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*Le* CORBUSIER, PIERRE CHAREAU  
AND TWO MASTERPIECES OF  
MODERN ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

Le Corbusier and Pierre Chareau are famously responsible for two projects considered iconic of modern architecture: Villa Savoye and Maison de Verre. Both are coeval and commissioned by clients with the same socioeconomic profile – the French haute bourgeoisie –, and with similar needs. Villa Savoye is a single family home, while Maison de Verre houses both residential and medical clinic functions in the same building structure. However, this difference does not interfere in our intended analysis. By comparing the client-architect relationships in both projects – Le Corbusier/Savoye and Chareau/Dalsace – we raise questions regarding the professional behavior that modern architects have arrogated to themselves: to revolutionize customs and practices. The projects are modern and diverse responses to similar requests. In both cases, the role of women is indicative of their influence in that particular historical context as opinion setters. The house is the locus of the female dominium, and as such expresses women's tastes and habits.

KEYWORDS

Maison de Verre. Villa Savoye. Modern houses. Modern architecture. Chareau, Pierre (1883-1950). Le Corbusier (1887-1965).

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RESUMEN

Le Corbusier y Pierre Chareau son notoriamente responsables de dos obras consideradas íconos de la Arquitectura moderna: las viviendas Villa Savoye y Maison de Verre. Son obras coetáneas, solicitadas por clientes con el mismo perfil socioeconómico - alta burguesía francesa - y con necesidades similares. Villa Savoye es una residencia unifamiliar, mientras Maison de Verre tiene en el mismo edificio la función de residencia y clínica médica: diferencia que, sin embargo, no interfiere en el centro del análisis propuesto. El artículo pretende, a través del examen de la relación entre cliente y arquitecto - Le Corbusier / Savoye y Chareau / Dalsace - plantear cuestiones acerca de la conducta profesional que el arquitecto moderno se arrogó a sí mismo: revolucionario de hábitos y costumbres. Las obras son respuestas modernas y diversas a peticiones similares. En ambos casos, el papel de la mujer es indicativo de su influencia, en este contexto histórico, como formadora de opinión. La casa, por ser el lugar del dominio femenino, expresa a los gustos y hábitos de la mujer.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Maison de Verre. Villa Savoye. Casas modernas. Arquitectura moderna. Chareau, Pierre (1883-1950). Le Corbusier (1887-1965).

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Le Corbusier e Pierre Chareau são notoriamente responsáveis por duas obras consideradas íconos da Arquitetura moderna: as moradias Villa Savoye e Maison de Verre. São obras coetáneas, solicitadas por clientes com o mesmo perfil socioeconômico – alta burguesia francesa – e com necessidades similares. Villa Savoye é uma residência unifamiliar, enquanto Maison de Verre compartilha as funções moradia e clínica médica na mesma edificação: diferença, no entanto, que não interfere no foco da análise proposta. O artigo busca, por meio do cotejamento das relações cliente-arquiteto - Le Corbusier-Savoye e Chareau-Dalsace -, levantar questões sobre a conduta profissional que o arquiteto moderno se arrogou: revolucionário de hábitos e de costumes. As obras são respostas modernas e diversas, para solicitações semelhantes. Em ambos os casos, o papel da mulher é um indicativo de sua influência, nesse contexto histórico, como formadora de opinião. A casa, sendo o lócus de domínio feminino, expressa os gostos e hábitos da mulher.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

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## MAISON DE VERRE<sup>1</sup> (1928-1932)

In 1928, architect Pierre Chareau was hired by Edmond Bernheim, a client he had worked for two years earlier, to renovate a three-storey property situated at Saint Guillaume, 7<sup>ème</sup> arrondissement, Paris. The property should be both a house to his daughter, Anna (better known as Annie), and a medical clinic to his son-in-law, Dr. Jean Dalsace. At Annie's request, Chareau had already manufactured the furniture for the young couple's home<sup>2</sup>, an apartment on the Boulevard Saint Germain. It can be said that the relationship between Chareau and the Dalsaces was based on friendship and common artistic and cultural interests.

Chareau starts the property renovation in association with the Dutch architect Bernard Bijvoet<sup>3</sup>. An early and crucial obstacle for the development of the studies for the building renovation arose with the impossibility of its complete demolition: the third and last floors belonged to a permanent tenant, who refused to leave the property, relying on legal support. The architects did not feel intimidated by the difficulties, and found an extreme shrewd solution: they left the third floor intact, supported by metal pilotis. The lower floors could be demolished. This structural solution enabled the redistribution of the space, both horizontally and vertically, changing the relation in terms of ceiling height, and in this way, a new floor was created.

To provide the tenant with access to her residence on the third floor, an independent staircase on the side of the internal courtyard of the lot settled the issue (Fig. 1). The two floors that had been demolished gave way to a new spatial organization, totally detached from the pre-existing one. Despite the limitations imposed by the lot and the remaining third-floor, Chareau managed to create a brand new building. The structural system implemented resulted in freedom and flexibility in terms of area: new external envelope, internal partitions and ceiling heights, represented a total different configuration from the old property.

A new logic of spatial distribution, in accordance with the mixed-use requirement was established: the couple's home and a medical clinic. Following a public-private hierarchical gradation, the program was presented as follows: on the ground floor: the medical clinic, the hall, and the hallway of access to the private house (Fig. 2); on the second floor: reception and social events areas, exclusively the social areas of the house, such as the grand salon, Dalsace's private office, Annie's private blue room, and the service rooms, kitchen, laundry and a dining area; finally, on the top floor, the intimate area, with bedrooms and their respective bathrooms (residents exclusive area). Schematically, the building was distributed as follows:

- Ground floor- public area: access to the private house and the medical clinic;
- 1st floor – semi-public area: social area and reception (house);
- 2nd floor – strictly private area: bedrooms (house).

It is curious to note that the choice of floor finishing materials, for example, also followed the same hierarchical order, gradually going from public to private.

1. Gray, rubber floor panels cover the public floors: the circulation area of the clinic, reception, waiting room, the entrance hall to the house, the main staircase, the grand salon.
2. Black ceramic floor tiles cover the semi-public areas: the circulation hall and the office, on the ground floor; the blue room (2nd floor) and part of the floor in the couple's suite (3rd floor).
3. Parquet: dining room and private circulation of bedrooms.



Figure 1: Maison de Verre. Front view: glass block panels that give the building the name by which it is known - entry access to the house-clinic. On the right side of the image, you can see the stairs that lead to the third floor: an apartment independent of the Maison de Verre.  
Source: Author, 2011.

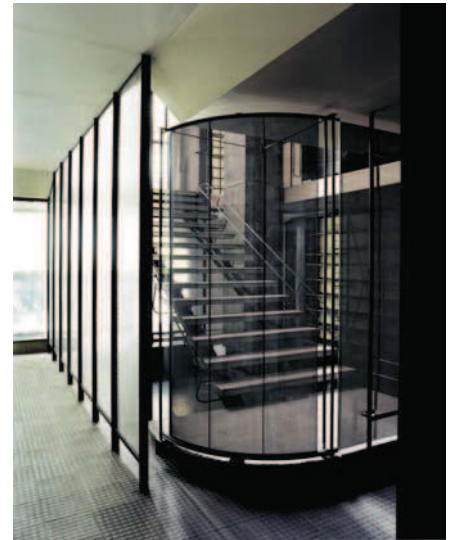


Figure 2: Maison de Verre. Hall of access. Glass panel and wire mesh cover the staircase that gives access to Dalsace's house.  
Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre



Figure 3: Maison de Verre. Main salon. The metal pillars and the bookcase are the protagonists of the grand social salon, double ceiling height.  
Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)



Figure 4: Maison de Verre. Tilting window frame in the laundry.  
Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr) - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr).

Figure 5: Maison de Verre. Grand salon - in the background, tilting vertical frame which regulates the ventilation of the room, Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)



Figure 6: Waiting room of the clinic, at the back of the house. Glass block panels combined with tilting frames. Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)



Figure 7: Main staircase that gives access to the grand salon of the house. Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)



Figure 8: Bookcase and mobile staircase that allows accessibility to the bookcase shelves in the grand salon. Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)



Figure 9: Maison de Verre. Sink and bidet, hidden by metallic screen panel. Source: Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de Verre - [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)



Figure 10: Villa Savoye.  
Southwest facade.  
Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 11: Villa Savoye. Car route towards the entrance of the house.  
Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 12: Villa Savoye. House entrance.  
Northeast face.  
Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 13: Villa Savoye. Entrance door.  
Northeast face.  
Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 14: Villa Savoye. Entrance hall.  
Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 15: Villa Savoye. Central hall.  
Source: Author, 2011.

Figura16: Villa Savoye. Grand social salon. Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 17:Terrace seen from the salon. Source: Author, 2011.

Figure 18:Villa Savoye. External terrace. Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 19: Kitchen. Large windows. Source: Author, 2011.

Figure 20: Villa Savoye. Bathroom of the master suite. Source: Author, 2011.



Figure 21 and 22: Villa Savoye. Southeast and southwest facades. Source: Author, 2011.

4. White ceramic floor tile: in the house, kitchen and service rooms; laboratory and clinical examination room.

In the private area of the house, it is also possible to notice a distinctive gender distribution: some spaces are reserved solely to the man and others solely to the woman. Those are spaces of private use (Dalsace's office and Annie's blue room), located on the 2nd floor, which communicate with each other and with other common use areas. Dalsace's office has two entrances, one private – a staircase that links the clinic directly to the office on the second floor –, and another through a sliding panel, which interfaces with the grand salon. Annie's blue room follows the same reasoning with two possibilities of access – one leading to the dining room and another which, through a retractable staircase, links her female intimate area to the couple's bedroom on the third floor. Communication between these rooms, of exclusive female and male use, is done, when desired, through a small passage, like a pulpit. This same sex partition is repeated in the couple's bathroom: one side was designed for the man, and the other, for the woman.

The work meticulously obeys the rules of coexistence, and typical daily habits of a young rich bourgeois couple in tune with their time.

The distribution of areas does not depend on the structure. Dividing walls, metal panels and large sliding doors internally organize the functions of the program. The metal pillars are not only part of the building structure; they also act as aesthetic elements: they are the leading actors on the “stage” of the wide grand salon (Fig. 3). The smooth walls are painted in black, whereas the ones with rivets are highlighted with an orange tone.

In order to solve the lighting of the property, Chareau resorted to the use of glass bricks<sup>4</sup>. The front facade, which gave access to the home, as well as the rear one, facing the inner garden, compose translucent plans, ensuring abundant light in the interior environment.

Inside the courtyard that gives access to the home-clinic, Chareau arranged the blocks in a broad L-shaped panel (Fig. 1 and 4).

The building was named after its impressive envelope: Maison de Verre (Glass House). In a bold manner, the architect, with the consent of the Dalsaces, used glass blocks manufactured by the company Saint Gobain in an unprecedented way: glass, which had been used until then as constructive material, exclusively in industrial and internal projects, was now used as the vertical envelope of a house. Although the company Saint Gobain did not provide warranty regarding the use of the blocks for the house's envelope, Chareau knew how to solve the problem satisfactorily. The fixing of the glass blocks was organized on a metallic checkered structure that guaranteed the impermeability of the facades.

The large glass panel offered diffuse lighting to the entire building: during the day, natural light invaded the property, and, at night, external floodlights, strategically placed before the front panel, provided the overall brightness needed for the activities carried out inside the house. The glass panel was, in fact, a great diffuser of light, although translucent, ensuring the privacy needed for a home.



In order to solve the ventilation problem related to the front glass facade, Chareau created a tilting vertical frame of large dimensions, which was inserted in the lateral of the grand salon of double ceiling height (Fig. 5): in that way, lighting and ventilation problems were settled.

The rear facade, to the inner garden, received glass bricks in its lower part, and a combination of movable iron frames in the upper part (Fig. 6). For the rooms of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Chareau once again innovated by choosing windows originally produced for train cars. He knew how to masterfully adapt standard industrial elements, transforming them into residential frames.

Despite the use of industrial materials, this project was not intended to be developed on a large scale. It met the specifications of the client. It was a modern appropriate home for the Dalsaces, a modern couple with living habits of their time, according to their social customs.

The vertical circulation was composed by a set of five stairs, which, besides meeting its strictly functional purpose, acted as elements of exceptional aesthetic importance. Structurally made with industrial materials – iron, sheet metal, bars – the stairs were designed specifically for the environments which they served.

Some of them are worth mentioning:

- The main staircase, of dramatic effect, leads the visitor to the grand salon (ground-1st floor) (Fig. 7);
- The ingenious tilting and retractable staircase connecting Annie's intimate room to the couple's suite (1st-2nd floor);
- The small staircase, which connects the medical office to the doctor's private office on the second floor, allows the removal of its treads for cleaning (ground-1st floor);
- And last but not least, the staircase on casters whose function was to allow access to the bookcase, and acts as an ornamental plastic element of the grand salon. (Fig. 8)

All aspects of the work were thoroughly detailed to ensure comfort to the residents, patients, visitors and staff. It should be mentioned that the participation of the famous craftsman metalworker Dalbert, implementing all the technical devices that support the building, was essential for the success of the work<sup>5</sup>.

Another basic premise of the project is flexibility. Virtually everything at the Maison de Verre is subject to change: both the layout of the space and the furniture itself. Mobility is the rule for this construction work.

Large sliding doors can transform the doctor's private office into an extension of the grand salon. A small mirror attached to the pillar located in the hall of access to the house and the clinic can be adjusted to the appropriate height of the patient and/or visitor. The bedside tables of the master suite are pivoting and rotate according to user's needs. The couple's bathroom cabinets are movable, as well as all bidets in the house which run on casters. Each bedroom has a sink and a bidet, hidden by a metallic screen panel that moves, times hiding the pieces, times showing them (Fig. 9).

According to Nelson<sup>6</sup> in his article on the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* n. 9, 1933: «*La maison de Chateau n'est pas immobile, elle n'est pas photographique, elle Cinématographie. Il faut des espaces parcourir pour l'apprécier – autre point de l'homme avec liaison d'aujourd'hui*» (CINQUALBRE, 2005, p. 28).

Another truly remarkable factor of the Maison de Verre concerns health issues: the number of bathrooms is noteworthy. All bedrooms have private sinks and bidets<sup>7</sup>. This excessive concern, within the context of the time, can perhaps be explained by the professional demands of the gynecologist.

Water and electrical systems are also arranged in a modern way: exposed pipes. The electrical wiring runs vertically with metal tubes strategically placed in the building areas; detached from any partition, they are independent elements. The water system is also fully apparent: it is a very innovative aspect for a residence.

The heating of the rooms occurs in the horizontal plane, between the floor slabs of the pavements.

In short, the house presents itself, in fact, like a machine.

However, for the perfect functioning of this building which presents a machine-like character, the social, intimate and professional costumes of its occupants were observed. The care in the level of detail in relation to the objects and the way space organization were linked to the demands of the clients. The couple's habits and their bourgeois way of life, in the specific context of the moment, were pre-established conditions of the project.

Everything in this work has its *raison d'être*: there was no choice without a pre-defined goal. From the entrance to the back door, everything was carefully studied.

Details present themselves already as one arrives at the Maison de Verre and faces a bell that allows for three distinct rings which vary according to their functions: clinic, house, services.

Upon leaving Dalsace's office, it is possible to notice that the door handle requires the doctor to recline himself in order to use it, as if anticipating a gentle way to say goodbye to his patients: details that attest to the perfect harmony between client and architect.

The Maison de Verre was the home to the Dalsace family for many years<sup>8</sup> and it was the result of the adaptation of the building to the needs of the residents. Three family generations have lived at Maison de Verre, despite the fact that their habits and ways of life have changed along time, and that technology has provided, more recently, myriads of electrical appliances and different electronics, which has required some readjustment of the electrical and hydraulic infrastructure of the building.

The Maison de Verre reflects, above all, Annie's wishes. It is worth emphasizing the importance of the woman's role in spreading modern values. Women, sensitive to modern social changes, were in tune with

innovations of comfort and convenience that technology could offer to the domestic environment, a place until then, of feminine domain. However, the aesthetics of the machine, usually linked to the male-dominated work environment, also seems to please the eyes of this new woman who occupies another place in society, more participative, freer and endowed with a more critical general attitude. A woman who works, practices sports, longs for independence and thus is more inclined to accept modern language, both in the Architecture and the furniture of her own house.

The Maison de Verre is a work of Architecture to be experienced for the enjoyment of the sounds emanating from its machinery, the textures of its materials, the shades and brightness of day and night, and the diversity of its colors. Sharing Julien Lepage's<sup>9</sup> vision, when he visited the work site in 1933, he said it would be difficult to present it through words and images.<sup>10</sup>

*« Il est particulièrement difficile, sinon impossible de donner, dans une publication par plans et par photos, une idée nette de la maison de verre. Deux choses échappent à l'objectif aussi bien qu'au crayon; l'espace, qui se développe sans cesse, qui change à chaque pas du visiteur, et les détails, qui rendent vivant ces espaces. »* (CINQUALBRE, 2005, p. 30)

It should be noted that the digressions about Maison de Verre aim at contextualizing the architect-client relationship. Chareau employed technological advances and industrial materials which until that moment have never been used in the construction of a house, to meet the demands of his clients in a unique and original way. He did not build a modern prototype. He built a modern and unique house<sup>11</sup>.

#### CHAREAU / LE CORBUSIER: COLLEAGUES IN THE SAME CAUSE

In the same year of the building of Maison de Verre, 1928, the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM – Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne), was established in La Sarraz, Switzerland. Among the 24 founders who signed the La Sarraz Declaration<sup>12</sup>, Le Corbusier and Pierre Chareau stood out as French representatives; Le Corbusier, as its organizer in France, and Gideon, in Switzerland. Again, it is worth pointing to the importance of the female presence: Hélène de Mandrot<sup>13</sup> (1861-1948), Le Corbusier's friend, was not only patron of the congress, but who has also actively taken part in the organization agreements and choice of guests for the event. An event that brought together only male architects was curiously sponsored by a woman who did not play a mere supporting role. The character of the 20<sup>th</sup> century new woman, as opinion maker, seems to have contributed significantly to the spread of the modern artistic premises. It can be said that art and modern Architecture were in line with the values that the woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century advocated: for a greater participation in society, whether acting professionally or not, a woman of new tastes and habits, endowed with her own opinions.

Hélène, as the promoter of the event which took place in her property, the castle of La Sarraz, shared the same ideas of the founders of the CIAM group:

Architecture should promote social reform. According to historian Mumford<sup>14</sup>, modern architects have gathered there, followers of French philosopher Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, convinced of the relevance of their actions as vanguard characters.

It is worth mentioning that Hélène was also Le Corbusier's client from whom she had commissioned a residence, Villa de Mme H. Mandrot, Le Pradet<sup>15</sup> in 1929. This work generated a strain in their relationship due to construction problems that were only settled later on. Nevertheless, Hélène remained an enthusiast of modern Architecture.

Interestingly, she was also Chareau's client, hiring him in 1925, when in Paris, for an interior decoration work<sup>16</sup>. He would have been her first mentor in modern art. To make a long story short, it can be said that Hélène publicly played a prominent role concerning the diffusion of modern Architecture ideas, although in private, her way of life did not correspond to modern spatial propositions, attested by the negative reception she gave to Chareau's work, first, and to Le Corbusier's, a posteriori. This dichotomy seems to be constant in this historical moment: some excitement in relation to modernity and at the same time difficulties in experiencing the new spatial propositions offered by the modern architects. The comfort provided by new appliances is easily accepted; however, the acceptance of the practicality and asepsis of modern environments demanded a long-term behavioral change. Disposing of "knick-knacks" is not a simple task.

Le Corbusier's activism on issues regarding the modernity is well known: he was the most prominent avant-garde articulator, a pamphleteer; in a less explicit or marked way, however, Chareau has also engaged in the defense of the Architecture consonant with its time, and therefore modern. That was how both of them also took part in the Modern Artists Union Association (UAM – Union des Artistes Modernes), founded in France, in 1929. UAM was born from a dissent group of the organization of the *Salon des Artistes Décorateurs*, in 1929, and proposed an aesthetics breakthrough, as they were pursuing current avant-garde trends. It gathered a significant number of architects and professionals linked to the decorative arts.

UAM was, in the words of Barré-Despond<sup>17</sup>, a group of inventors of everyday life who sought to express the art of living in accordance with their time. In fact, most modern architects of the time necessarily played a political role in defense of the modern cause, with gradual variations of involvement. Many of them, believed in Architecture as a means of social revolution, others, sought to reconcile modern plastic expressions with new standards of urban living.

In 1930, the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* is launched: a specialized publication that presented different lines of modern architectural thought. Chareau was part of the editorial board, and Le Corbusier contributed to various editions. The number 9 issue, 1933, highlighted Chareau's work of the *Maison de Verre* with pictures, sections and items, and the number 10 was especially dedicated to Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret.

Still on the relationship between the two architects, it seems significant the fact, already observed and exploited, that Maison de Verre influenced<sup>18</sup> Le Corbusier in the construction of a building called Molitor<sup>19</sup> (1931-1934). On the subject, Jacques Sbrigliio makes the following reference:

*The idea of "glass structure" is not specific to Le Corbusier; it appears throughout the whole history of modern Architecture, as witnessed in certain works of architects such as Mel'Nikov, Asplund, Ellis and Clarke, and Mies Van der Rohe, to name but a few. Most of these architects used glass facades in the design of exhibition centers, factories, or office buildings. Le Corbusier's originality lies in the fact that he applies this new technological design feature to private housing. At this time there was only one other architect in France – Pierre Chareau – who was experimenting with this type of design. In fact, the latter's famous house-clinic, built for Doctor Dalsace in 1931, is said to have greatly influenced the architectural style of 24 Nungesseret Coli. (SBRIGLIO, 1996, p. 16)*

### VILLA SAVOYE, LES HEURES CLAIRES (1928-1931)

This seminal work, called *Les heures claires* (Light Hours), already meticulously studied and described by numerous architects and historians, and in this case, whose interest is to analyze the architect-client relationship, needs no more detail. A simple lecture on the work is enough, given its exhaustive prestige, unlike the Maison de Verre, from which a greater account seemed necessary.

The most convenient description of the work seems to be Le Corbusier's own description, transcribed below from "Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning", and originally published in 1930:

#### *Plan of the Modern House*

*Let us finally take a look at this construction that is underway in Poissy, outside Paris.*

*Visitors, so far, go back, again and again, to the inside, wondering how this happens and they can hardly understand the reasons of what they see and feel. They can no longer find anything from what a house is conventionally like. They feel they are in an entirely new thing. And ... I think they do not get bored!*

*The place: a vast and curved lawn. The main view faces the North and therefore opposes the sun. The regular front facade would be, therefore, on the opposite side.*

*The house is a box in space, perforated all round, without interruption, by a sliding window. One does not hesitate to hold architectonic games of full and empty spaces. The box rises in the midst of meadows, dominating the orchard.*

*Under the box, passing through the pilotis, there is a two-way track for cars, in a fork shape, whose hook closes exactly under the pilotis, the house entrance, the hall, the garage, the services (laundry, linen room, servants' quarters). The cars run under the house, and either park or leave.*

*From the interior of the entrance hall a gentle ramp leads, almost unnoticed, to the first floor where the resident's life unfolds: reception, bedrooms etc. Receiving light and with a view of the regular contour of*

*the box, the different rooms meet radically over a hanging garden, located as a distributor of light and sun.*

*It is the hanging garden, over which the sliding glass walls of the hall and several other rooms open with complete freedom: so the sun penetrates everywhere, in the very heart of the house.*

*From the hanging garden, the ramp, which is now outside, leads to the rooftop, to the solarium. This, incidentally, binds through three flights of a spiral staircase to the wine cellar which is dug into the ground under the pilotis. This spiral staircase, a pure vertical organ, it falls freely in the horizontal composition.*

*Finally, verify the section: air circulates everywhere, light is in every corner, it penetrates everywhere. Circulation provides architectonic impressions of a staggering diversity which baffles every foreign visitor in the face of the architectonic freedoms afforded by modern techniques. The simple pilasters of the ground floor, by means of a proper disposal, cut out the landscape with a regularity that has the effect of removing any notion of "front" or "rear", or "lateral" of the house.*

*The floorplan is pure and meets the most precise needs. Its situation is the most accurate possible, in the harsh landscape of Poissy. (LE CORBUSIER, 2004, p. 138-139, our translation)*

At the end of the summer of 1928, the couple Pierre and Eugénie Savoye commissioned the architects in vogue, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, to build a cottage in Poissy, a town located thirty three kilometers from Paris. Pierre Savoye had quickly made his fortune by means of an insurance company. At his wife's request, he hires Le Corbusier to fulfill her wish. The Savoyes had known and appreciated Villa Church (1927), a residence built by Le Corbusier for their couple of friends Henry and Barbara Church, Americans and patrons of the arts (literature) in the town of Ville-d'Avray, west Paris. Incidentally, an expanding region in the northeast of the capital – Boulogne-Billacourt, Garches, Vaucresson, Ville d'Avray, Poissy, Mézy-sur-Seine – has attracted, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an interesting occupation of avant-garde trend.

The piece of land acquired by Savoye comprised seven acres of the old Château de Villiers, in Poissy. The project negotiations were almost exclusively attributed to Eugénie. The requirements of the brief itself were written by her in a letter<sup>20</sup> sent to the architects. In it, Eugénie detailed the preferences and wishes to be carried out in the project. Modern comfort was a key demand of the client which meant cold and hot water facilities, electricity, central heating, services area prepared for the existing new appliances, and sufficient garages for the cars – her husband's, conducted by a driver, her car, driven by herself, and the visitors' car, since the house was located in the countryside.

Other guidelines had to do with the possibility of a future expansion of the residence. Overall, the requirements basically did not escape the habits of a bourgeois family. For the ground level, she specified the presence of an entrance hall, a hallway, rooms, kitchen, child and guest rooms, two bedrooms for the maids – one for the janitor and another for the driver -, deposit, wine cellar and laundry room, where there would be an electric washing machine, exactly like that of Villa Church. Upstairs, the area was reserved for the intimacy of the couple – a large bedroom with a full bathroom and a boudoir (small parlor for female use). In the same letter, Eugénie also requested that the estimate of the work should be written in a very detailed way.

The first study (the first sketches are from October 1928) presented satisfied the clients, but the estimate exceeded Pierre's calculations. Several other proposals were made, with some variations regarding the first study. In April 1929, the final design was agreed upon and the works were initiated.

Despite Le Corbusier's account, classifying the couple as "open" to innovation and devoid of prejudices, their relationship was not successful. Le Corbusier reported, in his public presentations of the design of the house, that the clients were devoid of prejudice, neither modern, nor old-fashioned (in his words, the Savoyes were: "*clients dépourvus totalement d'idées préconçues: ni modernes, ni anciens*") (AMOUREUX, 2011, p. 13).

The work was completed in 1931; the effects of the economic depression of 1929 probably shook up Savoye's business, which amplified his discontent with the work, not restricted to its costs. In addition to estimate issues<sup>21</sup>, several construction problems emerged as a result of the technical failure of the Cormier construction firm in relation to the new procedures required for the building, and the architect's negligence before the micro-climatic conditions, i.e., the intense winds of the region. The wooden frames of the sliding doors without effective seal and their large sliding glass panels contributed to cool the inside of the house. Moreover, there were the water-proofing problems in the terrace slabs, allowing rainwater to infiltrate inside the rooms, making the house uncomfortably cold and damp.

The couple's complaints in relation to the thermal discomfort inside the house yielded an extensive exchange of correspondence between Savoye and Le Corbusier, from September 1936 to October 1937. Eugénie and Pierre complained in different letters: "*It rains inside the house*", "*We tremble with cold*", "*We take showers in the damp.*" These facts aggravated because of their child who had tuberculosis, a serious health condition. Pierre threatened to sue the architect. To avoid this situation, Le Corbusier sent, on October 31, 1937, a letter containing an apologetic speech on the importance of the house as a work of exceptional Architecture. These excuses brought little practical effect.

For the architect, the house was a benchmark; it was the expression that best exemplified the five principles of modern architecture<sup>22</sup>. Because of this, he used to take visitors to the work site:

*Let's consider, finally, this construction that is underway in Poissy, outside Paris. Visitors, so far, go back, again and again, to the inside, wondering how this all happens and they can hardly understand the reasons of what they see and feel. They no longer find anything of what a house is conventionally called. They feel they are at an entirely new thing. And ... I think they do not get bored!* (LE CORBUSIER, 2004, p. 138-139, [emphasis given])

Visits to the house, including the ones mentioned above (which had already happened even before the end of the construction works) were also the subject of Pierre Savoye's<sup>23</sup> claim during the year of 1937; According to Savoye, the architect did not fulfill their repair requests, and yet, sent visitors to the house.

Villa Savoye is a manifesto work of modern Architecture, exploited as an exceptional architectonic experiment, but, in fact, it did not meet its social function, such as being a single family house.

The feud between the couple and the architects was never settled. From 1937 on, only Eugénie and her son would sporadically return to the house, which served as a hay barn, was occupied by the Nazis, later by the Allies, and eventually abandoned. In 1959, Eugénie, already a widow and her son Roger<sup>24</sup> agreed to the expropriation of the property by the local municipality. The Savoyes, aware of the importance of the work, warned Le Corbusier on its probable demolition. Le Corbusier began an international campaign to save the building from destruction. The campaign succeeds and in 1964, the minister of culture, André Malraux, decrees its classification as a French historical monument.

Villa Savoye – defined by the author as a machine for living, a machine for moving, one that touches your heart – is a masterpiece of Architecture. In it, Le Corbusier could illustrate his theory, established in 1927, on the five points of a new Architecture: the use of pilotis, flat roof terrace, free design of the floorplan, free designs of the façade, and horizontal windows. (Figure 10 to 22)

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

With regard to the case presented, it is worth mentioning two aspects: the architect-client relationship from the perspective of domesticity, and the role of women as a driving force behind modernity.

Considering the first aspect, it can be said that the personal testimonies given by the clients of both works mentioned herein provide such a rich study material. The comparison between the experiences lived in Villa Savoye and at Maison de Verre entails a reflection on the performance of the architects.

In this way, it is possible to identify a harmonious relationship between Chareau and the Dalsaces. Requests, tastes and individual characteristics were duly privileged in the project. The private and domestic character of what was intended for a house was satisfactorily achieved. The same happened with the clinic: Dalsace's workplace corresponded to the functional particularities of a public place. Chareau designed Maison de Verre for the Dalsaces, a modern bourgeois couple.

In the case of Villa Savoye, although the client was inclined to modern avant-garde, the solution, imposed vertically, was not well received. Savoye's request seems to have been a pretext for Le Corbusier to apply his *five points of a new Architecture* in a residential project. It is undoubtedly a paradigmatic project. The Villa Savoye is an architectonic masterpiece, designed for a modern bourgeois couple.

Its constructive failures were nonetheless only the germ of the problems between client and architect.

The case of furniture at Villa Savoye helps clarify the discrepancies between the couple and Le Corbusier. While for the Dalsaces, Chareau developed almost all furniture for both the house and the clinic, in agreement with the wishes of the clients, in the case of the Savoyes, Le Corbusier had



difficulties promoting his line of tubular steel furniture. The decoration in Villa Savoye did not include the furniture designed by Le Corbusier and Charlotte Perriand, a clue about the “non- modern”<sup>25</sup> taste of the Savoyes.

To Le Corbusier, aware of the importance of his work manifesto, the photographic record of the building was necessary for its dissemination in modern journals. Anticipating the Savoyes’ decoration, Le Corbusier photographs the empty house, with no furniture. The articles published on the Villa Savoye in 1930, in the magazine *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* No.2 and *L’Architecte* No. 9, present images of the house completely devoid of furniture.

Both architects, Le Corbusier and Chareau, belong to a generation that believed in the advocacy and enlightening character of the profession. They formed a generation of architects who believed they had a pedagogical role to play; for them, it was necessary to cultivate the clients, make them able to exercise an “appropriate” judgment in relation to modernity.

It can be said that both believed in the same ideals, but with nuances: Le Corbusier, more categorical and ahead of his time; Chareau, closer to actual daily life.

To Chareau, Architecture should correspond to the present time, in line with artistic manifestations, and it should be a response to everyday life requests, “*Comme la musique et la peinture, l’architecture avec tout ce qui est s’y rattache de son temps*”<sup>26</sup>. In this sense, Maison de Verre perfectly expressed the wishes of his clients, especially Annie Dalsace.

Le Corbusier, in a more assertive and incisive manner, addresses the question of improvement of individual taste as the architect’s task or duty. The text *A Coat of Whitewash, The Law of Ripolin, 1925*, emphasizes this educational attribute of the modern architect.

*It would be extremely important, therefore, to make every individual a shrewd judge. The crusade for art has long been preached among people. Confusion. Art is everywhere on the street, which is the museum of the present and of the past. One must learn how to recognize it, and it will then become superfluous wanting to add another one to it. The individual, on the other hand, seriously lacks it. That is where this absence, multiplied by millions, creates a collective fact whose social consequences are serious: the abandoned homes. **It is to the individual that we should bring art, and for this, it is useful to provide him with judgment. The individual lacks judgment.*** (LE CORBUSIER, 1996, p. 189, our translation [emphasis added])

This demiurge character of the modern architect of imposing on his clients a way of living according to his will, as we have seen, resulted in a controversial experience. Villa Savoye is an architectural landmark. For the Savoyes, it is a building that had never been their home.

On this issue, the tale ‘*The Story of a Poor Rich Man*,’<sup>27</sup> written in 1900 by the architect Adolf Loos, provides a reliable picture of the, sometimes touchy, relationship architect-client<sup>28</sup>.

In this fictional tale, Loos ironically tells the story of the relationship between a wealthy bourgeois and a renowned architect whom he hires to bring art to his

home. The bourgeois' dwelling becomes, thereafter, his friends' object of greed, copied and published as a model in many fashionable magazines. The man becomes increasingly happy and honored with the recognition of its aesthetic refinement. He goes on studying the house because everything had its place there. But as time passed by, he became more and more tired of so much art and started to spend less and less time at his home. On his birthday, he was given several gifts. He called the architect for guidance on where he should place the beautiful gift his son had made for him at school. When he went to welcome the famous professional, the bourgeois became shocked at his reaction of indignation. The architect immediately inquired about the slippers that he was wearing. Well, those slippers had been designed and manufactured under the guidance of the architect himself, to be used exclusively in the bedroom, never in any other room. Therefore, they decided to continue the conversation in the bedroom, the right place to wear the slippers. There, again, the architect replied as if he had been insulted by his client's inquiries concerning his child's gift. For the architect, the house was full, making it impossible to acquire any kind of object, including presents from dear ones. For the bourgeois, the house was no longer a place of material and psychological comfort. It was a strange place, poor man!

It is interesting to draw from this story not the blunt criticism of the decorative excesses typical of the eclecticism of late 19<sup>th</sup> century, an issue repeatedly addressed by Loos, but the gap in the client-architect relationship, in which the professional wishes to impose a way of life through Architecture.

It also seems relevant to highlight another text written by Loos, "Architecture"<sup>29</sup>, from 1910, in which the author defends the idea that the residence shall correspond to the way of life of its present resident. According to his ideas, the residential Architecture could not be regarded as a work of art because art is revolutionary, whereas the house is conservative. Artworks show humanity new paths and future thoughts, while the house considers the present. For him, human beings love everything that provides<sup>30</sup> one with comfort, so the house meets a need and should appeal to its users, unlike the work of art that mustn't please anyone. Artwork does not respond to anyone; the house, on the contrary, responds to everyone. The artist, he said, is at his own service, the architect serves everyone in the community.

Loos points out that transformation in forms have arisen from new needs, from changes in the customs, and from new technologies; so therefore, tradition must be respected.<sup>31</sup> This idea probably was not shared by his avant-garde colleagues, who respected him.<sup>32</sup>

The client-work relationship, in case of Villa Savoye and Maison de Verre, clearly exemplifies the "educational" mission that modern architects assigned to themselves.

Finally, the second point to be highlighted concerns the female influence in the dissemination of modern values. Playing a supporting role, but no less significant, Annie Dalsace and Eugénie Savoye were the ones in charge of the negotiations regarding the construction works. Annie was a modern woman by definition, with her own choices; Eugenie was guided by the need to be in line with the artistic current of her time, and maybe not so much because of her

own convictions. Either way, they were the ones who contribute to the dissemination of the modern Architecture.

The leading roles of Annie Dalsace and Eugénie Savoye in the episodes, together with Dolly Chareau and Hélène de Mandrot were essential for the consolidation of modern principles in arts and Architecture.

It is the modern woman, with short hair *à la garçonne*, who leads a number of important social changes. The constant reference to the haircut is not only symbolic, but also linked to a number of behavioral changes: inclusion of women in the work environment, in the practice of sports, in the commitment to political issues, in a more intense cultural activity (painters, sculptors, decorators, architects, actresses, writers). This woman who displays a modern behavior is in tune with the artistic avant-garde: they were, in their time, what we define today as opinion makers.

It is significant that Le Corbusier<sup>33</sup>, with his artistic sensibility and sharp perception, had several times mentioned this revolutionary role played by women:

*The woman preceded us. She carried out the renovation of her outfit. She was faced with a dilemma: to follow fashion and therefore give up the contribution of modern techniques, give up modern life. Give up sports, a more material problem, to not be able to accept jobs that allowed her to have a fruitful participation in contemporary activities and earn her living. Follow fashion: she could not think of driving; or take the subway or the bus; she could not even act with ease in her office or store. In order to carry out the everyday building of her toilet – comb her hair, put on the shoes, button her dress – she would no longer have time to sleep. Then the woman cut her hair, her skirts and sleeves. Now she is bareheaded, with naked arms, and free legs. She gets dressed in five minutes. And she's beautiful, seduces with the charm of her graces, of which dressmakers decided to take advantage.* (LE CORBUSIER, 2004, p. 112, our translation)

In short, the architect-client relationship's comparison points to two significant aspects in the process of assimilation of modern values?? regarding the private area of ??the residence: the first one concerns the need for integration between professional and client, in the specific case, the female client; and the second indicates the importance of women as a driving force behind the dissemination of new customs, habits and tastes. Women formed a revolutionary clientele for modern architects.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Part of the formal and technical descriptions and part of the sensory impressions regarding the construction result from the visit made by the author, in July 2011. Visitors are not allowed to access the dormitories or to take pictures.

<sup>2</sup> The Dalsaces belonged to Chareau's circle of friends. In 1918, Annie (1896-1968) and Jean (1893-1970) got married. Living in an apartment on Boulevard Saint Germain, Annie decided to commission new furniture from the architect Chareau. She knew the Chareaus since 1905, when she started to study English with Dolly, Chareau's wife. They became friends and Dolly took Annie to modern avant-garde exhibitions. Under the original influence of her friend and intellectual mentor, Annie became a lover of modern art.

- <sup>3</sup> Dutch architect Chareau met in Paris, at 'the *Paris Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Art of 1925*', in which both had works exhibited. In 1926, they held their first joint work, a summer house, near Saint-Tropez, which belonged to Edmond Berheim, himself.
- <sup>4</sup> Chareau justifies the choice of glass as the most appropriate solution to ensure lighting conditions to the house: "*La façade translucide n'est pas pour employer le verre pour le verre, mais si on examine le plan de cet immeuble construit sur les fondations d'un ancien hôtel du XIIIème siècle (14 sur 14 mètres environ) et si l'on tient compte d'une hauteur normale d'étage et des fenêtres par lesquelles la lumière pouvait être distribuée, on se rend compte qu'un tiers de l'ancienne demeure était privé de lumière*" (CINQUALBRE, 2005, p. 39).
- <sup>5</sup> In relation to the partnership between Dalbert, the metalworker and Chareau, the historian Cinqualbre synthesizes it as a complicity between Chareau's inventiveness and Dalbert's know-how: "*Dès 1923, Chareau s'attache les compétences de Louis Dalbert, artisan ferronnier. De son entreprise sortiront tous les modèles de luminaires en métal et albâtre si particuliers et les fameux meubles en bois-métal. Inventivité de l'un, savoir-faire de l'autre, une complicité s'instaure entre les deux hommes*" (CINQUALBRE, 2001, p. 8).
- <sup>6</sup> Paul Nelson, an American architect, Perret's student, invited as a collaborator by the editor in chief of the magazine, Pierre Vago.
- <sup>7</sup> The health issue appears to have been a major factor in the project. In 2011, the architect, historian and curator of the Maison de Verre foundation, Mary Johnson, carried out her doctoral research that addressed the health aspects of the home (Mary Johnson's account, during a visit guided by her to the Maison de Verre). July 2011.
- <sup>8</sup> The Maison de Verre was closed during the Nazi occupation. After the end of World War 2, the Dalsaces returned to their house, remaining there until their deaths (1896-1968 Annie and Jean Dalsace 1893-1970). The house was later occupied by Annie Dalsace's granddaughter, Dominique Vellay.
- <sup>9</sup> Julien Lepage, alias of the German architect Julius Posener, contributor to the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.
- <sup>10</sup> In order to follow the coeval discussions about the construction of the house, vide texts *Un hôtel particulier à Paris, La Maison de la rue Saint-Guillaume* and *Observations en visitant*, which were originally published in 1933, issue 9 of the newly founded magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (first edition in November 1930), and compiled in a publication organized by Cinqualbre, (CINQUALBRE, Olivier. *La Maison de Verre, un objet singulier*. Paris: Jean-Michel Place éditions, 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> For an accurate critical analysis of the work, vide: FRAMPTON, Kenneth. "Maison de Verre". *Perspecta*, issue 12, 1969, p. 77-128, and also: FRAMPTON, Kenneth. "Maison de Verre as bachelor machine". *Labour, Work and Architecture*, New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2002.
- <sup>12</sup> The La Sarraz Declaration was signed by 24 architects coming from eight European countries on June 28, 1928: H. P. Berlage (The Netherlands), Victor Bourgeois (Belgium), Pierre Chareau (France), Josef Frank (Austria), Gabriel Guévrékian (France), Max Ernst Haefeli (Switzerland), Hugo Häring (Germany), Arnold Hoechel (Switzerland), Huibrecht Hoste (Belgium), Pierre Jeanneret (France), Le Corbusier (France), André Lurçat (France), Ernst May (Germany), Fernando García Mercadal (Spain), Gerrit Rietveld (The Netherlands), Alberto Sartoris (Italy), who also signed for Carlo Rava (absent), Hans Schmidt (Switzerland), Mart Stam (The Netherlands), Rudolf Steiger (Switzerland), Henri Robert von der Mühl (Switzerland), Juan de Zavala (Spain), Hannes Meyer (Switzerland) e Sigfried Giedion (Switzerland). (MUMFORD, 2000, p. 282)
- <sup>13</sup> On the relationship between Hélène de Mandrot and Le Corbusier, vide: BAUDIN, Antoine. *Le Corbusier et Hélène de Mandrot, une relation problématique*. Available at <[www.infoscience.epfl.ch/record/114354/files](http://www.infoscience.epfl.ch/record/114354/files)>. Access on: 24/04/2014.
- <sup>14</sup> "*CIAM was deliberately intended to create an avant-garde within the new, anti-traditionalist Architecture that began to develop in the early twentieth century. Its innovations had historical links to many earlier efforts to reform society through Architecture. Its overall inspiration can best be understood in relation to the ideas first put forward by Count Claude Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825), a French philosopher and student of society in the early nineteenth century. Saint-Simon believed that developments in industry and in the scientific understanding of human history and society were making possible a new social system based on universal human association. A former soldier, Saint-Simon argued that artists, whom he defined broadly as 'men of imagination', would serve society as its 'avant-garde', the forward part of an advancing army. Saint-Simon's influential combining of scientific analysis with political and artistic radicalism inspired many later 'avant-gardes', including CIAM.*" (MUMFORD, 2000, p. 2)

- <sup>15</sup> The construction presented several technical problems that put a strain in the relationship between Hélène and Le Corbusier. After completing the work in 1931, the house was flooded by rainwater. In the face of the complaints of the customer and friend, Le Corbusier deviated, but the many functional problems of the work were settled later. This dispute was documented by the correspondence between them. In response to Hélène, Le Corbusier wrote: “Il semblait que Mme de Mandrot, après l’acte de La Sarraz, qu’il a faite entrer par la porte d’honneur dans le monde de l’Architecture moderne, serait apte à habiter une maison moderne. Vous nous affirmez que non. Que diable alors» Letter from Le Corbusier to Hélène de Mandrot, Dec, 6. 1931. FLC H3(2)154 - Fondation Le Corbusier. (BAUDIN, 2011, p.157)
- <sup>16</sup> Chareau’s work would have led to the first conflict between his adherence to an innovative architectural model and the difficulty to adapt to it.
- <sup>17</sup> BARRE-DESPOND, Arlette. *UAM*. Paris: Éditions du Regard, 1986. p. 111-112.
- <sup>18</sup> A plausible speculation can lead us to believe that Le Corbusier, in walking route between his house (rue Jacob, 20) and his studio (rue des Sèvres, 35), would have had the opportunity to follow the progress of the building project of his friend Chareau (rue Saint Guillaume, 31).
- <sup>19</sup> Molitor, building located at rue Nungesser et Coli, 24. Work of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret.
- <sup>20</sup> Excerpt from the transcript of Eugénie Savoye’s letter sent to the architects in September, 1928: “Monsieur, voici des principaux détail de ce que désire avoir dans la maison de campagne. D’abord, je voudrais qu’il soit possible de l’a grandir dans quelques années sans que l’agrandissement abime la maison. J’y veux l’eau chaude et froide, le gaz, l’électricité (lumière et force) le chauffage central. Au rez-de-chaussé: 1 grande pièce de 12 m /7, 1 vestiaire, (lavabo-water), 1 cuisine, 1 office, 1 chambre à coucher 5/4, une autre chambre à coucher 4/4 séparées par une salle de bains avec water. A l’étage ma chambre 5/4 avec grand salle de bains water fermé, 1 lingerie et 1 boudoir de 15m<sup>2</sup>. Service: 2 chambres de bonnes, 1 garage pour 3 voitures, 1 logement de concierge et un logement de chauffeur, 1 débarras [...]» (AMOUROUX, 2011, p. 4)
- <sup>21</sup> The house cost twice the agreed price (AMOUROUX 2011, p. 14).
- <sup>22</sup> In the 5<sup>th</sup> conference entitled *The Plan of the Modern House*, presented in 1929 in Buenos Aires, Le Corbusier comments on the impression that the Villa Savoye evoked in the visitors. Vide: *Precisions on the present state of Architecture and City Planning*, first published in 1930. (LE CORBUSIER, 2004, p. 138). (LE CORBUSIER, 2004, p. 138)
- <sup>23</sup> Letter sent on September 3, 1937.
- <sup>24</sup> The property expropriation did not bother the Savoyes, for the ten years they lived there were not happy ones (from 1931 to 1940, exception made to the periods it was occupied by the Germans and then by the Allies during the war).
- <sup>25</sup> «La villa ne renferme ni prestigieuse collection d’œuvres d’art comme celle de Raoul La Roche, ni œuvres créées par le propriétaires comme celles d’Ozenfant ou de Lipchitz, ni même des meubles signés de l’architecte et de ses amis». (AMOUROUX, 2011, p. 13)
- <sup>26</sup> Transcript from an excerpt of the intervention by Chareau in 1926. Vide: BARRE-DESPOND, 1986, p. 378.
- <sup>27</sup> LOOS, Adolf. Histoire d’un pauvre homme riche. in: SARNITZ, August. *Adolf Loos, architecte, critique culturel, dandy*. Londres: Taschen, 2003.
- <sup>28</sup> The movie *Mon Oncle* by Jacques Tati, 1958, also addresses this issue. The film is set in the Villa Arpel, object of a burlesque parody of the modern house. The film was shot in a historic moment of eclipse of the modern movement and criticism towards the technological society. The conflicting relationship between modern works designed by the architect and the experiences of residents is hilarious and timeless.
- <sup>29</sup> Vide: LOOS, Adolf. Architecture. In: LOOS, Adolf. *Ornement et crime et autres textes*. Paris: Payot-Rivages, 2003, p. 95-117.
- <sup>30</sup> The bedroom must be comfortable, the home must be cozy. “La pièce doit avoir l’air intime, la maison, l’air habitable”. (LOOS, 2003, p. 115).
- <sup>31</sup> Vide Tournikiotis analysis on the text “Architecture” by Loos (TOURNIKIOTIS, 1991, p. 30-35).

- <sup>32</sup> In the last years of the 1920s, Loos moves from Vienna to Paris, where he would reunite with architects and artists such as Mallet-Stevens, Lurcat, Le Corbusier, Mondrian, Tzara, etc. In 1925, he visited the International Decorative Arts Exhibition, which was attended by Le Corbusier, Perret, Mallet-Stevens and Melnikov. As Tournikiotis commented: "One way or the other, he had always been among the vanguards of his time, but he knew how to differ, preserving his uniqueness till the end." (TOURNIKIOTIS, 1991, p. 19). His popularity in Paris, is prior to his stay in the capital. Several of his essays had been published in Paris in 1913, in the magazine *Cahiers d'Aujourd'hui*, and, in 1920, in the magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Le Corbusier also cited him in his writings: "*It seems fair to say: the more cultivated a people becomes, the more decoration disappears (It must have been Loos who has wrote it so clearly)*" (LE CORBUSIER, 1996, p.85). The cited reference might possibly be the following: "*L'évolution de la culture signifie suppression de l'ornement sur les objets d'usage courant.*" (LOOS, 2003, p. 99)
- <sup>33</sup> Interestingly, during his whole stay at 20, Jacob Street, Le Corbusier was in frequent contact with his neighbor, also a lessee, Natalie Clifford Barney, an American writer who weekly gathered at her house the modern intellectual elite. Artists, writers, poets, men and women gave life to the soirees of the Friendship Pavilion, a small temple situated in the internal courtyard of the building and in which Barney held her events.

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Mark Lyon, authorized photographer Maison de verre – [www.marklyon.fr](http://www.marklyon.fr)

**Editor's note**

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