SIDE GALLERY

PIERRE JEANNERET

Central State Library Desk (Dismountable Version)
Manufactured by Government Workshops, Chandigarh
India, 1961
Solid teak, pleated teak, aluminum

Measurements
185 × 162 × 102h cm
72,8 × 63,8 × 40,1h in

Provenance
Central State Library, Chandigarh, India
Private Collection

Details
Manufacturer's Label

About
Designed for the Central State Library in Chandigarh in 1961, this monumental desk stands among the rarest and most architecturally expressive furniture pieces created by Pierre Jeanneret for the city's institutional interiors. Conceived during the final phase of the Chandigarh project, the design reflects the powerful structural clarity and sculptural presence that characterize Jeanneret's mature work in India.
Constructed in solid Indian teak, the desk features a richly textured surface finished with multiple layers of original shellac, producing a warm cognac tone and a subtly irregular gloss that highlights the natural grain of the wood. The table is assembled from massive teak elements, including a thick tabletop connected to a lateral storage unit incorporating drawers and cabinet doors with aluminum interiors.
The structure balances two distinct supports: on one side, three vertical slatted legs create a rhythmic architectural base, while on the other, cylindrical solid legs provide structural stability. The interplay between mass and void, solid surfaces and open spacing, gives the desk a sculptural presence that resonates with the monumental architecture of Chandigarh itself.
Originally conceived as a dismountable structure, the desk reflects the pragmatic yet visionary approach that defined the city's furniture program. Today only a handful of examples are known to exist, making this piece a rare and powerful artifact from one of the most ambitious modernist urban projects of the twentieth century.

Biography
Pierre Jeanneret (1896–1967) was a Swiss architect and designer and a key collaborator of his cousin Le Corbusier. Working mainly in Paris during the early decades of his career, he co-founded an architectural studio with Le Corbusier in 1922, where they developed influential modernist ideas in architecture, urban planning, and furniture design, often collaborating with Charlotte Perriand.
Jeanneret played an important role in the development of modern furniture and architecture associated with their studio, contributing to projects presented at the Salon d'Automne and to many of the architectural works that defined the modern movement.
Later in his career he moved to India, where he worked closely with Le Corbusier on the planning and construction of Chandigarh. There he served as the city's chief architect for several years, designing numerous public buildings, housing projects, and furniture pieces that became emblematic of the city's modernist identity.

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