

an interview by Luca Ortelli with Monique Eleb
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Video





Monique, hello! Thank you for having us in your beautiful home. We come to you as a world expert as a great world expert the history of the in the history of We'd like to ask you Haussmann buildings. Haussmann buildings. We'd like to ask you some questions and discuss with you some questions and discuss with you on the specific character of this type of building, of this type of building, about the specific character in particular with regard to the organization of spaces according to the different categories, the social classes to which social classes to which this type of building was intended for, after if ever, if there's the ability to identify a difference between buildings, say, buildings from the middle of the 19th century and the end of the 19th century. And in a second step, I have a curiosity particular in relation to the capacity of these architects to adapt to geometries the most bizarre, with plots of land sometimes impossible, they start when to do things. There you go. But you speak freely and if I ever allow myself to interrupt you about things that we'd like to explore further. Of course, of course! There are a in fact three main questions, when you land me, there's the question of the population mix.

Notes

Summary

0m 16s





There is the question of the geometry of the catching up, what we call for catch-up geometric. And then the question of the distribution and the flexibility of adaptability of these apartments in extremely diverse lifestyles. When the the first Haussmann-style buildings are built on this boulevard, boulevard de Sébastopol around... it starts around 53 and of course with Napoleon III and Haussmann as prefect, with a whole series of architects, you know, who are watching the architects. Let's put it this way. That is, the idea is to make the City, to make great boulevards with vanishing lines which also make it possible balconies, the system, the entire system of facades with windows identical as it is whatever, whatever, whatever how to say, the assignment of the part that's behind it, all windows are identical, which is an irrational principle as much as possible. But that's the thing. the idea, the idea that all the windows are identical, the vanishing lines with the balconies and the blindfolds will allow to have a view of the a much more pleasant city. That's it, it's still a rule that completely flouts the architectural system, it is to to say that every architect is obliged to adapt to this rule and that's what he's going to do.

Notes

Summary

1m 34s





moreover, that after Napoleon III, the regulation will totally change and that the projections will be possible. But we will come back to this later. What is a Haussmann building? It is a wonderful system of social diversity. Why? Because it is a system, the Haussmann building inherits from a whole reflection on on the tripartite Parisian building that was built in the mid-18th century, actually. And by the way, what we call Haussmannian today in everyday language, it's the Parisian building actually. So it's a building with a commercial basement in the main avenues, four square floors, i. e. not attic storeys, crowning and in the crowning of the rooms of servant. So already the social hierarchy, but also the functional mix, has been recorded. That is a type... That is a type... multifunctional and moreover it is a building with courtyard; so who has wings which are generally inhabited by less privileged classes than those who live in on the street front and sometimes there's a return to another building on the courtyard which is accessible from the porch from the main entrance on the street. That's the overall system. On this subject is a passage from Proust who describes exactly this deep stratification.

Notes

Summary

3m 19s





Yes! On the plot with also sometimes a small private mansion where is located.... So I was just getting to that. It's just that often the owner, since we're here in a system of private property. often the owner decides to live there. And in this case, he puts a staircase that connects two floors and we call it the hotel. in the building. So actually, it's what is now called the duplex. But we're going to find out for sure either at the back or at the front, it's not always regular. Private mansions in the building. So, it should also be noted that the second floor is the noble floor, it is the privileged floor with the most great height under the ceiling and only a few little by little with the knowledge hygienic, we know that the air is very polluted on the first floors and more and more the fifth will be get a coveted place. Here you are in an apartment which is on the fifth floor, so not very high ceiling, but which was above the miasmas, above the bad.... and above the noise. So more and more the fifth is going to be and we're going to see it appear, by the way, you will see some balconies on the fifth floor, which means that was not the case in the first few buildings.

Notes

Summary

5m 07s





So then the distribution: The inside, really from the inside. The interior is still quite a variation on the theme of the hotel particular; it is to say the private mansion had like rule of connect the main parts by a string along the windows and so we're going to find in the apartment Haussmannian this string. We're going to find the entrance expanded, sometimes it's a real gallery, where Proust rightly dreams that Mrs. of Guermantes will invite him to join the salons, (very nice pages on there) and there's going to be a dissociation between.... there are three parts in the apartment Haussmann: the services part which is generally relegated, the private part and the public part. And theoretically there are very few links between the private and public part except for the lady's room. that's going to be connected to the dining room. That is to say, in fact, we have a very good idea here that the woman is both in her bedroom and in the dining room to make all kinds of women's activities of that period. So in fact this system is an extremely flexible system for another reason: is that the owners are very pragmatic, and in multiplying the doors, are going to make it possible for us to associate one apartment with another.

Notes

Summary

6m 47s





This is a door here, it overlooks my apartment's apartment. neighbour. So that's if I wanted to expand at the time from his departure I could rent or buy this apartment to make a bigger apartment or a piece. So all Haussmann systems are organized in such a way that sometimes a room is either assigned to an apartment or to the other one at the time of the move. This is a system of flexibility extraordinary, and I'm an admirer of it. crazy. Why? Why? Because today when we have this whole family system recomposed, of aid temporary to the grandmother of the teenager who wants to live a little bit of his life etc. All these elements play a role great. And then there's also in the Haussmann building, it's not the case here, but it's often the case, one bedroom separate from the other side of the bearing and which is an office in general, which is the office of Mr. and which allows precisely this autonomy. So today, the building Haussmannian is a building that I show always to effectively show the continuity, both continuity reflection on on flexibility, but also how much these apartments teach us a lesson for today. Yes, it is. you can ask me another question that was What's going on?

Notes

Summary

8m 42s





The building Haussmann is very criticized by Viollet the Duke and Charles Garnier who are fighting an extraordinary battle to free the buildings by done. And in 1884, they win the battle because there is a regulation that allows for projections which were extended in 1889 and so we're going to to have buildings now autonomous who do not obey the rule urban, that can be works of art of architects. So more and more architects will let loose in relation to this new regulations. And we're going to see the arrival of the beautiful Window, the various gardens, of everything that makes it possible at the back of the building of, how to say, to have a facade which is no longer flat, which has of the projections and who has one, how to put it, a freedom, since the signature of the architect can be seen, since he a all possibilities to play. So what's the architect playing with? He's playing with a principle of rationalism; i. e. each part is opened by report to its destination and so there's going to be some small and large windows, we're not no longer in the reproduction system of the same window in the room and we is going to have all of this this freedom that will put in place place, we're actually going to see Guimard, Sauvage, all all architects known at the time who are going to play with this new regulations.

Notes

Summary

10m 24s





The other interesting regulation is that of the courses and runners. The runners allowed for often to have only one element lighting or ventilation. But in fact the runs had become of the places extremely dirty. So we're going to expand the courses. In fact, the runs are going to become..... The runners will become courses and the courses will become court-garden. So more and more we're going to have these great courts that philanthropists, that early philanthropists moreover will expand a lot, since they're going to propose a courtyard system with sometimes 11 or 12 buildings around a very large courtyard garden. So with the idea of ventilation, a thin frame and a lot a lot a lot..... It's a phenomenon that we can observe more or less to the same in the same several European cities, of course, but this species of opposition between a building that bends to rules in favour of the city and the other that is a self-referential building, so to speak, in this kind of opposition, to say it between a more formal position classic or more romantic, is which in the second generation you just mentioned, there are real improvements in terms of typology and distributive, including with regard to flexibility and adaptability?

Notes

Summary

12m 19s





The question, it's very surprising, because in this when I is working on the 1920s and 1930s, well, since I'm preparing the third one. volume of architecture of life private. And that's It's amazing how devices persist and how others are not out of order total, but are pursuing elements that were in germination. For example, let's take a look at two examples, examples of architects not known, you don't even have to say their name since we wouldn't hold them back, we see the rehearsal of what was happening before y included a rule I don't yet have spoken, which was to Madam's room in front of the street since the Chamber in front of the street. Since Madam's room was there the most important. So she was as important as the living room, so we put it on the most beautiful view which was the street, since in the 19th century, the street becomes the most beautiful view, which is still something that should be reported here. And so it is we see you with plans that don't do not disturb at all in relation to this system where we even see runners at the minimum who obeyed the law, but barely fair.

Notes

Summary

13m 57s





And then next to that, we have for example the studio Building de Sauvage which is a building of artists' studios with 7-metre double height living room high and rooms above repeated, that is, in fact, houses superimposed, which is completely out of touch with what that was happening before, except that we can say that the duplex has existed since mid-18th century century. But the novelty is the repetition in the same building of floors, of duplexes, in fact workshops that allow a life which is very, very close to the one of a single-family home, actually. So what we in France call the intermediate habitat in fact. So they're stacked houses, and that's it, stacked houses is always at the forefront today, a hundred years later it's still the front custody. So that's what's going on. is the most requested by the middle class. So, one of the interesting things as well in relation to à the Haussmann, if you want, it's than Haussmann's allowed that the social mix persists in cities and in particular in Paris. That's right! Because when you mix it up, in Paris first you have to to know that in Paris there are 50% of homes that have two pieces and less, which is still very specific, today but at the same time we has a lot no apartments, no housing, of apartments in the beautiful neighborhoods that make between 150 and 300 square meters.

Notes

Summary

15m 18s





So we actually have some kind of opposition extraordinary, but here we're in one in an apartment. second class, since Caesar Dali who is the great Haussmann water preacher, Caesar Dali classifies the apartments in three levels: the first level and especially in the beautiful districts 16th, 17th, 8th, 8th, 7th etc. Here we have in these neighborhoods which are neighbourhoods very commercial, we have rather apartments, not buildings of second class. That is, they are not built they are made of wooden panels and not in stone and there are two apartments per floor or sometimes three, then that to be classified first class it is necessary to that the apartment occupies an entire floor. With typically the double circulation, separation. Dual circulation exists always, I didn't mention it. It's true that I didn't mention it, but one of the characteristics of the Haussmann apartment that inherits of the private mansion, is the dual circulation, the double flow; that is, in fact the idea is that the servants who were very present, as included here in In the second class, the servants were there and well must not not do their service in a way too visible. So the double flow allows precisely not to being too present.

Notes

Summary

17m 19s





That's what's good and at the same time it gives you this interest of the Haussmann who gives the impression of being more great than it is, because when you don't fact no return, when you're in a loop, in a loop system, it feels like it's a perceptual illusion that architects know how to handle, and so we feel like we're in an apartment much bigger than it is. This is the double flow is typical. So except in the third category where there is no double flow since there's not even a living room and we to the Haussmannian in the outlying suburbs in Paris of third grade class without a living room. So instead of to be in the tripartition, we is in the bipartition. And this double circulation exists at the horizontal level, that is, domesticity invisible in relation to to the guests, but also at the level of vertical distribution, because often in the buildings of first class, there are two stairwells. Oh yes! So anyway, in the first class, and I was going to go. come because I wanted to talk about of the servants and their place that's the point. So in the first and in the second class, the domestic servants are therefore in the attic and rooms of servants are organized sometimes with one or two water points, which is still conditions of life very very difficult.

Notes

Summary

18m 53s





Except Ledoux and Guimard who, they, however, treat very very well the servants, but most of the servants are still very badly treated, and so in the first class Obviously we have a staircase. of service, this service staircase direct duct to the last floor, but on each floor we can go into each apartment through the kitchen. So in fact this system, there is a toilet for servants. So it's a system that double the dual flow system at inside. In fact, there are all kinds of devices that allow that the servants are not visible since that's the luxury, that's the luxury. It's the back. of the set. In the second class, there's no service stairs, but the servants have a room. So they have a room upstairs. But after 1884, when..... after 1884, but well after actually, we realize that if we gathers the servants they will rebel and compare their wages, well, we sets up rooms of servants in the apartment. So here are in fact these apartments these buildings, such as you were saying it, are autarkic, but at the same time and in the apartments we have the social mix. So it's very special. this period of architecture.

Notes

Summary

20m 29s





And in fact of some of the buildings of Rouspète in the 1930s, made for the very, very large bourgeoisie, and we can see very clearly that there's a whole part of services where servants live, usually it is written lingerie, and lingerie is there. room of the servants at that time there, in fact a servant. So in the experiments modernists of the buildings of report we find modules or paths, especially at the level of of the distribution, which belong to the Haussmann. To the legacy Haussmann and the legacy of the private mansion before. Yes! Because for me, despite the space which has shrunk a lot, there are interpretations. The bourgeoisie wants to live apart and imitates ways of life of the aristocrats who remain something, a representation very strong in the asks and therefore in fact all these elements there, we find in all these elements there is a continuity of ways of to live that is French. But I'm talking about a species contradiction between the typological organization and architecture, you just quoted Roustiks, I think in Italy there is INAUDIBLE first buildings, the new INAUDIBLE which was considered really as the icon of modernity in Italy, covers behind this magnificent facade a dwelling, which is a distributive product apparently from the 16th century, unlike vineyards that's behind it.

Notes

Summary



22m 25s



It's very common, precisely because what's striking is what mixing. So I'm used to saying that the envelope is modern and the interior refers to the modernization. That is to say, we actually have in the inter-war period we have all these phenomena of mix, in terms of mixing between positions of the avant-garde in terms of of the facade building structure sometimes, by the way, from... The constructive aspect is very modern and we have a distribution very commonplace which refers to 19th century. Because as Adolphe points out Flo, it's true that the housing has a huge inertia compared to others research areas of interest on architecture, absolutely, which is demonstrated by the fact that in a Haussmann apartment, we live very well today. Yes, of course. So I would also like to say that a lot of things that are attributed to Le Corbusier as a novelty, in fact are prepared to very, very long time ago before. For example, we attribute a lot of in Le Corbusier the artist's studio. If we take the housing unit from Marseille, if you will, well, we find the Tubar, as the people of the Fine Arts, we find the model in Arfitson's building of Campagne Première Street in 1911.

Notes

Summary

24m 11s





I put the two shots of one on the other one is the same, and at the time Arfitson was not even not avant-garde, since that was done in the usual way in architecture for the very great bourgeoisie who wanted to have what they called a studio or a High English, i.e. the double height, the staircase that leads to.... the staircase against a wall based on the model of the artist's studio since this staircase led to the possibility of storing canvases. In fact, this model is a model very very very strong from the a French company. Le Corbusier took it. He did all of them. types of transformations aesthetic with this model, but this model is fundamentally rooted in the 19th century. So we could think, listening to you, that the building as such slows down a little bit modern discoveries much more than the villa individual, because there are villas which are, in relation to the more revolutionary way of living that the modernist building compared to the 19th century, or I'll cheats. No, no, no, it's true, it's true. true, because, a villa, there's a lot more leisure time, the leisure of invention in the villa, because first in this direct report with the client, the question is very, very different.

Notes

Summary

25m 57s





In the building, there is a fundamental brake, is that the owner wants to be able to resell or rent, and so he doesn't want to put in question ways of living too much brutal, because he knows it's going to be difficult then to find a buyer. And so that's it. It's one of the big brakes, he's one of the brake guys and today, there is still this brake. Certainly Adeline Demare who did some work on that, but I'm not. would be unable to answer that, but there was some work done, Yes, of course, on the yield, there is also more work to be done within my reach, because I'm financially involved I'm absolutely terrible, but by against there's an aspect which is very interesting, is that the Haussmann building is built for classes different, except that little by little, when the West in Paris is developing, it will take more and more, it's Adeline Demare that shows it, it will also be necessary to in addition to having the same income to be able to live in the same building. So that's actually the mix. of the first Haussmannites, It will be reduced, it will to be reduced because to live Avenue Foch, you'll have to be very possessive. or be a servant, but there will be no middle class.

Notes

Summary

27m 39s





Avenue Foch, that's it. So it's very important. And now you can see very clearly that the system built frame social relationships very important. One last thing, Monique, which concerns this extraordinary ability to take advantage of, I say to myself more difficult and confusing, because Haussmann, in good and evil has produced plots of land sometimes really difficult. So I have makes a small chapter in one of my books on the art of redemption, and one of my books on the art of redemption, and because effectively the in because effectively the in plots are in plots are Paris, plots are Paris, irregular, Paris, irregular, we irregular, we finds a building, we find a piece of land that makes it possible to make a building, but where a lot of parts are going to be in an acute angle for example, that's when even very difficult. So the architects will develop an art of the redemption which allows to geometrize because one of the rules still for a very long time, one of the design rules of housing in France is that each part has a particular shape a particular shape. There, the living room is a very large room in general terms rectangular, it only has That's all the living room has like that.

Notes

Summary

29m 10s





quality, the dining room on the other hand, it has very good qualities special that are written is that for functionalists, if we see Viollet the Duke, Gadet, Well, the dining room has to have only one window. It must be in length to that the table lengthwise and then move in, and it must have walls. in panelling at one meter, not with oil to be cleanable. And then little by little the dining room's gonna have a nice window. it's going to be one of the rules. And then often a hair on the side or in the middle of the room. So in fact, there is a regularity of the parts. There are rules and these parts must be regular and the rooms must be regular, even if they have a small rounded, since the rounding becomes an element of prestige, but the roundness with windows not rounded anywhere. So the problem is is that and especially not to triangle and especially no shape irregular. In fact, they are... how can I say this? They obey the rules of the INAUDIBLE quite simply, that is, in the right shape, to the rules of good form is to say that in Western civilization, the rule of good form, we are not Eskimos, we don't like rounded roofs etc. So there are rules of the right shape: orthogonality etc.

Notes

Summary

30m 37s





So it's a question of the architects will set up a geometric catch-up system and will install... Let's say a dining room was a fake rectangle with an acute angle, well, they're going to recover the rectangle and install in the acute angle a closet, or if it's a room, they're going to set up a small cabinet of grooming or a closet. So it's actually the art of closet and art of the reusable nook. That's why you can call it a redemption, since we're buying back a space that is not useful and therefore the parts are back in good shape. That's it, and so this art of redemption, it is absolutely necessary on the little biscornus fields like you you were saying. Actually, that's an art we have. lost, there may only be our students in INAUDIBLE who know him since we're talking about it and there is a teaching of architecture learned domestic servant, but it is totally lost. And today I saw anyway in Paris from in a building of a very good quality architect with high reputation people who complained about having attributable sawing off the foot of a child's bed to be able to use it go into a room in a room of a child, because the catch-up didn't have summertime done or that we didn't think that in effect there were others....

Notes

Summary

32m 14s





So this is still an art that should be found and that she was, let's say, instrumentary that the architects had to do with it. At the level of training, geometric repurchase was part of the teaching where it was something that we were learning on the battlefield? We were learning about the battlefield, as you say, on the field because in fact, first of all, you should know that during very much for a long time there was not housing education, that the teachings were done in shortcomings the great reviews. Caesar Dali's review was beautiful. Then someone who was working with continued to do so. It was a real teaching on housing, so these elements in addition there were monthly production that showed the best productions of the month with a level of exceptional criticism. That is, the level of criticism was going from construction to use, and they were critics who had a talent incredible, who were in fact pedagogues and educators in reality the architects in agencies. Which means that the same thing happened again this knowledge. It was a species of parallel training, or even same antagonist to the formation. Yes, since when you see the...

Notes

Summary

33m 58s





when you see the... when you sees the time, if we take the time again from the end of the 19th century, teaching at the Beaux-Arts was absolutely, you have to read a book that is awesome of France Jourdain called the workshop chanterelles which is a mean criticism of what was happening at the Fine Arts and who is very funny and where he's just talking about of the competition themes. It was necessary to build a casino on an island etc. We never talked about housing. There was no teaching of housing. However, this teaching was done like that, by the gang and in the agencies. Last week, INAUDIBLE recalled that the price Schinkel, until the 1920s, was not given to residential buildings, because precisely the Schinkel prize it was first and foremost the great monuments. But of course. But this year, you can see you, one of the winners taught me that the silver square given for the first time, a silver square the housing. That's it! That's it! Is that true?

Notes

Summary

35m 35s

