





**FIG. 1**  
Pavilion Le Corbusier after  
restoration, 2019.  
New path leading to Atelier  
Haller (left) and the Pavilion,  
following the route  
envisaged in Le Corbusier's  
original plan.  
Photo: Georg Aerni, Zürich.  
FLC/ADAGP Paris, 2022.

# THE LE CORBUSIER'S ZURICH PAVILION RESTORED: SPECIFIC SPACES CALL FOR SPECIFIC EXHIBITIONS

*Arthur Ruegg*

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**Abstract:** Le Corbusier's Zurich Pavilion, built between 1964 and 1967 by his exclusive art and furniture dealer, Heidi Weber, is a model home that – placed under two enormous steel umbrellas – served to demonstrate the interaction of all the different creations of the artist-architect. In 2014, when Weber's lease of land expired, title to the pavilion fell to the City of Zurich, which decided to open it on a regular basis and run it as a Le Corbusier museum. A careful restoration set the building afloat again, based on the agreement that it could not be altered and used at will. While a number of relevant improvements was realized in the underground space, the sun-flooded but unheatable upper stories remained in their original state. The City formulated the potential uses according to the conditions that the restored pavilion dictated and finally entrusted the Museum für Gestaltung Zurich with its operation. The article shows how the specific climatic environments effectively shaped the design of the first three annual summer exhibitions.

**Keywords:** *Zurich, Heidi Weber, synthesis of the arts, restoration, exhibition techniques.*

**Résumé:** Le pavillon de Zurich de Le Corbusier, construit entre 1964 et 1967 par son marchand d'art et de meubles exclusif, Heidi Weber, est une maison modèle qui - placée sous deux énormes parapluies en acier - servait à démontrer l'interaction de toutes les différentes créations de l'artiste-architecte. En 2014, lorsque le bail du terrain de Weber a expiré, le titre de propriété du pavillon est revenu à la ville de Zurich, qui a décidé de l'ouvrir régulièrement et de le gérer comme un musée Le Corbusier. Une restauration minutieuse a remis le bâtiment à flot, sur la base de l'accord selon lequel il ne pouvait être modifié et utilisé à volonté. Si un certain nombre d'améliorations pertinentes ont été réalisées dans l'espace souterrain, les étages supérieurs, inondés de soleil mais non chauffés, sont restés dans leur état d'origine. La Ville a formulé les utilisations potentielles en fonction des conditions qu'imposait le pavillon restauré et a finalement confié son exploitation au Museum für Gestaltung Zurich. L'article montre comment les environnements climatiques spécifiques ont effectivement façonné la conception des trois premières expositions annuelles d'été.

**Mots-clé:** *Zurich, Heidi Weber, synthèse des arts, restauration, techniques d'exposition.*

**FIG. 2**  
Pavilion Le Corbusier after  
restoration, 2019.  
Photo: Georg Aerni, Zürich.  
FLC/ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**Resumen:** El Pabellón de Zúrich de Le Corbusier, construido entre 1964 y 1967 por su exclusiva marchante de arte y muebles, Heidi Weber, es una casa modelo que -colocada bajo dos enormes paraguas de acero- servía para demostrar la interacción de todas las diferentes creaciones del artista-arquitecto. En 2014, cuando expiró el contrato de arrendamiento del terreno de Weber, la titularidad del pabellón recayó en la ciudad de Zúrich, que decidió abrirlo de forma regular y gestionarlo como museo dedicado a Le Corbusier. Una cuidadosa restauración puso el edificio a punto, con el acuerdo de que no podía ser alterado y utilizado a voluntad. Mientras se realizaban una serie de mejoras relevantes en el espacio subterráneo, los pisos superiores, inundados por el sol pero sin calefacción, permanecían en su estado original. El Ayuntamiento formuló los posibles usos en función de las condiciones que dictaba el pabellón restaurado y, finalmente, confió su explotación al Museum für Gestaltung Zurich. El artículo muestra cómo los entornos climáticos específicos determinaron efectivamente el diseño de las tres primeras exposiciones anuales de verano.

**Palabras clave:** Zúrich, Heidi Weber, síntesis de las artes, restauración, técnicas de exposición.



Heidi Weber, interior designer and owner of the Galerie Mezzanin in the old town of Zurich, had been Le Corbusier's exclusive art dealer since 1958, and had been instrumental in reissuing the four iconic tubular chairs from 1928/29. As early as 1959, she dreamed of presenting all the creations of the great artist-architect "in a house that he himself designed"<sup>1</sup>. Le Corbusier agreed and designed a pavilion for her that is at the same time a demonstration of architectural principles and a laboratory for the synthesis of the arts. A free-standing, sheltering roof and underneath it an independent spatial complex – that was the concept behind Le Corbusier's ideal exhibition receptacle (Fig.1,2).

### **Heidi Weber's Exhibition «House»**

In 1950, Le Corbusier had proposed erecting a monumental *parapluie-parasol* at the Porte Maillot in Paris. It was to consist of two steel umbrellas placed side by side, one concave and one convex, underneath which an artist group would be able to exhibit its work to the public. Such iconic steel canopies defining a public space were also the starting point of the design for the Zurich pavilion in 1960. Instead of an open-air exhibition space, however, Le Corbusier now envisioned a prototypical residential building, which, having been initially conceived in concrete, was ultimately realized as a loose system of colored cubes in a demonstratively prefabricated, visibly bolted-together steel frame. Once again, this residential building is a collage of earlier ideas, as has been shown elsewhere<sup>2</sup>.

The "Synthesis" that was envisioned here means the combination of autonomous but mutually enhancing forms of artistic expressions. The interaction of architecture, furniture, painting, tapestry, sculpture, and the graphic arts, Le Corbusier argued, could be more effectively demonstrated in the "modest and nomadic setting of a dwelling"

**FIG. 3**  
Open kitchen and dining area after restoration of its original state, 2019. Photo: Georg Aerni, Zürich. FLC/ADAGP Paris, 2022.



**TRIAL RUNS BEFORE  
RESTORATION, 2015 AND  
2016**

**FIG. 4**  
“Seeing Chandigarh.  
Swiss Reports”. Summer  
exhibition, 2015.  
Remnants of Jürg Gasser’s  
1968/69 Chandigarh photo  
panels. Photo: Arthur Rüegg  
FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

than “by the arbitrariness commonly found in rooms designed for exhibition puposes”<sup>3</sup>. He supplied the framework with which to prove this in the form of an “artist house” (a Maison Citrohan) assembled out of prefabricated steel and glass elements, whose proportions are derived from the Modulor. Its specific dual function of model home and exhibition space was of central importance for the client right from the start (Fig. 3).

After the opening of the exhibition “house” in 1967, Heidi Weber at first took advantage of the very different spaces to exhibit the works of Le Corbusier himself, including his furniture, turning the spotlight on the history of the pavilion, a series of oil paintings, and finally his buildings for the new provincial capital of Chandigarh. But in the years 1968 to 1977, Weber and her curator, the photographer Jürg Gasser, launched an ambitious program of socially critical shows flanked by talks given by speakers of renown. After Gasser’s departure in late 1977, a Community workshop (CoCo) moved in on a two-year lease, which was not, however, renewed. The pavilion thereafter remained closed, as it had been from 1973 to 1976, and not until 1984 did it once again sporadically offer new insights into the work of the *homo universalis* Le Corbusier.

Whatever the themes of the exhibitions were, Weber always reserved the rough-plastered basement of the pavilion for Le Corbusier’s own works of art. This underground exhibition space had been added to the project at a relatively late phase of the design process. While Weber presented the drawings, collages, gouaches and lithographs under glass in box-like oak frames, Gasser worked on developing modular support systems for the two upper stories based on the steel-frame modules of the building itself. Over the years, many of the oak wall panels were doubled up with chipboard cladding painted in various colors until certain parts of the building – the two-story studio, for example – had been completely remodeled.



## ***Rebirth and Renewal***

The City of Zurich had granted a fifty-year lease on the magnificent plot of land near the lakeshore that Heidi Weber had chosen, situated between a neo-Gothic villa and an artist's studio built entirely of wood. Construction of the pavilion began in 1964, and the building was finished in 1967, two years after Le Corbusier's death, by two "anciens" of his atelier, Alain Tavès and Robert Rebutato. When Weber's lease expired after half a century in 2014, title to the pavilion fell to the City, which decided to open it again on a regular basis and run it as a Le Corbusier museum that would draw visitors from far and wide to Zurich. The Building Surveyor's Office was thereupon entrusted with the fullscale restoration of the structure, which at the time was beginning to show clear signs of deterioration. The feasibility study elaborated by the architects in charge, Silvio Schmed and Arthur Rüegg, and overseen by an international scientific committee, identified the pavilion's leaking and partly rusty shell, the defective infrastructure, the missing furniture, and compatibility with the prevailing standards as the most daunting aspects of the project. Although the building had been well maintained, there could be no doubt about the urgent need for action. Between autumn of 2017 and spring of 2019, the two architects together with the canton's heritage team and numerous other specialists succeeded in setting the building afloat again. It was a task that called for recourse to many unconventional solutions, such as the careful replacement of the rusted parts of the metal plates with gaz-shielded welding, the use of a needle hammer to remove the coats of paint covering the steel profiles on the exterior, or the replication of the original neoprene glazing profiles designed by Jean Prouvé<sup>4</sup>.

The fact that this highly protected experimental construction was to be made fit for purpose as a state-of-the-art exhibition space, made the restoration an even more challenging task. Since the 1960's, the policy and practice of museums have drastically changed, particularly regarding loan requirements, storage and display conditions, building design and air conditioning systems. The Le Corbusier pavilion was far away from fulfilling any of the new standards. The thermal insulation of the façades was inadequate, effective protection from the abundance of sunlight not existing. The convectors and underfloor heating had been out of order since 1982. The basement exhibition space was too humid for the presentation of any kind of precious paperwork; the double concrete shell sunk into the groundwater and the ramp corpus were no longer watertight. The need for improvements of all kinds was quite obvious. The building's architectural power, however, resides first and foremost in its material substance. For conservational reasons, neither the façade could be altered, nor the underfloor heating on the ground floor and the convectors on the upper story replaced. It was acknowledged from the outset that this spindly building could not be altered and used at will. It was the pavilion itself that would dictate its use, and not vice versa. Therefore, it was decided at a very early stage that the exhibition spaces would be opened only during the warm middle of the year and remain closed in wintertime.

Nevertheless, a certain number of relevant improvements could be realized. While the enameled façade panels required only minor retouching, the majority of the composite glass panels had to be replaced; that being the case, it was decided that sun protection glass should take place of the adhesive sun control film hitherto used on the south façade. But no attempt was made to improve the energy ratings; even the addition of curtains was discarded. Absolutely essential, however, was the installation of proper new underfloor heating and a dishumidifier in the basement exhibition space, not least to eliminate condensation on the cold concrete surfaces in summer.

Only then could the climatic problems afflicting that space be overcome as a necessary precondition of its future use as an exhibition space for – mainly – works on paper. Fortunately, the original slate flagstones could be saved and relaid in their original positions (only three of the 500 original stones had to be replaced). Furthermore, none of the experts consulted queried the decision to install replicas of the missing furnishings, fittings, and light fixtures – including the small spotlights – which thanks to the extremely exact measurements previously taken could be reconstructed with the utmost precision, making them all but impossible to tell apart from the originals. The replicas were discreetly identified as such, but tinged to match the original surfaces. So the pavilion now once again comes across as a credible whole – as complete and radiantly fresh as when it was first built.

FIG. 5

"René Burri / Le Corbusier. Maisons d'homme". Summer exhibition, 2016. Summary reconstruction of the teared seating in chipboard. Photo: Silvio Schmed. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

### *Exhibiting in the restored pavilion*

After the "Heidi Weber Haus von Le Corbusier" passed to the City of Zurich in 2014, Cultural Affairs staged three summer exhibitions there, notwithstanding the missing furnishings and the very difficult climatic conditions that by then were prevailing in the basement<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 4, 5). The City formulated the potential uses of the pavilion according to the results of these trial runs and to the conditions that the restored pavilion itself dictated, and only then launched its search for a new operator that would fully understand them. The architectural jewel was to become a living cultural center open to the public six days a week from April to November. Once a year, a new summer exhibition should present themes in relation to Le Corbusier's work, his theories, and his influence on the architectural discourse. The sensual experience was to equal the intellectual insights. More than twenty groups were interested in running the pavilion under these conditions. The City finally entrusted its operation to the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich for a first period of four years. This choice proved to be extremely successful; in the meantime, the mandate has been extended after a careful evaluation of the Museum's performance.

Christian Brändle, director of the MfGZ, started with three thematic exhibitions that made Le Corbusier's uniquely intelligible position accessible for a large public and at the same time amazed the connoisseurs. Curated by Brändle and Rüegg, "Mon univers. Le Corbusier's World of Objects" dealt with his largely unknown personal collection – works of art, laboratory glassware, African masks, Serbian vases, broken seashells, bleached bones, and strangely veined stones. The architect's fervent analysis of these objects was a driving force behind the development of his architectural and artistic concepts. "Le Corbusier and Zurich", curated by Bruno Maurer (director of gta archives at ETH Zurich) and Rüegg, recalled the long and productive relationship with this city, including his first honorary doctorate in 1933, two epochal solo exhibitions at the Kunsthaus (1938 and 1957), three unrealized construction projects for large residential complexes and the Rentenanstalt, the eight volumes of his OEuvre complete, and finally the Heidi Weber's exhibition pavilion. Thanks to persons like the publisher Hans Girsberger, the architects Willy Boesiger and Alfred Roth, the art historian Sigfried Giedion, and the gallerist Heidi Weber, Zurich was besides Paris the most important platform from which his ideas spread worldwide. Finally, "Le Corbusier and Color", curated again by Brändle and Rüegg, traced the most important milestones of his architectural polychromy that



has lost none of its topicality. Having made the leap from painting to architecture in 1924, the artist-architect made color an integral part of his method of architectural conceptualization, which he continued developing throughout his life. His Salubra color scales (1931 and 1959) are now being produced again and have met with great success.

The interesting common fact about these three exhibitions is that they are all conceived according to the specific qualities of the different parts of the pavilion. Didactic sequences that include light-sensitive originals were systematically arranged in the quite constant room climate of the relatively dark basement space. False walls made of composite board with rear ventilation provide higher surface temperatures there than the concrete structure underneath, and they allow nailing according to the free will of the curators. In contrast, however, there is an abundance of sunlight on the upper floors, the relative humidity cannot be controlled, and the original oak panels must be spared as much as possible. The double-storey atelier space calls therefore for free-standing large-format installations, whereas the upper floor is suitable for loose presentations of objects that don't disturb the perception of the sublime space with its views of the surrounding park.

The photographs of the three exhibition installations designed by Silvio Schmed illustrate the interdependence between specific spaces and exhibition concepts.

For the show "Mon univers", the precious objects preserved by the Fondation Le Corbusier were arranged in seven wall vitrines in the basement space, and surrounded with small clouds of images and a wall-size puzzle of the architect's own photographs. This exhibition connected, for the first time, Le Corbusier's original finds to his various work phases and successive living arrangements in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Paris, and Roquebrune-Cap-Martin (Fig. 6, 7). "Le Corbusier and Zurich" told the story with full size replicas of works on paper framed in the typical oak frames and additional visual material, but was enriched with some superb original exhibits, among them a yellow Egyptian-style vanity and easy chair from a Zurich apartment remodeled and furnished by Charles-Edouard Jeanneret in 1915, or the famous 1:200 model for the Rentenanstalt project (1933), owned by the Foundation in Paris (Fig. 8, 9).

#### EXHIBITIONS 2019-2021 BASEMENT ROOM

##### FIG. 6

"Mon univers. Le Corbusier's World of Objects". Opening summer exhibition, 2019. The basement with exact replica of tiered seating in oak and rubber. Related objects of Le Corbusier's collection are grouped in wall vitrines. Photo: Betty Fleck, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.



**FIG. 7**  
 “Synthesis”: Old juxtaposed with new, natural beside artificial – arranged in ever new constellations in Le Corbusier’s penthouse 24, rue Nungesser-et-Coli.  
 Photo: Betty Fleck, Museum für Gestaltung, ZHdK, FLC/ADAGP Paris, 2022.



The case of “Le Corbusier and Color” was still different. There, the narrative was structured with a series of monitors in heavy wooden frames and supported by a rich palette of visual material, be it old graphic documents, color samples or polychrome models. The original highlights were relatively light sensitive, but could be shown courtesy of a collector: among them a 2.50 meter long sketch made by le Corbusier during his Zurich lecture “Les relations entre architecture et peinture” in 1938, and the original designs for the Salubra II wallpaper patterns from 1959 (Fig. 10,11).

The installations made for the high atelier space were all fakes, but nevertheless impressive. A partial reconstruction of the legendary exhibition *Les arts dits primitifs dans la maison d’aujourd’hui* (1935) – including the Fernand Léger’s tapestry – illustrated Le Corbusier’s vision of a synthesis of the arts (Fig. 12, 13). For the second show, a reconstruction of the Jürg Gasser’s notable inaugural exhibition traced the buildings construction history while demonstrating the modular support system that he developed in 1967, covering the whole end wall of the building (Fig. 14, 15). For “Le Corbusier and Color”, finally, an entire wall from the director’s office at the Claude et Duval textile-factory in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges was rebuilt, where the artist-architect positioned an area of colored rectangles alongside a blown-up fragment of one of his own Purist paintings. Thus, he engineered two direct confrontations in a single manifesto-like design: of abstraction with figuration and of radiant color with black-and-white photography (Fig. 16, 17).

On the upper floor, where initially two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a boudoir had been planned but not realized, the curator’s have free hand for any arrangement that would support the idea of the entire show. For the first exhibition, large-format exhibits from the realms of art, industry, folklore, and nature entered into a thematic and visual dialogue with one another and with the architecture of the “ideal” exhibition building, among them a Roman copy after the Aphrodite of Knossos by Praxiteles, a giant D’nimba (Nimba) shoulder mask representing the fertility goddess of the Baga people (Guinea, before 1950), two steamboat air-vent pipes, and archaic Spanish pottery (Fig. 18). The second exhibition recalled the various activities of Heidi Weber’s Galerie Mezzanin (1958–1964). The precious exhibits – a Le Corbusier enamel painting, a large tapestry, the four furniture types produced by Heidi Weber, and her advertising graphics – conveyed again the vision of a synthesis of the arts (Fig. 19). In the third case, and completely different again, a large-scale installation with six pigments from Le Corbusier’s early puristic color palette contrasted dramatically with the “signal-like, heraldic, festively folkish (with a mildly spectacular undertone)”<sup>6</sup> exteriors of his last realized building (Fig. 20).



**FIG. 8**  
"Le Corbusier and Zurich", second summer exhibition, 2020. Charles-Edouard Jeanneret's remodeling of Marguerite Jeanneret's Zurich apartment, 1915. Egyptian-style vanity and easy chair from Marguerite's boudoir. Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.



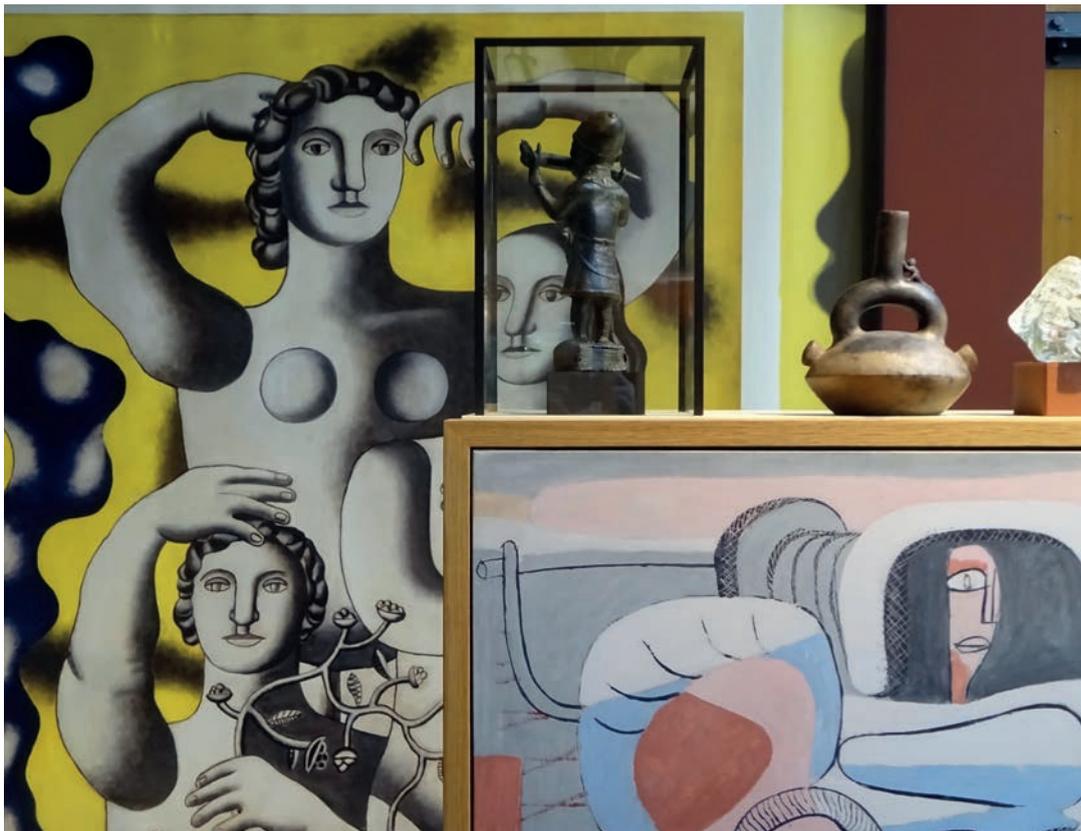
**FIG. 9**  
Presentation of the Rentenanstalt project (1933), with the original model owned by the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**FIG. 10**  
 "Le Corbusier and Color",  
 third summer exhibition,  
 2021. Screen presentation  
 of Purist polychromy  
 and documentation of  
 Le Corbusier's Zurich  
 lecture "Les relations entre  
 architecture et peinture",  
 1938. Photo: Regula Bearth,  
 Museum für Gestaltung  
 Zürich, ZHdK. FLC/ADAGP  
 Paris, 2022.



**FIG. 11**  
 Partial view of exhibition;  
 installation with the 20  
 colors of the second Salubra  
 collection (1959) on the  
 endwall of the basement  
 space. Photo: Regula Bearth,  
 Museum für Gestaltung  
 Zürich, ZHdK. FLC/ADAGP  
 Paris, 2022.





**EXHIBITIONS 2019-2021  
GROUND FLOOR STUDIO**

**FIG. 12**  
"Mon univers. Le Corbusier's World of Objects", 2019. Partial reconstruction of the exhibition "Les arts dits primitifs dans la maison d'aujourd'hui" in the studio/apartment at 24, rue Nungesser-et-Coli, 1935. Photo: Georg Aerni, Zürich. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**FIG. 13**  
Detail of pre-Columbian and African objects, Le Corbusier's *La pêcheuse d'huitres* (1935, copy) and Fernand Léger's tapestry for Mme Cuttoli (1935, copy). Photo: Arthur Rüegg. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.



## Conclusion

No doubt, Le Corbusier was an “Exhibition Architect”. His concept for a Musée à croissance illimitée (Museum of Unlimited Growth) goes back to a radical proposal he made in 1931 to the editor of *Cahiers d’Art*. The ensuing 1939 project was not built, but there were three later realizations following his concept for an ideal art museum: the Sanskar Kendra Museum at Ahmedabad (1952–1954), the Chandigarh Museum and Art Gallery (1947–1952), and the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo (1957–1959). And before white-cube galleries (and black boxes) came into fashion, there was Le Corbusier’s Boîte à miracles (Box of Miracles) to accommodate various media and installations. But he also staged innumerable exhibitions, and whenever commissions for major expos came along, the architect produced a corresponding programmatic response. In the Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux built for the Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne, Paris 1937, he explored the combination of commercial iconography and photo-montage techniques, and at the Brussels World’s Fair of 1958, the aluminium-colored stomach of the Philips Pavillon was synthesized with quasi-magical projections of colored light ambiances, black and white images, and electronic music emanating from loudspeakers on all sides to produce an audiovisual drama that would appeal to all senses at once. Not by coincidence, it was the Paris Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs Paris 1925 that provoked what can be seen as a blueprint of the much later Zurich Pavilion. On that occasion, Le Corbusier & Pierre Jeanneret’s Pavillon de l’Esprit Nouveau was launched as an antithesis to the omnipresent traditionalist Art Deco interior<sup>7</sup>. Their prototype apartment was equipped with ready-made furniture either found on the market or designed to look as if resulting from an industrial process. Instead of the products of French decorative art, there were laboratory jars and the simple bonbonnières found in any French pâtisserie, instead of carpets designed by “modern” interior decorators, the folkloristic Berber carpets from Morocco with their rich geometric patterns. In contrast to these spartanic furnishings, the polychrome walls were hung with advanced contemporary paintings signed Fernand Léger, Juan Gris, Amédée Ozenfant, and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, and the upper floor balustrade was decorated with a free-standing sculpture by Jacques Lipchitz.

**FIG. 14**

“Le Corbusier and Zurich”, 2020. Partial reconstruction of the inaugural exhibition at the pavilion in 1967, with modular photo-panels by Jürg Gasser. Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**FIG. 15**

View from the upper floor with room-high Modulor scale. Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**FIG. 16**

“Le Corbusier and Color”, 2021. Installation based on Le Corbusier’s color scheme for the director’s office at the Claude et Duval factory, Saint-Dié-des-Vosges (1946–1950). Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.



**FIG. 17**  
View from the entrance, with pivoting door and LC 1 free-standing lamp in the foreground. Photo: Arthur Rüegg. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**EXHIBITIONS 2019-2021  
UPPER FLOOR**

**FIG. 18**  
"Mon univers. Le Corbusier's World of Objects", 2019. Large-format exhibits from the realms of art, industry, folklore, and nature: Nimba shoulder mask, Aphrodite torso after Praxiteles (ca. 340 b.C.), air-vent pipes, Spanish pottery. Photo: Betty Fleck, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

**FIG. 19**  
"Le Corbusier and Zurich", 2020. Some products of Heidi Weber's various activities at her gallery Mezzanin, Zurich, 1958–1964: Enamel painting, tapestry, lithographs, graphic design, furniture. Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, ZHdK. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.



In short, the Paris pavilion was an all-over demonstration of modernity that covered all aspects of avant-garde-art, design, and an elitist lifestyle.

Like its predecessor, the Zurich pavilion is not an art museum, but a manifesto of Le Corbusier's time-specific concept of the "synthèse des arts majeurs"<sup>8</sup>: a place where the interaction between architecture, painting, tapestry, sculpture, and print could be fully explored and demonstrated. Architecture was a main ingredient of this synthesis. If overprized paintings and fragile drawings are no longer available today, they can be replaced by other, more robust "originals", or even by copies. Here and now, it is perfectly possible for us to inherit the expertly shaped rooms to serve our needs as curators and those of a contemporary young public and to find new and specific answers to the challenge Le Corbusier gave us more than fifty years ago.

This article condenses and develops texts from the restoration report co-signed with Silvio Schmed (2019, see note 4; translations by Bronwen Saunders), and my texts for the three exhibition booklets 2019, 2020, and 2021 (translations by Bronwen Saunders and Jennifer Taylor).



FIG. 20

"Le Corbusier and Color", 2021. Installation with six pigments from Le Corbusier's palette. Kore 674, 500 b.C., colored copy by Ingrid Kjær, 1902. Photo: Regula Bearth, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, MfGZ. FLC / ADAGP Paris, 2022.

## Author

**Arthur Rüegg** (born 1942), architect, professor of architecture and construction at ETH Zurich from 1991–2007. Published extensively on recent architecture and on construction, color, and design in the Modern Movement, among others *Swiss Furniture and Interiors in the XX Century* (2002); *Le Corbusier. Furniture and Interiors 1905–1965* (2012) and *Le Corbusier. Polychromie architecturale. Color Keyboards from 1931 and 1959* (1997 / 2005 / 2016). Co-curator of *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier* (New York, 2002) and *Le Corbusier. The Art of Architecture* (Rotterdam et al., 2007–2009); *Charlotte Perriand – Designer, Photographer, Activist* (Zurich 2010); *100 Years of Swiss Design* (Zurich, 2014); *Ideal Living* (Zurich, 2018). Restoration of Le Corbusier's Zurich Pavilion together with Silvio Schmed (2017–2019).

## Notes

1 Heidi Weber, *Dokumentation über das Centre Le Corbusier*, published on its inauguration, Zurich, 1967, p. 3.

2 The authoritative monographs are: Catherine Dumont d'Ayot in collaboration with Tim Benton, *Le Corbusier's Pavilion for Zurich. Model and Prototype of an ideal Exhibition Space*, edited by Institute of Historic Building Research and Conservation (IDB), ETH Zürich, Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013; and Naïma Jornod, *La "Maison d'homme" ou "Heidi Weber Museum-Center Le Corbusier". Le dernier testament architectural de Le Corbusier*, Genève: Editions Slatkine, 2013.

3 In: *Le Corbusier et son atelier rue de Sèvres 35. Œuvre complète publié par Willy Boesiger*, Zurich: Les Editions d'Architecture, 1965, p. 24.

4 See in extenso: City of Zurich, Building Surveyor's Office / Silvio Schmed and Arthur Rüegg, *Pavilion Le Corbusier Zurich. The Restoration of an Architectural Jewel*, Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2019.

5 The three exhibitions were: *Seeing Chandigarh. Swiss Reports* (2015, curated by Bruno Maurer and Arthur Rüegg); *René Burri / Le Corbusier. Maisons d'homme* (2016, curated by Arthur Rüegg and Eva Wagner); *For now or forever. Swiss Pavilions* (2017, curated by Roman Hollenstein and Eva Wagner). 2015 and 2016 exhibitions designed by Silvio Schmed.

6 Stanislaus von Moos, "55 Jahre Le Corbusier und Zürich", in: *Zürcher Almanach*, ed. Paul Nizon, Zurich et al.: Benziger Verlag, 1968, pp. 100–109, here p. 107.

7 See Arthur Rüegg, "Le Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau en tant que musée imaginaire", in: Stanislaus von Moos (ed.), *L'Esprit Nouveau. Le Corbusier et l'industrie 1920–1925*, Berlin: Museum für Gestaltung Zurich et Ernst & Sohn, 1987, pp. 14–153.

8 See in extenso: Stanislaus von Moos, *Le Corbusier. Elements of a Synthesis*, Rotterdam: O10 Publishers, 2009 (revised edition), chapter VII "Elements of a Synthesis", pp. 265–317.

