Le distanze dunque tra il mondo pre-macchinista e di un carattere internazionale, di una poetica allargata. Frammentari di un'epoca. Così il folklore, espressione Musei come il Pavillon Marsan o il Musée des Arts dé-

“...au loin des bruits émouvants...” scrive Le Corbusier. “...Plus un peuple se cultive, plus le décor disparaît...” afferma Le Corbusier richiamando Loos. La sua è dunque un’opposizione all’arte decorativa coeva e l’affermazione di un’altra arte decorativa, quella che segna il passaggio dal décor all’utile, dall’artigianato alla produzione industriale, dall’oggetto individuale al prodotto standardizzato, ri- conducendo l’oggetto al mondo delle necessità umane e l’arte al mondo della libertà e del sogno.

Le argumentazioni di Le Corbusier conducono a una metafora: la “Loi du Ripolin”, che gli consente di fare un paradosso tra la rigenerazione dello spirito e l’ope- razione di pulizia e di rinnovamento delle superfici murane, tramite la nota vernice a olio brevettata dall’olans- dese Carl Julius Ferdinand Rip. Dove il bianco totale risorse spirituali dell’uomo. “...esthetique de la pureté, d’exactitude, d’harmonie...” afferma Le Corbusier.

Un concept esthétique de la pureté, d’exactitude, d’harmonie...” afferma Le Corbusier. L’arte decorativa è dunque l’arte dell’outilage, del bel outillage, è la poetica degli oggetti che ci circondano, oggetti del quotidiano che rispondono a bisogni-tipo, quindi oggetto-tipo, oggetti-personali, umani. Il paradossio è dunque terminologico, perché l’uomo ha bisogno dell’arte, di opere prive di utilità immediata, disinserite, come le arti plastiche o la pittura, in quanto rispondono a passioni che elevano lo spiri- rito. Così, se l’arte esprime la passion désintéressée, l’oggetto d’uso la raison calculée. Per giungere a questo distingo, Le Corbusier si avvale della storia e dell’osservazione della natura. Dove la decorazione è inquadrata nel processo storico-culturale, mentre il progresso del XX secolo ha cambiato radicalmente i bisogni spirituali dell’uomo. “...un concept neuf nous est venu. Il n’y a plus de décor possible. Nos effusions, notre compréhension vive de la nature, de ses beautés, de ses forces, tout s’est intégré dans un système d’organisation architecturale...” Francesca Giusti
L’Art décoratif d’aujourd’hui is a collection of articles published in «L’Esprit Nouveau», which can be considered as a compendium of Le Corbusier’s theoretical thought, and not exclusively on the “Decorative Arts”. The text-images-graphic layout of the volume itself expresses the sense of the both critical and poetic collage, almost a visual kind of writing with the dimensions of an essay and the immediacy of a gesture, the logical continuity and the discontinuity of a palimpsest. A relationship between image, text and music that expresses the quintessence of the culture which emerged from the Exposition internationale des Arts Décoratifs et industriels modernes of 1925. As when he inserts in the text a brief musical score (“Silence! Il semble qu’on perçoive au loin des bruits émouvants”), or when in expounding his thoughts on man and society, both deeply transformed by machines, in the fourth chapter on the consequences of the crisis and the role of the Exhibition of 1925, amongst the images of parts of airplanes (fuselages, structures of wings, etc.), of which he extols the relations between lightness and resistance, Le Corbusier inserts a small choréon de mousse, FLUFF [Literature, Art, Elegance] that “evokes in a single syllable all the charm of the delightful hours of our modern life”.

The reasoning is however rigorously logical, and from the synthesis of the thirteen questions discussed, followed by the concluding Confession, the critical process is outlined, expressed through metaphors, analogies, evocations. The incipit is the negation of the absolute value of the unconditional positive nature of the past, not an “inestimable”, with beautiful and ugly products. This is where the icons of luxury come from, from the reproductions of styles, the antiques market, the catalogues that exemplify the bric-à-brac of contemporary taste. Museums themselves are consecrated entities that almost never educate on the reason of things, and that therefore risk being misleading. The true museum, for Le Corbusier, is the one that contains everything, and does not yet exist, with the exception of Pompeii, “le seul véritable musée digne de ce nom”. Museums such as the Pavillon Marsan or the Musée des Arts décoratifs modernes are considered as partial and fragmentary witnesses of an era. Thus folklore, as expressed through metaphors, analogies, evocations. The process of material purification corresponds to the spiritual purification, which allows him to make an analogy between the regeneration of the spirit and the operation of cleaning and renovating of the surfaces of walls, through the well-known enamel paints patented by the Dutchman Carl Julius Ferdinand Riep. In it, the overall whiteness of the habitat is opposed to the “rumeur bruyante des couleurs et des ornements”. This process of material purification corresponds to the spiritual purification, in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness.

Thus from the sixth chapter, played on the symmetry between besoins-types and objets-membres-humains, Le Corbusier proceeds on to more reassuring, propositive and projectual themes. The images that accompany the text clearly illustrate the process of classification that would derive in the project of the Casiers Standard, presented at the Pavillon de L’Esprit Nouveau in 1925.

Innovative materials, serial productions, modular compositions, in order to optimize every-day movements and “libérer notre esprit”, writes Le Corbusier. Decorative art is thus the art of the outillage, of the bel outillage, it is the poetics of the objects that surround us, every-day objects that respond to types of needs, and are therefore types of objects, objets-membres-humains. The paradox is thus one of terminology, since man needs art, of objects devoid of immediately utility, uninterested, such as the plastic or pictorial arts, which respond to passions that elevate the spirit. Thus if art expresses the passion désintéressée, objects for every day usage express la raison calculée. To arrive to this distinction, Le Corbusier calls into question history and the observation of nature. Decoration is inscribed in the historical-cultural process, whereas with the progress of the 20th century the spiritual needs of man were radically altered.

“Plus un peuple se cultive, plus le décor disparait”, affirms Le Corbusier paraphrasing Loois. His is therefore an opposition to contemporary decorative art and the affirmation of another decorative art which signals the passage from décor to utility, from artisan to industrial production, from the individual object to the standardized product, bringing back the object to the sphere of human necessity and art to the thrill of freedom and dreams. Le Corbusier’s arguments in this respect point to a metaphor: the “Loi du Ripolin”, which allows him to make an analogy between the regeneration of the spirit and the operation of cleaning and renovating of the surfaces of walls, through the well-known enamel paints patented by the Dutchman Carl Julius Ferdinand Riep. In it, the overall whiteness of the habitat is opposed to the “rumeur bruyante des couleurs et des ornements”. This process of material purification corresponds to the spiritual purification, in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness. White walls, pure, freed from the useless, permit man to get rid of anguish and to elevate the spirit, immersing himself in a perfect symbiosis between house and consciousness.

Le Corbusier’s idea of regenerative purity becomes a metaphor for the new concept of Art décoratif moderne, which is not merely décor: “Un concept neuf nous est venu. Il n’y a plus de décor possible. Nos éffusions, notre compréhension de la nature, de ses beautés, de ses forces, tout s’est intégré dans un système d’organisation architecturale”.

Francesca Giusti

translation by Luis Gatt