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L'Ensemble et l'Unité: a tale of 2 apartments.

(Monique, Dominique and her architects.)

Moment & situation

There it was.

That view, onto the Mediterranean sea and the ferries that link Marseille to Algiers, slowly entering or leaving the harbor.

That round table, dressed in a faded napkin, on which Monique had carefully placed 5 fruits in a centered porcelain bowl, next to spectacles indicating a possibility of different perspectives for those willing to confront an insisting setting sun.

Yet we came to realize that it was more than the combination of an impressive view and well-positioned furniture, more than the



but had been abandoned for hygiene reasons. She doubts that claim. The archaic system, a cast-iron hatch linked to a large pipe, enabled



Monique turns left to the kitchen. "I didn't clean the windows"



The urban genius has no effect if local domestic demands are not



such a buanderie facing the sea, recessed in a loggia. This layout made it possible for clothes to dry quickly, but above all to manage these household tasks in the most generous of conditions.

Yet it ultimately led many (new) owners to use the space differently, and drastically change the layout of the apartments. The sacrifices of gentrification.

Opposite to the kitchen door, a second door gives access to one of the three bedrooms. The loggia can thus act as a second circulation, parallel to the night hall. A disposition that enables additional usage scenarios of the apartment.

Distributing flyers for Macron

At first Monique was reluctant to our meeting, and skeptical about an article on her or her apartment.

She has become rather busy, and rather political recently. She sees herself obliged to prevent Mélançon from coming to more power. Apart from the radicalism of his positions, she asserts that the ideas have been tested, and failed, and that now we have to move on.

And so tomorrow, she plans on distributing flyers for Macron, at a nearby school.

A pile of blue “la république en marche” handouts await patiently next to the entrance door.

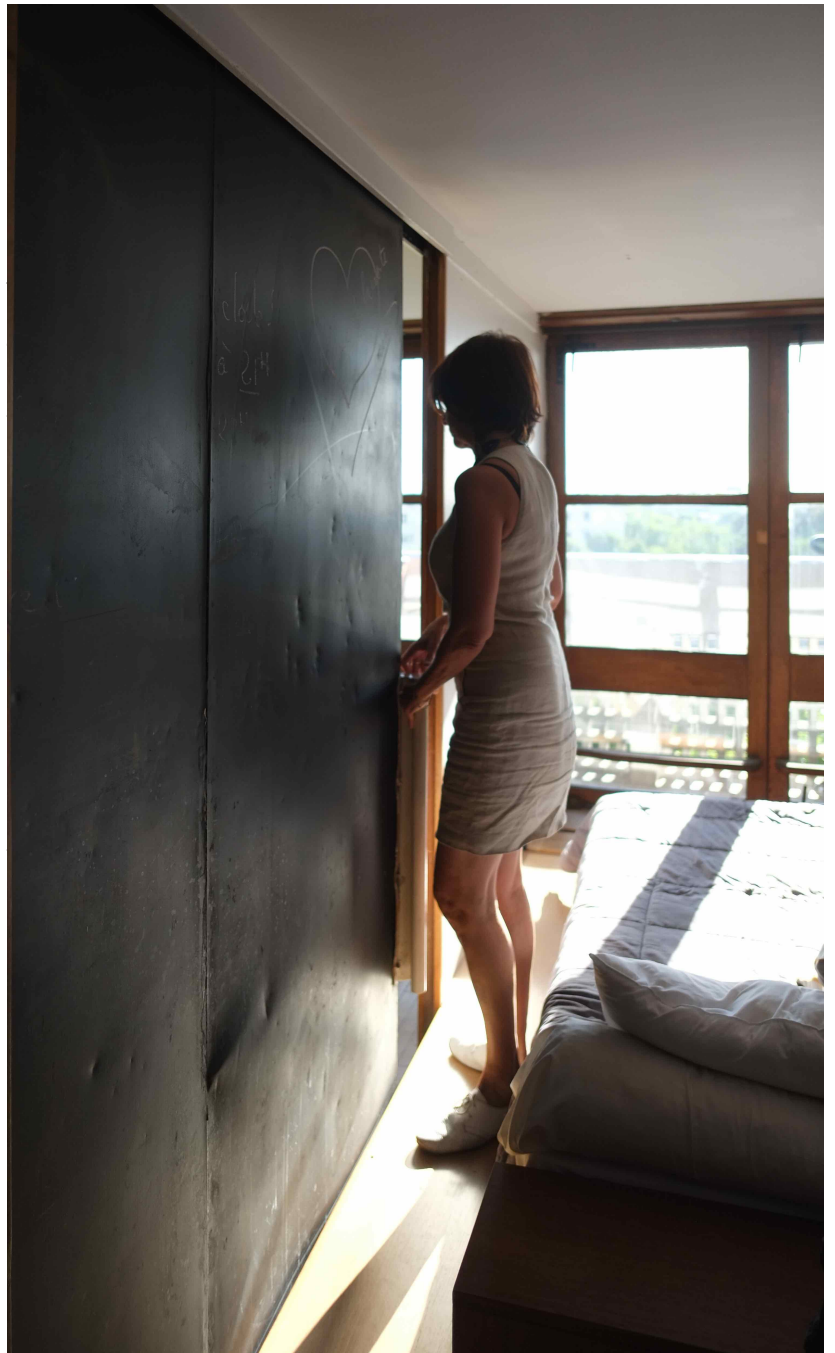


According to Monique, space becomes the true luxury in a non-luxurious dwelling.

Everything feels square

This capacity is made possible as much by the size of the dwelling, as by the dimensions, proportions and organization of the different spaces.

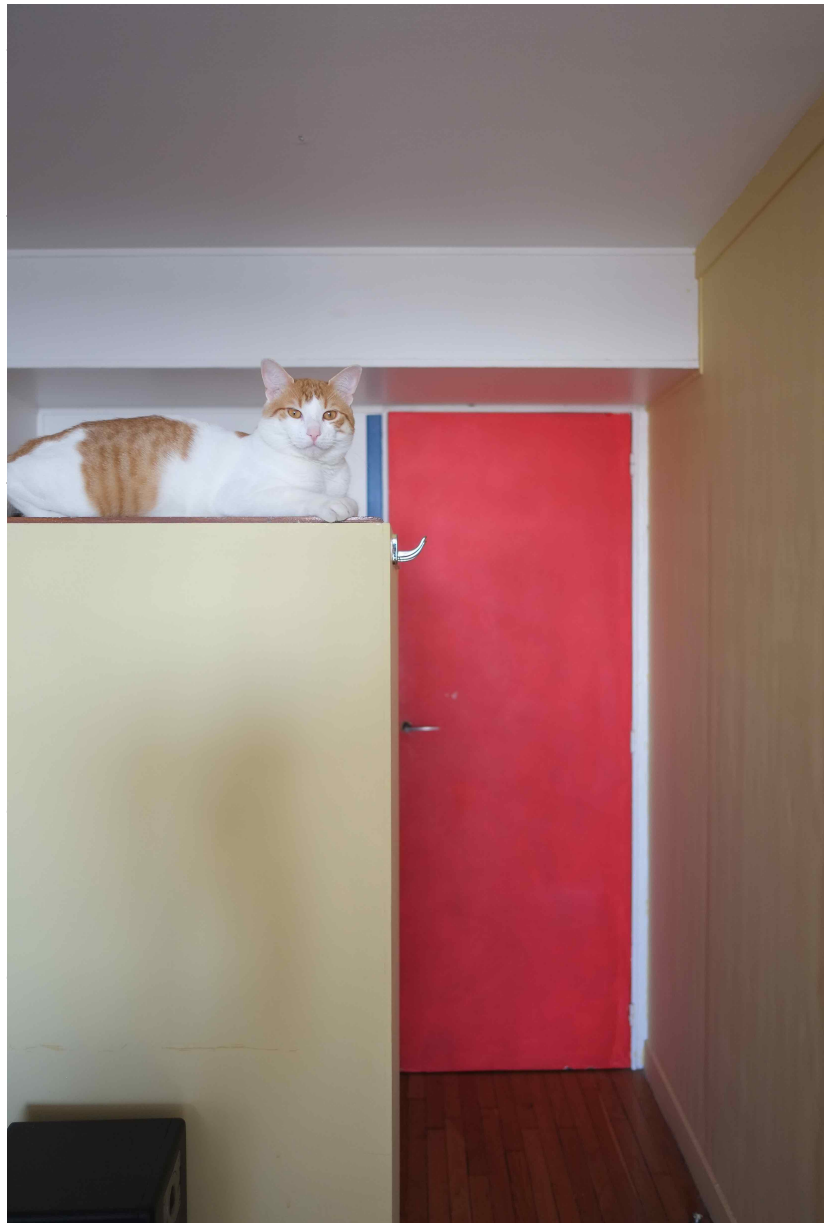
Just as on the urban scale of the ensemble, upon entry in the



He who did not draw for the pilot but for the pedestrian, seems to have considered the domestic sequence as much as the urban structure.

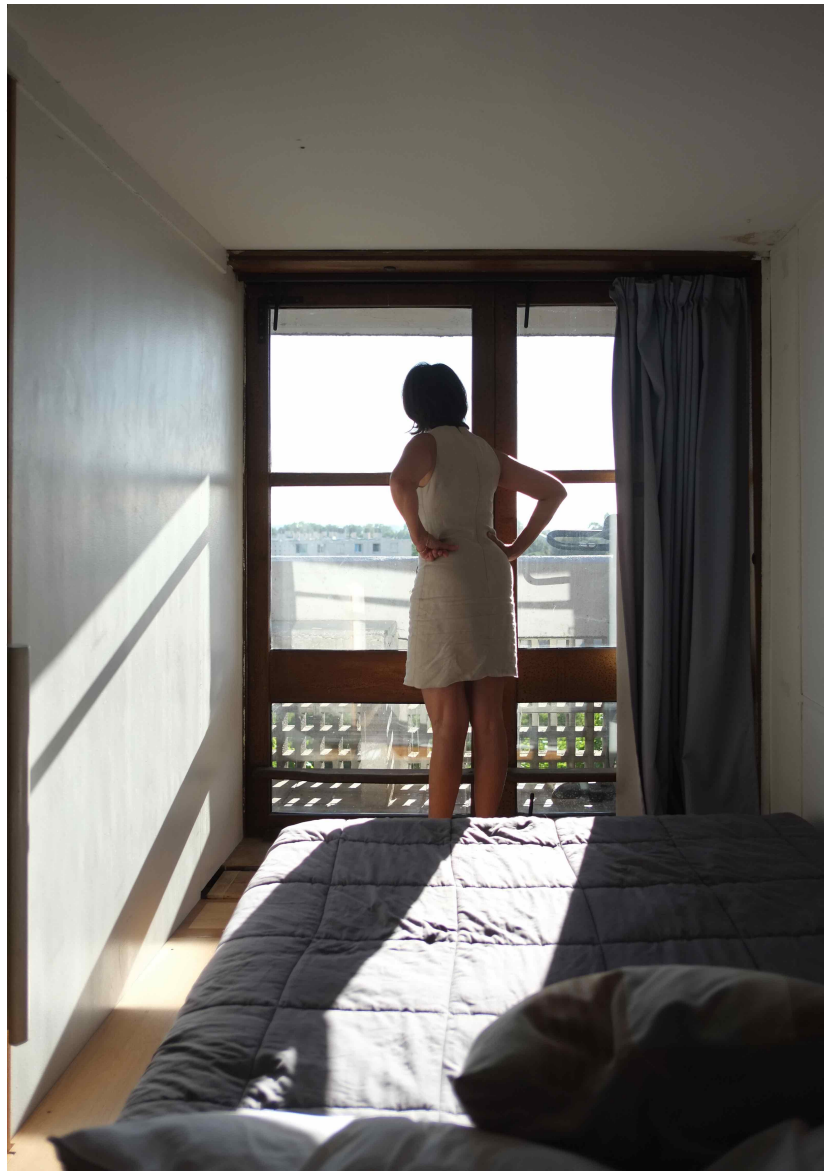
The sensitive reading of domestic practices and the humble architectural interpretation of those diverse applications and behavior patterns, makes Monique's Pouillon apartment an inspiring example of a kind of sustainability. The architect chose not to project a model lifestyle. Pouillon's proficiency lies in not venturing into prophecy.

His system; the structural grid, the building depths, the spaces' dimensions and proportions along with it's materialization, consisting



system, distributing more or 2 apartments per floor, and increasing both building and maintenance costs. Furthermore, the distribution of apartments into a multitude of single blocs, even if part of a larger urban whole, splits the rather considerable ensemble population into small fractions of individuals, who will not benefit of additional, shared services or commodities.

The architect, who was briefly a member of the communist party, before renouncing in a violent way, appears to dodge all form of doctrine, of political dogma. What counted was to build a critical mass of dwellings, fast, cheap, better. The lack of ideological concept for collective and community, other than the spatial quality of the ensemble, might indicate an opportunistic stance to make the project politically feasible. But as it came to existence, this lack still makes the project, La Tourette as a place, as a home, appealing to the broadest range of citizens, as political animals, able to afford it.

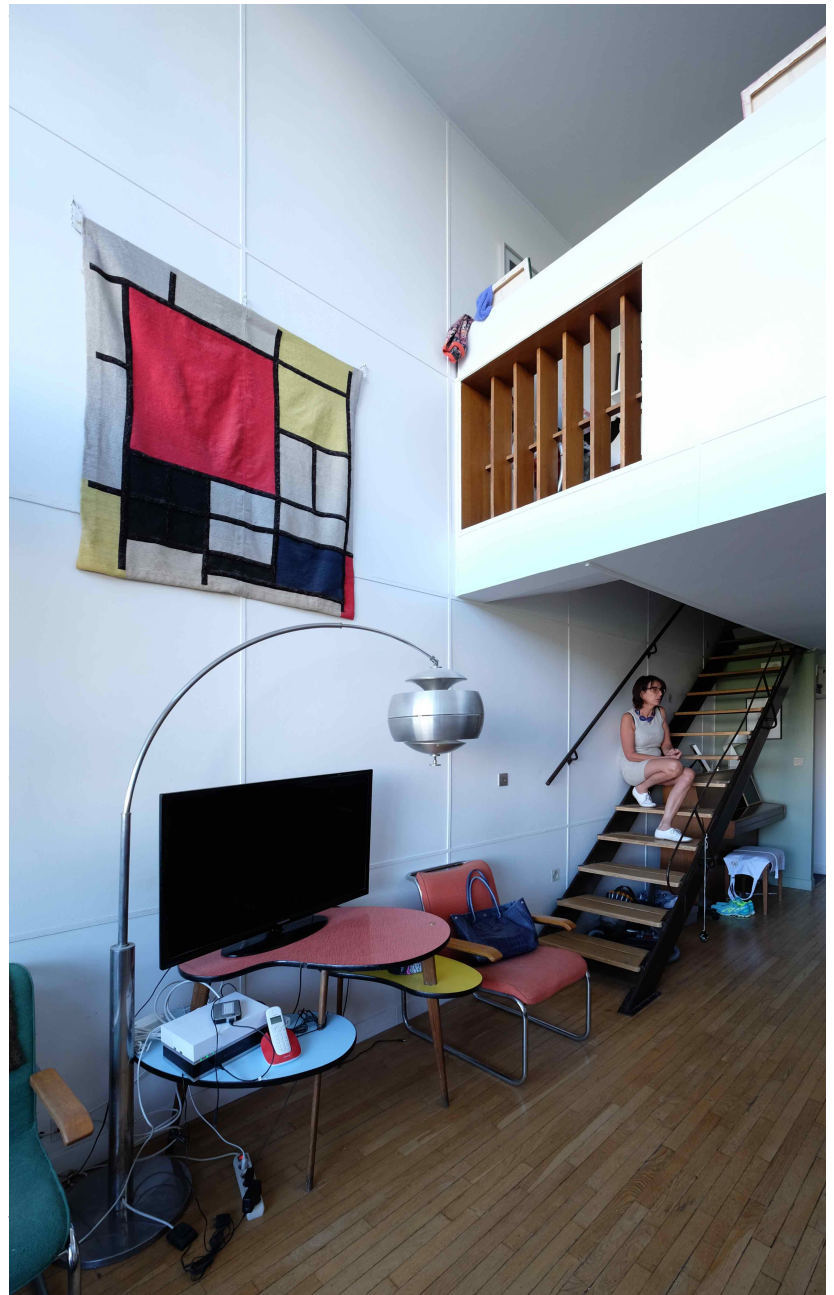


She just came back from a weekend in Syracuse, where she was shocked by the negligence by which people deal with historic monuments. "When I see how people are harassing me here for a double-glazed instead of a simple-glazed window!"

Dominique is the owner of the Hotel Le Corbusier as well as an apartment on the second floor. She arrived 14 years ago, without any knowledge nor interest for Le Corbusier. Now, she is one of his greatest admirers and advocates.

strange familiarity, architecture and emancipation

"Why is it working so well? Because the human being was his core concern. Beyond housing, he proposed a lifestyle. He liberated the women! The soul of an apartment is the woman. It is the family. He



The apartment is dissected down to its smallest details.

Exhibits of evidence:

the ice and groceries box at the entrance, the door which opens left in order to veil a part of the kitchen to the entering guests, the piece of furniture between the kitchen and the living room high enough to hide the working surface but low enough to let the housewife participate at the discussion, the stairs easy to walk up and down without having to watch one's steps, the fixed changing table with drawers one can close with the knees, the children's shower with the switch on the exterior ensuring control on the duration of the shower...



successful and perfectly cut it doesn't need laces or flounces. To understand and feel it, one must live in it. That's why despite the constant advice to turn her hotel into a luxury boutique one, she resists: "I want this place to remain accessible to everybody. To experience Le Corbusier's spaces shouldn't be a luxury, it is a necessary experience for so many young architects. You cannot imagine my joy when I see a Japanese student going into raptures when he discovers his cellule!"

She demonstrates the sliding door between her guest-room and her son's bedroom. We notice the hearts drawn with chalk on the door as she pulls it open. Her son must be desperate attempting to study for



Contemporary societal shifts affect the project, which aimed beyond pure architecture. The prophesized domestic dematerialization might make the original apartment layouts more contemporary and coherent to daily life again, while the current uberisation clashes with the collective and several of the implemented functions.

Social condenser

Inside an apartment community life is facilitated too; children and parents both have their territories. Her son, preparing his baccalaureate upstairs, bursts into the living room, provoking a



our visitors can have their independence and a good quality service. It is just more simple and comfortable for everybody."

A visionary take on contemporary questions of property and the benefits of sharing.

We're halfway out of the apartment. Dominique gets a call from the Hotel and rushes back to her fridge to check if she has some spare cheese to bring up to the kitchen.

We try to keep the cat in. Anecdotic detail: the doormat is recessed in the hardwood floor. The cat doesn't care. We leave.

"Look, one more wonder. The dark atmosphere produced by the soft







