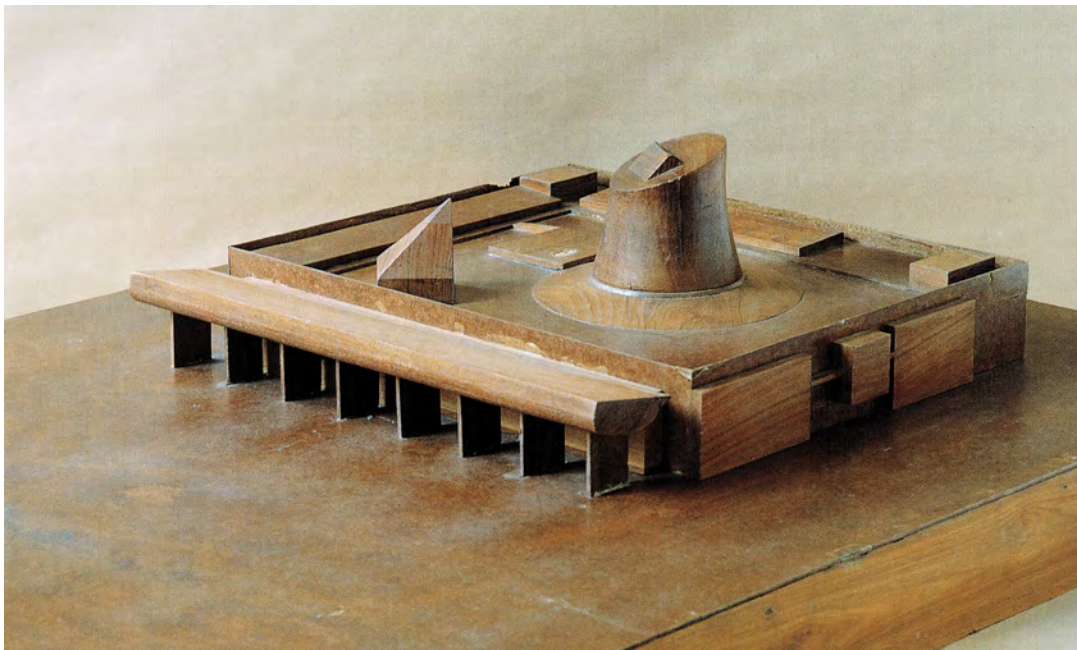


LC. #07 LE CORBUSIER CONTEMPORAIN



Le Corbusier. Chandigarh.
Palais de L'Assemblée,
1955. Maquette en bois.

**LC150+, a conversation with Rene Tan, Jonathan Quek, Ian Soon,
Keefe Chooi and Janelle Ho**

Alejandro Lapunzina

**LC150+, A TRAVELLING EXHIBITION. The RT+Q Architects' Private
Collection of Le Corbusier Models**



FIG.1
Models LC150+.

LC150+

A CONVERSATION WITH RENE TAN, JONATHAN QUEK, IAN SOON, KEEFE CHOOI AND JANNELLE HO

Alejandro Lapunzina

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LC150+ is an exhibition of RT+Q Architects' private collection of nearly one-hundred and sixty models of buildings and projects designed by Le Corbusier.¹ Originally an in-house office project, two years ago the collection was publicly exhibited for the first time in the office's hometown, Singapore. The event acted as a thunder that triggered the rapid and now incessant growth of the collection. Shortly thereafter, it also began travelling, first to neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia, and now through Europe, where it will be displayed in several countries before it travels to Canada and the United States towards the end of the northern hemisphere's summer.

The Illinois' program of overseas studies at Barcelona-EI Vallès hosted at the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura del Vallès (ETSAV) and the ETSAV itself joined efforts to display the LC150+ traveling exhibition between February 20 and March 6, 2023. Organizing the exhibit was also a propitious opportunity for convening a small and informal, but insightful and enthusiastic mini conference which, entitled "Five Brief Reflections on Le Corbusier's work," was attended by Rene Tan and other members of his team, as well as by Brigitte Bouvier, Director of the *Fondation Le Corbusier*.²

The collection is certainly heterogeneous. All models are at different scales and are built at very diverse range of development and detail. Some are small and rather schematic (for instance, the Pavilion Suisse, Villa Le Sextant, and Maison Fueter, to name only three), but others are quite large and highly sophisticated, many of them with removable parts or built in fragments that permit seeing the buildings' interior in either plan or section. The Villa Savoye spliced in four quadrants, a one-half model of the Asile Flottante, and a partially sectioned model of the Church at Firminy are three examples among a constellation of Le Corbusier's built projects that the collection recreates through carefully crafted, digitally printed models. In fact, most of the models are built through 3D printing technology, but the older models in the collection (generally of houses from the 1920s) are built with traditional techniques and materials. These older models are nevertheless charming, proudly displaying the aging of the white board with which they were built more than twenty years ago as well as the imperfections of being hand-crafted by young architectural interns. This is an important aspect of the collection: it is not the work of professional model-builders who created models to be displayed in museums or as part of scholarly-oriented exhibitions. Instead, it is the work of dozens of young motivated and engaged architectural interns who take it as an opportunity to continue learning, often with contagious passion for being part of a project that goes beyond the daily routines of learning the ins-and-outs of the profession.

While heterogeneous, the collection is impressive in every sense. In fact, the impression of seeing in only single room more than one-hundred-and-fifty models of Le Corbusier's buildings and projects is striking. In effect, visitors can virtually see the complete work of Le Corbusier at a glance, in a linear succession of fifty cardboard pedestals (cleverly designed by RT+Q) on top of which all-white models of over one-hundred built and unbuilt projects are organized in a somewhat chronological order, from the early work at La Chaux des Fonds to the Church of Firminy completed long after Le Corbusier's death. The display also contains formulations like the Dom-ino concept, non-

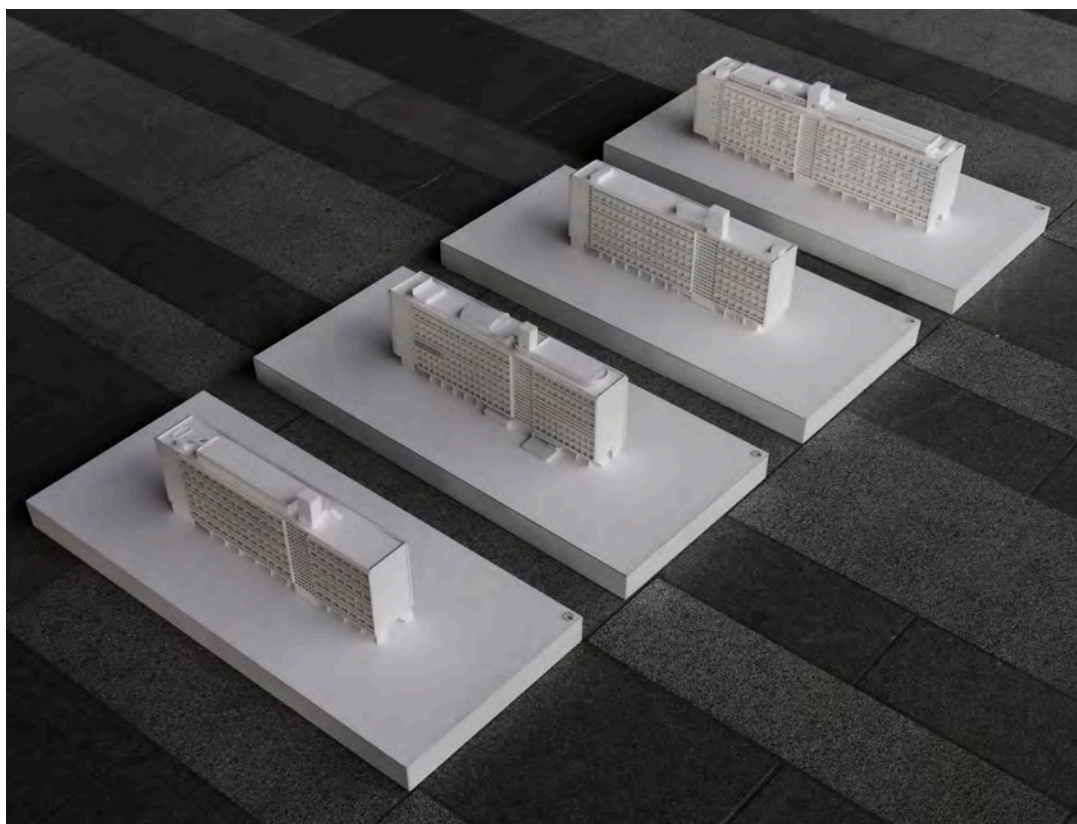


FIG. 2
Models LC150+.
Unités d'Habitation.



FIG. 3
Models LC150+.

architectural projects such as the Voiture Minimum, a model interpretation of Le Corbusier's well known sketch "the four compositions," and schematizations of urban projects such as the masterplans for St. Die and Chandigarh.

The exhibit includes multiple versions of some of Le Corbusier's most iconic buildings. Many of the Purist houses of the 1920s which are part of the initial collection of twenty-something models were rebuilt in recent years with 3D printing taking advantage to generate more precise, more detailed, and more elaborate renditions of these buildings from that important period in Le Corbusier's work. There are also several Unités d'Habitation, from three quite large different versions of Marseille (a full building, a section, and an exploded model of the typical set of two units) to smaller-scale editions of those at Nantes, Strasbourg, Berlin, Brye-en-Foret and Firminy. One can see two different models of several other buildings such as Ronchamp and La Tourette, and intelligent and quite didactic models such as Le Corbusier's own formulation of his famous Five points for a New Architecture illustrated through a model of Maison Cook, like he himself did in the first volume of the Oeuvre Complète.

The most striking for students and for those who are only familiar with Le Corbusier's built work is to see models of a large number of poorly known and unbuilt projects, from the Villa Meyer to Villa Errázuriz, the Domaine Agricole in Peyrissac, early versions of Villa Hutheesing, fragments of the Venice Hospital, the demolished Philips Pavillon, and many more. In short, the exhibit is a veritable tour-de-force, a didactic promenade through Le Corbusier's work through a collection of models which original intention was to be part of the formative process of young architectural interns. Exhibited at schools of architecture like at Sant Cugat del Vallès, the formative initial goal of building these models comes full circle as they become powerful pedagogic instruments for teachers and students of architecture worldwide.

Rene Tan, Director and co-founder with partner TK Quek of RT+Q Architects, is the "master mind" behind this project, but there is no doubt that it would not have been possible for him to develop and sustain it without the commitment and engagement of his Singapore-based architectural office and a veritable legion of dedicated interns and young collaborators.

One week after the opening of the exhibit in Sant Cugat del Vallès, I had a conversation with him and a few members of his team to talk about the exhibit, its origins, intent, and future plans. Selected fragments of that informal conversation follow.³

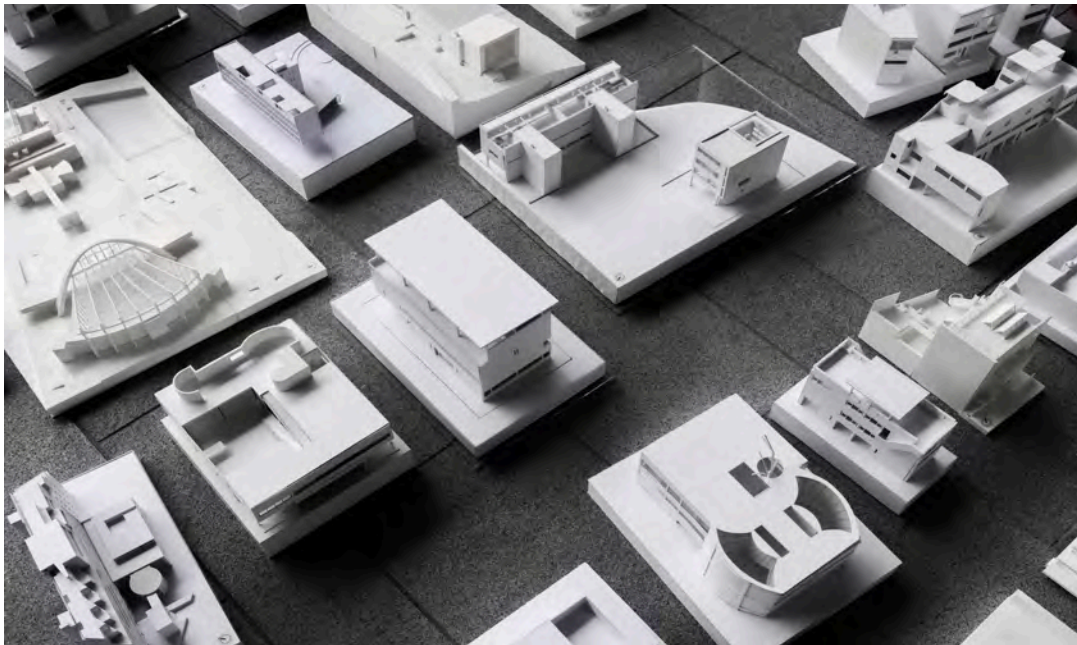


FIG. 4
Models LC150+.

Alejandro Lapunzina [AL]: The exhibition here at the ETSAV is going quite well. We have received lots of praising comments and great feedback that I will share with you later. We are not surprised. Our expectations have been largely surpassed.

Rene, you have put together an amazing private collection of models of both built and non-built projects of Le Corbusier. Can you share with us the story behind it? What was the origin of the collection? How did it start?

Rene Tan [RT]: That is a very good question because we are now thinking back, trying to trace the origins of this collection. The idea started about twenty years ago, very modestly, in the attic that is in the fourth level of our office. The idea was that every intern who comes to work with us, their first task from the first week of the internship, was to build a model of a project designed by Le Corbusier. We do that for a variety of reasons. The first is that we are never ready for the intern because sometimes it happens that our administrative staff tells us, “Rene, Jon, we have a new intern here for the next six months, what do you want them to do?” So, we are never ready for them. Thus, to make their time useful, the idea was to get them to look at, and build a model, of a world-famous architect. At that point, we thought that the Purist houses of Le Corbusier, would be a good place to start, partly because in that Purist phase, the buildings were usually geometrically pure, rectilinear, and easy to build models with. We gave interns a one-week challenge of drawing up a Le Corbusier project and then get it built in model form, initially hand-cut cardboard models, and eventually, as things progressed along, we started using a 3D printer.

We thought that working on Le Corbusier would be a good project for students and interns because we consider his work to be very encyclopedic. Le Corbusier has covered a range of themes, designed homes, worked with construction methods, materials, and so forth, therefore we just thought that it would be a good introduction to prepare our interns because they come with varied skills; some have only six months of experience, while others have already four years. Regardless, we thought that it would be a good place for them to start the internship rather than wasting time and building a second- or third-rate project of RT+Q Architects. We thought that Le Corbusier would be the perfect way to get them going, just to warm them up. That is the origin of the idea.



FIG. 5
 “A Day in the life of
 Le Corbusier”, Archifest
 Singapore, 1 - 30 October
 2021.



FIG. 6
"LC121: Uncovering The Hand". University of Malaya (UM) Kuala Lumpur, 11 June – 3 July 2022.

FIG. 7
"LC150+ Le Corbusier 150+ Models". Universidad de Navarra Exhibition, 30 January – 17 February 2023.

AL: When you say twenty years ago, can you put a date?

RT: Yes 2003, that is when RT+Q Architects started.

AL: I presume that obviously everybody already worked with digital drawing technology. Do the interns know, before they go to your office, that they are going to do this?

RT: My sense is they didn't in the first few years, but today the word must have traveled, and they would have heard about this.

Jonathan Quek [JQ]: We have got a reputation, in universities, that when you go to RT+Q be ready to build a model for the first week. We heard this a few times.⁴

RT: But I think that building the models of Le Corbusier is not just for the interns and their education, it is also for us and for me to learn something from. The value of this exercise, I think, benefits everyone.

AL: Lots of questions emerge from these first few comments. There are two interns sitting next to you. A question for all of you then, how do the interns react when the first thing that you tell them when they come to the office is "sit down, here is a building of Le Corbusier, you have to make the drawings and a model of it"? Is the reaction now different than twenty years ago?

RT: I think the reaction is normally of surprise, because interns –whether they are at a law office or a dental clinic, or even an architect's office— are usually expecting to do menial work such as to tidy up the library, or to get coffee or breakfast for the staff. So, rather than doing that, we thought we would instead ask them to build a model. I think it's usually a welcome surprise because Le Corbusier is "something" that they would have heard at school but perhaps have not seen everything yet. So, it's a welcome surprise. I also I feel that through the years there has been a little bit of a healthy competitive spirit because every intern would want to do better than the previous one.

There was a stage when rather than just building one model, there were about six interns in our office, and they were having a great time over a period of three to four months in which they were building maybe even three, four, or five models each. They just got into it, and then they started believing that there was a good purpose for them to do it. I think in time, their curiosity changed into interest, and then interest changed to passion.

JQ: I'd like to add something here. I think that for some of the interns who actually do stay with us for about three months, doing the exercise of actually studying the plans and the beautiful spaces that Le Corbusier has actually developed over the years for every single project is good for all. If they can actually learn one thing and apply that to any sort of task or drawing that we give to them, subsequently it will make what Rene refers to a symbiotic, relationship. It will inform them how to actually design the spaces with a passion like that of Le Corbusier, and that will be beneficial to the work in the office, as an intern, as opposed to just tell them "please draw a bathroom..."

But, if they see, for instance, Le Corbusier's bathrooms or spaces, and try to learn something and apply that to the work that they do, subsequently –after the model has been built– that is beneficial.

RT: I think one of the important things is a lesson that I learned from Michael Graves. He used to tell us that the best way to learn about anything is to retrace, to redraw, the plans and the sections of any project. To build the models, interns would have to, for example, redraw the curves of Villa Savoye, they would have to draw the sloping ground of La Tourette, like Keefe did. I think that once you go through that exercise, you really learn, you really experience the curve, the height, you experience the size of the windows. I think it's all about learning. That's the most important thing.

AL: We can say then that one of the objectives, which is not hidden but quite visible, is to learn by the act of making, and this act of making leads to understanding the act of creation of a work of architecture.

RT: Yes, and on top of that, I think that going through Le Corbusier's work, which is so encyclopedic, is a bit of a warm-up that leads the interns along. It is really to just shake them up a little bit so that they can experience drawing, curves, straight lines...



FIG. 8
 "Now Boarding: Le Corbusier". Singapore University of Technology and Design, 12 Mars - 11 April 2022.

AL: You mentioned a few times the encyclopedic nature of the Le Corbusier's work, and that the objective of building the models is, for interns, to understand the Purist language of his architecture, the methods of construction working with different materials, and many other things. Yet, I am curious; the collection began with the Purist houses, which are not simple houses, they are architecturally complex and very rich; but yes, perhaps because they are more purely geometrical, especially the smaller ones, they are more adequate for interns to build models.

But there are also many other works from the same period by other architects. I can think of for example, Mies van der Rohe, the Tugendhat House in Brno, or works by Walter Gropius, or the buildings in the Weisenhoff Siedlung complex that could have a similar complexity or present a similar challenge. Even though the encyclopedic aspect of Le Corbusier's work may already answer my next question, did you ever think of, instead of focusing on one single architect, another way of approaching this would be to work with buildings from the same period, or from a variety of periods? I can also think of the work of Louis, Kahn, or many other architects whose buildings lend themselves to achieve similar objectives.

RT: Yes. Well, we certainly are aware of these other architects. But we focus on Le Corbusier for a variety of reasons. The first is that at RT+Q Architects we do a lot of suburban houses in Singapore, and we always thought that it'll be interesting to build the Villa Savoye at the same scale as the buildings that we are doing, so that we can compare and see, for instance, proportions and issues of scale. Because of that, we started with Le Corbusier, and we continued with him because something tells me that it is best to completely explore one project, one architect, rather than spreading ourselves through a variety of architects.

Let me tell you something interesting. People always ask what are the ten great architects and their buildings that students should know? So, you name three by Le Corbusier, two by Mies van der Rohe, one Palladio, and so on and so forth, but a teacher of mine –probably in Princeton, I can't quite remember– used to tell me, "Rene, just learn all Le Corbusier and you would have covered A through Z."

There is also something that I like to say, quite controversial. I always say that architecture after Le Corbusier are just footnotes of Le Corbusier. Lots of people tell me I can't say that, but I truly believe that "Corb" is so all-encompassing that a lot of the works that come after him are just footnotes.



FIG. 9
"Le Corbusier Maquettes:
The representation of
modern architecture Part
1" Universiti Sains Malaysia
(USM) Main Campus,
Penang, 4-12 July 2022.

AL: Well, that is something that to a certain extent I may share. The sustained relevance and influence of Le Corbusier’s work is, I believe, one of the reasons that explains why there is something like “LC La Revue,” that is, a journal dedicated to Corbusian studies that is published twice a year. There is a volume of research dedicated to his work that is very rare to see dedicated to other architects.

Let’s get back to the models. Villa Savoye was perhaps the first model built, and then the Villa LaRoche. But, Rene, at what point, the initial collection of about twenty models or so that you mentioned in your presentation last week, began to grow to become a project in its own right, because it is obvious that now it is a full-scale project in your office.

RT: This is an important question because we are talking about the origins of the exhibit. Well, it started in July 2021, when the Alliance Française was looking for an exhibition after doing one with a private collection of Rudolf Nureyev’s costumes. The Singapore Institute of Architects was also looking to do an exhibition because of the upcoming ArchiFest. Somehow, someone informed both parties that RT+Q Architects had a collection of Le Corbusier models. At that point, we only had twenty-seven models that were all over the office, some were lost, and some were dirty. We had twenty-seven, and they thought it was enough to do an exhibition at the Alliance Française. But then, we had a fresh batch of interns and I said we better up the collection to at least forty or fifty.

So, we had forty-five at the first exhibition which, subsequently, went to a few universities in Singapore over the following few months. The first forty-five, became seventy-five, at one point there were eighty-eight, and then one-hundred-and one, later one-hundred-and-fifteen. When I first talked to you [November 2022] we had one-hundred-and thirty and now we have about one-hundred-and-sixty. There are some models upstairs in our office that have not made the trip because we don’t even know how to bring them over. We started rather modestly.

AL: I see. In a very short time, only two years, it went from about twenty-something to one-hundred-and-sixty, of which we have one-hundred-and-fifty-seven currently exhibited in Sant Cugat del Vallès. Will this ever end? Will you ever end building models, or do you plan to continue until you cover Le Corbusier’s entire work, especially his unbuilt projects?



FIG. 10
 “LC150+ A Travelling
 Exhibition. World
 Architectural Festival”.
 Lisbon, 30 November – 2
 December 2022.

RT: I think it will never end because the more we do, the more we look at the *Œuvre Complète*, the more we realize that there are lots of interesting things that we didn't know about which we should build. For instance, Ian, which one are you are looking at now?

Ian Soon [IS]: The one that I am currently looking at is the Bata Shoe Store that Le Corbusier just sketched up.⁵ It was never built, but there is series of studies of different plans and how to draw passersby on the street into the store. So, he started changing the front part of the store with a series of capsules where everything would be displayed on the wall, and then there are a series of different open plan to study that circulation on the façade. It is quite interesting that he managed to consider designing for retail spaces such as a shoe store. Actually, in Singapore, we also have the Bata brand, so it was quite eye-opening to see that the Bata Brand goes one-hundred years back, from Prague.

RT: This is what we are continuing to discover, and it is just fascinating because Le Corbusier has really thought about everything. It is amazing, he did not just think about Madame Savoye's *boudoir*, he thought about everything.

AL: Certainly. In addition to what Ian is telling us about the Bata store, are there buildings, or one building, that you still dream to do in model form? For example, thinking of my own research, I would love to see a model built with the same care, dedication, and sophistication of many unbuilt projects. One that easily comes to mind is the French Embassy in Brasilia, which is a fantastic project. But I am sure that there are many others. Are there buildings that you as an office, or individually, would like to add to this collection.

RT: No, there are no immediate ones at the moment.

AL: Let's get back to the traveling exhibition. It began with a few models at the Alliance Française in Singapore. Where did it go after that?

IS: After the exhibition at the Alliance Française, it went to the National University of Singapore for three weeks, and then to Singapore University of Technology and Design.



FIG. 11
"LC150+". Museum EAAD,
Guimaraes, 4 -25 January
2023.

AL: If I understand correctly, at the beginning it was only in Singapore. When did it cross the borders, and how did it become a traveling exhibition that went to South East Asia, eventually to Europe, and very soon to the Americas?

IS: I think the key connection here is Rene and his friendship with Lillian Tay who is a practicing architect at the Veritas Design Group in Malaysia.

RT: Lillian Tay is an architect, a partner of a big firm, and used to be the president of the Malaysian Institute of Architects. We are both Malaysians and were in Princeton together. She told me I should bring the exhibit to Kuala Lumpur which is a short three-hour ride from Singapore. We packed up the models and the exhibit was driven across the border to Kuala Lumpur where we had a rather good exhibition for a few weeks in a neo-Le Corbusier building. After that, it stayed in Malaysia for another month because the Alliance Française in Penang and the Universiti Sains Malaysia, wanted it. After Kuala Lumpur and Penang, it came back home to Singapore. The next destination was Indonesia.

We started rather modestly in the Southeast Asian region: Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia where it again had a very good reception. At that point we spoke with the World Architecture Festival (WAF), which started years ago in Barcelona, then came to Singapore for four years, and later went to Berlin, Amsterdam, and this year was in Lisbon. I told the WAF about our collection of models, and they said it was a great idea to exhibit it in Lisbon. This is how the models got to Europe [in November 2022]. Once there, I told everyone in the office that the models could stay in Europe touring through three or four more cities before returning to Singapore. But then, it occurred to me that we should write to schools in Europe, North America, etc... to see if they would be interested in hosting this collection of models, free of charge.

AL: Yes, this is how we heard of the exhibition, because of the material you had sent to us, which was very attractive. But I have to say that seeing it in person, the exhibition is much more impressive than just attractive.



FIG. 12
 "LC150+ The RT+Q
 collection of models of
 Le Corbusier's buildings
 and projects". ETSAV 20
 February – 6 March 2023.
 Fotografía Boden Freeman.

RT: Good to know!

AL: What is impressive is the quality of the models, the selection of buildings and projects, but especially the volume. You never see, in the same room, virtually the entire complete work of Le Corbusier in model form. There have been many exhibitions of models of Le Corbusier's work before, especially about the Purist houses. I can think of Max Risselada's collection of models done at Delft University, I believe in the 1990s, and I think Tadao Ando's continuing project of making models of Le Corbusier's buildings. But I had never seen a collection of virtually the entire complete work. It is also nice to see the heterogeneity of the models, some very detailed and very sophisticated, others more schematic.

One of the great things about the exhibition, which you mentioned in your lecture last week, is that you made visible projects that, for students, are little known. This is wonderful and very didactic. I think of, for example, the project for the Villa Errázuriz in Chile. For students to discover a house designed by Le Corbusier in the 1930s that looks like the antithesis of what they would expect of a building designed by Le Corbusier in that period is fantastic.

RT: Yes, true antithesis. I feel also that Le Corbusier is interesting because he is always reinventing himself. This is why he built in timber, steel, in tent-like form, concrete. I think there is a certain richness in his work that is unsurpassed. We saw it in the event that you organized last week.⁶ Everyone had an interpretation of Corb's work. We can talk about the sculptural qualities of his work, about the moving image, his reaction to climate conditions, the promenade architecturale, and so forth. It was actually a very good event.

AL: I would like to ask you a little bit about the models. It seems that when the collection began to grow, the models became more sophisticated: there are many section models, an amazing model of the Villa Savoye in four quadrants, etc. Can you say a little more about this process of sophistication? At what point it was decided to go beyond the object itself, as beautiful as it could be, to be something that can be explored inside through section models or, as in the exploded model of the Unité d'Habitation's typical unit. How did it happen and what are the objectives of these special models?



FIG. 13
 "LC150+ The RT+Q
 collection of models of
 Le Corbusier's buildings
 and projects". ETSAV 20
 February – 6 March 2023.
 Fotografía Jorge Torres.



IS: I think the inspiration for the explosion of section models is the sketch of Le Corbusier about the Unité d’Habitation where a hand is pulling out a bottle of wine, a very iconic image. We thought that the emphasis on the Unité d’Habitation is that very act of pulling out, of peeling the layers to see what is inside each module or each unit. That building is also interesting in section because of the double-height spaces it generates. So, we really wanted to place a new way to see that building. Instead of just seeing the facade, which most people see from the ground, we wanted to see the volumes and how Le Corbusier proportioned spaces inside. That prompted the section model, and also the exploded model of the [typical] unit.

RT: There are a few ideas for the section models. The first is: I told the interns that if we are going to revisit a well-known building, we must do more, that is, we are not just going to do another Villa Savoye from the outside. We should instead take the opportunity to really look at the inside very carefully. Because it is all about the promenade! Through the interiors and all that! Moreover, I think the interiors of Le Corbusier are understudied, because if you ask what Le Corbusier’s work is about, you will hear “form,” form here and form there. But there are lots of interesting interior incidents that are not so well known. So, again, if we are going to redo an old well-known building, we better show more and show new things.

The second reason is that I don’t want to kill the interns by overbuilding models, so at some point we thought, one-half of the building is just enough. So, we build a digital model and later try to decide whether we show one half of the building or the other half. That is the spirit; while we are passionate about the work, we are not fanatical. The third reason is more logistical and practical: packing. In order to pack these things, if we don’t need to show the whole Villa Savoye, one-half would be enough. So, it was because of a combination of things: packing challenges, not overdoing things, and the desire to experience the inside of the buildings. Like the amazing model of Curutchet house. We thought it was better to build a section model through the ramp to explore new possibilities; we finally built the section model and it showed us a few things.

AL: Yes, all this is quite wonderful and very didactic. The work of Le Corbusier is, as you said, so encyclopedic that is always opened to all sorts of new interpretations. In the last few days, while teaching Architectural Design,

FIG. 14
“LC150+ The RT+Q
collection of models of
Le Corbusier’s buildings
and projects”. ETSAV 20
February – 6 March 2023.
Fotografía Boden Freeman.

we brought students down to the exhibition hall to show them things we were talking about in studio related to things they should explore [in their projects]. We would show something that Le Corbusier had tried, and invited them to do their own interpretation as part of a never-ending process of exploration, what Le Corbusier himself called the patient search.

The exhibition is now here in Sant Cugat del Vallès and next week goes to London and on to several other venues in Europe. In the summer, it will travel to North America; hopefully we can host it in Illinois in November. What is next? What are your future plans?

RT: Well, first, the models will just go from one location to another like refugees, so to speak. We hope that after the tour through North American schools the exhibit can go south, to Montevideo, Buenos Aires, La Plata... in 2025.

AL: Do you think that your refugees will ever get back to their home in Singapore? Or will they continue traveling for a long time?

RT: We don't know. People have been talking to us, like Glasgow, or maybe goes to Cardiff next year or the following one. And we have not yet asked in Asia, where there are lots of schools in China and India; and perhaps it also goes to Australia, and to African schools.

AL: You will probably never see them back together in Singapore. They will continue traveling ...

Since we have three of the interns with us, let me ask all three of you: what did you get out of doing this? Obviously, the models show your passion because you cannot do anything like this without being passionate. What are your impressions once you finish a model? What do you think of all this?

Keefe Chooi: I think that building the model itself is a good primer for getting into the working world, how an architecture office works; while you build the model, you really get to learn how Le Corbusier designed spaces. When you do the section model, you finally have to analyze the different spaces he intended to create, you learn some lessons about how he designed buildings, and you can then directly use those lessons and apply them to your own work. Also, spending the first week of work in the office doing the model helps to ease your adaptation to the new work environment, getting to know your colleagues and everything else.

This is further strengthened by going to help setting up and organizing the exhibition in other countries. It is an invaluable learning experience.

RT: What is important from my point of view is we are neither experts nor scholars, we are not a university, nor a gallery, nor a school. We are a normal architecture office, very busy every day. We just felt that we needed something extra to lead us around as well, and I think there is no better little project than doing this. The idea of bringing it around was also because of the Covid pandemic. With the impossibility of traveling for two years we thought we could bring Le Corbusier to the doorsteps of people.

Janelle can tell us more about what she got out of this.

Janelle Ho: [In building the models] it is very interesting to see all the little details, all the thought that was put into each design, and how Le Corbusier creates the space and atmosphere for the user, the resident. By dissecting the model, through the cut you can see that each component was very well thought out to create functional and comfortable rooms.

RT: I think the breakthrough model in terms of section, done by Keefe, was La Tourette. It surprised me, I began to see a lot of things in section that I never thought about because we are usually looking in plan.

AL: We can continue this conversation for several hours, but I don't want to abuse your generosity and time asking more questions. Instead, I would like that you close this conversation with anything else you want to share with us.

IS: For me the biggest challenge is the logistics. There were many along the way. When we started, we had to design the models' pedestals, and trying to get the models on a plane is difficult because of airline restrictions. Therefore, we had to design our own crates to get everything ready for international travel.

We designed the cardboard pedestals in our office. We worked with a carpenter to manufacture them. We wanted them to be as travel friendly as possible so that everyone gets to see the exhibit.

RT: Well said! The models are only half of the story. The pedestals are the other. The idea was to create something lightweight, easy to construct, sustainable, and reusable, reducing the work for the hosts to the minimum.

In closing, it is important to highlight the generosity of RT+Q Architects in making this traveling exhibit available to interested institutions or venues free of charge, including insurance. The only cost for the hosts is to pay the transportation from the previous location. RT+Q Architects' generosity and passion for propagating the display of this traveling exhibit worldwide is further demonstrated by sending, at their own expense, members of their office to co-ordinate the process of installation of the exhibit at every venue. This generosity is fundamental for institutions, especially public universities worldwide, which otherwise could not afford hosting an exhibition of this magnitude, contributing, at the same time, to further disseminate the timeless legacy of Le Corbusier's work.

Auteur

Alejandro Lapunzina is the *Suzanne & William Allen Professor of Architecture* at the Illinois School of Architecture (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). He is also Director of the Illinois Architecture Study Abroad Program at Barcelona-El Vallès of the same institution. An architect educated at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Washington University in St. Louis (USA), he has written books, essays, and articles on a range of architectural themes, including many about Le Corbusier, with an emphasis on his work in the American continent.

Rene Tan, who describes himself as an 'accidental architect', received his BA (double-majoring in architecture and music) from Yale and his MArch from Princeton.

Today as Director at RT+Q (a firm he co-founded in 2003 with partner TK Quek), Rene works on projects of various types, scale, and sizes—locally and internationally. He was 'Designer of the Year' laureate of the 2016 President's Design Awards, Singapore—an honour he shares with everyone at RT+Q.

To maintain work-life balance, Rene searches (with his wife Woei Woei and daughter Lara) for the next ski slope to negotiate, and has, forever it appears, been struggling to prevent the complete demise of his skill at the piano.

Notes

1 RT+Q Architects is an award-winning architectural firm based in Singapore that was founded by Rene Tan and TK Quek in 2003. For more information about their work I recommend visiting their website www.rtnq.com.

2 Preceded by welcoming and introductory statements by Brigitte Bouvier and Rene Tan, this "mini-conference" consisted of short paper presentations by Corbusian scholars based in Spain. Participants (and the title of their presentations) were Jorge Torres Cueco ("Le Corbusier 1910. Germany. *A la recherche de la clarté Classique*"); Josefina Gonzalez Cubero ("Le Corbusier's vindictive distances: cultural context, media and architecture for spectacle"); Juan Calatrava ("New paths in the plastic work of the last Le Corbusier"); Alejandro Lapunzina ("The poetic dimension of Le Corbusier's architecture"); and, Pere Fuertes ("Le Corbusier bioclimatic"). A limited-edition publication compiling these texts and a selection of photographs of the models exhibited will be published in April 2023. Digital access to this publication will be free of access.

3 The transcript has been partially edited to make it more adequate to a written/readable format. We eliminated most of the rather anecdotal information, but we intentionally kept the casual

and informal tone that predominated during our one-hour long conversation.

4 Jonathan Quek is a Director at RT+Q Architects.

5 Ian Soon is a member of RT+Q Architects. As the exhibition manager, he is in charge of managing, coordinating, and updating all the information related to the exhibit and its journey through the world. He often travels to the exhibition's destinations to lead the process of displaying the models.

6 Rene Tan refers to a one-morning event described in note #2.

7 Now working full time at RT+Q Architects, Keefe built a carefully crafted section model of La Tourette. He was in charge of directing the installation of the exhibition in Sant Cugat del Vallès.

8 Janelle Ho, a very young intern, built several models of the exhibition, notably two section models: one of one-half of the *Asile Flottante*, and a second edition of *Villa Curutchet* in section.

9 The exhibit at Sant Cugat del Vallès was brought from its preceding location at the Universidad de Navarra in Pamplona.

LC 150+

A TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

The RT+Q Architects' Private Collection of Le Corbusier Models

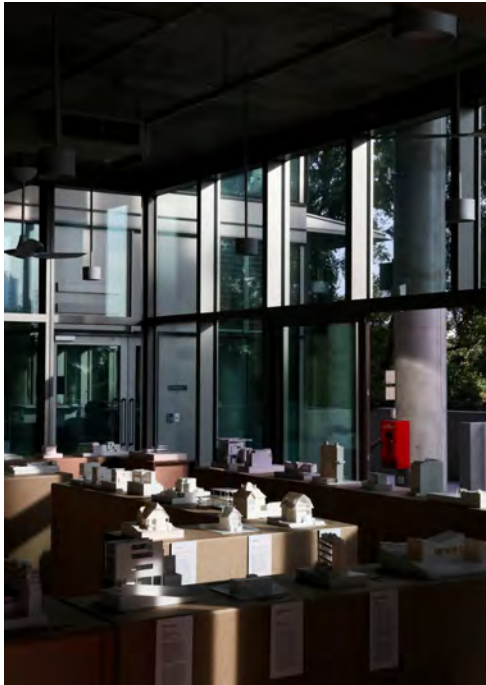


"A DAY IN THE LIFE OF LE CORBUSIER"

ARCHIFEST SINGAPORE. Alliance Française, Singapore. 1 - 30 October 2021



"LE CORBUSIER. MODEL INSIGHT"
National University of Singapore (NUS). Singapore, 22 January - 20 February 2022





19 05 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 12 **PROJEZTARNA**
1928-30

19 16 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 23 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 26 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 27 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 45 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 50 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 52 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 60 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31

19 63 **WILLEBELLE**
1929-30-31



LE CORBUSIER: MODEL INSIGHT

22 JAN - 20 FEB

How do we learn from Le Corbusier?

The message theme of this exhibition evolved around this question. Through 30 scaled models of his built works that have been produced by teams at NTU, NUS, and Nanyang Technological University, we aim to explore the value of model-making and its role in architectural design. The models are designed to explore the value of model-making and its role in architectural design. The models are designed to explore the value of model-making and its role in architectural design.

Acknowledgements

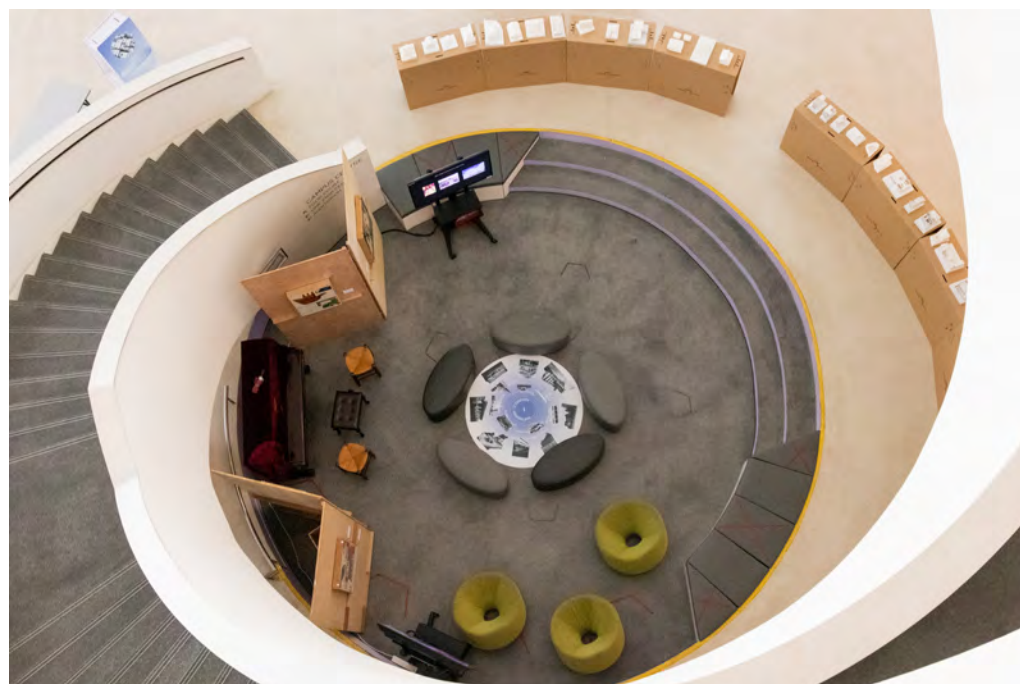
• We would like to thank the following for their support: ...





"NOW BOARDING: LE CORBUSIER"

Singapore University of Technology and Design (STUD), Singapore, 12 Mars - 11 April 2022

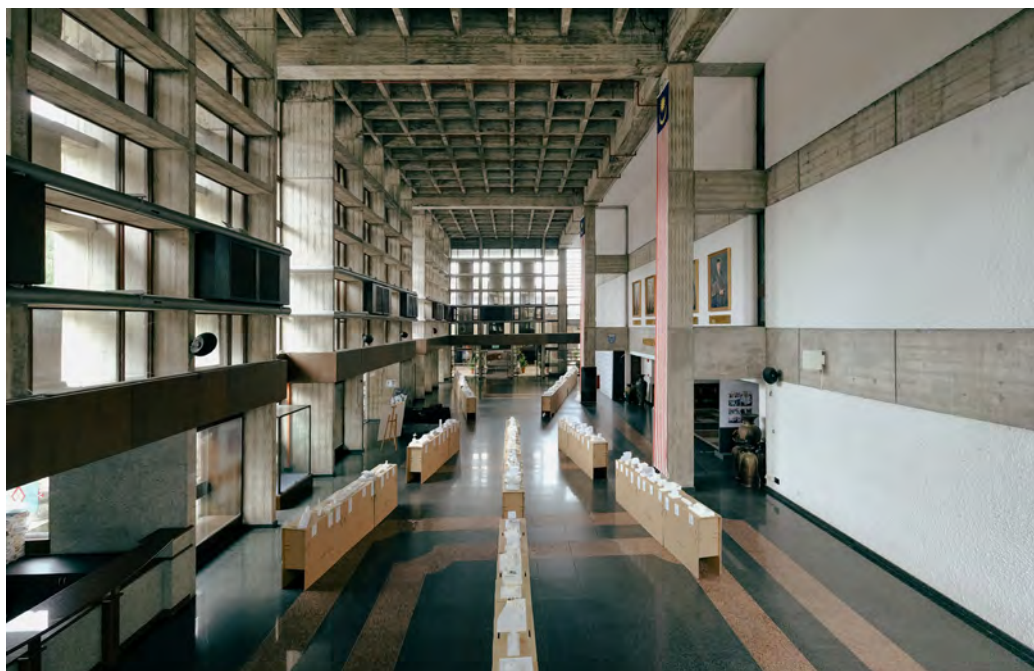


"LC101"
National Design Center Singapore (NDC), Singapore 14 April - 3 May 2022



"LC121: Uncovering The Hand"

University of Malaya (UM) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. 11 June - 3 July 2022



"LE CORBUSIER MAQUETTES: THE REPRESENTATION OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE PART 1"
University Sains Malaysia (USM) Main Campus, Penang, 4 - 12 July 2022



"LE CORBUSIER MAQUETTES: THE REPRESENTATION OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE PART 2"
USM.Create@Georgetown, Penang, 14-24 July 2022



"PRO FORMA LE CORBUSIER (JAKARTA)"

Kompimanyar Gallery, Jakarta - Studio Andra Matin - BYO Living, Jakarta Indonesia. 19 October - 6 November 2022



"LE CORBUSIER UNBUILT PROJECTS (BANDUNG)"

Selasar Pavillion, Bandung - BYO Living, Bandung, Indonesia, 20 October - 6 November 2022



"LC150+ A TRAVELLING EXHIBITION. WORLD ARCHITECTURAL FESTIVAL"
Lisbon, Portugal, 30 November - 2 December 2022



"LC150+"

Museum EAAD, Guimaraes, Portugal, 4 -25 January 2023



"LC150+ LE CORBUSIER 150+ MODELS"
Universidad de Navarra Exhibition, Spain, 30 January - 17 February 2023



"LC150+ THE RT+Q COLLECTION OF MODELS OF LE CORBUSIER'S BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS"

Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura del Vallés, Sant Cugat, Spain, 20 February - 6 March 2023





Villa Fallet

1905
La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland
210 x 210 x 165
1:150

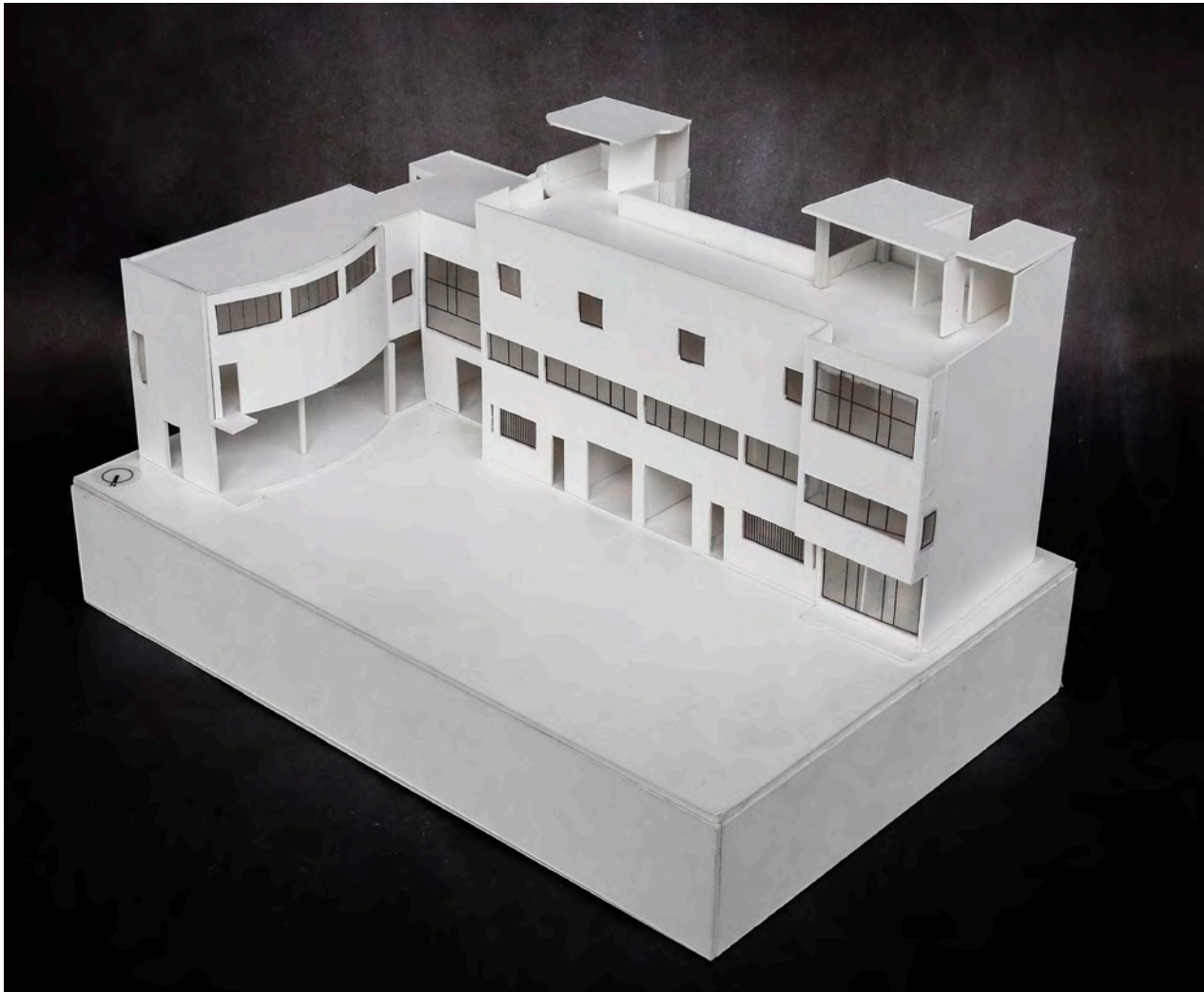
Villa Fallet is an early work of Le Corbusier in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. It is a large traditional chalet with a steep, local alpine style roof, and its facade is carefully crafted with colored geometric patterns of triangular pine trees and pine cones. The villa was completed in 1905, and its success led to his construction of two similar houses, the Villas Jacquemet and Stotzer, in the same area.



Cinéma "La Scala"

1916
La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland
170 x 270 x 115
1:200

Cinéma "La Scala" is one of Le Corbusier's neo-classical styled works. It was built in 1916 but was destroyed by fire in 1971, leaving only its rear facade til today.



Maisons La Roche-Jeanneret

1923
Paris, France
326 x 220 x 235
1:100

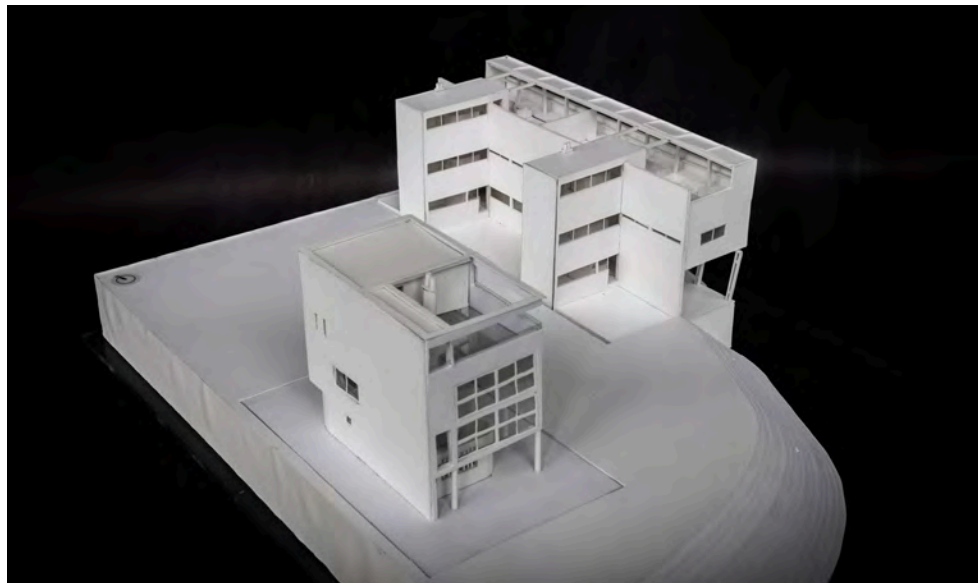
Maisons La Roche-Jeanneret was designed for a Swiss banker and art collector who inspired the concept of the art gallery. The Promenade served to unite the two programs of Residence and Gallery into one. The paths deliberately guide the inhabitants, revealing works of art as a journey through history.



Cité Frugès - Zigzag and Quinconces prototype

1924
Pessac, France
240 x 225 x 85 - 290 x 210 x 110
1:100

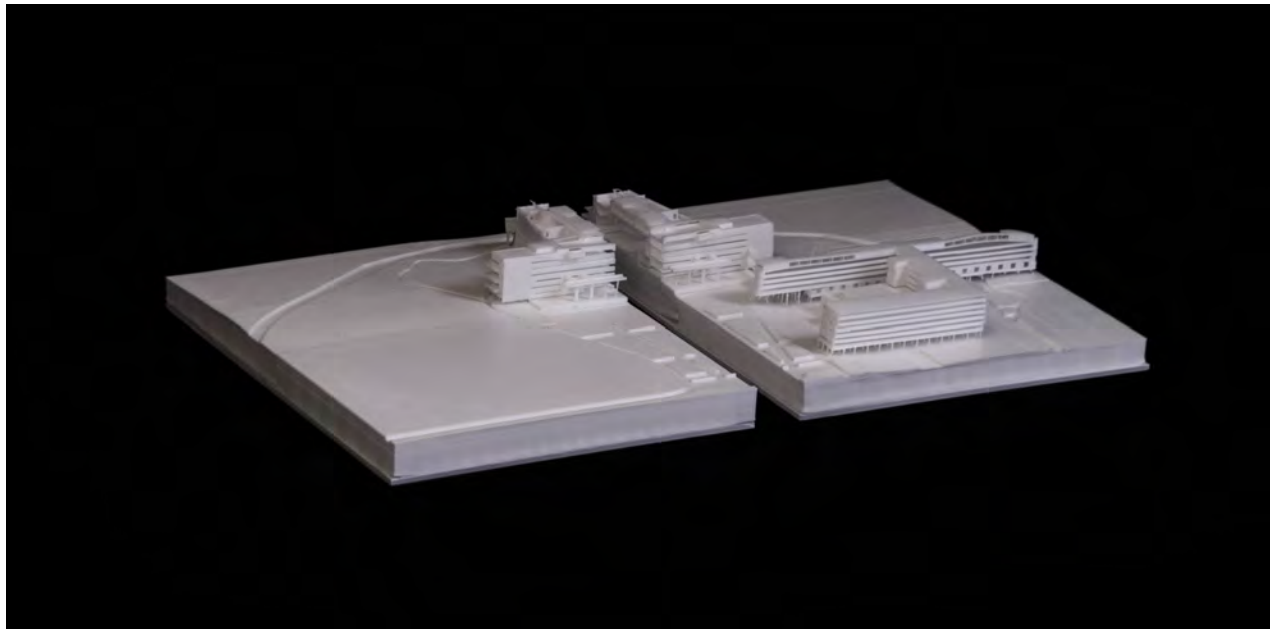
Le Corbusier aimed to develop a prototype for an experimental social housing settlement of 51 houses in Pessac, named Cité Frugès in the 1920s. The Zigzag layout of the Cité Frugès is a standard plan serving as the basis for all the house types in the scheme sketched for this real-estate project. It demonstrated flexibility of the standard plans in this staggered typology, which design consisted of spaces arranged in a 'Z' formation. Straight staircases divide the houses in half, separating living and service spaces on the ground floor and bedroom and bathroom spaces on the upper floor. In the Quinconces prototype, the layout each house has 2 floors. On the ground floor there is a living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and hall. There are 2 bedrooms on the upper floor, one of them with a terrace and bathrooms for both. They are distinguished by being three houses that together form a Z through the use of the 5m x 5m module plus half a module.



Maisons de la Weissenhof-Siedlung

1927
Stuttgart, Germany
500 x 395 x 170
1:100

The Weissenhof Estate was built as part of the German Werkbund exhibition in 1927. Le Corbusier designed 2 houses, maximising their functions to create bright, airy rooms and roof terraces, making them "machines for living in".



Palais de la Société des Nations

1927
Geneva, Switzerland, unbuilt
440 x 300 x 75
1:1000

A competition in 1927 was held for the Palace of the League of Nations, where architects worldwide submitted their entries, including Le Corbusier's. 4 academic architects were later commissioned, whose design was directly inspired by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's entry. They sought to take legal action to vindicate their rights soon after.



Villa Church

1927
Paris, France
330 x 170 x 105
1:200

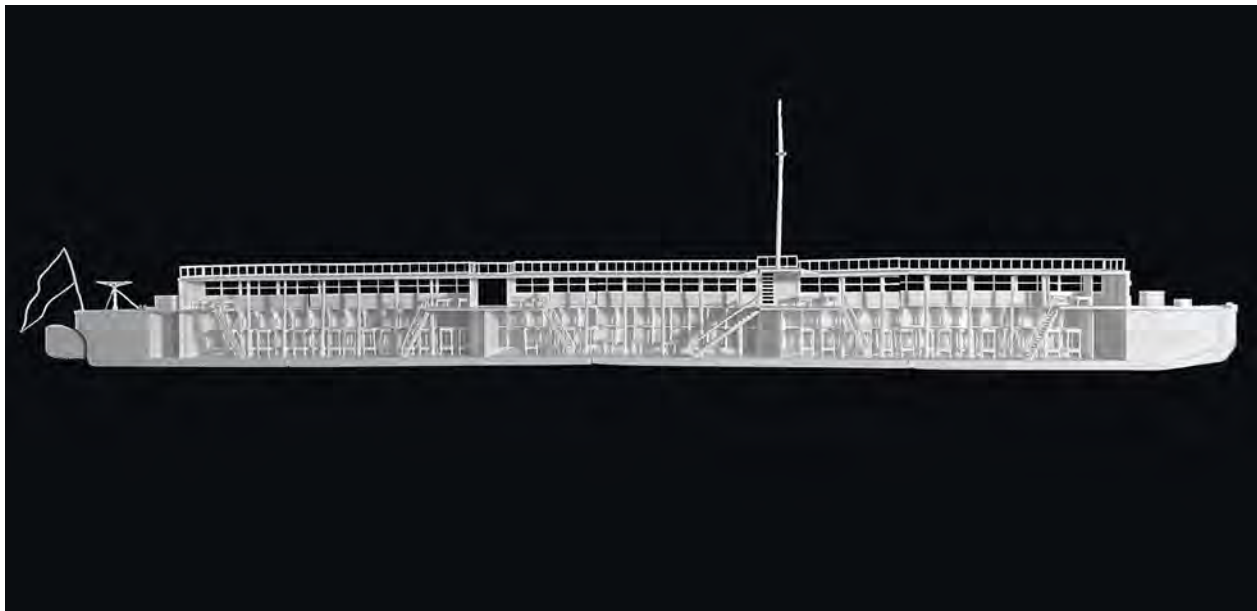
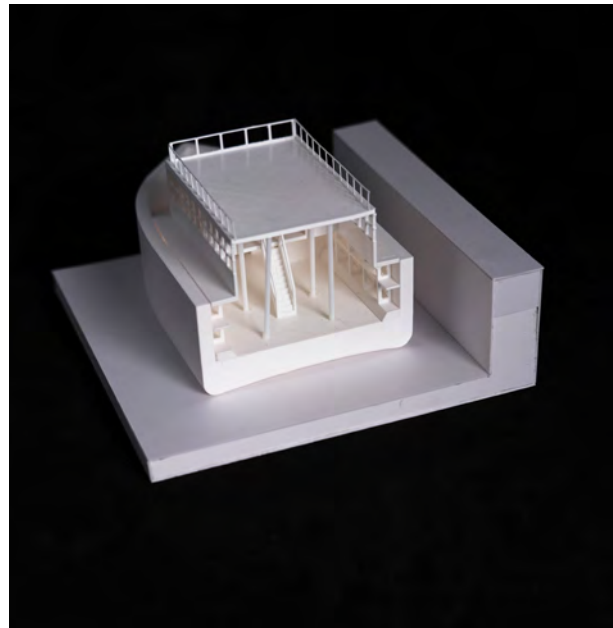
Villa Church is a private residence designed by Le Corbusier built between 1927 and 1929 on the order of Mr. Henry Church and destroyed in 1963. This building revolutionized the image of houses at the end of the 1920s: it was characterized by white walls with clean lines, a cubic shape inserted into the greenery of the park and furniture designed especially for the villa by Le Corbusier and his collaborators, including the famous LC4 chaise longue.



Villa Savoye

1928
Poissy, France
335 x 285 x 235
1:200

Arguably his most significant contribution to modern architecture and influence on International style, Villa Savoye encapsulates the essence of Le Corbusier's manifesto "Five points of a New Architecture" written in the 1920s. Situated in Poissy, it was designed for the Savoye family to be their holiday home. Beyond its tangible features, it was revolutionary for his approach to systematise efficiency with architecture in an era where modern living would be heavily influenced by the machine age.



Péniche Louise Catherine

1929
Seine Paris, France
1:200

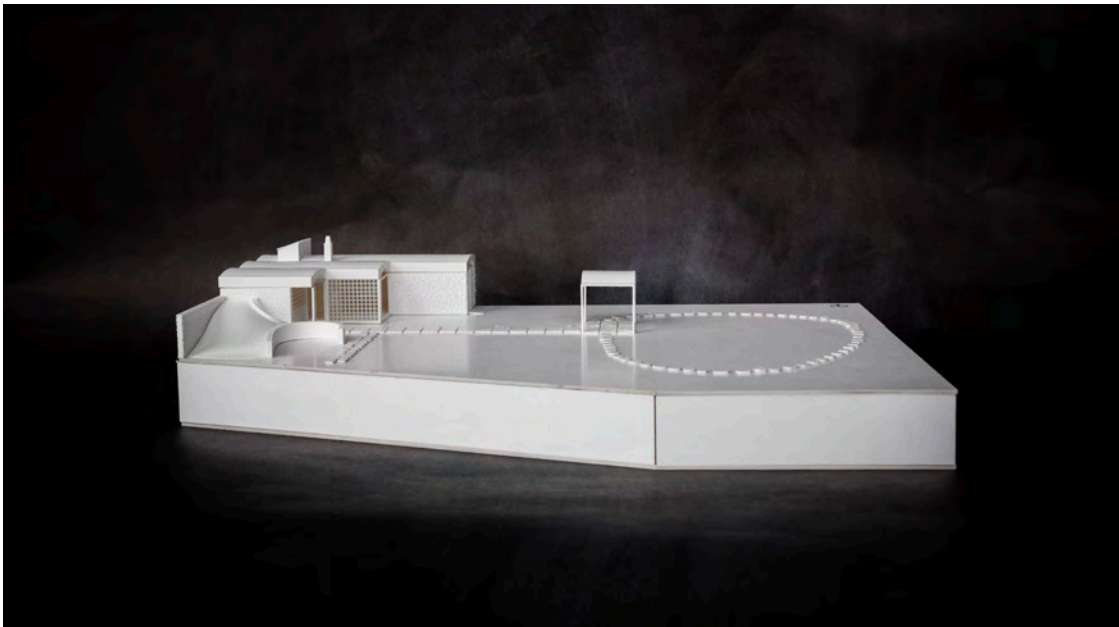
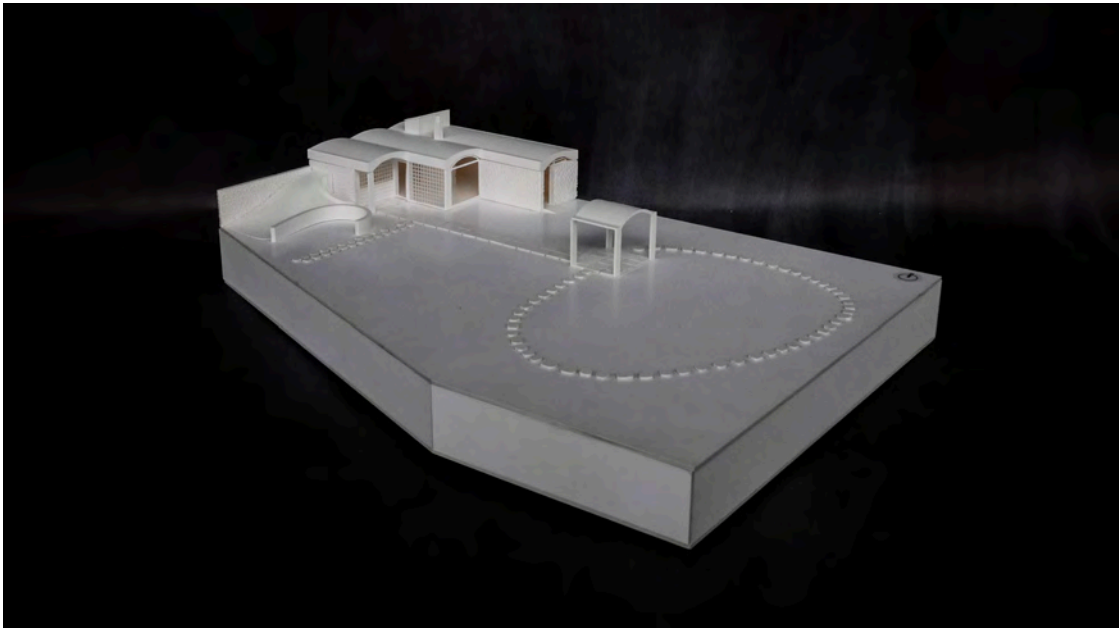
Louis Catherine, the 70 metre-long former coal concrete barge, was converted into a floating homeless shelter in Paris by Le Corbusier in 1929. It housed 160 beds, 3 dormitories, dining rooms and a hanging garden. The intention was for the barge to be moored in front of the Louvre Museum as a homeless shelter in winter, and a floating children camp's in summer.



Palais des Soviets

1930
Moscow, USSR
610 x 430 x 185
1:500

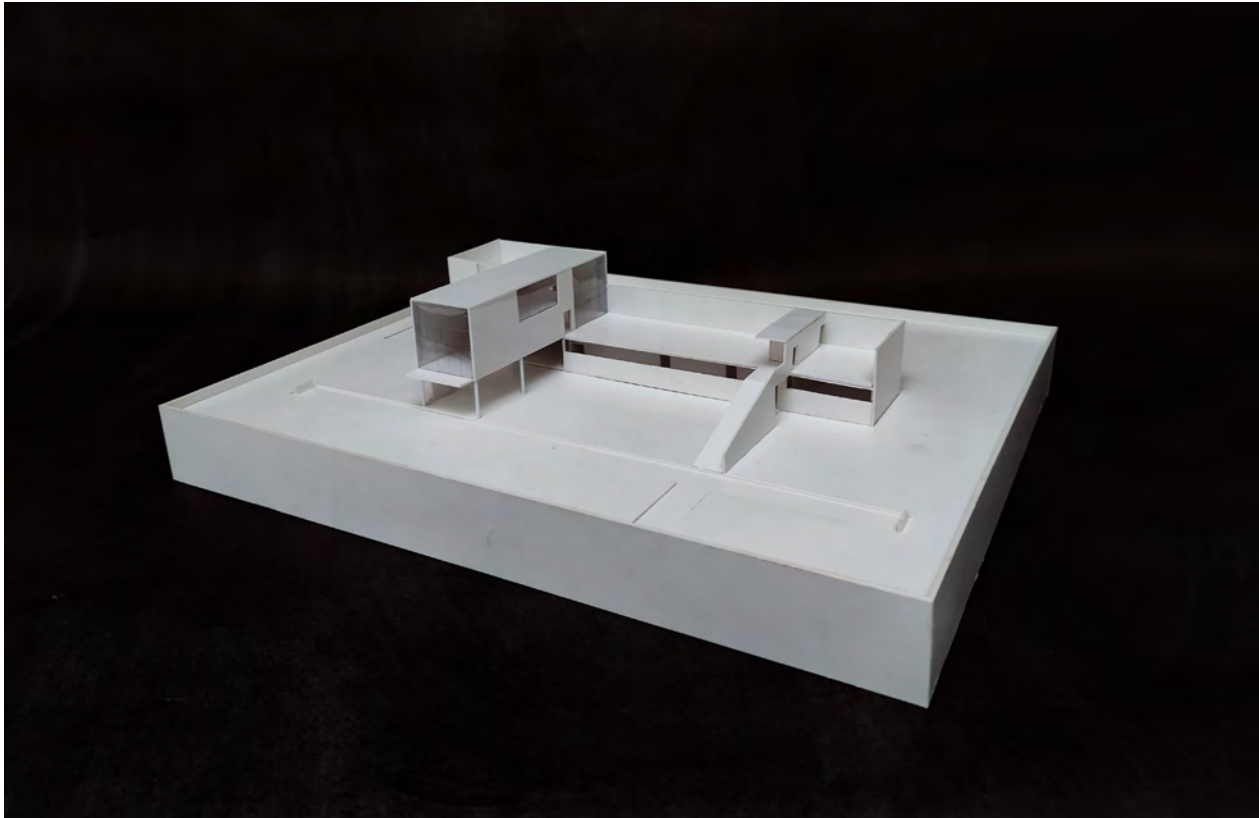
The Palace of the Soviets was an entry for a design competition organised by the Soviet Union in 1931. The project plays with the tension between the dynamic and static functions along the vertical axis. Where the ground is designed to facilitate movement of pedestrians and cars, everything above the ground (ie. the building which rests on pilotis) is designed to programatically anchor movement. Following his unsuccessful entry, Le Corbusier expressed anger to the Soviet judges, severing his relationship with the USSR.



Maison de week-end

1934
Paris, Franca
430 x 312 x 105
1:75

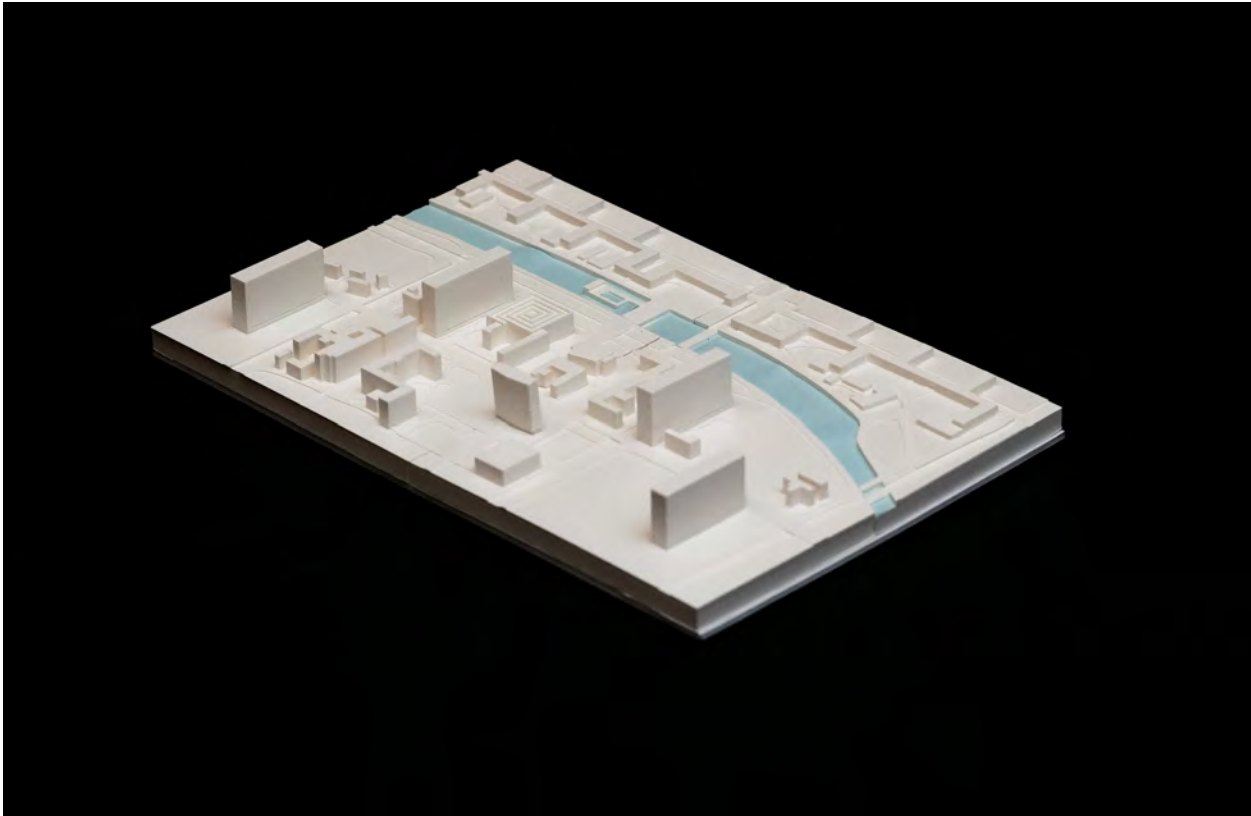
Maison de Weekend was conceptualised based on a brief which specified for a house that was "as unnoticeable as possible". It stands at 2.5m with a roof made of quarry stone and reinforced concrete, covered by soil and grass.



Résidence du président d'un collège près de Chicago

1935
Chicago, USA
310 x 370 x 115
1:150

Le Corbusier transformed a simple request from the president of Olivet College, Joseph Brewer, into an actual commissioned house. The villa is a modular assemblage of parts that had already been designed or even built, connected by a long and suggestive promenade architecture, offering the American people his vision of modern life.



Plan d'urbanisme de Saint-Dié

1945
St. Die, France
370 x 245 x 70
1:7500

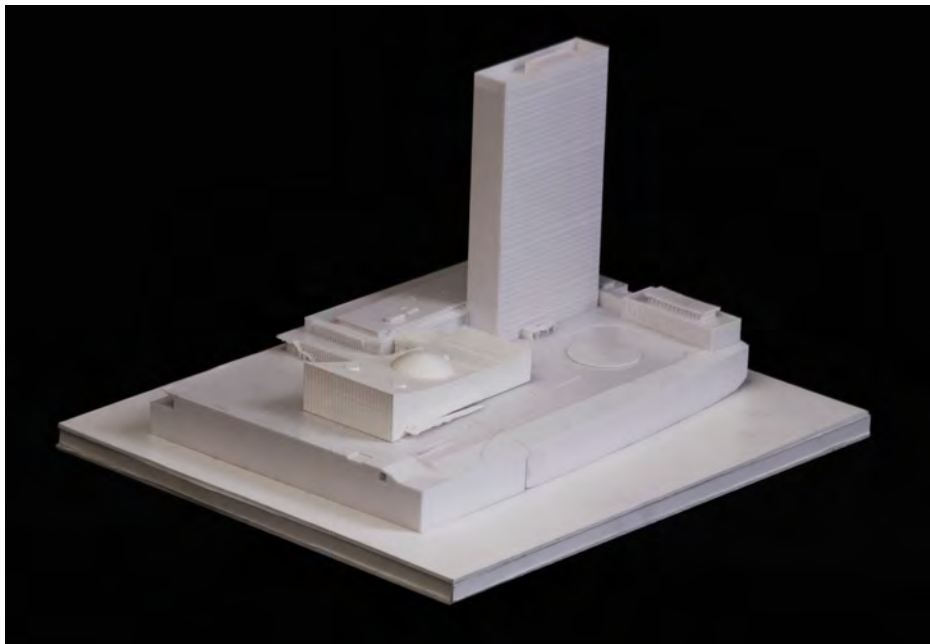
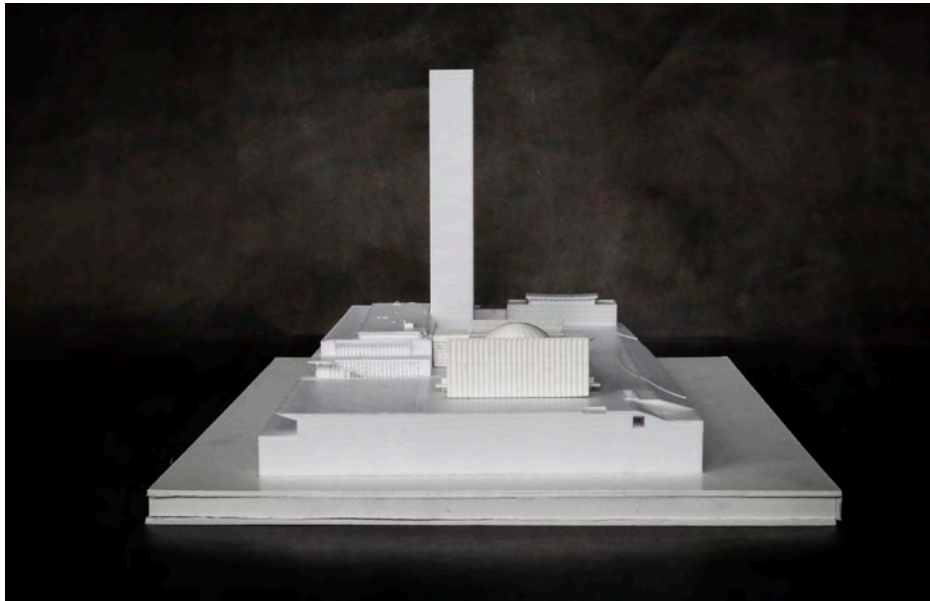
Le Corbusier was approached to revitalise the war-torn commune of Saint-Dié in 1945. Le Corbusier was uninspired by formulaic urbanism and thus he sought a different approach to urban planning. His proposal included high-rise housing and mass-produced blocks that provided its residents views of the mountains and countryside.



Unité d'Habitation (Marseille)

1945
Marseille, France
850 x 270 x 420
1:200

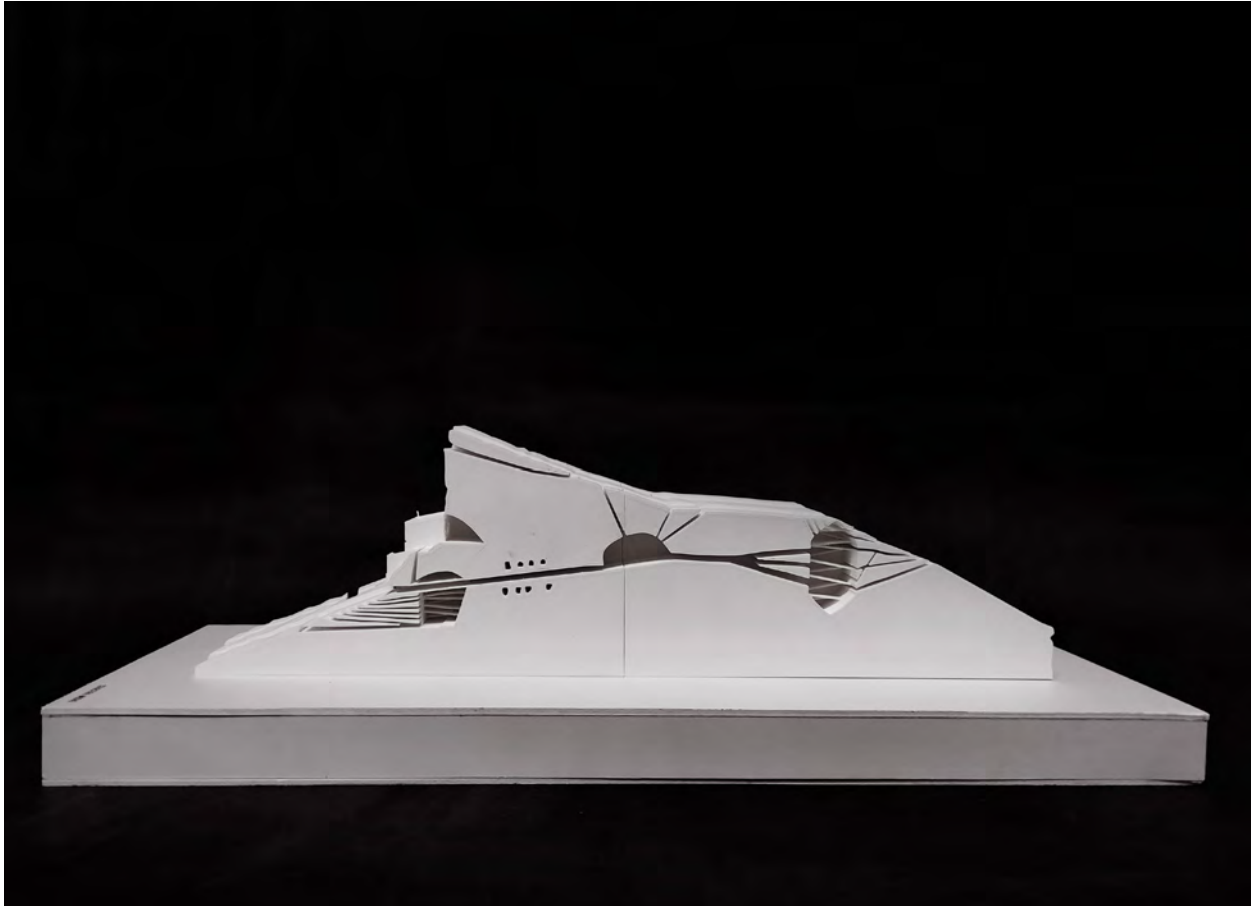
Built between 1947 and 1952, the building was designed to resemble a steam ship in section, comprising 337 apartments of 23 different layouts across 12 stories. Built with rough-cast concrete, the building was thought to be one of the precursors of brutalist architecture and the social housing model.



Palais des Nations Unies

1947
Manhattan New York, USA
355 x 310 x 210
1:1500

The United Nations headquarter was a competition project which oversaw the commissioning of a multinational team of leading architects to collaborate on the design. Le Corbusier's scheme proposed a large assembly hall centralized on the site. However, the committee preferred Niemeyer's proposal for separate assembly and secretariat buildings which created a large civic plaza. After some coaxing from Le Corbusier, Niemeyer allowed the assembly building to stand closer to the center of the site while keeping his albeit smaller civic plaza.



Basilique de la Sainte-Baume

1948
St. Baume, France
470 x 180 x 175
1:250

La Sainte-Baume Basilique was a religious building with enormous effort expended on the interior, to move the hearts of only those capable of understanding the magnificence of the space. The building was made entirely within the rock, cohesive with nature. It runs from one side of the rock at the entrance of the cave of Mary Magdalen to the other side, opening up to a blinding light and the distant sea.



Chapelle Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp

1950
Ronchamp, France
265 x 265 x 235
1:250

The Chapelle Notre-Dame du Haut is a Roman Catholic chapel in Ronchamp built in 1955, which functions as a working religious building chapel with two entrances, a main altar, and three chapels. Corbusier was commissioned to design a new Catholic church to replace the previous church that had been destroyed during World War II. He sculpted the form of the building to give acoustic properties and to achieve an internal ethereal atmosphere through the careful control of light. Supported by embedded columns in the walls, the curving roof appears to float above the building.



Palais des Filateurs

1951
Ahmedabad, India
640 x 300 x 240
1:100

Le Corbusier was commissioned by the president of the Mill Owner's Association to design its headquarters. The architect proposed a distinctly modern aesthetic to stand out from its surroundings. As Corbusier began working predominately in warmer environments, a set of architectural devices in response to climatic and cultural contexts was developed from cues of India's vernacular architecture, such as overhanging ledges and shading screens.



Villa Chimantbai

1951
Ahmedabad, India
285 x 243 x 155
1:150

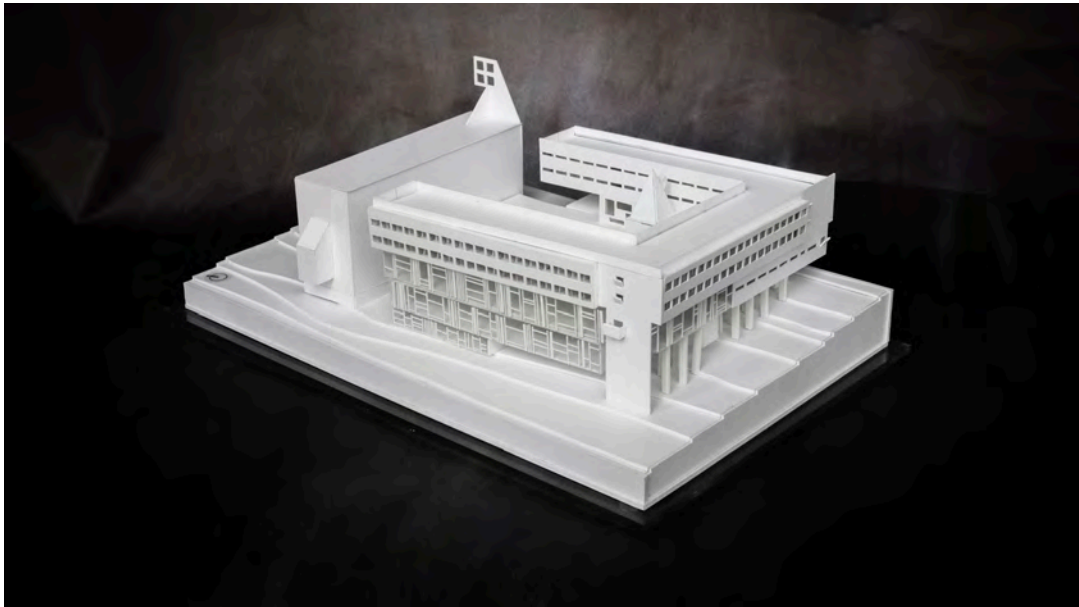
Villa Chimantbai consists of a barrel vaulted roof garden which adapts to the tropical climate in India, with the intention to direct wind flow and to create shadows. The project was not realized due to conflict between the client and the architect.



Palais de l'Assemblée

1951
Chandigarh, India
510 x 510 x 225
1:250

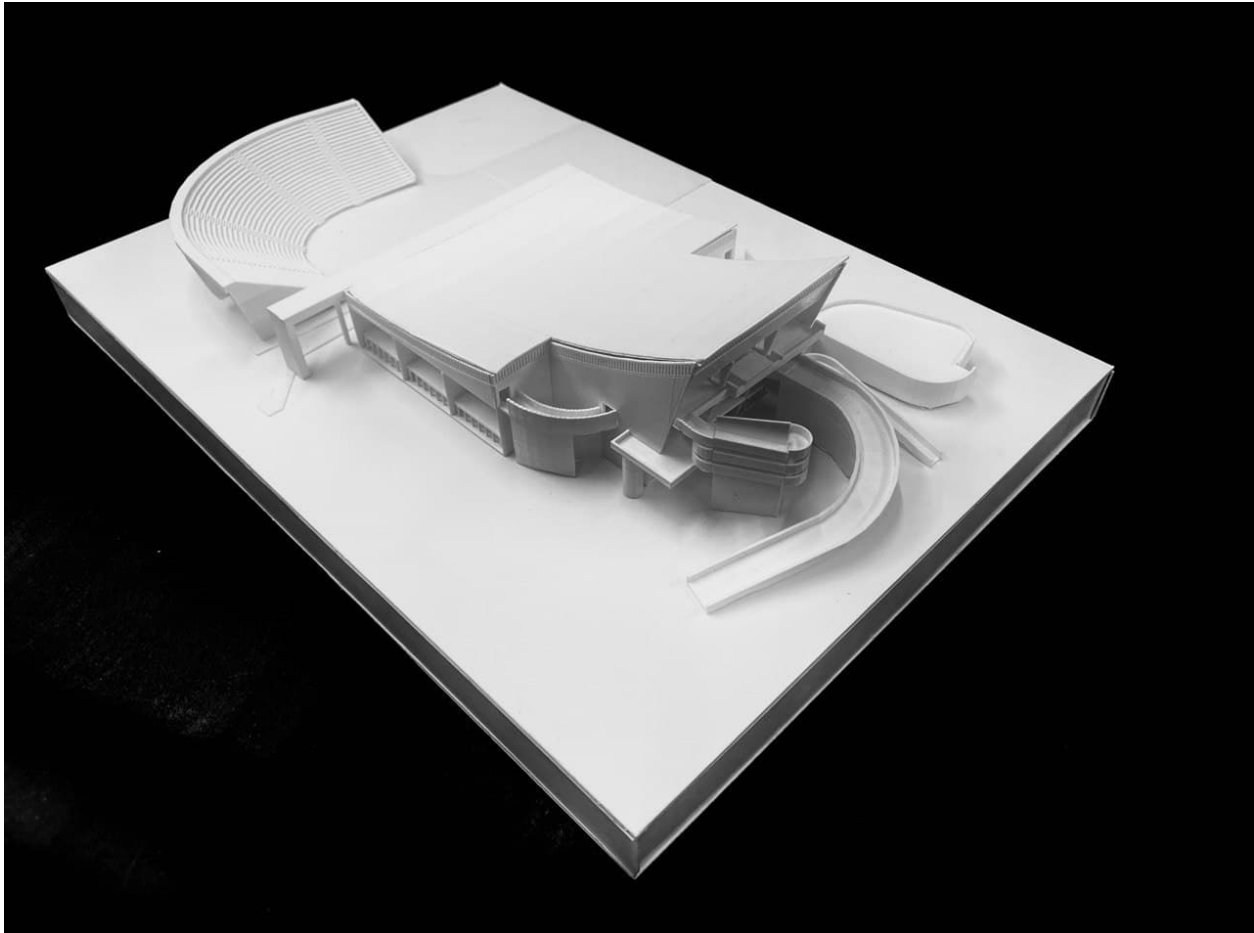
The Palace of Assembly is a legislative assembly building in Chandigarh, India. Le Corbusier was approached to partake in the design of a new city for the new capital of Punjab - Chandigarh. The architect eventually designed several major buildings within the city, including the Palace of Assembly. The building was designed with brise-soleils, a common feature for buildings Le Corbusier designed for India's climate. It also consists of a circular assembly hall and a forum where the great Hall of Deputies and the Hall of Senators were immersed.



Couvent Sainte-Marie de La Tourette

1953
Lyon, France
390 x 253 x 180
1:100

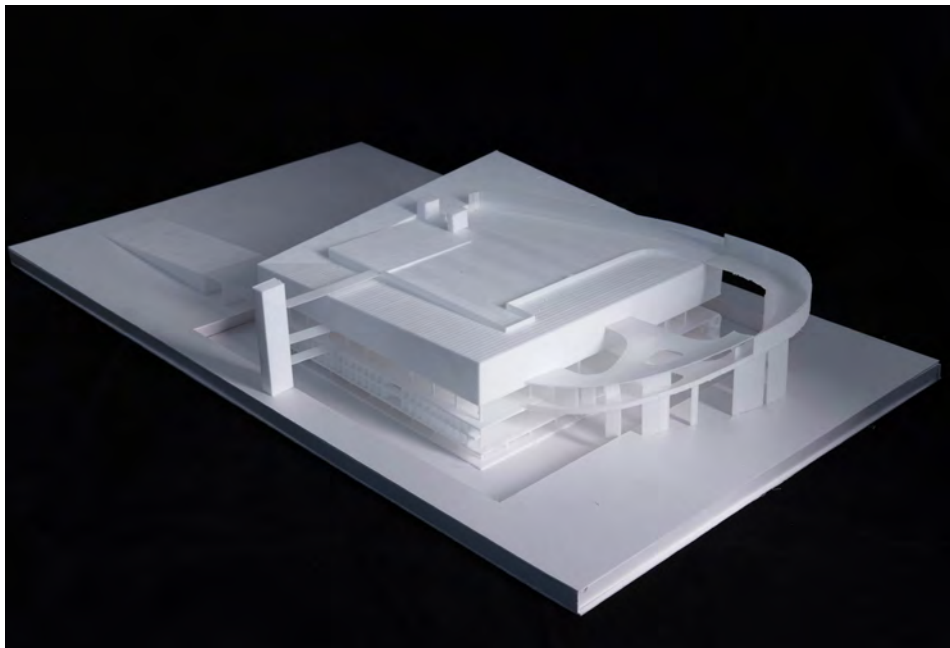
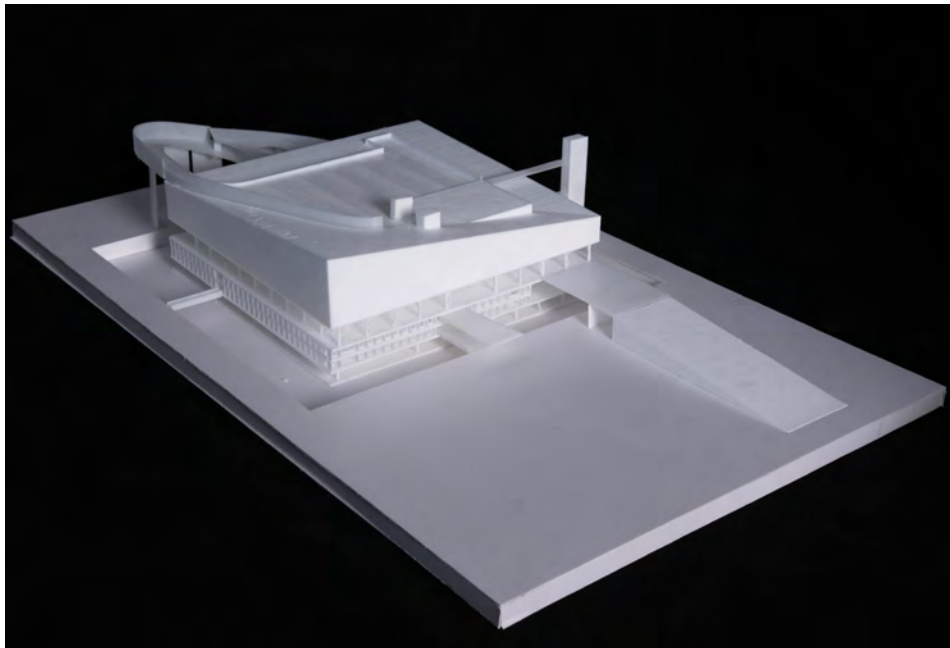
The Convent of La Tourette is one of Le Corbusier's late works completed in Europe, near Lyon in France. Le Corbusier was approached to design a monastery in the midst of nature, within a clearing along a hillside that leads to a forest. Le Corbusier often translated spirituality in his spaces for worship into elements that played with daylighting and colour. La Tourette is most interesting in the way that Le Corbusier chose to place a convent typology on a sloping ground, using pilotis to raise its volumes above the terrain, and using natural light in its spatial design, such as the cathedral's sculptural skylights that significantly illuminate its sacred space.



Stade de Bagdad

1956
Baghdad, Iraq
430 x 310 x 130

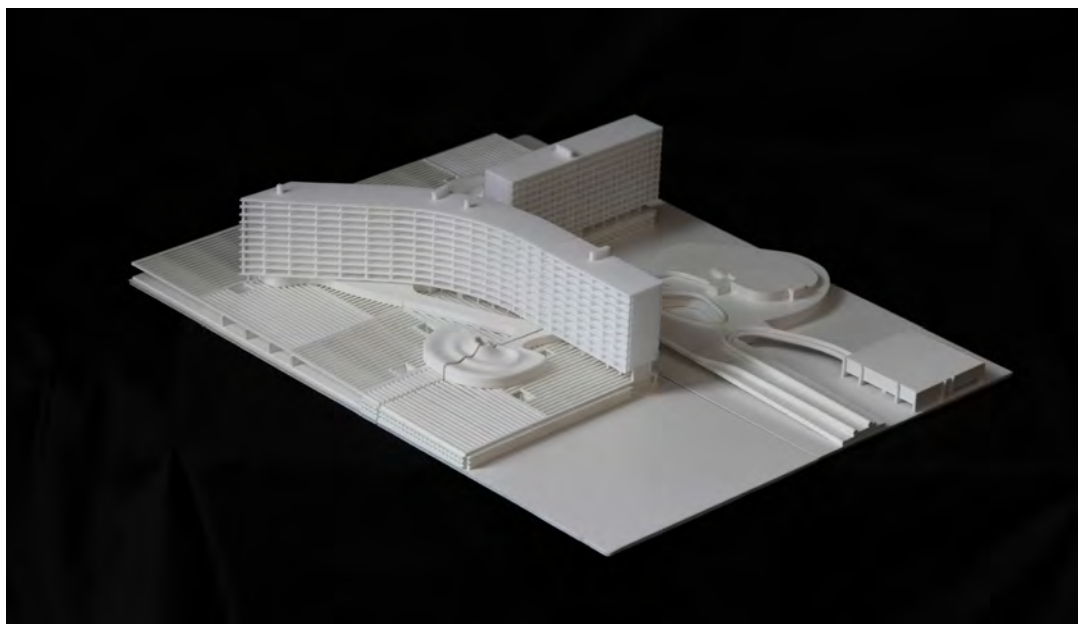
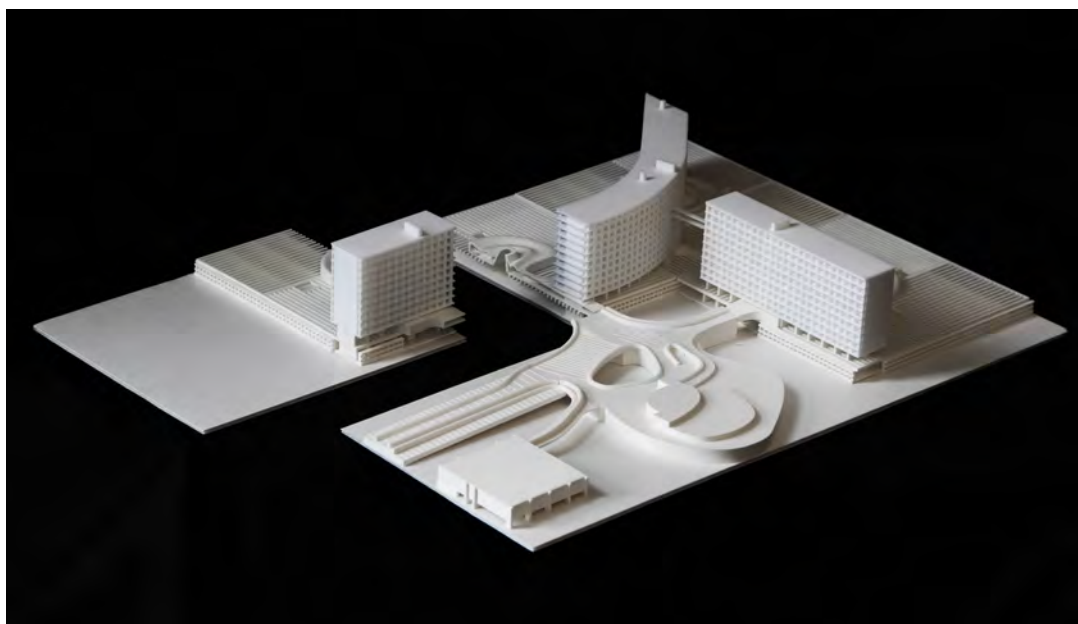
Le Corbusier's Saddam Hussein Gymnasium was envisioned as part of a larger masterplan for the "City of Sport". Contrary to the wide spread belief that the project's design was of lower value and deemed unimportant to Corbusier, the discovery of a large stash of drawings proved that the gymnasium was in fact dear to Le Corbusier.



Palais des Congrès

1962
Strasbourg, France
525 x 315 x 165
1:100

The Palais des Congrès is one of Le Corbusier's last works where he had made drafts and a wooden model, but passed on before providing definitive plans. The eventual construction in 1973-1975 was built in a completely different style and shape than what Le Corbusier had envisioned.



Olivetti, centre de calculs électroniques

1962
Rho, Italy
510 x 400 x 170
1:600

Olivetti, the typewriter company, employed several architects to plan factories and workshops. Le Corbusier's proposal was a mix-use complex which was eventually never realised. On the ground floor is an odd-shaped centre hosting commercial and public spaces and the 10-storey high rises above were dedicated to Olivetti workshops. Around the commercial centre are 3 square blocks for the workers' locker spaces and washroom. They are joined to the commercial centre by 3 mushroom-like structures and a series of ramps.