

Keitelman Gallery

LE CORBUSIER BY LUCIEN HERVÉ

Opening: June 6th, 2013, from 6 to 9 pm

Exhibition: June 7th – July 13th, 2013

Opening hours: Tuesday –Saturday, 12:00 – 6:00 pm

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1949 proved to be a milestone year for Lucien Hervé.

On the advice of Father Couturier (a Dominican promoter of modernism in French churches, a friend of the arts and artists and the chief editor of the review *L'Art Sacré*), Lucien Hervé travelled to Marseille to make a photo report on le Corbusier's "Unité d'Habitation [housing complex]" for a magazine.

Hervé quite impressively took 650 photographs of it in a single day.

But on his return, none of the pictures was taken up by the editor of *Plaisir de France* who had commissioned them. Lucien Hervé thus decided to mail a duplicate to Le Corbusier's office. Two days later, he received a letter from the architect saying: "You have the soul of an architect, come and see me quickly. For 40 years I've been looking for a photographer able to express architecture".

Rarely in the history of photography have an architect and a photographer worked with each other so closely, to such an extent that it has given rise to a distinct photographic language.

Not only can the architect's perspective be felt in the photographer's eye, it also inspired Hervé aesthetically speaking. At the time, Le Corbusier was a leading expert in his field and exercised great influence over his colleagues. The impact of his "Unité d'Habitation" left a strong impression on a whole generation.

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It is sometimes difficult to say which of the two artists responds to the other, insofar as Hervé developed not a mere documentation activity, but a real photographic art entering into dialogue with architecture and with the specific architects he chose to work on.

Lucien Hervé and Le Corbusier worked together until the architect's death in 1965.

Adapted excerpt from *Les deux modernismes architecturaux de Lucien Hervé*, by Barry Bergdoll, art history professor and chief curator of the architecture department at the MoMA in New York City.

An exhibition of Lucien Hervé's photographs, entitled "L'œil de l'architecte [The Eye of the Architect]" was presented in 2005 at the CIVA in Bruxelles, curated by Avi Keitelman and Pierre Puttemans. A catalogue was published on the occasion.

In September 2010, Keitelman Gallery presented "Sculpteur d'Images [Sculptor of images]", an exhibition commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Lucien Hervé's birth.