

A6813: Reading *Precisions*: Reconstructing Latin America's Le Corbusier

Fall 2018 | M 11am - 1pm | Avery 409

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In 1929, when Le Corbusier first ventured on the Masilia towards South America, his expectations of its modern architecture would have been already defined through the network of his friends and associates. His first time in South America would be spent traveling, observing the people, their culture, and their customs, developing architectural and urban proposals, and rethinking some of his architectural principles. These would all find expression in the lectures that he delivered in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Montevideo that would become the basis for his book, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (1930); a book that he wrote on his return trip to Europe.

Throughout his life, Le Corbusier would maintain a close relationship with Latin America though the multiple trips he would undertake there, his publications, lectures, proposals for cities, and polemical positions for it that addressed all aspects of design, art, and urbanism. He would also remain an important influence as he kept in contact and continued his exchanges with architects, intellectuals, and artists that he met prior, during, and after his multiple trips to South America and through the International Congress on Modern Architecture (CIAM).

The seminar will examine the impact and expression of Latin America on Le Corbusier and the Le Corbusier that Latin America understood. Of the first, the focus of our attention will include a close reading of *Precisions*, an examination on the similarity/influence of the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro to his thinking, on his experiences flying over the territory, and on the palpable ways that South America affected his theories, architecture, and urban planning throughout the first half of the twentieth century; characterized by a few proposals (one built and the rest un-built). Of the second, we will focus on how his presence both reinforced the stature of his architecture and of his ideas and, at the same time, opened them for (mis)interpretation and transformation from Mexico all the way down to Brazil and Argentina. This will be addressed by studying the materialization of his influence in the built and theoretical work of twentieth-century Latin American architects such as Juan O’Gorman, Emilio Duhart, Juan Borchers, Alberto Prebisch, and others.

Schedule:

September 10 Introduction *

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, “Le Corbusier: Latin American Traces” in Jean-François Lejeune, ed., *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 98-107.

September 24 Remedial Le Corbusier

Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, “Purism” in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp.237-240.

Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 2007), pp. 81-144, 177-191, 291-307. [In general, you should (re)familiarize yourself with the main points, argument, and organization of, *Toward an Architecture* (1923/2007).]

Le Corbusier, *The City of To-morrow and its Planning* (New York: Dover, 1987), pp. 221-245.

Vicente Huidobro, “The Epoch of Creation” in *Manifestos Manifest* (Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1999), 98-100.

Vicente Huidobro, “Pure Creation,” *L’Esprit Nouveau* 7 (April 1921). [Translated Luis E. Carranza]

Tim Benton, “Le Corbusier’s Logic” in *The Rhetoric of Modernism: Le Corbusier as a Lecturer* (Boston: Birkäuser, 2000), 26-49.

* Readings can be found at: [REDACTED]

September 24

Le Corbusier: An American Prologue

Danielle Ortiz dos Santos, “Le Corbusier and the Americas: Affinities, Appropriations and Anthropophagy” in *Le Corbusier, 50 Years Later*: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4995/LC2015.2015.918>

Tim Benton, “Introduction to Precisions (2015)” in Le Corbusier, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Zurich: Park Books, 2015), a7-a47.

Le Corbusier, “Preface,” “Notice,” and “American Prologue” in *Precisions*, vii-22.

Further Reading:

Jorge Francisco Liernur, “The Gestation of the South American Trip” in *La Red Austral* [trans. Luis E. Carranza]

October 1

Precisions, Part 1

Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 23-122.

Further Reading:

Jorge Francisco Liernur, “Precisions” in *La Red Austral* (trans. Luis E. Carranza)

October 8

Precisions, Part 2

Tim Benton, “The Ten Lectures in Buenos Aires” in *The Rhetoric of Modernism*, 134-187.

Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 123-245.

October 15

The Architectural Projects: Presentations 1

Villa Ocampo, Paulo Prado House, Junia Martinez House, Errasuritz House, Ministry of Education and Public Health (MESP), Rio de Janeiro University, Curutchet House

Jorge Francisco Liernur, “Argentina: The Pampa’s Sublime, or the Geographical Gaze” in Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 317-323.

Carlos Eduardo Comas, “São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília: Le Corbusier and the Brazilian Landscape” in Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 324-335.

October 22

The Urban Projects: Presentations 2

Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Montevideo, Buenos Aires

Adnan Morshed, "The Cultural Politics of Aerial Vision: Le Corbusier in Brazil (1929)," *Journal of Architectural Education*, v.55, n.4 (May 2002), 201-210.

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "Le Corbusier: in South America. Reinventing the Latin American City" in Tim Benton, ed., *Le Corbusier and the Architecture of Reinvention* (London: AA Publications, 2003), 140-153.

Further Reading:

Claude Prelorenzo "Rio de Janeiro: Filming Landscape Sequences, or Scale, Time, and Movement" in Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 336-343.

Tim Benton, "A Month in Brazil" in *LC FOTO: Le Corbusier Secret Photographer* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013), 206-235.

October 29

Direct/Formal/Discursive Influences:

O’Gorman, Prebisch+Vautier, Reidy, Williams, Grupo Austral

Alejandro Hernández Gálvez, "Juan O’Gorman: Architecture and Surface," *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 26.

Alberto Prebisch and Ernesto Vautier, "Towards a New Style," "A Project for a Fine Arts Museum," and "Fantasy and Calculation" (trans. Anayvelyse Allen Mossman) *Martin Fierro* 1924-27.

Sigfried Giedion, "Affonso Eduardo Reidy and Contemporary Brazilian Architecture" in *The Works of Affonso Eduardo Reidy* (New York City: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1960), 7-11.

Jorge Silvetti, "Aires de la Pampa: An Introduction to the Work of Amancio Williams" in Jorge Silvetti, ed., *Amancio Williams* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), np.

Jorge Francisco Liernur, "The Tree in the Box: Abstraction and Nature in the Virrey del Pino Apartments" in *Assemblage* 40 (1999).

Presentations/Production/Organization/Design/ Discussion

November 5

No Class

November 12

Material Influences/Corrupted Influences

Guarda+Correa, Borchers, Duhart, Testa, Niemeyer, Matta

Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, "Material Circumstances: The Project and Its Construction" in Malcolm Quantrill, ed., *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2010), 58-67 and 70-74.

Matta Echaurren, "Sensitive Mathematics – Architecture of Time" reprinted in *Drifts and Derivations: Experiences, Journeys, and Morphologies* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010), 216-219.

Fernando Pérez Oyarzun, "The Life of Architecture: The Valparaíso School and the Studio of Juan Borchers" in *Drifts and Derivations: Experiences, Journeys, and Morphologies* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010), 143-153.

Oscar Niemeyer, "Statement" in *Brasil 1920-1950: De la Antropofagia a Brasilia* (Valencia: IVAM, 2000), 629-629.

Oscar Niemeyer, "Form and Function in Architecture" in Joan Ockman, ed., *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 308-313.

Further Reading:

Oscar Niemeyer, *Curves of Time: The Memoirs of Oscar Niemeyer* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 58-69.

Presentations/Production:

The goal of the seminar consists in analyzing and evaluating the Latin American work by or inspired by Le Corbusier (including proposals, writings, built works, etc.) with the intention of writing historical accounts and critical essays about it and of collecting and gathering information –from many available but scattered resources at Avery Library, the MoMA, etc.– in an effort to develop and curate a small (virtual) exhibition of our findings. Given that there are no holistic publications or other reference works that extensively or exclusively address these issues, we will develop vehicles for the dissemination of the material including an exhibition check-list, a small exhibition catalogue, short documentary films with computer reconstructions and historical footage, contemporary views of the projects, etc. to be created collectively by all of the members of the seminar.

The case study/thematic presentations will be based on continued investigation into the architect(s), work, context, polemics, etc. in relationship to the issues addressed in the seminar and discussions. Tentatively, the organization of the material will be based on 5 themes: lectures, copies, translations, experiments, and visuals.

For this, it is imperative that everyone provide any reading and/or graphic material prior to the class in order for us to prepare for and better understand the material you will be addressing, allow us to formulate questions, find parallels between the

works/cases/contexts, etc. This includes a “checklist” of the important material (with basic information, order, small image, etc.), rough outlines of possible catalogue entries and essays, possible ideas about images or videos, etc. In addition, use your presentation as a “model” for the order, content, structure, and graphic design of what the final version of the project can be [we will chose collectively what this will ultimate be and how to split the work evenly.]

The order of the presentations will be established in relationship to students’ deadlines, material gathered/processed, and/or other circumstances; or, if all else fails, randomly.

General information on the topics can be found in:

Luis E. Carranza and Fernando Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art Technology and Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

Barry Bergdoll, et al., *Latin America in Construction: Architecture, 1955-1980* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2015).

November 19 Presentations + Proposals 1

November 26 Presentations + Proposals 2

December 19 Final Project Due

Bibliography:

Tim Benton, "A Month in Brazil" in *LC FOTO: Le Corbusier Secret Photographer* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013), 206-235.

Tim Benton, "Introduction to Precisions (2015)" in Le Corbusier, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Zurich: Park Books, 2015), a7-a47.

Tim Benton, "Le Corbusier's Logic" in *The Rhetoric of Modernism: Le Corbusier as a Lecturer* (Boston: Birkhäuser, 2000), 26-49.

Tim Benton, "The Ten Lectures in Buenos Aires" in *The Rhetoric of Modernism: Le Corbusier as a Lecturer* (Boston: Birkhäuser, 2000), 134-187.

Luis E. Carranza and Fernando Luiz Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

Olivier Cinnqualbre and Frédéric Migayrou, eds., *Le Corbusier: The Measures of Man* (Zurich: Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess AG, 2015).

Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013): Buenos Aires: Urban Plans, 1929-49 (322-323), Rio de Janeiro: University Campus (334-335), Errázuriz (342-343).

Carlos Eduardo Comas, "São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília: Le Corbusier and the Brazilian Landscape" in Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 324-335.

Manuel Cuadra and Wilfred Wang, eds., *O'Neil Ford Monograph 4: Banco de Londres y América del Sud – SEFRA and Clorindo Testa* (Austin: Center for American Architecture and Design, 2012).

Matta Echaurren, "Sensitive Mathematics – Architecture of Time" reprinted in *Drifts and Derivations: Experiences, Journeys, and Morphologies* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010), 216-219.

Sigfried Giedion, "Affonso Eduardo Reidy and Contemporary Brazilian Architecture" in *The Works of Affonso Eduardo Reidy* (New York City: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1960), 7-11.

Alejandro Hernández Gálvez, "Juan O'Gorman: Architecture and Surface," *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 26.

Alejandro Lapunzina, *Le Corbusier's Maison Curutchet* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997).

Alejandro Lapunzina, "The Pyramid and the Wall: An Unknown project of Le Corbusier in Venezuela," *Arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, v.5, n. 3 (September 2001).

Le Corbusier, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Zurich: Park Books, 2015).

Le Corbusier, *Towards an Architecture* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007).

Jorge Francisco Liernur, "Argentina: The Pampa's Sublime, or the Geographical Gaze" in Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 317-323.

Jorge Francisco Liernur with Pablo Pschepiurca, *La Red Austral: Obras y Proyectos de Le Corbusier y sus Discípulos en la Argentina (1924-1965)* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2008).

Jorge Francisco Liernur, "The Tree in the Box: Abstraction and Nature in the Virrey del Pino Apartments" in *Assemblage* 40 (1999).

Adnan Morshed, "The Cultural Politics of Aerial Vision: Le Corbusier in Brazil (1929)," *Journal of Architectural Education*, v.55, n.4 (May 2002), 201-210.

Eric Mumford, "CIAM and Latin America" in Xavier Costa, ed., *Sert, Arquitecto en Nueva York* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 1997).

Oscar Niemeyer, *Curves of Time: The Memoirs of Oscar Niemeyer* (London: Phaidon, 2000).

Oscar Niemeyer, "Form and Function in Architecture" in Joan Ockman, ed., *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 308-313.

Oscar Niemeyer, "Statement" in *Brasil 1920-1950: De la Antropofagia a Brasilia* (Valencia: IVAM, 2000), 629-629.

Jorge Nudelman, *Tres Visitantes en París: Los Colaboradores Uruguayos de Le Corbusier* (Montevideo: Ediciones Universitarias, 1914).

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "Le Corbusier in South America. Reinventing the South American City" in M. Mostafavi, ed., *Le Corbusier and the Architecture of Reinvention* (London: AA Publications, 2003), 140-153.

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "Le Corbusier: Latin American Traces" in Jean-François Lejeune, ed., *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 98-107.

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, *Le Corbusier y Sudamerica: Viajes y Proyectos* (Santiago: Ediciones Arq, 1991).

Claude Prelorenzo "Rio de Janeiro: Filming Landscape Sequences, or Scale, Time, and Movement" in Jean-Louis Cohen, ed., *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 336-343.

María Cecilia O'Byrne, ed., *LC BOG: Le Corbusier en Bogotá* (Bogotá: Ediciones Uniandes, 2010).

Jeannette Paul and Marcelo Sarovic, eds., *CEPAL 1962_1966* (Santiago: Constructo, 2012).

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "Le Corbusier: Latin American Traces" in Jean-François Lejeune, ed., *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 98-107.

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "Le Corbusier: Studies for South American Cities," *AULA 2* (2001).

Alberto Prebisch and Ernesto Vautier, "Towards a New Style," "A Project for a Fine Arts Museum," and "Fantasy and Calculation" (trans. Anayvelyse Allen Mossman) *Martin Fierro* 1924-27.

Malcolm Quantrill, ed., *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2010).

Cecília Rodrigues dos Santos, et al., *Le Corbusier e o Brasil* (Sao Paulo: Tessela, 1987).

Jorge Silvetti, ed., *Amancio Williams* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

Yannis Tsiomis, org., *Le Corbusier: Rio de Janeiro 1929, 1936* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro de Arquitetura e Urbanismo do Rio de Janeiro, 1998).

<http://www.lecorbusierenbogota.com>

http://www.fondationlecorbusier.fr/corbuweb/lclars/Lc_Lars.html

<http://ocs.editorial.upv.es/index.php/LC2015/LC2015/schedConf/presentations>