

## MASTER

### Learning from a building

#### Maison Louis Carré : Propriété Carré

Basso, M.

*Award date:*  
2017

[Link to publication](#)

#### **Disclaimer**

This document contains a student thesis (bachelor's or master's), as authored by a student at Eindhoven University of Technology. Student theses are made available in the TU/e repository upon obtaining the required degree. The grade received is not published on the document as presented in the repository. The required complexity or quality of research of student theses may vary by program, and the required minimum study period may vary in duration.

#### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain

LEARNING  
FROM A  
BUILDING

Maison Louis Carré



# LEARNING FROM A BUILDING

Graduation Studio “Masterly Apprentice”

Technische Universiteit Eindhoven

Built Environment  
Architecture, Building and Planning  
Master in Architecture Urban Design and Engineering

Tutors:

Jacob Voorthuis  
Jan Schevers  
Sergio Figueiredo

Student:

Matteo Basso



## **Content**

Learning from a building	6
A Methodology	8
Model Making	12
Introduction	18
Sensing Atmosphere	24
Comparing Programs	32
Abducting Influences	40
Model Making	46
Establishing Connections	58
A chat with Van Hee	62
Designing “Propriété Carré”	Vol.2

# Learning from a building





# A METHODOLOGY

by Matteo Basso and Kapilan Chandranesan

---

How do we learn from a building?

To understand the process of learning from a building it is useful to break it down into its fundamental components and define them.

## **Subject**

A human activity such as learning requires us to reflect on the agency of such action. The agent, at the centre of the learning process, is who, consciously or unconsciously, is engaging with the building at hand, deriving lessons from it.

The studio Masterly Apprentice - Learning from a Building is concerned with the subjectivity of this learning process and conceives the individual students as its agents.

Bachelard, french phenomenologist, gives a clear perspective on how one could understand the working of the agency. He defines the agents as "speaking beings," or as those subjects who receive a poetic image and recreate it, through their imagination. They "resonate," hearing the poem, and "reverberate," speaking it, thus making it their own[1]. For example, admiring an impressionist painting of a landscape will enrich the viewer's experience of landscape thereafter by adding a new layer to his perception.

"When I receive a new poetic image, I experience its qualities of inter-subjectivity. I know that I am going to repeat it in order to communicate my enthusiasm. When considered in transmission from one soul to another, it becomes evident that a poetic image eludes causality"<sup>[1]</sup>.

When we study a building we are not specifically looking at the contextual conditions and the causal relationships that influenced it. Instead, we are concerned with the individual experience of the qualities of the building which we have perceived and that we have further researched.

"I always come then to the same conclusion: the

essential newness of the poetic image poses the problem of the speaking being's creativeness. Through this creativeness the imagining consciousness proves to be, very simple but very purely, an origin. In a study of the imagination, a phenomenology of the poetic imagination must concentrate on bringing out this quality of origin in various poetic images"<sup>[1]</sup>.

Through learning from a building we become creative in understanding it and combining it with our personal experiences. We become conscious, and therefore start making things our own through the act of designing.

The subjectivity of this process, is rather more an inter-subjectivity, which opens up at least two reflections.

Firstly we have, on one hand the agent's subjective experience and on the other the object which is the building at hand, its contextual setting, its interpretations, its readings, its narrations, and more simply its "reverberations". The intersubjectivity lies in how these factors "resonate" within the agent. The intersubjectivity ties us to the architect who designed the building, through learning from it.

Secondly we notice an inter-subjective layer within the various students undergoing similar processes of resonance and reverberation, but directed at different buildings. Here the learning becomes a horizontal phenomenon by which the peers influence and inform each other's ongoing processes, much alike the Montessori method.

## **Object**

The learning process cannot exist without the object of perception elaborated into an experience. To understand this process it is useful to break down the object in question - the building - into its fundamental components. If we

consider a building to be a complex whole we can describe it as being a material and a theoretical construct, tangible and intangible at the same time. We identify the tangible, material reality, with the elements that make up a building; and the intangible, theoretical construct, with the concepts that appropriate the elements of architecture into the specificity of each building. These two fundamental moments – material concepts and intangible concepts - in the experience of learning from a building can be collectively called architectural aspects. In the way Wittgenstein intends “Aspekt,” as a phenomenological object, one makes experience of <sup>[2]</sup>.

It is important to understand that the building is approached in aspects. The experience of it cannot be in its wholeness, rather more it has to go through a reading of various aspects and a recombination of them, once understood.

The architectural perception thus depends on the contextual conditions of experience.

Recreating an image through a model is an example of how one can learn from aspects of the building that are merely one part of its existence. The moment described through the picture of the building captures a specific position in space, a specific lighting condition, specific material compositions, and a specific atmosphere which are among the many experiences that can be had of the building. The picture of the model, then, recreates the conditions captured in original picture.

The physical elements and groups of elements participate in the creation of the unity of the building. These elements are to be intended as all the tangible components, as stairs, walls, windows and doors, materials, furniture and so on and so forth.

The concepts are, on the other hand, relationships between us and our environment, bringing together the different elements in understandable patterns.

“The concepts help us understand ourselves and our environment. When things look chaotic and confusing, a concept can help establish order in that chaos by showing us how we might understand something. Alternatively, where first we might see “nothing much,” a concept can help us see things that we would otherwise not have noticed by identifying patterns and things”<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Activities**

As we have defined the subject along with the object of this learning moment, we are missing the connection that brings them together. As a sentence cannot be complete if verbless, the learning cannot exist without an activity. These activities are done by the subject -the actor- upon the object -the aspects of the building-.

These activities are a plethora that encompasses analytical thinking and sensible experience alike. Because of the high degree of subjectivity, we are faced with activities of very different nature, depending on one’s attitude towards the aspects of the building and on how one approaches learning.

Quite broadly, we identify three moments within which every activity can fall. The moments are ordered depending on proximity between subject and object. The building and the experience of it can happen through different degrees of contact. The three moments are: the moment of intimacy, when one learns in the physical presence of the building; the moment of detachment, when one learns in indirect contact through thought, or physical means and representations; and the moment of reconnection, when one learns through application and design.

The first two moments involve the attention towards the building itself, the third has its primary attention elsewhere, while maintaining an instrumental relationship with the building.

Moment of intimacy:

sensing; observing; abstracting; conceptualising; recording; describing; abducting.

Moment of detachment:

abstracting; conceptualising; analysing; comparing; connecting; imagining; redrawing; copying; reconstructing; exploring; abducting; anticipating design.

Moment of reconnection:

discussing; testing; intuiting; remembering; applying; iterating.

## **Conclusion**

"The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being." [1]

So when is it not merely a reproduction?

Doing something with what we have learned means we have imbibed it with our personal interpretation, making it part of our language. That aspect exists through us, we exist with it.

Matteo Basso

Kapilan Chandranesan

## **References**

- [1] Bachelard, G. (1994). *The Poetics of Space*. Beacon Press.
- [2] Wittgenstein, L. (1977). Anscombe G. E. M., ed. *Remarks on Colour*. University of California Press
- [3] Voorthuis, J. (2016, September). *Analysis and Critique*. Eindhoven [Powerpoint slides].



# MODEL MAKING

by Philippe Groeneveld and Dario Sposini

---

When referring to an architectural model, it is common to consider them as a three dimensional representation of the actual design. However models can be useful tools to investigate, analyse and research a building or a design process. Within the process of the analysis and investigation of their respective buildings, a common assignment carried out by studio was the recreation of a picture of the interior through a model. The quest of this assignment was to understand in-depth the various aspects that make up the interior as captured in the picture.

The first stage was the selection of the interior view of the building to reproduce. The final goal was not the model itself but a picture of it that will be comparable to the original image of the building's interior. Therefore relevant attention was devoted to the process of selection of the picture as it should be able to express the peculiar characteristic of that interior. A wide angled picture will definitely provide a vast amount of information about the space but will be lacking in specificity towards aspects that add character to the space. On the other hand a zoomed view, will focus too much attention to specific elements that the larger picture is missed. Therefore a proper framing will be the one that focuses on the key characteristics of the building where distractions are reduced to the essential.

However a question can be raised about the necessity of reproducing a picture of a building by the means of a model. This question has been argued during the tutorials and the answer has been found, mostly, only during the realization of the model itself or after its conclusion. The creation of a model has some relevant implications that has been, somehow, discovered during the process itself.

First of all, in order to reproduce a photo it is fundamental to have a proper knowledge

of the geometry of the building. Therefore, since the early stages, we began to generate a series of questions upon the building and its materialization. Question that can hardly be answered only by looking at the selected picture. Therefore the photograph become only a reference and different sources of information were researched, such as: extensive descriptions, reproduction of original drawings and experience of the real space. By doing so, we started to enrich the picture with meanings and information, combining what was seen in the picture with the knowledge gathered from different sources.

It is through this process of observation, analysis and synthesis that we began to develop an extensive understanding of the building as whole. In effect, the analysis of the picture with the motive of recreating the same through a model served as a gateway to the study of the building at hand.

The research and analysis of the actual building in its manifestations of material, detail, proportion provided sufficient information for the faithful reproduction of the original image.

## **The process of the photo's recreation**

In order to create a clear idea about how an images can be reproduced by the means of a model, it is important to introduce the differed layers or elements that compose the photograph. Some of the layers that have been recognized within the photos and then investigated in the models are: proportion, material, detail and light. By isolating these layers from the others, we could identify a general approach on how the models have been built and describe a framework in order to compare those models.

Firstly by analysing the images it is possible

to recognize the picture as a composition of elements. These elements can vary greatly from furniture, walls, floors, columns structural elements. They differ from each other in scale, size and role within the composition. They will form the fundament of the images that we are going to reproduce affecting the final composition picture. The reproduction of an images through models, requires us to possess a clear understanding of the space and the spatial relationship between those elements and how they appear within the composition. A proper understanding about how sizes and dimensions define the real space, will enables us to create a correct understanding of the composition of the image. The example of the building realized by Auguste Perret (Edificio 25 bis rue Franklin, Paris, 1903) is an interesting example on how this analysis of elements occur in the model. The photo of the apartment is filled with different typology of furniture. In order to create a proper reproduction of this interior it was relevant to faithful create those objects. The student accomplished this by creating parts of the furniture using the 3D printer which provides a precise scaled rendering of the original objects, which then has been carefully put in the right place.

The second layer we identify is the one referring to the materialization. This layer concerns everything that is related to the surface of the space, from colour to texture. In reproducing the surfaces as seen in the actual building into a scaled model, it was not the materials itself that were reproduced but the materiality that the original materials effected. While in some cases the material quality was reproduced by emulating the production of the actual material, in yet other cases the materiality was recreated through completely different media. For example, in the reproduction of the images of the Canova

Museum designed by Carlo Scarpa, the student tried to recreate the reflective materiality of the marble flooring by pouring ceramic within a glossy mould. He tested different mixture of powder in order to achieve the proper reflection of the floor's marble. On the other hand for the realization of the model of Villa Moller by Adolf Loos, the textures that bound the surfaces of the interior were recreated through prints of the textures on various types of paper which in their final effect reflect the materiality of the actual materials.

Details as well, were fundamental for the accurate realization of the image. This could be accomplished, for example, by carefully connecting the different materials, by placing attention to small details such as the size and proportion of the window frame, the use of non-architectonic elements that make up the composition and so on. This helps the viewer to understand the proportion and scale of the space he is looking at. In the example of The Daily Express Building designed by Owen Williams, the central composition of the picture was occupied by a large printing press. In the reproduction of the image, in order to create an proper understanding of the measurement of the space, it was important that this machine was reproduced with the right level of detail. This printing machine gave the space a higher level of perceptive reality.

The last layer that we distinguished in reproducing the picture was the one referring to the light quality as captured in the photograph. This layer has something less to do with the object that has been explored, but more with bringing together of all the previous layers in combination with light. Finding the right balance between texture, detail and shape of the objects that occur in the picture was central to refine the

composition of the image. However by achieving the right balance between those layers and light will results in faithful reproduction of the original photo.

The reproduction of the image is not the reality itself, but it is a picture that has been burden with much more meaning and knowledge by accomplishing the realization of the three-dimensional model. It helps us to understand the spatial quality of that specific observed interiors, yet provide information of the entire architecture. The analysis accomplished wasn't an abstract exploration of an architecture but a tangible experience of the space. The assignment developed within the domain of the actual conditions such as light, materiality, vantage points etc. that define an architectural experience.

Dario Sposini  
Philip Groeneveld







# INTRODUCTION

Maison Louis Carré

## INTRODUCTION

Choosing a building.

Choosing a master.

When I started looking for a building to analyse, knowing I had to live with it for almost nine months, I decided to define the kind of building through what I felt I wanted to learn. I was looking for a wise use of materials. I was looking for a wise use of light. I was looking for a wise use of curved lines. I was looking for a wise interaction with the human scale. The building I was looking for had to be one that was designed into the smallest detail: a door's hinge; a column; the coming together of the bris soleil's parts. At the same time it should have aimed to the creation of a system, a theoretical one. A system of values, of aesthetic moments, a space capable, through design, of creating Place. In the middle of these two -seemingly- distant spheres stands the uniting power of the project: that is able of taking one to the understanding of the whole through its parts and of the parts through the whole.

To find a building with such features I knew I was looking for a project of a mature architect. The idea of learning from a master, in my view, had to offer the possibility of interfacing an architectural language with a large vocabulary and full of nuances, reflecting years of stratified knowledge

coming together in one building.

After a shortlist, that saw buildings such as the *Fondazione Querini-Stampalia* of Carlo Scarpa, the *Skogskyrkogården* of Asplund and Lewerenz and *Can Lis* by Jørn Utzon, I decided to opt for *Maison Louis Carré* by Alvar Aalto.

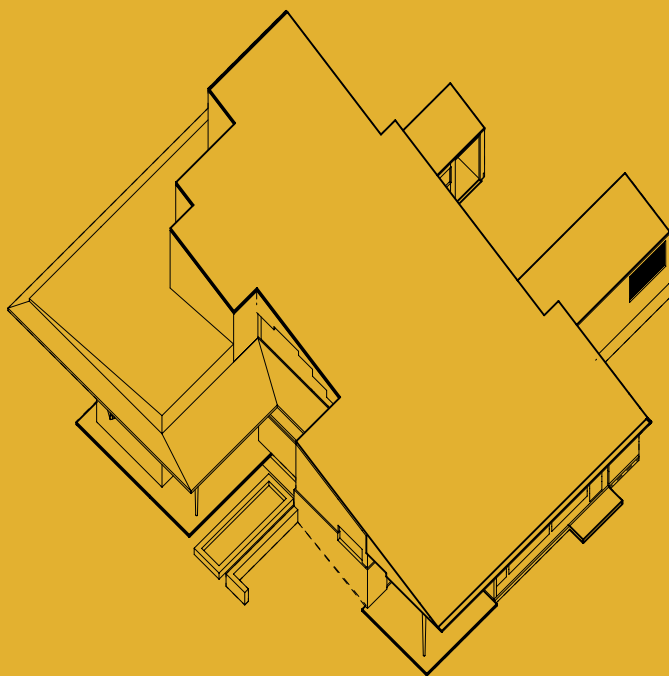
My impression was that it would teach me many lessons as that of conceive buildings as systems. Ideas before designs, that shape the reality and give reason to every choice made throughout the process. At the same time being a system that reverberates in every small detail, giving the opportunity of learning how to bridge these two worlds.

The synthesis of the arts mastered by Aalto in this building can be seen in the wise use of such a plethora of materials - bricks, stones, concrete, woods and metals - and their coming together; in the mastery of light, of water and of the interaction with the landscape - of all natural elements; in the interaction with the human scale; in the use of one single curved line that takes the building from being a good one, to being exceptional.



# Maison Louis Carré

Alvar Aalto  
(Elissa Aalto, Marlaïne Perrochet)





# SENSING ATMOSPHERE

## As architecture *Esprit*

---

"With a client in Paris, a few days ago, I had a discussion about just such a simple thing as ventilation. He said "Technique *sans esprit* is the worst thing in the world" - which it is."<sup>[1]</sup>

Alvar Aalto, 1956

I like to think this client was Louis Carré.

*I enter Maison Louis Carré minutes before twilight on a November afternoon.*

*I enter Maison Louis Carré minutes after noon on a November afternoon.*

In both cases, one day after the other, I sensed the *esprit*, the atmosphere of this home, and it moved me. Upon accessing the Maison from its north facing entrance, I felt welcomed and warmly embraced. While walking about, I felt in harmony with the landscape and at ease with the very human sizes and proportions.

Architecture speaks a language that can talk to our sensibilities, emotional and physical, other than to our thinking mind. The reason we decide to concern ourselves with the multifarious and volatile theme of Atmosphere is, probably, best said by architect Peter Zumthor while explaining the title of his book <sup>[2]</sup>.

"The title "*Atmospheres*" is generated by a question that has interested me for quite some time. And you are unlikely to be surprised when I tell you what it is: what do we mean when we speak of architectural quality? [...] Quality architecture to me is when a building manages to move me. What on earth is it that moves me? How can I get it into my own work?" It might be that what moved me were personal reasons unrelated to architecture. It might be that it did for reasons exclusively related to architecture.

Nonetheless, what I set out to understand through observation were, other than the personal implications, the architectural aspects - intended as Wittgenstein's "Aspekt" or phenomenological object <sup>[3]</sup> - that were resulting in my perception of this atmosphere.

*I grasp the cold bronze doorknob and pull the heavy wooden double door towards me, entering the Maison. The space is small and pleasantly lit, the ceiling is low so I push towards the second door and open it. I halt and look straight up. The undulated ceiling reminds me of where I am and why I have come here.*



The apex of the undulated ceiling of Finnish red pine ribs.





Entrance-hall-cum-gallery lit by a northern diffused light penetrating the clerestory.

The transition from the outside to the inside is almost as the one in some religious architecture, as one might feel accessing the -very French- Gothic cathedrals. Similarly to entering *Notre Dame de Paris*, after two doors, a portal and a door for the church, and a small vestibule in between -as to underline the ritual of passage to a holy place- I instinctively looked up.

Both the wooden curved ceiling height, measuring 4.5 meters at its maximum, and the northern diffused light seeping in over my head from a clerestory, as through a rose window, and shining on the ceiling and surfaces around, invited me in.

It is not to be liable of overinterpretation by creating connections with French Gothic that might not be there, rather I wish to show how the experience of entry is enhanced by similar uses of elements as doors, windows and ceilings, with the purpose of suggesting the sense of place.

*I look more attentively at the ceiling and it strikes me that it isn't only a gesture: it's a crafted, thought through and detailed unity of smaller pieces of wood. The wave isn't just one massive element, rather the composition of many slim ribbs, and where the curve meets the straight line, something odd happens.*

Here the employment of wood reaches its highest degree of skill and craft. It is the work of Aleksanteri Ahvanainen and Aleks Rantanen, the two Finnish carpenters, sent from Aalto's office on purpose to build the ceiling implementing Aalto's design.

Louis Carré required for his home the use of materials that "had lived"<sup>[1]</sup>. So red pine wood from Finland was used for the vaulted ceiling.

The ceiling is curious, as it breaks the curve from the straight line, and one wonders why. And the fact the answer doesn't come makes the image all the more vivid, while one looks for the possible answers. I still



View through the living room and to the landscape. Occluding edge on the left.

haven't got.

*I look around, slowly, and follow the invitation of the dying wave described by the ceiling toward my right: there where the soft northern light coming from over my head dims, creating a darker spot; there where the bright western light flows in through the distant curtain window and provides a direction to my movement. So I'm drawn to walk there.*

The curve of the ceiling straightens and lowers until it is just above the line of sight at about two meters from the grounds one stands on, and follows the house's arrangement that lowers altogether with the hill descent through stretching stairs. The ceiling creates a funnel with the pavement and the northern wall concentrating one's focus. The diagonal view that is thus formed, slightly slanted towards the ground and occluded from the southern edge of the fireplace, establishes a relationship with the viewer that is made curious as to what might lie outside his very restricted sight.

*Some years ago, while walking barefoot in the Honmaru Goten of the Kawagoe Castle, I had a similar sensation. Ceiling heights, diagonal views, shifts in levels, glances of the landscape, head-height windows but mostly the use of material as rice paper and wood - all take me back to that warm and cozy memory. Except here I don't feel cumbersome in my tall body.*

"Of all the people I met in Finland, I particularly remember Alvar Aalto as a highly gifted man. He told me that he had read Marco Polo's memoirs in his youth and had conceived a liking for Japan. Later he had collected many books on our architecture, especially on tearooms. In his hospitals, libraries, dwellings and restaurants, he used pure wood, even bamboo, with an unerring feeling for style." Hakotaro Ichikawa, Japan's first

ambassador to Finland, wrote in the 1930s <sup>[4]</sup>.

*I find myself walking easily down a flight of stairs that accompany me to the lower level of the house. It's six of them. I can feel they are even, as I flow down them, landing with the foot I started descending with. It feels as if I were outside; as if the staircase was just a very gentle slope down the hill towards the patch of oaks and the city of Bazoches-sur-Guyonne where I came from.*

The staircase, covering an eighty-five-centimetre gap between the two levels in two meters and twenty-eight centimeters of depth, has a very gentle rhythm. The depth of each tread, which measures a run of thirty-eight centimeters, accommodates for all the foot to lie comfortably on it, while the height of each step measures only twelve centimeters. As a matter of fact, the staircase was designed to help the walking about of Monsieur Carré, which suffered from some leg related condition and specifically required a home he could live in on one single floor. This element seems to embody the lessons that this house can teach about proportion based on the human scale.

The staircase also resonates with the landscape. It creates a connection with the outer declivity. It feels as a natural consequence of the hillside formation because it takes to the inside of the house the same steepness of the terrain one has walked up when accessing the property.

*I pause, again, and look around. I'm in the living room, and everything seems to be talking about the beating heart of the lives spent between these walls. The bright artworks on the walls, the order in the disposition of the furniture, the open views towards the landscape, the centrality of the fireplace, the detail in the lighting fixtures, the softness of the materials employed.*

The living room as the public room: *la crème de la crème de la Galerie Carré*. The place that functioned as centre of the private couple life and as bourgeois salon and extension of Monsieur Carré's commercial activity. The pale oakwood pavement breaks from the vaulted space, which has a brick-coloured clinker tiles pavement. The pinewood ceiling continues also in this space, at a height of two meters and seventy centimeters. Being the size of the room is of eleven meters by six, with the two shorter sides closed to the outside, one can feel the push towards the fireplace or towards the wide window facing the sloped hill, one standing on the



The oak and teak wood staircase connecting hall and living room.



Living room in its full depth exhibiting the artwork of Errò.

opposite side of the other.

Everything in here seems to have been thought of, up to the last small detail: the position of a lamp, the tabletop, a setback in the ceiling, the copper cladding of the fireplace, or the foot of the armchair.

The atmosphere of Maison Louis Carré is produced by a wise use of material, of light and of form, proportioned to sizes that are comfortable yet challenging. Mostly it feels as if all has been thought about, as if all has been taken care of.

I am moved and overwhelmed at the site of the tremendous amount of design I am surrounded with.

This -I think- is architecture *Esprit*.

#### References:

- [1] Laaksonen, E., & Ólafsdóttir, Á. (2008). *Alvar Aalto Architect volume 20: Maison Louis Carré 1953-63*. Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation / Alvar Aalto Academy.
- [2] Zumthor, P. (2006). *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects*. Basel: Birkhauser.
- [3] Wittgenstein, L. (1977). Anscombe G. E. M., ed. *Remarks on Colour*. University of California Press
- [4] Schildt, G. (1987). *Alvar Aalto: The Decisive Years*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.



The detail of the brass foot of the blue upholstered armchair.

# COMPARING PROGRAMS

## Alvar Aalto, Art and Daily Life

---

"I have been in quite a few homes [of art collectors] and can honestly state that there was no relationship between art and daily life [...]. it was very difficult to find the human heart which binds the person to the art."  
Alvar Aalto

Maison Louis Carré might seem to have an exceptionally rare program: a home designed to house both the daily life of a couple and precious artwork maintaining with careful balance both a representational and social function and a private sphere. A program including both the essential service spaces that have to make the equilibrium function at best and the interaction with a landscape to which the owners were very tied.

But for Alvar Aalto, this program comes as a very well know one, perhaps the appointment of the job from Louis Carré derives from the knowledge of the architect's mastery in such a complex situation.

And perhaps Alvar Aalto might have treated Maison Louis Carré as an iteration of the concepts that had driven him close to twenty years earlier while designing Villa Mairea for Harry and Maire Gullichsen.

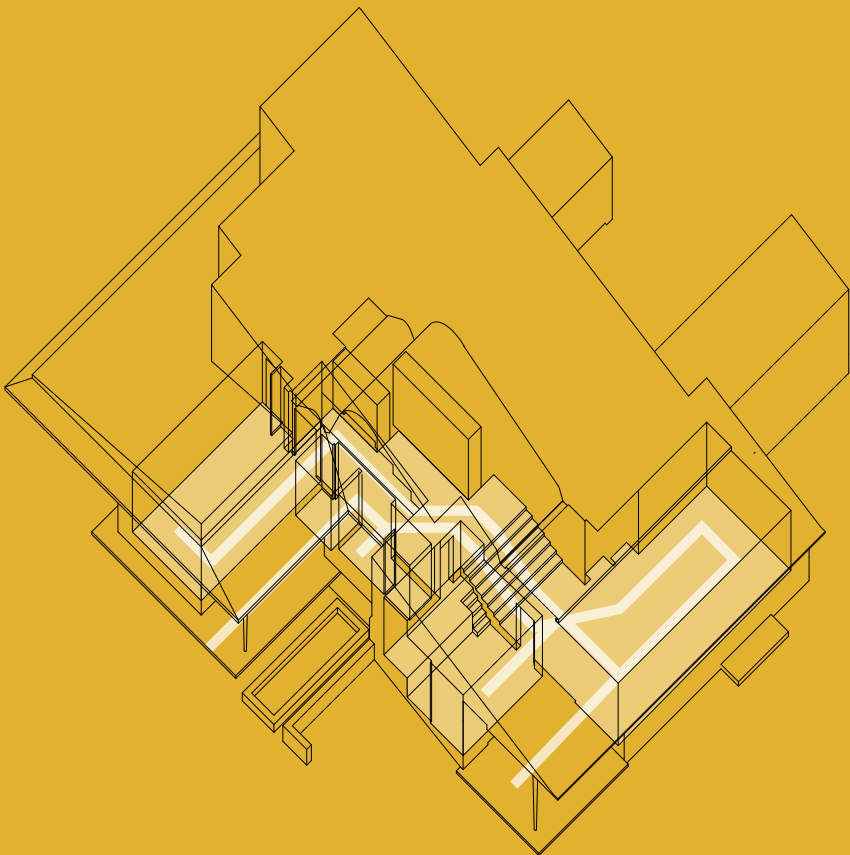
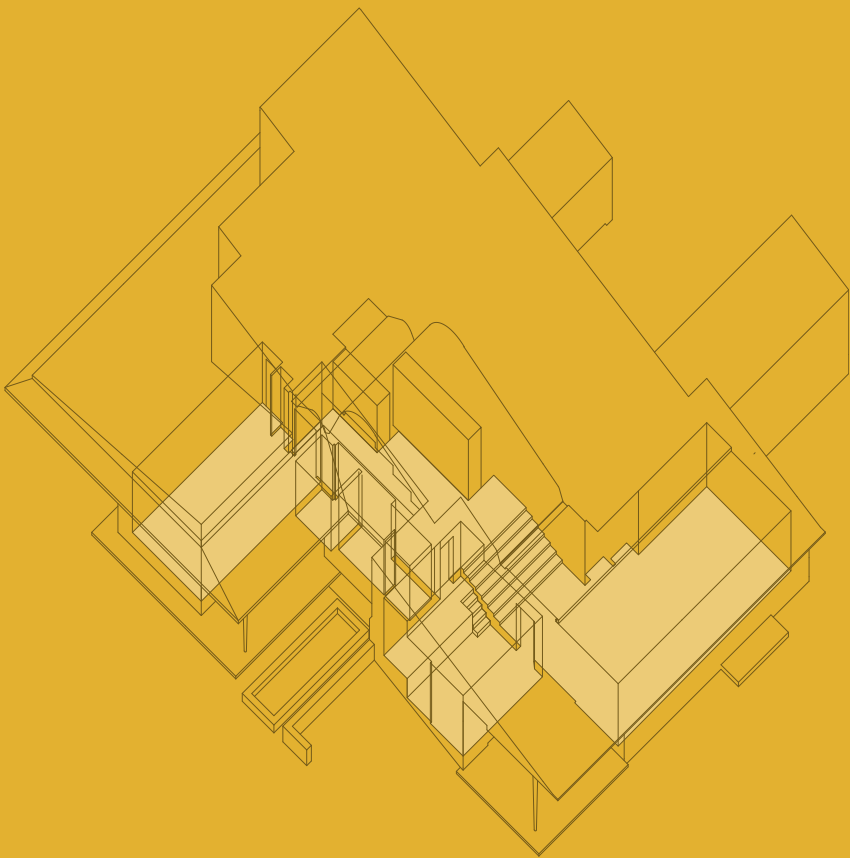
Maison Louis Carré can be considered as the retreat of a mature art dealer -and collector- and his mistress, Olga, from the Parisian hustle to a more idyllic and homelike environment.

After acquiring the land from twenty different farmers, in the neighborhood of his dear friend Jean Monnet of which he had been guest for some time, he sought the architect who would design him a love nest and a gallery space where to host his wealthy clients and show off the best of his art collection.

Friend of Le Corbusier, Jean Monnet, Jean Cocteau, Alexander Calder, Jacques Villon, Paul Elouard, Fernand Léger and many more well known figures, Carré can be considered with no doubt to have been a bourgeois, operating in the French cultural panorama as art dealer from his gallery in 10 Avenue de Messine, Paris. It was Calder and Léger that directed him to Alvar Aalto, as his explicit wish was a house that would feel more homelike than Le Corbusier's architecture; of whom he had been a tenant for many years, residing in 24 Rue Nungesser et Coli, Paris, neighboring with the architect's studio-apartment<sup>[1]</sup>.

From the top:  
Figure 1- floor surface of the public spaces of the house  
Figure 2- routing in the public spaces of the house

The requirements were straightforward, to these programmatic ones some others were added: a slanted roof of blue ardoise, an attention to beauty and proportion and most of all, a one story house as previously explained.





The program can be divided in three: a public part, a private one and a service one. As stated in Aalto's and Feig's edition *Alvar Aalto: the complete work*: "the task was to create a residence that could serve for family living as well as a gallery for paintings and sculpture, while, at the same time, avoiding the character of an exhibition space."<sup>121</sup>

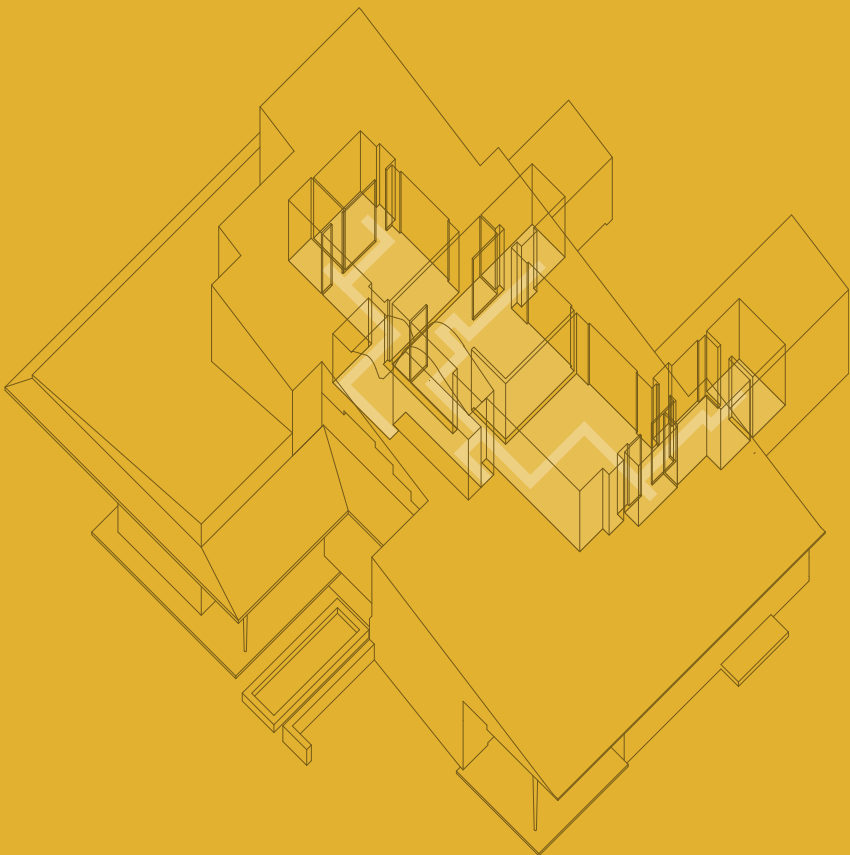
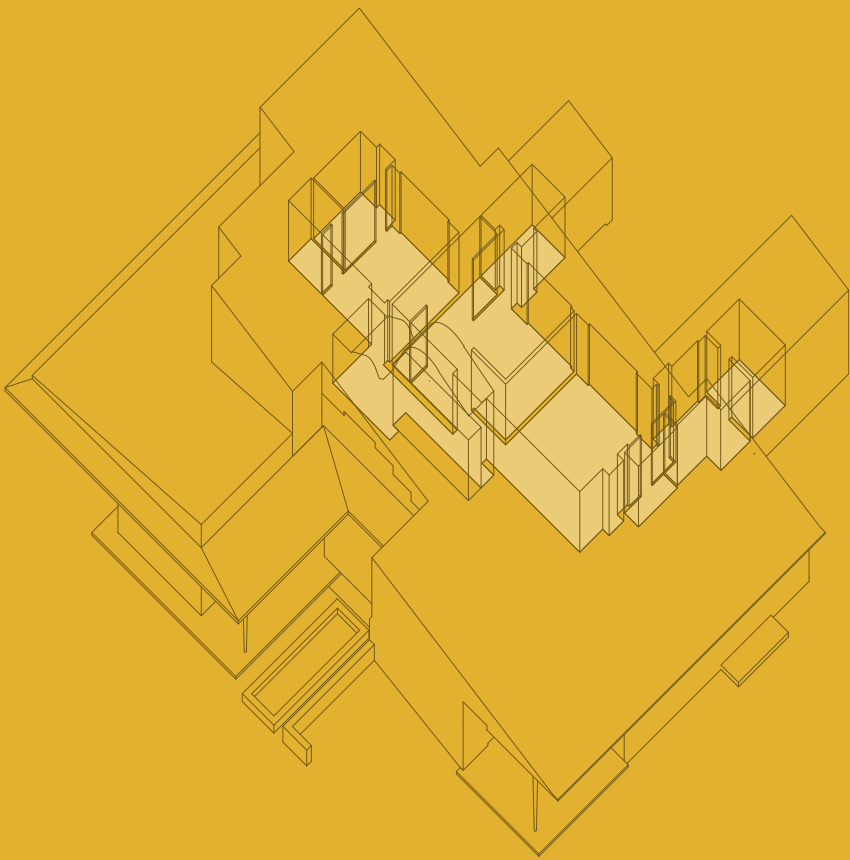
The "privacy gradient"<sup>13</sup> is arranged to maintain private, public and services side by side. The large entrance hall-cum-gallery, with the curved ceiling, functions as a receiving hall, offering the southern wall and the upholstered separating cupboards to exhibition purposes. By giving the guest as first image of the inside that of art under a contrasting curved ceiling, washed with northern and diffused light, the Maison starts, in literature term, *in medias res*, in the middle of the story. Thus manages to tell its story of welcome to a home of art, yet and still a home.

By creating such a strong central space it enables to attach to it three different kinds of spaces. A first time visitor, as narrated in the previous chapter, will be drawn from the curve of the ceiling, attracted by the light, the landscape and the curiosity for the room of which his sight is occluded. Doing so he will follow down the stairs to the heart of the house, where the fireplace burns. It is a center that isn't one of passage, rather more of destination. It is a heart that isn't only the couple's one, but also the societal one. Nestled between this space and the hall, lies the library and Louis Carré's office, split into the two different levels. On the other side of the hall instead one can find the dining room, which faces west, on the entrance porch [Fig.1. 2].

From the central space of the hall, one can also find his way towards the private spaces. These lie behind the upholstered cupboards and the wall that first greets the newly arrived. The cupboards offer a maze-like path that directs the experienced and disallows the first time visitors. The rooms are clustered there: two entrances for three rooms. Olga and Louis splitting the central entrance to the cell-like rooms, and a guest room closer to the service quarters. Each room has a bathroom, a walled closet, its own view towards the south and an access to the garden: the guest one to its own, the master bedrooms to their common one [Fig.3. 4].

From the top:  
Figure 3- floor surface of  
the private rooms  
Figure 4- routing in the  
private rooms

At the end of the hall, adjacent to the dining room one can find all the service rooms: the kitchen, the pantry, the access to the cellar, the servitude dining room and the access to the second floor, containing the



servitude quarters and the storage room.

These spaces seem to be organized to provide the best service routes, making every space reachable in a short walking distance, including the garden [Fig.5,6].

It is curious to observe how the space is ordered with a diagonal stacking that offers slanted views. Esa Laaksonen tells us that "the plan solution for the Maison Carré is typical of Aalto: a simple basic idea molded into a meandering composition in which themes are repeated and accompanied by details in just the correct places."<sup>[1]</sup>

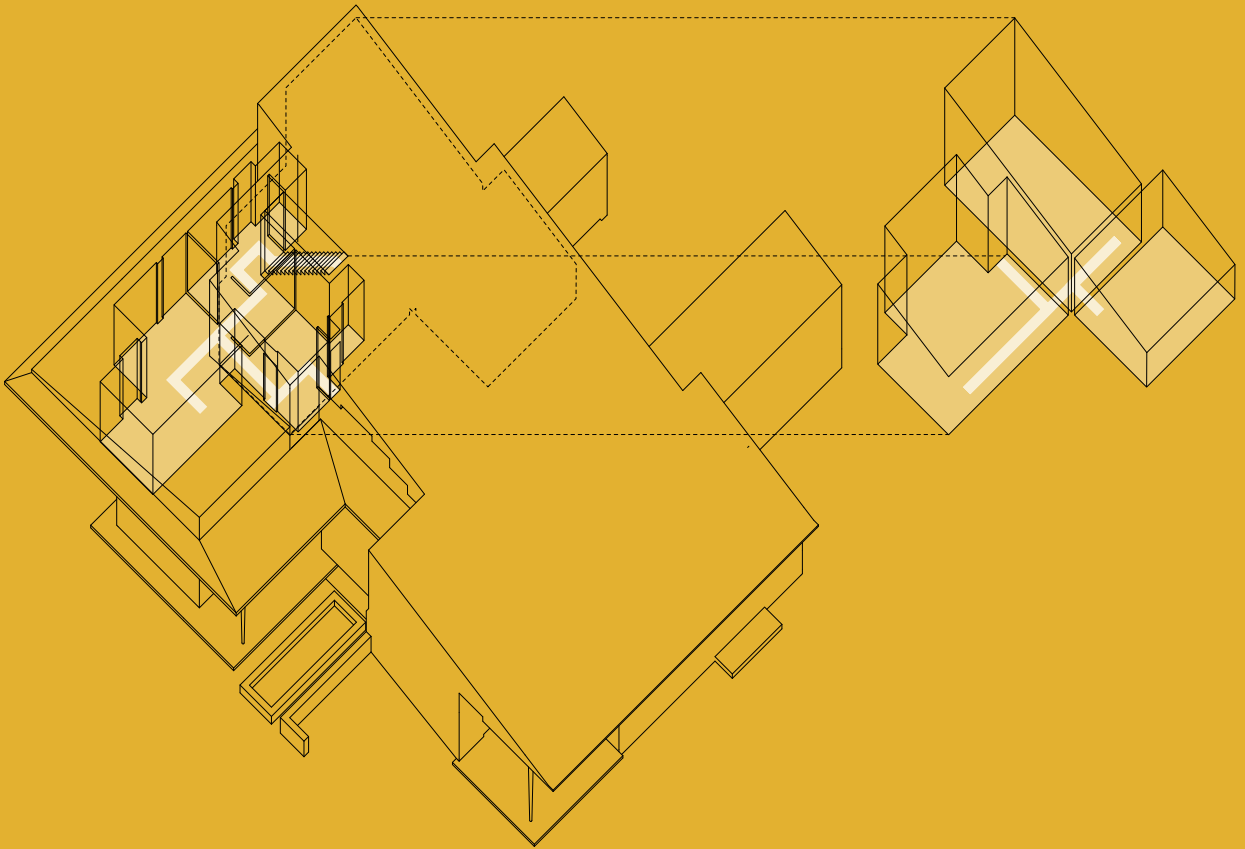
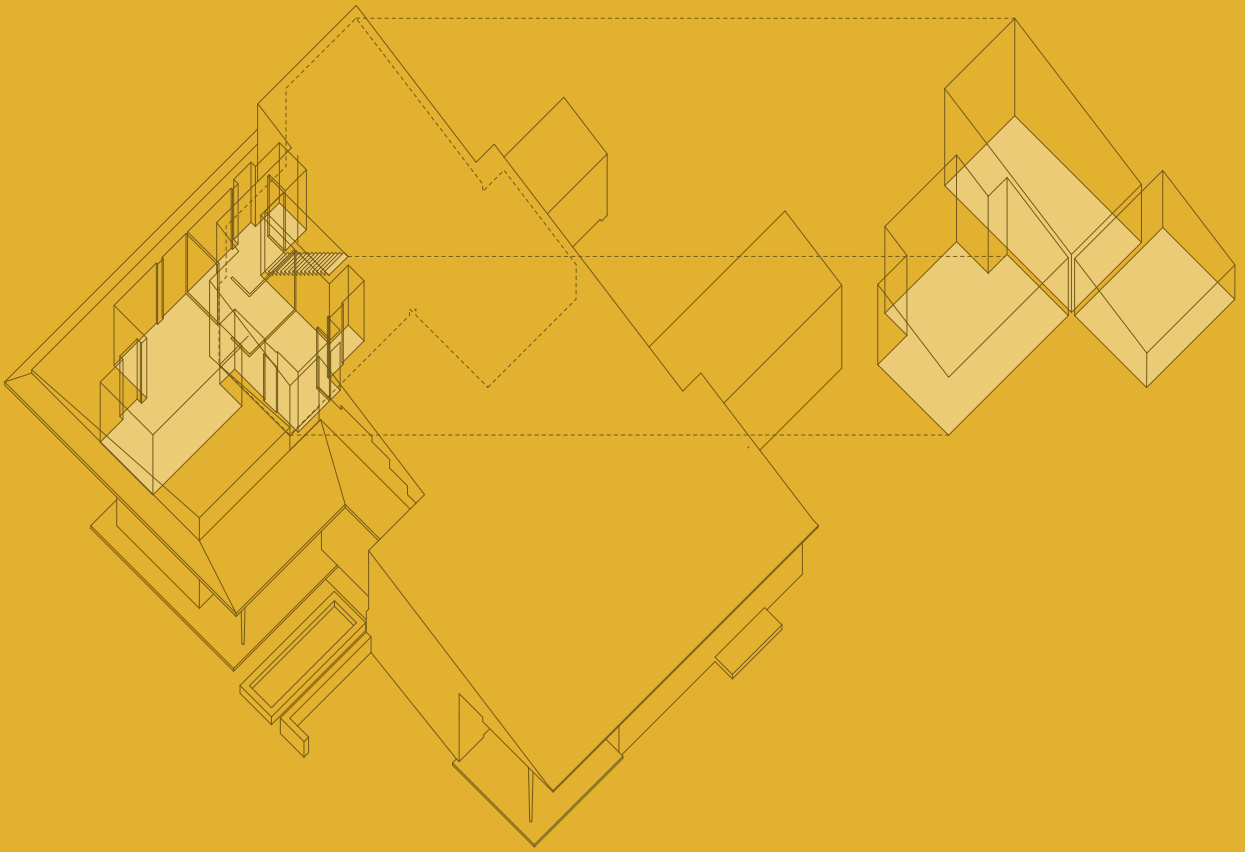
Also Villa Mairea is "a refinement of a series of [...] a few basic ideas: a courtyard differentiated from the natural pine forest of the site, a cluster of residential spaces connected with a mode domestic service-, bedroom- and sauna-wing, social and private aspects of the house, articulation of living spaces and integration of art exhibits with residential functions."<sup>[5]</sup> The private spaces of Maison Louis Carré are the biggest difference in the internal disposition with Villa Mairea which "were contained in a separate wing" on the second floor<sup>[3]</sup>. The covered entrance, the entrance hall with clinker pavements, the wood ribbed ceilings, the stairs connecting two slightly different levels, the diagonal disposition of space and use of occluding edges, the continuous public space, the wood-clad columns, the fireplace as the heart of the home, all resonate as a common language, explored and deepened through iteration.

The diagonal composition of spaces produces an effect also on the exterior, rendering the volume as a highly plastic one. By going around it, one gets the impression it has ever-changing views and as Quantrill says "this house, which starts out with a "classical" pedimented front, cascades into the garden with full Cubist vigor."<sup>[4]</sup>

As Aalto describes his project "the floor plan is so arranged that every interior room receives a corresponding exterior space (patio or special garden corner)"<sup>[2]</sup> and with it "views which are the core of the whole composition"<sup>[1]</sup> upon the landscape and a precise orientation for the sun to shine in.

The public spaces have exclusively westward openings on the landscape, from which they are also provided with light. Except for the clerestory of the hall, which, facing north, captures the diffused light, the best for the art exhibited in such a space [Fig.7]. Towards the south, as already mentioned, are the openings of the private rooms [Fig.9]. The

From the top:  
Figure 5- floor surface of  
the service spaces of the  
house  
Figure 6- routing in the  
service spaces of the house



service rooms have exclusively openings towards the East, where the maintenance yard is [Fig.8].

Perhaps the success of the program derives from the use of materials. The extensive use of wood on the inside warms up the colors of the house, much like its Nordic sibling, making the atmosphere very comfortable.

On the exterior the use of white washed brick and different limestones as pavement and pediment make the building highly plastic and thus make it seem as a molded sculpture, in anticipation of the contained art. To this, teak wood is added, as a signature of Aalto's treatment of the cladding materials. A materiality that is recognizable in many other designs from Aalto, but which very closely resonates with that of Vila Mairea. Both villas are influenced by the Japanese use of materials and elements <sup>[5]</sup>: wood slats, rice paper, movable elements, diagonal views, and much more, as the next chapter will argue.

From the top:

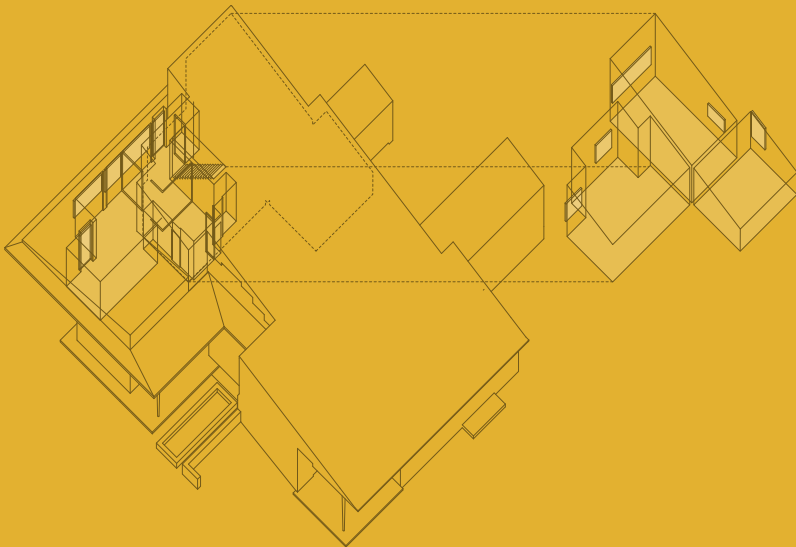
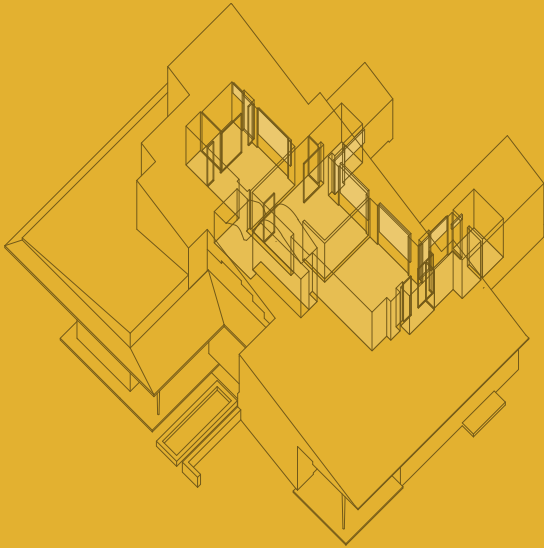
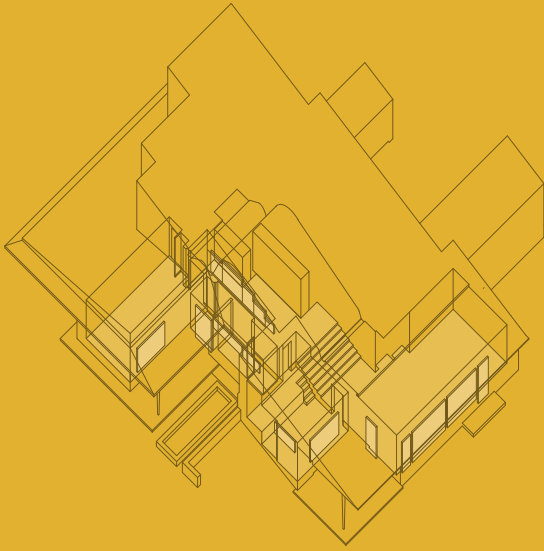
Figure 7- openings of the public spaces of the house

Figure 8- openings of the private spaces of the house

Figure 9- openings of the service spaces of the house

#### References:

- [1] Laaksonen, E., & Ólafsdóttir, Á. (2008). Alvar Aalto Architect volume 20: Maison Louis Carré 1953-63. Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation / Alvar Aalto Academy.
- [2] Aalto, A., & Feig, K. (1963). Alvar Aalto: The Complete Work Volume I: 1922-1962. Zurich: Artemis - Verlag für Architektur.
- [3] Schildt, G. (1991). Alvar Aalto: The Mature Years. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
- [4] Quantrill, M., & Webb, B. (1998). The Culture of Silence: Architecture's Fifth Dimension (1st ed.). Texas A&M University Press, College Station.
- [5] Pallasmaa, J. (1979). Villa Mairea: fusion of Utopia and Tradition. Global Architecture.



# ABDUCTING INFLUENCES

## Lessons from Japanese Traditional Architecture

---

### 因果応報

inga ouhou

Japanese saying meaning “What goes around, comes around”

The sensation of moving through a Japanese traditional house derives, for sure, from more than one aspect, more than the mere patterns revealed by objects in space, or the conceptual layers recognized in the flow of spaces of Maison Louis Carré.

At an initial research, I found myself in the company of many more observers feeling as I did.

“In front of the large windows there used to be “Japanese” screens, ie, sliding screens with a semi-transparent fabric. Several elements in the house, such as the window screens, the openwork teak flower tables and the entrance hall screen doors, are a hint of Aalto’s long lasting admiration of Japanese aesthetics. In one of the guest books Will Grohmann wrote that the house -reminds [him] of the imperial villas of Kyoto-” writes Ásdís Ólafsdóttir in Maison Louis Carré’s monograph volume<sup>[1]</sup>.

So I decided to dig deeper in this alleged link. A relationship that seemed somehow evident to so many visitors and students of the Maison, but of which no hard proof seemed to exist.

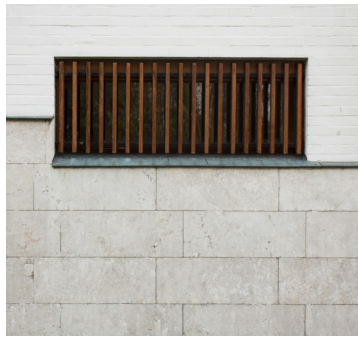
During one of the visits to my hometown, while in the library of the Politecnico di Torino for some research, I came across a book I hadn’t found earlier online or in any other library: *Aalto Beyond Finland. Architecture and Design*<sup>[2]</sup>.

In this conference proceeding, one can find an astonishing amount of information about the influences Alvar Aalto was subject to and the influences he has had around the world.

There aren’t two papers, collected in the volume, that talk about the same geographical influence, except “Japanese inspirations in the architecture of Alvar Aalto” by Leif Høgfjeldt Hansen<sup>[3]</sup> and “Aalto’s house and studio in Riihitie and Testuro Yoshida’s Das Japanische Wohnhaus: The missing link” by Chiu Chen-Yu<sup>[4]</sup>, which both refer to the influence Japanese traditional architecture might have had on the Scandinavian architect.

Both texts recognize, at different degrees, the impossibility to verify these connections to make them into a sturdy theory, nonetheless, move important steps for the very theory to be pinned down and further analyzed. It being a difficult task in the light of the knowledge that Alvar

From top left clockwise:  
A window and its *bris soleil* of wooden slabs; a double level false ceiling made of red pine ribs; A staircase with wooden slabs as parapet; metal columns embellished with wooden slabs as parapet; metal columns embellished by wooden elements.



Aalto never visited Japan.

As I don't have as immediate objective that of proving this theory, I will follow Leif Høgfældt Hansen's lead, using his paper as backbone of my research to verify the themes explored in the specificity of the building at hand. Investigating the following themes: Detail; Covering; Compound shapes and ambivalence; The expansion of space and infinity; The empty space and the freestanding element.

### Detail

The joinery of wooden elements, such as columns, slabs, ceilings and so forth, and generally the quality of the juxtaposition of different materials, reminds us of Villa Mairea, as previously stated. A building which we know had been influenced by Japanese floor plans: "[...]a plan drawing of a Japanese house is found in the Aalto Archives among the sketches for Villa Mairea." as Hansen tells us<sup>[3]</sup>. And it might be specifically by Das Japanische Wohnhaus<sup>[5]</sup>.

The attention to the joinery found in the wooden poles, scattered on the outside faces of the Maison, in the metal columns embellished with wooden elements, both inside and outside, and in the wooden slabs, acting as *bris soleil* on the majority of smaller windows. The attention to



the composition of elements of the fireplace, reminding of Villa Mairea's tea room, to form a *tokonoma*, or alcove, with the higher shelf balancing the fireplace's height and the wise use of five different materials. After all, it isn't hard to imagine Aalto having a liking for the Japanese culture which had been able of an incredible material sensibility. Göran Schildt quotes that "there is a civilization that, even in its traditional phase, its handicraft era, showed enormous sensitivity and tact towards the individual in this regard. I mean parts of the Japanese culture, which, with its limited range of raw materials and forms, inculcated a virtuoso skill in creating variations and almost daily recombinations." Alvar Aalto said in the lecture "Rationalism and man," held at the Swedish Craft Society in Stockholm as early as May 1935<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### Covering

The Japanese ambassador Hakotaro Ichikawa observed in awe the use of wood and bamboo in Aalto's architecture<sup>[7]</sup>.

He most probably knew the Riihite office, in Munkkiniemi, in which, similarly to the Maison Louis Carré, the cladding of surfaces creates a tactile experience that works on contrasts: on one side the West facing dark wood covered external walls, on the others the whitewashed brick and the limestone. "The resemblance to Japanese lattice wooden windows and walls is very clear, but at the same time the surface refers back to regional building style," writes Hansen.

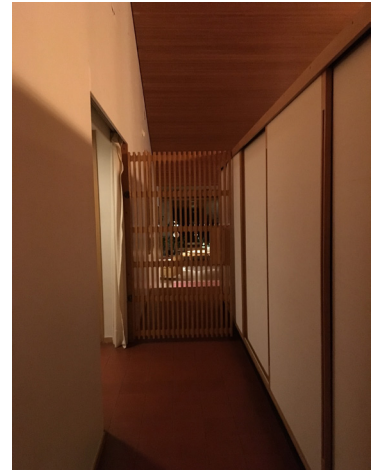
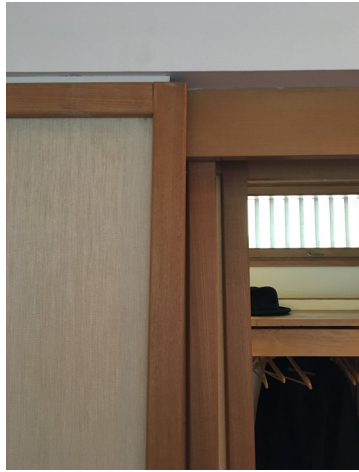
#### Compound shapes and ambivalence

The use of parallel and curved lines, forming compound shapes is a Japanese traditional character in architecture. "It is uncertain whether Aalto has intentionally applied this Japanese complementary thinking, although the principles of using curved and straight lines in the layout of an individual building [...] are fundamentally the same" writes Hansen. Need not be said, the section of the La Maison, is exactly this creation of compound shapes through the overlapping of straight and curve. Not only this creates compound shapes, but also, at the level of the building volumes, opens the way for ambivalence, or ambiguity. "[...] the Japanese teahouse often uses the clash between two incomparable building volumes" a feature of the building at hand that has had Malcolm Quantrill define it as muffled echoes of cubism <sup>[8]</sup>.

#### The expansion of space and infinity

Here the parallelism is with the *shoji*, or *shoin*, the movable sash

From top left clockwise:  
A linnen upholstered sliding door; an off-white fabric upholstered cupboard with sliding doors and a wooden gate; a rice paper sliding blinder in front of a window; an off-white fabric upholstered cupboard used for hanging artwork.



windows or doors, that create a certain degree of flexibility, typical of Japanese traditional houses. A feature borrowed in the use of movable paper and textile elements such as the living room's windows' screens and the off-white linen lined sliding doors close to the entrance. This flexibility feature wasn't only meant in the elements of the thresholds, but also in the exhibition surfaces, for which Aalto designed the display surfaces and cupboards at the entrance of the house. These elements were in the intention, flexible furniture, much reminding of the Japanese storing closets.

#### The empty space and the freestanding element

Aalto is known to have conceived his designs, starting from an empty space, designing around it. Such process "has a parallel to the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, and corresponds well to the Japanese concept of creating "emptiness" (mu) out of positive form" tells us Hansen<sup>[3]</sup>. A process that can be seen in the creation of the outer spaces in front of the entrance and on the opposite side, in the two small courts that give a higher degree of privacy to the bedrooms. The same process that seems to meet, at a certain point, the importance of the connection of the building with the landscape, another timeless lesson of Japanese

traditional architecture, seen in many buildings by Alvar Aalto such as the Experimental House in Muuratsalo, or Maison Louis Carré.

As interesting as it is to try to define the possible influences of Japanese culture in the architecture of Aalto, generally, and in Maison Louis Carré, specifically, these also lead to the interesting question of how they might have influenced other generations of architects.

“I recently visited La Maison Carré, 1956-1959, which Aalto built at the peak of his career. It was interesting to see how Aalto applied his architectural vocabulary, which he had been developing and refining since his famous Villa Mairea, 1938-1939, to this more manneristic work.” said Shigeru Ban<sup>[9]</sup>, opening the chapter, in the research of this building, of how Maison Louis Carré might have influenced architects far and near. Inspired by a land whose architecture he had never experienced, but deriving lessons from the little material he had available, adapting it to the solutions of his own regional design tasks with sensibility and refinement, Alvar Aalto managed to influence the same land’s architecture in return. As they say: what goes around, comes around.

#### References:

- [1] Laaksonen, E., & Ólafsdóttir, Á. (2008). Alvar Aalto Architect volume 20: Maison Louis Carré 1953-63. Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation / Alvar Aalto Academy.
  - [2] Laaksonen, E., & Micheli, S. (2015). Aalto Beyond Finland - Architecture and Design. In The 2nd Alvar Aalto Research Seminar, Rovaniemi Town Hall, Finland, 16-18 February 2015 (p. 340). Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation.
  - [3] Leif Høgføldt Hansen, Japanese inspirations in the architecture of Alvar Aalto.
  - [4] Chiu Chen-Yu, Aalto's house and studio in Riihitie and Testuro Yoshida's Das Japanische Wohnhaus: The missing link.
  - [5] Yoshida, T. (1935). Das Japanische Wohnhaus. Wasmuth.
  - [6] Schildt, G. (1997). Alvar Aalto: in his Own Words, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
  - [7] Schildt, G. (1987). Alvar Aalto: The Decisive Years. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
  - [8] Quantrill, M., & Webb, B. (1998). The Culture of Silence: Architecture's Fifth Dimension (1st ed.). Texas A&M University Press, College Station.
  - [9] Pallasmaa, J., Sato, T., & St John Wilson, C. (2007). Alvar Aalto through the eyes of Shigeru Ban. (J. Pallasmaa & T. Sato, Eds.). London: Black Dog Publishing Limited.
- Image references:
- [1] Pallasmaa, J., Sato, T., & St John Wilson, C. (2007). Alvar Aalto through the eyes of Shigeru Ban. (J. Pallasmaa & T. Sato, Eds.). London: Black Dog Publishing Limited.



The exhibition on Alvar Aalto realised by Shigeru Ban in 1986 in Tokyo<sup>[1]</sup>.

# MODEL MAKING

## A learning device

---

The making of the model can be seen as a learning device. In the same line of reasoning, I will be treating it as a narrative device to take the reader through my learning and the analysis of the building. Through the reproduction of the picture I had previously taken at Maison Louis Carré I will touch upon some fundamental actions undertaken, trying as much as possible to be faithful to the chronological order and mostly to pay attention to point out where some overlapping might have happened. I have thus decided to subdivide this chapter into brief but careful reflections into the functioning of said actions and the aspects of the building they involve.

### Redrawing the building

*“Non voglio già negare che e’ non sia stato un primo che cominciasse, ché io so molto bene che e’ bisognò che qualche volta e da qualcuno venisse il principio; né anche negherò essere stato possibile che l’uno aiutasse l’altro et insegnasse et aprisse la via al disegno, al colore et [al] rilievo, perché io so che l’arte nostra è tutta imitazione della natura principalmente e poi, per chi da sé non può salir tanto alto, delle cose che da quelli che miglior’ maestri di sé giudica sono condotte [...]”*

*“I do not want to deny that there was not a first to start, since I know very well that it was necessary that some day the origin would come from somebody; Nor will I deny that it was possible for one to help the other and to teach and open the way to the design, to the color and to the relief, because I know that our art is all imitation of nature, and then, whom cannot rise as high, can take things from who he judges to be the best of masters.”*

from *Le vite* of Giorgio Vasari <sup>[1]</sup>.

The same Vasari who proved to us the apprenticeship of Michelangelo Buonarroti to Domenico Ghirlandaio, to understand how Art itself was benefitting from the handing down of knowledge. Michelangelo himself knew about the importance, or rather, the necessity for art to imitate. Maybe because schooled in that intensely Neoplatonic influenced philosophical circle of the Medici family, he was very familiar with the concept of *mimesis*<sup>[2]</sup>. Or maybe for a fascination of his own for the Old Master’s pieces that crowded the churches and *palazzi* of Tuscany’s *Signorie*, which he sketched throughout his formative years. From Giotto down to, at least, the romantic painters, the learning of the painting craft, at the time in which art and craft were closely bonded in the



The picture, to be reproduced, took in Maison Louis Carré's central space.

institution of the guilds, passed through the copying of masterpieces, the reproduction of one's master's paintings and only ultimately through the production of the base for the master's work.

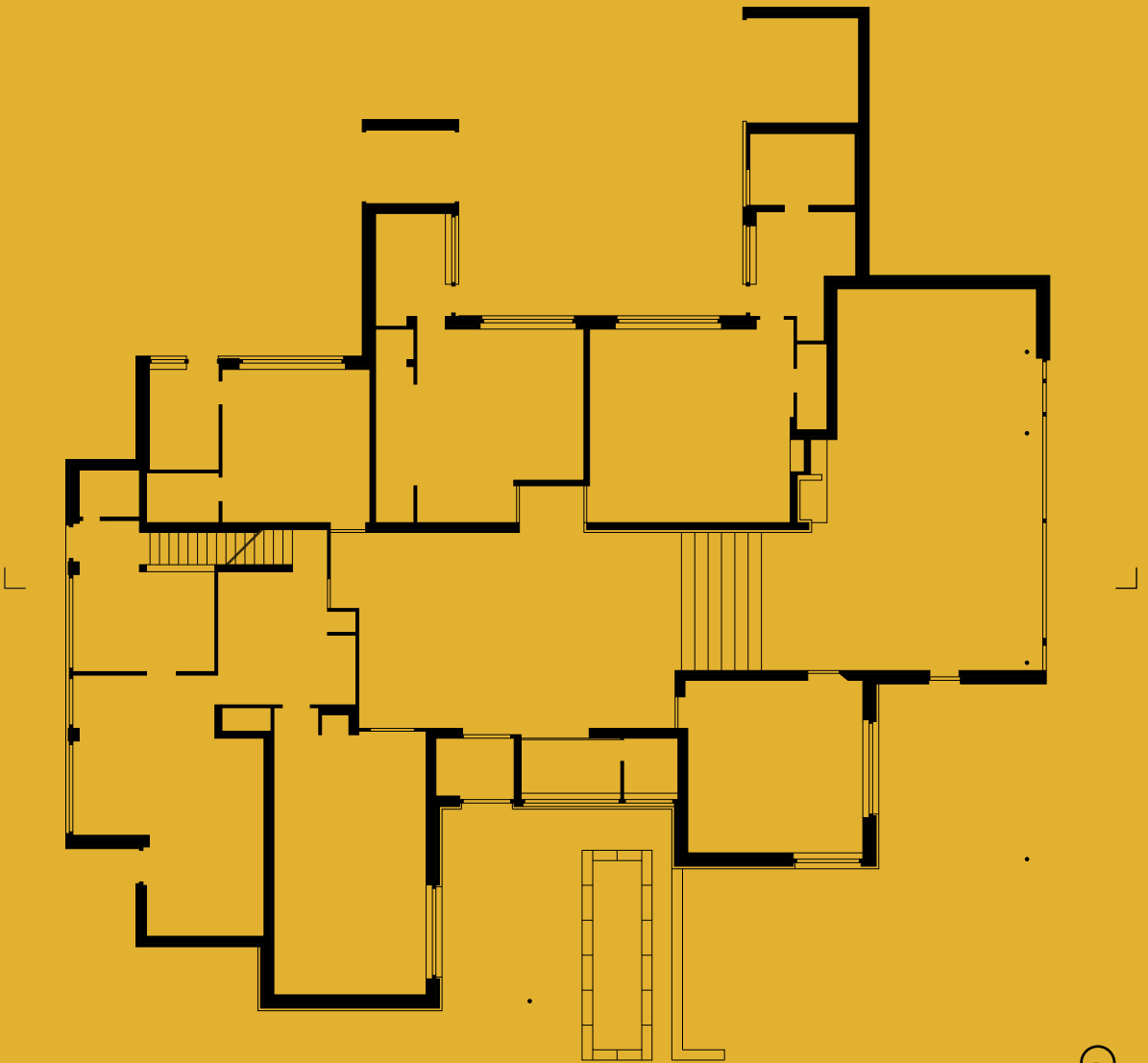
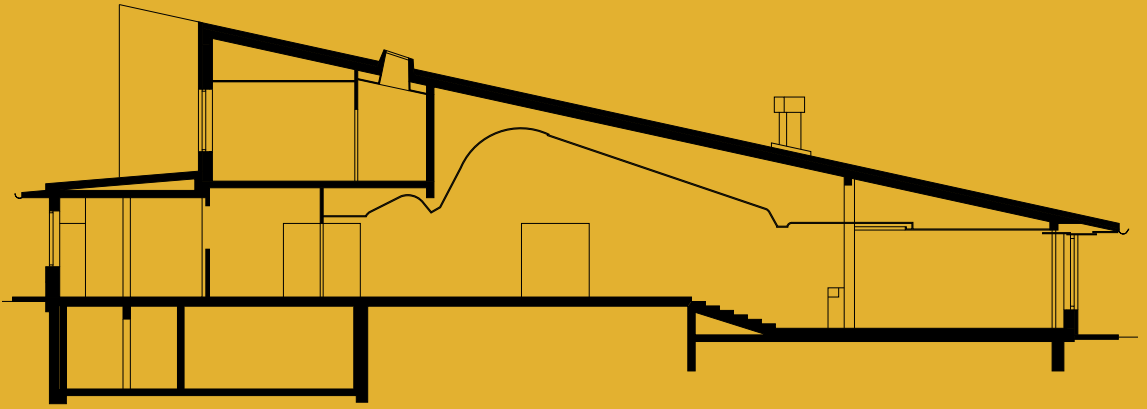
This is true for painting, as for the other arts. In architecture, the practice of redrawing the masterpieces was one of the focal points of teaching architecture for the *École des Beaux-Arts*. From the practice of the *Envoi de Rome*, the drawings of the great temples of southern Italy and of the Roman ruins, sent back to Paris from the winners of the *Grand Prix de Rome*, we understand the great importance of retracing the lines that abstract the lessons of the architectural elements in question.

The spatial quality, the ornament, the proportion, the light, the material and, why not, the passing of time - Ruskin's "golden stain of time"<sup>[3]</sup> - are all factors that can be abstracted and conceptualised through drawings, with careful lines, to be carried with oneself, shared with the interested community and made into worthwhile lessons.

This is how I understood the task of recreating a picture through a model. In which the first necessity was that of understanding the plan and the section. The action of redrawing the building; of feeling, through the linear dimensions, the angles of the corners, the built and the contained space and so on, Alvar Aalto's conclusion of the design process. And within that, understand - or at least try to shed some light on - the reasons behind every stroke I was tracing.

The first thing, after the experience within the building, was the one of sitting down, with the calm of an apprentice to retrace, on paper, on CAD and in my mind the building's plans and sections. What Michelangelo must have done in the Brancacci Chapel, in front of Giotto's and Masaccio's frescoes<sup>[4]</sup>, copying to learn what is already there; what has already been achieved.

As Alain De Botton says in his *The Art of Travel*, "If drawing had value even when it was practiced by people with no talent, it was for Ruskin



0 m 5





coming together of the details, and the immediate human experience. A type of photographic inquiry that didn't have as its end that of narrating, rather that of reminding or explaining.

These two typologies come together, strengthening each other, to provide a subjective narration that is imbued with factual elements.

#### Reconstructing atmosphere

The first step was that of selecting an image, which had, in my narration, the task of communicating the complexity, yet simplicity, of the building at hand: the atmosphere and the detail. It had to narrate the conceptual layers - giving life to art with light; opening to various light directions; integrating with the landscape; offering occluding edges; functionally dividing the house - and it had to show the use of elements in the space - the central staircase; the undulated ceiling; the display cupboards - to tell, in one unique image, the proper story.

To reconstruct the atmosphere and the details it was made of, the first action was that of transforming the two-dimensional floor plans and sections I had, into a three-dimensional model. In short, constructing the base elements: the walls and the floor levels.

In a second moment, I reflected upon the perspective and the skewed sight of the wooden ceiling, asking myself what was making the curve such. The importance of understanding the form and how to achieve it through which means.

The ceiling, as seen previously, isn't only a curved line, rather it is a compound shape that alternates a curved line to a straight line with a descending trajectory that gives a sense of wholeness to the composition. A sensation that is easily understandable from the point of view of the picture. In addition to that, the moment the two lines meet, they meet overlapping, not in a continuous flow. As to remind that there is a pause in between these two elements, between two moments, a

Photographic inquiry of  
Maison Louis Carré



because drawing could teach us to see: to notice rather than to look. In the process of re-creating with our own hand what lies before our eyes, we seem naturally to move from a position of observing beauty in a loose way to one where we acquire a deep understanding of its constituent parts and hence more secure memories of it".<sup>[5]</sup>

The interesting challenge in this action was the sparse set of information at my disposal. In the monograph dedicated to Maison Louis Carré, the plans and sections are various, ranging from process drawings and final ones. The fact I have noticed is that many of the - supposedly - final drawings have some evident differences from the actual building. One might think, intuitively, that the building has been modified after the construction, but except for some temporary and reversible solutions, such as linen upholstered sliding doors, and the addition of a plug in the kitchen's chimney, nothing has been touched, if not for a conservative restoration.

This situation has left me with virtually reconstructing the fireplace geometry, an entire wall, the cellar, and some other minor aspect, through the use of archival photographs and pictures I had taken.

Capturing idea and detail

The pictures took during the visit of the building can be divided in two distinct typologies, for which two means were used.

The first typology, with the mean of the reflex camera, was used to capture the atmosphere, essences, concepts or elements that might be telling a story about the building. The nature of the mean enables one to modulate the focus and the exposure, by modifying the ISO, the shutter time, and the aperture. This makes it possible to show the subjective reading in the inquiry of the building and narrate it through the most powerful element of photography: the point of view.

On the other hand, the second typology, with the mean of a good smartphone's camera, was used to capture the elements' functioning, the

pause that is as musical as Mahler's "dying away" notes that lead to a pause and again to a "dying away" note in his Symphony no.9 finale. Once brought together, the walls, the levels and the ceiling form the primary light source: the window to the north, that acts as a clerestory. From here the light sweeps in and, as it gets deeper into the room, gets feeble and dies on the opposite wall. From this point of view, one can understand the choice of the curved ceiling and of its slabs direction: they work side by side with the light to create a movement.

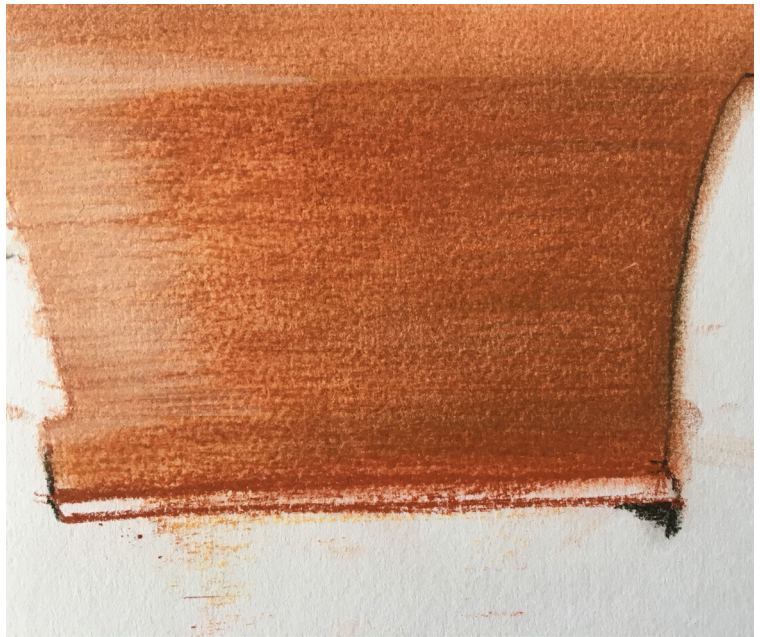
The ceiling isn't the only important feature to which I decided to give space: the staircase holds the same amount of meaning, lying placidly in the foreground. The two levels of the house, slightly different in height, are closely and - mostly - comfortably united by this element, that thus becomes a fundamental device in the experience of this home.

Yet again, I found myself reflecting upon the dimensions of the staircase, asking what was making the experience such. Not only dimensions, but care in the detail and use of materials, as I would discover once I started materializing it.

Another fundamental part of the experience, was the centrality, though asymmetrical, of the artwork: mostly paintings at the time of my visit. I reproduced them by selecting each of them from the catalog of artwork by Erró, as faithful to my visit as I could. One feature was more important than the printing of them, which revealed to be the easiest method. In this, I tried to follow what Louis Carré defined the most important part of being an art gallerist: the hanging.

The light comes from the clerestory-like window, but also from a series of secondary points: the open doors on the left-hand side, bright and diffused; the open door behind the wooden gate on the right-hand side, dim and cold; the open *enfilade* of doors where the vanishing point lies, bright and warm; the three artificial light sources on the left-hand side of the composition, again bright and warm; and, finally, the light, dim

Hard pastel study sketch  
of the light effect on the  
curved surface of the ceiling



and warm, seeping in from behind the point of view and lighting up the viewer's foreground.

This complex light combination creates alternations of dark and light that, on an experiential level, invite or repel the visitor, which is directed to respect the functional division of the home.

#### Exploring materiality

Louis Carré would say in 1967 that "[Alvar Aalto] is extremely sensitive to materials. I think that is related to his poetic talent; he is a poet."

As a matter of fact, this house uses a certain refined and wide palette of materials, which are employed side by side without ever feeling overwhelming, instead collaborating to create a pleasant environment through changes of shades and colors. In a note of the monograph volume one can read that "In August 1966, Elissa Aalto described the building materials as follows:

- terraces and garden details limestone ("Pierre de Souppes")
- same stone around the basin
- Chartres stone on the façades (light colored travertine)
- otherwise, white washed brick
- teak, ash and copper outside
- ardoise blue slate on the roof
- inside walls painted or covered with fabric
- Finnish pine for the ceilings
- oak parquet
- large ceramic tiles for the main hall
- inside doors ash, teak mulling around door leaves"

These are some of the materials I had to reproduce within the model, scaling them down to fit within the reproduction, giving to each element its proper materiality.

I started by observing what was the materiality of the plaster. Slightly

humid and in some points breaking off. Generally consistent, yet showing the “golden stain of time”. In my mind, I had to show the materiality I saw, not reproducing a building at its newest state, rather telling the story of how it came to be the building I experienced. So, after experimenting with plasters, gypsum, off-white paint, I opted for a slightly rough and off-white filler. Once applied to the surfaces and sanded roughly, it gave me the effect of a good looking wall, with some random imperfections.

The horizontal surfaces needed more working on. The floor, in red-brown clinker, just visible in the picture, was relatively easy to experiment with. After a few attempts, it was correctly rendered with its texture, chromatically corrected, scaled to the correct proportion and size and printed with an inkjet printer.

The ceiling materiality instead was more complex. Of course, individuating a material that would reproduce, twenty times smaller, the red pine slats, its veins and its slight color shift between single elements was the real concern. As I was trying all kinds of wood, in a very fortuitous way, I stumbled upon a bamboo dining mat, I had, which was worn off. The color, reddish and with a taint of yellow, was practically the same, the size of it fits closely, and most of all, bamboo was a naturally grown, scaled-down tree, as one can see in the small fibers.

Also, the ceiling is a curved one, requiring a solution accommodating the different degrees of curvature. I solved it by glueing the material to a dark and thickly woven piece of textile, which would give a certain degree of flexibility to the ceiling reproduction perpendicularly to the bamboo elements and screen the back, preventing light from filtering through the ribs.

In a very similar manner, the staircase’s materiality was solved by constant trial. The use of different woods for each different element, built up to become a whole.

What the staircase put me in front of, was the understanding that even a

Process picture of the photo set while taking the final picture of the model.



potentially standard element such as a staircase, could be thought of such depth and detail to create a unity from an amount of such diverse woods and functional elements.

#### Reconstructing details

I tried, as much as I could, to learn from the reproduction of the details, by reconstructing the smallest detail in the picture. The Artek lighting fixtures.

In this house, the variety of lighting fixtures designed by Aalto and his collaborators is indeed very high. The ones I reconstructed are similar to the ones used for Vuoksenniska Church in Imatra.

The dimension of the lamps, made them, once scaled down, not bigger than 25mm long, a very small size to work with, which imposed some restraints to how they could be done.

After many trials with different materials including plastics, aluminum and wood, I selected the most lightweight and flexible material, thick paper. By cutting, folding and modeling it I managed to create the three cylinders and the compartment they could share to insert the light bulb in. In fact, I actually inserted an incandescent bulb, the size of a LED, used years ago in train modeling, to give the distinctive warm color of incandescent lamps.

The wished effect was slightly different from how it turned out. The actual lamps shed light on the curved ceiling, creating diagonal stripes of light, an effect that was only partially accomplished by the reproduction.

Although the element was of a small size, its importance within the picture was vital to render the atmosphere of the building.

#### Exploring lighting

The reproduction of a picture can't be made through the use of a scaled model only. The model will come alive once the light is the correct one.

Construction of the wall system and of the curved ceiling.



Plastering of the walls.



Sanding of the walls and refinement of the ceiling curve.





Insertion of the staircase



Definition of the elements within the space and artwork on the walls.



Creation of the artificial lighting and refinement of the elements in the space.



As many experiments one can do, the moment of taking the picture is the one in which one gets to see and modify on the spot the lighting solution. The use of the sun, in a direct light picture, can be the best solution, as the sunlight, in a model or in reality, doesn't change its properties. But in the case of diffused light, and with so many different sources of light modulating it is fundamental.

#### Reflecting upon the lessons

I came to this University, the TU of Eindhoven, knowing little -or less- about model making. In a University such as the one I attended during my bachelor, the Politecnico di Torino, where spaces and means appropriate for the craft are scarce, the favored tool within the design process, other than the massing in 1:200 scale, are visualizations.

The creation of this model has had a great influence on the way I conceive architecture. The knowledge that space can be rendered at a different scale, to abstract and recreate atmosphere through the use of light and of materials has brought me to conclude that this mean is one I will be adopting in the design phase.

#### References:

- [1] [http://www.jstor.org/stable/476635?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/476635?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) and [http://vasari.sns.it/cgi-bin/vasari/Vasari-all?code\\_f=print\\_page&work=le\\_vite&volume\\_n=2&page\\_n=12](http://vasari.sns.it/cgi-bin/vasari/Vasari-all?code_f=print_page&work=le_vite&volume_n=2&page_n=12)
- [2] Halliwell, S. (2002). Renewal and Transformation: Neoplatonism and Mimesis. In *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (pp. 313-343). Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- [3] John Ruskin, "The Lamp of Memory," *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849)
- [4] Coughlan, Robert; (1978), *The World of Michelangelo*, p28-32
- [5] de Botton, A. (2004). *The Art of Travel*. London: Vintage Penguin
- [6] Laaksonen, E., & Ólafsdóttir, Á. (2008). *Alvar Aalto Architect volume 20: Maison Louis Carré 1953-63*. Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation / Alvar Aalto Academy.



The image reproducing the atmosphere of Maison Louis Carré's central space through the use of a model.

# ESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS

## Architectural lessons derived from the Maison

---

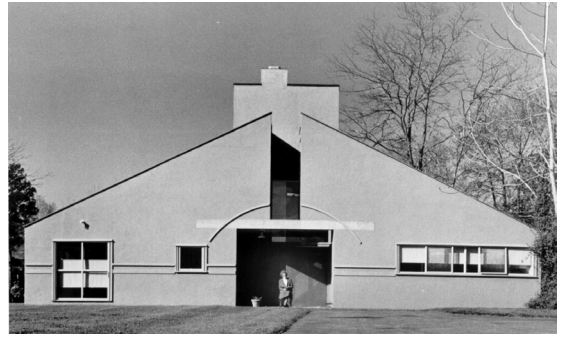
The analysis of the Maison was also concerned with finding a link to other architects and other buildings, to try to derive lessons from the connections in between them and the villa.

I have thus embarked on a research to find, throughout time and place, architects who have derived themselves worthwhile lessons from Maison Carré.

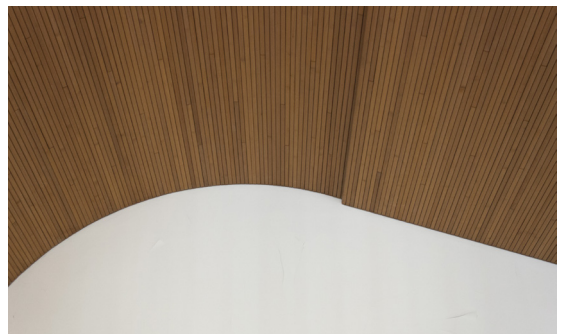
Casa de Cha da Boa Nova by Alvaro Siza may represent the best example of connection to Maison Louis Carré- The building, designed and built between 1958 and 1963, echoes Aalto's design in many ways: the slope of the roof interacts with the landscape merging with it; the gutter spout is a reinterpretation of Maison Carré's one; the hall has a clerestory, a wooden ceiling and steps descending towards the sea.



Vanna Venturi House done by Robert Venturi in 1964 shows some interesting parallels with the Maison. The facade works in both cases as a broken timpanum, dividing in a mannerist way the two lines of the roof that never meet. It is also interesting to note that Robert Venturi inserts this home in "Complexity and Contradiction".



Casa Zannier in Ragogna, Italy, built in 1964 is an example of an iteration of the design in a formalist manner. The curved ceiling and the window show the same form. Marconi was, as a matter of fact, an apprentice to Aalto during the designing of Maison Carré.



Sangath by Balkrishna Doshi, built in 1981, offers the example of an architecture which borrows an element of the design. Although there is no proof, it isn't to be excluded that the Indian architect might have visited the building while host of Le Corbusier.



As previously shown, the affection of Shigeru Ban for Aalto is born in his youth. The idea of taking Aalto's architecture and design to Tokyo, through an exhibition, overlaps with the first experimentations of the architect with the medium of cardboard tubes.



The Modenatie by Van Hee can be one of the many examples of how the themes contained in Aalto's oeuvre may have affected her architecture: the use of occluding edges; the use of diagonal cuts and views; the design of split levels; the use of light; the use of sketching in the design approach.

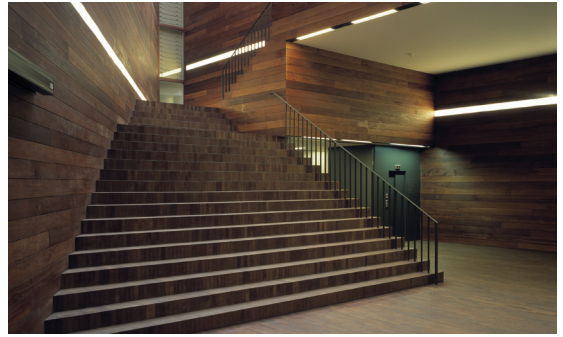


Image references:

- [1] retrieved from: <http://portugalconfidential.com/casa-de-cha-da-boa-nova-alvaro-siza-rui-paula-leca-da-palmeira-matosinhos/>
- [2] <http://www.archdaily.com/62743/ad-classics-vanna-venturi-house-robert-venturi>
- [3] Marconi, F. (January 16 2017 )retrieved through personal communication.
- [4] retrieved from: <http://www.archdaily.com/158300/ad-classics-sangath-balkrishna-doshi>
- [5] Pallasmaa, J., Sato, T., & St John Wilson, C. (2007). Alvar Aalto through the eyes of Shigeru Ban. (J. Pallasmaa & T. Sato, Eds.). London: Black Dog Publishing Limited.
- [6] retrieved from: <http://miesarch.com/work/2843>

# A CHAT WITH MARIE-JOSÉ VAN HEE

## On learning from a building

---

**M:** I'm Matteo Basso, I'm here because I'm studying Maison Louis Carré in my graduation project and I found out you also have a liking for the house<sup>[1]</sup>.

What we're doing for the graduation project can be basically highlighted by this piece that my teacher, Jan Schevers, did for the exhibition *Maatwerk / Massarbeit: Custom Made Architecture from Flanders and the Netherlands*. It's called "Masterpieces" and contains many different parts representing inspirations he has from different buildings. There is Le Thronet, there is Peter Märkli, there is Rudolf Olgiati, and for example, an outer staircase of his. He has used this staircase within his architecture, remodeling the elements but also thinking of what that means conceptually.

So I chose Maison Louis Carré and I went to visit it, to study it, to take pictures and breath the atmosphere, that is really something amazing. The light, the form, the art, everything is really nice.

One of the exercises we had to do was to reproduce a picture of it in a model 1:20. And that puts you within the architecture and it makes you think about the details, having to reproduce the artificial light.

But also, something we are trying to do is trying to link it in some way with other architects, or other buildings, so it can go through an element as the outer staircase. This is Sanghath by Balkrishna Doshi, in India and it's very very similar in some aspects of the landscaping.

This is a small architect from Italy, Federico Marconi, he used exactly the same form. He's more formalistic.

Then you have more conceptual ideas of what that house means as in Vanna Venturi's House. Robert Venturi actually takes Maison Louis Carré and puts it in "complexity and contradiction". It's very interesting that there is this link and he studies the building at the same time he designs Vanna Venturi House, although there is no referenced link between these houses.

**MJVH:** I've been in it. It's very small.

**M:** It's the first building I studied in my first year of Bachelor.

**MJVH:** The most exciting thing is the staircase, but then I'm fascinated by stairs. There is a very small staircase that goes here, up, just behind the chimney. And the front facade is beautiful, the back facade is inexistent. You never see it, in the photos of the house.

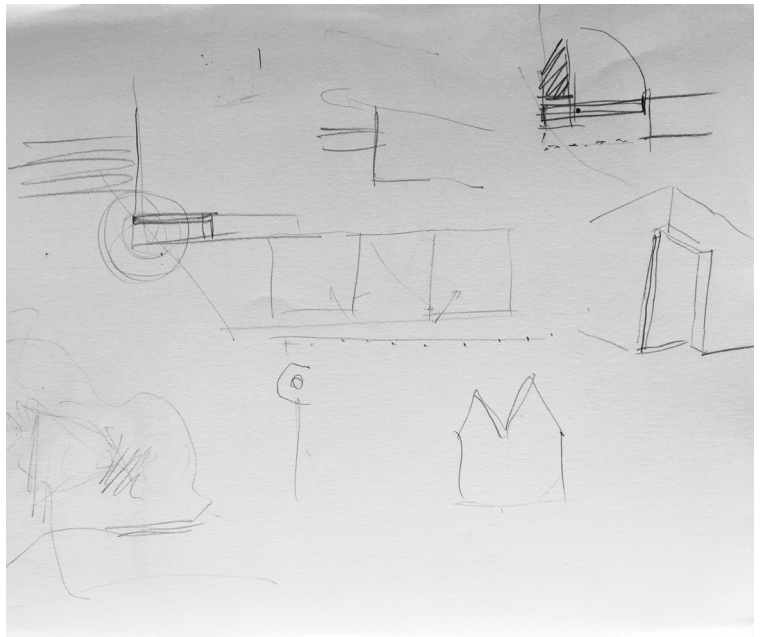
**M:** And then there is Casa de Cha da Boa Nova by Alvaro Siza and it is in some way a reinterpretation of Maison Louis Carré. The way it dialogs with the context, through the tension with the natural environment, the staircase, the ceiling, the use of wood etc.



Marie-José Van Hee <sup>[1]</sup>



Sketches made from Marie-José Van Hee during the interview.



So the thing is that I stumbled upon your article and what fascinated me was that I couldn't find an element, I couldn't find something that links your architecture to this precise building, but I see many instances where there could be some overlapping. So that has got me curious and is why I'm here to ask you.

The first thing was in sketches. So you also speak about Alvar Aalto's sketches and these very rough and as you say, I think, non-academic sketches. I took some sketching paper, if you wish to say something through the means of a sketch I think that that would be very nice.

**MJVH:** In fact, I think it was a bit exaggerated that they had been writing down about this house exactly<sup>11</sup>. Because I knew much better the work from Aalto in Sweden. From books.

And for example, Le Thoronet; I have never made an Abbey, but Le Thoronet has been inspiring as well. I find it very nice how someone calls it: translation. It's a kind of translation: you have your historical background of architecture, and everything. I often say: "even a stone can make your imagination go on", or a tree or whatever. It's just to be open for everything that's inspiring you. In fact, if you have no eyes or you don't use your eyes - in a better expression - you don't have the ability to do anything. There are also many great examples so open your eyes.

And try to remember. The remembering of something and you don't have to go exactly into the material. Even Casa de Cha da Boa Nova isn't exactly Maison Louis Carré. And each time you go back you see different things and most of the times you see things that at that moment you are busy with.

That's also a remarkable thing. So sometimes if you go back to a building and you are fully thinking about something specific, maybe very functional, maybe the kitchen for example. And Maison Louis Carré kitchen is special as well. I had never seen that kitchen because it wasn't published, but it's wonderful. The marble table with the wood underneath, so you can

sit and it doesn't feel cold. So you learn something from that building. You don't make exactly the same curve or something like that. So of course if you say "it looks a bit like this and a bit like that" then you see it more easily, but the first thing, when I came in I was not thinking of Siza, I was not thinking at Aalto. Because if they talk about it, I'll think "of course". And he (Siza) also went to the studio (of Aalto), this is what they explained to me.

**M:** It was started, I think, three or four years after Maison Louis Carré.

**MJVH:** I remember now. I went with the students of ETH. There was this person who showed us around in this building. In fact, it was not for Siza to build, it was for his master, Tavora. So, in fact, it was a project of Tavora, but he was traveling a lot, so he went around the world, and he said to Siza "maybe it's a good exercise for you". Because Siza started even as a student. So Tavora had been visiting Aalto maybe.

But nevertheless there were some real links and while Siza had been working on it, it became his project. But there was also that influence of the North.

**M:** The critical regionalism, that Frampton talks about.

**MJVH:** It's a wonderful building. But this one, Maison Louis Carré, has been more thought of in the landscape. If you look at your pictures, it was standing on top of that hill towards the whole valley. It was a real landscape. Now it's all surrounded by villas and the planted woodland, so to not see the popping up of the houses in the neighborhood.

And one of the fascinating things, and that's something that fascinates me, is walking around the corner. What does it mean?

**M:** The curiosity it creates.

**MJVH:** Yes, here you come down the stairs and then you have the room, but you have no idea how large the room will be. And what does he do? There are the corner, the staircase and the fireplace. You feel already the fireplace in the corner that is going around.

And that's just something I've been doing in another way. But I am sensitive to that. It's not a wall like this (with a straight corner). There is already the joy of the landscape and you don't know what's behind the corner, but then that's a solution for the corner.

**M:** It's always an occluding edge.

**MJVH:** That was wonderful and I've been influenced, not exactly by this, but I did recognize it. Now very clearly. That was for me a new thing, but I've been doing this by the use of doors, at my house. There is a corridor, cupboards with glass above and here I have two rooms and a central place, and I wanted to go into the rooms like this. So I did this detail, the

door and a pivot. So that's just the corner.

**M:** So you are trying to mediate the cut of the corner.

**MJVH:** Yes, but that's opening; that's a welcome, otherwise it's hurting. You're hurting yourself at that sharp corner. Here you don't have a sharp corner. Because this you feel as a corner, you are aware of it, but you have more space. It's very fine-tuning. Some people see it. If I have visits, maybe students, some students can see it, some can't. I always wonder when I walk around who will ask something about this.

**M:** So you say in the interview, I think it's also the title, about this personal library or an inner map. How does this work for you as an architect?

**MJVH:** Ah, my inner map. Well, it's a bildsprache - how do you say? - It's not exactly like you have a library. But all those things you see, you put them, somewhere in your head. like you have your library. You fill it up. It's like a memory.

If you look at things and you make them come over to you, they get in. and they'll come out - don't worry! - when you need them.

**M:** So it works like an anticipation of design?

**MJVH:** Yes.

**M:** So you see an element or, why not, a concept, something that is more complex than just an element.

**MJVH:** Yes, that's what I say: if you use your eyes and everything you have. But you have to be attentive, and sensitive, then you can, yeah, load it up in your memory. And I think you'll get something out of it. When you're designing and you just don't know what to do and all of a sudden, all the scales are different and so on, there something popping out. "Oh, yes, I've been there, I've seen this." Just sometimes I don't know what to design and I start with the contour of the place, and there's a tree. Ok, a tree. Something here. A road. And it starts like that. And I don't know what, but there's something coming out. And it's getting very dark and I take an eraser and I start over. But some lines are getting more and more. Orientation: so I start with shadows. And so on. Yeah, everybody has his way.

And in the meantime, all the memories are like bites they are coming over. That's the inner library. But if you must load it up first then: it can be memories from. For example, I had an aunt who was living in a world of plants, she was taking care of the plants of the castle, in the place where I lived. And I like to go there because there was a walled garden, the woodland around it - from that castle - and you had to go through the porch. I still see every element, you know. The house. And the first glasshouse. Then there was a wall with a glasshouse to the south against

that wall. Then behind that wall, there was a house with a window. In that glass house, for her grandmother - mother in fact - and then the wall was continuing. And then they had bees in the fruit trees, that was of my uncle. There was the orangerie. How a wonderful place.

Huge windows and then up, a hole in the wall to get in the woods, and then the fields all walled, and I went there to help plant things when it was summer.

I think that was my first architectural impression. That's the house I know the best because I did like it and I have a very visual memory.

So when I see something it goes back into the library. It was very necessary when I had to study theoretical things, I had the memory of the page, I just had to find the first letter or sentence so I could start. Like a photograph.

I need it. Something to start. That's where it comes from that visual memory. Look at things and be sensitive to them then translate all that experiences somewhere in another context.

**M:** So you would say this house goes into that inner map. But in what way? Is it elements? You already talked about the diagonal views and the occluding edges. Are there elements, are there other concepts? I could think about the tension between landscape and architecture, so built environment. Or I could think about the human scale.

**MJVH:** I've been talking already about it. He puts the villa on the top, and then he uses the slope in the house. For Flemish people who are always having flat houses. And I was always very angry about it. Every moment there was a little bit of slope I would use it, just because of that connection. For example, in my house, there is the level of the old house. Although it's not in the same place, the town of Gent has been made higher up over the years, especially in the Middle Ages and later on. So my house had some roots of the 16th-century. The level of the floor was just stepped down to come in. And I wanted to keep that as a feeling. And that makes that when I'm in my kitchen and out of the gallery, that's two steps up, and if I'm standing at my working table in the kitchen, looking in the gallery, straight in front. Two steps higher and it gives much more perspective because of your horizon, is not on the real level of when you are in the gallery, so it's coming down.

For example, I've always been fascinated by the paintings of Piero Della Francesca. His horizon is always close to the feat. It's much - normally it should be eye level - much lower. Also Mantegna. But of course with him it has to do with the wall frescos so he tries to make it a bit on the level because paintings are a couple of meters above the floor level, so

he's making his horizon very low, so that you have the feeling of looking in the landscape or at the people a bit closer. You have kind of another relationship with it, otherwise, you should be asked to stand on some steps somewhere. Just to have communication with things even in the landscape.

Going parallel, we are going down together, here [in Casa de Cha da Boa Nova] it's used as well, going down to the rocks, to the sea. To the sea level and then to the water coming over. It's marvelous. We had been there, years ago, with students. We could eat there at the time and we had been renting the whole restaurant with the students. And then we came from the swimming pool (in Leiça) that was a bit further on. We walked up there and then came up, while the sun was going down in the ocean. That red sun, reflecting on that ceiling and then also from there, the light coming. Because when you're coming in, you're looking through that window. Moments like this get into your memory.

It doesn't mean you can do it everywhere. You can do a window and there's nothing to see. Yes, and there are people who have this marvelous place and haven't even seen that.

**M:** I think light is another very interesting theme to talk about, talking about Maison Louis Carré but mostly talking with you. Your use of light is something that astonishes me, personally. Is there any instance of Maison Louis Carré that you have put in your personal library?

**MJVH:** No, I think if Aalto was in my library it had to do with landscaping much more. Because I've never been visiting - I started to visit Aalto not so many years ago. I know it from books. So there's some other reading, things you know from a book, especially in studying plans and sections. Facades I'm not interested in. That's my way of doing architecture. The house or the building has something to tell from the inside to the outside. For the outside then you have the confrontation of the building to the context, the environment. Inside it's just the history, its proper history of course. And it starts to get light, connections - what you want to see -, it's always secondary that you want to have from outside to inside.

So it's more about working from inside out. Maybe in Italy, you do it a bit different, but I've been influenced a lot by Italy. But first by the northern architecture and then by Italy.

**M:** Also Alvar Aalto was very influenced by Italy.

**MJVH:** Yes, I've been a lot to Italy.

The Etruscans. I'm an admirer of Etruscan architecture. Also the sculptures; bronze and everything. And also their culture: because men and women were equal. So that's already a thing that tells you, you have

to go for it.

**M:** By the way, it's Women's Day today, so I wish you a great day.

**MJVH:** (to collaborator, in Flemish) Is vandaag Vrouwendag. De jongen zegt me dit, en dat deed je niet.

We have to celebrate it all by ourselves.

I'm very bad in keeping the line. Like I'm thinking about here and there and everything is there to make something. Because architecture is everything. It's good food, it's a culture.

It's like a painter: If he doesn't live he cannot paint, you know, he has to live. A painter or other artists as well. It's much more than just have been learning to become an architect.

Don't forget to live!

**M:** Last question: I see that your architecture deals mainly, not solely but mainly, with housing.

**MJVH:** Yes, it's now a bit different, but...

**M:** So, This is a house (Maison Louis Carré), and yet not only a house.

There are many instances in which you didn't do only a house but also designed functions connected to it.

What do you think that an architect must do in relation to, on one side the house and the people living in it and on the other side the city? As you also do. Or say the Markthal, here in Gent, that is something for the community.

**MJVH:** Well, it's also a house. It's a house for more than one family. It's a house for the whole city. That was a bit our response to the question of that square. Because they still make remarks on it: that it has no function. But why should everything have a function? Does a tree standing there have a function? Does a building standing there have a function? It's the same, you know, and for me, that's a roof. And a roof is mostly used by people and nowadays I think it's a place for people to meet now, where they play music and it's very nice and I hate it that people say it's a useless thing.

Why does everything have doors and windows? If it has doors and windows it should be more useful than just having a roof? In that place, not to me. But it's a commonplace. Everywhere I'm going and seeing it. We also did it in Deinze but there it's even more functional, like today it was a market and then they use it when people are walking in the rain all the time from one place to the other and then they can stand there and talk. It shouldn't be in use every day. Why? There are a lot of places that are close up even if they have doors and windows that are not used. It's a commonplace and that's what's very nice about it.

Overlapping between two places, the roof, and it's organizing a lot of views that was a very important element as the historical way of giving back the definition of the two small places there were before. So we had been carefully working on the geometry, so to regulate views that we did know from old postcards. And there were buildings standing at the narrowness between them, just to have a view on the church on one side and then underneath you had a view to the Mammelokker and the Beffroi and then the not so interesting building beside the town hall, the white one, and you just see that façade. We kept over the facade of the town hall and we used even the definition of the smaller and bigger top facade. We picked it, we just took that element and used it for our facade.

**M:** It's very interesting what you say about the giving cover. The roof always covers.

**MJVH:** The thing that human people need most is the roof.

**M:** I come from Turin - Turijn - and we have porticoes. Long ones. And it rains a lot, like here. So that is a place that creates community.

**MJVH:** I found something special in the porticoes you have. Because they continue over the road with trams going underneath, in between the porticoes. Then you have the big place near the river.

**M:** Piazza Vittorio.

**MJVH:** We had been doing an exercise there with students of Sint-Lukas. That's what he did every year, went somewhere for exercise. Lubiana, Berlin, everywhere. With students, so we always learn something ourselves about the city. We were outside our context, so also we, as teachers, had to learn, had to be very attentive, just to see a bit more than the students, you know.

**M:** Of course, it would be a waste not to learn.

**MJVH:** No, you never stop learning. It's something so nice. But some people are really getting blocked at a certain age. But it's the nicest work you can do as an architect. If you open your eyes, walk around, see things, visiting. We have got so many tools to look, to learn to look at things, to have attention to history, to have attention to sculpture, to everything. We have been handed during our studies, you know. There are a lot of professors who wake you up: look at this, do this, make a sketch of this. Just make a reminder of it.

**M:** I just wanted to give you this picture I took of Maison Louis Carré as a gift.

**MJVH:** What's most fascinating is that when you come in you have the two cupboards, that are just covering the bedroom area. In the meantime, there is the beautiful light from the north.

When I went there was nothing hanging from those cupboards, but he used his building as a kind of gallery, where he would have the best of his collection, so the people would come in, and wow.

He came in with the people that wanted to buy them.

And you just have the distance.

But one of the most remarkable things that you have, is the entrance. You have the porch, and you are already thinking this is not a normal house.

When you come in (from the gate) and don't see anything, you just walk, and then you come around and wow!

And then you have that covered place. That's a welcome. A covered area that is a real welcome. That you don't let people wait in the rain.

Then you have the corner of the dining room. You have the corner with the pipe that is dropping water.

He helps you to look at things because they are nice to see.

And the light posts, those kind of flowers with a lamp. The lanterns. They are like flowers in that green copper.

And then I was fascinated by his lamps in the dining room, where he lights up the table and the paintings.

**M:** He designed them on purpose for that house.

**MJVH:** Yes, lighting with one lamp two things.

Then I say to myself, shit I didn't think about it!

**M:** But this house gives you a lot of that feeling. How much thought.

**MJVH:** It's wonderful because I've seen his houses in the North, that now you have one house like this in France and if you look at the architecture of France, you don't have - it hasn't had any influence on nothing in the whole of France. Because I think you can find houses in Belgium that have been influenced by it, in Portugal, but in France, I can't see them.

#### References:

[1] Buxton, P. (2013). Marie-José Van Hee's inspiration: Maison Louis Carré by Alvar Aalto. Retrieved December 1, 2016, from <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/marie-josé-van-hees-inspiration-maison-louis-carré-by-alvar-aalto/5058545.article>

#### Image references:

[1] [http://www.belgium-architects.com/nl/mjvanhee/source:index\\_updated\\_new#/teamPhotoModal](http://www.belgium-architects.com/nl/mjvanhee/source:index_updated_new#/teamPhotoModal)





