

Kukje Gallery  
**Jean Royère**



**Jean Royère (French, 1902-1981)**

*Ours polaire*  
1950

red sofa, velvet  
78 x 240 x 142 cm

Image provided by Kukje Gallery

**February 28 – March 31**

○ **Exhibition Information**

Artist: Jean Royère (French, 1902-1981)

Exhibition Dates: February 28 – March 31, 2013

Exhibition Space: Kukje Gallery K1

Opening Hours: Monday – Saturday: 10am-6pm, Sunday, Holiday: 10am-5pm

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○ **About the Exhibition**

Kukje Gallery is very pleased to present the exhibition of French designer Jean Royère. Instantly recognizable for his inventive use of materials and playful forms, Royère was a trend setting designer well ahead of his time. This will be his first major showing in Korea and will include works that span the full breadth of his long and stunning career.

Jean Royère's design is characterized by his sensitive use of sumptuous textiles, wood, and metal. The quality and workmanship combined with an endlessly inventive approach to form makes a piece by Royère tasteful as well as luxurious. The designer was especially drawn to seating, and his couches and chairs display an iconic use of swooping lines and plush overstuffed upholstery that has become synonymous with Royère's aesthetic philosophy.

Employing elaborate wooden armatures and metal forms, Royère created stylized curvaceous forms that he sheathed in a whole range of available fabrics including deep velvets, pastel silks, and bold-colored cottons. Favoring vibrant jewel tones, Royère's genius lie in his ability to marry luxurious material choices with simple elegant objects that defined space without overwhelming it. He recognized that his furniture and interior design was in the service of his sophisticated clientele, and should be functional both when entertaining and in business. This vision has come to define twentieth century design, and Jean Royère was one of its first champions and his influence continues to be felt today.

○ **About the Artist & Work**

Born in Paris in 1902, Jean Royère was something of a design prodigy achieving significant commercial success by his early thirties. His first breakthrough came when he was commissioned in 1933 to redesign the café and restaurant of the Hotel Carlton on Paris' Champs-Élysées. Approaching the project as an opportunity to design a complete environment, Royère created tables and semi-circular, wicker armchairs in a balance of comfort and style. The design instantly won the young designer a dedicated client base and he was invited to show his work at two of Paris' most prestigious shows: the Salon d'Automne in 1934 and the Salon de la Société des Artistes Décorateurs in 1937.

During the prewar period, Royère laid out what would become his principles of design: openness to material, inventiveness while still attending to simple lines, and the importance of space. He manifested these values in his own home on the Rue de Passy, in Paris' affluent 16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, which he filled with sofas in metal tubing frames and low coffee tables (radical at the time) squatting on long-tufted rugs. Rejecting what he perceived as an over reliance on the minimal aesthetic, Royère developed signature lines of chairs and couches that were notable for their material volume and fullness as well as their playful titles: *éléphanteau* (elephant calf), *ouef* (egg), *boule* (ball), *ours polaire* (polar

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bear), and *trèfle* (clover).

As his reputation grew, so did the scope of his ambitions, and Royère expanded his client base to the Middle East, opening offices in Cairo, Egypt and Beirut, Lebanon. This would prove to be a fateful decision as he was soon rewarded with commissions from the ruling elites in those burgeoning cultural centers, eventually becoming the Shah of Iran's designer of choice as well as working for King Hussein of Jordan, Prince Chehab of Lebanon (before he became President of his country), and Saudi Arabia's future King Saud and his nephew, Faisal. Undertaken in 1959, Royère's largest single project in the Middle East was the Senate Palace in Teheran. Luxury hotels also provided major contracts, and Royère completed major commissions for the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem, the Park Hotel in Teheran, the Hotel Semiramis in Cairo, the Bristol and the Capitole in Beirut, and the Philadelphia and the Amman Club in the Jordanian capital of Amman.

In all of these spaces, many of them opulent, Royère never lost sight of his philosophy that it was not the furniture that was the most important – he famously quipped that “I am against furniture” – but the dynamic space that is created and complemented by good design. Having a Royère designed piece immediately sets a tone and brings light to any environment.

While never out of the public eye, interest in the visionary designer has steadily grown since his death in 1981. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs staged a major show of Royère's work in October 1999. Today, passionate interest among collectors, decorators, and students of design continue to confirm the brilliance and historical significance of Jean Royère.

○ Exhibition Images & Captions

Use of images **must** clearly credit the artist and other relevant parties.



**Jean Royère (French, 1902-1981)**

Installation view, Kukje Gallery

Photo: Kim Sang Tae

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