokyo immediately after arriving in Japan, and was probably an unknown material to her. Straw, on the other hand, was found in rural villages in the north-east of Japan. The straw itself was the material for the seat of a chair she found in a shop in Paris in the early 1930s,¹² but the quality of the material and the techniques used in it were probably very different from those he had seen in Paris.

The most typical material conversion to bamboo is the original reclining chair (chaise longue) studied by Perriand in the early 1920s, illustrated and explained by Perriand herself for the *Catalog* (Photo 33) (Figure 4).

Bamboo as factory production, use of bamboo as a substitute material:

- Chair made entirely of steel. Can be repositioned without any mechanical manipulation. Designed by Le Corbusier, Jeanneret, and Perriand. France.
- Substituting the resilience of steel with thin sheets of bamboo, Japan, 1986.¹³

According to Perriand, the change of material from steel pipe to bamboo for the chaise longue is simply a “substitution”, but it was made using the resilience and ease of shaping of bamboo, which was also applied to the chair (Photo 33). The shape of the chaise longue differs in the head and the foot part between the steel pipe and the bamboo in order to ensure strength, but there is no significant difference in the overall length and width dimensions. Also, the chaise longue seems to be an early trial of material conversion from steel pipe to bamboo as a test piece in Japan (Figure 5).

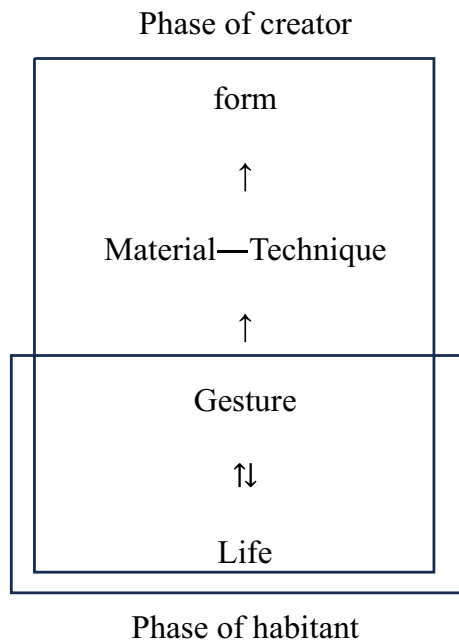


FIGURE 4 | Perriand’s logic of “selection”. Source: Made by the author.

However, even before her arrival in Japan, Perriand had been considering the prototype chaise longue; the folding system itself had been pursued in LC’s narrow house concept in a series of steel furniture studies from 1928 to 1933,¹⁴ and in 1939 she had drawn up plans for a chaise longue that would be made in Japan.¹⁵ What she required of the craftsmen in Japan was to make variations of it.

Perriand attempted to experiment with replacing the chaise longue with bamboo, then converted it to straw as well. She explained the base frame and seat cushions as separated into their parts in the catalog. Although it appears as if the cushion is folded to adapt to the Japanese floor-sitting lifestyle, the folding system itself was actually studied as part of Le Corbusier’s research on narrow houses, in a series of steel furniture studies from 1928 to 1933,¹⁶ and was exhibited at the popular budget living room exhibition (1936), as well as in the 1938.¹⁷ Thus, the functional requirement for compact living in narrow houses was replaced by the Japanese floor-sitting lifestyle in Japan.

Furthermore, in terms of overall dimensions, the head is 5 cm shorter than the 55 cm width of the original chaise longue, while the legs are not as slender as those of the chaise longue (according to actual measurements by the author) in order to fold it up. It seems that it is due to the consideration of the Japanese body size.

The straw used for chaise longue was made by Perriand, who instructed farmers to fabricate variations,¹⁸ and has been made into parts as a cushion (Photo 41; Photo 42 for variations).

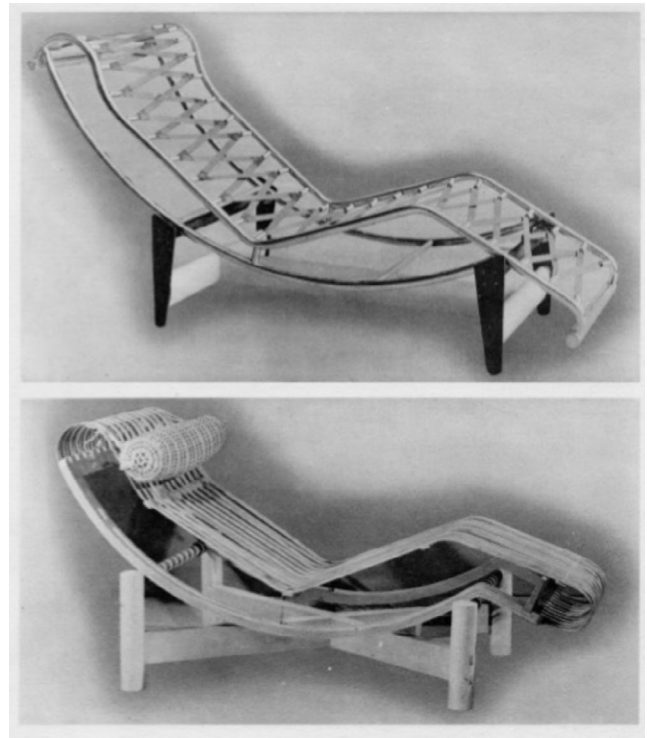


FIGURE 5 | Material Conversion Forme Metal Tube to Bamboo. Source: Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, *Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art*, Koyama-shoten, 1941, photo 33).

The wood itself had also been studied by Perriand as a material for furniture since the 1930s, as well as steel pipes, and in Japan the exhibited pieces are not only a chair, but also a small wooden table, which is also made into parts (Photo 36). The first prototype was produced as Jean Richard's small table [OCChP1, p.429] in 1930's, but in the exhibited pieces, she replaced the top with a bamboo woven, which can be replaced by piece parts. There are two types of legs as "standard" supports for the tops, with different three-point support assemblies (Photo 38).

The forms of wooden table are based on 1938 wood furniture research of the "Form Libre", that is, the use of free-form curves in wood to explore the possibilities of gesture. The exhibited pieces are made from the texture of Japanese cherry and red pine wood (photos 45 and 46) (Figure 6). In addition, there is also a "Form Libre" table, without cutting the edges of wood (Photo 27).

A section of the tree trunk is placed on an iron leg tripod. The leg is as invisible as possible so as to preserve the value of the trunk section itself. (Photo 27) This method of creation was criticized by Japanese modern designers who did not know her original form, but she regarded the natural form itself as a "work of art" (Catalog, p. 5).¹⁹

5.2 | Application of Technology (Bamboo Weaving, Cloth Weaving, and Straw Weaving Techniques)

Perriand's research in Paris on the conversion of form prototypes into Japanese materials led to the idea of the artisanism/craftsmanship of furniture and, on the other hand, to the plastic expression of natural beauty. Her focus on "economic" materials leading to natural beauty is directly linked to her focus on the "economic" technical beauty of the artisans or farmers. Indeed, the descriptions of material conversion in the *Catalog* often include the application of traditional Japanese techniques (Photo 5 below).

The traditional backrests of luggage made in rural villages in the northeast were used as chaise longues, which were made by farmers themselves using straw weaving techniques. The rug itself was used in the interior decoration of the 1929



FIGURE 6 | Solid Wooden Table as "Form Libre". Source: Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art, Koyama-shoten, 1941, photo 27).

Salon d'Automne. In Japan, she also had rugs woven by farmers (Photo 47) or had them made by Japanese workshops (Figure 7).

In the case of the application of weaving techniques, whether bamboo weaving, straw weaving or wood weaving, they are all used as materials for furniture created by the Perriand, but in the case of the bamboo blinds, little "improvement" was made and they are used unchanged as blinds (Photo 47) (Figure 8). This seems to be related to the fact that the blinds seen in Japan were a visual dividing device between the exterior and interior, to the relatively low-interest she had in gardens compared to interior decoration, or to the fact that she could not actively link the intangible nature of the blind, which was different from the wall, to "creation".

5.3 | Dimension Reduction (Furniture: Reference to Traditional Japanese Lifestyle)

The overall height dimensions of both the dining table and small table, as well as the chairs, are relatively low and it appears to reflect the Japanese floor-sitting lifestyle, but do not differ



FIGURE 7 | Application of Rugs Woven by farmers. Source: Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art, Koyama-shoten, 1941, photo 5.

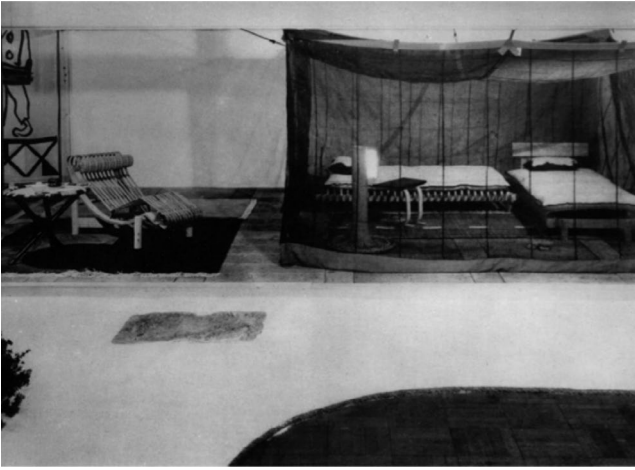


FIGURE 8 | Low Sleeping Platform on Display in the Exhibition Space. Source: Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art, Koyamashoten, 1941, photo 47.

significantly from the dimensions of the forms Perriand was studying in Paris for narrow houses.

Large table. A table frame structure suitable for a large-sided table, with a wide opening under the table, so that the knees and feet of the diner do not get caught on the table legs. This is the most important principle in table construction. The table is made of cherry wood, and the table boards are made of beautifully grained red pine split into small pieces for the vertical frame.²⁰

In her notes, Perriand explains the general movement when sitting at a dining table, while she not refer to the unique Japanese lifestyle of sitting; hence, the reduction of the height of the table and chairs was not a reflection of a peculiar Japanese lifestyle. However, it was a height that had already been studied as a possibility for various gestures in 1938. This height could be applied to the Japanese way of life, and she adopted it.

The exception is the sleeping platform (Photo 35) (Figure 8). Although Perriand did not mention it, the legs are low, which was not the case with her previous sleeping platforms. In Paris, she has designed sleeping platforms with relatively high legs (Le Corbusier's own residence in 1933 and the Salvation Army Refugee Centre in Paris). Although she did not mention it, the sleeping platform probably reflects the Japanese way of life, with futons on the floor (the natural wooden table that she created in Japan is also very low in height). (Photo 27).

5.4 | Transcription of Patterns (Japanese Symbolic Signs)

Perriand is interested in Oriental and Japanese patterns and incorporates them into her furniture. They are, so to speak,

superficial “decorations”, which should be “useless”. However, it is also true that patterns spread into Japanese lives as symbolic signs, and she treated them as traces of life as the texture of the material. The patterns are transferred onto chair seats, small table tops and carpets. The carpets, in particular, were used as spatial devices that can also be used as tapestry-like wall coverings. It is an adaptation of the photographic wall that Perriand and Le Corbusier created for the salon walls of the Swiss Student House (1932). Such a spatial composition, with its emphasis on vertical sides, differs from the dimension of traditional Japanese housing, where ceiling heights are restrained.

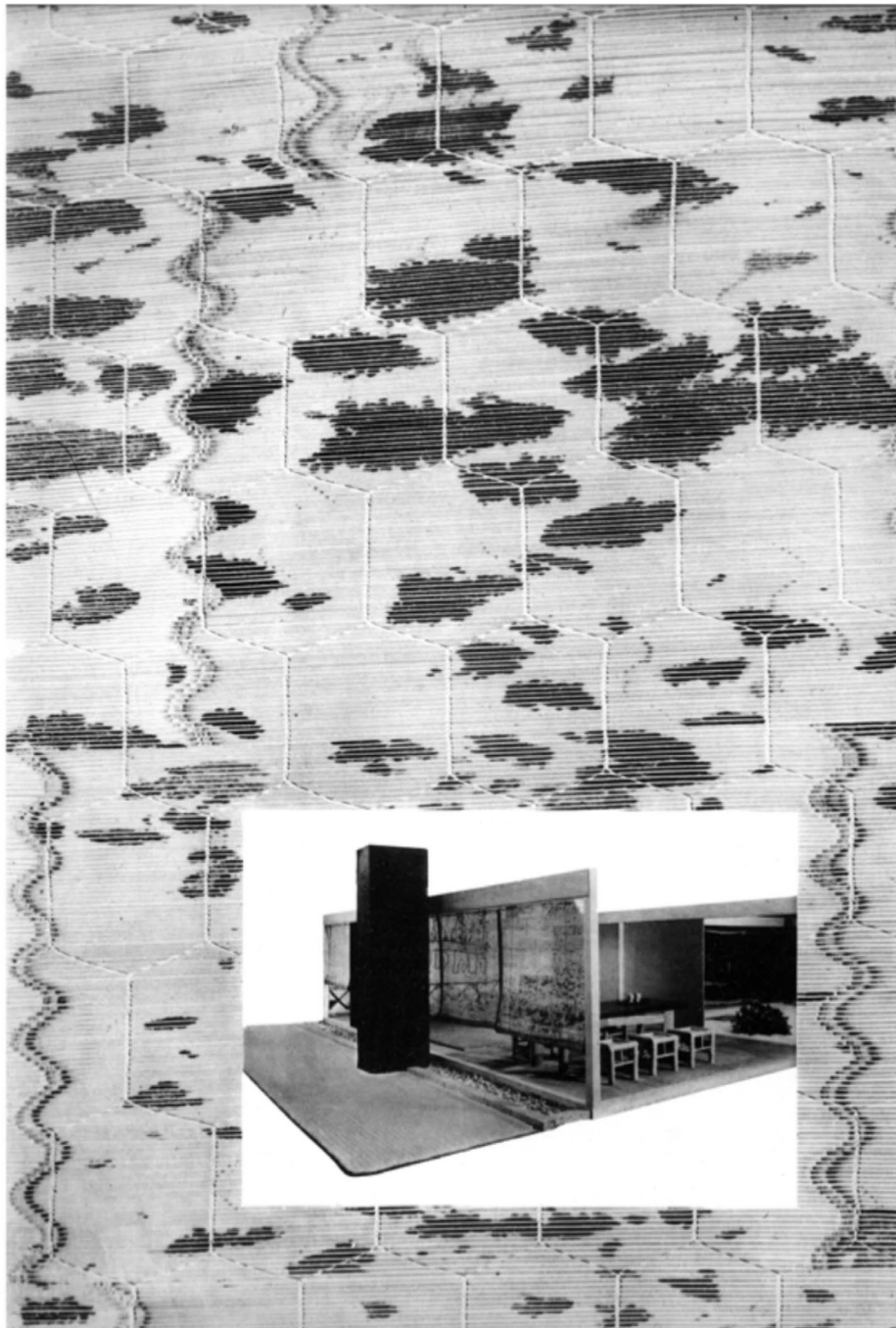
In the exhibition, the chair itself adopted her prototype but incorporated Harumasa Yamamoto's expression of the wavering bamboo grass in Maki-e lacquer, which was used on the seat and back of the chair (Photo 8). The slightly different color tones include her “creative” character, but the pattern itself is reproduced faithfully using traditional techniques.

Japanese characters Kanji were also transcribed (Photo 24) (Figure 10). Traditionally, Japanese tea bowls and trays are often decorated with text and poems, but Perriand's transcription was of carpets, which were also quite large. This is a method of spatial composition of floor surfaces not found in traditional Japanese tatami. Similar techniques were used equivalently in drawings of sailors (Photo 23) and children (Photo 21), which are unrelated to tradition, or in drawings by Picasso and Léger (Photo 37). Although the technique of transcription was sometimes based on photographic printing plates, most transcriptions were realized using traditional craftwork techniques, with further color modifications and considerable detail by Perriand (Figure 11).

In addition to this transfer of iconography, the patterns created by the sutra-wrapping technique used to wrap the sutra scrolls are applied to the curtains of the exhibition space (Photo 9) (Figure 9), developing the photographic wall technique explored in Paris.

6 | Conclusion

The pieces selected, created, or inherited from tradition in Perriand's “Selection, Tradition and Creation” exhibition in Japan overlap so much with each other that it is not possible to make a clear distinction between them. Her criteria for the “selection” of the exhibited works were that the form should guide the gesture through careful consideration of materials and techniques. The criteria were also her method of “creation”, namely the conversion of materials and application of techniques, as well as the transcription of patterns using traditional techniques, or the reduction of dimensions to correspond to the unique gestures of the Japanese. Of course the four methods of creation, were not used strategically by Perriand. In some cases, multiple methods were synthesized and realized as a creative work. For example, the transcription of patterns, such as the bamboo blinds in Photo 9, requires the application of craftsman's technology to realize them. With



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FIGURE 9 | Japanese-style blinds used for the living room display. *Source:* Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art, Koyama-shoten, 1941, photo 9.

such a holistic approach to creation, Perriand's goal was the creation of "gestures" common to all human beings.

Hence, the continuity between "selection" and "creation" is not, however, only linked to the Japanese "tradition". It is also related to the fact that Perriand's "creation" is based on forms that she had studied in Paris. In Japan, she used the prototypes of forms she studied in Paris and interprets them with Japanese materials and techniques, transforming them: she is not influenced by the forms of traditional Japanese folk works themselves. Her "creation" is the opposite of transforming traditional forms existing in Japan into modern forms.

Sori Yanagi, who accompanied Perriand on her trip in Japan, testifies:

When I used to work for Mms Perriand, she never presented a drawing to the fabricator when designing a new chair. She would go to a suitable factory, observe the conditions of the factory, inspect the machine tools, or study the materials carefully, and only then would she present the fabricator with a simple drawing of her idea, ask him whether it would be practical to make, and then fabricate a



FIGURE 10 | Low Table and Carpet with enlarged transcriptions of Japanese Characters Kanji. Source: Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, *Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art*, Koyama-shoten, 1941, photo 24.

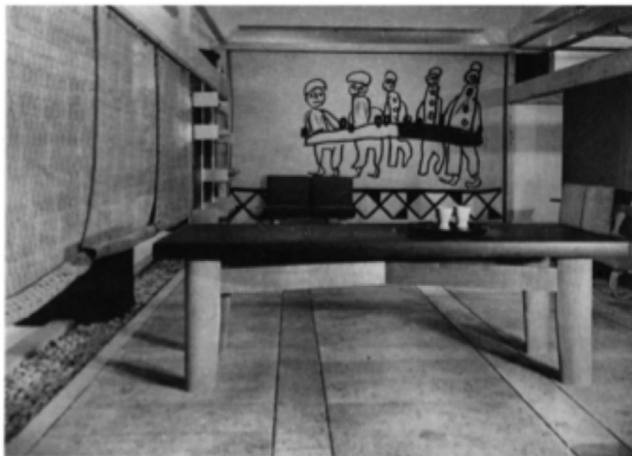


FIGURE 11 | Tapestry wall with enlarged and transcribed children's drawings. Source: Charlotte Perriand, translated by Junzo Sakakura, *Selection, Tradition, Creation, Contact with Japanese Art*, Koyama-shoten, 1941, photo 21.

simple prototype or model. After that, a simple prototype or model was made. Once the prototype was completed, she would correct the impossible points and move on to making the next prototype after improving what needed to be improved. After repeating this process a dozen times (or at least ten times over), it was decided that only when there were no more faults in any part of the prototype should it be put into production. Only then were official drawings drawn up to keep a record of the finished product.²¹

According to Yanagi, Perriand did not begin her creations by making drawings, but rather worked with the artisans. This may indeed have been the case in the actual production process in Japan. This was her act of identifying the specific characteristics of Japanese materials and techniques. However, the

prototype itself was already in her mind. At least the chaise longue made in Japan was based on a drawing before her arrival in Japan.²²

Essentially, the Japanisation of Perriand's own prototypes was her way of inheriting the Japanese "tradition" (i.e., consideration of gestures): selected, created and then integrated. The interior space proposed by her in the exhibition space is a mixture of modernity and a feeling of déjà vu due to the Japanese tradition at the same time, since both are concerned with "gesture" and "life". This exhibition is a question about creation,²³ and what is the creativity of the pieces.²⁴

Conflicts of Interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Endnotes

- ¹ References [1–3]. For the Perriand's concept of "folklore", including Japanese, see Reference [4].
- ² References [5], pp.37–38.
- ³ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, 5 September 1941.
- ⁴ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, 5 September 1941.
- ⁵ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, 17 September 1941.
- ⁶ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, 1st Oct 1941.
- ⁷ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, 1st Oct 1941.
- ⁸ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, 2st Oct 1941.
- ⁹ Reference [6], pp. 28–30.
- ¹⁰ Reference [7], p. 190.
- ¹¹ AChP, Charlotte Perriand's Notebook, no date.
- ¹² Reference [5], pp. 76–77.
- ¹³ Reference [8], photo 33.
- ¹⁴ Reference [9], pp. 0.102–103.
- ¹⁵ Reference [9], p.431; AChP 40096, pp.102–103.
- ¹⁶ Reference [9], pp.102–103.
- ¹⁷ Reference [9], AChP 40096, 1939.10.20, p.431.
- ¹⁸ Perriand's letter of 15 December 1997.
- ¹⁹ Reference [8], p.5.
- ²⁰ Reference [8], photo 46.
- ²¹ Reference [10], pp.1–2.
- ²² Reference [9], p.430.
- ²³ For example, Perriand described the threads she had the farmers make. In Shinjo, I felt that it was better to simply tell the people who make folk crafts how to use them and leave the creative process to them, than to give them instructions on how to make them or show them a model. ...In the end, the quality of a piece of folk craft emerges when it is made with the feeling of using it in one's own home, and it will fail if it is displayed at an exhibition, aims for an award or is

intended to be sold. I would like to talk to them only about the purpose of the use and let them actually make it. I don't know whether this will succeed or not, but I believe that at least that is where the true life of folklore lies (Reference [11], p.17).

²⁴ In her selection of folk pieces, Perriand explained that the items to be seen were limited in time, but this excuse directly accounts for the affinity between tradition and modernity, and shows that Perriand's 'creation' is not originality. In the traditional, it is not the thing itself, but the way it is, the feeling of the whole being, that has some resemblance to what is newest that we are looking for. Not the work itself, but the way it is, which also relates to the overall principle, which corresponds to what I have been looking for a long time (Reference [7], p.189).

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6. C. Perriand and J. Sakakura, "On Japanese Industrial Arts," *Monthly Folk Crafts* 3, no. 3 (1941): 26–33.
7. C. Perriand, "Interview About the Exhibition of Ms Perriand's Creations 1," *Kogei News* 10, no. 5 (1941): 187–193.
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