1901-1984. Jean Prouvé was born in Paris. Though never formally educated, he used his training as a blacksmith and engineering knowledge to push the boundaries of prefabricated building during the early part of the twentieth century.
Jean Prouvé grew up amongst his father Victor’s Ecole de Nancy, an eclectic group of artists whose concern was to make art accessible to all, seeking to bring together art and industry, combining social consciousness with the artistic determination.

In 1916, Jean apprenticed at the blacksmith shop of Emile Robert, then at the Paris workshop of Szabo. The craftsman approach he learned there would last his lifetime.
01 Aluminum Panel Drawings


02 Panels as curtain wall
Prouvé created basic structural types, The Alphabet of Structures, in order to facilitate its use of preconstructed panels and parts.

For me, there is no architecture without structure.

Jean Prouvé
Prouvé was concerned with access to natural ventilation and shading. He also used injected polyurethane insulation between folded steel panels, sometimes preassembled but often injected on site.
Prouve was interested in manipulation of light and air through the incorporation of interchangeable panels: solid, glazed, and opening. He also used exterior shutters and perforated panels, like the port-hole doors, to regulate light and air. The individual dwelling must be light and dynamic which is an expression of large-scale production and therefore characteristic of industry.
Kit of Parts: Since all parts are prefabricated, construction costs are minimized. Prouvé tried to create structures to minimize manpower or material. Some could be erected by two men and simple lifting devices, others were reduced to the minimum of parts.
Aluminum and glass fit into folded steel structure or extruded aluminum.
Manufacturing and installing the secondary skin was also designed to minimize time and materials.
In addition to the “opening” panels, Prouvé experimented with other ventilation systems. In this case, the vent opening is integrated into the column system, negating the need for operable windows.

Prouvé also used prebuilt modules for interior use, such as bathroom and kitchen.
Prouve may have been ahead of his time in attempting an industrialized building process. However, we must also take note that his Tropical House, designed to fit into French cargo planes for delivery, was more expensive than a traditional dwelling made from local materials and very few were sold for that reason. Scales of economy are not the only factors.