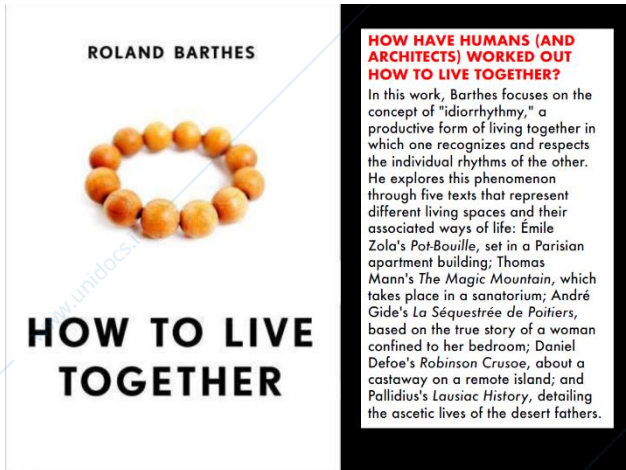


LIVE TOGETHER

Last week we explored a new way of living, something detached dwelling minimal units. Today we will talk about living together, in which the private and more independent dimension is connected to the need of putting people and houses together, in order to have a shared building and dimension.

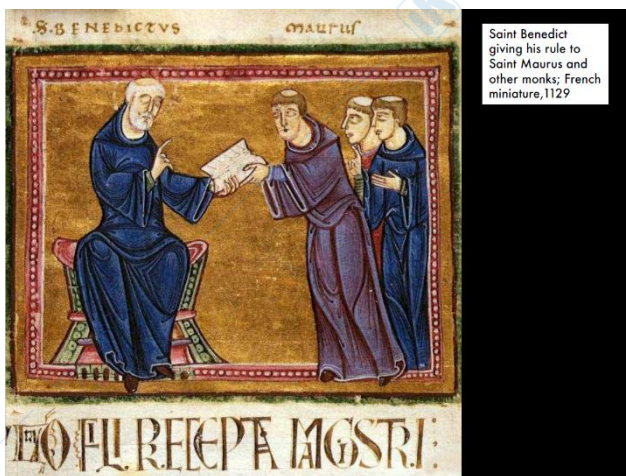
How can we live together? How can we design it?

We will be looking at how humans, in particular architects have dealt with the task of living together.



How to live together by Roland Barthes, is a collection of notes collected by his pupils from his speeches to the College of France, a famous college in Paris to which many intellectuals were invited to take part in lectures. He started to think about the concept of living together from the concept of idiorrhymy; a productive form of living together, a way of finding a balance between different individuals to find a good balanced rhythm. Because we need to dialogue with others to live together. He explored the idea of living together but not by giving a traditional lecture, but rather to discuss with his audience this topic through five novels. These five texts discuss different ways of living, in different settings, like *Pot-Bouille* by Emile Zola which is set in Parisian apartments, *The Magic*

Mountain by Thomas Mann set in a sanatorium, *La Séquestrée de Poitiers* by André Gide based on the true story of a woman confined in her bedroom, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe about a castaway remote island and finally the *Lausiac History* by Palladius which talks about the ascetic lives of the desert fathers.



Another archetypical situation is the picture of Saint Benedict giving his rule (a book to establish an order between the monks and their relationship with nature and the world and to make the individual stronger) to Saint Maurus and other monks because we can connect the idea of living together to the way of living of monks. Again, the idea of a rule, of a higher purpose, a higher spiritual dimension, but at the same time the need to balance daily life and freedom. The model of Saint Benedict is a sort of family, with a father on top of the hierarchy and the monks were seen as brothers.

John Rogers Herbert, *Ora et labora*, 1862

One of the main ideas was the one of *Ora et labora*, depicted in the picture by John Rogers Herbert, where we can see a balance between working and praying. This could be seen as a sort of idyllic way of living together. This could be applied to small communities with strong faith, where everybody shares everything, where people work for the others.

J.G. Ballard, *High Rise*, 1975

Now we jump to a dystopic vision provided by Ballard, a British writer who wrote *High-rise* (il Condominio in Italian), a novel written in 1975 in which we see a tuff story about the disintegration of a community that lived in a building with all the facilities, where different social classes. The novel starts with a good picture of this high-rise building, where people live together, work, have parties, etc. But suddenly the situation breaks down and we a progressive destruction of the building and also of all the social rules that balanced this way of living. (of course, this is an extreme situation in a dystopic future) All the comforts inside the building make the people uninterested of the outside world, because they can find everything they need. Some group start to attack the enemy floors

where the wealthier people live. Ballard reflect of architectural and psychological terms: can such a project influence our psychology? The answer for Ballard I yes, but there can be different answers. Living in High-rise requires a special type of behaviour. In High-rise we can see the gap between the idea of improving and changing social conditions and our homes, but at the same time the confirmation of older social subdivisions, in which powerful and rich people rule over the rest of the population. We are beyond the society we are used to live in, and beyond this line things are different, minds are different and so are people. What we consider normal in our society is completely gone and destroyed by a new disorder. Washing machines and refrigerators are used as garbage bins, and the protagonist cannot remember their original function.

A phalanstère (or phalanstery) was a type of building designed for a self-contained utopian community, ideally consisting of 500-2000 people working together for mutual benefit, and developed in the early 19th century by Charles Fourier. Fourier chose the name by combining the French word phalange (phalanx, an emblematic military unit in ancient Greece), with the word monastère (monastery).

L'AVENIR.
Perspective d'un Phalanstère ou Palais Stéiciétaire dédié à l'humanité.

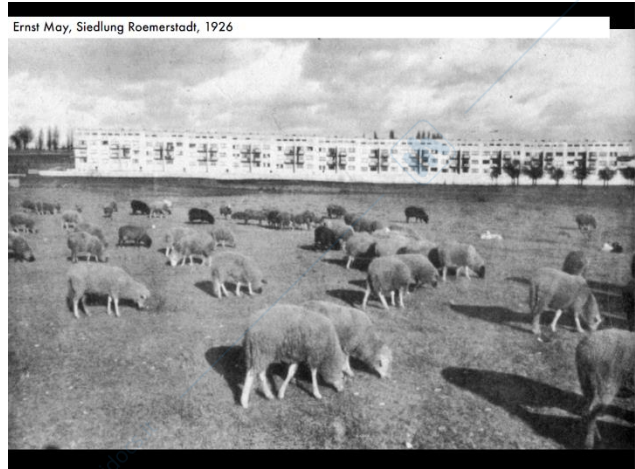


Charles Fourier, Phalanstère, XIX sec. (1600-2200 inhabitants, c. 450 families)

We can find numerous ways in 19th and 20th century in which architects have dwelt with the idea of designing buildings and neighbourhoods in which people can live together. Like for example the Phalanstère by Charles Fourirer, which is a social project, a sort of utopian community of 500/2000 people with the same purpose and everyone contributing for the wellbeing of the community. This is somehow the father of many examples of collective building that we have in the 20th century. The problem of creating new housing models was and still is one of the biggest challenges for an architect especially since people started moving to cities.



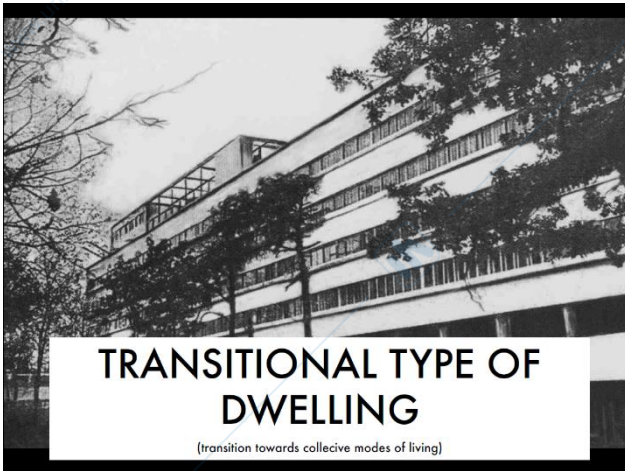
The Karl-Marx-Hof is another example from 1926 designed in Wien, as well as the Siedlung Roemerstadt.



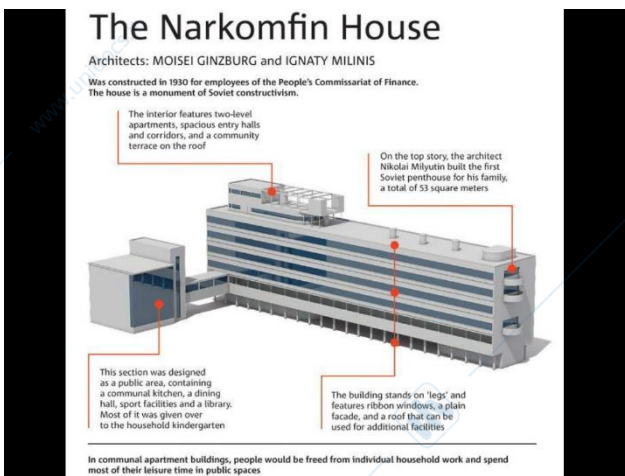
Narkomfin building was an experimental residential building by Ginzburg and Milinis in Moscow at the end of 1920s. It is very important because of its architectural characteristics but also because of the political environment in which it was built. 10 years before there was the Russian Revolution and so there was a complete redefinition of the society. The Narkomfin was designed to experiment new ways of living their society.



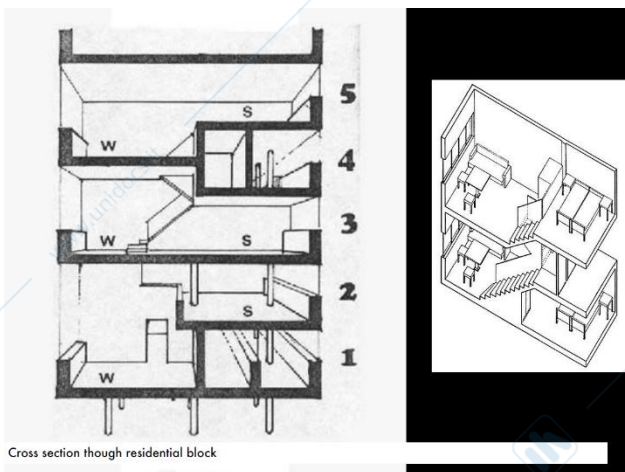
The building had an ambitious perspective and was part of a wider discussion of collective living: the idea, explained in the book called *Dwelling* by Ginzburg (right hand side), is research on the concept of housing considering history but at the same time looking towards a new way of living together.



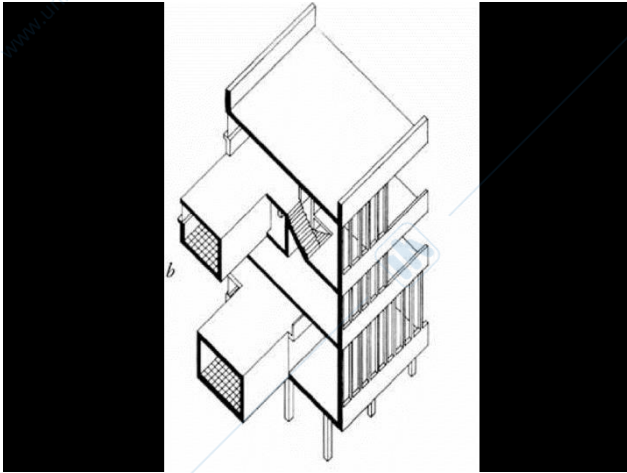
This was a political shift involving transformation of the traditional family and the figure of the woman, following the model of European families. Another idea was to look at Le Corbusier, Gropius, etc. and change the engineering of the buildings to make them cheaper and more efficient. At that time in Russia the challenge was a liberation of the woman and to make new typologies and new living models. Functions were integrated in the building inside collective spaces so women could work and not only take care of the family. Education was not a private task, but a public affair, the state has the responsibility to educate children, not the families.



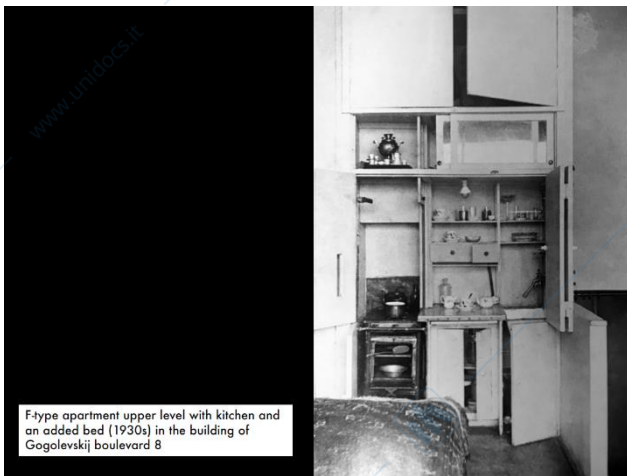
The Narkomfin was built for the employees of the People's Commissariat of Finance. It was composed of five floors and a separate building dedicated to public functions, such as kitchen, dining, sport and a library.



From sections we can see the originality of the design, which is made of two parts: the lower one where we can find the type K large apartments dedicated to families, and on the upper part we can find the type F dedicated to one of two people, and in this case, there was a real revolution of facilities provided inside the flats because we have a double height ceiling, and this idea was taken from higher classes apartments. The type F was declined in different variations, one of which was a one-room apartment, where different kind of rooms have different height of ceilings, bathrooms were much smaller.



The inner corridors are quite wide because they are not only space for circulations but also to put heating system because they were intended to be common spaces. Another fundamental idea was to fill the spaces with light to have the best illumination inside the rooms.



Ftype apartment upper level with kitchen and an added bed (1930s) in the building of Gogolevskij boulevard 8

The kitchen inside the type F apartment is a beautiful piece of design because it is designed in every single element in order to rationalize its functions to reduce the space dedicated to kitchen activities since it was just an emergency kitchen because the dining room was inside the public building. What used to be an entire room is reduced to a cabinet.



Hinnerk Scheper, colour design for apartment F of the Narkomfin building, Moskau, 1929

Each type of apartment was studied in every detail, Hinnerk Scheper, who studied at the Bauhaus (starting from 1925 he will be the head of the Mural Painting Workshop at the Bauhaus, place previously occupied by Wassily Kansinsky), contributed to the colour design of the building, choosing colours according to functionality with an artistic approach to architecture.

This building has been renovated recently because it is a sort of landmark of the architecture of the 30s in Moscow. There is also a website narkomfin.ru, where it is possible to find facts about the history and the different types of cells.



20 marzo 2019
← **Итоги конкурса на разработку дизайн-проекта ячейки F-вниз жилого комплекса Дом Наркомфина**



There are also some rendered pictures of what will be of the apartments. The architect in charge of the renovation is the grandchild of Ginzburg. This new intervention updated the building to a Moscow 21st century style.

(15 minutes video about Narkomfin - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sx_0uCn3fOo)

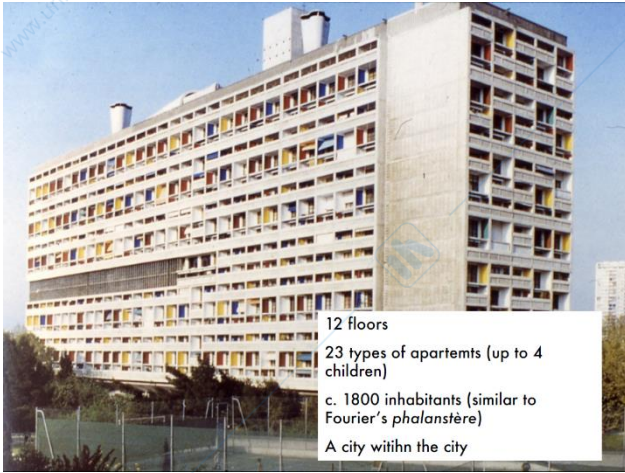


Le Corbusier, Unité d'habitation, Marsiglia, 1947-53

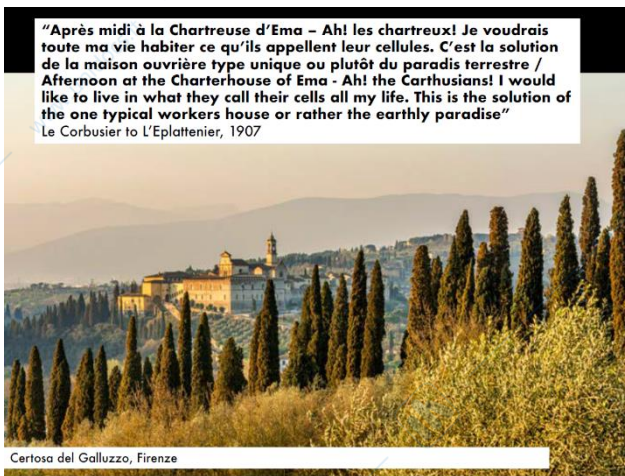
One of Le Corbusier most famous projects is the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, built after WWII, in a situation in which cities needed to be rebuilt and expanded according to the sparking economy after the war.



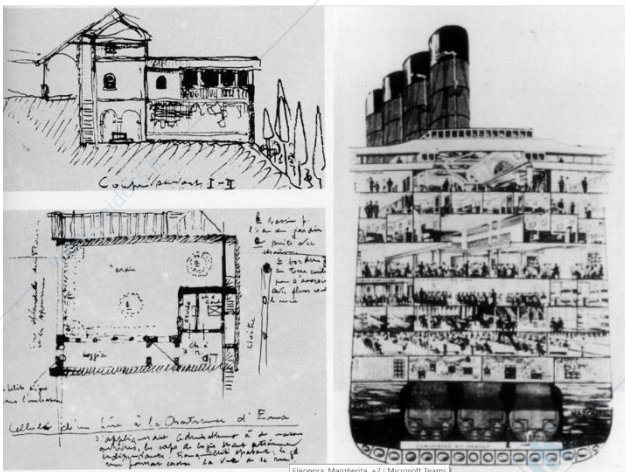
The influences between the Narkomfin and the Unité are visible, Ginzburg worked on his projects many years before Le Corbusier because the rising ideas of new ways of living were stopped in the more traditional French setting. Inside Ginzburg approach Le Corbusier's influence is also visible.



The Unité d'Habitation was intended to host almost 2000 people, a quantity similar to the Fourier's phalanstère, and can be seen as a city within a city so a building with mainly residential cells but with public facilities that were put in the middle and on the top of the building that allowed to live inside the building 24/7. On the roof there are gyms and schools and swimming pools for the inhabitants.



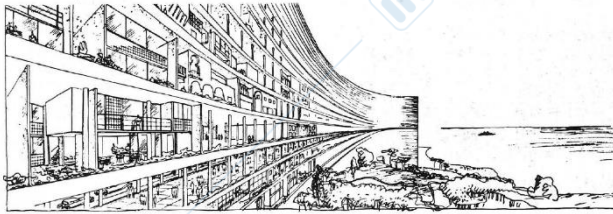
There are connections with Le Corbusier's studies that come from his early travels to Italy. Places like the Chartreuse d'Éma, near Florence, had a big influence on him and we can see this on a writing from 1907 where he appreciates the cells in which monks live. He had the idea of connecting the dimension of the cells to the modern worker house.



He also uses sketches to analyse this small living units, which are then compared to the cruise, one of the most modern pieces of engineering of that time.



Le Corbusier, Plan Obus per Algeri, anni Trenta



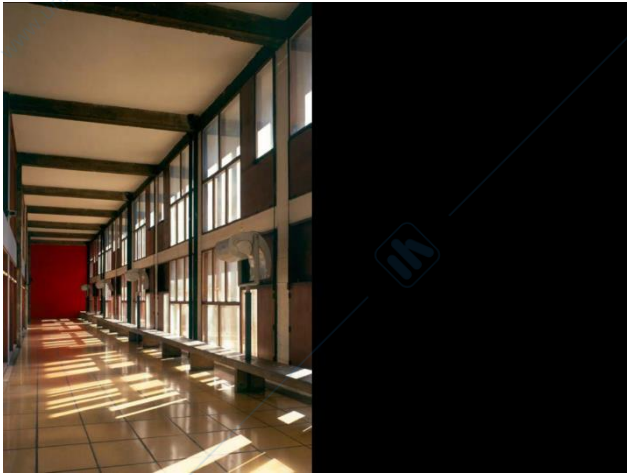
We can find another project with the small scale of the cell and the big scale of the infrastructure built by modern engineering at the beginning of the 20th century. Plan Obus for Algeri is another project by Le Corbusier that he made in the 30s, where the cells are all connected to create da huge structure that also has a highway on top.



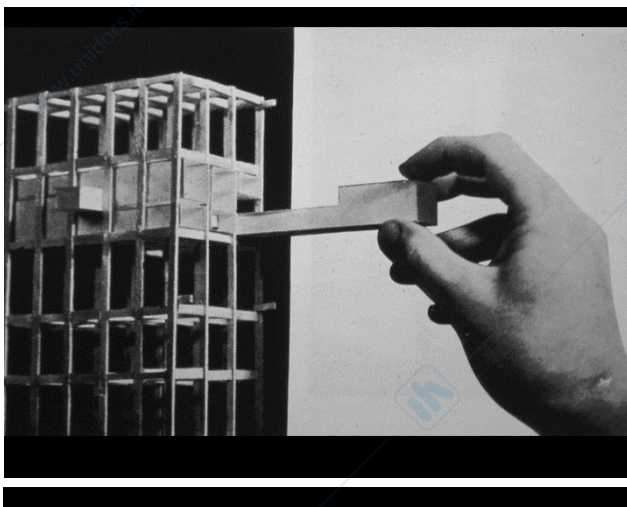
There are many details in the Unitè from the huge pillars at the base of the building made of reinforced concrete, which are different from the pilotis design from the Ville Savoy. The Le Corbusier from the 50s is very different in the materials and weight of the architecture compared to the lightness of the buildings from the 1920s.



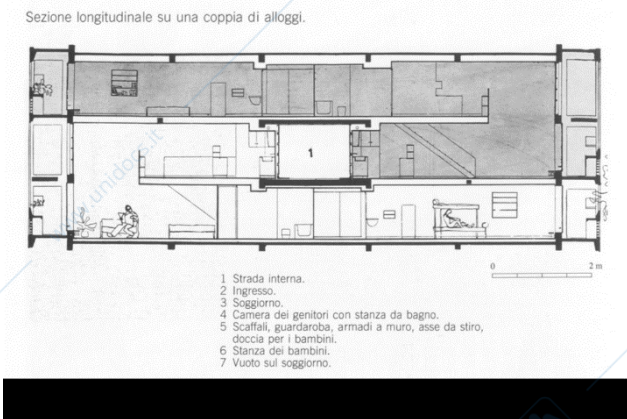
The approach comes from a more industrialized style, the structure can be seen and also the cells.



The "street" in the middle of the building with the public facilities.



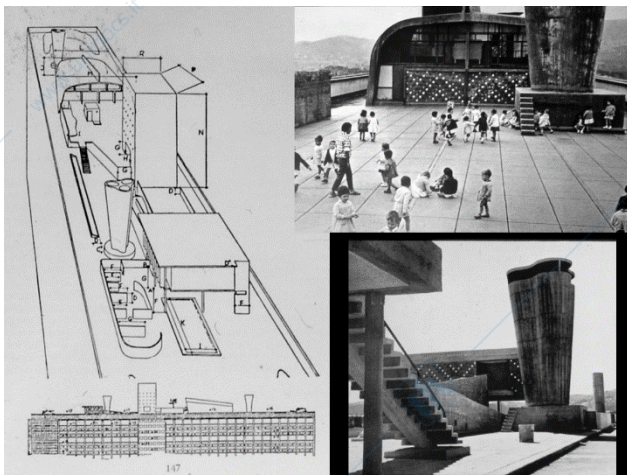
The concept of the Unitè is to have a tridimensional concrete frame in which the L-shaped cells are inserted. These cells are designed like an object industrially produced.



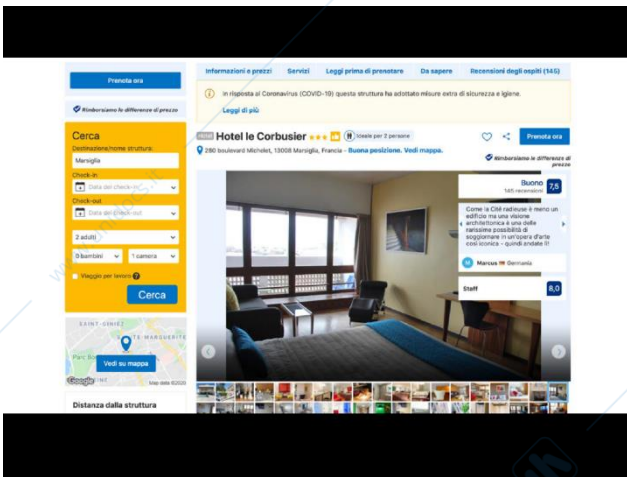
The corridor is placed in the middle of two apartments that have a double height with a living room in the first part and with the rooms on the longer section. The apartments have windows on both sides in order to have the best light exposure and better air circulation. There is a wide range of details that follow the proportion of the Modulor, a Renaissance like system of measure and geometry that Le Corbusier uses for the dimensions and proportions of furniture and architecture. An interesting element is the loggia, which is like a filter between the inside and the outside, which protects from the sun.



This filter is divided from the inside with a step that also functions as a seating area. The kitchen is designed not a single piece but as a standardized piece of furniture, designed with the help of Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvè. Again, the challenge of reducing the spaces with an optimization of the functions.



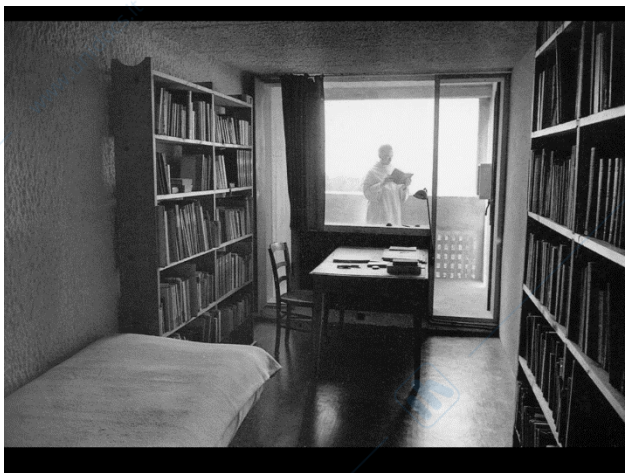
The flat roof is very famous, and it has a link to the sculptural yet functional elements that Gaudí used on top of his architectures in Barcelona. The reinforced concrete is not a flat material, but it is rather shown with its porosity and the traces of the constructive process.



There are more Unité other than the one in Marseille, one is in Berlin, and today it is possible to sleep in this building that hosts an hotel, which was not included in the original project, but it is composed of some of the apartments of the original building.



The Monastery of La Tourette near Lyon is another example of Le Corbusier's work. It is another place for living together and in this case the connection with Middle Age's abbeys, with a courtyard in the middle. The La Tourette building has a more sculptural and modern shape of course and uses yet again the idea of the cell.



We could compare them to the prisons that we saw in the first two lessons but also to the project by Leonardo Di Chiara. These, along the the Unitè and the Narkomfin, are all variations of the same concept but adapted to the time and place, but always having many points in common. Again, we have a gradual separation between outside and inside with the use of a filter that protects from rain and sun and creates a connection with nature and where the monk can read a book because there is a difference between reading a book in a nice place and in a bad place.



This filter also frames the landscape, and it is possible to enjoy the outside, which doesn't happen if we have a glass wall dividing directly the inside form the outside (like in modern skyscrapers). The balcony is divided in two parts, one is open and allows to see the outside, and the lower part, the parapet, that allows to perceive the landscape but also creates a division. These are the great details of architecture.



Another interesting example by Kisho Kurokawa is the Nagakin Capsule Tower from 1972. It is part of the Metabolist movement, a group of architects that were oriented towards a total renovation of Japanese architecture during the years in which Tokyo was experiencing a big economic boom. The way these capsules are designed and the concept is brought to an extreme, because they are designed like industrial products according to a particular idea of private space and industrialized production.



The concrete boxes are assembled on site in a sort of Tetris. All the facilities needed are put inside the capsule like the case of cabins on cruises, with always the idea of optimizing spaces and saving money.



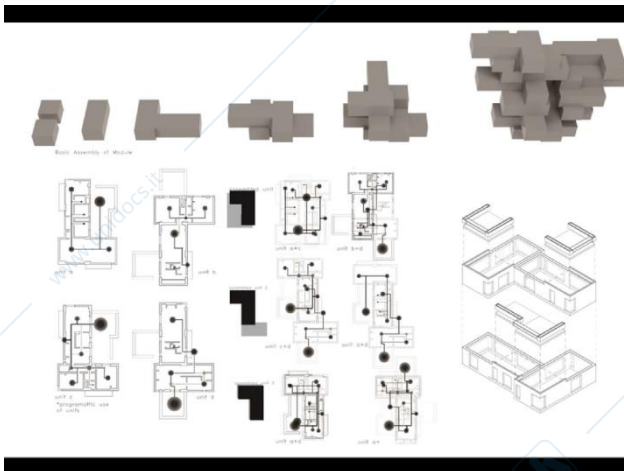
With the same idea but with a completely different urban approach is the Habitat 67 by Moshe Safdie with the help of Komendant, an engineer. It is probably one of the most iconic housing building of the second half of 20th century. This was Safdie's project for his final thesis and it was selected to be built in Montreal for the Expo of 1967.



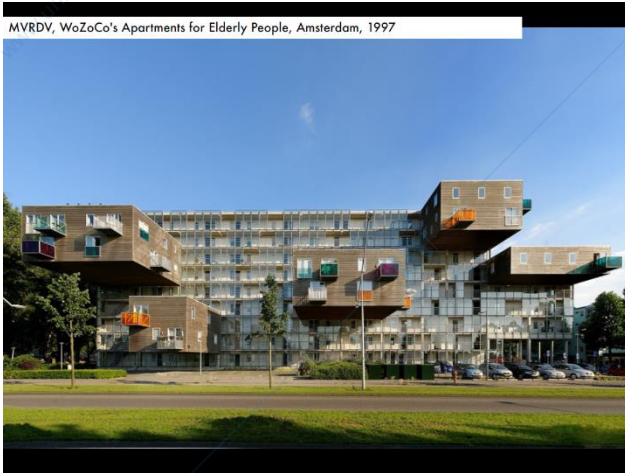
The boxes are prefabricated industrially produced and assembled on site. The modules have different shapes and are assembled in order to give not the idea of a standardized building but to create an organic landscape.



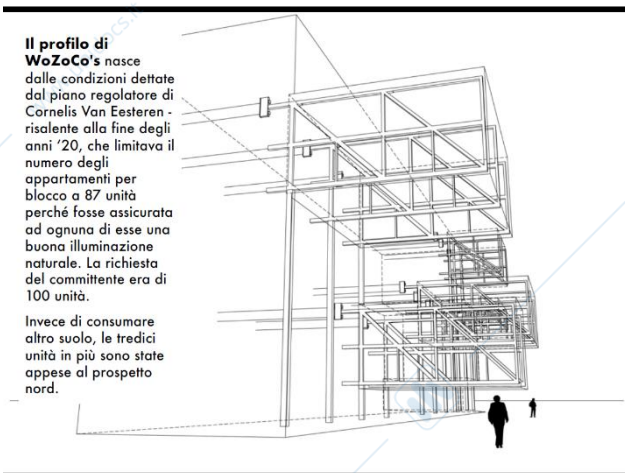
There is a connection to traditional urban atmospheres because it is possible to find the same aesthetic of an Italian historical town, in which the growth of the architecture was not predetermined but it is rather random, it is built step by step following certain necessities.



Another point is the transformation of these apartments because they are composed of different modules assembled together, creating different shapes to adapt to the requests of the families.



WoZoCo's apartments for elderly people in Amsterdam by MVRDV was built in 1997.



The shape of the building comes from the conditions imposed by the masterplan by Cornelis Van Eesteren, which limited the number of apartments for each block. The original volume had 87 apartments, while the request was of 100 units.

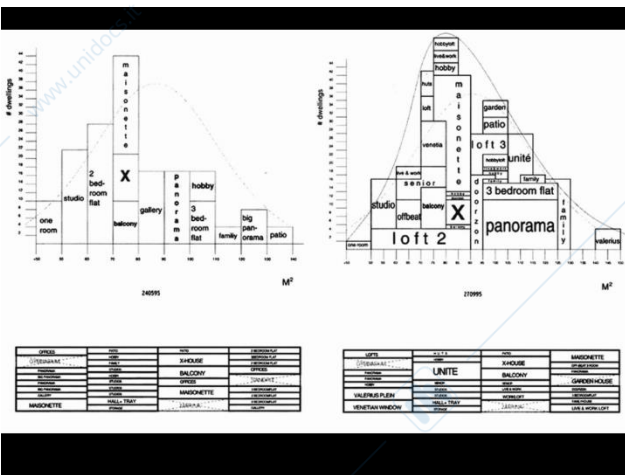


So instead of creating a new volume, MVRDV decided to create these giant structures hanging on the façade in order to follow the rules but also have this iconic aesthetic. The plan is quite regular.



MVRDV, SILODAM, Amsterdam, 2002

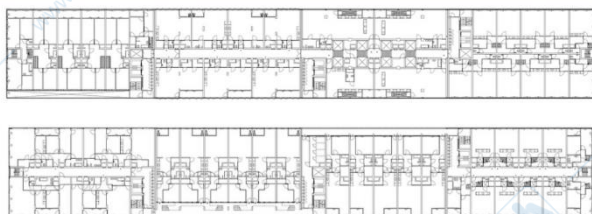
More interesting is the SILODAM designed by the MVRDV in Amsterdam in 2002.

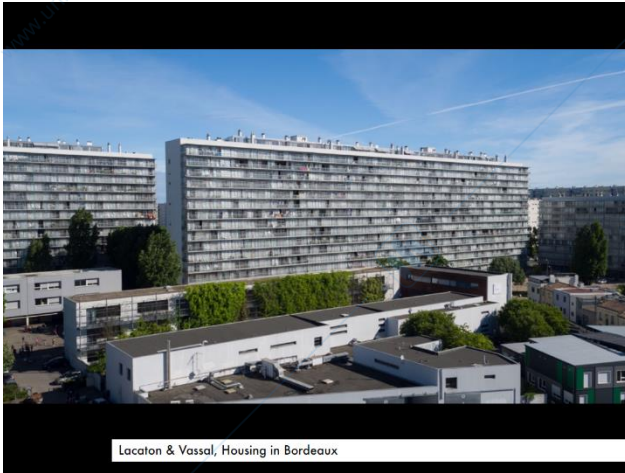


It is a reinterpretation of the Unité d'Habitation. It is made of big boxes filled with apartments. But this time we have a freer composition of the apartments, diversity has become the main concept of this building. To answer a flowing and always changing society with different ideas of families, different sizes of families and different ideas of living the apartments assume different layouts.



The differences that can be seen on the plan is shown on the façade using different materials and colours. The logic of industry, since the building is located at the Amsterdam's harbour, is used to create buildings that are similar to containers that are used to transport goods from one country to the other.





Housing in Bordeaux by Lacaton & Vassal is another (very recent) approach to this kind of buildings. It is composed of three volumes. The project consists of a renovation of three existing buildings. This strategy of working on an existing volume is very interesting and sustainable.



Before we had a quite classic 70s building in the outskirts of Bordeaux, while now we have this brand-new addition to the building, which lacked many services in terms of comfort and sharing our life. It is a new layer, a new façade, a large balcony that can function as a greenhouse, that was added without asking the people to leave the building during the construction. So, there was this great attention to respect the life of the current inhabitants.



(5 minutes video about this housing project in Bordeaux - vimeo.com/329987418)