

Kukje Gallery Showcases Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's Chandigarh

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"Tree Trunk" Coffee Table and "Kangaroo" Chair.(Photo: Keith Park, Image provided by Kukje Gallery)

As part of its series of annual design exhibitions that seek to introduce global pioneers in the field to a Korean audience, Kukje Gallery opens "Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret: Chandigarh, India, 1951-66" on April 26.

A forward-thinking modernist who sought to incorporate thoughtful design precepts into everyday life, Pierre Jeanneret was often the quieter, more pensive half in his design collaborations with his cousin, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier), the best known of which include Villa Savoye (1929), Pavilion Suisse at the Cite Internationale Universitaire (1923-33).

Some of Jeanneret's most progressive ideas, however, were realized not in Europe, but the tabula rasa conditions of the new capital of Chandigarh in the state of Punjab, India. Tasked with fashioning a completely new urban environment in 1951 after India gained independence from Britain, Jeanneret and Le Corbusier devised an ambitious master plan for Chandigarh that divided the city into sectors separated by function.

Working with the English architects Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, the Swiss pair produced a plan that foregrounded the specific local cultural and climatic conditions, while incorporating a number of their central principles, including the golden ratio and Le Corbusier's "modulor" theory, where architecture would be proportioned to fit the scale of the human body.

Over the course of 15 years living on-site in Chandigarh and directing the project, Jeanneret produced a selection of chairs, cabinets, desks, and other pieces of furniture that demonstrate a commitment to supporting local artisans and craftsmen, while utilizing local materials such as rosewood and teak, fused with the spirit of functional simplicity.

“Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret: Chandigarh, India, 1951-66” runs at Kukje Gallery in Seoul from April 26 through May 29, 2016.