

E. 1027

Autor(en): **Laaring, Bess / Poulikakos, Alexander / Stolze, Magdalena**

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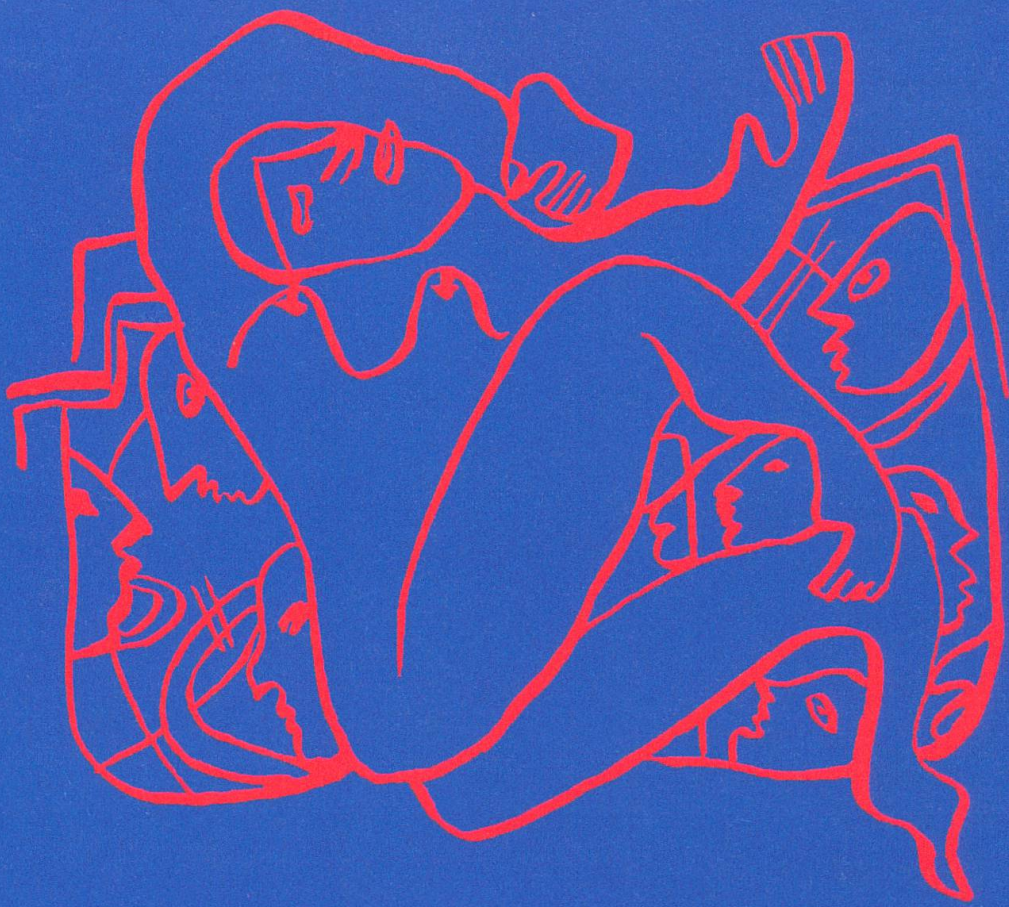
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E. 1027

Bess Laaring, Alexander Poulidakos, Magdalena Stolze

Cape Martin, South of France.
A house built in 1929 sits on a cliff,
overlooking the sea.

Dear Badovici,

Thank you for hosting us recently in your sea-side villa. I will admit to liking it greatly, and being full of admiration of the villa's sophisticated design. It accommodates, in its well-formed layout, de-compression and the contemplation of the blue expanse and enjoyment on the terrace of the sea air. It so elegantly houses our languid activities.

The initial formulation and conception of the house's purpose was irrational, however. I understand that your lover designed the villa for both of you and yet for only the briefest time did it serve its intended purpose. Her frivolity is evident, and I cannot admit to appreciating the interiors. They are at once meaningless and emotional. Her treatment of surfaces is too female, too timid and too restrained. Better the house serves its purpose as the vessel for our holiday making.

The house is no longer hers and the murals I painted while there were an attempt to meter the arrogance of her overconfident design. The dull walls needed addressing. My murals rectify the unconvincing nature of the place, what with the bold introduction of spirit and vitality. I hope you are benefiting from my improvement, the life it brings to an otherwise lifeless place. I have several more compositions planned which I intend to complete on my future visits.

I look forward to my next visit.
I shall bring Yvonne again.

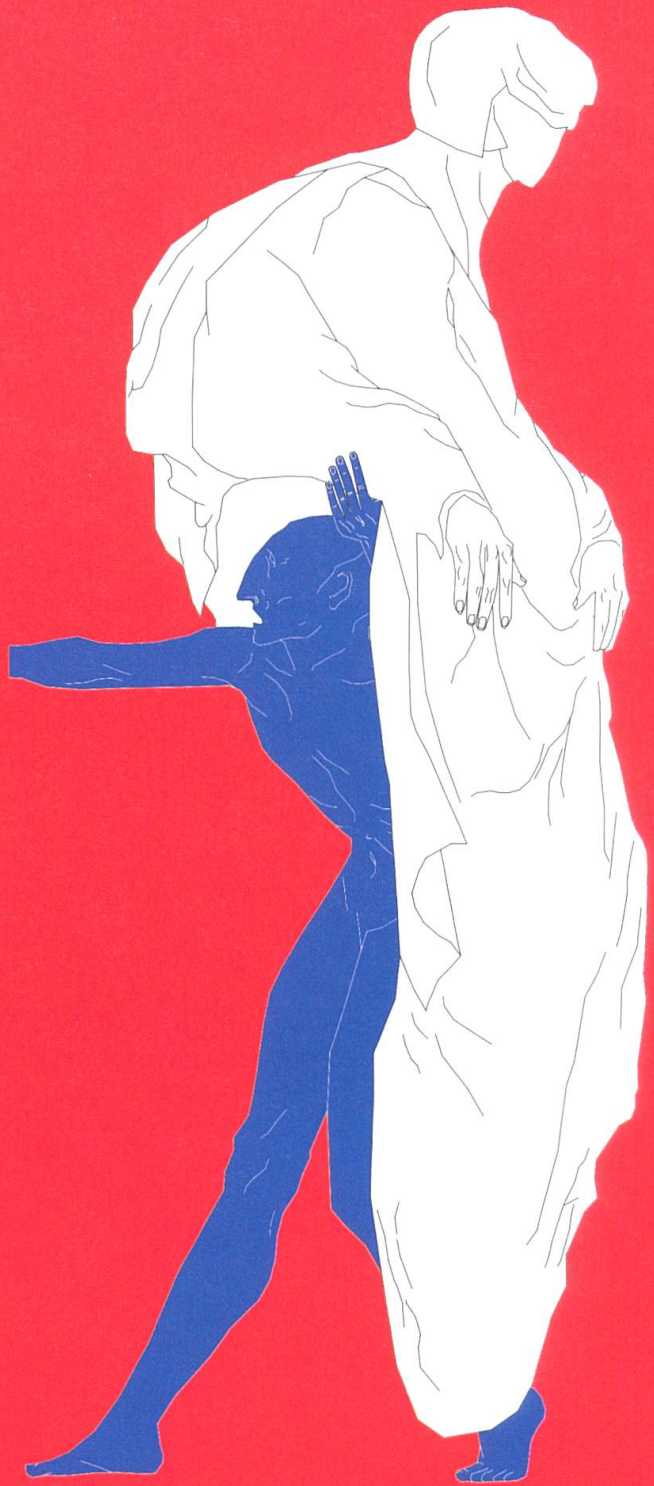
Le Corbusier



Eileen,

There has been something preoccupying me for years. I've been thinking about us. I've been thinking about it, our most precious obsession. We wrote poems and constantly thought about it. Our capsule built with our own hands that was supposed to hold us together but instead tore us apart. It started to amplify our differences and make us feel incompatible. That's why there was no room for the three of us after a few short years together. And you left. I stayed but things were no longer the same. I was constantly reminded of the times the three of us had shared and how they were gone forever. I felt lonely but my attraction to it didn't allow me to move on. I became dependent on visitors to keep me busy so naturally I was happy at first to see how fond of it my dear friend became. His visits started to become more frequent till it was grabbed fully by his bare, naked hand and squeezed tightly, hardly letting it breathe. Being caught between them and afraid of becoming isolated again, I did not interfere and let myself be repressed. His stain stayed present even after his grip loosened. There is a constant reminder now of his penetration. I'm even afraid his delusional obsession still hasn't faded. Just over a year ago he built his own cabanon five minutes away from our house. My dear friend tainted my affection to it, tearing it out of my weak arms, leaving me apprehensive and unable to protect it. Out of guilt I couldn't bear to be there anymore, so I abandoned it. I'm still devastated I let this happen and I am asking you to forgive me.

Love
Jean



My first one – when we first started I saw so much promise in you. We designed you together, Jean and I. And now neither of us owns you. I put all of myself into you, in every corner. I wanted to be alone with you and Jean. My life in Paris was always too loud and fast and public, women and cars and salons. I wanted quiet dinners and slow mornings and lazy afternoons. I wanted a space that was perfect for him, perfect for me. A private stage for my relationship with Jean, but also a new organism.

And when we created you together, I really believed it could be perfect. When I made the spaces, and we put them next to each other, you were created, a living thing. And you were not perfect for me or for my lover – you chose to be loved by another man. One who abused you – one who saw you as just a machine for living. The bedroom, perfect for sleeping in, for lounging around in, became just walls around a beautiful space. All of my instructions for living ignored, all our spaces vandalised and destroyed. And my weak-willed ex-lover allowed it all to happen to you, and you allowed it too. You wanted to be just a house, when you could have been much more to me. I made you with my own hands, I gave you a name, a new combination of Jean's and my name. But I knew it was over even before it happened. You were a product of my love for Jean, a product of his love for me. And our love crumbled as soon as we had created you. It was not your fault – but you made us see it. How his living room was supposed to be my bedroom. How his need for people destroyed my love of privacy. This is why I could never come back to you – you were his, and then you were another man's. Both you and I sit, barely recognised, left alone. Your recognition comes only from what a man painted on your walls, and my recognition comes only from the man's name I painted on my walls. But I think about you, and what you could have been for me, every day.

Love, Eileen.



View of E.1027 shortly after 1926 © DR – Photographer unknown

Uninhabited for many decades, the house deteriorated. In order to protect his murals, Le Corbusier eventually persuaded a supporter to buy the house. The villa was often attributed to Le Corbusier. Through more recent attention, Eileen Gray has gained recognition for the villa and for her work. She continued to work as a designer until her death at the age of 98 in 1976. The house has now been refurbished.

These letters are written on the basis of true events.