



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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国際連合教育科学  
文化機関



The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier,  
an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement  
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2016

ル・コルビュジェの建築作品  
—近代建築運動への顕著な貢献—  
世界遺産登録年:2016年

## Le Corbusier

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, known as Le Corbusier (1887-1965), was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland, a town renowned for the manufacture of watches.

After graduating from the municipal school of decorative art, Le Corbusier experienced the new movement of architecture, arts and crafts in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. As an architect, he briefly worked for Auguste Perret and Peter Behrens, but he was mainly self-taught. His design work was the result of very thorough research for each prototype. Then, as needed, he repeatedly considered and refined the design until he was satisfied it was the best building for the site and environment. Le Corbusier, worked mainly in France, pursued rational, functional and clear design principles, and had an incomparable influence on 20th Century architecture and urban planning.

## The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo was established to house and display the Matsukata Collection, returned to Japan by the French government after World War II. (The founder of the Matsukata Collection was Kojiro Matsukata, the president of the Kawasaki Dockyard Co., Ltd. who had travelled extensively in Europe and built a vast collection of artworks)

After France stipulated that a French architect should design the museum to house the collection, the works were returned to Japan, and the Japanese government commissioned Le Corbusier to design the building for the new museum in 1955. Le Corbusier asked his three former Japanese apprentices, Junzo Sakakura, Kunio Maekawa and Takamasa Yoshizaka to help him supervise construction.

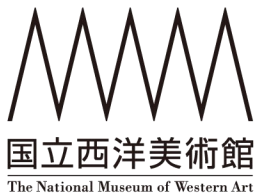
Many Japanese architects have been influenced by Le Corbusier's work and his architectural philosophy has made an outstanding contribution to the new architectural movement in Japan.



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The National Museum of Western Art is the repository of something just as important as paintings and sculpture: architecture; and the building itself is just as precious as the artworks it houses. Le Corbusier, one of the most influential architects in the 20th Century, designed the museum, which was completed in 1959. The building, designated as a World Heritage Site, is acknowledged for its important contribution to the new architectural movement in Japan and represents "the five points for a new architecture" and is a wonderful embodiment of a "museum of unlimited growth".



## The Nineteenth Century Hall

Le Corbusier himself named this hall located at the center of the building and intended to be the heart of the museum. Its open space rising freely up into places on the mezzanine and second floor allows visitors to appreciate the complex spatial composition.

### Triangular Skylight

On a clear day, sunlight fills the hall with natural light from the north-facing triangular window.

### Supporting Columns and Beams

Concrete columns and beams are poured in filled Japanese pine frames so the texture of the wood grain is beautifully visible.

### Ramp

Ramps were often included in Le Corbusier's design. Visitors leisurely strolling up the ramp, are treated to slowly changing scenery, and enjoy paintings appearing and disappearing behind columns, along with the changing appearance of the triangular ceiling.

### Floor Lighting

Floor-mounted lights were installed to light the works from below. (They are currently not in use.)



## The Second Floor Exhibition Room

This exhibition room is arranged around the Nineteenth Century Hall, and the high and low ceilings and walls with openings allow visitors to appreciate the transition between open and compressed spaces.

### Balconies

The two balconies overlooking the Nineteenth Century Hall allow visitors to appreciate the complex spatial composition of the building by providing a view down onto the hall below and into the exhibition room behind the opposite balcony.

### Mezzanine Floor (Clerestory Gallery As Lighting Device)

A small corridor-like glass walled gallery allows natural light from the roof as well as artificial lighting to filter through into the exhibition room and the Nineteenth Century Hall. (Only artificial lighting is currently in use.)

### Mezzanine Floor (Balcony)

There are three separate balcony-like rooms with narrow staircases made for meetings and for the display of smaller exhibits. (The mezzanine floor spaces are currently not in use.)



### Pilotis

This was one of the essential elements of "the five points for a new architecture" and the idea of a "museum of unlimited growth", which Le Corbusier proposed.



### Panels of Exterior Walls

Unlike in traditional architecture, the exterior walls are not required to support the weight of a building; each wall panel is embedded with pebbles and each panel is removable. (Almost all of the panels have been replaced to date.)



### Modulor (Exterior)

The concrete mullion-like narrow vertical louvers or slats, which are found for instance outside the windows of the restaurant and the museum shop, are positioned according to Modulor measurements. The design of the forecourt and the exterior wall panels are also allocated rhythmically based on the Modulor scale.

### Modulor (Interior)

Le Corbusier designed buildings based on the proportions of the human body. The columns are erected at equal intervals of 635cm. Most of the building is constructed based on Modulor measurements including the height of the low ceiling in the exhibition room on the second floor and on the mezzanine floor (226cm) as well as the height of the balcony handrail wall (113cm).



## World Heritage Across Seven Countries

"The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement", including the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, was added to the World Heritage List at the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee on July 17, 2016. This is the first time the group of 17 sites across seven countries and three continents was listed together. These sites encompass the history of the modern architectural movement, which criticized the style of architecture prior to the 19th Century and attempted to change architecture in accordance with the needs of a new society. The sites are also proof of the movement's influence around the world. The movement was recognized as an innovative solution to 20th Century social and human needs.



### The Petite villa au bord du lac Léman Switzerland 1923



Le Corbusier showed the new architectural form in "a minimal house" to meet the needs of the occupants with minimal elements. This is an example of standardized housing.

### The buildings of Cité Frugès France 1924



The "Minimal house" concept was applied to this housing development. It is a combination of 5 square meter housing units and is also an important work in terms of prefabrication and standardization.

### The Maisons de la Weissenhof-Siedlung Germany 1927



This became a prototype of a house with precast beams, which showcased the new possibilities of space within a building and made it possible to change the floor plan flexibly after construction.

### The Immeuble Clarté Switzerland 1930



Le Corbusier demonstrated his principles of prefabricated and standardized plan and structure. This was the first building that used steel frames for windows and panels instead of concrete.

### The Unité d'habitation in Marseille France 1945



This is a prototype of a new house that was to establish a balance between individuals and the group. The building has walls of exposed aggregate concrete.

### The Maison du Docteur Curutchet Argentina 1949



"The five points for a new architecture" were applied again several decades after the principals were first proposed. This house had a fundamental influence on South American architecture.

### The Cabanon of Le Corbusier France 1951



This is the most significant standardized "Minimal House" based on the Modulor system.

### The Convent at Sainte-Marie-de-la-Tourette France 1953



This priory was designed with the deeper principles of "the five points for a new architecture".

### The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo Japan 1955



### The Maisons La Roche and Jeanneret France 1923



When you walk down a ramp or along a balcony, you experience the fluidity of space as the scenery and colors around you change. This was the first Le Corbusier work to which the epithet "the five points for a new architecture" were applied. At this time "the five points for a new architecture" had not yet been made public.

### The Maison Guiette Belgium 1926



This is one of the early works of Le Corbusier and was an expression of a new architectural language (elements and technique): free form and color. This house made his work known inside and outside Belgium.

### The Villa Savoye, together with its gardener's house France 1928



The villa is a manifesto of Le Corbusier's "the five points for a new architecture". This is one of his most famous works.

### The Immeuble locatif à la Porte Molitor apartments France 1931



"The five points for a new architecture" were applied to this apartment building. The use of glass created a sense of unity between the building and space outside. After its completion Le Corbusier lived in this building for the rest of his life.

### The Manufacture à Saint-Dié France 1946



This is a factory designed to meet the social and human needs of modern people. The building also demonstrated the principle that people working in the factory can still feel in harmony with nature.

### The Chapel at Ronchamp France 1950



Le Corbusier established a new sculptural architecture with this chapel and influenced church architecture across the world.

### The Complex of the Capital, Chandigarh India 1952



The work was based on Le Corbusier's view of urban life ("Radiant City", "The Athens Charter"). This compound had an outstanding influence on the architecture of the Indian subcontinent.

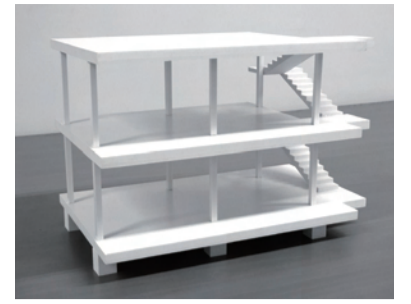
### The Centre de récréation du corps et de l'esprit at Firminy-Vert France 1955



This building was designed and established as a part of an urban planning scheme designed to improve urban life.

## Maison Domino 1914

This innovative approach involves constructing a building with a simple structure supported by reinforced precast columns and floors connected by staircases. Unlike traditional architecture with buildings supported by walls made of layered stones or bricks, the Maison Domino structure with columns supporting the floors allows replaceable and movable exterior walls and partitions (interior walls) and the creation of the now familiar open space designs. The domino concept efficiently demonstrated how to make an elegant prefabricated structure by using pre- and mass-produced construction components with completely standardized measurements.



## The Five Points for a New Architecture 1926-

Le Corbusier presented "the five points for a new architecture" considering such technical aspects as construction materials and methods, while incorporating concepts to create a structure to benefit the lifestyle and wellbeing of its inhabitants.

### 1 Pilotis

A space supported by columns. It is a comfortable light and open space allowing free movement of people and air.



### 2 Rooftop Garden

Generous rooftop spaces filled with plants enhance the reinforced concrete flat roof—such gardens in the sky are impossible to create on older buildings with their functional sloped roofs designed to repel snow and rain.



### 3 Free Floor Plan (Flat Surface)

Replaceable and movable partitions (interior walls) laid out on floors supported by columns allow the free design of interior space.



### 4 Horizontal Oblong Windows

Rooms are filled with light from windows extending the full width of the wall.



### 5 Free Façade

Supporting the building on columns gives virtually unrestricted freedom to use panels and glass for exterior walls.



## The Museum of Unlimited Growth (Museum Projects) 1929-

Le Corbusier repeatedly worked on his plans for the "museum of unlimited growth" concept over a 36 year period from 1929 until his death. "Mundaneum, the World Museum" (1929) was his first museum project. A pyramid shaped building allowed visitors to descend spirally from the center of the top floor exhibition room.

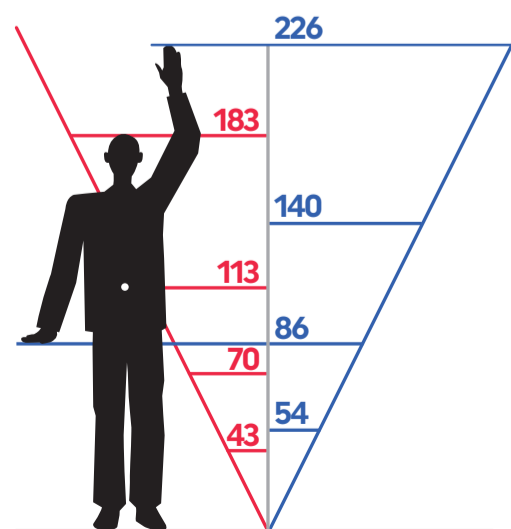
The Contemporary Art Museum, Paris (1931) was the first museum of a square spiral form with an exhibition room above pilotis. In order to solve the problem of an ever expanding collection, a central room was first created, around which exhibition rooms extending helically and outwardly were to be added as the number of exhibits increased.

Le Corbusier continued his research in to building a museum which could be constructed relatively easily, could accommodate a variety of exhibitions and which looked harmonious. He presented the prototype of a "museum of unlimited growth" in the museum in Philippeville planning (1939).

The design of the National Museum of Western Art was based on the principle of a "Museum of Unlimited Growth". The characteristics are still relevant today.

- 1 Enter the central hall through pilotis and go around the square spiral exhibition room.
- 2 There is a swastika shaped mezzanine space.
- 3 The dimensions and locations of the partitions (walls) in the exhibition room are flexible and allow a variety of different spatial arrangements.

## Modulor



Le Corbusier created his architectural measurement and proportion system by linking architecture and the human body. He drew up two proportional sets, red and blue, based on the following criteria: the ratio of the height of a human (183cm) to the height of their navel (113cm), which gives a Golden Ratio of 1.618:1, and the overall height of a human with raised arms (226cm). Harmony and rhythm are created in architecture when Modulor measurements are added together or a single measurement is repeated in a series.

In some cases, the "museum of unlimited growth" is translated as the "museum of unlimited expansion", and "the five points for a new architecture" is translated as "the five elements for modern architecture".