

**LE CORBUSIER IN WORDS**

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## LE CORBUSIER BY WORDS

A few years ago (1987), the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris published a very interesting and complete book *Le Corbusier une encyclopédie*, which accompanied a superb exhibition organized by Jacques Lucan. In it, as an encyclopedia, and organized by letters, interesting topics related to the master were collected.

I am asked to write for *El País* something that could be similar to that, a text about Le Corbusier through only 10 terms. The words chosen: Freedom, Vanity, Box, Light, Actuality, Sobriety, Thought, Permanence, Disarray, Horror, are linked to proper names, many of them well known.

### NEWS (Raúl del Valle)

A very good young architect and professor at the Madrid School of Architecture, Raúl del Valle, brilliantly demonstrated in his doctoral thesis how much of Rem Koolhaas' work is, almost a century later, a reworking, point by point, of Le Corbusier's work. Amazing.

### PERMANENCE (Jorge Manrique)

When the passage of time and history are fading the profiles of many of the architects who were famous in their time, ("What became of so much gallant, what became of so much invention as they brought? "), the figure of Le Corbusier not only stands out, but remains. With a surprising timeliness.

### BOX (Antoine De Saint-Exupery)

I have always thought that the "Boite a miracles" [Box of miracles] proposed by Le Corbusier is nothing more than the little box where the Little Prince of Saint Exupery, through its three little holes, could see whatever he wanted, the whole universe.

### HORROR (Madrid)

Le Corbusier knew how to plan new cities, stupendous ones, with his head, with reason. And he planned them from the airplane. He would be horrified, appalled to see, and even more so from the airplane, the current recent cities (read the new Madrid) that have been planned with the ass, with speculation, and built with the feet, with corruption.

### VANITY (Richard Meier)

Being Le Corbusier the best architect in the world, he was aware of it and therefore very vain. And in his vanity he would have liked Taschen to have published a big, fat book for him, like the last one it has recently published on Richard Meier. With a beautiful foreword written by a good friend of mine.

## SOBRIETY (Diogenes)

A good architect friend of mine, who has no car, no television, no cell phone, no watch and lives happily, has a deep admiration for Le Corbusier. And he talks to me about how Le Corbusier has something of the Diogenes I was quoting, when, stripped of everything, he lived happily in his cabanon. Because the same sobriety with which he made his architecture, he practiced in his personal life.

## THOUGHT (René Descartes)

"Je pense donc je suis" [I think therefore I am]. This rationality, better than rationalism, will mark all of Le Corbusier's thoughtful and well thought-out architecture. An architecture that moves our heart through our head.

## DESALIÑO (Antonio Machado)

That imperfection or that slovenliness, "clumsy dresser dressing" proclaimed by Machado, is something patent in all the work of Le Corbusier. With a radical beauty capable of assuming imperfection.

## LIGHT (Ronchamp)

Le Corbusier spoke ad nauseam of Architecture as "the wise, correct and magnificent play of volumes under light". A light in continuous and slow movement capable of tensing the space for men. As he did in the Ronchamp Chapel and in so many of his buildings.

## FREEDOM

Le Corbusier puts up through his works the freedom in architecture, both in ideas and in the forms that materialize those ideas. Always hand in hand with reason. Always dominating Gravity, the gravitational forces consubstantial with the constructive fact. Always working with light, the most luxurious material of Architecture that is given to us for free.