

Authors of new book reveal the artist behind architect Le Corbusier

January 31 2012



This image was taken in Chandigarh, India. It is a worksite from 1951 -1963.
Credit: © FLC / 2012, ProLitteris, Zurich.

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"I received your handwritten letter from the 28th of September 1962 with eight color photographs, five of which are of the High Court with its new [colors](#). I am extremely bothered and saddened to see such colors. I never gave the order for such colors..."

So begins a letter from architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (better

known as Le Corbusier) to his cousin Pierre Jeanneret about the Chandigarh, India, worksite. It is just one of many such letters and other unpublished documents that Anna Rosellini and Roberto Gargiaini uncovered in the archives of the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris. All together, these bring new light to the architectural oeuvre of the 20th century's most famous architect.

The results of this research are richly illustrated with 1,350 full color photographs, plans, and sketches in the newly published book "Le Corbusier: Béton Brut and Ineffable Space, 1940 - 1960" (EPFL Press; September 2011; Integra cover; 600 pp), by Roberto Gargiani, a renowned architectural historian, with Le Corbusier scholar Anna Rosellini.



Photograph of Le Corbusier with a casting of his foot, by Balkrishna V. Doshi on 9 June 1961. Credit: © FLC / 2012, ProLitteris, Zurich.

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insight into the aesthetic principles of Le Corbusier during the post World-War-II period. They explain his manner of defining the final artistic quality of the work directly at the construction site as if he were dealing with a sculpture or tableau, for example. Béton brut, a term invented by Le Corbusier at the beginning of the 1950s to describe his use of exposed concrete, is analyzed from all angles for the first time: fabrication, final formation and texture, and surface treatment.

The text also delves into the project management and construction of several Le Corbusier buildings constructed between 1940 and 1965. Sites explored in detail include the Unité d'Habitation (Housing Unit) at Marseille, the city of Chandigarh, the Tokyo museum, the Carpenter Center in Cambridge, and the Unité d'Habitation in Berlin.

Gargiani and Rosellini describe the convergence of artistic expression into what Le Corbusier defines as the espace indicible (ineffable space), including both the role of tapestries and paint to qualify these spaces and the use of photography to study the unexpressed potential of his architecture and paintings.

The book examines questions of optics, artistic vision, and the psychophysiology of perception in parallel with technical questions about the materials used in Le Corbusier's various works. This approach reveals the existence of a series of previously ignored theoretical questions about the artistic process shown here to be indispensable for the complete understanding of the work of Le Corbusier after [World War II](#).

This examination of Le Corbusier's last and fundamental works decodes both the architect's vision and his quest for architectural and artistic solutions—solutions that are still defining the course of modern architecture today.

Provided by Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne

Citation: Authors of new book reveal the artist behind architect Le Corbusier (2012, January 31)
retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-authors-reveal-artist-architect-le.html>

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