

Le Corbusier *Untitled*, 1937

By Mathilde Gubanski



“It’s in the practice of the visual arts that I found the intellectual vitality for my urban planning and architecture” Le Corbusier

LE CORBUSIER
Untitled, 1937

Mixed media on paper
20 x 30 cm / 7.8 x 11.8 in.

Le Corbusier (1887-1965) (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris) was a Swiss architect, artist and writer, who was naturalized French. Although he is famous primarily for his architecture, his works as an artist were essential for his creative process.

The synthesis of the arts

The first fundamental encounter in the visual arts was in Vienna with Gustav Klimt. Le Corbusier then worked with Amédée Ozenfant, with whom he developed *Purism*, and also with Fernand Léger.

Le Corbusier painted and drew every day. His visual creations are simultaneously works of art in themselves, which he exhibited regularly, and studies for architecture projects, wall paintings, sculptures, stained glass windows and tapestries. Le Corbusier was a multi-faceted artist for whom the concept of the “synthesis of the arts” was fundamental.



FERNAND LÉGER

Projet de décoration murale, 1936

Mixed media on paper
30 x 50 cm.

Centre Pompidou, Paris

Years of research

The work from 1937 on view at the gallery is interesting because it can be placed at a transitional time in Le Corbusier's work. In fact, after *Purism* (1918-1928) and the *Objects of poetic reaction* (1928-1932), Le Corbusier spent the 1930s in a period of reflection and study that led to mural paintings during the 1940s and then *Brutalism* in the 1950s.

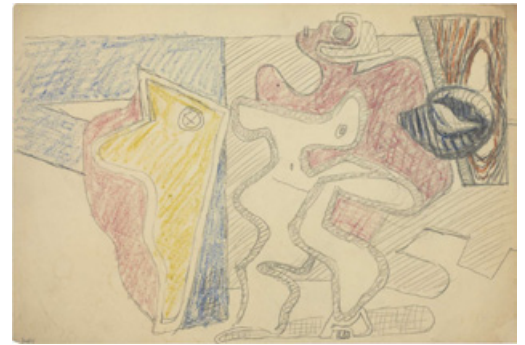
During the 1930s, Le Corbusier thus experimented systematically, especially in relation to female bodies that became deformed, then took on geometric forms and were recomposed. Le Corbusier was by then already an architect with an international reputation.

The artwork presented at the gallery shows two figures in front of a white door that opens into a black space. The architect is therefore present in this work and contributes an effect of perspective. The bright colours which were typical of the previous period of *Objects of poetic reaction* are also present. The wood stump shown geometrically on the left is also an inheritance from this period during which Le Corbusier gathered objects from nature.

The double figure

Here Le Corbusier has experimented with drawing outlines in a single gesture inspired by Matisse. This process was later called the "marriage of contours". Le Corbusier then drew in a single line the outline of two objects or two female figures. He has experimented with the expression of volume, not only by contrasting light and dark, but also by opposing two coloured surfaces. His experiments caused him to use cut out sheets of paper, again following Matisse's example.

The work of 1937 is part of a series of studies around the theme of the *Figure in front of a White Door*. It shows the experimental character of this period in Le Corbusier's art. A few works from this series are now in the Fondation Le Corbusier.



LE CORBUSIER
Étude pour «Figure devant une porte blanche», c.1937
Mixed media on paper
21 x 31 cm.
Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris

This experimentation with the double figure, the outline in a single gesture and flat areas of colour were materialized in the 1950s in easel pictures, murals and tapestries.



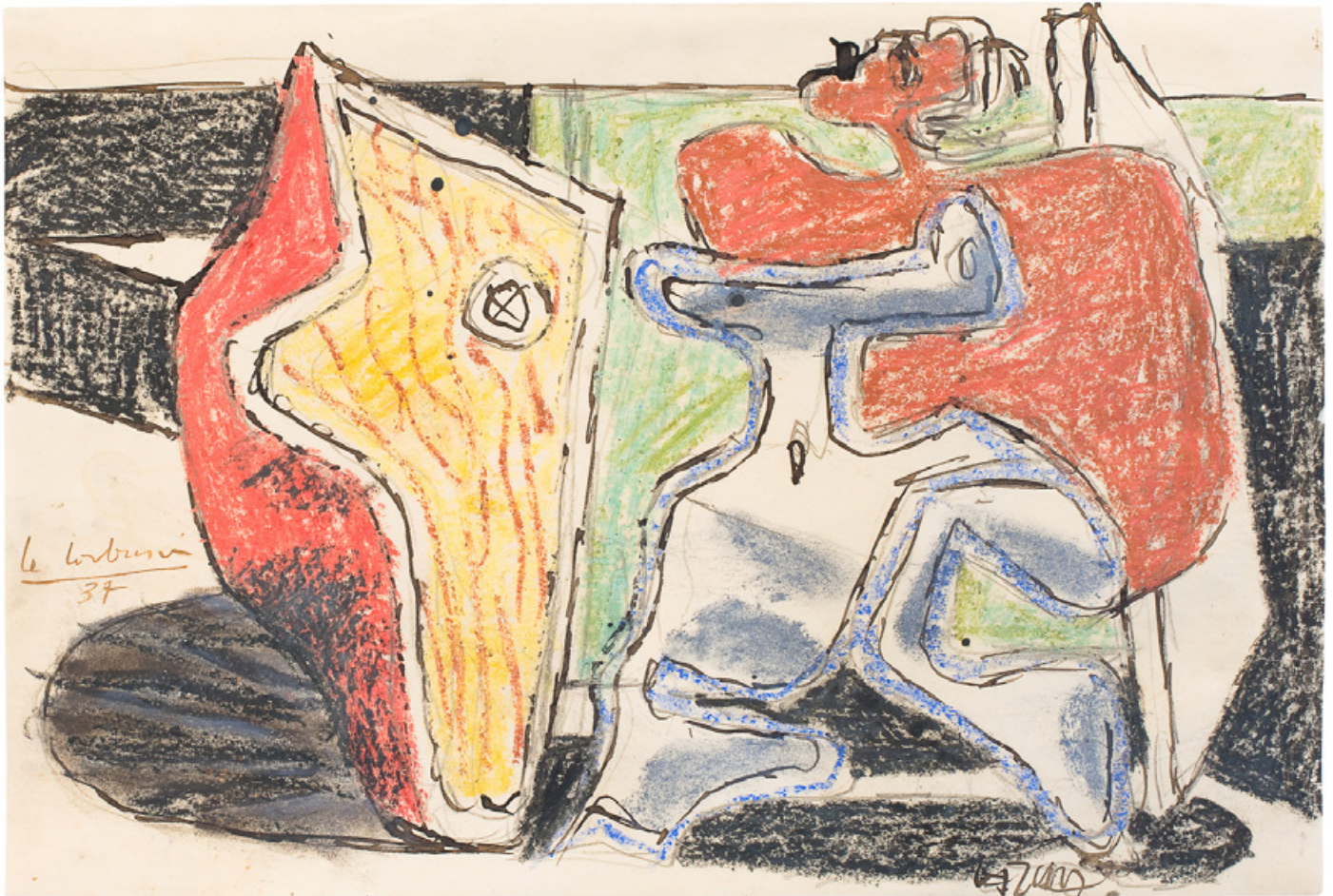
LE CORBUSIER
Deux figures, 1947
Oil on canvas
81 x 100 cm.
Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris



HENRI MATISSE
Le Luxe I, 1907
Oil on canvas
210 x 138 cm.
Centre Pompidou, Paris



LE CORBUSIER
Étape pour le «Mural de Cap Martin», 1937
Gouache and watercolour on paper laid
down on cardboard
21 x 31 cm.
Centre Pompidou, Paris



LE CORBUSIER
Untitled, 1937
Mixed media on paper
20 x 30 cm / 7.8 x 11.8 in.

**“I would rather draw than talk. Drawing is
faster and leaves less room for lies”
Le Corbusier**