

The Museum of Modern Art

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LE CORBUSIER: ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

A selection of 85 architectural drawings representing 50 buildings designed by Le Corbusier between 1912 and 1962 will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art, from January 20 through March 26, 1978. All but three of the works are from the archives of the Fondation Le Corbusier. Many are being shown for the first time. The drawings have been selected by Arthur Drexler, Director of the Department of Architecture and Design, and are on view in the second-floor Goodwin Galleries.

Arthur Drexler explains that Le Corbusier: Architectural Drawings "does not seek to review all of Le Corbusier's work. What is emphasized here is the visualizing process--the method of discourse--of an architect whose capacity for formal invention is unsurpassed." In selecting the material preference was given to drawings by Le Corbusier himself. Among the most important are pastel elevation studies, of which ten for the Stein house are shown in the exhibition.

Also included are elevations and perspectives in freehand and in ruled line, often made expressly for reproduction. Some of these are by Le Corbusier alone; others were probably executed by draftsmen and embellished by Le Corbusier with freehand sketches of landscapes and people. Another group of interest are those drawings, with or without accompanying handwritten text, which constitute illustrated letters to clients. "These, like most of the drawings from Le Corbusier's hand," comments Mr. Drexler, "have a nervous vitality that belies his claim to cool, unemotional rationalism. Despite his devotion to 20th-century technology, his art is emotional and intense, fantastic, and often whimsical."

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Mr. Drexler also finds revealing the first conceptual studies for certain projects because they show what had to be discarded along the way. "They suggest the wealth of ideas Le Corbusier himself never found an opportunity to realize: there must be ideas enough for ten more buildings in the discarded versions of the Stein house alone. The most fascinating of these drawings are those that give us the opportunity to look over his shoulder, as it were, at the moment inspiration takes shape."

The Fondation Le Corbusier was formally inaugurated in 1968 to preserve the records of the great French architect's life work. Open to the public, it occupies two connected houses in Paris designed by Le Corbusier in 1923, for his cousin Albert Jeaneret and the banker Raoul Le Roche. Like The Museum of Modern Art's Mies van der Rohe Archive, the Fondation's collection includes thousands of original drawings in loose sheets and notebooks, as well as letters and documents.

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition program is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.