

SIDE GALLERY



LE CORBUSIER (1887-1965)

Charles-Edouard Jeanneret was born in Switzerland in 1887. Architect, urban planner, painter, writer, designer and theorist, his designs combine the functionalism of the modern movement with a bold, sculptural expressionism.

He belonged to the first generation of the so-called International school of architecture and was their ablest propagandist in his numerous writings.

In 1922, Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret opened an architectural studio in Paris establishing a partnership that would last until 1940. After inviting architect Charlotte Perriand to join the studio in 1928, they began experimenting with furniture design.

Le Corbusier placed systems of harmony and proportion at the centre of his design philosophy. His faith in the mathematical order of the universe was closely bound to the golden section, which he explicitly used in his Modulor system for the scale of architectural proportion. He saw this system as a continuation of the long tradition of the works of Vitruvius, Leonardo da Vinci and Leon Battista Alberti, and others who used the proportions of the human body to improve the appearance and function of architecture.

After World War II, Le Corbusier sought efficient ways to house large numbers of people in response to the urban housing crisis. He believed that his new, modern

architectural forms would provide an innovative solution that would raise the quality of life for the lower classes. Le Corbusier was at his most influential in the sphere of urban planning, and was a founding member of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), an organization that codified the standards of modern architecture and urban planning.

He introduced the five points of architecture in his books, and followed them closely to create wonderful pieces of architecture that are still revered as masterpieces today. Beginning his colourful career in his father's footsteps as a watchmaker, this artist cum architect travelled far and wide to learn the various dimensions of art and architecture. His masterpieces adorn every corner of the globe including India, America and Europe.

His visionary books, his startling white houses and his progressive urban plans set him at the head of the modern movement in the 1920s, while in the 1930s he became more of a complex and skeptical explorer of cultural and architectural possibilities. Le Corbusier frequently shifted position, serving as 'Old Master' of the establishment of modern architecture and as unpredictable and charismatic leader for the young.

From the beginning of his career until the very end, he was dedicated equally to thinking space differently and, most importantly, in accordance with a human body. Regardless of their commercial success, his seemingly simple and modest, yet sophisticated pieces were always suffocated with elaborate social and political thought. Le Corbusier was one step out of his time and his progressive and visionary ideas were not always welcomed. An innovator in several different niches, he has contributed to general development of modern art and design greatly.

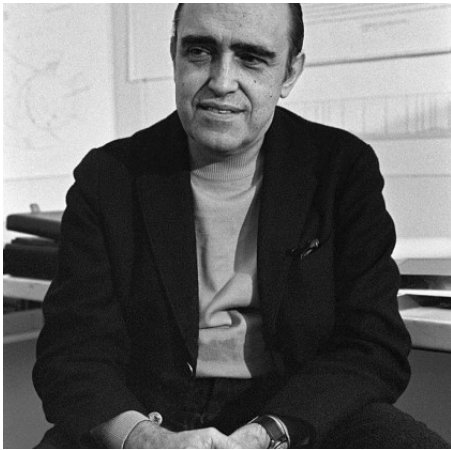
Before his death in 1965, he established the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris containing his library, architectural drawings, sketches and paintings.

Le Corbusier & Oscar Niemeyer: Influences and counter influences on modern design (1929-1965)

When: September 14, 2018

Where: SIDE GALLERY, Enric Granados 80, 08008, Barcelona

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OSCAR NIEMEYER (1907 – 2012)

Oscar Niemeyer was born in 1907, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

After graduating from Barnabitas College in 1923, Niemeyer wed a woman named Annita Baldo, to whom he would remain married until her death in 2004.

As a young man, Niemeyer worked for his father at a typography house for a short while before entering the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes, from which he graduated in 1934. Shortly before graduation, he joined the offices of Lúcio Costa, an architect from the Modernist school. Niemeyer worked with Costa on many major buildings between 1936 and 1943, including the design for Brazil's Ministry of Education and Health building, which was part of a collaboration with Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier. Costa and Niemeyer also worked together on Brazil's iconic pavilion in the 1939 New York World's Fair; legendary Mayor Fiorello La Guardia was so impressed with Niemeyer's design that he declared him an honorary citizen of New York.

In 1941, Niemeyer launched his solo career by designing a series of buildings called the Pampulha Architectural Complex in the city of Belo Horizonte. Here, Niemeyer started developing some of his design trademarks, including the heavy use of concrete and a propensity toward curves. "I consciously ignored the highly praised right angle and the rational architecture of T-squares and triangles," he said, "in order to wholeheartedly enter the world of curves and new shapes made possible by the introduction of concrete into the building process."

Niemeyer's status as a rising star in the architectural world was confirmed when he was chosen to represent Brazil as part of the team to design the new headquarters of the United Nations in New York City; the final building was based primarily on Niemeyer's design, with significant elements also taken from his old collaborator, Corbusier. Following the completion of the United Nations building in 1953,

Niemeyer won an appointment as dean of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, but he was refused an American work visa by the United States government due to his membership in Brazil's Communist Party.

In 1956, Juscelino Kubitschek, the president of Brazil and a close friend of Niemeyer, came to the architect with a proposal, asking Niemeyer to become the new chief architect of public buildings in the country's new capital, Brasilia, a Modernist civic metropolis being built from scratch in the interior of the country. Niemeyer eagerly accepted, designing buildings that went along with his utopian vision of government.

Niemeyer designed several buildings in Brasilia, including the presidential palace, the Brasília Palace Hotel, the Ministry of Justice building, the presidential chapel and the cathedral. After the inauguration of the new capital city in 1960, Niemeyer resigned from his position as the government's chief architect and returned to private practice.

Niemeyer, a member of the Communist party, was harassed after Brazilian military overthrew the government in a coup. He left the country and did not return until democracy was restored, in 1985. Resettled in France, he began collaborating on furniture designs with his daughter, Anna Maria Niemeyer, which also included his trademark use of sinuous curves. Their best known pieces, the Alta lounge chair and ottoman and the Rio rocking chaise, have flowing bases made of sheets of lacquered wood or stainless steel, share the aesthetics of Niemeyer's architecture.

Niemeyer received the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1988, the highest award in the profession, for his Cathedral of Brasilia.

He is considered to be one of the key figures in the development of modern architecture. His exceptional architectural work has been unanimously hailed, and his influence on how the world looks like today has been reminded.

Niemeyer passed away a week before his 105th birthday and Ana Maria dies in 2012, a few months before his father.

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