

LE CORBUSIER

MESURES DE L'HOMME

29 APRIL – 3 AUGUST 2015

Through some three hundred works, the exhibition «Le Corbusier - Mesures de l'homme» offers a new interpretation of his work, focusing on the human figure. The analysis of the human body, in geometrical, sensorial and spiritual terms, lies at the heart of his work. His vast, multi-faceted output explores not only the fields of architecture and design, but also the visual arts – mainly painting and sculpture– and the literary side: writings on his work, poetry, and copious correspondence with his teachers, friends and family. As a visionary architect, urban planner, theorist of modernity, painter and sculptor, Le Corbusier left

a profound mark on the 20th century by dramatically changing architecture and the way it is “inhabited”. Using a decidedly innovative approach, this exhibition endeavours to refocus on the human aspect in his work, because man, the body and sensation are all essential – even crucial – points in Le Corbusier’s development. This exhibition is a journey through the labyrinth of the great man’s works and projects, from his beginnings in the Swiss Jura to his death in the Mediterranean, by way of Paris and his numerous, far-ranging travels; from his architecture to his visual artwork and his writings.

**Centre
Pompidou**

www.centrepompidou.fr

RHYTHMS AND MOTIFS

Born in La Chaux-de-Fonds in 1887, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret originally studied clockmaking, but eventually turned to architecture. He studied with the great architects of his time – Joseph Hoffmann, Auguste Perret and Peter Behrens – and drew inspiration from his travels in Italy, Austria Germany, Hungary, Turkey and Greece. In Hellaerau, he met Heinrich Tessenow, the architect of the garden city where his brother Albert Jeanneret taught rhythm with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. **(room 1)**

PURISM

In 1918, Le Corbusier painted what he considered his first picture: *La Cheminée*. The same year, he and Amédée Ozenfant published *Après le Cubisme* [After Cubism], the manifesto for the Purist movement they created together. The still lifes painted by the two artists featured simple, everyday “theme-objects”, which were positioned on the canvas using regulating lines. Geometry simplified the comprehension of the work, and made it universal. The compositions followed in quick succession and were all very similar, with minute variations. **(room 2)**

ESPRIT NOUVEAU

In 1920, together with the poet Paul Dermée, the “Purist brothers” Ozenfant and Le Corbusier founded *L'Esprit nouveau, Revue internationale d'esthétique* – an “international review of aesthetics”. Charles Henry, Theo Van Doesburg, Louis Aragon, Adolphe Loos, Jean Cocteau and Auguste Lumière also contributed to this mouthpiece of modern life. At the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts, Le Corbusier brought together all his theories on housing in his Esprit Nouveau Pavilion. The same year, he experimented with an urban complex in Pessac, near Bordeaux, where he built the Quartiers Modernes Frugès. **(room 3)**

PRIVATE SPACES

In the Twenties, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, his cousin and partner, built a series of villas that contributed to the development of their architectural vocabulary, and notably resulted in the famous “five points of new architecture” formulated in 1927: piles, a rooftop garden, an open plan, horizontal windows and a free façade. The last in the series, the Villa Savoye, became a symbol of modern architecture. **(room 4)**

FIGURATION OF BODIES

In the Thirties, Le Corbusier’s painting focused on the human body. In his so-called “objects in poetic reaction” period, bodies, or some of their parts, were juxtaposed with Purist objects. In his “Women” period, women’s bodies were omnipresent in generous, colourful form. During this time, Le Corbusier created large frescoes, including one in Vézelay at the home of his friend, the architect Jean Badovici. **(room 5)**

FURNISHING THE HOME

Le Corbusier sought sober, classic, standard solutions for furniture. In this respect, his “equipment” was very different to the ornamental Art Deco style fashionable in the 1920s: the period when he focused most intensely on creating furniture. In 1927, Charlotte Perriand joined the Le Corbusier/Pierre Jeanneret partnership. Together they produced tubular metal works that became classics of their kind. Supple, enveloping, mounted on springs, or adjustable in height, these items of furniture were ergonomic, adapting to the body and different ways of sitting down and moving. **(room 6)**

THE MODULOR

In 1943, Le Corbusier began thinking about the Modulor, a system of measurement on the scale of the average man: 183 cm, or 226 cm with the arm raised. The Modulor, widely disseminated through the book *The Modulor: A Harmonious Measure to the Human Scale, Universally Applicable to Architecture and Mechanics* (first published in French in 1950), was presented as an obvious philosophical, mathematical and historical fact, as Le Corbusier’s invention was based on classical systems. While practical in nature, the Modulor was also a poetic figure, drawn or stamped onto drafts of technical drawings, and sometimes painted or carved on the walls of buildings. **(room 7)**

THE "UNITÉS D'HABITATION"

"L'unité d'habitation de grandeur conforme" was the result of Le Corbusier's work on housing units, which he had continued since the "Ateliers d'art" at La Chaux-de-Fonds. The "Immeuble-villas", the Cartesian Skyscraper and studies on apartment buildings took shape during the post-war reconstruction period. The "unit" was economical, containing a maximum amount of housing within a relatively small ground surface area, and was a vertical city providing a number of services. Inaugurated in 1952, the Unité de Marseille, the "Cité Radieuse", generated a great deal of controversy for its creator but also brought him the Légion d'honneur. **(room 8)**

THE ACOUSTIC PERIOD

In the Forties, Le Corbusier's painting entered its "acoustic" period. The characters "Ubu" and "Ozon" appeared on the canvas, resembling giant ears. In this way, the painter stressed the importance of sight, hearing and touch in the spatial experience. His meeting with the Breton cabinetmaker Joseph Savina gave rise to a series of sculptures inspired by Le Corbusier's painted subjects. **(room 9)**

SPIRITUAL RESONANCE

The atheist Le Corbusier built for the clergy, encouraged by the dynamic energy of Father Couturier. Standing on a hill in Franche-Comté, the Notre-Dame du Haut Chapel, in Ronchamp, is a sculpture. With the Couvent de La Tourette (Rhône-Alpes), the concrete, which suffered somewhat during the construction phase, reveals all its irregularities and faults. Though described as "Brutalist", the building has a poetic quality nonetheless. Here, the musician and mathematician Iannis Xenakis (who was collaborating with the architect at the time) installed the famous undulating glass panes. Xenakis was also involved in the Philips Pavilion built for the Brussels International Exhibition. This was the setting for the *Electronic Poem*, a sound and light show created by Le Corbusier and the composer Edgar Varèse. **(room 10)**

A HUMANIST CITY

With Chandigarh, the capital of the Punjab state built from scratch, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wanted a "new town, symbolic of India's freedom, unfettered by the traditions of the past: an expression of the nation's faith in the future". With this immense project, Le Corbusier assigned the residential areas to his associates (Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew) and himself focused on the sites of power: the Capitol, the National Assembly building and the High Court of Justice. Placed in the centre of these buildings, the Open Hand monument – open "to give and to receive" – is a symbol of Le Corbusier's work. **(room 11)**

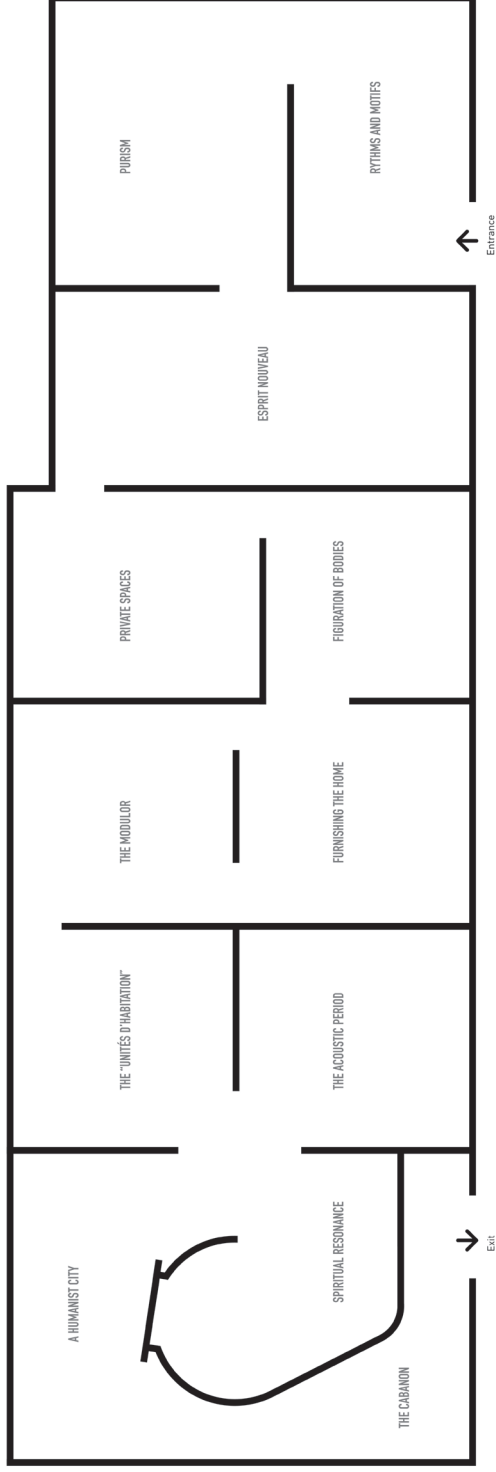
THE CABANON

In 1952, a few metres from Eileen Gray's and Jean Badovici's Villa E1027, Le Corbusier built a tiny wooden house of 12 m² at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, where he lived during the summer months until his death on 27 August 1965. In this idyllic setting halfway between Monaco and Menton, close to the sea and surrounded by luxuriant Mediterranean vegetation, the friends would meet at L'Étoile de Mer, an open-air café lying next to the Cabanon. Covered in wood and built according to the principles of the Modulor, this minimal space measured 366 x 366 cm on the ground, and was 226 cm high. **(room 12)**

"There is a hierarchy in the arts, with decorative art at the bottom and the human figure at the top."

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret and Amédée Ozenfant, *After Cubism*, 1918.

EXHIBITION MAP



"Putting people back on their feet, their feet on the ground, their lungs in the air and their minds on edifying collective work, and inspiring them with the joys of productive individual activity – not reducing them to a state of amorphous fixed values to be piled up in a vertical trust. Taking care of people!" Le Corbusier, *La Ville radieuse*, 1935.

EXHIBITION

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FONDATION LE CORBUSIER

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PUBLICATIONS

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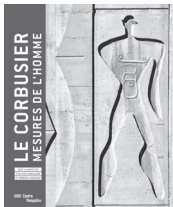
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Price: €42



ALBUM

Le Corbusier, Mesures de l'homme

Mailis Favre

60 colour illustrations, 60 pp.

Price: €9.50

AROUND THE EXHIBITION

GUIDED TOUR APP

Downloadable for free

Exhibition circuit

"FILM" PROGRAMME

Wednesdays at 7.00 p.m., Cinéma 2

"Manifeste" (Manifesto), 6 May

"De l'habitation à l'unité"

(The housing unit), 13 May

"Carpenter Centre", 20 May

"Dessiner une ville: Chandigarh"

(Designing a city: Chandigarh), 27 May

€6; reduced price €4; free to Pass

Holders

GUIDED TOURS

2.30 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays

7.00 p.m. on Wednesdays

(1 h 30 mins.)

€4.50; reduced price €3.50 + reduced

price "Museum and Exhibitions" ticket.

TAILOR-MADE TOURS

Saturday 30 May

11.00 a.m. - Lip-reading tour

2.30 p.m. - Tour in French sign language

€4.50; free for carer

INFORMATION

01 44 78 12 33

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EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

29 April to 3 August 2015

Galerie 2, level 6

Every day except Tuesdays

and 1 May, from 11.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Ticket offices close at 8.00 p.m.

Late night opening: Thursdays
until 11.00 p.m.

Ticket offices close at 10.00 p.m.

PRICES

Admission with

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to each area at the Museum, for all

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€14; reduced price €11

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