รำลึกถึง LE CORBUSIER สถาปนิกผู้ยิ่งใหญ่

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ยุคสถาปัตยกรรมสมัยใหม่ เป็นยุคที่สถาปนิกมีความอิสระในความคิดและในงานสร้างสรรค์มากที่สุด เพราะเป็นยุคที่สถาปัตยกรรมมีผลของการสร้างสรรค์จากวิวัฒนาการของวัสดุและเทคโนโลยีซึ่งมีแหล่งมูลมาจาก ศาสตร์ทางอุตสาหกรรมซึ่งอาจพูดได้ว่ามีจุดเริ่มต้นแห่งยุคสถาปัตยกรรมสมัยใหม่จึงทำให้เข้าใจว่า สกุลช่างของยุค ได้เกิดขึ้นใหม่แล้วในยุคนี้เอง

เป็นความจริงประการหนึ่งคือ ระหว่างสกุลช่างทั้งหลายที่เกิดขึ้นทั่วโลก ซึ่งในสายตาของสถาปนิกที่มีความรู้ความสามารถ และประสบการณ์สูงทั้งหลาย ย่อมเข้าใจถึงสภาวะของความขัดแย้งและสับสนที่มีอยู่ทั่วไป Le Corbusier เป็นสถาปนิกที่ได้ใช้ความเป็นอัจฉริยะของท่าน สร้างแนวทางของตนเอง จนได้กลายเป็นสกุลช่างสายหนึ่ง ที่มีอิทธิพลและเป็นที่ยอมรับในวงการสถาปัตยกรรมทั่วโลก และแน่นอน การจากไปอย่างไม่มีวันกลับของสถาปนิกผู้ยิ่งใหญ่ผู้นี้ สมควรจะได้รับเกียรติคุณที่จะต้องกล่าวถึงโดยเฉพาะในสังคมสถาปนิก ศิลปิน และปัญญาชนทั่วไป

ข้าพเจ้าได้อ่าน คำกล่าวถึงกิตติคุณของสถาปนิก Le Corbusier ในหนังสือ Progressive Architecture. October. 1965 ในการเผยแพร่ให้เพื่อนสถาปนิกได้อ่านได้ทราบด้วยในครั้งนี้ แต่แรกข้าพเจ้าคิดว่าจะแปลเป็นภาษาไทย แต่ก็กรงว่าจะเสียรสของการระบายความรู้สึกจากจิตวิญญาณของผู้กล่าวถึงแต่ละท่าน และอาจเป็นการคลาดเคลื่อนต่อความหมายที่แท้จริงได้ จึงขอคัดลอกมาเป็นภาษาอังกฤษโดยตรง ซึ่งเป็นการคัดลอกเพียงส่วนหนึ่งที่เป็นสาระสำคัญของทั้งหมด

WALTER GROPIUS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

An unending, prolific abundance of architecture, art, poetry, and inventiveness characterized the work and life of Le Corbusier, this Universal Man. He has created a new set of values, deep enough to enrich generations to come. In every field of urban planning and architecture, he has offered basic answers and has renewed his messages by ever-fresh and surprising architectural images. He have repeated himself, evidence that principles must not lead to rigidily, but permit an unending variety of interpretations.

JOHN ELY BURCHARD

Dean Emeritus of the School of Humanities and Social Science Massachusetts Institute of Technology

When the news of Le Corbusier's death shocked us all, the ready comments bracketed his name with those of Mies and Wright as the three great and seminal architectural geniuses of our day. On the one hand, this ignored the impressive contributions of Gropius; on the other, it understated the stature of Le Corbusier, who stood alone. In the early days, many lesser men accused him of having lifted ideas from them, a high compliment, since it was always the reverse of the truth. He was the one genuine theorist of the century, the one true urbanist among architects. Better than any one else, save perhaps Alvar Aalto, he understood the needs of simple people and simple materials and methods. He fathered almost every important innovation in design, though he soon abandoned many. He was, in the best sense, a genuine classicist. Least likely to be noted is that he was a great humanist and human being. He was not difficult when he trusted people; he was not arrogant. He was a man who knew that an accommodation must be made with the machine, but that the accommodation need not be that of the human. He showed this best perhaps at Eveux, where he opened the private monastic cells not only to the interior life, as they had traditionally been opened, but also to the life of the paysage, viewed privately. His face would light up to anyone who showed he realized this. The reputations of our other great may rise or fall with times; his is secure and can only wax. I did not always think this way, and an ashamed now that I was so blind.

LEWIS MUMFORD

Amenia, New York

Le Corbusier's life and work mark the beginning and the end of a period; one of those minor periods that in perspective proves to be only a ripple in a much longer wave. His genius dominated this period by his aesthetic originality and his persuasive polemical power; while his defects as both a social thinker and an architect warped the work of a whole generation, giving it arbitrary directives, superficial slogans, and sterile goals. At each end of his life, Le Corbusier expressed himself in a classic structure: the Esprit Nouveau pavilion in 1925, and the Church at Ronchamp in 1955. Between these two poles of Le Corbusier's thought–the architecture of Cartesian rationalism, reorganized by the machine, and the architecture of fantasy, reunited to tradition–any architecture worthy of the name today must in the end move. But the task of fusing these two components in an integrated design, incorporating every relevant human need and purpose, is the challenge Le Corbusier left to the coming generations.

ALVAR AALTO

Helsinki, Finland

The death of Le Corbusier is a family loss to us all and to "The great family of art".

It is equally a great loss for culture in general, of course, but his great architecture and highly admired theory remains.

He was highly appreciated and admired the world over for his theoretical work.

But the real man behind the official image was a master of the arts–one of immense stature, a man with real "courage," which went beyond the usual boundaries, to do things even when they were outside his theories and beliefs. This is what made him historieally great–the key that enabled him to do all the various buildings, so individually varied, suited to such different climates and cultures. All showing the enormous charme that is possible only through the hands of a real master; and, may I add, a master with a realistic sense that has added to his position in the history of art.

A good friend is gone. His work, and all the help and influence he has given the art, stays written in illustrious lines.

G.E. KIDDER SMITH
New York, New York

Le Corbusier gave nobility to an age of architecture in which wretchedness prevailed; he produced scale when a repetitive grid mocked man's stature; he stirred imagination–ever sparkling, ever quickening–when our mental resources lapsed into dreariness: and he achieved a working comity between architecture. painting, and sculpture that had seemingly perished centuries ago. In short, Corbusier extended the horizons of architecture and urbanism further than any architeet who ever lived. Thank you, small Switzerland, for giving ns this giant, and thank you, France, for harboring him. Requiescat in pace; your monument can be seen throughout the world.

PAUL F. DAMAZ
New York, New York

Le Corbusier is not gone. He will remain with us for a long time to come.

For a long time, he will remain the model fo the ideal creator: the precursor with integrity and perseverance who fought for his beliefs against overwhelming odds; the artist who never allowed his work to become a frozen style; the teacher who was never constricted by clichés, old or new; the thinker who, until the last day of his life, kept a searching mind and a fertile imagination.

Le Corbusier is tou alive to enter history; he will remain a continuous source of inspiration to future generations.

We are still discovering his humanistic message.

We have not yet fully understood Ronchamp.

No, Le Corbusier is not gone. He will he with us for a loog time to come.

PHILIP JOHNSON
New York, New York

Of the two poles of modern architecture of our time, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, I chose, way back in the 20's the Miesian. Mies the classicist; Mies the detailer; Mies, the builder; Mies's use of beautiful material; Mies's "Less is More" all attracted me.

Le Corbusier, almost exactly the same age as Mies, the other great magnet for our generation, is now gone. It is inevitable therefore that one try to assess the impor-

tance of his role. In balance, the Corbu pole is the stronger. His ereative intimacy with the formwill of our times insured his leadership. Curiously, the very fact that he had freed himself from the lowly building processes of his time also increased his lonely statnre above the field of common architectural practitioners.

In contrast to Mies, he was a sculptor, a shaper of gigantic forms that, just barely buildable, aroused our admiration and delight. His pyrotechoics amazed a generation.

The two poles (though it was by no means obvious in the 20's tbar these two were to be the poles) were clear even at the Weissenhof Exposition in Stuttgart in 1927. The International Style was then in full flower. All the buildings at the Fair were, and are. stucco. All roofs are flat. Most windows are ribbons. Mies designed a solemn, quietly symmetrical, well–proportioned group of flats; Le Corbusier, two roofterraced, floating cubic volumes, tinted his beautiful pinks and chocolates. They were poems, slightly low–ceilinged and uncomfortable, out poems.

The bipolarity ends up in Seagrams and Ronchamp: From my sober–sided, prejudiced point of view, Seagrams is great architecture, Ronchamp perhaps the most exciting juxtaposition of large sculptural shapes of the century.

The historie future of the two poles? Wby ask?

The death of Le Corbusier touches us more than that of any other architect possibly could. That this is so is proof that we live still, regardless of the fact that he was nearly 80 years old, in the Age of Le Corbusier.

How tbat he is dead, I feel it the stronger, since when he was alive, I never found him a sympathetic person to be with. His pathological bitterness, his self–isolation from his own world of art and architecture, his downright rudeness, kept him from the position of personal leadership he might have had.

But artistically, let us admit he was the architect of the present generation. The death of Frank Lloyd Wright left no such mark. Le Corbusier was our architect.

BALTHAZAR KORAB
Birmingham, Michigan

Le Corbusier was the humanist par excellence of our time. His deep and incorruptible concern about man, man's well–being and enrichment, were les tracés regulateurs of his life's labor.

His concept of life was that of a poet, illminated, inspired, for which his Sun stands as symbol of his handiwork; an eruption of the genius of the earth, that creative Hand symbol reappears and reappears throughout his oeuvre.

He was a relentless teacher, without a doubt the true prophet, yet the voice in the wilderness. The power of his hand's work reached us first. The robust truth and beauty of that hand did find followers in all echelons of understanding. His influence, wide and deep, would be hard to analyze here and now. It will keep learned scholars busy for years to come.

Much more difficult, yet more important, the task of measuring Le Corbusier the poet, the integrated thinker. The time was not ready for him, except as a prophet; hence his impulse to be always the "call in the wilderness." Still, he echoed his message obstinately for decades.

His example–the Grand Designer with deep sense of humanity and poetic vision–is the one we most need now. Our age calls for a new concept of man, of the architect as carver of cultures and not ivory towers. This call our profession can hardly answer now, yet the bold example of the Renaissance Man Le Corbusier is with us. He is with us.

MIES VAN DER ROHE

Chicago, Illinois

Everyone recognizes by now that Le Corbusier was a great architect and artist, a real innovator. Ever since 1910, when I first came to know him, he has reminded me of the great Renaissance artists who built, painted, and sculpted, all at the same time.

To me, his deepest significance lies in the fact that he was a true liberator in the fields of architecture and city planning. Only the future can reveal how those who have been liberated will use the freedom opened up to them by his courage and imagination, Any liberation can result in a new confusion. a new Baroque, or, in what we can hope for from those who will follow Le Corbusier–an essential expression of our civilization.

JOSE LUIS SERT

Cambridge, Mass.

Le Corbusier and his work are an entity. One cannot separate the man from the architect or the city planner; the painter from the sculptor, nor the poet from the writer. The key to his work, was his interest in life itself and his attitude toward what he called les joies essentielles, the components of joie de vivre. These elements led him to the discovery and choice of the newest, most lively and human architectural vocabulary of our times. His work cannot make sense to anyone who does not share his attitude toward life and what made life meaningful to him.

Le Corbusier had more to give than any other architect of our times, and he could express his ideas with precision and clarity. Although he never took up teaching in any professional school, for the privileged few who were in his atelier during the course of the last 40 years, he was the greatest of teachers. His particular approach to architecture and city planning problems carry the most promising seeds for future development. His genius was the rare kind that opened new doors and perspectives to the future, and only a few his most important ideas were carried out during his lifetime.

The younger generations of architects will carry out, I am sure, many of the dreams that he could not develop. The results may not be the same as if Corbu himself had seen these dreams materialize; but his gallant fight has not been lost, and, in times to come, more and more people will be grateful for his significant contributions to humanity.

JAN C. ROWAN

Editor "Progressive Architecture"

That he was a great artist, there is no doubt. His genius could turn the most improbable shapes into things of beauty. He was a great

carver of solids and a great carver of voids–a poet of form and poet of space. History, surely, will always give him credit for that.

But was he also a great philosopher, a prophet of the world to be, or merely a contagious pamphleteer, whose catchy phrases turned the minds of a whole generation of architects away from the essential task of creating an urban environment?

Much of what we see today–the ubiquitous modern cityscape of isolated, monumental, widely spaced buildings–is the result of Le Corbusier's plea for soleil et verdure, for a sort of high-rise countryside.

Today, many of us are swinging back and picking up again the scattered pieces of the past. All the concepts destroyed and abandoned by the architectural revolution that was so much influenced by Corbu's writings now are being re-evaluated by the postrevolutionary generation.

Only time will tell what will happen in the end–who was right and who was wrong.