

The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism

Beatriz Colomina

1 Moller House.

The staircase leading from the entrance hall into the living room.

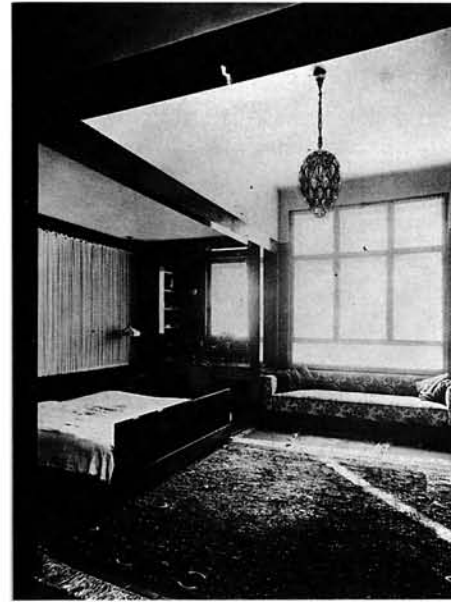
“TO LIVE IS TO LEAVE TRACES,” writes Walter Benjamin, in discussing the birth of the interior. “In the interior these are emphasized. An abundance of covers and protectors, liners and cases is devised, on which the traces of objects of everyday use are imprinted. The traces of the occupant also leave their impression on the interior. The detective story that follows these traces comes into being. ... The criminals of the first detective novels are neither gentlemen nor apaches, but private members of the bourgeoisie.”¹

There is an interior in the detective novel. But can there be a detective story of the interior itself, of the hidden mechanisms by which space is constructed as interior? Which may be to say, a detective story of detection itself, of the controlling look, the look of control, the controlled look. But where would the traces of the look be imprinted? What do we have to go on? What clues?

There is an unknown passage of a well-known book, Le Corbusier’s *Urbanisme* (1925), which reads: “Loos told me one day: ‘A cultivated man does not look out of the window; his window is a ground glass; it is there only to let the light in, not to let the gaze pass through.’”² It points to a conspicuous yet conspicuously ignored feature of Loos’ houses: not only are the windows either opaque or covered with sheer curtains, but the organization of the spaces and the disposition of the built-in furniture (the *immeuble*) seems to hinder access to them. A sofa is often placed at the foot of

1 Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 155–156.

2 “Loos m’affirmait un jour: ‘Un homme cultivé ne regarde pas par la fenêtre; sa fenêtre est en verre dépoli; elle n’est là que pour donner de la lumière, non pour laisser passer le regard.’” Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* (Paris, 1925), p. 174. When this book is published in English under the title *The City of To-morrow and its Planning*, trans. Frederick Etchells (New York, 1929), the sentence reads: “A friend once said to me: No intelligent man ever looks out of his window; his window is made of ground glass; its only function is to let in light, not to look out of” (pp. 185–186). In this translation, Loos’ name has been replaced by “a friend.” Was Loos “nobody” for Etchells, or is this just another example of the kind of misunderstanding that led to the mistranslation of the title of the book? Perhaps it was Le Corbusier himself who decided to erase Loos’ name. Of a different order, but no less symptomatic, is the mistranslation of “laisser passer le regard” (to let the gaze pass through) as “to look out of,” as if to resist the idea that the gaze might take on, as it were, a life of its own, independent of the beholder. This could only happen in France!



2 **Flat for Hans Brummel, Pilsen, 1929.**
Bedroom with a sofa set against the window.



3 **Müller House, Prague, 1930.**
The raised sitting area in the *Zimmer der Dame* with the window looking onto the living room.

a window so as to position the occupants with their back to it, facing the room (figure 2). This even happens with the windows that look into other interior spaces—as in the sitting area of the ladies’ lounge of the Müller house (Prague, 1930) (figure 3). Moreover, upon entering a Loos interior one’s body is continually turned around to face the space one just moved through, rather than the upcoming space or the space outside. With each turn, each return look, the body is arrested. Looking at the photographs, it is easy to imagine oneself in these precise, static positions, usually indicated by the unoccupied furniture. The photographs suggest that it is intended that these spaces be comprehended by occupation, by using this furniture, by “entering” the photograph, by inhabiting it.³

3 The perception of space is not what space *is* but one of its representations; in this sense built space has no more authority than drawings, photographs, or descriptions.

In the Moller house (Vienna, 1928) there is a raised sitting area off the living room with a sofa set against the window. Although one cannot see out the window, its presence is strongly felt. The bookshelves surrounding the sofa and the light coming from behind it suggest a comfortable nook for reading (figure 4). But comfort in this space is more than just sensual, for there is also a psychological dimension. A sense of security is produced by the position of the couch, the placement of its occupants, against the light. Anyone who, ascending the stairs from the entrance (itself a rather dark passage), enters the living room, would take a few moments to recognize a person sitting in the couch. Conversely, any intrusion would soon be detected by a person occupying this area, just as an actor entering the stage is immediately seen by a spectator in a theater box (figures 1, 5).

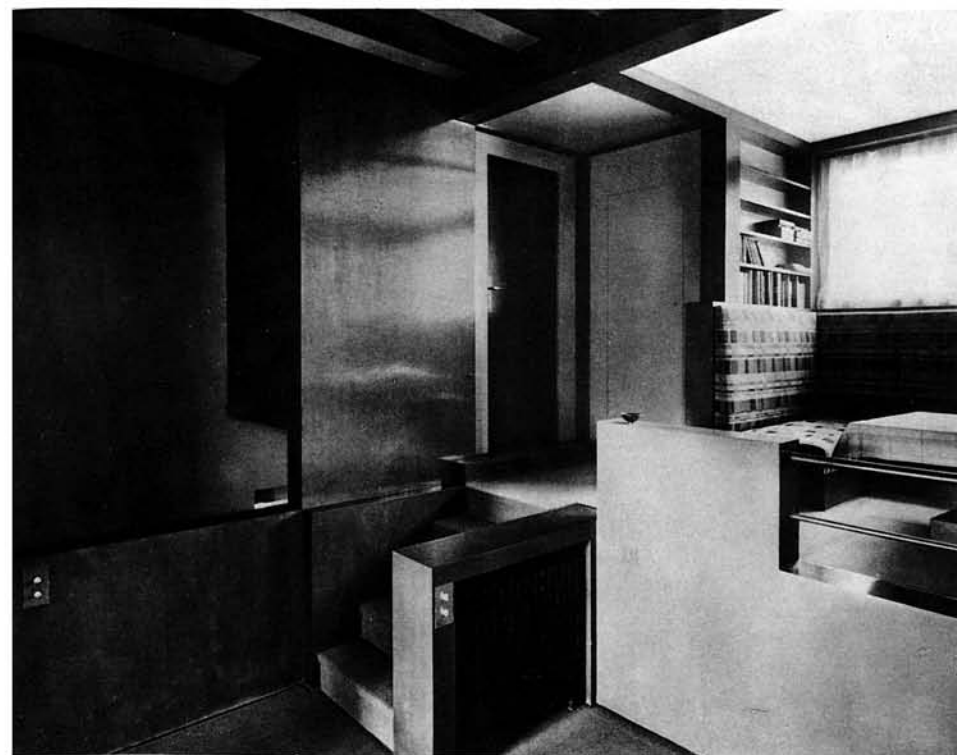
Loos refers to the idea of the theater box in noting that "the smallness of a theater box would be unbearable if one could not look out into the large space beyond."⁴ While Kulka, and later Münz, read this comment in terms of the economy of space provided by the *Raumplan*, they overlook its psychological dimension. For Loos, the theater box exists at the intersection between claustrophobia and agoraphobia.⁵ This spatial-psychological device could also be read in terms of power, regimes of control inside the house. The raised sitting area of the Moller house provides the occupant with a vantage point overlooking the interior. Comfort in this space is related to both intimacy and control.

This area is the most intimate of the sequence of living spaces, yet, paradoxically, rather than being at the heart of the house, it is

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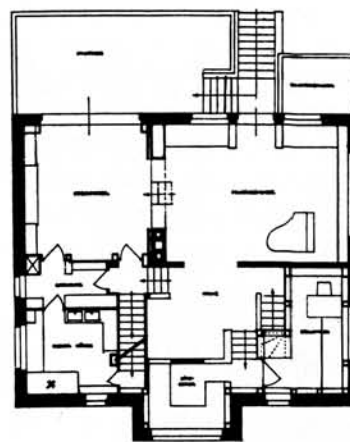
4 Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler, *Der Architekt Adolf Loos* (Vienna and Munich, 1964), pp. 130–131. English translation: *Adolf Loos, Pioneer of Modern Architecture* (London, 1966), p. 148: "We may call to mind an observation by Adolf Loos, handed down to us by Heinrich Kulka, that the smallness of a theatre box would be unbearable if one could not look out into the large space beyond; hence it was possible to save space, even in the design of small houses, by linking a high main room with a low annexe."

5 Georges Teyssot has noted that "The Bergsonian ideas of the room as a refuge from the world are meant to be conceived as the 'juxtaposition' between claustrophobia and agoraphobia. This dialectic is already found in Rilke." Teyssot, "The Disease of the Domicile," *Assemblage 6* (1988): 95.



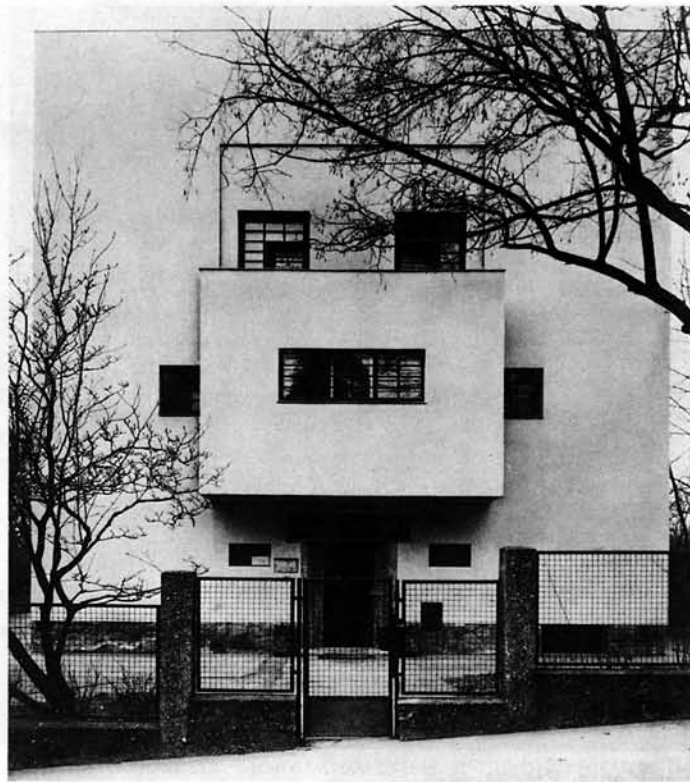
4 Moller House, Vienna, 1928.

The raised sitting area off the living room.



5 Moller House.

Plan of elevated ground floor, with the alcove drawn more narrowly than it was built.

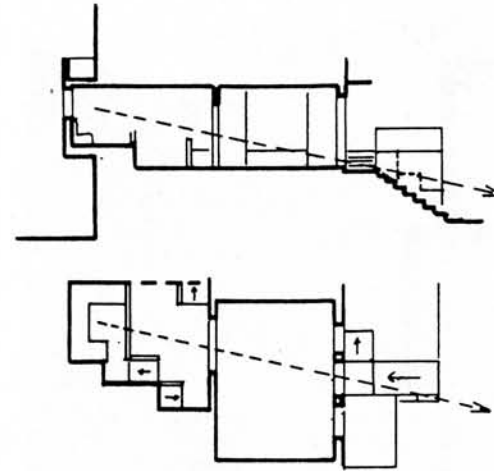


6 Moller House.

View from the street.

placed at the periphery, pushing a volume out of the street facade, just above the front entrance. Moreover, it corresponds with the largest window on this elevation (almost a horizontal window) (figure 6). The occupant of this space can both detect anyone crossing-trespassing the threshold of the house (while screened by the curtain) and monitor any movement in the interior (while “screened” by the backlighting).

In this space, the window is only a source of light (not a frame for a view). The eye is turned towards the interior. The only exterior view that would be possible from this position requires that the gaze travel the whole depth of the house, from the alcove to the living room to the music room, which opens onto the back garden (figure 7). Thus, the exterior view depends upon a view of the interior.



7 Moller House.

Plan and section tracing the journey of the gaze from the raised sitting area to the back garden.

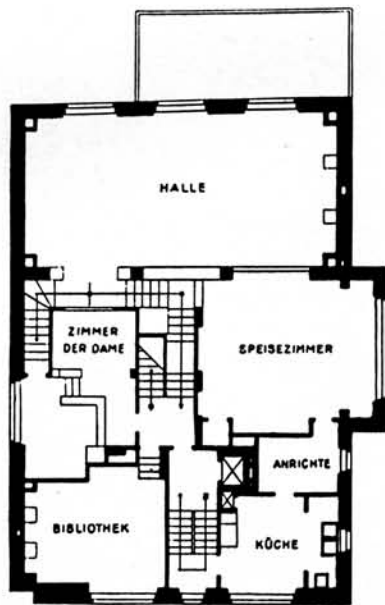
The look folded inward upon itself can be traced in other Loos interiors. In the Müller house, for instance, the sequence of spaces, articulated around the staircase, follows an increasing sense of privacy from the drawing room, to the dining room and study, to the “lady’s room” (*Zimmer der Dame*) with its raised sitting area, which occupies the center, or “heart,” of the house (figures 3, 8).⁶ But the window of this space looks onto the living space. Here, too, the most intimate room is like a theater box, placed just over the entrance to the social spaces in this house, so that any intruder could easily be seen. Likewise, the view of the exterior, towards the city, from this “theater box,” is contained within a view of the interior. Suspended in the middle of the house, this space assumes both the character of a “sacred” space and of a point of control. Comfort is paradoxically produced by two seemingly opposing conditions, intimacy and control.

This is hardly the idea of comfort which is associated with the nineteenth-century interior as described by Walter Benjamin in “Louis-Philippe, or the Interior.”⁷ In Loos’ interiors the sense of

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⁶ There is also a more direct and more private route to the sitting area, a staircase rising from the entrance of the drawing room.

⁷ “Under Louis-Philippe the private citizen enters the stage of history. ... For the private person, living space becomes, for the first time, antithetical to the place of work. The former is constituted by the interior; the office is



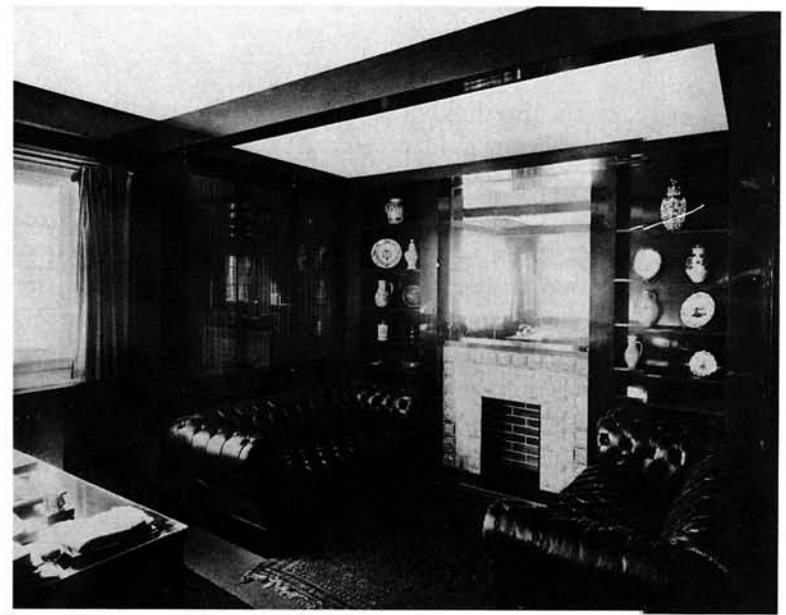
8 Müller House.
Plan of the main floor.

security is not achieved by simply turning one's back on the exterior and immersing oneself in a private universe—"a box in the world theater," to use Benjamin's metaphor. It is no longer the house that is a theater box; there is a theater box inside the house, overlooking the internal social spaces. The inhabitants of Loos' houses are both actors in and spectators of the family scene—involved in, yet detached from, their own space.⁸ The classical distinction between inside and outside, private and public, object and subject, becomes convoluted.

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its complement. The private person who squares his account with reality in his office demands that the interior be maintained in his illusions. This need is all the more pressing since he has no intention of extending his commercial considerations into social ones. In shaping his private environment he represses both. From this spring the phantasmagorias of the interior. For the private individual the private environment represents the universe. In it he gathers remote places and the past. His drawing room is a box in the world theater." Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Reflections*, p. 154.

8 This calls to mind Freud's paper "A Child Is Being Beaten" (1919) where, as Victor Burgin has written, "the subject is positioned both in the



9 Müller House.
The library.

The theater boxes in the Moller and Müller houses are spaces marked as "female," the domestic character of the furniture contrasting with that of the adjacent "male" space, the libraries (figure 9). In these, the leather sofas, the desks, the chimney, the mirrors, represent a "public space" within the house—the office and the club invading the interior. But it is an invasion which is confined to an enclosed room—a space which belongs to the sequence of social spaces within the house, yet does not engage with them. As Münz notes, the library is a "reservoir of quietness," "set apart from the household traffic." The raised alcove of the Moller house and the *Zimmer der Dame* of the Müller house, on the other hand, not only overlook the social spaces but are exactly positioned at the end of

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audience and on stage—where it is both aggressor and aggressed." Victor Burgin, "Geometry and Abjection," *AA Files*, no. 15 (Summer 1987): 38. The *mise-en-scène* of Loos' interiors appears to coincide with that of Freud's unconscious. Sigmund Freud, "A Child Is Being Beaten: A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17, pp. 175–204. In relation to Freud's paper, see also: Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London, 1986), pp. 209–210.

the sequence, on the threshold of the private, the secret, the upper rooms where sexuality is hidden away. At the intersection of the visible and the invisible, women are placed as the guardians of the unspeakable.⁹

But the theater box is a device which both provides protection and draws attention to itself. Thus, when Münz describes the entrance to the social spaces of the Moller house, he writes: "Within, entering from one side, one's gaze travels in the opposite direction till it rests in the light, pleasant alcove, raised above the living room floor. Now we are really inside the house."¹⁰ That is, the intruder is "inside," has penetrated the house, only when his/her gaze strikes this most intimate space, turning the occupant into a silhouette against the light.¹¹ The "voyeur" in the "theater box" has become the object of another's gaze; she is caught in the act of seeing, entrapped in the very moment of control.¹² In framing a view, the theater box also frames the viewer. It is impossible to abandon the space, let alone leave the house, without being seen by those over whom control is being exerted. Object and subject exchange places. Whether there is actually a person behind either gaze is irrelevant:

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9 In a criticism of Benjamin's account of the bourgeois interior, Laura Mulvey writes: "Benjamin does not mention the fact that the private sphere, the domestic, is an essential adjunct to the bourgeois marriage and is thus associated with woman, not simply as female, but as wife and mother. It is the mother who guarantees the privacy of the home by maintaining its respectability, as essential a defence against incursion or curiosity as the encompassing walls of the home itself." Laura Mulvey, "Melodrama Inside and Outside the Home," *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London, 1989).

10 Münz and Künstler, *Adolf Loos*, p. 149.

11 Upon reading an earlier version of this manuscript, Jane Weinstock pointed out that this silhouette against the light can be understood as a screened woman, a veiled woman, and therefore as the traditional object of desire.

12 In her response to an earlier version of this paper, Silvia Kolbowski pointed out that the woman in the raised sitting area of the Moller house could also be seen from behind, through the window to the street, and that therefore she is also vulnerable in her moment of control.

I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not even see, not even discern. All that is necessary is for something to signify to me that there may be others there. The window if it gets a bit dark and if I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straightway a gaze. From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But in this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen.¹³

Architecture is not simply a platform that accommodates the viewing subject. It is a viewing mechanism that produces the subject. It precedes and frames its occupant.

The theatricality of Loos' interiors is constructed by many forms of representation (of which built space is not necessarily the most important). Many of the photographs, for instance, tend to give the impression that someone is just about to enter the room, that a piece of domestic drama is about to be enacted. The characters absent from the stage, from the scenery and from its props—the conspicuously placed pieces of furniture (figure 10)—are conjured up.¹⁴ The only published photograph of a Loos interior which includes a human figure is a view of the entrance to the drawing room of the Rufer house (Vienna, 1922) (figure 11). A male figure, barely visible, is about to cross the threshold through a peculiar opening in the wall.¹⁵ But it is precisely at this threshold, slightly off stage, that the actor/intruder is most vulnerable, for a small window in the reading room looks down onto the back

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13 Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique 1953–1954*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988), p. 215. In this passage Lacan is referring to Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*.

14 There is an instance of such personification of furniture in one of Loos' most autobiographical texts, "Interiors in the Rotunda" (1898), where he writes: "Every piece of furniture, every thing, every object had a story to tell, a family story." *Spoken into the Void: Collected Essays 1897–1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H. Smith (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1982), p. 24.

15 This photograph has only been published recently. Kulka's monograph (a work in which Loos was involved) presents exactly the same view, the



11 Rufer House, Vienna, 1922.
Entrance to the living room.



10 Adolf Loos' flat, Vienna, 1903.
View from the living room into the fireplace nook.

of his neck. This house, traditionally considered to be the prototype of the *Raumplan*, also contains the prototype of the theater box.

In his writings on the question of the house, Loos describes a number of domestic melodramas. In *Das Andere*, for example, he writes:

Try to describe how birth and death, the screams of pain for an aborted son, the death rattle of a dying mother, the last thoughts of a young woman who wishes to die ... unfold and unravel in a room by Olbrich! Just an image: the young woman who has put herself to death. She is lying on the wooden floor. One of her hands still holds the smoking revolver. On the table a letter, the farewell letter. Is the room in which this is happening of good taste? Who will ask that? It is just a room!¹⁶

One could as well ask why it is only the women who die and cry and commit suicide. But leaving aside this question for the moment, Loos is saying that the house must not be conceived of as a work of art, that there is a difference between a house and a "series of decorated rooms." The house is the stage for the theater of the family, a place where people are born and live and die. Whereas a work of art, a painting, presents itself to critical attention as an object, the house is received as an environment, as a stage.

To set the scene, Loos breaks down the condition of the house as an object by radically convoluting the relation between inside and outside. One of the devices he uses is mirrors which, as Kenneth Frampton has pointed out, appear to be openings, and openings which can be mistaken for mirrors.¹⁷ Even more enigmatic is

same photograph, but without a human figure. The strange opening in the wall pulls the viewer toward the void, toward the missing actor (a tension which the photographer no doubt felt the need to cover). This tension constructs the subject, as it does in the built-in couch of the raised area of the Moller house, or the window of the *Zimmer der Dame* overlooking the drawing room of the Müller house.

¹⁶ Adolf Loos, *Das Andere*, no. 1 (1903): 9.

¹⁷ Kenneth Frampton, unpublished lecture, Columbia University, Fall 1986.

the placement, in the dining room of the Steiner house (Vienna, 1910) (figure 12), of a mirror just beneath an opaque window.¹⁸ Here, again, the window is only a source of light. The mirror, placed at eye level, returns the gaze to the interior, to the lamp above the dining table and the objects on the sideboard, recalling Freud's studio in Berggasse 19, where a small framed mirror hanging against the window reflects the lamp on his work table. In Freudian theory the mirror represents the psyche. The reflection in the mirror is also a self-portrait projected onto the outside world. The placement of Freud's mirror on the boundary between interior and exterior undermines the status of the boundary as a fixed limit. Inside and outside cannot simply be separated. Similarly, Loos' mirrors promote the interplay between reality and illusion, between the actual and virtual, undermining the status of the boundary between inside and outside.

This ambiguity between inside and outside is intensified by the separation of sight from the other senses. Physical and visual connections between the spaces in Loos' houses are often separated. In the Rufer house, a wide opening establishes between the raised dining room and the music room a visual connection which does not correspond to the physical connection. Similarly, in the Moller house there appears to be no way of entering the dining room from the music room, which is 70 centimeters below; the only means of access is by unfolding steps which are hidden in the timber base of the dining room (figure 13).¹⁹ This strategy of physical separation and visual connection, of "framing," is repeated in many other Loos interiors. Openings are often screened by curtains, enhancing the stagelike effect. It should also be noted that it is usually the dining room which acts as the stage, and the music room as the space for the spectators. What is being framed is the traditional scene of everyday domestic life.

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18 It should also be noted that this window is an exterior window, as opposed to the other window, which opens into a threshold space.

19 The reflective surface in the rear of the dining room of the Moller house (halfway between an opaque window and a mirror) and the window on the rear of the music room "mirror" each other, not only in their locations and their proportions, but even in the way the plants are disposed in two tiers. All of this produces the illusion, in the photograph, that the threshold between these two spaces is virtual—impassable, impenetrable.



12 Steiner House, Vienna, 1910.

View of the dining room showing the mirror beneath the window.

13 Moller House.

View from the music room into the dining room. In the center of the threshold are steps that can be let down.



But the breakdown between inside and outside, and the split between sight and touch, is not located exclusively in the domestic scene. It also occurs in Loos' project for a house for Josephine Baker (Paris, 1928) (figures 14, 15)—a house that excludes family life. However, in this instance the “split” acquires a different meaning. The house was designed to contain a large top-lit, double-height swimming pool, with entry at the second-floor level. Kurt Ungers, a close collaborator of Loos in this project, wrote:

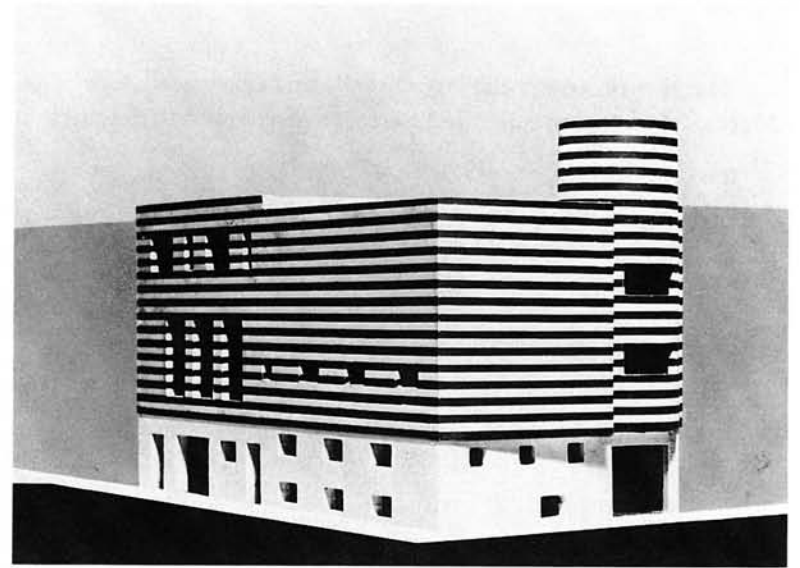
The reception rooms on the first floor arranged round the pool—a large salon with an extensive top-lit vestibule, a small lounge and the circular café—indicate that this was intended not for private use but as a *miniature entertainment centre*. On the first floor, low passages surround the pool. They are lit by the wide windows visible on the outside, and from them, thick, transparent windows are let into the side of the pool, so that it was possible to watch swimming and diving in its crystal-clear water, flooded with light from above: an *underwater revue*, so to speak.²⁰ [author's emphasis]

As in Loos' earlier houses, the eye is directed towards the interior, which turns its back on the outside world; but the subject and object of the gaze have been reversed. The inhabitant, Josephine Baker, is now the primary object, and the visitor, the guest, is the looking subject. The most intimate space—the swimming pool, paradigm of a sensual space—occupies the center of the house, and is also the focus of the visitor's gaze. As Ungers writes, entertainment in this house consists in looking. But between this gaze and its object—the body—is a screen of glass and water, which renders the body inaccessible. The swimming pool is lit from above, by a skylight, so that inside it the windows would appear as reflective surfaces, impeding the swimmer's view of the visitors standing in the passages. This view is the opposite of the panoptic view of a theater box, corresponding instead to that of the peephole, where subject and object cannot simply exchange places.²¹

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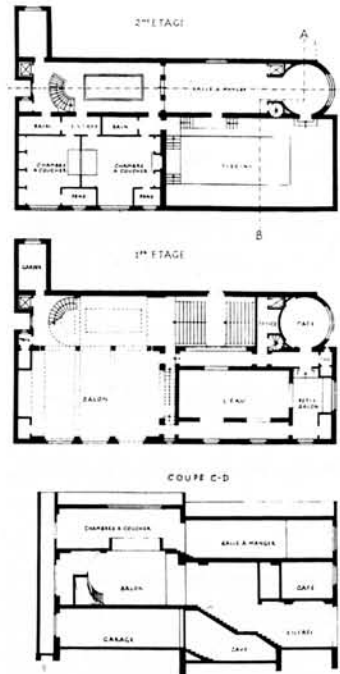
²⁰ Letter from Kurt Ungers to Ludwig Münz, quoted in Münz and Künstler, *Adolf Loos*, p. 195.

²¹ In relation to the model of the peepshow and the structure of voyeurism, see Victor Burgin's project *Zoo*.



14 Project for a house for Josephine Baker in Paris, 1928.
Model.

15 Josephine Baker House.
Plans of first and second floors.



The *mise-en-scène* in the Josephine Baker house recalls Christian Metz's description of the mechanism of voyeurism in cinema:

It is even essential ... that the actor should behave as though he were not seen (and therefore as though he did not see his voyeur), that he should go about his ordinary business and pursue his existence as foreseen by the fiction of the film, that he should carry on with his antics in a closed room, taking the utmost care not to notice that a glass rectangle has been set into one of the walls, and that he lives in a kind of aquarium.²²

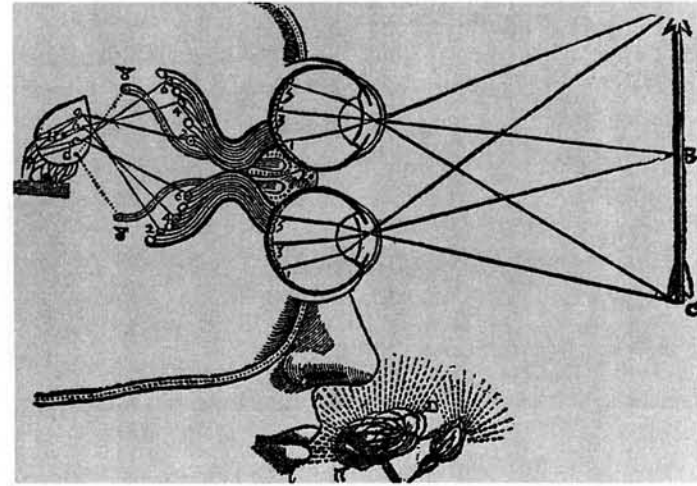
But the architecture of this house is more complicated. The swimmer might also see the reflection, framed by the window, of her own slippery body superimposed on the disembodied eyes of the shadowy figure of the spectator, whose lower body is cut out by the frame. Thus she sees herself being looked at by another: a narcissistic gaze superimposed on a voyeuristic gaze. This erotic complex of looks in which she is suspended is inscribed in each of the four windows opening onto the swimming pool. Each, even if there is no one looking through it, constitutes, from both sides, a gaze.

The split between sight and the other physical senses found in Loos' interiors is explicit in his definition of architecture. In "The Principle of Cladding" he writes: "the artist, the *architect*, first senses the *effect* [author's emphasis] that he intends to realize and sees the rooms he wants to create in his mind's eye. He senses the effect that he wishes to exert upon the *spectator* [author's emphasis]. ... homeyness if [it is] a residence."²³ For Loos, the interior is pre-Oedipal space, space before the analytical distancing which language entails, space as we feel it, as clothing; that is, as clothing before the existence of readymade clothes, when one had to first choose the fabric (and this act required, or I seem to remember as much, a distinct gesture of looking away from the cloth while feeling its texture, as if the sight of it would be an obstacle to the sensation).

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²² Christian Metz, "A Note on Two Kinds of Voyeurism," in *The Imaginary Signifier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 96.

²³ Adolf Loos, "The Principle of Cladding" (1898), in *Spoken into the Void*, p. 66.



16 Diagram from the *Traité de Passions* of René Descartes.

Loos seems to have reversed the Cartesian schism between the perceptual and conceptual (figure 16). Whereas Descartes, as Franco Rella has written, deprived the body of its status as "the seat of valid and transmissible knowledge" ("In sensation, in the experience that derives from it, harbours error"),²⁴ Loos privileges the bodily experience of space over its mental construction: the architect first senses the space, then he visualizes it.

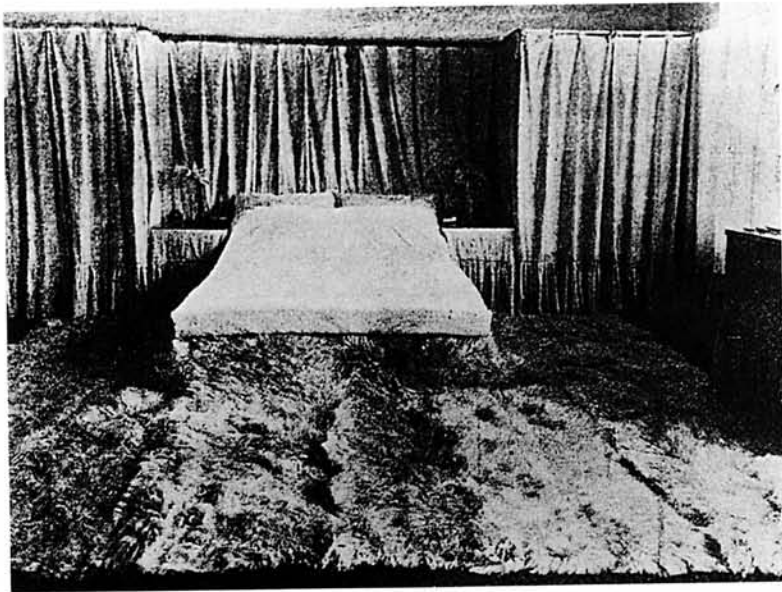
For Loos, architecture is a form of covering, but it is not the walls that are covered. Structure plays a secondary role, and its primary function is to hold the covering in place:

The architect's general task is to provide a warm and livable space. Carpets are warm and livable. He decides for this reason to spread one carpet on the floor and to hang up four to form the four walls. But you cannot build a house out of carpets. Both the carpet on the floor and the tapestry on the wall require a structural frame to hold them in the correct place. To invent this frame is the architect's second task.²⁵

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²⁴ Franco Rella, *Miti e figure del moderno* (Parma: Pratiche Editrice, 1981), p. 13 and note 1. René Descartes, *Correspondance avec Arnould et Morus*, ed. G. Lewis (Paris, 1933): letter to Hyperaspistes, August 1641.

²⁵ Loos, "The Principle of Cladding," p. 66



17 **Adolf Loos' flat.**
Lina Loos' bedroom.

The spaces of Loos' interiors cover the occupants as clothes cover the body (each occasion has its appropriate "fit"). José Quetglas has written: "Would the same pressure on the body be acceptable in a raincoat as in a gown, in jodhpurs or in pajama pants? ... All the architecture of Loos can be explained as the envelope of a body." From Lina Loos' bedroom (this "bag of fur and cloth") (figure 17) to Josephine Baker's swimming pool ("this transparent bowl of water"), the interiors always contain a "warm bag in which to wrap oneself." It is an "architecture of pleasure," an "architecture of the womb."²⁶

But space in Loos' architecture is not just felt. It is significant, in the quotation above, that Loos refers to the inhabitant as a spectator, for his definition of architecture is really a definition of theatrical architecture. The "clothes" have become so removed from the body that they require structural support independent of it. They become a "stage set." The inhabitant is both "covered" by the space and "detached" from it. The tension between sensation of comfort and comfort as control disrupts the role of the house as

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²⁶ José Quetglas, "Lo Placentero," *Carrer de la Ciutat*, no. 9–10, special issue on Loos (January 1980): 2

a traditional form of representation. More precisely, the traditional system of representation, within which the building is but one of many overlapping mechanisms, is dislocated.

Loos' critique of traditional notions of architectural representation is bound up with the phenomenon of an emergent metropolitan culture. The subject of Loos' architecture is the metropolitan individual, immersed in the abstract relationships of the city, at pains to assert the independence and individuality of his existence against the leveling power of society. This battle, according to Georg Simmel, is the modern equivalent of primitive man's struggle with nature, clothing is one of the battlefields, and fashion is one of its strategies.²⁷ He writes: "The commonplace is good form in society. ... It is bad taste to make oneself conspicuous through some individual, singular expression. ... Obedience to the standards of the general public in all externals [is] the conscious and desired means of reserving their personal feelings and their taste."²⁸ In other words, fashion is a mask which protects the intimacy of the metropolitan being.

Loos writes about fashion in precisely such terms: "We have become more refined, more subtle. Primitive men had to differentiate themselves by various colors, modern man needs his clothes as a mask. His individuality is so strong that it can no longer be expressed in terms of items of clothing. ... His own inventions are concentrated on other things."²⁹

Significantly, Loos writes about the exterior of the house in the same terms that he writes about fashion:

.....
²⁷ "The deepest conflict of modern man is not any longer in the ancient battle with nature, but in the one that the individual must fight to affirm the independence and peculiarity of his existence against the immense power of society, in his resistance to being levelled, swallowed up in the social-technological mechanism." Georg Simmel, "Die Grosstadt und das Geistesleben" (1903). English translation: "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald Levine (Chicago, 1971), pp. 324–339.

²⁸ Georg Simmel, "Fashion" (1904), *ibid.*

²⁹ Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime" (1908), trans. Wilfried Wang in *The Architecture of Adolf Loos* (London, 1985), p. 103.

When I was finally given the task of building a house, I said to myself: in its external appearance, a house can only have changed as much as a dinner jacket. Not a lot therefore. ... I had to become significantly simpler. I had to substitute the golden buttons with black ones. The house has to look inconspicuous.³⁰

The house does not have to tell anything to the exterior; instead, all its richness must be manifest in the interior.³¹

Loos seems to establish a radical difference between interior and exterior, which reflects the split between the intimate and the social life of the metropolitan being: outside, the realm of exchange, money, and masks; inside, the realm of the inalienable, the nonexchangeable, and the unspeakable. Moreover, this split between inside and outside, between senses and sight, is gender-loaded. The exterior of the house, Loos writes, should resemble a dinner jacket, a male mask; as the unified self, protected by a seamless façade, the exterior is masculine. The interior is the scene of sexuality and of reproduction, all the things that would divide the subject in the outside world. However, this dogmatic division in Loos' writings between inside and outside is undermined by his architecture.

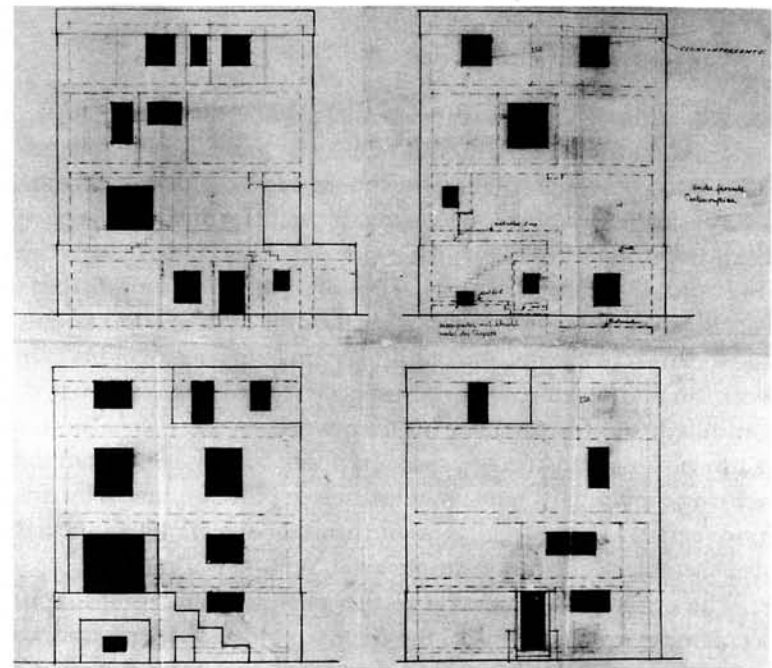
The suggestion that the exterior is merely a mask which clads some preexisting interior is misleading, for the interior and exterior are constructed simultaneously. When he was designing the Rufer house, for example, Loos used a dismountable model that would allow the internal and external distributions to be worked out simultaneously. The interior is not simply the space which is enclosed by the façades. A multiplicity of boundaries is established, and the tension between inside and outside resides in the walls that divide them, its status disturbed by Loos' displacement of traditional forms of representation. To address the interior is to address the splitting of the wall.

Take, for instance, the displacement of drawing conventions in Loos' four pencil drawings of the elevation of the Rufer house (fig-

.....

³⁰ Adolf Loos, "Architecture," *ibid.*, p. 107.

³¹ Adolf Loos, "Heimat Kunst" (1914), in *Trotzdem* (essays 1900–1930) (Innsbruck, 1931).



18 Rufer House.
Elevations.

ure 18). Each one shows not only the outlines of the façade but also, in dotted lines, the horizontal and vertical divisions of the interior, the position of the rooms, the thickness of the floors and the walls. The windows are represented as black squares, with no frame. These are drawings of neither the inside nor the outside but the membrane between them: between the representation of habitation and the mask is the wall. Loos' subject inhabits this wall. This inhabitation creates a tension on that limit, tampers with it.

This is not simply a metaphor. In every Loos house there is a point of maximum tension and it always coincides with a threshold or boundary. In the Moller house it is the raised alcove protruding from the street façade, where the occupant is ensconced in the security of the interior, yet detached from it. The subject of Loos' houses is a stranger, an intruder in his own space. In Josephine Baker's house, the wall of the swimming pool is punctured by windows. It has been pulled apart, leaving a narrow passage surrounding the pool, and splitting each of the windows into an internal window and an external window. The visitor literally inhabits this wall, which enables him to look both inside, at the pool, and

outside, at the city, but he is neither inside nor outside the house. In the dining room of the Steiner house, the gaze directed towards the window is folded back by the mirror beneath it, transforming the interior into an exterior view, a scene. The subject has been dislocated: unable to occupy the inside of the house securely, it can only occupy the insecure margin between window and mirror.³²

Like the occupants of his houses, Loos is both inside and outside the object. The illusion of Loos as a man in control of his own work, an undivided subject, is suspect. In fact, he is constructed, controlled, and fractured by his own work. In the *Raumplan*, for example, Loos constructs a space (without having completed the working drawings), then allows himself to be manipulated by this construction. The object has as much authority over him as he has over the object. He is not simply an author.³³

The critic is no exception to this phenomenon. Incapable of detachment from the object, the critic simultaneously produces a new object and is produced by it. Criticism that presents itself as a new interpretation of an existing object is in fact constructing a completely new object. On the other hand, readings that claim to be purely objective inventories, the standard monographs of Loos–Münz and Künstler in the 1960s and Gravagnuolo in the 1980s—are thrown off-balance by the very object of their control. Nowhere is this alienation more evident than in their interpretations of the house for Josephine Baker.

Münz, otherwise a wholly circumspect writer, begins his appraisal of this house with the exclamation: “Africa: that is the image conjured up more or less firmly by a contemplation of the model,” but he then confesses not to know why he invoked this image.³⁴ He attempts to analyze the formal characteristics of the

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³² The subject is not only the inhabitant of the space but also the viewer of the photographs, the critic and the architect. See in this respect my article “Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interior of Loos,” *AA Files*, no. 20 (1990): 13–14, which develops this point further.

³³ Loos’ distrust for the architectural drawings led him to develop the *Raumplan* as a means of conceptualizing space as it is felt, but, revealingly, he left no theoretical definition of it. Kulka noted: “he will make many changes during construction. He will walk through the space and say: ‘I do not like the height of this ceiling, change it!’ The idea of the *Raumplan* made it difficult to finish a scheme before construction allowed the visualization of the space as it was.”

³⁴ Münz and Künstler, *Adolf Loos*, p. 195.

project, but all he can conclude is that “they look strange and exotic.” What is most striking in this passage is the uncertainty as to whether Münz is referring to the model of the house or to Josephine Baker herself. He seems unable to either detach himself from this project or to enter into it.

Like Münz, Gravagnuolo finds himself writing things without knowing why, reprimands himself, then tries to regain control:

First there is the charm of this gay architecture. It is not just the dichromatism of the facades but—as we shall see—the spectacular nature of the internal articulation that determines its refined and seductive character. Rather than abandon oneself to the pleasure of suggestions, it is necessary to take this “toy” to pieces with *analytical detachment* if one wishes to understand the mechanism of composition.³⁵ [author’s emphasis]

He then institutes a regime of analytical categories (“the architectural introversion,” “the revival of dichromatism,” “the plastic arrangement”) which he uses nowhere else in the book. And he concludes:

The water flooded with light, the refreshing swim, the voyeuristic pleasure of underwater exploration—these are the carefully balanced ingredients of this gay architecture. But what matters more is that the invitation to the spectacular suggested by the theme of the house for a cabaret star is handled by Loos with discretion and *intellectual detachment*, more as a poetic game, involving the mnemonic pursuit of quotations and allusions to the Roman spirit, than as a vulgar surrender to the taste of Hollywood. [author’s emphasis]

Gravagnuolo ends up crediting Loos with the “detachment” (from Hollywood, vulgar taste, feminized culture) in “handling” the project that the critic himself was attempting to regain in its analysis. The insistence on detachment, on reestablishing the distance between critic and object of criticism, architect and building, subject and object, is of course indicative of the obvious fact that Münz and Gravagnuolo have failed to separate themselves from the object. The image of Josephine Baker offers pleasure but

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³⁵ Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), p. 191.

also represents the threat of castration posed by the “other”: the image of woman in water—liquid, elusive, unable to be controlled, pinned down. One way of dealing with this threat is fetishization.

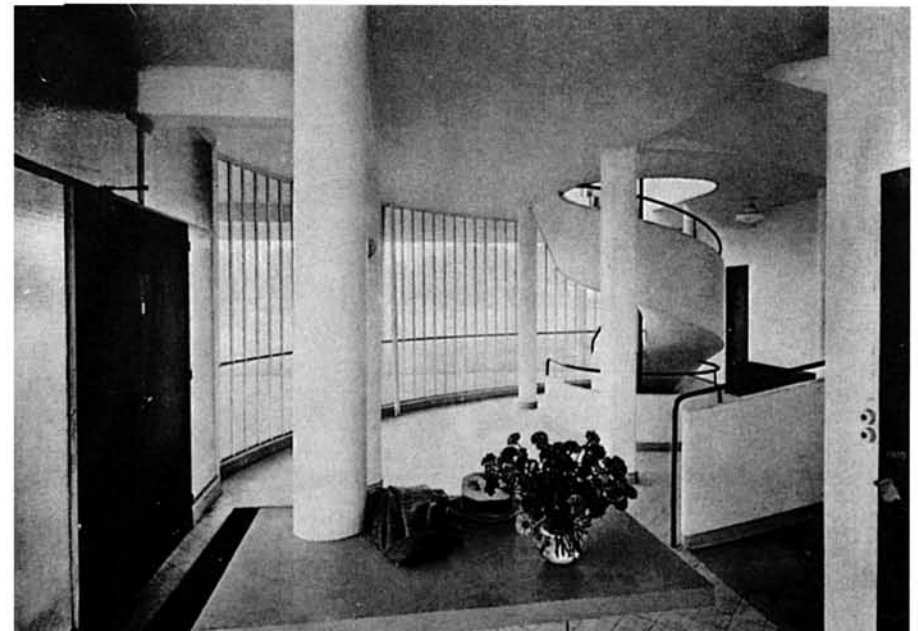
The Josephine Baker house represents a shift in the sexual status of the body. This shift involves determinations of race and class more than gender. The theater box of the domestic interiors places the occupant against the light. She appears as a silhouette, mysterious and desirable, but the backlighting also draws attention to her as a physical volume, a bodily presence within the house with its own interior. She controls the interior, yet she is trapped within it. In the Baker house, the body is produced as spectacle, the object of an erotic gaze, an erotic system of looks. The exterior of this house cannot be read as a silent mask designed to conceal its interior; it is a tattooed surface which does not refer to the interior, it neither conceals nor reveals it. This fetishization of the surface is repeated in the “interior.” In the passages, the visitors consume Baker’s body as a surface adhering to the windows. Like the body, the house is all surface; it does not simply have an interior.

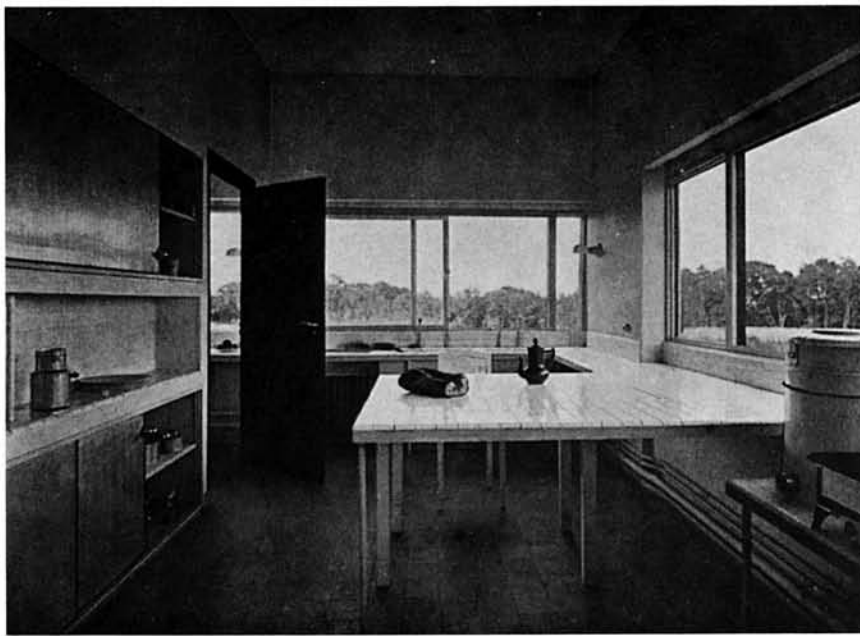
In the houses of Le Corbusier the reverse condition of Loos’ interiors may be observed. In photographs windows are never covered with curtains, neither is access to them hampered by objects. On the contrary, everything in these houses seems to be disposed in a way that continuously throws the subject towards the periphery of the house. The look is directed to the exterior in such deliberate manner as to suggest the reading of these houses as frames for a view. Even when actually in an “exterior,” in a terrace or in a “roof garden,” walls are constructed to frame the landscape, and a view from there to the interior, as in a canonic photograph of Villa Savoye (figure 19), passes right through it to the framed landscape (so that in fact one can speak about a series of overlapping frames). These frames are given temporality through the *promenade*. Unlike Adolf Loos’ houses, perception here occurs in motion. It is hard to think of oneself in static positions. If the photographs of Loos’ interiors give the impression that somebody is about to enter the room, in Le Corbusier’s the impression is that somebody was just there, leaving as traces a coat and a hat lying on the table by the entrance of Villa Savoye (figure 20) or some bread and a jug on the kitchen table (figure 21; note also that the door here has been left open, further suggesting the idea that we have just missed some-



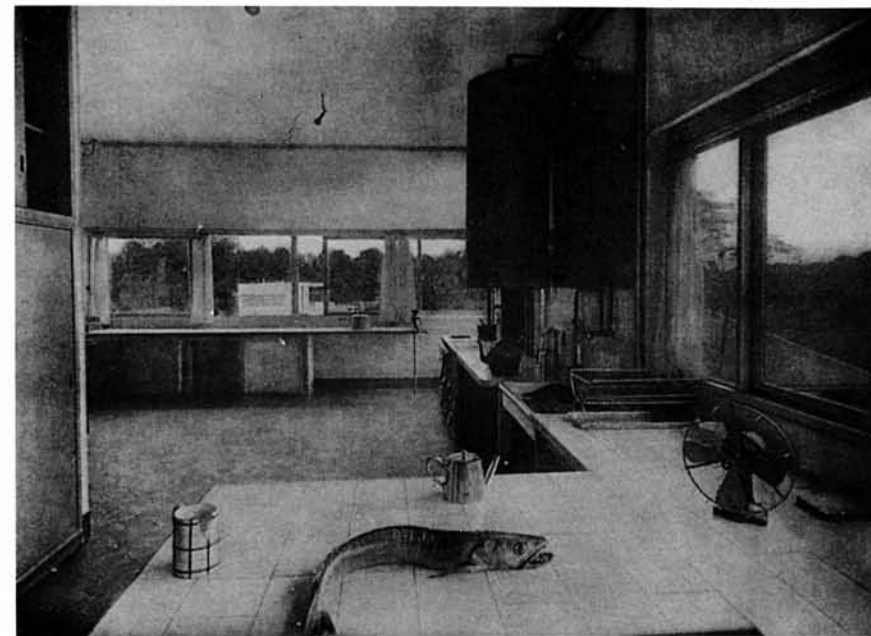
19 **Villa Savoye, Poissy, 1929.**
Jardin suspendu.

20 **Villa Savoye.**
View of the entrance hall.





21 **Villa Savoye.**
View of the kitchen.



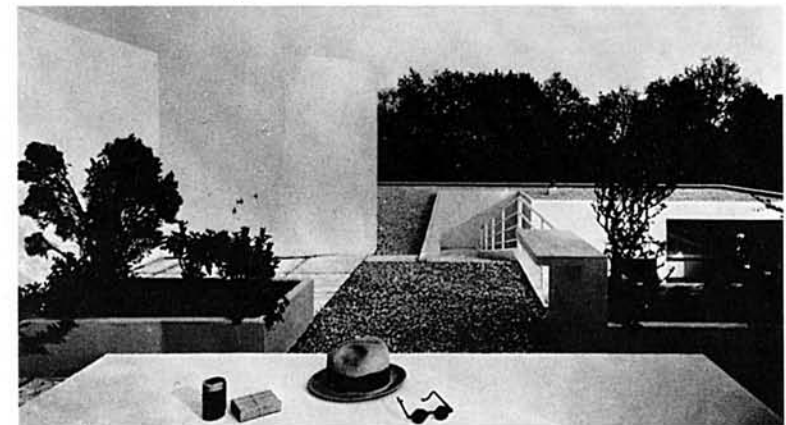
22 **Villa Garches, 1927.**
View of the kitchen.

body), or a raw fish in the kitchen of Garches (figure 22). And even once we have reached the highest point of the house, as in the terrace of Villa Savoye in the sill of the window which frames the landscape, the culminating point of the promenade, here also we find a hat, a pair of sunglasses, a little package (cigarettes?) and a lighter (figure 23), and now, where did the *gentleman* go? Because of course, you would have noticed already, that the personal objects are all male objects (never a handbag, a lipstick, or some piece of women's clothing). But before that. We are following somebody, the traces of his existence presented to us in the form of a series of photographs of the interior. The look into these photographs is a forbidden look. The look of a detective. A voyeuristic look.³⁶

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36 For other interpretations of these photographs of Le Corbusier's villas presented in the *Oeuvre complète* see: Thomas Schumacher, "Deep Space, Shallow Space," *Architectural Review* (January 1987): 37-42; Richard Becherer, "Chancing it in the Architecture of Surrealist *Mise-en-Scène*," *Modulus* 18 (1987): 63-87; Alexander Gorlin, "The Ghost in the Machine: Surrealism in the Work of Le Corbusier," *Perspecta* 18 (1982); José Quetglas, "Viajes alrededor de mi alcoba," *Arquitectura* 264-265 (1987): 111-112.

23 **Villa Savoye.**
View of the roof garden.

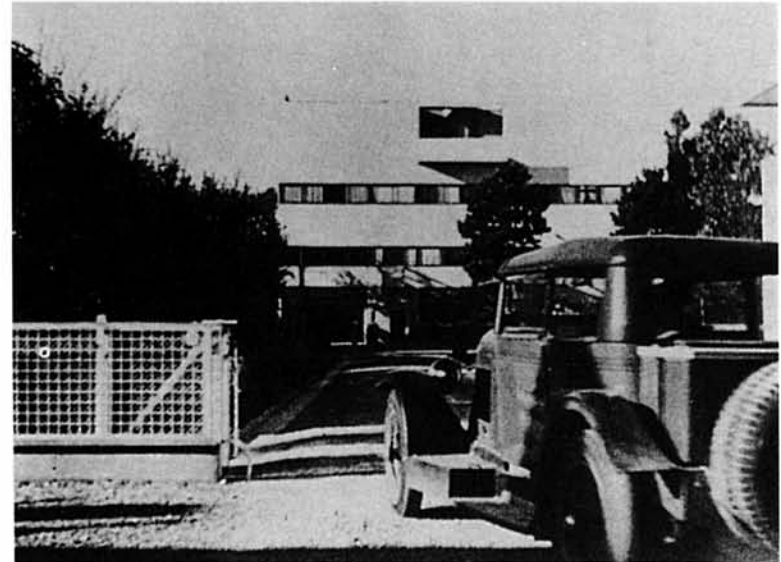


In the film *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1929) directed by Pierre Chenal with Le Corbusier,³⁷ the latter as the main actor drives his own car to the entrance of Villa Garches (figure 24), descends, and enters the house in an energetic manner. He is wearing a dark suit with bow tie, his hair is glued with brilliantine, every hair in place, he is holding a cigarette in his mouth. The camera pans through the exterior of the house and arrives at the "roof garden," where there are women sitting down and children playing. A little boy is driving his toy car. At this point Le Corbusier appears again but on the other side of the terrace (he never comes in contact with the women and children). He is puffing his cigarette. He then very athletically climbs up the spiral staircase which leads to the highest point of the house, a lookout point. Still wearing his formal attire, the cigarette still sticking out of his mouth, he pauses to contemplate the view from that point. He looks out.

There is also a figure of a woman going through a house in this movie. The house that frames her is Villa Savoye. Here there is no car arriving. The camera shows the house from the distance, an object sitting in the landscape, and then pans the outside and the inside of the house. And it is there, halfway through the interior, that the woman appears in the screen. She is already inside, already contained by the house, bounded. She opens the door that leads to the terrace and goes up the ramp toward the roof garden, her back to the camera. She is wearing informal clothes and high heels and she holds to the handrail as she goes up, her skirt and hair blowing in the wind. She appears vulnerable. Her body is fragmented, framed not only by the camera but by the house itself, behind bars (figure 25). She appears to be moving from the inside of the house to the outside, to the roof garden. But this outside is again constructed as an inside with a wall wrapping the space in which an opening with the proportions of a window frames the landscape. The woman continues walking along the wall, as if

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37 A copy of this film is held in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. About this movie see J. Ward, "Le Corbusier's Villa Les Terrasses and the International Style," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1983, and by the same author, "Les Terrasses," *Architectural Review* (March 1985): 64–69. Richard Becherer has compared it to Man Ray's movie *Les Mystères du Château du Dé* (setting by Mallet-Stevens) in "Chancing it in the Architecture of Surrealist Mise-en-Scène."

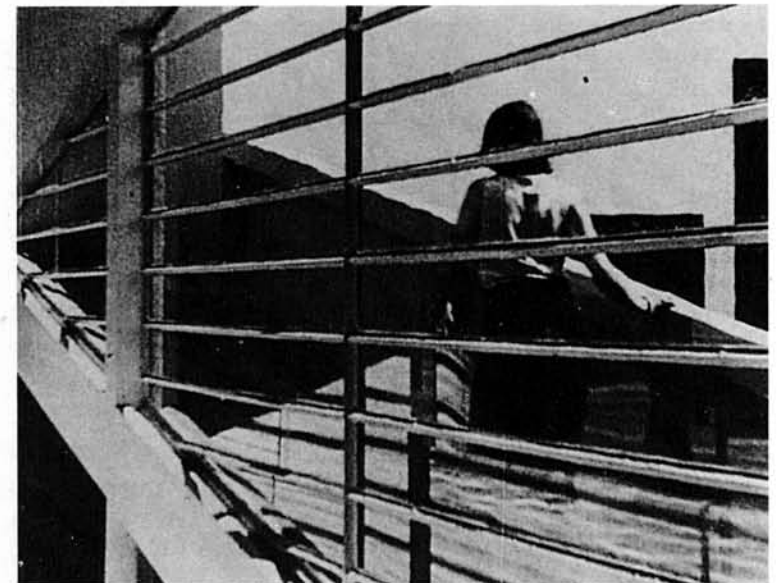


24 **Villa Garches.**

Still from *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 1929.

25 **Villa Savoye.**

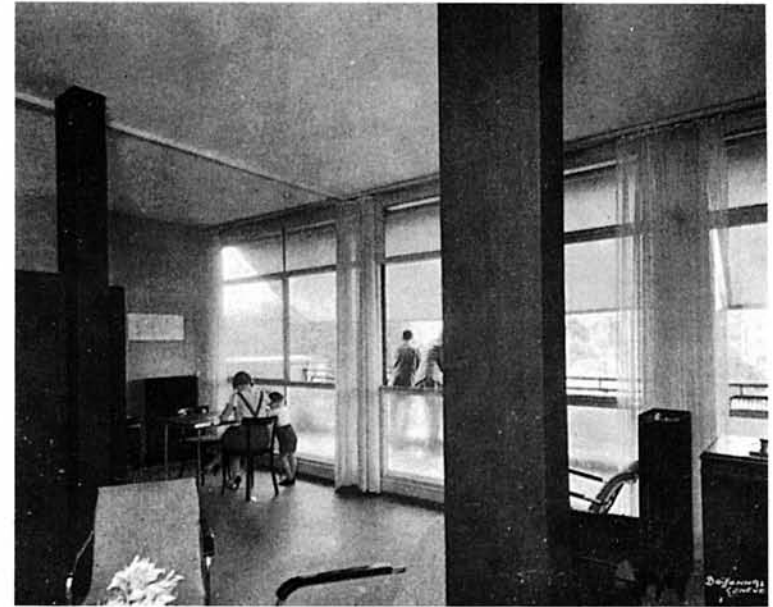
Still from *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*. "Une maison ce n'est pas une prison: l'aspect change à chaque pas."



protected by it, and as the wall makes a curve to form the solarium, the woman turns too, picks up a chair, and sits down. She would be facing the interior, the space she has just moved through. But for the camera, which now shows us a general view of the terrace, she has disappeared behind the plants. That is, just at the moment when she has turned and could face the camera eye (there is nowhere else to go), she vanishes. She never catches our eye. Here we are literally following somebody, the point of view is that of a voyeur.

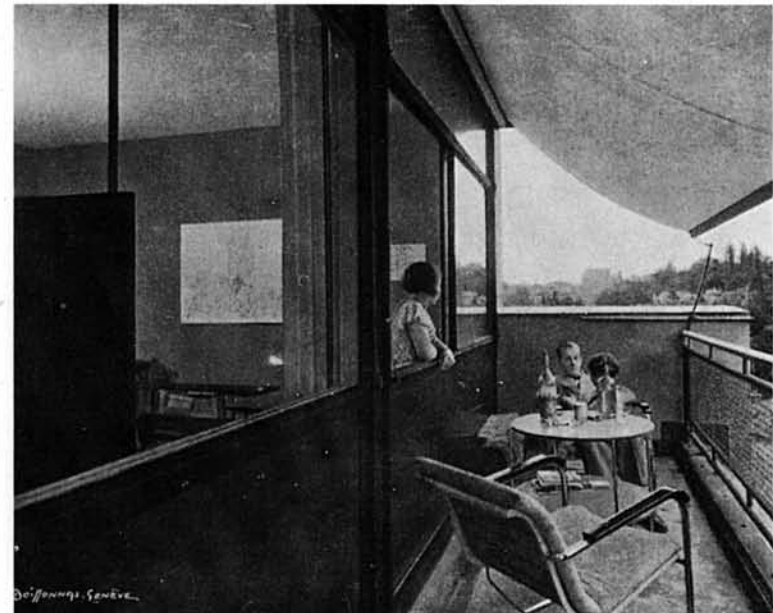
We could accumulate more evidence. Few photographs of Le Corbusier's buildings show people in them. But in those few, women always look away from the camera: most of the time they are shot from the back and they almost never occupy the same space as men. Take the photographs of *Immeuble Clarté* in the *Oeuvre complète*, for example. In one of them, the woman and the child are in the interior, they are shot from the back, facing the wall; the men are in the balcony, looking out, toward the city (figure 26). In the next shot, the woman, again shot from the back, is leaning against the window to the balcony and looking at the man and the child who are on the balcony (figure 27). This spatial structure is repeated very often, not only in the photographs but also the drawings of Le Corbusier's projects. In a drawing of the Warner project, for example, the woman in the upper floor is leaning against the veranda, looking down at her hero, the boxer, who is occupying the *jardin suspendu*. He looks at his punching bag. And in the drawing *Ferme radieuse*, the woman in the kitchen looks over the counter toward the man sitting at the dining room table. He is reading the newspaper. Here again the woman is placed "inside," the man "outside," the woman looks at the man, the man looks at the "world."

But perhaps no example is more telling than the photo collage of the exhibit of a living room in the *Salon d'Automne 1929*, including all the "equipment of a dwelling," a project that Le Corbusier realized in collaboration with Charlotte Perriand. In this image which Le Corbusier has published in the *Oeuvre complète*, Perriand herself is lying on the *chaise-longue*, her head turned away from the camera. More significant, in the original photograph employed in this photo collage (as well as in another photograph in the *Oeuvre complète* which shows the *chaise-longue* in the horizontal position),



26 **Immeuble Clarté, Ginebra, 1930–32.**
View of the interior.

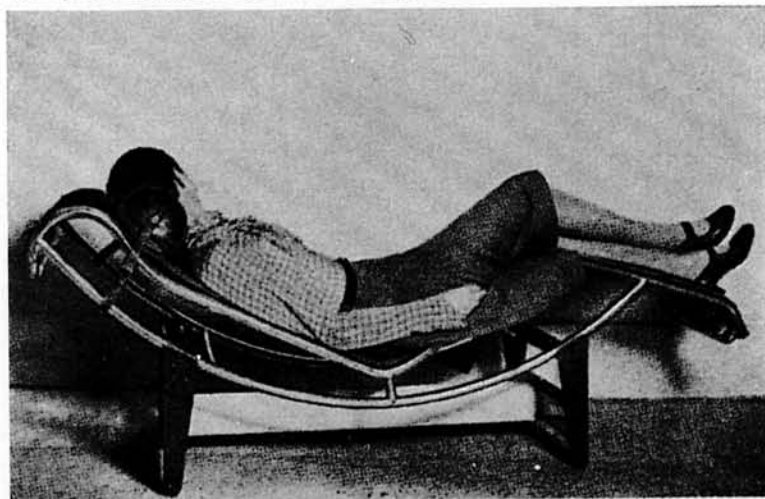
27 **Immeuble Clarté.**
The terrace.





28 Charlotte Perriand in the *chaise-longue* against the wall.
Salon d'Automne 1929.

29 *Chaise-longue* in the horizontal position.



one can see that the chair has been placed right against the wall. Remarkably, she is facing the wall. She is almost an attachment to the wall. She sees nothing (figures 28, 29).

And of course for Le Corbusier—who writes things such as “I exist in life only on condition that I see” (*Précisions*, 1930) or “This is the key: to look ... to look/observe/see/imagine/invent, create” (1963), and in the last weeks of his life: “I am and I remain an impenitent visual” (*Mise au Point*)—everything is in the visual.³⁸ But what does *vision* mean here?

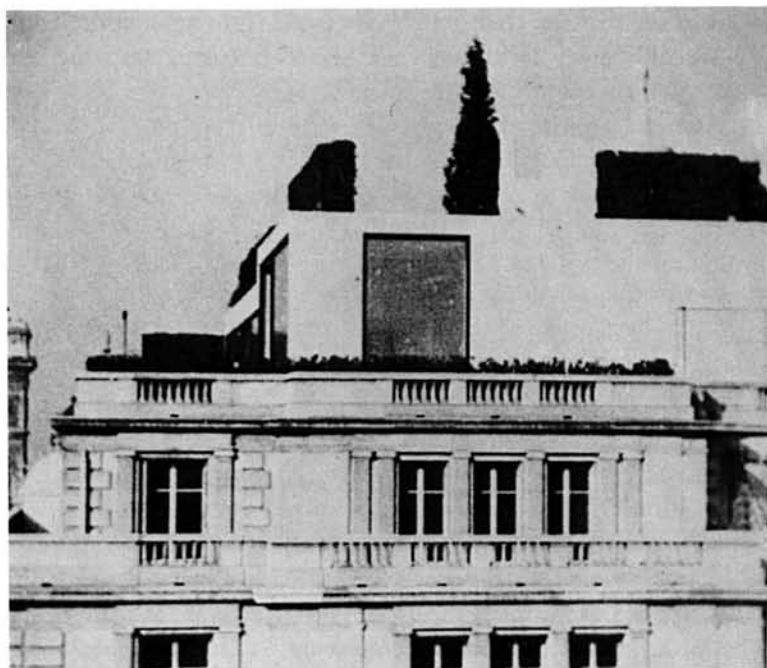
We should now return to the passage in *Urbanisme* which opens this paper (“Loos told me one day: ‘A cultivated man does not look out of the window ...’”) because in that very passage he has provided us with a clue to the enigma when he goes on to say: “Such sentiment [that of Loos with regard to the window] can have an explanation in the congested, disordered city where disorder appears in distressing images; one could even admit the paradox [of a Loosian window] before a sublime natural spectacle, too sublime.”³⁹ For Le Corbusier the metropolis itself was “too sublime.” The look, in Le Corbusier’s architecture, is not that look which would still pretend to contemplate the metropolitan spectacle with the detachment of a nineteenth-century observer before a sublime, natural landscape. It is not the look in Hugh Ferriss’ drawings of *The Metropolis of Tomorrow*, for example.⁴⁰

In this sense, the penthouse that Le Corbusier did for Charles de Beistegui on the Champs-Élysées, Paris (1929–31) becomes symptomatic (figures 30, 31). In this house, originally intended not to be inhabited but to serve as a frame for big parties, there was

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³⁸ Pierre-Alain Crosset, “Eyes Which See,” *Casabella* 531–532 (1987): 115.

³⁹ “Un tel sentiment s’explique dans la ville congestionnée ou le désordre apparaît en images affligeantes; on admettrait même le paradoxe en face d’un spectacle naturel sublime, trop sublime.” Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, pp. 174–176.

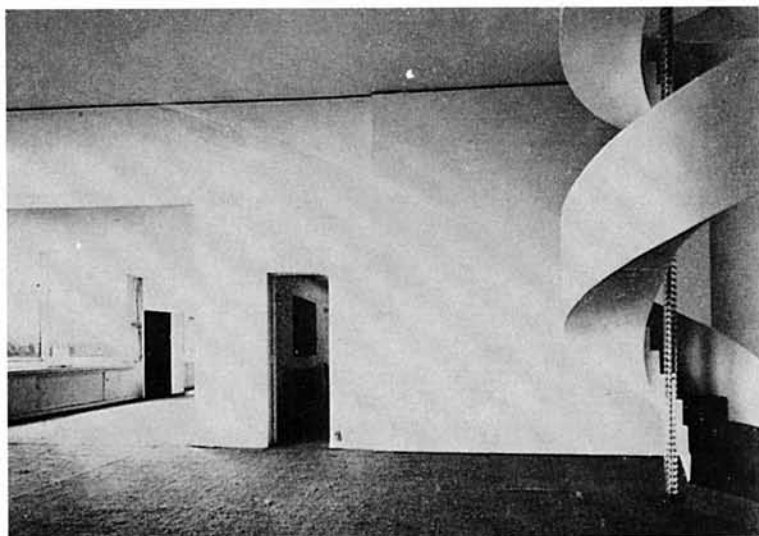
⁴⁰ Le Corbusier makes reference to Hugh Ferriss in his book *La Ville radiense* (Paris: Vincent, Frel & Cie., 1933), when he writes as caption accompanying a collage of images contrasting Hugh Ferriss and the actual New York with the Plan Voisin and Notre Dame: “The French tradition—Notre Dame and the Plan Voisin (‘horizontal’ skyscrapers) versus the American line (tumult, bristling, chaos, first explosive state of a new medievalism).” *The Radiant City* (New York: Orion Press, 1967), p. 133.



30 Apartment Charles de Beistegui, Paris, 1929–31.

31 Apartment Beistegui.

View from the living room toward the dining room.



32 Apartment Beistegui.
Terrace.

no electric lighting. Beistegui wrote: “the candle has recovered all its rights because it is the only one which gives a *living* light.”⁴¹ “Electricity, modern power, is invisible, it does not illuminate the dwelling, but activates the doors and moves the walls.”⁴²

Electricity is used *inside* this apartment to slide away partition walls, operate doors, and allow cinematographic projections on the metal screen (which unfolds automatically as the chandelier rises up on pulleys), and *outside*, on the roof terrace, to slide the banks of hedges to frame the view of Paris: “En pressant un bouton électrique, la palissade de verdure s’écarte et Paris apparaît”⁴³

.....
⁴¹ Charles de Beistegui interviewed by Roger Baschet in *Plaisir de France* (March 1936): 26–29. Cited by Pierre Saddy, “Le Corbusier chez les riches: l’appartement Charles de Beistegui,” *Architecture, mouvement, continuité*, no. 49 (1979): 57–70. About this apartment, see also “Appartement avec terrasses,” *L’Architecte* (October 1932): 102–104.

⁴² “L’électricité, puissance moderne, est invisible, elle n’éclaire point la demeure, mais actionne les portes et déplace les murailles....” Baschet, interview with Charles de Beistegui, *Plaisir de France* (March 1936).

⁴³ Pierre Saddy, “Le Corbusier e l’Arlecchino,” *Rassegna* 3 (1980).

(figure 32). Electricity is used here not to illuminate, to make *visible*, but as a technology of framing. Doors, walls, hedges, that is, traditional architectural framing devices, are activated with electric power, as are the built-in cinema camera and its projection screen, and when these modern frames are *lit*, the “living” light of the chandelier gives way to another living light, the flickering light of the movie, the “flicks.”

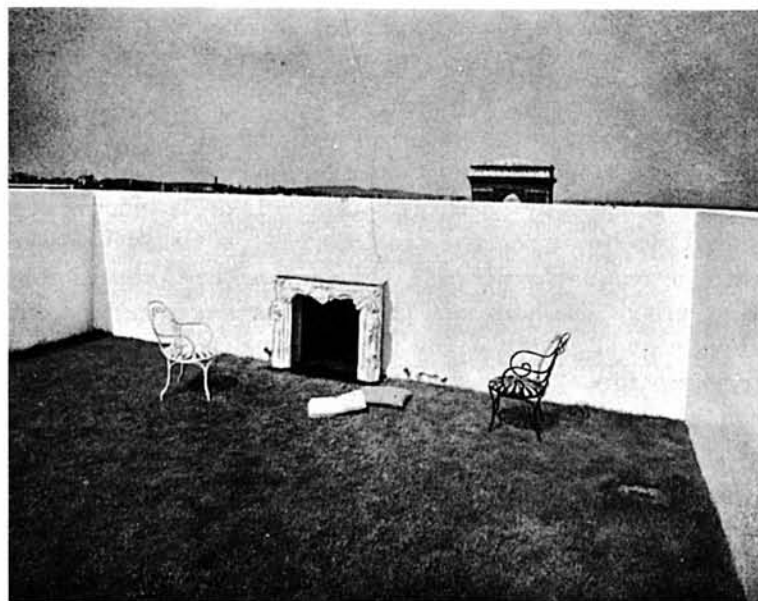
This new “lighting” displaces traditional forms of enclosure, as electricity had done before it.⁴⁴ This house is a commentary on the new condition. The distinctions between *inside* and *outside* are here made problematic. In this penthouse, once the upper level of the terrace is reached, the high walls of the *chambre ouverte* allow only fragments of the urban skyline to emerge: the tops of the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower, the Sacré Coeur, Invalides, etc. (figure 33). And it is only by remaining inside and making use of the periscope camera obscura that it becomes possible to enjoy the metropolitan spectacle (figure 34). Tafuri has written: “The distance interposed between the penthouse and the Parisian panorama is secured by a technological device, the periscope. An ‘innocent’ reunification between the fragment and the whole is no longer possible; the intervention of artifice is a necessity.”⁴⁵

But if this periscope, this primitive form of prosthesis, this “artificial limb,” to return to Le Corbusier’s concept in *L’Art décoratif d’aujourd’hui*, is *necessary* in the Beistegui apartment (as also was the rest of the *artifice* in this house, the electrically driven framing devices, the other prostheses) it is only because the apart-

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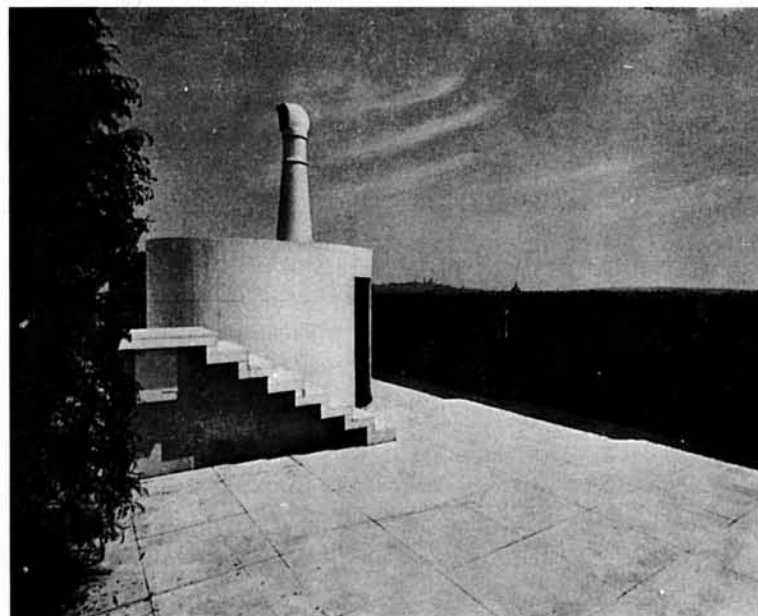
⁴⁴ Around the time that the Beistegui apartment was built, *La Compagnie parisienne de distribution d’électricité* put out a publicity book, *L’Électricité à la maison*, attempting to gain clients. In this book, electricity is made *visible* through architecture. A series of photographs by André Kertész present views of interiors by contemporary architects, including A. Perret, Chausat, Laprade, and M. Perret. The most extraordinary one is probably a closeup of a “horizontal” window in an apartment by Chausat, a view of Paris outside and a fan sitting on the sill of the window. The image marks the split between a traditional function of the window, ventilation, now displaced into a powered machine, and the modern functions of a window, to illuminate and to frame a view.

⁴⁵ Manfredo Tafuri, “*Machins et mémoire: The City in the Work of Le Corbusier*,” in *Le Corbusier*, ed. H. Allen Brooks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 203.



33 **Apartment Beistegui.**
“La chambre à ciel ouvert.”

34 **Apartment Beistegui.**
Periscope.



ment is *still* located in a nineteenth-century city: it is a penthouse in the Champs-Élysées. In “ideal” urban conditions, the house itself becomes the artifice.

For Le Corbusier the *new* urban conditions are a consequence of the media, which institutes a relationship between artifact and nature that makes the “defensiveness” of a Loosian window, of a Loosian system, unnecessary. In *Urbanisme*, in the same passage where he makes reference to “Loos’ window,” Le Corbusier goes on to write: “The horizontal gaze leads far away. ... From our offices we will get the feeling of being look-outs dominating a world in order. ... The skyscrapers concentrate everything in themselves: machines for abolishing time and space, telephones, cables, radios.”⁴⁶ The inward gaze, the gaze turned upon itself, of Loos’ interiors becomes with Le Corbusier a gaze of domination over the exterior world. But why is this gaze horizontal?

The debate between Le Corbusier and Perret over the horizontal window provides a key to this question.⁴⁷ Perret maintained that the vertical window, *la porte fenêtre*, “reproduces an impression of *complete* space” because it permits a view of the street, the garden, and the sky, while the horizontal window, *la fenêtre en longueur*, diminishes “one’s perception and *correct* appreciation of the landscape.” What the horizontal window cuts from the cone of vision is the strip of the sky and the strip of the foreground that sustains the illusion of perspectival depth. Perret’s *porte fenêtre* corresponds to the space of perspective. Le Corbusier’s *fenêtre en longueur* to the space of photography. It is not by chance that Le Corbusier continues his polemic with Perret in a passage in *Précisions*, where he “demonstrates” scientifically that the horizontal window illuminates better. He does so by relying on a photographer’s chart giving times of exposure. He writes:

I have stated that the horizontal window illuminates better than the vertical window. Those are my observations of the reality. Neverthe-

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⁴⁶ Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, p. 186.

⁴⁷ About the debate between Perret and Le Corbusier see: Bruno Reichlin, “The Pros and Cons of the Horizontal Window,” *Daidalos* 13 (1984), and Beatriz Colomina, “Le Corbusier and Photography,” *Assemblage* 4 (1987).

less, I have passionate opponents. For example, the following sentence has been thrown at me: “A window is a man, it stands upright!” This is fine if what you want are “words.” But I have discovered recently in a photographer’s chart these explicit graphics; I am no longer swimming in the approximations of personal observations. I am facing sensitive photographic film that reacts to light. The table says this: ... The photographic plate in a room illuminated with a horizontal window needs to be exposed four times less than in a room illuminated with two vertical windows. ... Ladies and gentlemen ... We have left the Vignolized shores of the Institutes. We are at sea; let us not separate this evening without having taken our bearings. First, architecture: the pilotis carry the weight of the house above the ground, up in the air. *The view of the house is a categorical view, without connection with the ground.*⁴⁸ [author’s emphasis]

The erected man behind Perret’s *porte fenêtre* has been replaced by a photographic camera. The view is free-floating, “without connection with the ground,” or with the man behind the camera (a photographer’s analytical chart has replaced “personal observations”). “The view from the house is a *categorical* view.” In framing the landscape the house places the landscape into a system of categories. The house is a mechanism for classification. It collects views and, in doing so, classifies them. The house is a system for taking pictures. What determines the nature of the picture is the window. In another passage from the same book the window itself is seen as a camera lens:

When you buy a camera, you are determined to take photographs in the crepuscular winter of Paris, or in the brilliant sands of an oasis; how do you do it? *You use a diaphragm.* Your glass panes, your horizontal windows are all ready to be diaphragmed at will. You will let light in wherever you like.⁴⁹

If the window is a lens, the house itself is a camera pointed at nature. Detached from nature, it is mobile. Just as the camera can be taken from Paris to the desert, the house can be taken from

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⁴⁸ Le Corbusier, *Précisions sur un état présent de l’architecture et de l’urbanisme* (Paris: Vincent, Freal & Cie., 1930), pp. 57–58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 132–133.

Poissy to Biarritz to Argentina. Again in *Précisions*, Le Corbusier describes Villa Savoye as follows:

The house is a box in the air, pierced all around, without interruption, by a *fenêtre en longueur*. ... The box is in the middle of meadows, dominating the orchard. ... The simple posts of the ground floor, through a precise disposition, cut up the landscape with a regularity that has the effect of suppressing any notion of “front” or “back” of the house, of “side” of the house. ... The plan is pure, made for the most exact of needs. It is in its right place in the rural landscape of Poissy. But in Biarritz, it would be magnificent. ... I am going to implant this very house in the beautiful Argentinian countryside: we will have twenty houses rising from the high grass of an orchard where cows continue to graze.⁵⁰

The house is being described in terms of the way it frames the landscape and the effect this framing has on the perception of the house itself by the moving visitor. The house is in the air. There is no front, no back, no side to this house.⁵¹ The house can be in any place. The house is *immaterial*. That is, the house is not simply constructed as a material object from which, then, certain views become possible. The house is no more than a series of views choreographed by the visitor, the way a filmmaker effects the montage of a film.⁵²

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⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 136–138.

⁵¹ This erasure of the front, despite the insistence of traditional criticism that Le Corbusier’s buildings should be understood in terms of their façades, is a central theme of Le Corbusier’s writings. For example, about the project for the Palace of the Nations in Geneva he wrote: “Alors, me dira-t-on inquiet, vous avez construit des murs autour ou entre vos pilotis afin de ne pas donner l’angoissante sensation de ces gigantesques bâtiments en l’air? Oh, pas du tout! Je montre avec satisfaction ces pilotis qui portent quelque chose, qui se doublent de leur reflet dans l’eau, qui laissent passer la lumière sous les bâtiments *supprimant ainsi toute notion de (devant) et de (derrière) de bâtiment.*” *Précisions*, p. 49 (my emphasis).

⁵² Significantly, Le Corbusier has represented some of his projects, like Villa Meyer and Maison Guiette, in the form of a series of sketches grouped together and representing the perception of the house by a moving eye. As has been noted, these drawings suggest film story boards, each of the images a still. Lawrence Wright, *Perspective in Perspective* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 240–241.

This is also evident in Le Corbusier’s description of the process followed in the construction of the *petite maison* on the shores of Lake Lemman:

I knew that the region where we wanted to build consisted of 10 to 15 kilometers of hills along the lake. A fixed point: the lake; another, the magnificent view, frontal; another, the south, equally frontal.

Should one first have searched for the site and made the plan in accordance with it? That is the usual practice.

I thought it was better to make an exact plan, corresponding ideally to the use one hoped from it and determined by the three factors above. This done, to go out with the plan in hand to look for a suitable site.⁵³

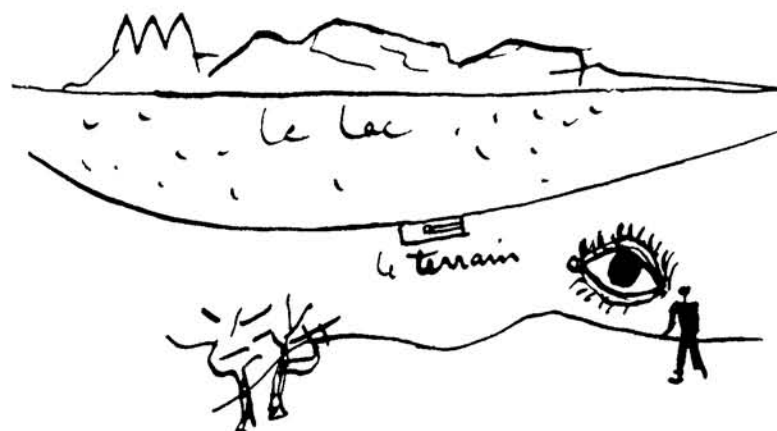
“The key to the problem of modern habitation” is, according to Le Corbusier, “to inhabit first,” “placing oneself afterwards.” (“Habiter d’abord.” “Venir se placer ensuite.”) But what is meant here by “inhabiting” and “placement”? The “three factors” that “determine the plan” of the house—“the lake, the magnificent frontal view, the south, equally frontal”—are precisely the factors that determine a photograph. “To inhabit” here means to inhabit that picture. “Architecture *is made in the head*,” then drawn.⁵⁴ Only then does one look for the site. But the site is only where the landscape is “taken,” framed by a mobile lens. This photo-opportunity is at the intersection of the system of communication that establishes that mobility, the railway, and the landscape.⁵⁵ But even the landscape is here understood as a 10 to 15 kilometer strip,

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⁵³ Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, p. 127.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 230.

⁵⁵ “The geographical situation confirmed our choice, for at the railway station twenty minutes away trains stop which link up Milan, Zurich, Amsterdam, Paris, London, Geneva and Marseilles ...” Le Corbusier, *Une Petite maison* (Zurich: Editions d’Architecture, 1954), p. 8. The network of the railway is understood here as *geography*. The “features or arrangement of place” (“geography” according to the Oxford Dictionary) are now defined by the communication system. It is precisely within this system that the house moves: “1922, 1923 I boarded the Paris-Milan express several times, or the Orient Express (Paris-Ankara). In my pocket was the plan of a house. A plan without a site? The plan of a house in search of a plot of ground? Yes!” Le Corbusier, *Une Petite maison*, p. 5.



35 *On a découvert le terrain.*
Une Petite maison, 1954.

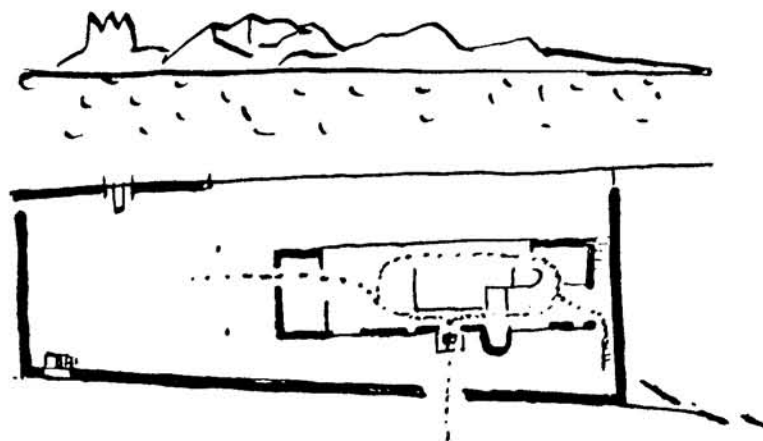
rather than a *place* in the traditional sense. The camera can be set up anywhere along that strip.

The house is drawn with a picture already in mind. The house is drawn as a frame for that picture. The frame establishes the difference between “seeing” and merely looking. It produces the picture by domesticating the “overpowering” landscape:

The object of the wall seen here is to block off the view to the north and east, partly to the south, and to the west; for the ever-present and overpowering scenery on all sides has a tiring effect in the long run. Have you noticed that *under such conditions one no longer “sees”*? To lend significance to the scenery one has to restrict and give it proportion; the view must be blocked by walls which are only pierced at certain strategic points and there permit an unhindered view.⁵⁶

It is this domestication of the view that makes the house a house, rather than the provision of a domestic space, a *place* in the traditional sense. Two drawings published in *Une Petite maison* speak about what Le Corbusier means by “placing oneself.” In one of them, *On a découverte le terrain* (figure 35), a small human figure appears standing and next to it a big eye, autonomous from the figure, oriented towards the lake. The plan of the house is between

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.



36 *Le Plan est installé....*
Une Petite maison, 1954.

them. The house is represented as that between the eye and the lake, between the eye and the view. The small figure is almost an accessory. The other drawing, *Le Plan est installé* (Figure 36), does not show, as the title would indicate, the encounter of the plan with the site, as we traditionally understand it. (The site is not in the drawing. Even the curve of the shore of the lake in the other drawing has been erased.) The drawing shows the plan of the house, a strip of lake, and a strip of mountains. That is, it shows the plan and above it, the view. The “site” is a vertical plane, that of vision.

Of course, there is no “original” in the new architecture, because it is not dependent on the specific place. Throughout his writings, Le Corbusier insists on the relative autonomy of architecture and site.⁵⁷ And in the face of the traditional site he constructs an “artificial site.”⁵⁸ This does not mean that this architect-

57 For example, in Le Corbusier and François de Pierrefeu, *La Maison des hommes* (Paris: Plon, 1942), he writes: “Aujourd’hui, la conformité du sol avec la maison n’est plus une question d’assiette ou de contexte immédiat,” p. 68. It is significant that this and other key passages of this book were omitted in the English translation, *The Home of Man* (London: Architectural Press, 1948).

58 About his project for Rio de Janeiro, he writes: “Here you have the idea: here you have *artificial sites*, countless new homes, and as for traffic—the Gordian knot has been severed.” Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, p. 224.



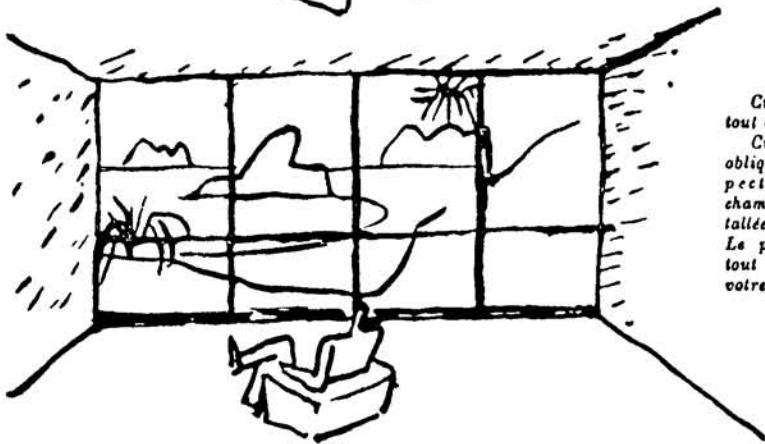
Ce roc à Rio-de-Janeiro est célèbre.



Autour de lui se dressent des montagnes échevelées; la mer les baigne.



Des palmiers, des bananiers; la splendeur tropicale anime le site. On s'arrête, on y installe son fauteuil.



Crack! un cadre tout autour.
Crack! les quatre obliques d'une perspective! Votre chambre est installée face au site. Le paysage entre tout entier dans votre chambre.

Le pacte avec la nature a été scellé! Par des dispositifs d'urbanisme, il est possible d'inscrire la nature dans le bail.

Rio-de-Janeiro est un site célèbre. Mais Alger, mais Marseille, mais Oran, Nice et toute la Côte d'Azur, Barcelone et tant de villes maritimes ou continentales disposent de paysages admirables!

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37 Rio de Janeiro.

The view is constructed at the same time as the house. *La Maison des hommes*, 1942.

ture is independent from place. It is the concept "place" that has changed. We are not talking here about a site but about a sight. A sight can be accommodated in several sites.

"Property" has moved from the horizontal to the vertical plane. (Even Beistegui's primary location from a traditional point of view, the *address*—Champs-Élysées—is completely subordinated by the *view*.⁵⁹) The window is a problem of urbanism. That is why it becomes a central point in every urban proposal by Le Corbusier. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, he developed a series of drawings in vignette that represent the relation between domestic space and spectacle:⁶⁰

This rock at Rio de Janeiro is celebrated.

Around it range the tangled mountains, bathed by the sea.

Palms, banana trees; tropical splendor animates the site.

One stops, one installs one's armchair.

Crack! a frame all around.

Crack! the four obliques of a perspective. Your room is installed before the site. The whole sea-landscape enters your room.⁶¹

(figure 37)

First a famous sight, a postcard, a picture. (And it is not by chance that Le Corbusier has not only drawn this landscape from a postcard but has published it alongside the drawings in *La Ville radiuse*.)⁶² Then, one inhabits the space in front of that picture, installs an armchair. But this view, this picture, is only constructed at the same time as the house.⁶³ "Crack! a frame all around it. Crack! the four obliques of a perspective." The house is installed *before* the site, not *in* the site. The house is a frame for a view. The window is a gigantic screen. But then the view *enters* the house, it is literally "inscribed" in the lease:

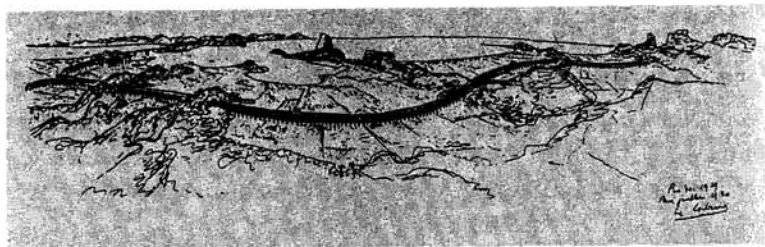
.....
⁵⁹ In *Précisions* he writes: "La rue est indépendante de la maison. La rue est indépendante de la maison. Y réfléchir," p. 62. But it must be noted that it is the street that is independent from the house and not the other way around.

⁶⁰ About the association of the notion of spectacle to that of dwelling, see Hubert Damisch, "Les tréteaux de la vie moderne," in *Le Corbusier: une encyclopédie* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1987), pp. 252–259. See also Bruno Reichlin, "L'Esprit de Paris," *Casabella* 531–532 (1987): 52–63.

⁶¹ Le Corbusier and Pierrefeuf, *The Home of Man*, p. 87.

⁶² Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, pp. 223–225.

⁶³ Cf. Damisch, "Les tréteaux de la vie moderne," p. 256.



38 Rio de Janeiro.

The highway, elevated 100 meters, and “launched” from hill to hill above the city. *La Ville radieuse*, 1933.

The pact with nature has been sealed! By means available to town planning it is possible to enter nature in the lease. Rio de Janeiro is a celebrated site. But Algiers, Marseilles, Oran, Nice and all the Côte d’Azur, Barcelona and many maritime and inland towns can boast of admirable landscapes.⁶⁴

Again, several sites can accommodate this project: different locations, different pictures (like the world of tourism). But also different pictures of the same location. The repetition of units with windows at slightly different angles, different framings, as happens when this cell becomes a unit in the urban project for Rio de Janeiro, a project which consists on a six-kilometer strip of housing units under a highway on pilotis, suggests again the idea of the movie strip (figure 38). This sense of the movie strip is felt both in the inside and the outside: “Architecture? Nature? Liners enter and see the new and *horizontal city*: it makes the site still more sublime. Just think of this broad *ribbon of light*, at night ...”⁶⁵ The strip of housing is a movie strip, on both sides.

For Le Corbusier, “to inhabit” means to inhabit the camera. But the camera is not a traditional place, it is a system of classification, a kind of filing cabinet. “To inhabit” means to employ that system. Only after this do we have “placing,” which is to place the view in the house, to take a picture, to place the view in the filing cabinet, to classify the landscape.

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⁶⁴ Le Corbusier and Pierrefeu, *The Home of Man*, p. 87.

⁶⁵ Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, p. 224.

This critical transformation of traditional architectural thinking about place can also be seen in *La Ville radieuse* where a sketch represents the house as a cell with a view (figure 39). Here an apartment, high up in the air, is presented as a terminal of telephone, gas, electricity, and water. The apartment is also provided with “exact air” (heating and ventilation).⁶⁶ Inside the apartment there is a small human figure and at the window, a huge eye looking outside. They do not coincide. The apartment itself is here the artifice between the occupant and the exterior world, a camera (and a breathing machine). The exterior world also becomes artifice; like the air, it has been conditioned, landscaped—it *becomes* landscape. The apartment defines modern subjectivity with its own eye. The traditional subject can only be the *visitor*, and as such, a temporary part of the viewing mechanism. The humanist subject has been displaced.

The etymology of the word *window* reveals that it combines *wind* and *eye*⁶⁷ (ventilation and light in Le Corbusier’s terms). As Georges Teyssot has noted, the word combines “an element of the outside and an aspect of innerness. The separation on which dwelling is based is the possibility for a being to install himself.”⁶⁸ But in Le Corbusier this installation splits the subject itself, rather than simply the outside from the inside. Installation involves a convoluted geometry which entangles the division between interior and exterior, between the subject and itself.

It is precisely in terms of the *visitor* that Le Corbusier has written about the occupant. For example, about Villa Savoye he writes in *Précisions*:⁶⁹

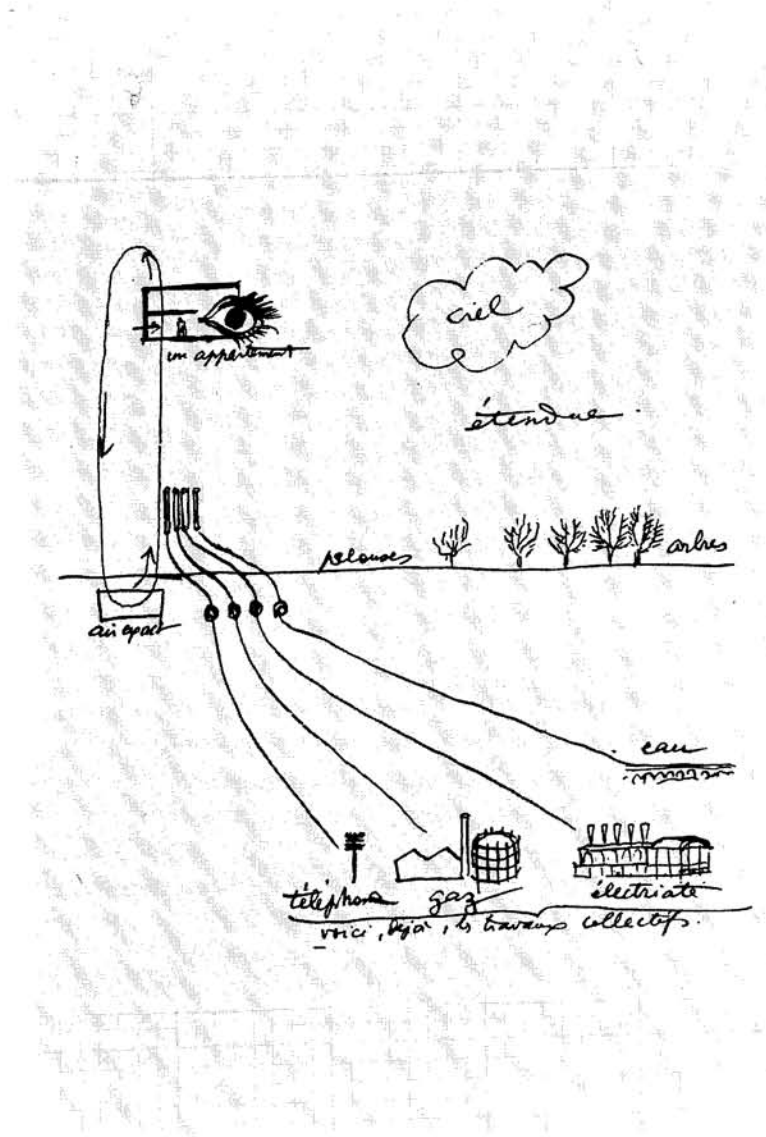
.....

⁶⁶ Whereas Loos’ window had split sight from light, Le Corbusier’s splits *breathing* from these two forms of *light*. “A window is to give light, not to ventilate! To ventilate we use machines; it is mechanics, it is physics.” Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, p. 56.

⁶⁷ E. Klein, *A Complete Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Amsterdam, London, New York, 1966). Cited by Ellen Eve Frank in *Literary Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 263, and by Georges Teyssot in “Water and Gas on all Floors,” *Lotus* 44 (1984): 90.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Le Corbusier had recommended that Madame Savoye leave a book for guests to sign by the entrance: she would collect many signatures, as La Roche had. But La Roche was also a gallery. Here the house itself became the object of contemplation, not the objects inside it.



39 Sketch in *La Ville radiense*, 1933.

The visitors, till now, turn round and round in the interior, asking themselves what is happening, understanding with difficulties the reasons for what they see and feel; they do not find anything of what is called a "house." They feel themselves in something entirely new. And ... I do not think they are bored!⁷⁰

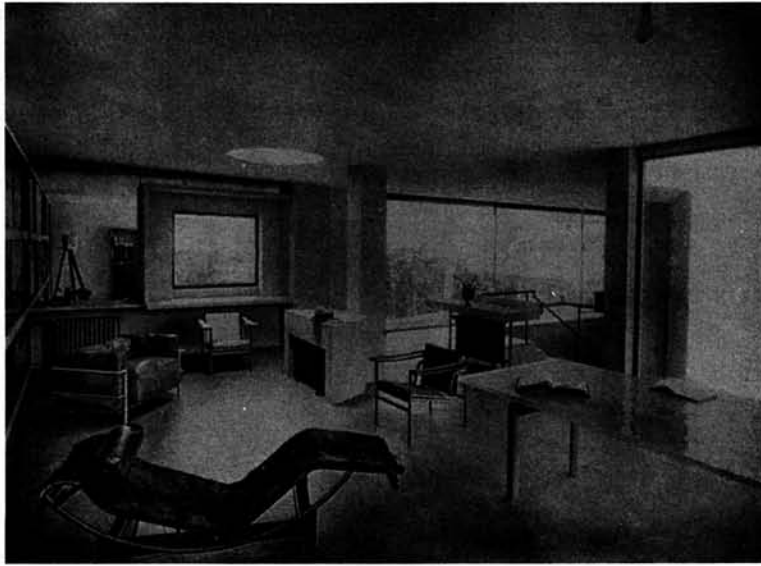
The occupant of Le Corbusier's house is displaced, first because he is disoriented. He does not know how to place himself in relation to this house. It does not look like a "house." Then because the occupant is a "visitor." Unlike the occupant of Loos' houses, both actor and spectator, both involved and detached from the stage, Le Corbusier's subject is detached from the house with the distance of a visitor, a viewer, a photographer, a tourist.

In a photograph of the interior of Villa Church (figure 40), a casually placed hat and two open books on the table announce that somebody has just been there. A window with the traditional proportions of a painting is framed in a way that makes it read also as a screen. In the corner of the room a camera set on a tripod appears. It is the reflection on the mirror of the camera taking the photograph. As viewer of this photograph we are in the position of the photographer, that is, in the position of the camera, because the photographer, as the visitor, has already abandoned the room. The subject (the visitor of the house, the photographer, but also the viewer of this photograph) has already left. The subject in Le Corbusier's house is estranged and displaced from "his" own home.

The objects left as "traces" in the photographs of Le Corbusier's houses tend to be those of a (male) "visitor" (hat, coat, etc.). Never do we find there any trace of "domesticity," as traditionally understood.⁷¹ These objects also could be understood as standing for the architect. The hat, coat, glasses are definitely his own. They play the same role that Le Corbusier plays as an actor in the movie *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, where he passes through the house rather than inhabits it. The architect is *estranged* from his work with the distance of a visitor or a movie actor. "The stage

⁷⁰ Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, p. 136.

⁷¹ It is not a casually placed cup of tea that we find, but an "artistic" arrangement of objects of everyday life, as in the kitchens of Savoye and Garches. We may speak here about "still lifes" more than about domesticity.



40 Villa Church, Ville d'Avray, 1928–29.

actor identifies himself with the character of his role. The film actor very often is denied this opportunity. His creation is by no means all of a piece; it is composed of many separate performances.”⁷² Theater knows necessarily about emplacement, in the traditional sense. It is always about presence. Both the actor and the spectator are fixed in a continuous space and time, those of the performance. In the shooting of a movie there is no such continuity. The actor’s work is split into a series of discontinuous, mountable episodes. The nature of the illusion for the spectator is a result of the montage.

The subject of Loos’ architecture is the stage actor. But while the center of the house is left empty for the performance, we find the subject occupying the threshold of this space. Undermining its boundaries. The subject is split between actor and spectator of its own play. The completeness of the subject dissolves as also does the wall that s/he is occupying.

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72 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 230.

The subject of Le Corbusier’s work is the movie actor, “estranged not only from the scene but from his own person.”⁷³ This moment of estrangement is clearly marked in the drawing of *La Ville radiuse* where the traditional humanist figure, the inhabitant of the house, is made incidental to the camera eye: it comes and goes, it is merely a visitor.

The split between the traditional humanist subject (the occupant or the architect) and the *eye* is the split between *looking* and *seeing*, between *outside* and *inside*, between *landscape* and *site*. In the drawings, the inhabitant or the person in search of a site are represented as diminutive figures. Suddenly that figure *sees*. A picture is taken, a large eye, autonomous from the figure, represents that moment. This is precisely the moment of *inhabitation*. This inhabitation is independent from *place* (understood in a traditional sense); it turns the outside into an inside:

I perceive that the work we raise is not unique, nor isolated; that the air around it constitutes other surfaces, other grounds, other ceilings, that the harmony that has suddenly stopped me before the rock of Brittany, exists, can exist, everywhere else, always. The work is not made only of itself: the outside exists. The outside shuts me in its whole which is like a room.⁷⁴

“Le dehors est toujours un dedans” (the outside is always an inside) means that the “outside” is a picture. And that “to inhabit” means *to see*. In *La Maison des hommes* there is a drawing of a figure standing and (again), side by side, an independent eye: “Let us not forget that our eye is 5 feet 6 inches above the ground; our eye, this entry door of our architectural perceptions.”⁷⁵ The eye is a “door”
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73 Pirandello describes the estrangement the actor experiences before the mechanism of the cinematographic camera: “The film actor feels as if in exile—exiled not only from the stage but also from himself. With a vague sense of discomfort he feels inexplicable emptiness: his body loses corporeality, it evaporates, it is deprived of reality, life, voice and the noises caused by its moving about, in order to be changed into a mute image, flickering an instant on the screen, then vanishing into silence.” Luigi Pirandello, *Si Gira*, quoted by Walter Benjamin in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” p. 229.

74 Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, p. 78.

75 Le Corbusier and Pierrefeu, *The Home of Man*, p. 100.

to architecture, and the “door” is, of course, an architectural element, the first form of a “window.”⁷⁶ Later in the book, “the door” is replaced by media equipment, “the eye is the tool of recording.”

The eye is a tool of registration. It is placed 5 feet 6 inches above the ground.

Walking creates diversity in the spectacle before our eyes.

But we have left the ground in an airplane and acquired the eyes of a bird. We see, in actuality, that which hitherto was only seen by the spirit.⁷⁷

The window is, for Le Corbusier, first of all communication. He repeatedly superimposes the idea of the “modern” window, a lookout window, a horizontal window, with the reality of the new media: “telephone, cable, radios, ... machines for abolishing time and space.” Control is now in these media. Power has become “invisible.” The look that from Le Corbusier’s skyscrapers will “dominate a world in order” is neither the look from behind the periscope of Beistegui or the defensive view (turned towards itself) of Loos’ interiors. It is a look that “registers” the new reality, a “recording” eye.

Le Corbusier’s architecture is produced by an engagement with the mass media but, as with Loos, the key to his position is, in the end, to be found in his statements about fashion. Where for Loos the English suit was the mask necessary to sustain the individual in metropolitan conditions of existence, for Le Corbusier this suit is cumbersome and inefficient. And where Loos contrasts the *dignity* of male British fashion with the *masquerade* of women’s, Le Corbusier praises women’s fashion over men’s because it has undergone *change*, the change of modern time.

Woman has preceded us. She has carried out the reform of her dress. She found herself at a dead end: to follow fashion and, then, give up the advantages of modern techniques, of modern life. To give up

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⁷⁶ Paul Virilio, “The Third Window: An Interview with Paul Virilio,” in *Global Television*, ed. Cynthia Schneider and Brian Wallis (New York and Cambridge, Mass.: Wedge Press and MIT Press, 1988), p. 191.

⁷⁷ Le Corbusier and Pierrefeu, *The Home of Man*, p. 125.

sport and, a more material problem, to be unable to take on the jobs that have made woman a fertile part of contemporary production and enabled her *to earn her own living*. To follow fashion: she could not drive a car; she could not take the subway, or the bus, nor act quickly in her office or her shop. To carry out the daily *construction* of a “toilette”: hairdo, shoes, buttoning her dress, she would not have had time to sleep. So, woman cut her hair and her skirts and her sleeves. She goes out bareheaded, barearmed, with her legs free. And she can dress in five minutes. And she is beautiful; she seduces us with the charm of her graces of which the designers have admitted taking advantage. The courage, the liveliness, the spirit of invention with which woman has revolutionized her dress are a miracle of modern times. Thank you!

And what about us, men? A dismal state of affairs! In our dress clothes, we look like generals of the “Grand Armée” and we wear starched collars! We are uncomfortable ...⁷⁸

While Loos spoke, you will remember, of the exterior of the house in terms of male fashion, Le Corbusier’s comments on fashion are made in the context of a discussion of the interior. The furniture in style (Louis XIV) should be replaced with *equipment* (standard furniture, in great part derived from office furniture) and this change is assimilated to the change that women have undertaken in their dress. He concedes, however, that there are certain advantages to male dressing:

The English suit we wear had nevertheless succeeded in something important. It had *neutralized* us. It is useful to show a neutral appearance in the city. The dominant sign is no longer ostrich feathers in the hat, it is in the gaze. That’s enough.⁷⁹

Except for this last comment, “The dominant sign ... is in the gaze,” Le Corbusier’s statement is purely Loosian. But at the same time, it is precisely that *gaze* of which Le Corbusier speaks that marks their differences. For Le Corbusier the interior no longer needs to be defined as a system of defense from the exterior (the system of gazes in Loos’ interiors, for example). To say that “the

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⁷⁸ Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, pp. 106–107.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

exterior is always an interior” means, among other things, that the interior is not simply the bounded territory defined by its opposition to the exterior. The exterior is “inscribed” in the dwelling. The window in the age of mass communication provides us with one more flat image. The window is a screen. From there issues the insistence on eliminating every protruding element, “de-vignolizing” the window, suppressing the sill: “M. Vignole ne s’occupe pas des fenêtres, mais bien des <entre-fenêtres> (pilastres ou colonnes). Je dévignolise par: *l’architecture, c’est des planchers éclairés.*”⁸⁰

Of course, this screen undermines the wall. But here it is not, as in Loos’ houses, a *physical* undermining, an *occupation* of the wall, but a *dematerialization* following from the emerging media. The organizing geometry of architecture slips from the perspectival cone of vision, from the humanist eye, to the camera angle.

But this slippage is, of course, not neutral in gender terms. Male fashion is uncomfortable but provides the bearer with “the gaze,” “the dominant sign,” woman’s fashion is practical and turns her into the object of another’s gaze: “Modern woman has cut her hair. Our gazes have known (enjoy) the shape of her legs.” A picture. She sees nothing. She is an attachment to a wall that is no longer simply there. Enclosed by a space whose limits are defined by a gaze.

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80 Ibid., p. 53.