

## What's the National Museum of Western Art?

### The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

Completed in 1959 Designer: Le Corbusier



©NMWA

■ The Main Building of the NMWA is a symbol of postwar cultural exchange between France and Japan owing to the return of "the Matsukata Collection" as donation.

■ The Main Building of the NMWA is the only building in East Asia designed by Le Corbusier. The architectural features of Le Corbusier, such as pilotis, ramp, a roof garden, lighting plan with natural light and the Modulor are well represented in this building.

■ This museum has realized the concept of "musée a croissance illimitée\*" (museum of unlimited growth)."

### Establishment of the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

From 1910 to 1920, the president of Kawasaki Dockyard Company at the time, Kojiro Matsukata built a collection of art works such as paintings and sculpture. These are called the Matsukata Collection.

After the Second World War, the collection became the possession of the French Government. However the French government returned the collection to the Japanese government to build a new museum as a condition.

It was soon after the war, the Japanese government did not have sufficient budget of building a museum. Eventually, the shortage was funded by donations from Japanese art world and financial community. It is said that 100million yen to have gathered at the time of the money. It shows us how big the expectation of people was.

The world famous architect Le Corbusier was selected to design the museum. He visited Japan in November, 1955 and researched the planned construction site in Ueno Park. Based on the drawing plan of Le Corbusier, his project was taken over to his three Japanese apprentices: Kunio Maekawa, Junzo Sakakura and Takamasa Yoshizaka, had completed the construction of the museum jointly.

The museum established in March and opened on 10th of June in 1959.

## Kojiro Matsukata and "the Matsukata Collection"

Kojiro Matsukata who built "the Matsukata Collection" was the third son of Masayoshi Matsukata. He became the first president of Kawasaki Dockyard Co., Ltd. and he made a great fortune out of his shipping business.

Kojiro Matsukata began to collect artworks in London in the middle of the First World War. He had made a fortune out of his shipbuilding business during the war, which allowed him to build a vast collection of artworks. On the occasion of several visits to Europe in the decade after 1916, he frequented art galleries and acquired a tremendous number of artworks ranging from painting and sculpture to furniture and tapestries. He purchased his collection entire reached to 10,000 works which includes sculpture of Rodin and painting of Monet and Renoir.

However, his passionate art collecting was not meant for his personal pleasure; rather, it came from an unselfish desire to build art museum on his own and to put authentic European artworks on view for the benefit of young Japanese artist.



Claude Monet "Water Lilies"  
1916 oil on canvas  
Matsukata Collection



Auguste Rodin "The Thinker"  
1881-82 bronze  
Matsukata Collection

Although, Matsukata had left a large number of his artworks in Europe, those stored in a London warehouse were destroyed in a fire.

Meanwhile, some 400 works stored in the facilities of the Musée Rodin. They became to possession of the French nation at the end of the Second World War. Through return and endowment of the Collection, that led to the opening of the National Museum of Western Art.



Kojiro Matsukata, the first president of Kawasaki Dockyard Co., Ltd. (currently Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd.)  
Photo by Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd.

## Discover the National Museum of Western Art

There are lots of Le Corbusier's architectural ideas studded in the Main Building of the National Museum of Western Art



### Pilotis

That is the space can find at the entrance of the Museum, lifting up the building from the ground with columns, in order to make a blow-through space which avoid rain and strong sun-light. It also increases flow ability inside and outside of the Museum.



### 19th century hall

This is the hall located the center of the main building and this is the starting point. There is a top light window (a triangular window set into the ceiling) where fills sunlight with natural light on a clear day. A slope connects 19th century hall and 2nd floor exhibition, which allows one to feel the change of spatial composition of this building at a glance.



### 2nd floor Exhibition

The second-floor exhibition room features an intriguing design in which one turns the corner, the same view with the previous, appears again. The ceiling of second floor exhibition is combined the lower part and higher part. The dimension of lower part of the ceiling is set by the Module system which is 226cm. The dimension of higher part of the ceiling is set twice high as the lower part of ceiling, and plus the thickness of the balcony floor.



### Mezzanine Floor Space

From the exhibition room on second floor, one can see a mezzanine and clerestory galleries spiraling outward. Going up through each of the narrow staircases one finds a space for the display of smaller exhibits. These are currently not in use.



### Free standing Columns

This building is supported by many columns. The columns were imprinted on the surface by using forms made from Japanese white pine into which concrete was poured. The length of center of column to the other center of column is decided by the modulor.



Photos : ©NMWA

## ACCESS



### The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

7-7 Ueno-koen, Taito-ku,  
Tokyo 110-0007, JAPAN

- JR Yamanote Line, 1 minute from Ueno Station, Park Exit
- Keisei Line, 7minutes from Keisei Ueno Station
- Ginza or Hibiya Subway Lines, 8 minutes from Ueno Station
- Taito City Circular route Bus, East-West Megurin, 1 minute from bus stop No.2:22, Ueno-eki-Ueno-koen

※The number of parking are limited in surrounding area, please use public transportation to visit the museum.

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http://www.city.taito.lg.jp/sekaiisan/



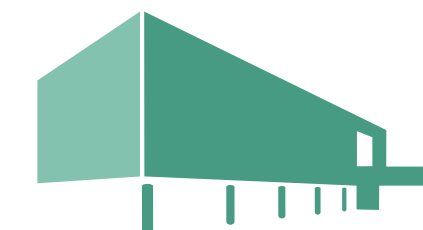
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WORLD  
HERITAGE  
in Ueno

## The First World Cultural Heritage in Tokyo

# The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo



The National Museum of Western Art which is included in the constituted elements of "The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier -An Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement", has inscribed in the World Cultural Heritage list in July of the year 2016.

 Taito City, Tokyo

# The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier

## —An Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement

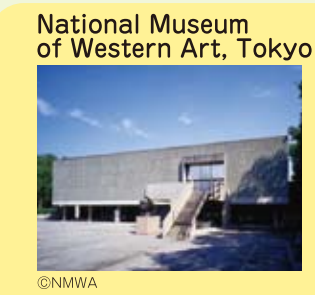
(L'Œuvre architecturale de Le Corbusier - Une contribution exceptionnelle au Mouvement Moderne - <French>)

Constituted assets: 17 elements in 7 countries

### France (10)



### Japan (1)



### Germany (1)



### Switzerland (2)



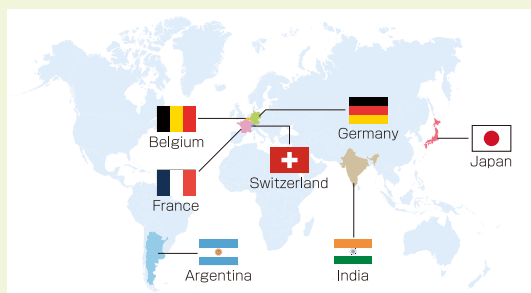
### Belgium (1)



### Argentina (1)



### India (1)



### Who's Le Corbusier?



#### Le Corbusier 1887–1965

Real Name : Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris  
 ※ "Le Corbusier" was his pen name that he used in the *Esprit Nouveau* journal.

• He was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland.  
 In order to take over his father's business as a clock smith, he went to an art school where he studied sculpture and metal carving. During his study in the art school, his teacher: Charles L'Eplattenier encouraged him to study architecture. That was his first step as an architect.  
 Afterwards, he moved to his office to Paris and succeeded all over the world. (He later took a French nationality.)

- He was one of the great masters of modern architecture in the 20th century.
- He proposed new ideas, such as the "Domino system," "Five Points of a New Architecture" and "Modulor." These ideas have had a major impact on architecture and design since the 20th century.
- There remain about 70 architectural works all over the world.
- In addition to the architectural field, he tackled interior design and writing. This included works of arts such as paintings, prints and sculptures. He took part in a wide range of creative activities - from small houses to a draft of the United Nations Building.

#### The Key words for understanding the Architectural works of Le Corbusier

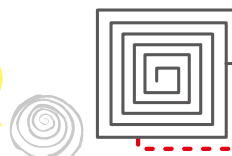
##### Le Modulor

This is the architectural rule to set the dimension of building by the traditional golden ratio and various human body measurements rulers (as a basic dimension). For example, Le Corbusier determined the ideal height of ceiling is a person (183cm tall European man) stretching his hand upwards (226m). Using this method: "the modulor", he set dimensions of rooms and furniture.

##### Musée a croissance illimitée (Museum of Unlimited Growth)

The floor plan of this concept allows to be extended in a spiral from the center of the building toward the outside to increase the exhibit space as collection expand. This concept is also attempted in the museums in Ahmedabad and Chandigarh in India in addition to the National Museum of Western Art.

I came up with the idea of spiral shape from a snail shell.



##### The Five Points of a New Architecture

He advocated the five points to consist of a New Architecture.

- 1. Pilotis**  
It is a space made by lifting up a building from the ground with columns, in order to make a blow-through space which can avoid rain and strong sun-light. It also increases flow ability inside and outside of the building.
- 2. Roof garden**  
Not using pitched roof. Designed a flat roof which allows planting greens and enjoying sunbathing, one can feel nature even in a city.
- 3. Free Plan**  
The floor space was free to be configured into rooms without concern for supporting walls.
- 4. Horizontal Long Windows (Horizontal Continuous Windows)**  
Horizontal long windows allow sun light reach to every corner of exhibition room, not disturbing by columns and/or walls.
- 5. A free façade**  
By supporting the building with columns on the inside of the building's outer perimeter instead of exterior walls, the outside of the building the façade or any exterior vertical wall surface becomes freer to design.

### Value of "The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier" as World Cultural Heritage

"The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier" that had been designed and constructed during the early 1920's to the middle of 1960's had proved historical outstanding contribution of "the Modern Architectural Movement" over half century. His works exist in numerous places in the world. His borderless works and assets had given magnificent impact to the Architecture in 20th century.

#### Materialization of le Corbusier's ideas by his Architectural Work

The works of Le Corbusier were pioneering answer for a new era of 20th century spiritual, society and needs of life style.

#### The influence of Le Corbusier's architectural work on a worldwide level

The works of Le Corbusier has introduced new ideas and concepts of values against the architecture to all over the world.

### Road to World Heritage Site Inscription

2007	Sep.	The Japanese government received the request for a serial nomination from the French government.
	Dec.	The Japanese government listed the Main Building of the National Museum of Western Art on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative Lists.
2008	Jan.	The Japanese government nominated the NMWA for "Architectural and urban works of Le Corbusier" to World Heritage List.
	Feb.	The French government, representing the states parties, submitted the nomination file for "Architectural and urban works of Le Corbusier" to the World Heritage Centre
	Oct.	ICOMOS, an advisory body of the World Heritage Centre, carry out on-site evaluation mission as a nomination process for World Heritage List.
2009	May	ICOMOS made their recommendation for "Deferral"
	Jun.	The 33rd World Heritage Committee in Spain examined and made "Referral" decision
2011	Feb.	The French government, representing the states parties, submitted additional information "The architectural work of Le Corbusier: an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement" to the World Heritage Centre. (Altered the title of nomination file and revised constituted elements.)
	May	ICOMOS made their recommendation for "Not to Inscribe"
	Jun.	The 35th World Heritage Committee in France reexamined and made "Deferral" decision
2014	Sep.	The French government, representing the states parties, submitted the nomination file for "The architectural work of Le Corbusier: an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement (Tentative)" to the World Heritage Centre
2015	Jan.	The Japanese government nominates for "The architectural work of Le Corbusier: an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement"
	Jan.	The French government, representing the states parties, submitted the nomination file for "The architectural work of Le Corbusier: an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement" (Official) to the World Heritage Centre
	Aug.	ICOMOS carry out on-site evaluation mission as a nomination process for World Heritage List.
2016	May	ICOMOS made their recommendation for "Inscription"
	Jul.	The 35th World Heritage Committee in Turkey examined and made "Inscription" decision

### What Is a World Heritage Site?

A World Heritage site is a place that is listed by UNESCO for being of such special cultural or physical significance that it has 'Outstanding Universal Value'. The list is maintained by the World Heritage Centre administered by UNESCO. The Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage was signed in 1972.

#### ★World Heritage Categories

There are three categories of world heritage site.

<b>Cultural Heritage</b> Buildings, ruins, castles, temples and ancient tombs, etc.	<b>Natural Heritage</b> Terrain, landscapes and valuable animal/plant habitats, etc.	<b>Mixed Heritage</b> Properties shall be considered as "mixed cultural and natural heritage"
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#### UNESCO

This is one of the institutions of the United Nations that was established in order to achieve world peace through educational, scientific and cultural activities. (Headquarters: Paris, France)



#### The decision of the World Heritage Committee is classified in the following four categories.

Categories	Details
1 Inscription	The site will be inscribed on the World Heritage List.
2 Referral of Nominations	The submission of additional information is required to the following Committee session for examination. The additional information must be received by the Secretariat by 1 February of the year in which examination by the Committee is desired.
3 Deferral of Nominations	More in depth assessment or study, or a substantial revision by the State Party is required. After the resubmission of nomination file, the site will again be evaluated.
4 Decision Not to Inscribe	The nomination may not again be presented to the Committee except in exceptional circumstances.