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La Galerie Philia, Marseille – Resonances and dissonances chronicle Le Corbusier's work

Between the contemporary design and visual arts, the influence of the father of modern architecture in the exhibition Héritages for the Seventieth anniversary of La Cité Radieuse

L'Unité d'Habitaton de Marseille, the background

Also known as La Cité Radieuse, L'Unité d'Habitaton de Marseille was designed by Le Corbusier; its construction was completed in 1952. In a post-World War II Europe that saw several destroyed cities needing to be rebuilt in 1946, the architect was approached to use his avant-garde vision effectively.

However, many of his theories, intentions, and design ideas had until then remained only on paper. Therefore, he was commissioned to design an experimental building on boulevard Michelet in Marseille that would be an integral part of the reconstruction process.

Later, it took the name Cité Radieuse. This is due to its exposure to the sun due to the orientation of the building. Despite institutional difficulties, L'Unité d'Habitaton became a famous residence of bourgeois, professionals, and intellectuals. Its relevance lies in the realistic rendering of Le Corbusier's ideology, especially the new concept of city building, architecture, and urbanism.



Héritages, a display by Galerie Philia

Galerie Philia and the nomadic arts magazine Eclipse collaborate for the first time paying tribute to the father of modern architecture with the exhibition Héritages. In the year that marks the 70th anniversary of the construction of La Cité Radieuse, the display aims to reinterpret the codes and studies proposed by Le Corbusier.

For this purpose, the Galerie Philia chose eight international designers to rethink their works on Le Corbusier's urbanistic, architectural, and decorative principles. At the same time, as the gallery explains, Eclipse magazine picked a collection of modern and contemporary works by six visual artists to portray the architect's influence on the visual arts.

«Set within the walls of Le Corbusier's architectural masterpiece La Cité Radieuse, the exhibition Héritages weaves a dialogue of resonances and dissonances between contemporary artists, designers and Le Corbusier, acting both as a tribute to and a critical reflection on his theoretical and artistic ideology», explicate Eclipse editors.

The disposition according to the Modulor system

Héritages finds place in an apartment built on Le Corbusier's Modulor system of portions and it develops in two adjacent rooms. Through the works of artists and designers, the notions of resonances and dissonances concerning modernist theories from the architect are investigated. This method makes use of creations that provide a visual representation of the debate around them, which sometimes receive approval and sometimes criticism.

«Le Corbusier is one of the most influential historical figures in contemporary design. Either by affiliation or disaffiliation, the ensemble of works in this exhibition questions his work and his legacy and intends to respond to his visionary but also polemical genius», points out Ygaël Attali, co-founder of Galerie Philia. In addition, the exhibition aims to understand and reflect on the influences of his theories on contemporary design and the visual arts.

The first room, the resonances

Among the two rooms, the first features Le Corbusier-inspired pieces. The new projects on display seem almost to represent a continuation of the designer's historical legacy. Harmoniously inspired by his aesthetic, the pieces that are part of this tranche combine sculpture, design, and painting. Among the relevant pieces is Rick Owens's vase with clean lines and the same Brutalist tendency as Le Corbusier's work and a functional armchair designed and created by Pietro Franceschini.

Then also the minimalist sculptural steel daybed by Arno Declercq. The father of architecture also used this material frequently in his work, which is why it recurs here. The artistry of the Palace of Assembly in Chandigarh, on the other hand, influences Indian designer Paul Matter's piece. He proposes a brass lamp composed according to the mathematical measurements of The Modulor.

Lastly, three pieces that take inspiration from Le Corbusier's paintings complete Le Corbusier's harmony of forms. These belong to Edgar Sarin and Mateo Revillo, along with Pablo Picasso's original 1948 engraving *Le Chevalier*.



HÉRITAGES EXHIBITION, CITÉ RADIEUSE. PHOTO CREDIT MAISON MOUTON NOIR. COURTESY OF GALERIE PHILIA AND LE CORBUSIER FOUNDATION, PARIS, 2022

Dissonances room, standardization, and regularity

The second room brings together dissonances concerning Le Corbusier's theories, critically reflecting on standardization and regularity doctrines. A ceramic table by Jojo Corvãia, which features cracks and even surfaces, creates a visual contrast.

The creation of Roxane Lahidji shares the same design object and similar concept. Lahidji uses a notched and iridescent salt material as a table pedestal. On the other hand, on the question of balance always in motion, Jérôme Pereira makes a piece in carved oak while Niclas Wolf proposes candlesticks in hammered bronze. The selection implemented by Eclipse focused on demonstrating the relevance of oscillations in the visual arts.

Among the chosen artworks are drawings by modern artist Sam Szafran who, like Flora Temnouche, works on a paper presenting inner landscapes in a blurred and diluted form. Meanwhile, contemporary artist Fabrice Hyber uses plant resins to depict a volatile intersection of leaves with oil painting.

Galerie Philia

Established in 2015, it helps emerging artists and designers gain exposure and support. The harmonic network created by the two founding brothers focuses on contemporary international design and modern art.

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The writer does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organization that would benefit from this article.

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