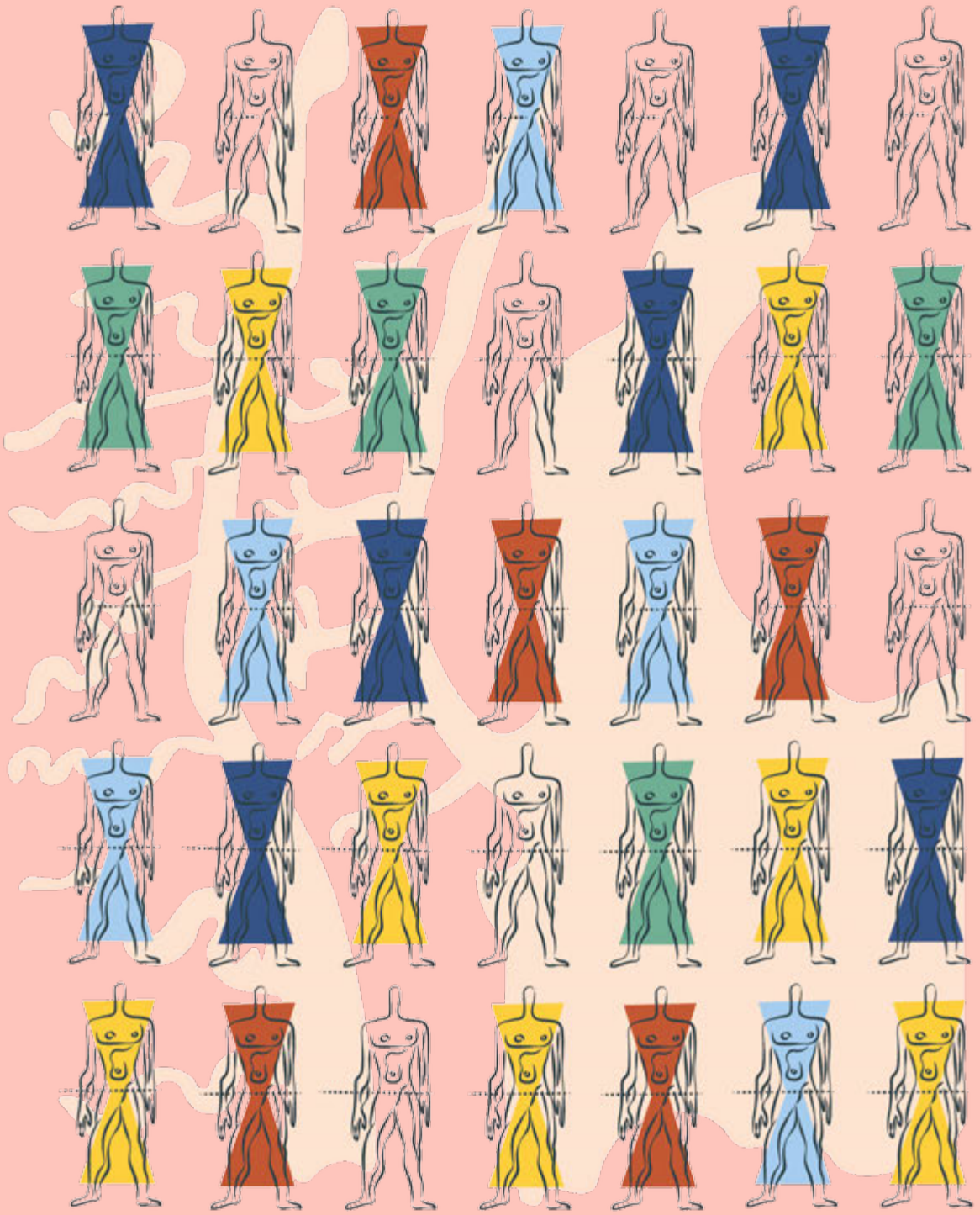


Novembre 2025

LC. REVUE DE RECHERCHES SUR LE CORBUSIER

No. 12

LC. REVUE DE RECHERCHES SUR LE CORBUSIER #12

Le Corbusier en 1931, rue Jacob, à Paris. Photo Brassaï. FLC L4(12)1.

Novembre 2025 / Noviembre 2025 / November 2025

LC. REVUE DE RECHERCHES SUR LE CORBUSIER #12 (11/2025)

DIRECTION / DIRECCION

Juan Calatrava. Universidad de Granada
Arnaud Dercelles. Fondation Le Corbusier
Jorge Torres Cueco. Universitat Politècnica de València

COMITÉ EDITORIAL / EDITORIAL BOARD

Ana Ábalos Llopis. Universitat Politècnica de València
Alejandro Campos Uribe. Delft University of Technology
Raúl Castellanos Gómez. Universitat Politècnica de València
Francisco Antonio García. Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
Paula Lacomba Montes. Universitat Politècnica de València
Ricardo Meri de la Maza. Universitat Politècnica de València
Ignacio Requena Ruiz. ENSA Nantes Université
Marta Rodríguez Iturriaga. Universidad de Granada
Manuel Sánchez García. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Carla Sentieri Omarrementeria. Universitat Politècnica de València

COINSEIL CONSULTATIF / COMITÉ ASESOR / ADVISORY BOARD

Arthur Ruëgg. Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Toyo Ito. Toyo Ito & Associates, Architects"
Carlo Olmo. Politecnico di Torino
Antoine Picon. Harvard Graduate School of Design
Maristella Casciato. Getty Research Institute. Università degli Studi di Bologna
Bruno Reichlin. Accademia di architettura di Mendrisio
Tetsuyu Shiraishi. Université Waseda.Tokyo
Stanislaus Von Moos. Accademia di architettura di Mendrisio
Caroline Maniaque. École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Normandie/ Normandie Université

DESIGN / DISEÑO/ DESIGN

Alejandro Campos Uribe. Delft University of Technology

MISE EN PAGE / MAQUETACIÓN / LAYOUT

Belén Fernández del Moral Mestre

COUVERTURE / PORTADA /COVER

Carlota Bueno Mainez

COMITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE / COMITÉ CIENTÍFICO / SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Iñaki Abalos Vázquez. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
José Ramón Alonso. Universidad A Corña
Rosa Añón Abajas. Universidad de Sevilla
David Arredondo Garrido. Universidad de Granada
Rémi Baudouï. Université de Genève
Tim Benton. The Open University. Milton Keynes (Emérito)
Iñaki Bergera Serrano. Universidad de Zaragoza
Luis Burriel Bielza. École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville
Miguel Ángel de la Cova Morillo-Velarde. Universidad de Sevilla
Carlos Eduardo Comas. Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
Ricardo Daza. Universidad Nacional de Colombia y Universidad de los Andes
Juan Deltell Pastor. Universitat Politècnica de València
Carmen Díez Medina. Universidad de Zaragoza
Françoise Ducros. Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne
Marie-Jeanne Dumont. École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville
Laurent Duport. École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Montpellier
Bénédicte Duvernay. École Supérieure d'Art de Lorraine
Elise Koering. École d'architecture de Paris La Villette
Panayotis Farantatos. Université d'Aarhus, Danemark
Yuri Fujii. Waseda University. Tokyo
Pierre Hyppolite. Université de Paris Ouest-Nanterre La Défense
Richard Klein. École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et de Paysage de Lille
Carlos Labarta Aizpún. Universidad de Zaragoza
Mickaël Labbé. Université de Strasbourg
Alejandro Lapunzina. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Marta Llorente Díaz. Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Claire Maingon. Université de Rouen/Normandie
Clara E. Mejía Vallejo. Universitat Politècnica de València
Xavier Monteys Roig. Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Guillemette Morel Journel. École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Malaquais
Hiroya Murakami. National Museum of Estern Art, Tokyo
Cecilia O'Byrne. Universidad de los Andes
Jean-Pierre Porcher. Architecte et photographe
Amadeo Ramos Carranza. Universidad de Sevilla
Anna Rosellini. Università di Bologna
Olivier Salon. Artiste, écrivain. Membre de l'Oulipo
Marta Sequeira. Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa
Catherine de Smet. Centre National d'Arts Plastiques. Université de Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis
Maria Candela Suarez. CITCEM. University of Porto, Portugal
Marida Talamona. Università Roma Tre

VENTE / VENTAS / SALE
https://www.lalibreria.upv.es/

© Articles : leurs auteurs
© Illustrations : leurs auteurs
© Illustrations relatives à Le Corbusier : FLC/ADAGP, Paris

ISSN: 2660-4167 / e-ISSN: 2660-7212
DL V-1295-2022

PÉRIODICITÉ

Deux numéros annuels (Mai et Novembre).

PERIODICIDAD

Dos números anuales (mayo y noviembre).

PERIODICITY

Two annual issues: May and November.

STRUCTURE DU JOURNAL

- Éditorial
- Article invité (membre du comité scientifique ou chercheur prestigieux)
- Articles de recherche soumis à une évaluation par paires
- Documentation : texte inédit de Le Corbusier, avec introduction critique page par un chercheur mandaté. Documents du fonds FLC (dessins, projets, correspondance, lettres postales)
- Le Corbusier contemporain : manifestations artistiques autour de Le Corbusier
- Recensions (livres ou revues sur Le Corbusier)
- Clôture (photographie, texte, dessin, extrait d'une publication de Le Corbusier)

ESTRUCTURA DE LA REVISTA

- Editorial
- Artículo invitado (miembro del comité científico o investigador de prestigio)
- Artículos de investigación sometidos a revisión por pares
- Documentación: texto inédito de Le Corbusier, con página de introducción crítica a cargo de un investigador encargado. Documentos de la colección de la FLC (dibujos, proyectos, correspondencia, postales)
- Le Corbusier contemporáneo: manifestaciones artísticas en torno a Le Corbusier
- Reseñas (libros o revistas sobre Le Corbusier)
- Cierre (fotografía, texto, dibujo, extracto de una publicación de Le Corbusier)

JOURNAL STRUCTURE

- Editorial
- Invited paper (member Scientific Committee or prestigious researcher)
- Research papers by peer-review
- Documentation: unpublished text by Le Corbusier, with critical introduction. Documents from the FLC funds (drawings, projects, correspondence, postal letters)
- Le Corbusier contemporain: contemporary artistic manifestations around Le Corbusier
- Reviews (books or revues on Le Corbusier)
- Closure (photograph, text, drawing, from a publication by Le Corbusier)

LANGUE

Français/Espagnol/Anglais, avec des résumés dans les trois langues.

IDIOMA

Francés/Español/Inglés, con resúmenes en los tres idiomas.

LANGUAGE

Français/Spanish/English, with abstracts in all three languages

STRUCTURE ÉDITORIALE

- Comité éditorial
- Comité scientifique
- Comité consultatif

ESTRUCTURA EDITORIAL

- Comité de redacción
- Comité científico
- Comité consultivo

EDITORIAL STRUCTURE

- Editorial Board
- Scientific Committee
- Advisory Board

ÉVALUATION

- Acceptation par le comité éditorial (conformité avec les lignes directrices de la revue)
- Premier examen par le comité scientifique, qui décide si l'article sera soumis à une évaluation par les pairs.
- Révision par les pairs, les modifications nécessaires sont demandées.
- Acceptation définitive et publication

EVALUACIÓN

- Aceptación por el comité editorial (de acuerdo con las directrices de la revista)
- Primera revisión por el Comité Científico, que decide si el artículo se somete a revisión por pares.
- Revisión por pares, se solicitan los cambios necesarios.
- Aceptación final y publicación

EVALUATION

- Acceptance by the Editorial Committee (compliance with the journal's guidelines)
- First review by the Scientific Committee, deciding if it will be subjected to peer-revie
- Peer-review, necessary changes will be requested
- Definitive acceptance and publication

SOUMISSIONS ET LIGNES DIRECTRICES À L'INTENTION DES AUTEURS

Les soumissions sont bienvenues en réponse aux thèmes décrits.Veuillez consulter le site web pour connaître les appels en cours et les lignes directrices à l'intention des auteurs :

http://polipapers.upv.es/index.php/LC/index

PRESENTACIÓN DE TRABAJOS Y DIRECTRICES PARA LOS AUTORES

Se aceptan propuestas en respuesta a los temas descritos, por favor consulte la página web para las convocatorias actuales y las directrices para los autores:

http://polipapers.upv.es/index.php/LC/index

SUBMISSIONS AND AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Submissions are welcome in response to the themes outlined. Please check the website for current calls and author guidelines on:

http://polipapers.upv.es/index.php/LC/index

PARRAINAGE / PATROCINIO / PATRONS

Fondation Le Corbusier
Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura. Universitat Politècnica de València
Grupo de Investigación Proyecto Arquitectura, UPV
Grupo de Investigación Arquitectura y Cultura Contemporánea, UGR
Asociación de historiadores de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo. AhAU

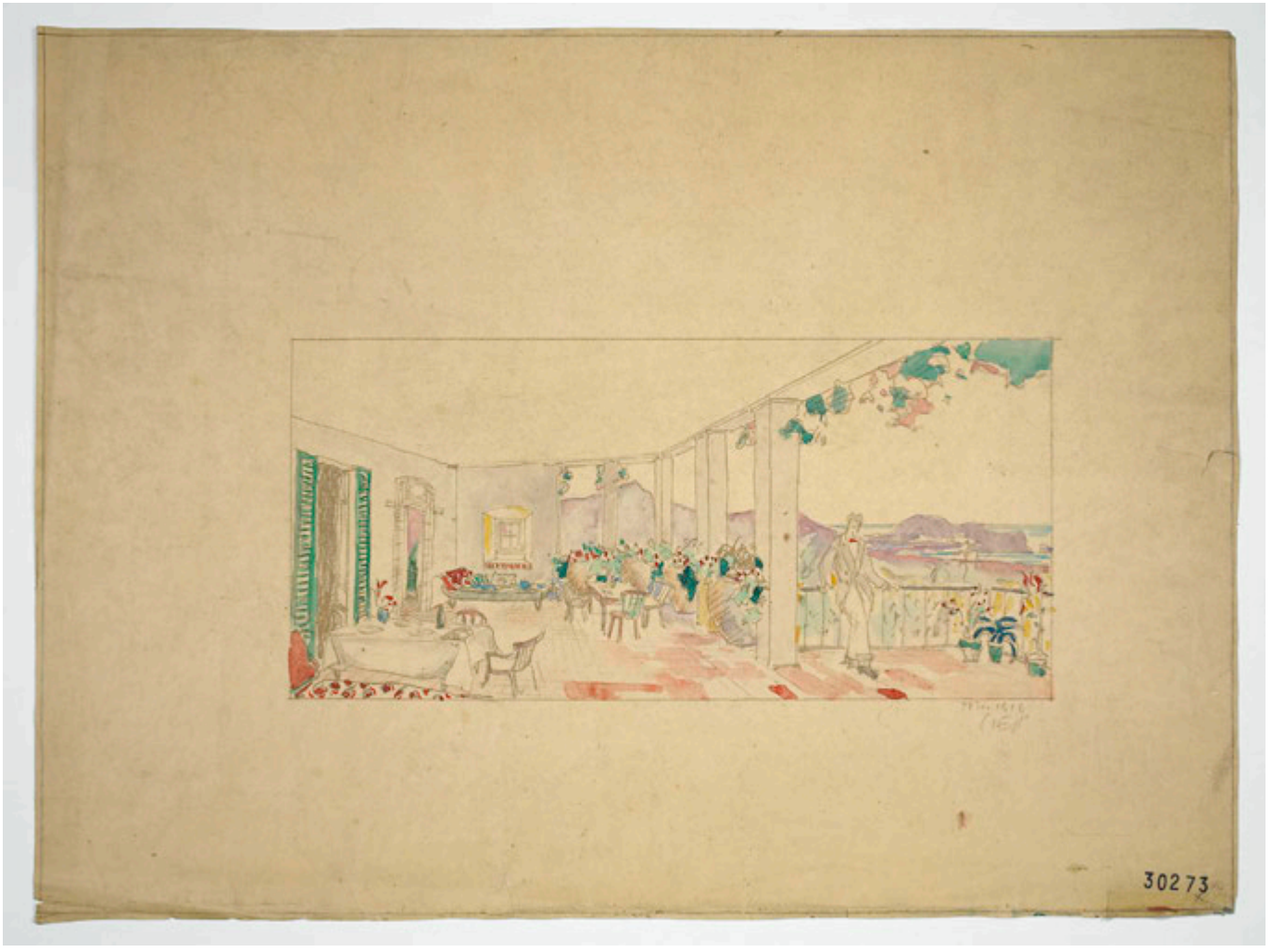
ÉDITEUR / EDITORIAL / PUBLISHER

Editorial Universitat Politècnica de València

CONTACT / CONTACTO /CONTACT

Jorge Torres Cueco
Departamento de Proyectos Arquitectónicos, UPV
Camino de Vera s/n. 46022 Valencia, Espagne
Tel : +34 963 877 380 - jtorrescueco@gmail.com

Charles-Edouard Jeanneret.
Dessin d'une terrasse pour
une villa à Le Moulinet.
Non construit. Aquarelle
couleur sur tirage gélatine,
0,642x0,481 cm. 1916.
FLC 30273.



EDITORIAL

ARTICLE INVITÉ

RECHERCHES

DOCUMENTATION

LE CORBUSIER CONTEMPORAIN

RECENSIONS

CLÔTURE

FIG. 1
Vers une Architecture in Teaching Workshop (gta Archive/ ETH Zurich, 2024). Photo: Mariam Zahra Bouye.

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.* LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.

READING *VERS UNE ARCHITECTURE*, OTHERWISE

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi et Marta Sequeira

https://doi.org/10.4995/lc.2025.25009

TOM EMERSON: LE CORBUSIER, TEACHING, AND THE RE-WRITING OF THE CANON OTHERWISE

Tom Emerson was trained between Bath, Cambridge and the Royal College of Art, in a Britain still shaped by the moral project of post-war reconstruction and by the quiet scepticism that followed it. In 2001, together with Stephanie Macdonald, he founded 6a architects in London, a studio whose work—from the South London Gallery to the Cowan Court at Cambridge—is distinguished by its attention to context, craft and the social life of buildings. At ETH Zürich, where he has taught since 2010, Tom Emerson has developed a pedagogy that reunites design, research and construction in a single, continuous process. In the garden of the university—an open-air workshop where students build at full scale—architecture is explored as both experiment and experience. There, ideas are tested through matter, collaboration and time, transforming the school itself into a site of production and reflection. Emerson describes this as "learning through making", a practice that dismantles the conventional hierarchy between drawing and building, thinking and doing. This conversation revisits Le Corbusier's modern faith in progress through the lens of a contemporary educator. Emerson speaks of a discipline that has moved from the certainties of modernism to the complexities of a plural world—one in which optimism persists, but in a quieter, more critical form.

Do you recall the moment when *Toward an Architecture* first entered your intellectual landscape? Could you describe the atmosphere in which the book was presented to you, and the ideological or pedagogical framework through which Le Corbusier's text was interpreted at that time?

It was in my first year of architecture school, in 1989. The introduction came through an architect and lecturer called Patrick Hodgkinson, one of the post-war British brutalists—a welfare-state architect who had worked on projects like the Brunswick Centre and other rather extraordinary megastructures of that period. He was one of my professors at Bath, where I did my undergraduate studies, and it was in that first year that he introduced us to Le Corbusier.

But the way he did so was quite particular. He spoke from the perspective of someone who had studied during and immediately after the war. For him, the intellectual landscape of modern architecture was divided between two ideological schools: you either joined Le Corbusier or you joined Mies. At Bath, there were both Patrick Hodgkinson and Peter and Alison Smithson, and the Smithsons clearly belonged to the Mies camp. Patrick, however, as it turned out, was closer to Aalto—that third pole that existed at the time.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

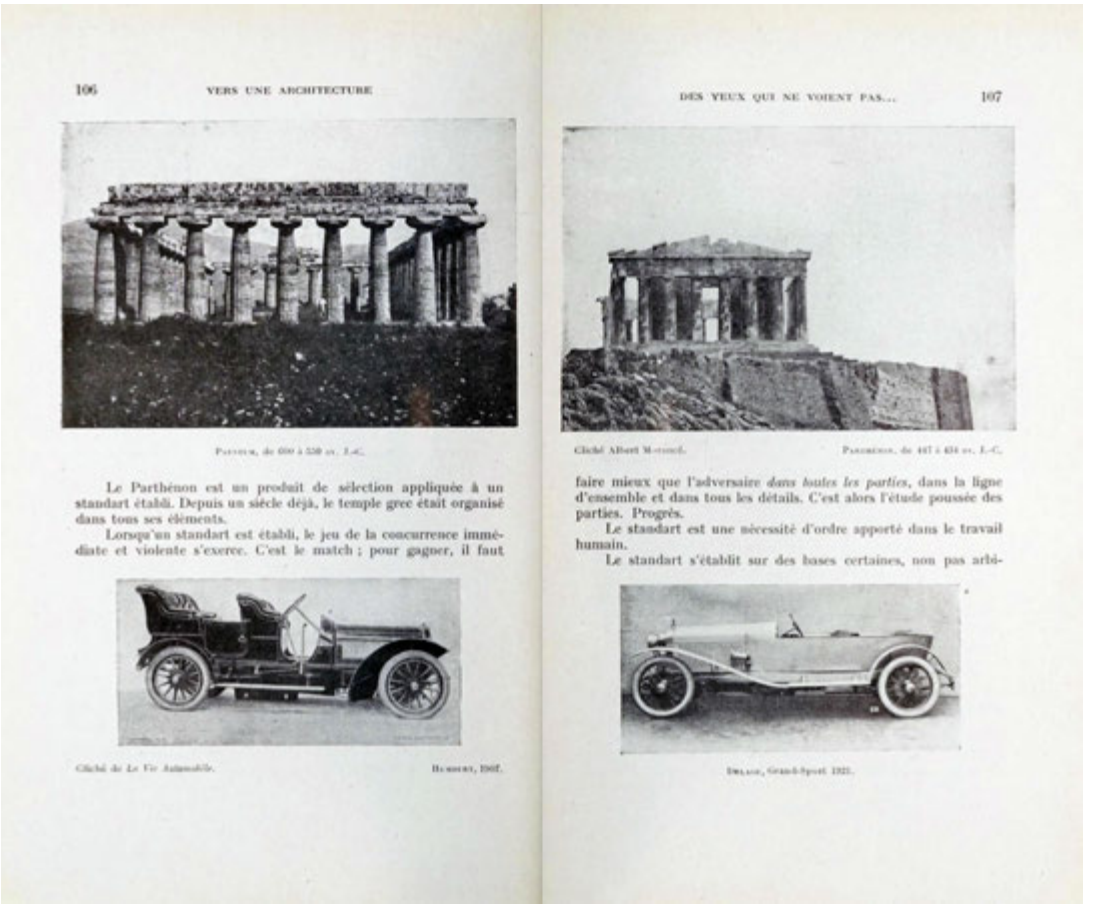
FIG. 2
Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1923), 106–7.

Le Corbusier was presented to us as one of the foundational figures of modern architecture, but not as someone to be followed uncritically. It was more like: "Here is the man, here is the book—*Toward an Architecture*—and here are the key buildings. But let me tell you about Aalto". Patrick was very much an Aalto person. Still, it was in that context—shaped by those distinctions and allegiances—that my contemporaries and I first heard about Le Corbusier.

Looking back, how do you situate that initial encounter within your subsequent formation as an architect and educator? Do the principles—or perhaps the rhetorical strategies—of *Toward an Architecture* still reverberate, however obliquely, in your teaching today?

I would say that if any of the ideas from *Vers une architecture* are still present in my teaching, they must lie very deep—almost beneath the surface of conscious thought. To be honest, I haven't read the book for about thirty years, and whatever remains is probably less a matter of direct reference than of sedimented influence, absorbed into the way we think and speak about architecture.

Over the past two decades—certainly in the last ten years—there has been a profound shift in architectural education: a widening and redefinition of what we call the canon. Within that new landscape, Le Corbusier has come to represent, especially for students today, almost the antithesis of what they seek. He stands as the archetype of the lone, white, male genius—a singular author with a totalising vision of the world, meticulously composed and curated.


106 VERS UNE ARCHITECTURE

Le Parthénon est un produit de sélection appliquée à un standart établi. Depuis un siècle déjà, le temple grec était organisé dans tous ses éléments.

Lorsqu'un standart est établi, le jeu de la concurrence immédiate et violente s'exerce. C'est le match ; pour gagner, il faut

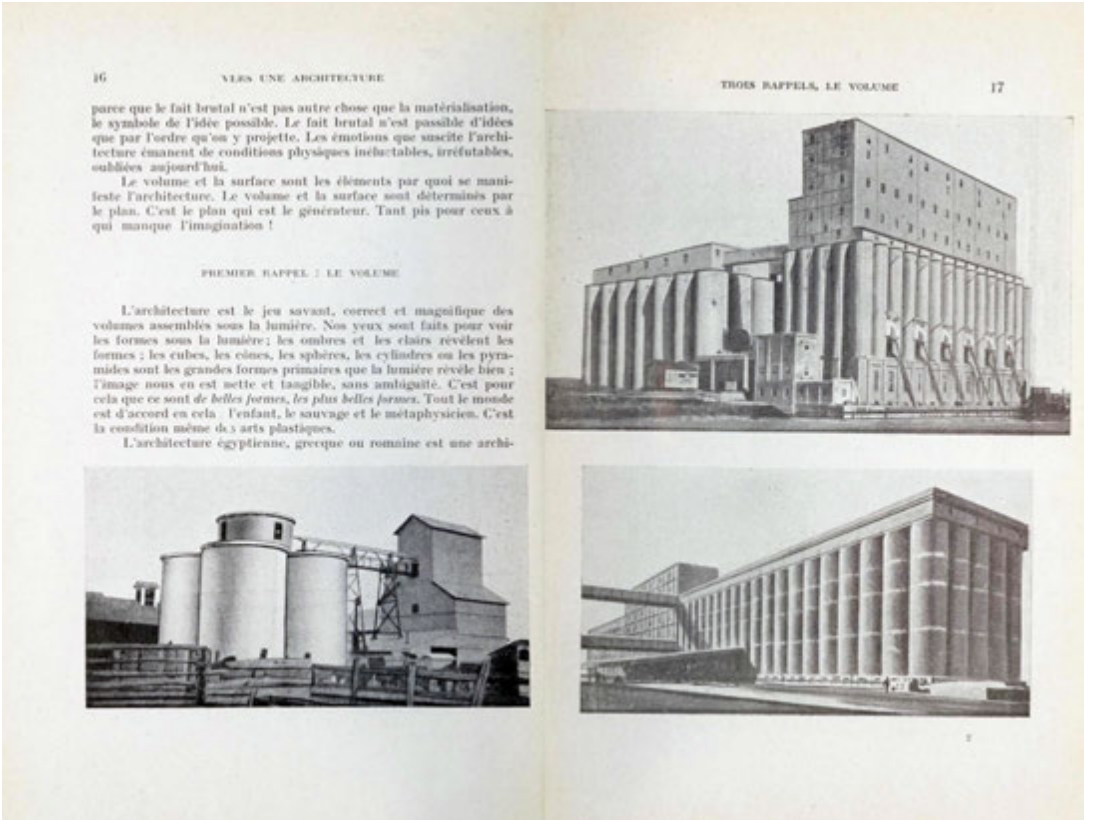
DES YEUX QUI NE VOIENT PAS... 107

faire mieux que l'adversaire *dans toutes les parties*, dans la ligne d'ensemble et dans tous les détails. C'est alors l'étude poussée des parties. Progrès.

Le standart est une nécessité d'ordre apporté dans le travail humain.

Le standart s'établit sur des bases certaines, non pas arbi-

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.*
LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.


16 VERS UNE ARCHITECTURE

parce que le fait brutal n'est pas autre chose que la matérialisation, le symbole de l'idée possible. Le fait brutal n'est passible d'idées que par l'ordre qu'on y projette. Les émotions que suscite l'architecture émanent de conditions physiques inéluctables, irréfutables, oubliées aujourd'hui.

Le volume et la surface sont les éléments par quoi se manifeste l'architecture. Le volume et la surface sont déterminés par le plan. C'est le plan qui est le générateur. Tant pis pour ceux à qui manque l'imagination !

PREMIER RAPPEL : LE VOLUME

L'architecture est le jeu savant, correct et magnifique des volumes assemblés sous la lumière. Nos yeux sont faits pour voir les formes sous la lumière ; les ombres et les clairs révèlent les formes ; les cubes, les cônes, les sphères, les cylindres ou les pyramides sont les grandes formes primaires que la lumière révèle bien ; l'image nous en est nette et tangible, sans ambiguïté. C'est pour cela que ce sont *de belles formes, les plus belles formes*. Tout le monde est d'accord en cela : l'enfant, le sauvage et le métaphysicien. C'est la condition même des arts plastiques.

L'architecture égyptienne, grecque ou romaine est une archi-

TROIS RAPPELS, LE VOLUME 17

FIG. 3
Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1923), 16–17.

From what I observe, students rarely invoke him now. Of course, they know his work; it remains part of every history course. But he no longer occupies the central position he did when I was a student. Back then, Le Corbusier was still a living point of reference—someone whose ideas we were expected to engage with seriously, whether in agreement or critique. Today, that kind of centrality—that sense of belief in the modernist master—has dissolved. His influence endures, but more as a historical background than as an active framework for thinking.

In your teaching, then, does Le Corbusier remain a living reference—a point of departure, perhaps—or has he become a figure to be revisited critically, from a contemporary perspective that questions the very foundations of modernist thinking?

Exactly. If Le Corbusier appears in our work or teaching today, it's almost always indirectly—implied rather than declared. I don't think we teach anything that could still be recognised as mainstream modernist thought, of which he was, in many ways, the central pillar.

On one occasion, we did use one of his projects as a kind of *doppelgänger*—as a mirror or model for a design project we were developing with students in the garden of the ETH, an outdoor workshop space where we build full-scale constructions as part of our teaching practice. The project in question was the roof terrace of the Charles de Beistegui apartment. But even that choice says something: it's Le Corbusier at his most idiosyncratic, his most surreal—far from the orthodox, canonical Corbusier.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

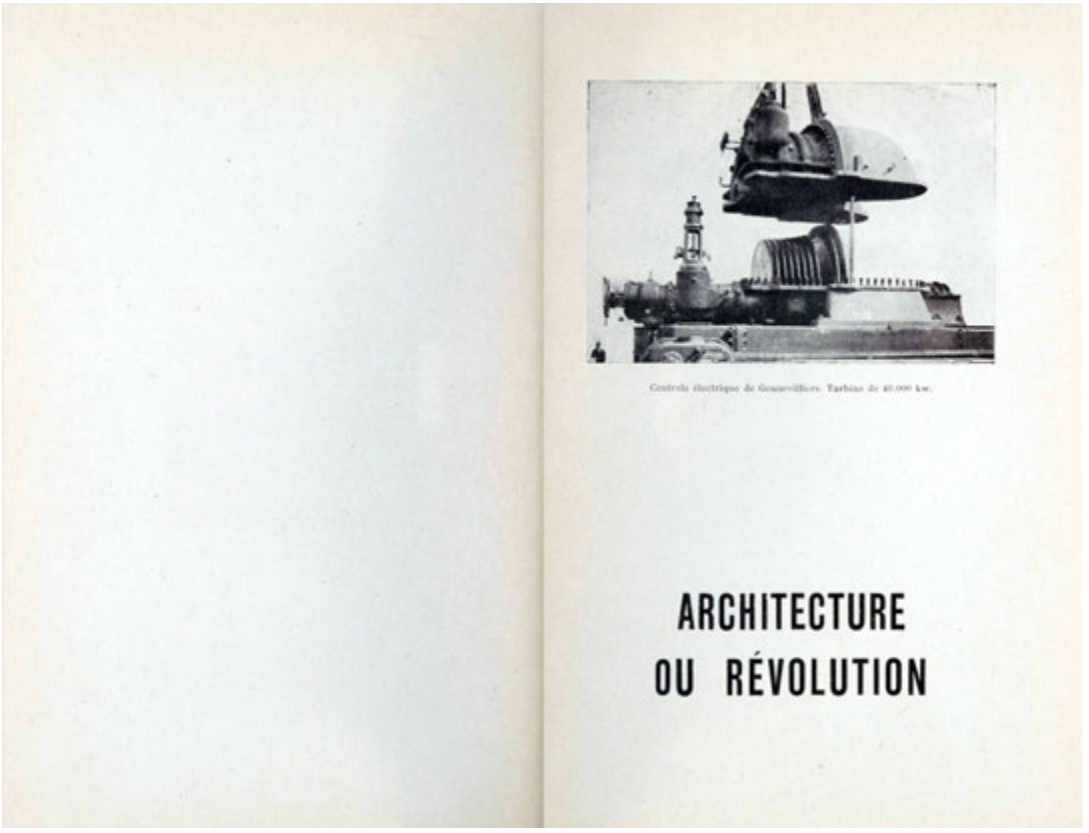


FIG. 4
Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1923), 212-213.

So even when we refer to him explicitly, we tend to look to the margins rather than the centre—to those moments where his work becomes ambiguous, open to interpretation, and perhaps closer to the way we think about architecture today.

Le Corbusier famously mobilised history as a quarry for modern invention, transforming historical forms into archetypes for a renewed architectural language (Figure 1). Do you believe that contemporary teaching still operates through such archetypal thinking—that dialectic between tradition and rupture, between continuity and the *esprit nouveau*—or has the very notion of a "pure source" become obsolete?

I think history is still very much part of the conversation in architectural education—whether we're talking about Western antiquity or other cultural histories. But not, I would say, in the archetypal sense that Le Corbusier proposed. I don't think anyone today is searching for some kind of "pure source". That idea no longer holds.

First of all, it's an extremely Western way of thinking—the notion that the discipline has an origin to which we must return, often imagined as ancient Greece. Many students today would actively resist that framework. They want to think more openly, drawing on a much wider range of references, from many different geographies and periods. The idea of history as a single lineage has been replaced by a far more plural and interconnected understanding of it.

That said, one of the remarkable things about *Vers une architecture* is that it remains a brilliant book—not only as an architectural text but as a piece of writing. Very few architects have written with such clarity and conviction. But it is also a profoundly rhetorical book. It doesn't invite reflection so much as persuasion; it's not there to open your mind, but to convince you of the correct path.

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.*
LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.

And that's perhaps where our relationship to it has changed most radically. I don't think people today believe in "the correct path" anymore. When I was a student, modernism was still something you could believe in—something presented as an ideal worth pursuing. Today, that kind of faith feels impossible. Books like *Vers une architecture* still matter, but they are read differently: not as manifestos to follow, but as documents to think with—critically, historically, and at a distance.

Another crucial aspect of *Vers une architecture* is the dialogue it establishes between architecture and engineering—a relationship that became emblematic of the early modern project. In Switzerland, architectural culture has long maintained a particularly close alliance with engineering disciplines. Do you think this dialogue still defines architectural education at ETH today, and if so, how has it evolved in response to contemporary forms of knowledge and technology?

Yes, absolutely. ETH—and Swiss architectural education more broadly—has always had a very strong technical foundation, one that sits very close to engineering. That connection remains central today, although the nature of it has changed profoundly.

In Le Corbusier's time, the relationship between architect and engineer was direct and tangible: they worked on the same structures, negotiating the physical logic of materials, loads, and spans. The engineer was a partner in the making of the building itself. Today, that collaboration still exists, but it has expanded into an entirely different terrain.

Now, the engineer may be writing software, developing digital fabrication systems, or working with robotic and parametric tools—and increasingly with artificial intelligence. The scope of engineering has broadened far beyond the civil and structural engineering that Le Corbusier was referring to. We now collaborate with environmental engineers, hydrologists, energy specialists—a much wider ecology of expertise.

In that sense, the dialogue between architecture and engineering not only continues but has multiplied and diversified. The "technical imagination" that Le Corbusier celebrated has exploded into new domains—digital, environmental, and planetary. If *Vers une architecture* reflected the optimism of the machine age, our moment is defined by another kind of urgency: how technology can be used critically and creatively in the face of ecological transformation.

If you were to identify the equivalent "reference images" for architectural imagination today, what realms—ecological, technological, social—would they emerge from?

I would say that today our reference images come less from machines and more from landscape and ecology. That's perhaps the most obvious shift. There's a growing rapprochement between architecture and environmental thinking—between design and questions of climate, biodiversity, and energy. So rather than aeroplanes or ocean liners, we might look now at solar farms, wind fields, rewilded territories, or systems of water management. These have become the kinds of images that carry imaginative weight—they speak of a different kind of technological engagement, one rooted in ecology rather than in industry.

If I remember correctly, Le Corbusier was fascinated by silos (Figure 2)—and he wasn't alone. The same images circulated among Mies, Gropius, and others at the time. There were only a handful of such photographs doing the rounds in architectural circles, but they became almost mythic: everyone admired the purity of those forms, their abstraction, their functional beauty.

That economy of images has completely disappeared. Today, the notion of a "reference image" has an entirely different currency. With digital tools—with Google, Photoshop, or even image generators powered by AI—students can create or access almost any image in seconds. The visual field is infinite and immediate.

So while Le Corbusier's silos once represented a kind of revelation—rare, precious documents passed from hand to hand—the images that shape architectural imagination today are countless and ephemeral. The challenge now is not scarcity but excess: how to navigate, interpret, and give meaning to an overwhelming visual landscape.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

Le Corbusier's book was also a manifesto for new forms of collective life, advocating an architecture attuned to the transformation of domestic and social structures. A century later, how do schools of architecture engage with questions of habitation, community and social agency? Do these issues still carry the utopian charge they did in 1923?

Yes, absolutely—"ways of living" remain at the very centre of architectural teaching and thinking. Even a hundred years later—four generations on—we're still asking the same fundamental questions: how do we live domestically, how do we work, and how do we live collectively? The questions themselves haven't disappeared; what has changed radically is the social framework in which they are posed.

The very notion of what constitutes a household or a family, or what the agency of each individual within a community might be, is now completely different. In Le Corbusier's time, the social order was still very much modelled on nineteenth-century hierarchies. You can see it not only in his plans but in the spatial logic of his houses: there are service quarters, clear gender divisions, and an implicit order that assigns everyone a place.

Later, with *Le Modulor*—almost three decades after *Vers une architecture*—he developed a proportional system based on the figure of a man 1.83 metres tall. It was conceived as a universal model of human measure, but from today's perspective it would immediately be questioned. You can't really propose a single ideal body—a tall, white, male body—as a universal standard anymore.

That said, I don't think we should judge him by the standards of our time. He was, in his own context, radically progressive. What matters is to read him critically, to understand both his extraordinary vision and his limitations. Our values have shifted dramatically, but the ambition to rethink how we live together—spatially, socially, and politically—remains as vital now as it was a century ago.

The optimism of *Toward an Architecture* was inseparable from its faith in technological progress. A hundred years later, in a world both empowered and endangered by its technologies, do you still perceive a space for optimism?

That's a big question. And I would still say yes—there is space for optimism. But it's a complicated kind of optimism, mixed with anxiety and uncertainty.

We live surrounded by technologies that are both emancipatory and deeply problematic. A decade ago, for example, we celebrated social media for connecting people, for giving voice to new communities—think of the Arab Spring. Now, the same platforms are often criticised for manipulation, misinformation, surveillance, and the erosion of public trust. The same tools can empower and endanger us at once.

So I think optimism today has to come from critical awareness. One of the fundamental roles of education—certainly here at ETH, and I would say in most universities—is to cultivate that capacity for critical thinking. Technologies themselves have no inherent morality; they don't tell us what's right or wrong. Everything depends on how we use them, what values we bring to them, and what purposes we imagine for them.

So yes, there is much to be worried about, but there's also much to look forward to—if we can approach technology not as destiny, but as a field of creative choice.

Can I end with one last question—a quote from the book itself? "Architecture or Revolution" (Figure 3)?

"Architecture or Revolution"? No—*Architecture or Evolution*!

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.*
LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.

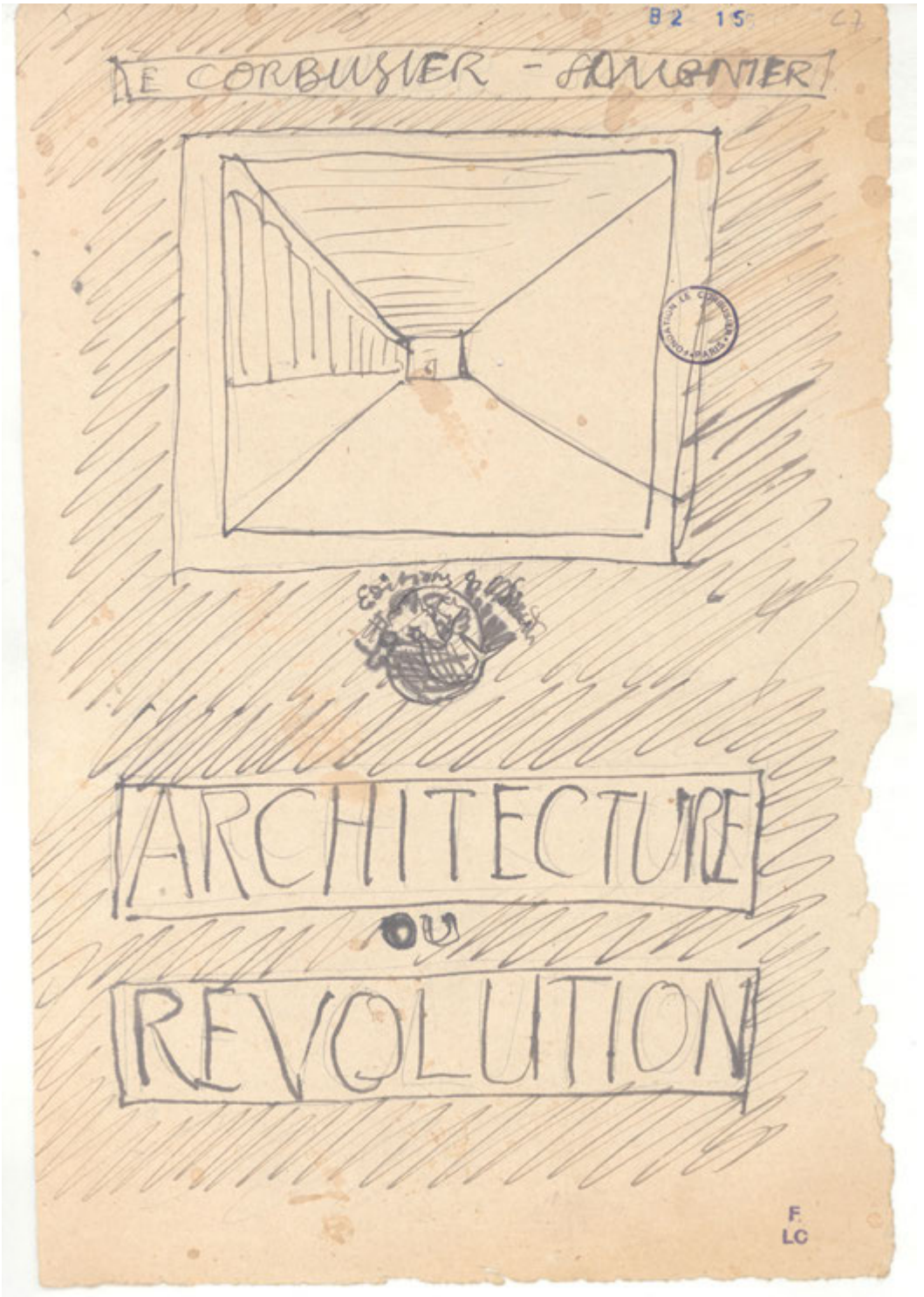


FIG. 5
Le Corbusier. Sketch for the cover of Vers une architecture, when it was to be titled "Architecture or Revolution". FLC B2(15)67.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

FIG. 6
Vers une Architecture in Teaching Workshop (gta Archive/ ETH Zurich, 2024). Photo: José Castro Caldas.

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.* LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.

AN FONTEYNE: LE CORBUSIER, THE ORDINARY, AND THE END OF PURITY

An Fonteyne was born in Ostend in 1971 and studied architecture at the University of Ghent. After working with DKV architecten in Rotterdam and David Chipperfield in London, she co-founded noAarchitecten in Brussels in 2000, a practice known for its engagement with the collective, the contingent, and the already built. Since 2017, she has held the Chair of Affective Architectures at ETH Zürich, where her teaching deliberately turns away from the monumental and the ideal towards what modernism left unacknowledged: the ordinary, the affective, and the lived. Fonteyne's pedagogy begins not with abstraction but with observation. Through walking, drawing, and conversation, she and her students learn to recognise architecture as a form of coexistence rather than an autonomous object. Against the modernist faith in purity, progress, and the machine, she reclaims ambiguity, adaptation, and care as architectural values. In her studio, buildings are approached less as temples of reason than as social organisms, shaped by time, maintenance, and use. In this conversation, Fonteyne revisits Le Corbusier not as a master to emulate but as a revealing symptom of modernity—a figure through whom the exclusions of the twentieth century become legible.

Every architect, willingly or not, passes through Vers une architecture at some point. Do you recall your first encounter with Le Corbusier's book—or perhaps the moment you realised you wanted to move beyond it?

I don't really remember the first time I saw the book, but I do know I've bought it twice. I have two copies on my shelf. I suppose that says something—you buy a book, then years later think, "I should probably have this", only to realise you already do. It must have sat there untouched for many years.

A century later, Le Corbusier still shapes the language and hierarchies of architectural education. How do you navigate that legacy in your teaching?

Honestly, there is no conscious decision against referring to Le Corbusier. It just does not seem relevant in the context of our interests. There are naturally architectural moments in his work that I appreciate. The terrace of the Beistegui apartment, for example. Or some colour schemes he developed. But his urban visions do not connect much to our teaching and design approach. Since students learn about his work from their very first year until their last theory class, I don't feel the need to add to that. And they don't seem triggered to apply his work when they design.

I am surprised that when one does not give his work a (central) role, the question still comes: why not? If we discuss Le Corbusier, or other male protagonists of the last century, it is in the context of their position within the discipline—and the many women and others whose contributions were erased or overshadowed. The desire of the past to create real (male) heroes. We all know the story of Le Corbusier's obsession with Eileen Gray's house, and how he vandalised it, took revenge—naked, with a brush in hand. The aggression of that act represents a key moment in realising how histories have been written in the past, and how we have inherited versions of those pasts.

Many of my students—often young women—say: "It's strange that we still hear about Le Corbusier in every single course. It is repetitive and his position is hardly ever questioned. How is this still possible"? And they're right.

This became even clearer during our exchange and collaboration with the Inga, an Indigenous community from the Colombian Amazon. They're invested in creating a pluriversity, a knowledge structure that should safeguard and pass on the Inga knowledge in the future. When some of their young architects, who left their territory to study architecture in Bogotá, came to visit, they told us: "When we leave our community to study architecture, we're expected to forget all we know and we learn about the work of Le Corbusier". That moment was very powerful too—a reminder of how universal, dominant and linear our architectural education still is. His thinking is omnipresent. And if that is what is still taught as guiding, it is problematic.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

In Le Corbusier's vision, architecture was purified through its monuments—temples, machines, archetypes (Fig.4). Your work and teaching, by contrast, seem to turn deliberately toward the ordinary, the overlooked, even the "unarchitectural". What happens when we stop looking at temples and start walking past architecture instead?

The monumentality and purity of the temple can be celebrational and joyful to some, but although beautiful, also oppressive to others. I am simply not interested in making temples anymore. I am interested in questioning the codes and conventions embedded in these architectures to develop structures and strategies to dismantle them. Living in Brussels, being surrounded by so many people that carry other references in them, definitely made me realise that we cannot take ourselves as the sole standard anymore. I love to embrace the complex cultural communities of people we are today, also architecturally.

In our teaching, we develop an interest in the unspectacular. We strive to learn from the built environment as it is inhabited and appropriated by the people and uses it accommodates. We go on walks, and we learn from things that aren't usually considered architecture at all. We indeed embrace the complexity, the overlooked, the in-between, the everyday, the seemingly boring. We reflect on types and references, on their past and present relevance and their potential meaning to address current needs.

In addition, also in our work, we love to read history in a less hierarchical way. Especially when buildings are listed, officially defined as heritage, the dogma of returning to the "original" and erasing the many histories a building has gone through, is still dominant. We are interested in reading all layers of history and in understanding all traces of use to see how a building transformed both spatially and socially. This detective-work offers numerous and precise possibilities to shape its future in a layered manner.

Your pedagogy often begins with close observation—of context, of who and what already exists. In a school like ETH, long associated with technical innovation, how do you balance this attention to the ground with the institution's enthusiasm for progress and technology?

I've been teaching here for eight years, and of course, ETH is a technical school. Naturally, technological approaches and innovation are celebrated and pushed forward; they play a central role.

At the same time, we're living through multiple, overlapping crises—the climate crisis above all, but also humanitarian crises, inequality, exclusion. In response, the school has opened itself to a broader range of approaches, which I think is very positive. ETH is no longer a school defined by a single doctrine.

Inevitably, there's a growing interest in looking carefully at what already exists and how we can transform this to respond to future needs. We can do in a scientific way, based on data, but also this in a more affective way. These approaches are complementary and offer essential knowledge for future architects. The affective approach might be slower, as it values understanding and evaluation before intervention. Although it sounds contradictory, I believe that slowness is essential in times of urgency. That is probably the great value of this school: the tension between progress and patience.

Le Corbusier built his modern myth through images: ships, cars, silos—emblems of a new order. Yet you've spoken of turning instead to literature, to fiction, to awaken imagination. In an age saturated with images, what can stories teach architects that pictures no longer can?

Today we live in a society far more visual than in Le Corbusier's time. We are constantly inundated—it's like a permanent rainfall of images. Inescapable. Because of this, using an image as a reference has become extremely complicated.

The slowness earlier mentioned, also leads to reading, to drawing from literature—especially fiction. Reading a short story or a novel activates anyone's imagination in a very intimate way. It allows to build your own mental images, rather than consuming pre-fabricated ones. I try to start from that point, also in teaching, to encourage this freedom of

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.*
LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.

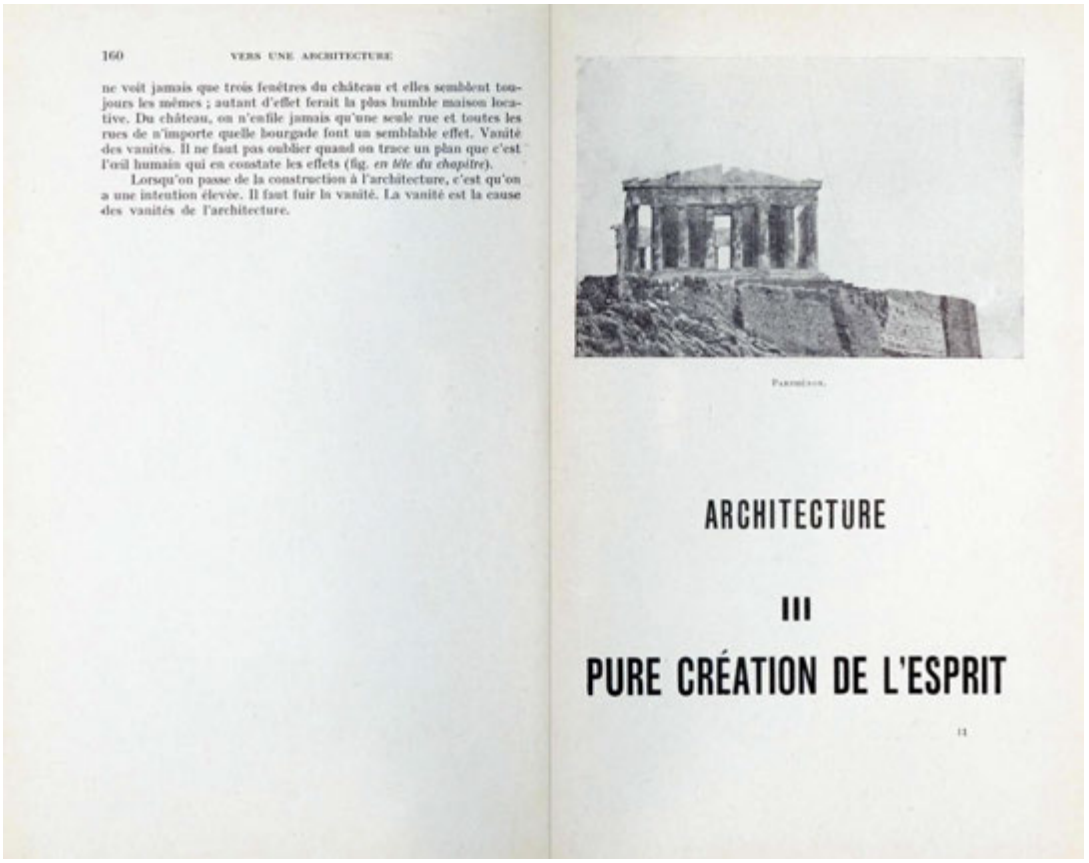
imagination, instead of adding to the visual noise. We select specific books and authors, for their content, their structure, their provocation. After reading, comes writing—developing other ways to talk about architecture, about one's design. The writing informs the design process; it does not come just at the end to describe the design.

Le Corbusier dreamt of new communal ways of living, though often through rigid formal systems. You approach collectivity from the opposite direction—from observation and care. How do you teach the architecture of living together today, when forms of family, labour, and belonging have changed so radically?

It is definitely a concern, but our understanding of it has evolved. Modernism was driven by hygiene and by the ambition to offer a higher standard of living for all. But it also meant replacing—and often erasing—many of the ways people had lived before, imposing a universal model to fit all. By the many followers of the vision, often much less talented architects, the guidelines were reduced simplistic to minimum standards and problematic urban models.

I believe that we as architects have overlooked grown knowledge about living together—how communities naturally care for one another, how different cultures read spaces differently and how we should consider architecture not only for what it is, but also for what it does.

I don't think modernist formalism is the most accommodating framework for democratic living; it is very hierarchical. This morning, for instance, we discussed the work of Claire Henrotin, a female architect who worked alongside Victor


160 VERS UNE ARCHITECTURE

ne voit jamais que trois fenêtres du château et elles semblent toujours les mêmes ; autant d'effet ferait la plus humble maison locative. Du château, on n'enfile jamais qu'une seule rue et toutes les rues de n'importe quelle bourgade font un semblable effet. Vanité des vanités. Il ne faut pas oublier quand on trace un plan que c'est l'œil humain qui en constate les effets (fig. *en tête du chapitre*).

Lorsqu'on passe de la construction à l'architecture, c'est qu'on a une intention élevée. Il faut fuir la vanité. La vanité est la cause des vanités de l'architecture.

PARTHÉNON.

ARCHITECTURE

III

PURE CRÉATION DE L'ESPRIT

11

FIG. 7
Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1923), 160-161.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

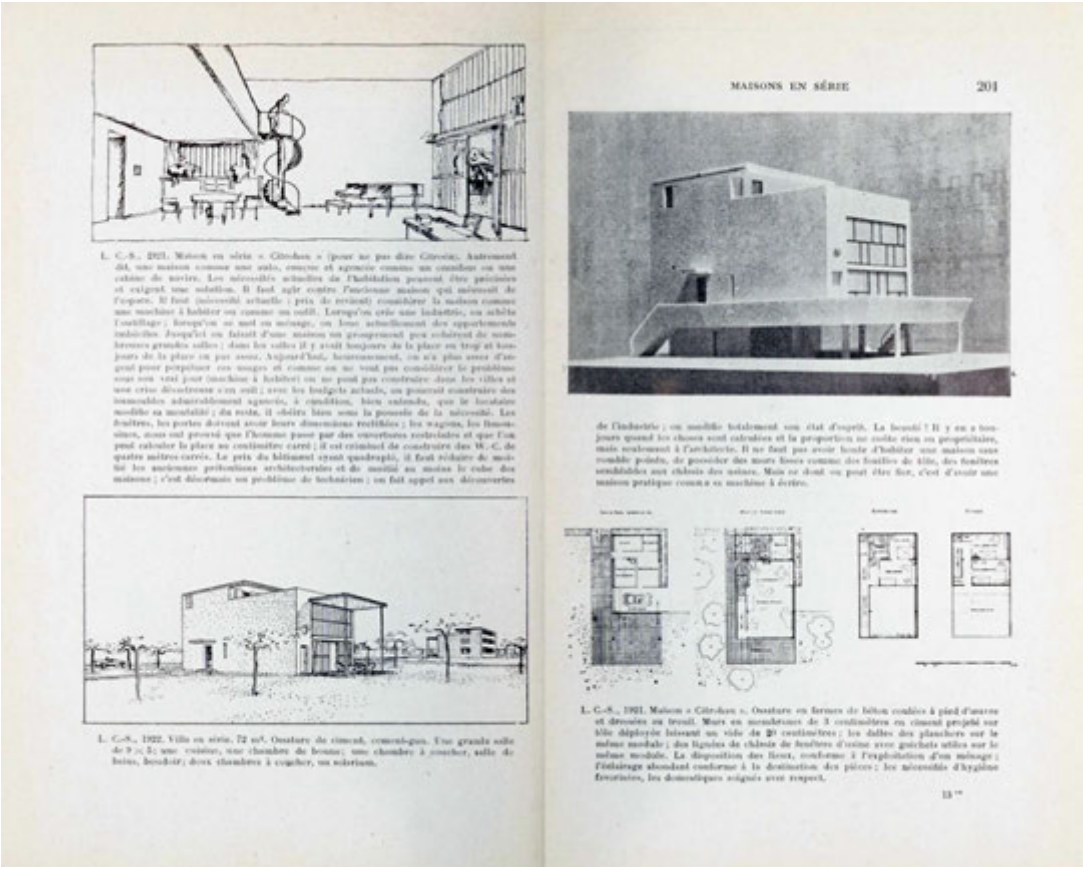
FIG. 8
Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1923), 200-201.

Bourgeois and the Belgian modernists. While they produced beautiful buildings, one senses that her work was driven by something more intrinsic—by the qualities of living together, and by her attention to local forms of knowledge. The qualities are not black or white, but nuance and complexity are needed to enrich architecture and make it durable.

We live differently in the city than in the countryside, differently across generations. I try to engage students with these different realities and then ask: what can architecture do to accommodate those lives? Rather than the other way around, where we invent an architectural system that is supposed to save us, and then expect everyone to conform to that single idea of “good living”.

You can see this tension beautifully illustrated in Le Corbusier’s houses at Pessac (Fig.5). There’s a wonderful film about them. On one hand, you have people who really adore the architecture of the original and restore the houses exactly as Le Corbusier intended—furniture, art, colours—they all contribute to the envisaged perfection. On the other, you have families who adapt the houses to their needs: they put up walls for more bedrooms, use the garage as a workshop, add a shed. You can hardly recognise the original house and it seems incapable to deal with change.

That raises a question: how democratic is a design if such acts of appropriation come across as catastrophes? “How dare you touch the house that was so well thought out for you?” The irony is that true democratic living might precisely mean the freedom to transform your environment—to make architecture your own. And that is a dilemma for architects. We love control and we try to design the complete answer from scheme to detail.



Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.*
LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier N° 12, 188 - 202.

Modern architecture was born from a faith in progress; optimism was its moral ground. Today, that faith has turned uneasy—ecological, technological, even moral. Do you still believe architecture can be a progressive force (Fig.6), or is progress itself a notion we must now unlearn?

I think we need both common sense—trusting in what and who is already there—and a continued search for better ways. But we must also remain critical of what "progress" actually means.

With our students, we travelled to Iceland for a seminar week, drawn by what was described as a major technological breakthrough: machines that capture CO from the air, amongst others in Switzerland. The gas is then transported by train to Rotterdam, shipped to Iceland, and injected two kilometres underground, where it binds with basalt to form limestone. On the surface, it sounds extraordinary—the kind of story we call optimism. It's also a brilliant business model: other countries can now pay Iceland to store their emissions. Certain territories become, quite literally, planetary CO storage sites.

But then you start to wonder—is this really a solution? The process involves deep drilling, and people living nearby report for example falling groundwater levels. It has a huge impact on the land and its geological life. Shouldn't we reflect on how to stop producing so much CO in the first place? Should we not question our standards of comfort before we invest in safeguarding it at all cost? It forms part of a broader narrative: we engineer grand solutions so that we can avoid changing our habits. And when the Earth is finally used up, we'll follow Elon Musk to Mars and start again.

Everyone loves new inventions that promise to solve our problems. Yet if you advocate for smaller, sensible actions—for modest forms of intelligence—it's rarely as rewarding. You don't stand out by being careful. And yet, I love to quote Thomas Lommée, a Belgian designer, who stated: The next big thing will be a lot of small things. So, let's all find the courage to develop that plurality, that multiplicity of small things.

Le Corbusier ended Vers une architecture with a provocation: "Architecture or Revolution". If asked the same question today, how would you respond?

Revolution.

***Vers une Architecture in Teaching,* project conceived by Ciro Miguel, Daniela Ortiz dos Santos, Frederike Lausch, Marta Sequeira and Veronique Boone, in cooperation with gta Archive, ETH Zürich. Film by Ciro Miguel, 2025. YouTube video, 16 min.**

LIEN À CONSULTER SUR LE SITE

https://youtu.be/Y4GtZAj2Qhs

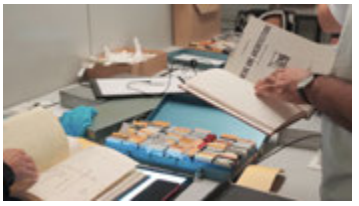


FIG. 9
Vers une Architecture in Teaching, project conceived by Ciro Miguel, Daniela Ortiz dos Santos, Frederike Lausch, Marta Sequeira and Veronique Boone, in cooperation with gta Archive, ETH Zürich.

ISSN (2660 - 4167) / e-ISSN (2660 - 7212)

Auteurs

Victor Beiramar Diniz
PhD candidate in Contemporary Architecture and researcher at the Centre for Studies in Architecture, City and Territory / Autonomous University of Lisbon (UAL)
30014019@students.ual.pt
Victor Beiramar Diniz (Lisbon, 1968) earned his degree in Landscape Architecture from the Technical University of Lisbon (1996), with study periods in Versailles and Wageningen. He also holds a postgraduate degree in Urban Design. Since 2024, he has been a doctoral researcher in Contemporary Architecture at UAL, where his investigation focuses on networks and constellations within Portuguese architecture of landscape in the modern period. His career includes collaborations with prominent firms like Carrilho da Graça arquitectos, and the directorship of the Serralves Park.

Sofia Pinto Basto
PhD candidate in Contemporary Architecture and researcher at the Centre for Studies in Architecture, City and Territory / Autonomous University of Lisbon (UAL)
sofiapintobasto@hotmail.com
Sofia Pinto Basto (Lisbon, 1970) earned her degree in architecture from the Technical University of Lisbon in 1993, and collaborated with Sousa Oliveira from that year until 2013. She completed a degree in Philosophy at Nova University of Lisbon in 1995. In 2007, she co-founded Atelier SIA Arquitectura with Ana Cravinho and Inês Cordovil, where she currently practices. She is a PhD candidate in Contemporary Architecture and researcher at Autonomous University of Lisbon UAL since 2024. Her research operates at the intersection of architecture, the artistic field, art theory, and philosophy.

José Castro Caldas
PhD candidate in Contemporary Architecture and researcher at the Centre for Studies in Architecture, City and Territory / Autonomous University of Lisbon (UAL)
20000336@students.ual.pt
José Castro Caldas (Lisbon, 1981) is an architect and PhD candidate at UAL. His research examines the role of architecture in Mozambique's post-colonial reconstruction. He has professional experience both in architectural studios and in NGOs, having worked in Argentina, in the Brazilian Amazon, and now in Portugal. His practice combines design, field work, and cultural production, exploring the intersections between architecture, craftsmanship, and film, seen in works like the Casa|Estúdio|Oficina, which served as the setting for the award-winning short film *Lá vem o dia* (2019).

Mariam Zahra Bouye
Bachelor's Student, Goethe University Frankfurt
mariam.bouye@stud.uni-Frankfurt.de
Mariam Zahra Bouye (Baden, Austria, 1992) is a bachelor's student at Goethe University Frankfurt, majoring in Comparative Literature with a minor in Art History, specialising in architectural history. Her studies engage with world literature, transnational literary theory, and interdisciplinary approaches encompassing media studies, philosophy, and cultural theory. Trained interlingually in German, English, French, and Persian, she examines literary phenomena across linguistic boundaries.

Fernando Kikuchi
PhD candidate in Contemporary Architecture and researcher at the Centre for Studies in Architecture, City and Territory / Autonomous University of Lisbon (UAL)
fernandohenrique_785@hotmail.com
Fernando Kikuchi (Itumbiara, Brazil, 1994) is an Architect and Urban Planner graduated from UFFS (2019) and a Technician in Electrotechnics from IFG (2013). He holds a Master's degree from UFPel, where he researched environmental perception and LGBTQIA+ representation in urban dynamics. He is currently a PhD candidate in Contemporary Architecture at the Autonomous University of Lisbon UAL.

Marta Sequeira
Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte / Autonomous University of Lisbon (UAL)
marta.sequeira@iscte-iul.pt
Marta Sequeira (Lisbon, 1977) is an architect, researcher, and curator whose work explores the reception and transformation of modern ideas in architectural culture, with a particular focus on Le Corbusier. She holds a PhD from the Escola Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona and is Associate Professor at ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, and at the Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, where she founded and directs the PhD Programme in Contemporary Architecture. She is also a researcher at DINÂMIA'CET–Iscte. Her book *Towards a Public Space* (Routledge) was awarded the *Prix de la Recherche Patiente* (Fondation Le Corbusier, 2016). As a curator, she has organised exhibitions including *Carrilho da Graça: Lisboa, Flashback / Carrilho da Graça, and Habitar Lisboa.* Her work bridges research, teaching, and curatorship to interrogate the critical legacies of modern architecture.

Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi, Marta Sequeira. *Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise.*
LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier Nº 12, 188 - 202.

LC. REVUE DE RECHERCHES SUR LE CORBUSIER #12

Le Corbusier, petites confidences / *Juan Calatrava, Arnaud Dercelles et Jorge Torres --* ***La programmation nietzschéenne du silence et de la méditation dans la ville fonctionnelle /*** *Arnaud Dercelles et Rémi Baudouï --* ***L'enquête Le Corbusier et Yourcenar entre modernité et antiquité /*** *Françoise Ducros --* ***Una interlocución crítica: Le Corbusier en la formación urbanística de Louis I. Kahn /*** *Andrea Salazar Veloz --* ***Between the Sahel and the Mediterranean: Le Corbusier and the Invention of an Inhabited Landscape /*** *Monica Luce Bohrer --* ***El jardín donde florecen los números. Obra plástica creada a partir del estudio de las propiedades combinatorias del Modulor /*** *Miguel Mantilla Salgado --* ***Le Corbusier et le rhodoid : la série petite « Confidences » /*** *Juan Calatrava --* ***Vers une Architecture in Teaching /*** *Daniela Ortiz dos Santos, Marta Sequeira, Veronique Boone, Frederike Lausch et Ciro Miguel --* ***Reading Vers une architecture, Otherwise /*** *Victor Beiramar Diniz, Sofia Pinto Basto, José Castro Caldas, Mariam Zahra Bouye, Fernando Kikuchi et Marta Sequeira --* ***Vikramaditya Prakash. Le Corbusier's Chandigarh Revisited: Preservation as Future Modernism /*** *Jorge Torres Cueco --* ***Le Corbusier. La femme au guéridon et au fer à cheval. Huile sur toile, 146 x 89 cm. FLC 145***