

-81

Five pictures of Maison La Roche, by Rex Martienssen, March 1938

ROGER MIRALLES. These pictures were taken on the second visit that Rex Distin Martienssen, the South African architect (1905-1942), made to La Roche House. The first visit took place the 9th January 1934 while he was touring in Europe, coming from Greece. A note with a hand made plan by Le Corbusier and a Martienssen's sketch witness this visit just five days before the first meeting of the two men, at 35 Rue de Sèvres.

Four years later, on Tuesday the 1st March 1938, the Martienssens' (Rex Distin and his wife Heather) visit La Roche House. There are no documents at the *RDM archives* (Witwatersrand University) testifying that Le Corbusier wrote a note to the owner of La Roche, but he might did it because Heather's diary says "Corby... gives Rex letter to La Roche..." Actually, the owner was out but the *concierge* let them in. Rex and Heather were on their six month honeymoon tour in Europe -they married the 10th December 1937-. The day before they visited Le Corbusier at 24th Rue Nungesser-et-Coli with their "Poppie", a brand new 1.5 litre MG that they rented one month earlier in London. It was the third meeting of Rex Martienssen and Le Corbusier and chronics says that there was another one.

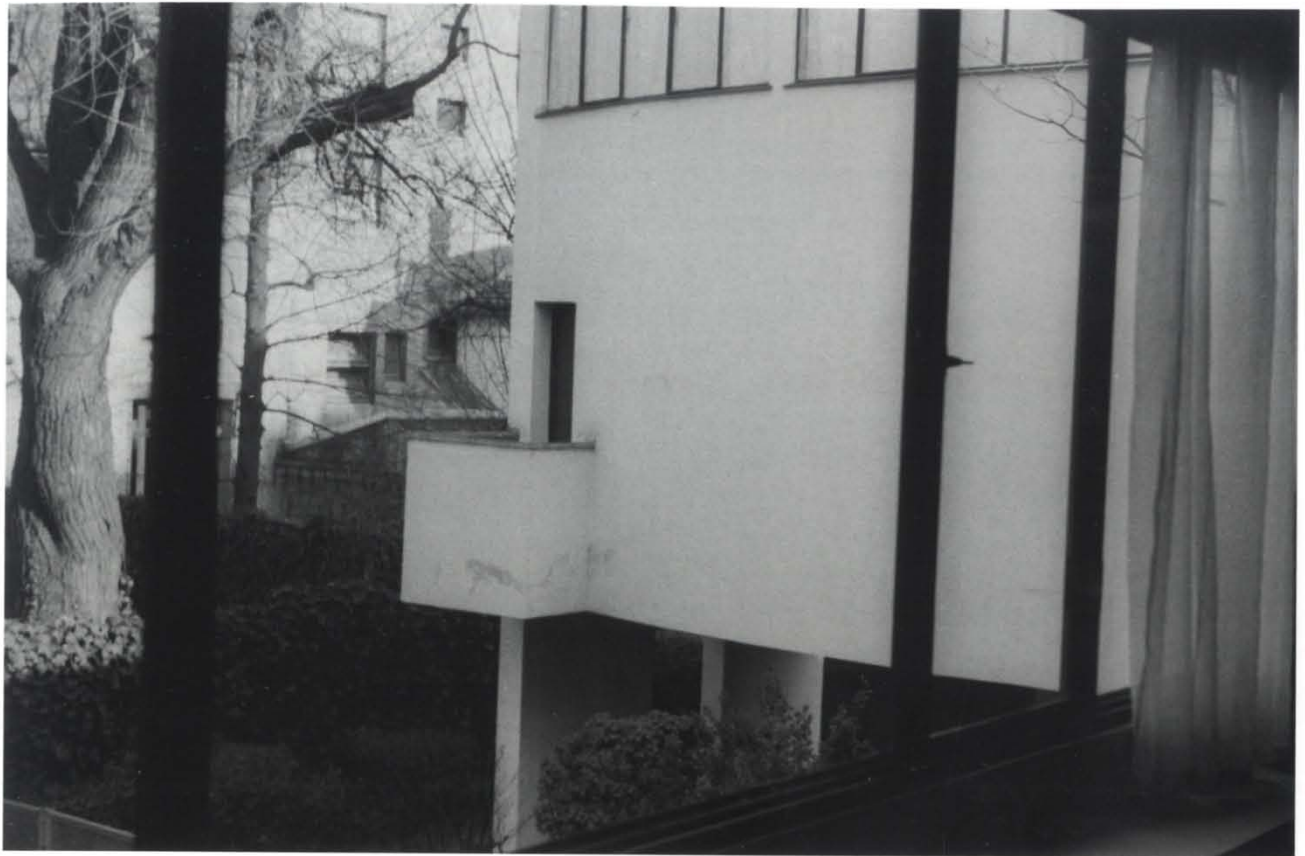
The relationship between Le Corbusier and Martienssen can be seen in some public documents: *1910-1929 Œuvre Complète* in his first french edition, published in 1937, begins with a letter that Le Corbusier wrote to Martienssen, "Cher ami Martienssen..."; a couple of years before, on the monograph number that *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* dedicate to Le Corbusier, he had invited Martienssen to wrote a note as a witness of friendship. *The Idea of Space in Greek Architecture: with special reference to the Doric Temple and its Settings* (a collection of papers on Greek Architecture, most of them published before in the *South African Architectural Record*) was Martienssen's PhD thesis in 1941 and appears as a posthumous book in 1956. This book can be read as an introductory chapter to the architecture of Le Corbusier.

At the *RDM archives* are the letters that Le Corbusier wrote to Martienssen during more than eight years. There are also some essays that Martienssen was trying to assemble on the figure of Le Corbusier, architect and plastic artist.

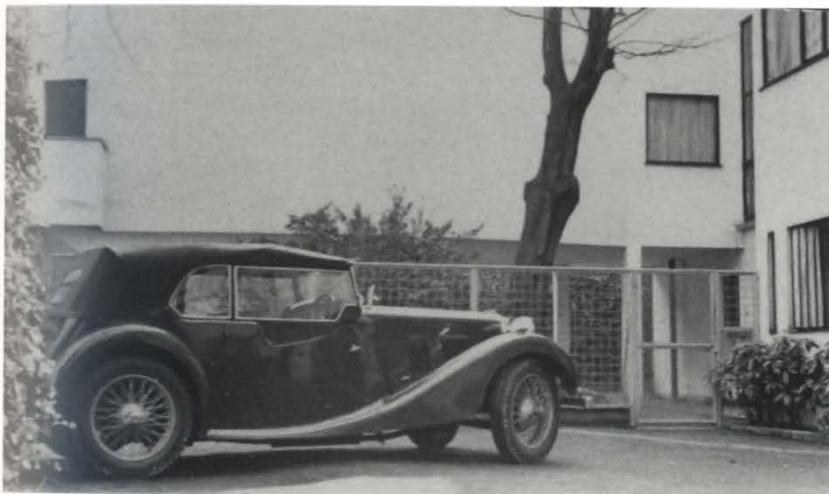


1

Roger Miralles Jori, rmj@coac.cat (Barcelona 1974). Architect for ETSA Vallès. Lecturer at the ETSA Reus. He is researching on Martienssen's work for his PhD at ETSA Barcelona.



2



3



4

- 1 The Martienssens and Le Corbusier at Le Corbusier's apartment hall.
 2 Balcony and facade of the painting room view from the bridge corridor.
 3 House exterior view. Entrance with the Martienssens's 'Poppe'.
 4 to 6 First floor view: the bridge corridor over the door from the dining room to the painting room entrance.



5



6