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## Le Corbusier: Swiss modernist architect

"Le Corbusier" is the pseudonym for the architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (1887-1965), who was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds in French-speaking Switzerland. He is considered one of the pioneers of modern architecture which he influenced significantly through his key works, including "Towards an Architecture".

His designs are characterised by lifting the bulk structure of the building off the ground, a free façade and open floor plan, long strips of windows which connect the inhabitants with the surrounding environment, and a flat roof comprising a roof garden to replace the space taken up by the footprint of the building.



The Villa Savoye in Poissy

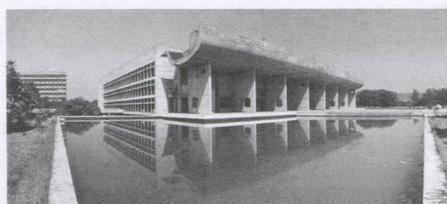
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:VillaSavoye.jpg>, Valueyou (talk), [GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2](#)

The modernist era broadly embraces the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the exact definition of when it started and ended is widely debated. It was triggered in a time of huge political, societal and technological change and the transition of the Western world into the industrial and urban age, and was to a significant degree influenced by the horrors of World War I.

At the heart of modernism was the basic rejection and revision of all traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organisation and daily life through the application of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge and technology.

In the spirit of modernism, Le Corbusier designed many stand-alone buildings for which he received great acclaim (see Villa Savoye above).

However, his architectural vision was much bigger and extended to urban landscapes at large.



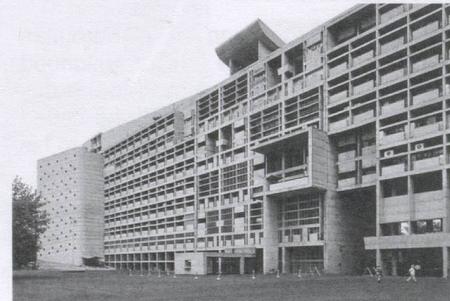
Assembly building, Chandigarh, India

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Palace\\_of\\_Assembly\\_Chandigarh\\_2006.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Palace_of_Assembly_Chandigarh_2006.jpg), duncid, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic](#)

In particular, Le Corbusier conceived a scheme for a "Contemporary City" for three million inhabitants. This included a group of sixty-story cross-shaped skyscrapers set within large, rectangular, park-like green spaces. At the center was a huge multilevel transportation hub, including buses and trains, highways and on top, an airport: Nothing short of science fiction!

These later forages into urban design drew major criticism due to the isolation and lack of connectivity between communities, as well as the severity of the designs.

His urban architecture was often labelled "brutalist", from the French *béton brut*, or "raw concrete", a phrase used by Le Corbusier to describe the poured board-marked concrete with which he constructed many of his post-World War II buildings.



Secretariat, Chandigarh, India

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Secretariat\\_Chandigarh.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Secretariat_Chandigarh.jpg), Sanyambahga, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0](#)

Despite creating many landmark modernist architectural buildings and schemes throughout the world, Le Corbusier spent the last years of his life in a tiny cabin in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, southern France. This was located next to one of his most favourite modern villas, not created by himself, but his contemporary, Irish furniture designer Kathleen Eileen Moray Grey whom he greatly admired. For many years he tried to purchase her villa - without success.

It was here he died whilst swimming in the sea, far away from his native La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Sources: [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toward\\_an\\_Architecture](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toward_an_Architecture), [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/modernism](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/modernism), [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_Corbusier](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Corbusier)



Le Corbusier's cabin at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cabanon\\_Le\\_Corbusier.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cabanon_Le_Corbusier.jpg), Tangopaso

### Le Corbusier Quotes

- ☺ Space and light and order. Those are the things that men need just as much as they need bread or a place to sleep
- ☺ The home should be the treasure chest of living.



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