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“**ART SPACE** : The contribution of Art and Artists to Architecture”

2. Existential Space



Study model of proposal for a Giacometti Museum from the author's Design Studio at UTA

Chapter 2. Existential Space: From Gallery Paintings to the Open Plan.

The "Gallery paintings" of Flemish painters of the seventeenth century depict as a rule a large open space filled with the artist's work. They represent the hidden desire of the Artist to have a home gallery and at the same time to be tools for the promotion of his work and the establishment of his credibility. Many times they show the artist surrounded by his work, talking to some noblemen or to a king, occasionally pointing to a particular work. These guests, patrons or prospect buyers, are testimonials of the social status of the Artist.



Typical “Gallery Paintings” by Dutch masters (left and middle) and “Las Meniñas” by Velasquez to the right

The open struggle for the social identity of the artist spilled out of the confines of the canvas with Velasquez. He had spent a good part of his life living and working in the palace constantly trying to convince King Phillip the IV to bestow upon him the title of nobility, which as he had argued in Spanish Court, he had inheritedⁱ. His famous painting Las Meniñas, has many of the characteristics of the gallery paintings of his Dutch predecessors. The smiling self of Velasquez in one of the corners of the painting, next to the princesses and the king, in a room of the palace filled with his own work, was his passport photograph to social acceptance. Most Art historians who have studied gallery paintings agree on their social mobility significanceⁱⁱ.

Yet, over and above the preceding interpretation, I suggest that these paintings are historic testimonies to the psychological and existential needs that surround creativity. They are indicative

of creative personalities, who like to be surrounded by the whole body of their work, being able at any time to show it to anyone they desire. The psychological and existential needs creative people have, appears through these paintings to be better satisfied threedimensionally in spaces which have what we have come to call "open plan", a column-free space devoid of partitions, free, not necessarily large, yet big enough so as to make it possible for the artist to work and rest at will.

The gallery paintings also display a spirit of ad-hoc in the organization and presentation of the works depicted. There was a case of intentional disorder, "controlled chaos" and circumstantiality. It was an order analogous to the monk's "cubicle", where a whole universe of search and contemplantion were accommodated in a tiny physical space.

The spatial category depicted by gallery paintings can accommodate the psychological need to *show* and to *contemplate*. These opposing needs were everpresent throughout the evolution of Art and they became exceedingly pronounced during the twentieth century.

The Gallery paintings as typology of Art space, is closely related to the spatial categories of the "cubicle" ("civorium" and the "Baldacin"). We address them in detail in later chapter, but warn the reader that a reference there at this point might be in order, because it will help understand the existential dimensions of creativity, which is the central theme of the Gallery paintings.

The spatial needs of meta-Renaissance pictorial artists, and especially of artists following the industrial revolution, were completely different from those of artists of earlier times. The meta-Renaissance artists operated more on an individual basis, often called to serve the needs of unknown clients, constantly aiming at larger markets. They were depicting the new society, while at the same time looking at this society as a market. Gone was the individual patron, both as subject and sole collector of Art. Such artists could not present their work in spaces that would appear alien, that would remind Renaissance palaces, that would be exceedingly articulate in the Baroque spatial expression of the time, or that they would appear idiosyncratic. The artist wanted to be able to concentrate in his own personal space, in his own "cubicle", while at the same time he had need to show his production, in his own house or in spaces with appropriate atmosphere. These "open", or more liberal, meta-Renaissance needs, obviously brought about the need for gallery

paintings which could satisfy the contemplative and show aspect of Art, through immediate summary display of an artists' body of work to the public. They were the equivalent of an architect's portfolio or an architect's web Site today.

The gallery paintings displayed in the clearest way the spatial inner need of artists regarding their space of work, which took flesh and bones as "the studio of the artist" three centuries later.

One will hardly find a twentieth century artist, a painter or a sculptor, whose studio is not characterized by the atmosphere of the open plan suggested by the gallery paintings, and which does not arouse the aesthetic and contemplative holiness of personal space, a cubicle a cell or a study buble. Further more, the space ingredients that can guarantee "freedom" of movement in combination with a certain order, are always present in such studios, despite their size. In adverse circumstances, which may prohibit the development of the spatial prerequisites of creativity(freedom of movement, flexibility, and contemplation), everything shrinks in scale and the space becomes the brain of the artist. In such circumstances we literally speak of "existential space" .

Following the industrial revolution artists became totally independent, free critics of society. As "outsiders" they had to struggle in order to exist. Discomfort, which was part of the early part of life of earlier artists, became the general norm for most of the artists of early twentieth century ⁱⁱⁱ . A "furnished room" or the room of a cheap hotel, were typical work spaces for beginning artists. Young Picasso was obliged to live in a small room in Paris, sharing it with the poet Max Jacob; they were actually arranging their working hours and life-style habits in such way so that they could use the one and only bed available in turns, when the other one was working. Poverty and need taught such artists to adjust and invent in space while working. A simple space with good proportions, with good lighting, devoid of columns, used to make most artists happy. Such spaces, in rented apartments or in cheap hotels, were not in physical condition and atmosphere unlike those of the gallery paintings of the Dutch, only that they were filled with dust, a condition which by all means should stay undisturbed so as not to pollute the color.

Physical conditions such as those of the "gallery paintings" or of the "cubicle", and psychological conditions for "freedom", "expression", "show", "place and degree of the artist by society", along

with the need for work and contemplation, were the parameters that defined or gave form to the Art Space of the 20th century.

Prerequisite in all that was the fundamental desire to express oneself through Art, and to operate as a free thinking being. These are ingredients of existential nature, and whether we want it or not they are prerequisites for any space that will eventually evolve beyond the human brain.

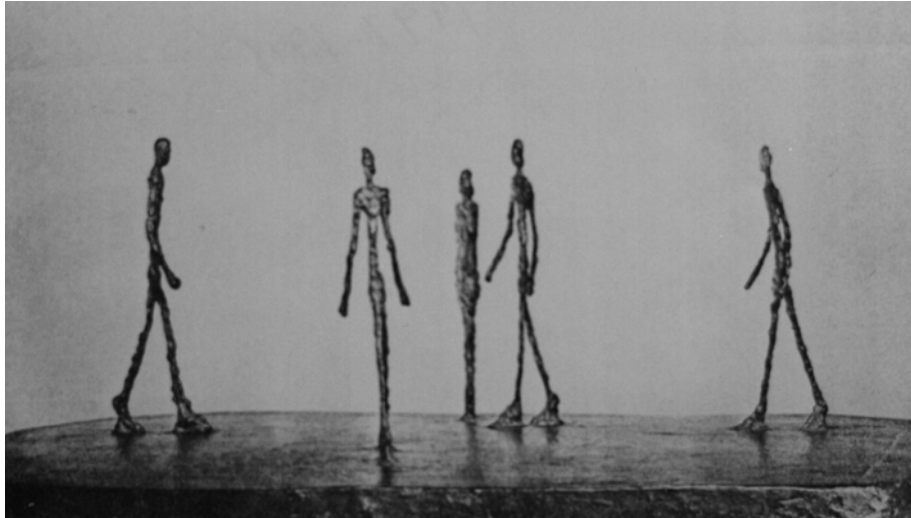
Art Space has existential dimensions , of which we have no better example than Alberto Giacometti's.

The Giacometti studio.

Jean -Paul Sartre and Jean Genet were among the most illustrious models of Alberto Giacometti. Both have written about the painter ^{iv}, giving us some of the deepest psychoanalytic evaluations ever made by models ^v. Other models of the Artist ,also spell bound by his personality , felt the urge to write their experiences in his studio. James Lord , an American author-Journalist wrote a vivid account of the artist at work ^{vi} and a few years later by a moving biography of the artist ^{vii}. Genet in "The studio of Alberto Giacometti", a booklet with little text and several photos communicates the artist and his agony of creation. In an atmosphere of decay and temporance , Giacometti , according to Genet, was making himself one with his works, "slowly dying , consuming himself" , transforming in the process the statues into goddesses ^{viii}. This booklet makes it clear that the artist was very content with what he had in terms of physical space; For Genet, the studio of Giacometti, is Giacometti's mind ^{ix}. A mind that always focuses elsewhere, in an effort to see the essence of things, to bring that essence out . In the process , the artist makes his own self disappear. The material comes out, instead of him, while the ultimate goal is the soul of the work to be born.

Similar is the approach of Sartre's analysis. In two essays devoted to Giacometti ^x , he addresses the personality of the artist, his agony to discover the essence of things, his dealing with the dematerialization of matter, and his whole existential struggle, a non-surprising dissection from an existential philosopher.

Both Sartre and Genet , had met Giacometti under odd circumstances in cafes. Both were particularly impressed by the smallness , the decaying ambience , the ad hoc order and the chaos that reigned ^{xi} . As Sartre says, "his studio is an Archipelago,a conglomeration of irregular distances" ^{xii} .



Giacometti has come to be appreciated as the artist who best captured the alienation of modern man within the modern world, as Sartre will say, "... by expelling the world from his canvases" ^{xiii} . His El Greco-like elongated figures, always in movement, passing each other by, in the open fields , in public spaces or in the street ,are strangers in the cosmos, indifferent of each other's existence.

The same is true when he paints specific persons, like his brother Diego or his wife Annette. Sartre observes in Giacometti the search of "the existential emptiness" , a search sought "in the vacuum and in everywhere, ... Emptiness insinuates itself everywhere: Between the eyes and eyelids, between the lips , into the nostrils. A head in its turn becomes an archipelago" ^{xiv} . Sartre continuously equates the studio and the brain with an archipelago. All three are the same, existential situations of circumstantiality and adjustability.

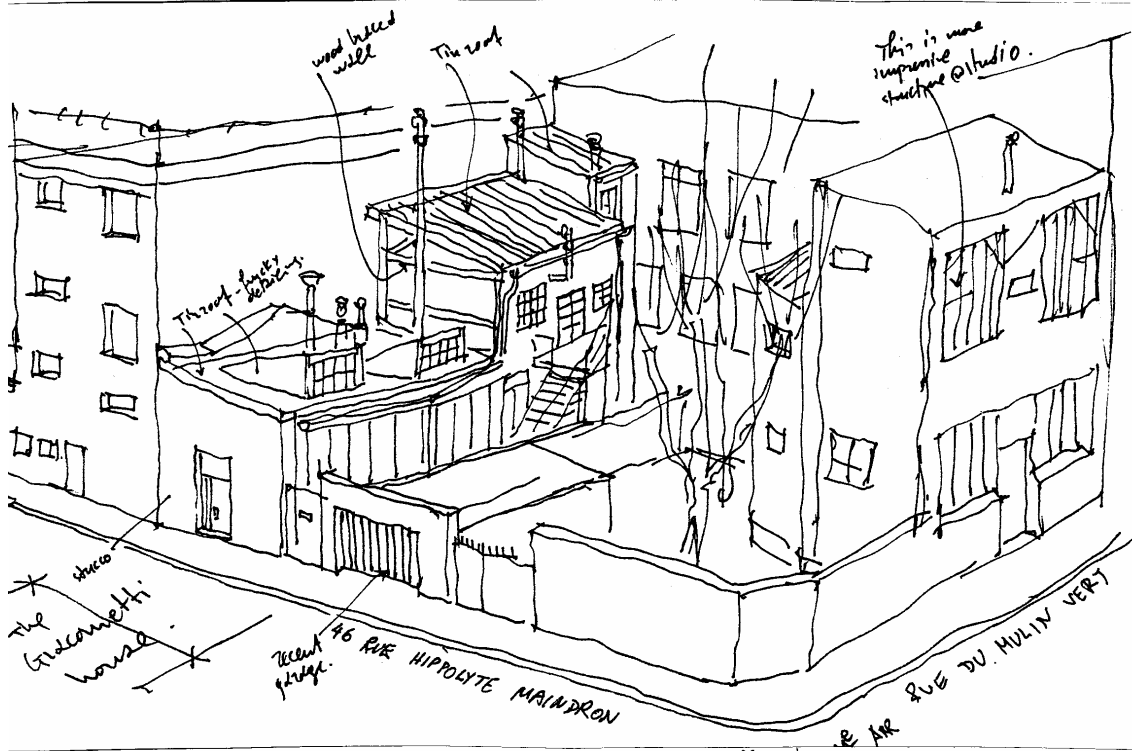
It is rather peculiar to speak about Giacometti and space, as he has written that he does not " believe in the problem of space" ^{xv} . Surely enough he means three-dimensional architectural space of which his studio was a part. Yet he was quick to explain that "Space is created solely by objects: an object that moves without any relation to another object could not give the impression of space. The

subject alone is decisive. Space, shapes, canvas, plaster, bronze... so many means" ^{xvi} . He creates , as he says, a contemporary appreciation of space , where the tangible aspects of architectonic space lose perhaps the meaning and significance assigned to it by architects and physical space scholars ^{xvii} , while he seeks a broader definition of space, something that will include the prerequisite of movement. Giacometti's non-architectonic spatial concept explains his personal inclination towards physical spaces of neutrality, and rooms of flexibility and non-glamor.



When we speak of the Giacometti house/studio, we refer to the 46 Hippolyte Maindron ramshackle assembly . In its renovated condition of the mid-nineties, when I visited it, it was only a reminder of one of the most significant personal mines of creativity of the century . Picasso , Sartre or Genet , used to drop by un-announced , since for many years there was no telephone^{xviii} . There was challenge and tease with Picasso, philosophic and literary probing with Sartre and Genet.

If we were to describe the plan of this "Giacometti house" we would be in trouble. It is unique from everything we know. It was and still is an idea : a house beyond the physical boundaries of what we see, beyond its rooms, its corridors, its courtyard and its trees. The "house" expanded beyond all



The Giacometti studio , Sketch in situ by the author

that, including, besides its two studios, a connecting passageway, a bedroom , a public street and a public cafe. The street and the cafe, the constant walks between the studio and the cafe at the corner of rue Didot , make the cafe the living room , the relaxing corner if you will of the Artist's habitat^{xix} . The cafe is the element for the artist's visual rejuvenation. He always discovers



The cafe (Bistrot) at rue Didot. Photo by the author

something new as he walks down the street : "The landscape I see, the trees I see as I go from home to the café are a little different every day, and this is new to me"^{xx} . Such visits become frequent as

he gets tired from working in the studio and as he seeks a means to relax. He occasionally asks his guests and models to follow him as if inviting them to the room next door for a coffee; like going to the couch of his den for care-free talk, a cigarette or personal meditation.



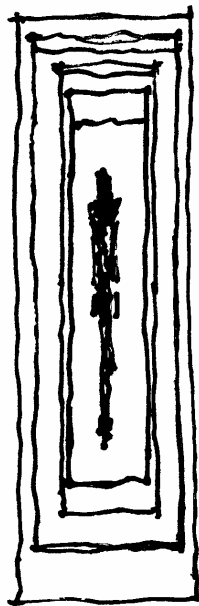
Left: Figure in the corridor of Giacometti's house . Middle : The main entrance to the left and garage entrance of the "compound" following renovation by the new owner. Right : Giacometti figure surrounded by people at the Maeght museum (all photos by the author)

Giacometti's brother Diego, occupied the second studio of the house and made casts and bronze work for his brother. 46 Hippolyte Maindron rests calmly next to a high wall of an elementary school in Alesia, a relatively quiet district in Paris, right off the Alesia Boulevard with its exquisite tall trees on either side of the street. In the middle nineties, the emigrant owners of the street cafe nearby had hardly heard of Giacometti. The new owner of the house, who had totally altered the interior of the space, was adamant of her privacy, the mail man was unaware of Giacometti, only an old lady in her seventies walking her dog, was quick to testify that Giacometti lived there and that she used to see him occasionally walking with his hands in his pockets. She probably knew nothing about the little figurines the wrinkled ridden artist was caressing in his pocket, as she would certainly be unaware that the occasional guests to the ramshackle house of her street were some of the greatest names of Art and literature of France...

Giacometti once accepted a commission to do three sculptures for the Chase Manhattan Plaza in New York City, without having ever seen the site. He was not satisfied with the outcome, and since then he rejected altogether the role of sculpture as an associate to architecture, or for the decoration of parks and cities, as many of his contemporary meta-world war II sculptors did (i.e Henry Moore, Calder). He focused instead on the essence of the modern city expressing man's existence in this

alienating environment^{xxi}. He created a space all of his own, where man is in movement, in an idealized -dematerialized form, carrying his existence and agony.

Giacometti felt the call for movement. In contrast to other artists, who expressed it literally, as for instance Calder, he expressed it in a latent, thus more dynamic way. He felt that form could not stay alone and he couldn't see his sculptures as solid mass, but as something transparent, "floating" mentally (not literally) in space. Form and space had to go together. He made cages around his forms, a first step toward the relativity of existence. Movement finally came about, when he abandoned his early cubist abstractions and returned to a somewhat naturalistic depiction of the human figure in relative staging, either enclosing it in cages, or photographing it in natural surroundings.



Diagrammatic sketch by the author after Giacometti's "Nu Debout 1953"(left) and "Nu Debout" 195* (right) in support of the corridor theory. Photos of Giacometti in corridor, and top middle Alberto, Diego, and Annette after Lord 1985

ome, the Renaissance churches, and all the external world had entered into the studio of the Artist though his early influences and wanderings. And yet this was a found, an evolved interior through history. The artist's own space came about through search for his own soul, observation of his own movement, in the process from the cage of life to the cage of death. His space was a "passage", and the actual passageway of his studio gave him the literal example for several of his works. The

passageway between the two houses(the two studios in the Hippolyte-Maindron house) gave him perhaps the vision to complete his emerging nude (*Nu debout* -1953), a picture of Annette coming through the corridor . Here I would like to push my argument one step further.

The two studios and the passageway, are in a sense the broader cosmos of the Artist. His heaven peace and creativity, where the living angels, or demons, as the period of life might have been, are Diego and Annette. This spatial triad will give him literal departures for the transformations of his broader expressions, while the street connecting them to the cafe , will give him the open spaces of anonymity, which he will employ later as he will group several of his pieces, making for situations which evoke to the viewer the feeling of contemporary masses, the individual as an element of a crowd , and a person living in contemporary society within the framework of anonymity. Within the broader framework of his conception of the contemporary cosmos , evolves the movement of the elements that constitute the conception of his space. Central in this latent cosmotheory is his own studio, which will give him shelter, distance to see his work, an interior to permit him recreate his own spatial cosmos, "an inner sanctuary , some palace of the mind not to be measured by any ordinary rule"^{xxii}.

From where he sits, he can see the passageway. Here I will risk a suggestion. It is the cross section of the passageway ,the elongated proportions of its vertical cut along with the perspective this cross section provides, that may have conditioned the vision of Giacometti toward the tall and elongated, having created at the end the elongated , El Greco -like figurines. A visual clue to that may be provided by two works in particular, the standing nude (*Nu debout* , 1953), and the painting "studies for sculptures" (*Etudes pour des sculptures* , 1947). The first one in particular has a series of rectilinear frames around it , while there is a movement gesture on the figure, which easily suggests a standing nude in movement, through the perspective of a passageway. The elongated proportions of the other painting and the vertical rectilinearity of the overall frame, along with the layering and perspective of the various studies, also suggests movement , perhaps a vision of figures coming through the passageway, the imprint of the visits of Diego and Annette, coming from the bedroom or from one studio to the other through the passageway. The static proportions of the studio space proper , enriched by the visions and the possibility for movement provided by the

elongated proportions of the adjacent passageway , were perhaps the two immediate physical space ingredients that eventually helped the artist, even without him knowing it, to bring about what he was actually seeking, the movement between the objects he was creating, and the depiction of his own conception of space. All this perhaps happened because the physical space that had been created earlier , by another artist, an architect this time, suited the artist perfectly, helping him to articulate through his own art what he was intellectually contemplating and what he was actually searching. The unknown architect of the Alesia studio , had provided a situation of bipolar spatial neutrality, along with the possibility for movement offered by the passageway ^{xxiii} .

Giacometti , following his success during the late fifties, moved to the "dilapidated studio" at rue Hippolyte-Maindron with his brother Diego^{xxiv} . The two brothers , who were very close since their infancy, had in mind to stay in this studio temporarily, but they never left it. As time went by , "they took over the ramshackle sheds in the small, narrow courtyard, one of which -miniscule-was for Diego's work" ^{xxv} . Diego looked after Alberto's studio when he was in Switzerland , staying for three and a half years at the ten by thirteen feet room of the Hotel de Rive^{xxvi} ,in Geneva, (Dec. 31, 1941-Sept. 17-1945)^{xxvii} , and he became his standard model and caster as before, following his brother's return. The two brothers, had completely different characters and life styles, yet they were able to live and work amiably in the same premises. Alberto , was a sleepwalker, conversationalist and direct, never shying from always telling the truth; Diego was totally different, quiet, closed to himself, a legendary animal lover- especially of the cats, and certainly a person who adored his brother and felt no competition whatsoever ^{xxviii} . Alberto , his wife Annette (they married in 1949), and Diego lived a life of ups and downs under the same roof. Annette, apparently never liked the ramshackle austerity of the Hippolyte-Maindron house, in which she had to go to the toilet outdoors. She was always seeking a place where a wife could live comfortably, and the environment that nurtured the imagination and inspired her husband, became in time her place of torture , perhaps the central element to have caused her misfortunes over the last years with Giacometti ^{xxix} . This house was , no doubt , one of the most significant settings, not only for the artist's life but for a good portion of the history of Art in the fifties and sixties. All this , unfortunately was not picked up in time by official interest and much of it will have to remain in

the pages of the books of Lord and Genet and the essays of Sartre. Lord in particular has provided wealth of descriptions regarding the furniture, the relative layout and the activities in the space. Furthermore, the existing paintings of Giacometti that depict his studio show a space not unlike those used by Picasso or of Courbet in earlier times. A large room, rather torn down walls, with no order, ad hoc furniture and drapes. What is clearly visible today are the studio's skylights and the stove chimney over the roof. It was a place where the model had to attend the stove, where dirt was part of the floors and where the only decoration on the walls was dust and plaster. Yet a sacred feeling was evoked to almost everyone who entered this studio. It had a power that could keep spellbound and quiet Marlene Dietrich looking at the painter at work, while he was addressing her from high up at his ladder^{xxx}, as well as accommodate Picasso, who was not stranger to such ambience. George Limbour who visited Giacometti in the late forties wrote about this studio: "On entering it, one is afraid of upsetting these slender, fragile creatures (really more solid than they seem), which rise from the floor, or of falling over piles of old plaster leaning against the walls and heaped under the tables. Giacometti's atelier looks more like a demolition scene than a workshop of construction"^{xxxii}.

Giacometti received his guests in his studio where he did his work. He had a constant view of the whole space and the happenings in it while at the same time he was concentrating in the creation of his own work, his personal tangible addition to the cosmos. His ability to concentrate and his adjustability to varying spatial conditions was incredible. His existential searching and personal isolation, could take place whether surrounded by the company of others, or under the tight conditions of confinement in the saintly cubicle of St. Jerome and the peaceful isolation of Albrecht Dürer. The cubicle of St. Jerome in his study, by Antonello Da Massina,^{xxxii} is the most representative of a space within a space.



The personal study of Albrecht Durer in his attic in his house in Nurenberg (left). The Study of St. Jerome by Antonello Da Massina (middle) and Saints Cubicle raised on post in a public square in Verona-Italy.

The cubicle was the personal space of the artist who was working under collective conditions, inside the larger studio premises an academy, affording privacy and isolation within a collective environment. This was for instance the case inside the studios of the Beaux Arts as well as the case at the ground floor studios of the New York young Artists league.



**Beaux-Arts cubicles during examination
Source : "Studios of Paris"**

The Eye

The Idea of the cubicle is very much tied to the idea of the eye; As the eye, becomes eventually the smallest cubicle, through which the artist eventually sees through the isolation and contemplation afforded by the spatial cubicle, the essence and psyche of the subject. And Giacometti, throughout his life, was searching for the gaze in the person's eye^{xxxiii}, that unique physical expression, which he had come to believe united the instance of transition between life and death, an instance he had

once experienced early on in his life, when his friend Peter van Meurs died in his presence in a little hotel room in the middle of the night^{xxxiv}. He had been trying to capture it through his portraits and through his sculpture ever since. Life, death, cubicle, the human eye, fear of the dark - which he associated with death- , failure as opposed to success and contemplation on all of the above with regards to the artist's place in life and his relationship to other humans, had been integrally intertwined in the life and creative process and the mind of Giacometti, with the spatial conditions of austerity, bareness, temporariness, and nothingness, which were the physical vase of his existence. None of the above could be better served than under the conditions of the austerity of a hotel room. And this spatial condition had occurred repeatedly in Giacometti's life , on occasions when the circumstances found him travelling or in exile in hotel rooms.

The Hotel room predicament.

The **hotel** and **the hotel room** are to be found in the spatial experiences of many artists. With the exception of Matisse who lived several years of his life in a large suite apartment at the Regina hotel in Nice, with a view to some extraordinary palm trees and the Mediterranean in the background, the majority of artists had to live periodically in small hotel rooms, often cheap, dismal and depressing. Such hotel rooms , occasionally constituted the artist's permanent accommodation for extended periods of time. Hotel rooms, no matter where, how small , clean or not , share one common characteristic: they are one space conditions, an open plan par excellence, with clearly articulated activity areas, permitting a variety of uses (table for correspondence, sitting area, sleeping area, etc. , while in the best conditions they include a separate area for storage of clothing and a bathroom). The Hotel room is usually rectilinear, while the adjacent areas of bathroom and closet are also rectilinear. Central in the life of Alberto Giacometti , and next to the Grand Hotel des Alpes where he experienced the death of Peter van Meurs mentioned above, was his hotel room in the Hotel de Rive in Geneva^{xxxv} where he spent three and a half years of his life. It was

the "smallest and shabbiest,also the cheapest" among the several cheap hotels who rented rooms to prostitutes during the World War II years . In it he spent his time in a state of fervent creativity " working exclusively from memory while he even relinquished drawing to concentrate entirely to sculpture , his creations getting smaller and smaller until they were but pin size , barely an inch in height" ^{xxxvi} . Yet the hotel room creative fever was not an isolated case applicable only to Giacometti.



“Hotel Room I”, unsigned crayon sketch of a hotel room, 1963

After Fondation Alberto Giacometti, Kunsthaus Zurich and

Alberto Giacometti 1992, p. 352

We can safely generalize and argue that it has been true for most artists. Furthermore, the "hotel room" predicament generates an equation for creativity whose products are inversely proportionate to the distance between the home studio base and the location in transience (exile), while the significant agent in the creative process of the artist becomes not the present but the past, served by memory without the need of the immediacy of model and the depiction of events of the present. Artists in Hotel rooms, as was the case of Giacometti, Juan Miro ^{xxxvii} and many others, confined in small and "wretched places" , draw from their past experiences, the longing of the situation back at home, interpreting and re-interpreting situations of adversity, while at the same time improvising ways to make ends meet the constraints of the small spaces inhabited. The hotel room is less appropriate for the visual artist, especially the sculptor, who often is used to working large, and more appropriate for the poet, the writer, or the art historian . In this sense the hotel is a blessing for cross fertilization of artists. The famous Chelsea hotel in Lower Manhattan, housed more poets and writers than artists. Lou Straus-Ernst, an Art historian journalist, the first wife of Max Ernst, could do a lot with her dismal hotel room in Paris , while her son, Jimmy Ernst, who subsequently became a painter and wrote a moving story about his father and mother, felt miserable in such

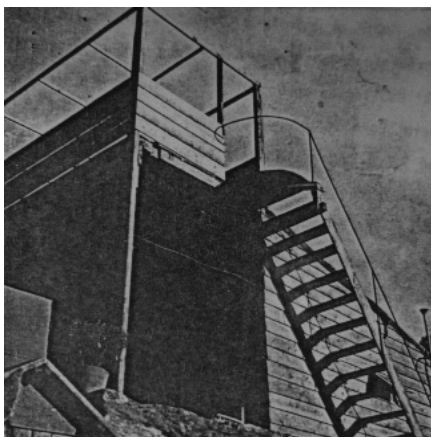
spaces. Lou living in an "old rabbit warren of a hotel" whose tiny little rooms were inhabited by numerous emigrés from Europe", could find space to write, managed to prepare meals in "a precarious cooking corner in the room" , could make room to entertain her friends, and could also find room during Christmas to display a little tree for the sake of her visiting son ^{xxxviii} . A vivid feature in such hotel room was the "never fully unpacked suitcase", a symbolic element , as Jimmy Ernst suggests, for the transient condition and the hope for immediate departure. Unlike Poets and writers, who had perhaps no complaint, as their poems and novels could be easily accommodated in small pieces of paper or in note books, artists such as painters and sculptors found hotel rooms depressing. "It was depressing cubicle" will say Jimmy Ernst for the furnished hotel room in which the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke had to stay, and which the young Ernst had to occupy during one of his visits to his mother in Paris.

"Great ideas are born in small rooms" said Pierre Schneider, speaking of the small work room of Art Editor Tériade ^{xxxix} . I used to tell to my architectural design students at the kick off of their design process: "the bigger the idea the smaller the paper".

It would be of great interest to make a study of the great poetry and literature that has been produced in small cubicles and hotel rooms, while on the other hand , it would be also interesting to enumerate the effect of the hotel room on other Arts. In the case of Giacometti ,the equation between distance from the home land, size of working space and working from memory vs. reality, and size of work created , worked in its normal condition. As soon as the artist returned to the home of his choice in Paris -his studio of Rue Hippolyte Maindron-"his figures began to grow, slender and strangely elongated" ^{xl} . Upon his return, the artist worked from model again, although he occasionally complained that he needed more distance from his subjects, in order to see them better, in order to get to their essence, and see the eyes. Giacometti needed a certain distance , much distance, in order to "see" his subjects, something which even the large studio could not provide, . The hotel room, gave him perhaps what he wanted, without realizing it. In any event, what the hotel room provided, for all the artists who created in it, was a spatial microcosm of the Universe. Because the hotel room is not a fragment of something else, it is a cell, a cubicle , a microcosm in

itself. It is the contemporary counterpart of St. Jerome's cubicle or the Work room of Albrecht Dürer. It provides privacy, seclusion, safety, and at the same time its limited confines help the spirit run into the universe of the brain. It is not the small size, but it is the layout of the plan and the possibility of activities that can take place in it, that energize the spirit, making space (hotel room) and brain part of a cosmic equation. The hotel room is a cosmic microcosm, with artist and his work in the center of everything. And beyond the intellectual transformation, there is a physical one which apparently takes place under such tight circumstances. The dust and dirt of the place, the effect of short dimensions and distance on the eyesight, and the constant engulfing of the artist by the number of his creations, brings about the eventual transformation of his own physical appearances, making him look like the art he creates. James Lord has suggested that it was in the Hotel de Rive that Giacometti came to acquire the physical resemblance which identified the sculptor with the sculptures he was creating^{xli} (wrinkles, hair, face, slenderness, etc.). It is perhaps because of all these reasons that an artist, no matter how much he may complain about the hotel room, he will still seek the typology of the hotel room for his own studio, when the time for such studio comes.

From all this we can say that it is not the size of space, but it is rather the type of space, that has effect on the creative activity. At this point we should remember the little "Illegal" cabin Le Corbusier had built for himself on a rock 70 feet above the sea in Cap Martin in southern France, which was no larger than a hotel room. In its 12 x 12 plan and its 7'-6" height, it possessed all the ingredients of environmental functional and psychological inclusivity. It had an open plan, with



drawing table, chair, shelves, washing and sleeping areas, along with cosmic elements of architecture such as lighting ambiance and environmental controls (cross-ventilation, protection from mosquitoes, sun control etc)^{xliii}. This little cabin was the cradle of Le Corbusier's inspiration. The house of Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning in Sedona Arizona, was not much larger either (it must have been approx. 20x20-as evidenced from the spacing of the studs in

the photograph p. 102, "Birthday" by Dorothea Tanning), and so was the house of the Greek architect Panos Nicoli Tjelepis, a wooden "Hotel type" bungalow , on the foothills of Penteli . This cabin , demolished long ago, is one of the great absentees of the international architectural bibliography and I am pleased to reproduce it here with the kind permission of my friend Professor Nicholas Cholevas , who has included it in his exemplary biography of Tjelepis, available only in Greek ^{xliii}.

Many artists were not out for money. With the little means they possessed , they had to make ends meet. The "Hotel room" open plan ,a microcosm of the open plan typology, was ideal as a cradle for their inspiration and creativity, a container of their contemplative life.

Artists to be sure will cramp any large area given to them, it is the inevitable result of creativity, unless one is Marchel Duchamp or Piet Mondrian , who were extremely ascetic and content with very little, being cases of unique concern and analysis ^{xliv} (see chapter on "Up-tight order" below). The "river" like artists ^{xlv} , artists like Van Gogh, Picasso, and Giacometti, or architects like Le Corbusier, operate on speed and constant production, requiring some kind of space for their activities, small or large-and it can be both. Artists like Gauguin , but more significantly Marcel Duchamp,create through "distillation". Such artists , require time rather than physical space in order to create. The physical space they need can be therefore minimal, not constituting their preoccupation. Time eventually becomes the primary part of their own space, including the period of contemplation, which others may consider as inactivity, and their brain. This is necessary because their attitude toward art is to create through "a vertigo of delay" as it has been suggested by Octavio Paz, necessary for the distillation and the statement of critical positions as tangibly evidenced through products never seen before and certainly not readily comprehensible by the prevailing status quo, other artists and artistic positions ^{xlvi}.

The "vertigo of acceleration" , which characterizes artists of the "river" school of creativity, requires, not only space for the act itself , but it also requires an extraordinary amount for storage. Picasso , will quickly cramp his studios, he will occupy every corner and store drawings anywhere, under the bed and above the closets, while Giacometti, will seek storage solutions in apartments of his friends or anywhere he could accommodate them. Dust is usually a friend to the production of

artists of the "river type", while neatness an enemy. Picasso was grateful to the maids who never undusted above a closet on the top of which he had placed for storage some drawings, which he found much later, while he was adamant about others cleaning or arranging his studio, the contents of which he could only find. Giacometti, because of lack of space in his tiny sack of a studio , next to the elementary school in Alesia, had given some of his sculptures for storage to Max Ernst, who kept them on the terrace of his new apartment in Paris, where he was living with his second wife Marie-Berthe.

The column free, large space studio, is readily available for storage, for movement of furniture and utensils in it , it is the larger condition of a hotel room , another microcosm of the Universe, easily comprehensible by the artist.

There is not much distance between adversity and comfort, at least for the creativity needs of the artist. What is perhaps necessary is the form, the shape and the proportions of the space, not its size . The hotel room is certainly larger than the prison cell, or the asylum cubicle, (for more see chapter on spaces of adversity), yet not unlike them , it shares a rectilinear shape , and the neutrality of an interior, inside of which the brain can operate opening up its own horizons, breaking the confines of the small rectangle, giving it dimensions of its like. I remember the Greek painter Yannis Tsarouchis, who , for a good part of his voluntary exile from Greece, during the years of the 1967-1974 Dictatorship , was living in a second floor cubicle in Paris, given to him by the architect George Candilis .It was perhaps the greatest microcosm of the most primitive hotel room predicament I have personally experienced, ingeniously transformed by the artist into a mezzanine space. Tsarouchis had created a mezzanine above the entrance, using a transverse wooden beam, creating a lower ceiling immediately upon entering , while providing enough space for the storage of roles of canvases and paintings above. At the right corner from the entrance it was a tiny table with a small gas stove on it; the artist had just cooked stuffed peppers , a memory to the remote home , enrichment to the ambience of the exile, an extension of the longing for the return home , through the gastronomic device. The bed was the only furniture, on which the artist displayed his albums containing some cut outs from publications of his work, post cards and

newspaper clippings. He showed these clippings proudly to Agneta Sändegard, the Swedish friend who was accompanying me, and who was wondering of the painter's place in the midst of the decade of Pop Art, just one year after the events of Paris. Being totally unaware of the artist's mystical disposition, the Byzantine roots of his work and cosmotheory, she fired the reaction of the ascetic, which turned the little room into a seminary on Hellenism. The Tsarouhis Paris accommodation in Rue Dauphine, was a case of a "hotel room" used and articulated to capacity. It is also interesting to note, that this artist was creating at the time works of relatively large size, like "the four seasons", an order by Tériade, using models as opposed to memory^{xlvii}. Tsarouchis, unlike Giacometti, was carrying within him the typology of the tiny open plan mezzanines from the Greek islands, especially from the island of Skyros, which despite their minute size are used to capacity, decorated with claywork, plates and cooking utensils, while their overall use is of a cosmic nature, accommodating all the activities of living (sleeping, storing, cooking, entertaining, etc.). He had transformed his temporary accommodation in exile into a cosmic typology.

I do not claim that the Hotel room, or the tiny mezzanine typology of the island of Skyros, are by necessity the precedents to the open plan studio of the artists, but I claim that they contain spatial ingredients of cosmic nature that have tended to enhance creativity of sorts, whether writers or painters and sculptors, and that they have similarities to be later found in the more comfortable quarters artists consciously sought for their permanent work places, their studios in their homes. The hotel room in particular, despite its minuteness and often dismal quality, is perhaps the best proof that rectilinearity, clarity of space and neutrality, along with the possibility for instant "flexibility", instant transformation and "freedom", is the hybrid of the creative space, the artist's studio, and eventually the Art gallery. Absence of columns and open plan are there. Further more, the hotel room, especially of the emigré and the exiled, is a place of freedom, both literally and symbolically, the place of stay, creativity and rest, away from the oppression of the homeland, where the size and largeness of a studio may be subject to the oppression of a regime.

Anti-architecturalism and existential space

Architecture has been to a great extent on the Defensive. Architects, perhaps because they have been associated with their services to the rulers or to those of economic might, for the construction of palaces, pavilions, monuments or glamors of multinational corporate giants, have been seen perhaps through a class bias. It is well known that there is a general feeling that "whatever architects do, costs more", a public opinion of which most architects, young or old, are pretty well aware of. On the other hand, architects, especially those of the twentieth century, never negated the strength of the architecture of the people, the vernacular architecture, that was created by anonymous builders, builders "non educated as architects", if you will. On the contrary, many architects reached to the point to be overly class concerned, becoming totally budget oriented, even shaping up strategies that were absolutely diagrammatic in nature, with the sole criterion the economics of implementation, which resulted in monotony and boredom. "People" oriented architects of the social direction did not create architecture either. Yet much of the canonical architecture of twentieth century, was a product of sincere admiration and study of vernacular architecture. Le Corbusier, according to Christian Zervos, had given credit to such architecture, having said that "the first time he had an idea of modern architecture was when he saw Santorini"^{xlviii}. The same is true for a score of architects of this century, who, contrary to the academic architects of previous centuries, who learned their craft through monuments and the architecture of the past, attempted to

learn from various sources, including the vernacular architectures of the people of various lands. Some among the architects, tried to learn through a process of distillation and criticism of the past monumental (monarchic-religious, etc.) or vernacular, while others simply imitated, the vernacular or the monumental, without understanding of the forces that created them, producing works that were irrelevant to the times, save perhaps serving the fashion or the preferences of a period.

August Renoir was one of the biggest enemies of architects. His opinion about the architecture and the city planning of his period was extremely low and he didn't hide it. His son Jean Renoir, the

famous movie director, in his moving account of his father's life provides all the testimony."... Heaven knows he disliked architects". He thought of them as accomplices of manufacturers, bankers and speculators, which he "detested" , for having taken away the trees and gardens from Paris, for having opened up boulevards in order to make the price of land go up and for having destroyed monuments. Obviously , Baron Haussmann ,the city planner who proposed the boulevards of Paris was his primary target on the matter of city planning ^{xlix}, while he would not attack Tony Garnier for his industrial City proposal , but for the Opera building , which he apparently hated. Yet among all the architects, Renoir actually hated Viollet-le-Duc . "He never forgave him for spoiling the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, and the one in Rouen" ¹ . His hate for this architect was so great that he wanted to move from his apartment studio in the Boulevard Rochechouart, when he found out that it was situated at the corner of the Rue Viollet-le- Duc. This was extraordinary, as the artist had found an ideal place in many respects , which had the studio at the same level as the apartment, something which was very difficult to find in non custom designed houses. The artist wanted "to move out immediately , as he could not bear seeing that name so near", but apparently the requirements for an efficient studio-apartment functional relationship prevailed and the hate toward the architect remained , according to Jean Renoir "just a whim"^{li} . Renoir, whose paintings depict some of the most extraordinary landscaping, light and human settings, who may be easily perceived as a romantic, wanted no artificial settings for architecture. He used to say, "I love theatre settings, but in the theatre" ^{lii} . In fact his whole attitude toward the "artificial" had been shaped perhaps through his experiences and attitudes toward architecture. He accepted Versailles, as a derivational possibility, satisfying the desire of a country's monarch such a Louis XIV, who would want to build his palace in the style of Italy, a country which was technically most advanced, but he would be critical when the monarch doesn't know where to stop. "Trouble begins when an architect takes advantage of his country's advanced technique to copy the exterior appearance of buildings of an earlier period. Then he finds himself a slave to accessories grown ugly because they no longer serve a useful purpose"^{liii} . Based on the above, with which many would agree, Renoir could be conceived as one of the earliest proponents of architecture as an expression of the essentials of the place , time and people, characteristics which create works

true to themselves and to their creators, as he called them "Universal". From this critical lense, Versailles was a copy whose architects did not know where to stop. it was not the Parthenon, nor Chartres Cathedral, the Basilica at Vézelay and especially not the Abbaye-aux- Hommes at Caen , and the Church at Tournus, which he considered not only truly French but Universal.

Such attitudes justify the fact why Renoir avoided to use custom- built studios. Unlike many architects of the modern movement, he sought what he wanted from what already existed. After all the vernacular French architecture could provide large rooms, stables, courtyards, that could provide him the true settings, within which he could live his daily life, while some of the spaces could be easily converted to studios, or added upon with large windows for ample lighting as desired. His studio in the ample open space of his large farm-like Garden of Les Collettes, in Cagnes sur mer, was such an addition. Renoir had found exactly what he wanted in a progressive way, with the passing of his age. We can therefore say, that unlike Diego Rivera, and unlike Joan Miro, he was blessed to find spaces to live in and create in , which were in accordance with his own aesthetic appreciation at the particular period of his life. We may personally disagree with the architectural stiffness of the Renoir's last villa in Les Collettes, a building of absolutely neutral character, dark corridors, and total lack of architectural order, but we can't but applaud Renoir's insistence to conserve the maximum possible of his beautiful terrain, and to built the house in the very edge of the land, in an effort to protect as many trees as possible and to conserve the natural view to the village of Cagnes, a few miles across his property. The facts at this point have not been very clear,as Renoir was old and in bad health at the time his villa was finally built. Based on Jean Renoir's account , it was his mother who built the house opposite the little farm, which she left intact ^{liv}. Therefore it might have been madame Renoir and her own taste , or lack thereof, who had more to say to the builder regarding the layout and the architecture of their house. It certainly appears odd, that Renoir, a very opinionated person , settled in his aesthetic preferances, but physically handicapped by that time of his life, would have had suggested a studio several steps down the main floor level of the second floor. It is also questionable that he would feel free in the interior of a house full of dark corridors and many steps. All the accounts suggest that Renoir felt very much at home and was happy with the people and life in the outdoors of *Les Collettes* . It

would have been very surprising and a great disappointment if future research were to support the claim that currently prevails in the Tourist books on the Renoir museum of *Les Collettes*, that the villa was built by Renoir^{lv}, in the sense that he had a say or that he was the originator of its architectural design and layout. This building is totally unacceptable for the handicapped, structurally uncoordinated, with dark turning corridors, and an overall unpleasant interior ambience. I believe we should rather regard Renoir as a critic of architects, a great proponent of nature and conservationist rather an architect himself. A painter who acquired several studios, both in the city and in the countryside, most of which have been now the subject of legend or oblivion. His Paris studios are now interwoven into the fabric of the city, some not even commemorating the fact that the great painter lived there, while reminding the visitor that a particular Argentinean general lived in the premises. This also happened with several other artists. Picasso was certainly one of those who eventually found what he wanted through much movement. In his modest way, Giacometti was equally lucky. His studio, which during my 1994 visit stood peaceful in its anonymity^{lvi}, next to the huge wall of the elementary school on Hippolyte- Maindron, with its skylights facing north and the back of the more elegant studio of the painter Bolin, should be reclaimed, its interior restored and preserved as a testimony of the modest that was great.

The existential space of an Artist, can be anyone. It can be tiny or large, a humble adobe or a palatial residence. It is the space in which, despite the physical ingredients of form area and configuration, one can operate in total freedom with the inner preoccupations of the brain and in which he can interpret and express through Art his appreciation of the cosmos at the particular stage of his life.

The architectural expression of the Space is irrelevant if it does not satisfy the existential requirements of the brain. Set designs and form irrelevancies come about only if there is absence of the cerebral and existential. From this point of view the studio of Giacometti and his brain were one.

Notes :

ⁱ i.e see Jose Lopez-Rey, "Valasquez'work and world", pp.20. For more on Velasquez "career at the court", see : White, 1969, p. 62 and Kahr 1976. On the various Art History readings of Las Meninas see Licht , 1996, p.62-63

ⁱⁱ For Terminology and more on the "gallery paintings" from the Art History perspective see Kahr, 1976

ⁱⁱⁱ King, 1987, p. 16

^{iv} About the friendship of Sartre and Genet with Giacometti , see Lord 1983, p. 201-202, and 348-351 respectively.

^v see Sartre, 1966, and Genet, 1989

^{vi} see Lord, 1964

^{vii} See Lord , 1983

^{viii} Ibid, and Lord, 1983, p. 351

^{ix} Ibid.

^x "The paintings of Giacometti" and "The quest for the absolute" both in Sartre, 1966

^{xi} Sartre, 1966, p. 78

^{xii} Sartre, 1966, p. 78

^{xiii} Sartre, 1966, p. 89

^{xiv} Ibid. p. 89

^{xv} Giacometti , 1964,p. 32

^{xvi} Ibid.

^{xvii} i.e Zevi, in "Architecture as Space", see Zevi, 1974,etc.

^{xviii} Lord, 1983, p. 340, see also Gilot, 1964, pp. 204-207, where descriptions of the studio , the artist's habit in accepting people and his artistic relationship with Picasso.

^{xix} the best description of the Artist's house , his life in it and in his neighborhood have been given by Lord. See Lord 1963, throughout, and Lord 1983, p. 247, p. 332, on the cafe, see p. 340, etc.

^{xx} Giacometti, 1964, insert between pages, 38-39. For Giacometti's own sketches of Hippolyte Maindron, along with other sketches and impressions from Paris, see Sketches in Giacometti's own book, "Endless Paris" published by Teriade, March 1969, ref. Antonioz 1973 and Museum Teriade, 1985, p. 33-36

^{xxi} for similar notions see Limbour, 1948, p. 253

^{xxii} Limbour, 1948, p. 253

^{xxiii} It must be noted here that everything said about the studio refers to the initial condition of the studio. The whole interior of the Giacometti studio has been totally altered by subsequent owners of the building.

^{xxiv} Marchesseau, 1986, p. 10

^{xxv} Ibid.

^{xxvi} For Hotel de Rive see Lord, 1983, p.219-223

^{xxvii} Op. cit. p. 13

^{xxviii} Ibid.

^{xxix} For Annette's attitude towards Hippolyte-Maindron see Lord, 1983, p.433

^{xxx} Marlene Dietrich who had seen Giacometti's sculpture The Dog, had visited the artist repeatedly in his ramshackle studio. For more see Lord, 1983, p.406-407

^{xxxi} Limbour, 1948, p. 253

^{xxxii} See Murray , 1963, Frontpiece

^{xxxiii} Giacometti himself has spoken of the significance of the person's gaze. See Lord, 1983, p. 426

^{xxxiv} See Lord p. 426. Lord argues that it was this instance which made Giacometti assume a fear of night and dark, since it was during the dark of the night that he experiences the burning away of the life of his old friend companion who died of a heart failure in the hotel room when the artist was nineteen years old.

^{xxxv} For discription of his life in this hotel see Lord 1983, p. 219-222.

^{xxxvi} Biography, Giacometti, 1964-no page number

^{xxxvii} Miro has spoken about "the wretched hotel where I was living in the boulevard Pasteur": see McCully, 1982, p.127

^{xxxviii} Jimmy Ernst, 1984, p. 73

^{xxxix} Re: Schneider in Kallianis

^{xl} Giacometti, 1964

^{xli} See Lord, 1983, p. 221

^{xlii} see "Le Corbusier My Work", translated by James Palmes, Introduction by Maurice Jardot, pp.156-157

^{xliii} See Cholevas "The Architect Panos Nicoli Tjelepis (1894-1976)", doctoral dissertation, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, 1983, pp. 330-331

^{xliv} for Duchamp and his frugality see: D'Harnoncourt, 1973, pp.43-44, and for Mondrian, see chapter on "Up-tight order" below

^{xlv} for such distinction of creators and in reference to literature, see also Vasilikos, in magazine "H Lejh", no. 107, January -February, 1992, p. 89

^{xlvi} Paz, 1973, p. 2

^{xlvii} for more details on this and overall information on Tsarouchis and his various accommodations, in Paris and in Greece, see source in Greek by Alexis Savvakis (Sabbakhw, 1993, p. 35). For Tsarouchis in General, see source in English: Roditi, 1984, 125-135

^{xlviii} This quotation is attributed to Christian Zervos who in talks to Greek architects said that Le Corbusier had confided to him such influence.

^{xlix} Jean Renoir, 1988, p. 45, and p. 60

^l Ibid. p. 45

^{li} Ibid.

^{lii} Ibid.

^{liii} Ibid. p. 113

^{liv} Renoir, 1962, p. 385

^{lv} i.e see "Renoir's house" in "Museums Art Galleries, Cote d'Azur", Emile Trameni, Nice, 1994

^{lvi} Greatly altered in the interior, and with its exterior walls re-stuccoed and the doors replaced