

LE CORBUSIER: AN ATLAS OF MODERN LANDSCAPES SPANS THE ENTIRE RANGE OF LE CORBUSIER'S ARTISTIC OUTPUT

Exhibition Features Room-Sized Interiors, Major Paintings, and Original Architectural Models of Buildings Designed by Le Corbusier

Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes

June 15–September 23, 2013

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Exhibition Gallery, sixth floor

Press Preview: Wednesday, June 5, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

NEW YORK, May 28, 2013—*Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes*, the largest exhibition ever produced in New York of the protean and influential oeuvre of Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, French, b. Switzerland, 1887–1965), encompasses his work as an architect, interior designer, artist, city planner, writer, and photographer, and is on view from June 15 through September 23, 2013. This major exhibition draws on MoMA's own collection, and extensively on exclusive loans from the Paris-based Le Corbusier Foundation. Following a path from his youth in the Swiss Jura mountains to his death on the shores of the French Riviera, the exhibition focuses on four types of landscapes, observed or conceived at different scales, and documented in all the genres Le Corbusier pursued during six decades: the landscape of found objects; the domestic landscape; the architectural landscape of the modern city; and the vast territories he planned. MoMA is the only U.S. venue for the exhibition, which will travel to Fundació "la Caixa" in Barcelona (January 28–May 11, 2014), and to Fundació "la Caixa" in Madrid (June 11–October 13, 2014). It is organized by guest curator Jean-Louis Cohen, Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, with Barry Bergdoll, The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at MoMA.

Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes reveals the ways in which Le Corbusier observed and imagined landscapes throughout his career, using all the artistic mediums and techniques at his disposal, from early watercolors of Italy, Greece, and Turkey, to sketches of India, and from photographs of his formative journeys to architectural models of his large-scale projects. Bringing together around 320 objects, all of these dimensions of Le Corbusier's artistic process, including major paintings and four reconstructed interiors, are presented in MoMA's first comprehensive exhibition of his work.

Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes is divided into five sections, and begins with one of four room-sized interiors built especially for the exhibition. Featuring original furniture, the interiors vividly present Le Corbusier's concepts for domestic landscapes, and the notion of houses operating as machines to view landscapes. The first interior on view is the Cabanon of Le Corbusier from Roquebrune-Cap-Martin (1951–52), installed in the area outside the Tisch

galleries. A cabin built on the coast of the gulf of Monte Carlo as a summer haven for Le Corbusier himself, the Cabanon's interior dimensions are based on those of the Modulor, a system of harmonic proportions Le Corbusier had created in the 1940s. The Cabanon features rustic elements—bark-covered exterior planks and furniture—crafted by the carpenter Charles Barberis.

From the Jura Mountains to the Wide World

The first section within the galleries is devoted to Le Corbusier's early life, in his hometown of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. Under the direction of his teacher, Charles L'Eplattenier, Le Corbusier learned to draw, exploring the landscape of the Jura mountains, before focusing on architecture and completing his first house at the age of 20. Over the next five years Le Corbusier discovered the horizons of Europe. In 1907 he made an initial study trip to Italy, followed by a visit to Vienna. In 1908–09 he worked in the Paris studio of the Perret brothers, pioneers in the use of reinforced concrete. He then travelled to Germany in order to study urbanism, working in Berlin in the studio of Peter Behrens, and in 1911 journeyed to Greece and Istanbul via the Balkans. These travels around Europe are represented in the exhibition with an extraordinary selection of watercolors and pencil drawings. Sketchbooks, both large and small, reveal through hundreds of drawings the time spent observing landscapes of cities and the countryside.

Upon returning to La Chaux-de-Fonds in 1912, Le Corbusier began teaching architecture and interior design. He also built several houses in which he drew upon the experiences of his travels, such as the Villa Jeanneret-Perret, also known as the Maison Blanche, which he designed for his parents. Blueprints from his time in La Chaux-de-Fonds and a room-sized interior of the Maison Blanche (1912) with the original furniture are both on view. Based on a collection of shapes observed during his journeys, the house was a break from the regional style of the area and Le Corbusier's first work as an independent architect.

The Conquest of Paris

The second section focuses on Le Corbusier's time in Paris, whose sites and monuments he drew tirelessly. In addition to his prolific writing at this time, Le Corbusier painted assiduously, arranging on the canvas objects of daily life as if they were forming landscapes. Among these are *La Cheminée* (1918), his first painting, *Still Life* (1920), *Guitare verticale – première version* (1920), and *Nature morte du Pavillon de l'Esprit nouveau* (1924).

In 1922 he opened an architecture studio with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret (1896–1967). They would work together until 1940, as he conducted two sets of projects in parallel. On the one hand, he developed theoretical schemes, such as the "Citrohan" house (1920), the "immeuble-villas" (villa apartments), the "Ville contemporaine" (Contemporary City) (1922), and the "Plan Voisin" for Paris (1925), each of which is represented in the exhibition through drawings. On the other, Le Corbusier built villas for the elite of the French capital, in which he experimented with his provocative ideas for a new architecture made possible by reinforced concrete. These are

represented in the exhibition through models and drawings. The third room-sized interior on view is from one such villa, the Pavilion for the Villa Church in Ville d'Avray (1927–29), a project for an American couple, Henry and Barbara Church. Working with a pre-existing neoclassical structure, Le Corbusier transformed it into a music pavilion with a library in which a rectangular window delimited the view of the surrounding garden as if it were a painting. Surrounded by a large frame, the window provided the backdrop for an interior landscape where furniture designed in 1928 by Charlotte Perriand, Le Corbusier, and Pierre Jeanneret was used in a domestic setting for the first time.

Responding to Landscape from Africa to the Americas

The third section focuses on the late 1920s, when Le Corbusier abandoned the prismatic forms he used in his houses of that decade and developed an architecture that was more attentive to landscape, echoing transformations in his painting style, which is represented here by a number of canvases. He greatly expanded the geographic range of his endeavors while continuing to work on his projects for Paris.

His first European success came in 1928 during a triumphant visit to Moscow, where he received the commission for a ministry building, the Centrosoyuz, completed in 1936 (though he was defeated in the competition for the Palace of the Soviets in 1932, the original model of which—from MoMA's own collection—is on view). Le Corbusier's accomplishments reverberated around the globe due to the success of his books, which in turn increased the impact of his buildings. His encounters with new landscapes transformed his way of thinking. In 1929 his successful lecture tour of South America led him to develop plans for Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, and São Paulo. However, the enthusiastic welcome of local elites did not guarantee the success of his projects. Le Corbusier sought in vain for 12 years to carry out his provocative plan for Algiers, shown in the exhibition through numerous drawings, sketches, and an original 1945 model of the skyscraper he designed for Algiers. Among the diverse techniques used by Le Corbusier to persuade the public of the truth of his analyses and projects, lectures played a prominent role. It was in front of the audience that he developed directly, drawing on long sheets of paper, his main ideas and proposals; some of these monumental drawings are on view in the section.

Chandigarh: A New Urban Landscape for India

After 1945 Le Corbusier would face new frustrations when the headquarters of the United Nations in New York were built by Wallace K. Harrison, based on sketches by Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer. But he finally managed to design an entire city, the only one in his career, as the result of a commission from the Indian government. Le Corbusier developed the plan for Chandigarh, the new capital of the Indian state of Punjab, a project that enabled him to implement, over a vast territory, ideas developed 30 years earlier in relation to ancient Rome. Numerous drawings, sketches, and models of Chandigarh are on view. The flights he took twice a year between Europe

and India provided the opportunity for him to practice "the view of the airplane," as he termed it. The sketches on view retain the countless traces of his observations of continents, islands, and mountains. If the architecture of the 1920s was strongly related to his paintings, that of the 1950s echoed his sculptures, from works in wood produced by the Breton cabinet-maker Joseph Savina to sand-casts he developed in Long Island with Costantino Nivola. Le Corbusier also continued his work as an author, publishing numerous books. With the Modulor, a system of harmonic proportions unveiled in New York in 1947, and on behalf of the "Synthesis of the Arts," he aimed to become the central figure of a modern architecture that was almost universally accepted by that time.

Toward the Mediterranean, or the Eternal Return

During the last 15 years of his life, Le Corbusier appeared to achieve many of the objectives he had been pursuing for decades. He finally realized a building in the United States, the Carpenter Center at Harvard University, as well as five large residential units, including his building in Marseille. This project for a "unité d'habitation" ("housing unit"), or a "vertical garden city," was developed in 1945 and commissioned for the rehousing of people left homeless by the war. In Marseille, for the 337 double-height apartments assembled on a reinforced concrete frame, Le Corbusier used the proportions of the Modulor to design the elements of the building. The roughness of the surfaces and the traces of wooden formwork that resulted from the lack of sufficient skilled labor led him to assert the beauty of "rough" concrete. The interiors resulted from a collective effort. The built-in kitchen cupboards, designed by Charlotte Perriand, and the steel stairways, designed by Jean Prouvé, are complemented by elegant shelves. The loggias became an intermediary space between the interiors and the Provencal landscape. The building is represented in the exhibition through models, photos, drawings, and the final room-sized interior. Toward the end of his career the question of landscape remained central to Le Corbusier's work, and he strove to respond to geography whether in the east of France, at Ronchamp, or in the region of Lyon at La Tourette. The hospital that he designed in Venice beginning in 1962 transposed the reflections he had made during the 1930s, and is represented through drawings, models, and plans.

SPONSORSHIP:

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Funding for the accompanying publication is provided by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

PUBLICATION:

An Atlas of Modern Landscapes examines Le Corbusier's relationship with the topographies of five continents, in essays by 30 of the foremost scholars of his work. The Swiss-born, Paris-based architect is often remembered as having been aggressively indifferent to the sites of his buildings and plans, but this new generation of research, analysis, and interpretation asserts that even the most generic of his projects responded to specific geographies. His sketchbooks, letters, and publications confirm that he was deeply involved with both optical and bodily relationships to landscapes, whether in an intimate suburban plot or against a dramatic horizon. Organized by geographic regions, as an atlas, and featuring maps, the book spans his career—from his beginnings in Switzerland, as a disciple of the regional style in his hometown of La Chaux-de-Fonds, to the creation of the new Indian city of Chandigarh; from touring Europe in his Avions Voisin automobile to mapping South America from the air; from inserting grand plans into existing urban layouts to setting a chapel atop an isolated hill in Ronchamp, France—revealing how Le Corbusier transformed territories into landscapes. 9.5 x 12", 404 pages, 422 ill. \$75. Available exclusively at the MoMA Stores and online at MoMAstore.org through the end of July.

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

The Center for Architecture, in collaboration with MoMA, presents **Le Corbusier/New York symposium** on June 8 and 9. Peter Eisenman, FAIA; Yale Professor Stanislaus von Moos; Columbia Professor Mary McLeod; exhibition organizers Barry Bergdoll and Jean-Louis Cohen; and others discuss how Le Corbusier's ideas about New York influenced his work and how, in turn, Le Corbusier's legacy impacted the city's built environment. The second day, June 9, is dedicated to a tour of the United Nations Headquarters. Led by Assistant Secretary-General Michael Adlerstein, FAIA, and Public Information Officer Werner Schmidt, the tour will explore the building's architectural history, including Le Corbusier's contentious collaboration with the project's main architect, Oscar Niemeyer. Registration for the symposium is available at aiany.org/calendar. All tickets include reserved seats to the symposium, registration for a MoMA exhibition tour and the United Nations Headquarters tour, and Saturday breakfast, lunch, and reception. The symposium is organized by Center for Architecture and MoMA. A complete schedule and further information is available via the MoMA press website (MoMA.org/press).

The symposium is co-sponsored by AIANY Interiors Committee, AIANY Cultural Facilities Committee, and AIANY Historic.

AUDIO GUIDE:

The exhibition audio guide features commentary by guest curator Jean-Louis Cohen and narration by MoMA curator Barry Bergdoll. MoMA Audio is available for check out on-site, as well as online at MoMA.org, MoMA.org/audio, and as a podcast on iTunes. MoMA Audio is available free of charge courtesy of Bloomberg.

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Public Information:

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Hours: Saturday through Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Free admission during Uniqlo Free Friday Nights: Fridays, 4:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

MoMA.org: No service charge for tickets ordered on MoMA.org. Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

Film and After Hours Program Admission: \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$8 full-time students with current I.D. The price of an After Hours Program Admission ticket may be applied toward the price of a Museum admission ticket or MoMA Membership within 30 days.

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