

LE CORBUSIER: ARCHITECT, AGENT DE PROPAGANDE

Author(s): ARIANE LOURIE HARRISON

Source: *Perspecta*, 2012, Vol. 45, AGENCY (2012), pp. 193-202

Published by: The MIT Press on behalf of *Perspecta*.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24728130>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



The MIT Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Perspecta*

JSTOR



1

The exchange between the multinational design firm Thonet and many of the most famous modernist architects left a paper trail of marketing brochures, advertising copy and patent lawsuits during the interwar period.<sup>1</sup> These documents complicate the stereotypical dual images of domination and control by the corporation, along with visionary leadership by the designer. These documents also help contextualize the sudden modernization of Thonet's corporate image as a promoter of modernist design.<sup>(Fig. 1)</sup> Once we discard the notion that industry remained at a relatively primitive state of cultural savvy and accept the

193

# LE CORBUSIER: ARCHITECT, AGENT DE PROPAGANDE

## ARIANE LOURIE HARRISON

evidence of modernist designers' lively engagement with the capitalist forces, we discover a scenario in which the agency of the architect takes on surprising roles. The interaction between Thonet and Le Corbusier, for example, instead unfolds in a narrative of copyright dodges and advertising feints in the service of developing a European market for modernist design.

#### L'AGENT DE PROPAGANDE

Following our telephone conversation, we would like to consider you a spokesman [agent de propagande] of the highest authority and that your influence will obtain for us much business. Thus ... the sum of 138.00 francs will be credited [to your account] at the first possible occasion.<sup>2</sup>

*Letter from Thonet Frères to Le Corbusier  
September 1, 1926*

This is not a bribe. This letter from Thonet's French affiliate, Thonet Frères, indicates the firm's willingness to overlook Le Corbusier's debt, incurred while furnishing the *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau*; Thonet extended this forgiveness in light of the architect's value as a marketing resource in the recalcitrant French market. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Thonet established its major branch offices—Thonet Brothers Ltd. in London, Thonet Brothers Inc. in New York, Gebrüder Thonet in Berlin, Thonet Frères in Paris—as semi-independent and regionally-integrated entities.<sup>3</sup> Thonet Frères, the seat of the firm's advertising and communication, adopted a French name but in fact had little access to the clientele of French design salons. Thonet's flattering overture towards Le Corbusier reveals the firm's interest in formalizing a relationship with the architect, not as one of simple supplier, but one of Le Corbusier as a spokesman, or "agent de propagande."

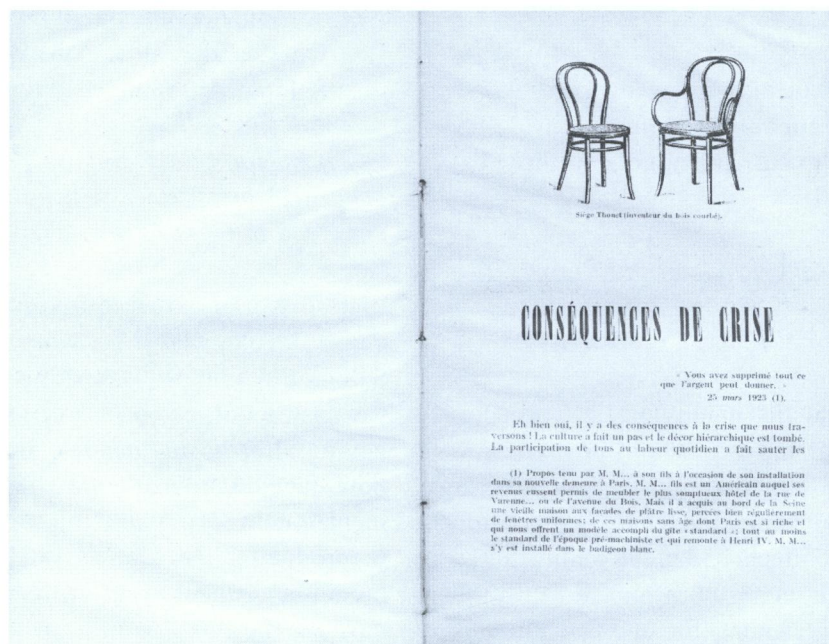
194 Le Corbusier's development as a young architect suggests that he would be receptive to just this sort of reciprocal partnership with the corporate world. The architect's interest in, and analysis of, the design business had begun over a decade prior—well before Charles-Edouard Jeanneret adopted his pseudonym. In his early writings, such as his *Étude sur le mouvement d'art décorative en Allemagne* (1912), Jeanneret focuses on the organization of the German design industry, observing the lucrative overlap of German industrial and design networks. He even offers the reader several business tips,<sup>4</sup> noting which corporate structures offer architects higher profit margins, and sizing up Behrens' makeover of AEG's corporate image.<sup>5</sup> He reviews the elegant layouts of the Werkstätte catalogues on display at Werkstätte branch offices, noting their effective communication of design principles and goals. He concludes that the French design business has much to learn from Germany.

Just how much, he feels, will be made clear by comparing French and German design products: this is the premise of his subsequent and unpublished manuscript. In his letters describing the proposed manuscript, entitled *France or Germany? Study on one aspect of the artistic creation of two nations during the period 1870–1914: a guide for reform*, Jeanneret envisions "an album for which the text only serves to bridge the facts."<sup>6</sup> The facts are the images—200 pages of images of design objects and buildings, culled from magazines.<sup>7</sup> French design can be rehabilitated, he suggests, by confronting German innovation: a symmetrical layout pits German design on the recto page against French design on the verso. The polemical tone of the proposal cannot mask the author's appreciation for German corporate organization and the Werkbund's strategies for publication financing. Jeanneret even proposes that the designers and producers of works illustrated in *France or Germany* share in the publication expense.

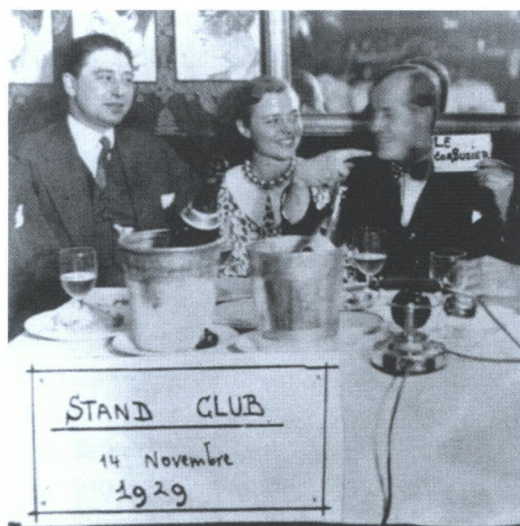
Protracted discussions with French publishers and the architect's own focus on the Domino project, his painting, and his new Parisian artistic circle contributed to the demise of this book project. Yet a commercial logic can be discerned in many of its visual arrangements, which would be echoed in the advertising of his new magazine, *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Illustrations of mass-produced products were embedded—not as overt advertisements—in the journal's articles, and Le Corbusier would sometimes redesign sponsors' actual advertisements by grafting in images of his own unbuilt works within the comparably more "real" space of the advertising image.<sup>8</sup> The space of design opportunity, for Le Corbusier, resided in the dialogue between object and the market, a relationship for which he proposed the high-minded moniker *objets-type*.

Le Corbusier singled out the *objet-type* as an anonymous mass-produced product, yet one that often bears a brand name: Thonet's mass-produced café chairs were often cited as an example. While the image of Le Corbusier's *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau* for the 1925 International Expo was one of mass product, it actually required extensive customization. In fact, Thonet's bentwood chairs were one of the few truly mass-produced items that Le Corbusier employed to furnish the pavilion.<sup>9</sup> Le Corbusier's texts told the story differently. In his *Almanach d'Architecture Moderne* (1925), Le Corbusier emphasized the industrial pedigrees of the pavilion's furnishings: "mass-produced Thonet chairs, adjustable standardized table, and laboratory glassware."<sup>10</sup> In *L'Art Décoratif d'Aujourd'hui* (1925), he further encouraged the reader to imagine the mass-produced *objets-types* such as Thonet chairs within the collections of a "museum of our own day".<sup>(Fig. 2)</sup> Le Corbusier's relentless pace of publication for the *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau* and his frequent mention of the firm's products in print contributed to Thonet's conceiving of Le Corbusier as a trend-setting spokesman for the company and led Thonet to write off his debt, perhaps as a marketing expense.

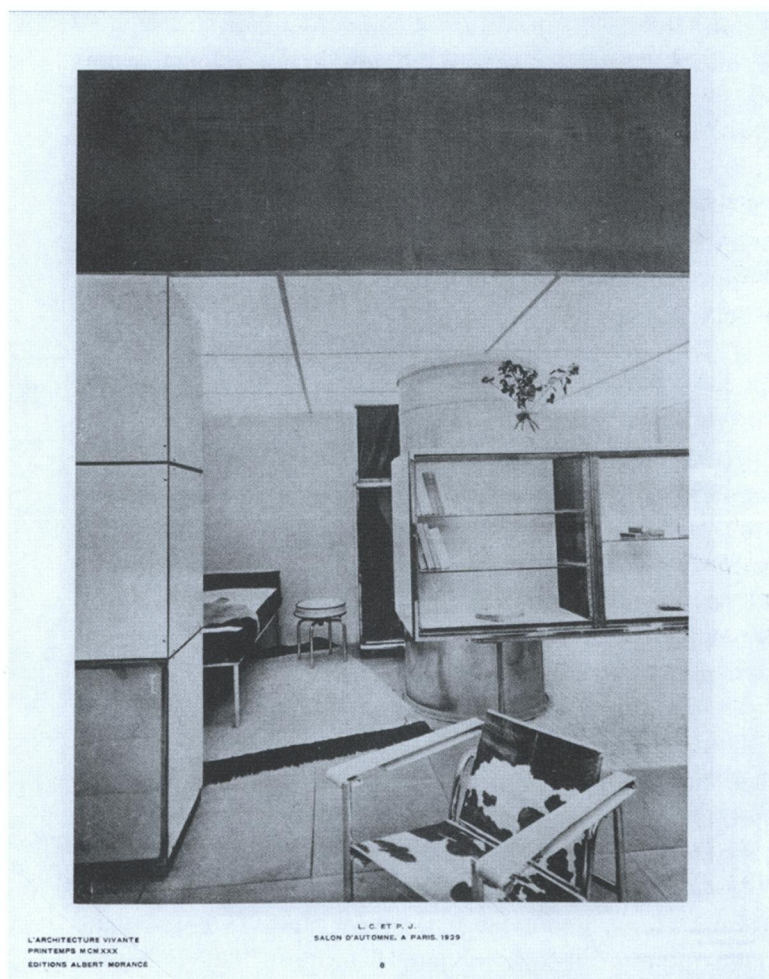
ARIANE LOURIE HARRISON



2



3



4

Fig.1 (on page 193) Charlotte Perriand seated on furniture by Thonet-Frères. Image courtesy of the Burgasser Archive, York, PA.  
 Fig.2 Le Corbusier's article, "Conséquence de Crise" from *L'Art Decoratif d'Aujourd'hui*. Image courtesy of Columbia University.  
 Fig.3 Bruno Weill, Charlotte Perriand, and Pierre Jeanneret at the Stand Club in Paris, November 14, 1929. Image courtesy of Jacques Barsac.  
 Fig.4 "L.C. et P.J., Salon d'automne a Paris 1929" from *L'Architecture Vivante* (Spring 1930). Image courtesy of Columbia University.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Your names were a powerful point of leverage and certainly garnered attention and interest in every country for this [event] and are one of the reasons for its success.<sup>11</sup>

*Letter from Thonet to Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret*  
September 28, 1929

Thonet's letter suggests that the names of Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret, with whom he went into business, were instrumental in generating an audience for the company's international bentwood chair competition of 1929, and that the two architects had greatly contributed as jury members. This is flattery from a high level in the design world of the day, given that, for one, Thonet was the largest furniture company in the world. Secondly, the letter was personally addressed to the architects by Thonet's president, and thirdly, Le Corbusier had not even attended the jury.<sup>12</sup>

Promoted in international design journals, the 1929 bentwood competition leveraged a prestigious jury to secure (relatively cheaply) exclusive rights to architect-designed furniture.<sup>13</sup> Thonet reserved the right to purchase the rights to any non-prize-winning project entered in the competition for 50 dollars, and all prize-winning and purchased designs would be considered Thonet's property. Moreover, the firm reserved the right to modify all proposed designs to facilitate fabrication. Four thousand entries for new bentwood chairs demonstrated the degree to which Thonet's scheme succeeded.

Thonet's letter stresses the importance of association with design-world "names" and, in so doing, signals a change in the company's approach: despite its history of producing architect-designed furniture, prior to 1929, Thonet only promoted products under the firm's own name and had never featured the designers' names in catalogue or advertisement. The names "Le Corbusier" and "Jeanneret," which "garnered ... attention in every country," represent avenues via which Thonet's business could be expanded. Both Thonet and Le Corbusier recognized the value of circulating the look and lifestyle of modernism. So how do these names—Le Corbusier and Thonet—one an architect's pseudonym, another a trade name for a conglomerate of bentwood furniture manufacturers—reinforce each other? One answer would be that Le Corbusier helped facilitate Thonet's foray into a new market for tubular steel, a material explicitly linked to modernist design.

## THE FRENCH MARKET

We will help as much as possible to help Thonet produce these... The name of Thonet's firm will

accompany ours on all publications of these works and in all reviews of our stand at the Salon d'Automne.<sup>14</sup>

*Charlotte Perriand (on behalf of Le Corbusier) to Thonet*  
October 4, 1929

"These works" are prototypes of tubular steel furniture being developed by Le Corbusier's office for the 1929 Salon d'Automne. Charlotte Perriand had joined Le Corbusier's office as its sole associate for interior design, having already produced several of her own designs, and now faced the challenge of furnishing a model apartment for this Parisian exhibition.<sup>15</sup> Thonet was interested in producing the tubular steel chairs and tables for the model apartment, but drew the line at the Corbusian *casiers*, the boxy form of which, the furniture manufacturer maintained, "lacked commercial appeal." Perriand insisted on the importance of *casiers*, which in this installation provided the sole partition-walls of the apartment. When the Salon d'Automne opened in early November, Le Corbusier-Jeanneret and Perriand's model apartment was unfurnished: evidently the result of the corporate/design collaborative stalemate with the director of Thonet Frères, Bruno Weill. (This served as an uncomfortable reminder of a previous furnishing fiasco—the bare interiors of Le Corbusier's Weissenhof Seidlung villas.) Perhaps not wishing to forfeit future marketing opportunities with the architect, Weill agreed to produce the suite of steel *casiers* on the condition that Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand would undertake the marketing. Weill also committed to underwrite the costs of the Salon d'Automne display in exchange for exclusive production and marketing rights for all of the other new furniture. A snapshot taken later that day at Paris's Stand nightclub shows Perriand, Jeanneret and Weill celebrating over champagne.<sup>(Fig. 3)</sup> Perriand smiles broadly and Jeanneret, laughing, holds up a sign reading "Le Corbusier" in the empty place of the architect. Weill sits back with a weak smile that hints at his understanding of the technical and marketing challenges that lay ahead.<sup>16</sup> The furnished apartment, titled "Interior Equipment for the Home," finally opened just twelve days before the exhibition closed, but the image of its provocative interior circulated widely.<sup>(Fig. 4)</sup>

After this episode, Thonet-Frères' marketing strategy for Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand furniture became more agile, exploring the symbolic value of collaborating with architects. The British *Architectural Review*'s July 1930 survey recasts the poetically-lit "portraits" of steel chairs in Thonet Freres showroom as those of a "Parisian architect's office."<sup>17</sup> In conjunction, Thonet Frères issued a two-page brochure of the collection with the bold headline, THESE WORKS BY LE CORBUSIER P. JEANNERET CH. PERRIAND ARE PRODUCED EXCLUSIVELY BY THONET PARIS.<sup>(Fig. 5)</sup> Photographs of this seven-piece collection were labeled by item number

ARIANE LOURIE HARRISON



5a



5b



5c

Fig. 5a-c *Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand*, Thonet-Frères catalogue, 1930. Image courtesy of the Burgasser Archive.

and product description. Unlike Thonet's German advertising materials, this catalogue made no attempt to justify tubular steel furniture on the grounds of comfort or hygiene. Photographs of the furniture and the architects' names did the advertising.

Thonet Frères also tested the applicability of the Corbusian aura to its other products. The firm issued another catalogue, titled "*Le fauteuil d'aujourd'hui*," adapting the title of Le Corbusier's 1925 text. Identical in layout and color scheme to the Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand's brochure, this catalogue did not feature sleek "machines for sitting," or any other *objet-types*, but rather offered a collection of stolid wooden chairs, the printed upholstery of which must have seemed to exude so musty an air that Thonet Frères felt compelled to reiterate its hygienic qualities ("*esprit hygienique*") on the cover.<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 6) Thonet also appropriated the modernists' appeals to scientific rigor: its wooden furniture "had evolved from logic and research." The company was resourceful, in any case, in attempting to imbue its decidedly less progressive product lines with an avant-garde aura.

#### ALIAS BÉWÉ

In addition to testing Corbusian rhetoric as ad copy, Thonet produced advertisements that charted new terrain for "signature-design." Thonet produced an advertisement in several languages that featured a lineup of tubular steel chairs, above each of which a designer's name is writ large—larger than the chairs themselves.<sup>(Fig. 7)</sup> These designers are preeminent figures of the architectural avant-garde, as the text "Thonet steel furniture based on designs by leading architects" attests. The names—Mies, Le Corbusier, Breuer, Lurçat—would have been familiar in architecture and design circles, all except the name Béwé.

198 Who was Béwé? Presumably a designer. Thonet's records attribute tubular steel designs to designers using initials: "LJP" for Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand; "Lur" for Lurçat; "BW" for Béwé. Thirty-four items are attributed to BW, and the name Béwé appeared frequently in Thonet catalogues and advertisements.<sup>19</sup> But BW also stood for Bruno Weill, the Paris branch director, who happened to be trained as an architect. As the stepson of Thonet's president, Weill occupied the highest ranks of the organization, in addition to serving as the primary contact for the Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand team. Béwé was effectively Bruno Weill's design pseudonym, but the way the German pronunciation of the initials BW is written phonetically in French suggests Weill's marketing savvy. Using the "e" accent *aigu*, Thonet Frères' director deploys French orthography to give this phantom designer an identity, the better with which to accommodate the chauvinism of the French market.<sup>20</sup>

What else do we discover about Béwé? He is given the professional identity of "Architect" in Thonet's 1930 tubular steel catalogue. This was essentially a folder of "product cards"—images of tubular steel items highlighting the name of each designer highlighted. We know from these cards that the design attribution Béwé could be used somewhat loosely: the catalogue attributed Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand's stool B305 and Breuer's chair B254 to Béwé. The alias Béwé—whether Bruno Weill designed or simply signed the thirty-four pieces of tubular steel furniture designs attributed to him—functions as a different register of corporate signature, lending to the "company-designed" furniture a status that the unsigned piece lacks.<sup>21</sup>

Similar to Le Corbusier's method of inserting unbuilt work into real advertising, proximity to architect-signed furniture lent Béwé's designs further legitimacy in their advertising context. A montage of office work vignettes, resembling stills from a film, integrates Béwé's B287 desk<sup>(Fig. 8)</sup>: a businessman leans back in his Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand swivel chair, twisting to open a file drawer; in the next scene he focuses on writing a letter in Breuer's swivel chair. The corporation inscribes itself within the pantheon of architects designing for Thonet: a feedback loop that blurs architect and corporate identities.

#### COPYING CORBU

We must inform you that in the catalogue of the Exposition of Decorative Arts in Stockholm, we see on page 110 an armchair that resembles your swivel chair in every way, also on page 187, there is a chaise longue which shares many of the principles of your own.<sup>22</sup>

*Thonet Frères to Le Corbusier*  
July 19, 1930

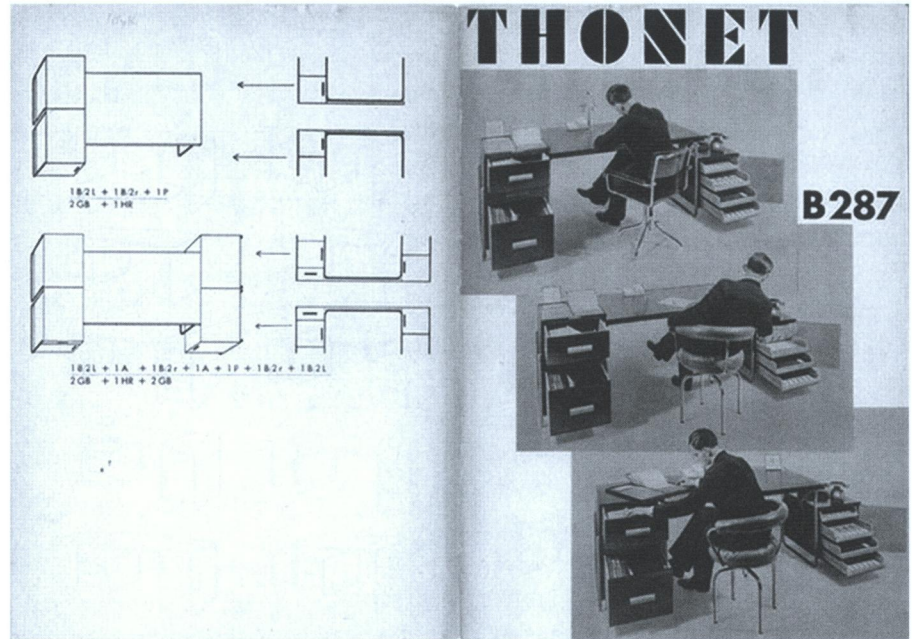
Four months after signing Thonet's contract, a letter arrived at Le Corbusier's office with bad news: knock-offs of Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand steel furniture had been spotted. Not only were these fakes memorialized in the official catalogue of the Exposition of Decorative Arts, but these pieces had already been reviewed in the architectural press. *Architectural Review* published the evidence: Swedish architect Erik Lund's living room gleamed with anemic copies of the Le Corbusier-Jeanneret-Perriand swivel chair, as well as some of Breuer's tables, Breuer's stool (which by late 1930 everyone had copied), and a daybed and armchair by another of Thonet's competitors, DESTA. Even the British reviewer seemed surprised: "Here we have elegant Sweden dabbling in this preposterous Franco-German 'Meccano' style."<sup>23</sup>

Thonet's extensive publicity for its new product line had provoked a slew of illicit copies. Such was the downside of mass-marketing: ease of mass-production equated to ease

ARIANE LOURIE HARRISON



6



7



8

Fig.6 *Le fauteuil d'aujourd'hui*, Thonet-Frères, 1930.

Image courtesy of the Burgasser Archive.

Fig.7 Thonet tubular steel advertisement from *Die Form*, 1932.

Image courtesy of the Burgasser Archive.

Fig.8 Thonet B287 brochure, (1930). Image courtesy of The Wolfsonian-FIU.

of reproduction. Thonet retaliated, welding small brass medallions stamped with the words “modèles Le Corbusier Jeanneret Perriand,” the name “Thonet” and its logo onto each piece of new tubular steel furniture. (Fig. 9) As an additional measure, Thonet launched an advertising campaign emphasizing the authority of its patents. The March 1933 issue of *Mobilier et Décoration* opened with a four-page spread: one hundred and ninety-two tubular steel designs—every tubular steel item produced by Thonet Frères—each reduced to a schematic line profile and numbered by Thonet catalogue reference. (Fig. 10) The accompanying text—“All of our models are protected by copyright according to the law. Wrongdoers will be prosecuted”—refers to copyrights, not patents; but the schematic drawings refer to the graphic regime of patent drawing.<sup>25</sup> What is in evidence here is a display of apparent force—the force of intellectual property as aura, rather than any means of specific legal enforcement. The aura of intellectual property augments the already auratic idea of exclusivity and therefore contributes to the value of the mass-produced object. The ad is not designed to ward off competitors, but to keep and win customers. Auras of various types, artistic and legal, could protect market share as well as sell.

Thonet Frères’ catalogue 3602 reiterates the same message, while augmenting the legal aura of the designs with the architectural status of their authors:

These models were designed by top-tier architects and have been protected by copyright. Their fabrication relies on entirely novel technologies and is protected by a large number of patents. Wrongdoers will be persecuted.<sup>26</sup>

200 But Thonet also had to cope with defection from within its stable of supposedly exclusive designers, including Le Corbusier, who, in May 1930, could be found reviewing a draft contract with the German firm DESTA for the worldwide rights of his *chaise longue*, excluding France.<sup>27</sup> Shortly thereafter, he finalized another licensing agreement with the Swiss metal manufacturer Embru-Werke for the *chaise longue*. This new version of the chaise had an H-shaped stretcher—a subtle change, but different enough from Thonet’s model of the *chaise longue* to secure Embru’s production rights.<sup>28</sup> Despite the obvious legal need to maintain the differences between Embru’s and Thonet’s versions of the *chaise longue*, Embru’s catalogue used an image surprisingly similar to the iconic image of Perriand reclining in the *chaise longue* for Thonet’s “Equipment d’intérieur.” (Fig. 11) Such instances of copies—by Thonet’s own designers—demonstrate the mutability of the practice Thonet had exploited to Bévé’s advantage. Thonet’s defensive publicity campaign, dwelling on the image of legal authority, in fact masks the firm’s relative inability to uphold the threat of legal sanctions until it committed to new copyright strategies (a topic that is outside of the scope of this article). Instead, we find Thonet navigating

the political and economic crises of the next decades by adjusting its corporate identity to the American market for corporate modernism.<sup>29</sup>

## CONCLUSION: DESIGN DESTINATIONS

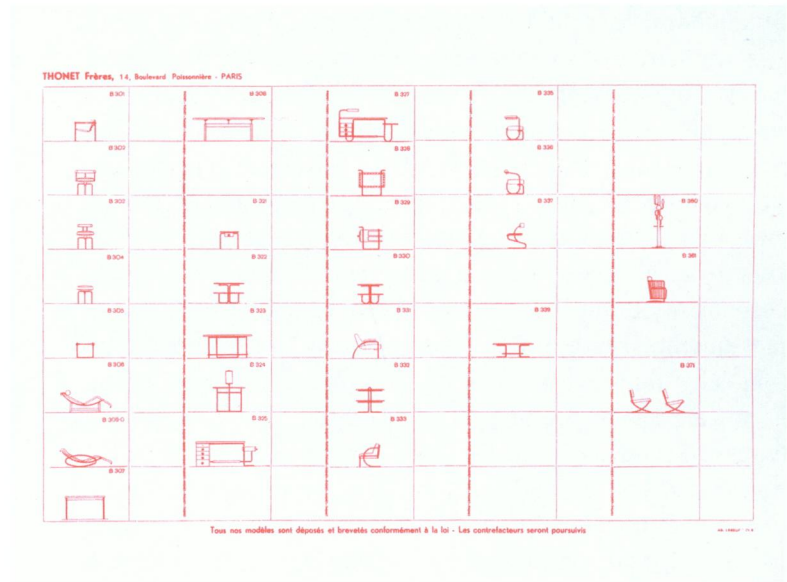
Thonet’s paper trail ends at the Vitra Campus in Weil am Rhein. A design firm whose stature today rivals that of Thonet at its peak in the 1930s, Vitra engages contemporary architects in designing product, buildings and its corporate brand on a significantly larger scale than Thonet.<sup>30</sup> In addition to acquiring the archives of many Thonet designers, Vitra acquired the rights to numerous Thonet designs and maintains an impressive Thonet collection, reflecting in part the personal interest and scholarship of the director of the Vitra Design Museum, Alexander von Vegesack. Thonet’s afterlife has on several levels been curated by Vitra, which stands unsurpassed as a contemporary design firm able to mobilize scholarship, display and architecture in developing the aura that distinguishes “modern classics” from mere reproductions.

While Vitra has framed Thonet’s importance in design history through exhibitions and acquisitions, one of its less conventional strategies involved reissuing Thonet’s 1930 loose-leaf tubular steel catalogue, in some sense as historical support for its fabrication of modern classics. Vitra’s reprint attempts “to cover the whole series of cards and thus gives a complete picture of the entire Thonet range of tubular steel furniture in Germany and France between 1930 and 1931.”<sup>31</sup> The focus on completeness reveals more about Vitra’s curatorial mentality than it does about Thonet’s history: the Vitra reprint includes tubular steel items that were not part of the original catalogue at all. Thonet did not present the entire product line in a single catalogue for various reasons, one of which—as this article tries to show—is the firm’s appreciation of strategic ambiguity. The notion that a “complete” image of the collection existed or would have even been desirable does not correspond to a global corporation that had cultivated multiple guises, each suited to strategies for penetrating new markets for modernist design.

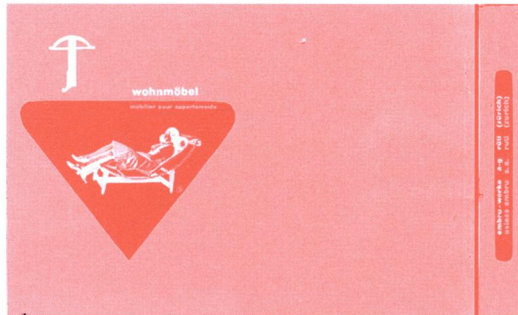
Vitra’s ability to construct the “requisite number of layers of cultural dressing” was cited as an example of the current tendency for design firms to use modernist design pieces as pawns “in a complex game of prestige and positioning.”<sup>32</sup> If this is so, we should recognize that Vitra ups the ante over Thonet, framing modernist and contemporary pieces within a continuum of “timeless” domestic furnishings, the entirety of which is framed within the newest addition to Vitra’s architecture collection, Herzog and De Meuron’s VitraHaus. (Fig. 12) This stack of house-shaped boxes, with its ends shaved off as display windows, is both perfect for Vitra’s conflation of museum and shopping programs and mordantly funny in reducing the house to a graphic: a dark outline around a display window. Perhaps nostalgia



9



10



11



12

Fig.9 "Thonet" medallion, 1931-2. Image courtesy of Jacques Barsac.  
 Fig.10 Thonet-Frères feuilles schematiques from the 1930s. Image courtesy of the Burgasser Archive.  
 Fig.11 *Meubles en tubes d'acier* from the Embru catalogue, 1933. Image courtesy of the Burgasser Archive.  
 Fig.12 VitraHaus by Herzog & de Meuron at the Vitra campus in Weil am Rhein, Germany. Image courtesy of Ariane Lourie Harrison.

for modernism sells better when framed within the ethos of completeness, closure and containment. Or perhaps in today's moment of design production, Thonet's tactics of ambiguity wane in light of Vitra's deadpan statement of the obvious: house-shaped showrooms for home furnishings. Yet the trajectory traced here, of design firms and architects mobilizing brand and signature design to create new markets for design, reminds us that agency for architects, while perhaps mythologized as the product of a heroic vision, in fact operates within a context of mutual instrumentalization. The architect is not a lone visionary; the corporation is not a predatory colossus. Both these ideas are stereotypes, with little explanatory power or interest today. What we see in Thonet, and later in Vitra, is a reciprocal relationship between architect and corporation, where each (as an agent) is implicated by the actions of the other, and deformed accordingly, in a constant iterative trace, marketing (aura) influencing design (object) and back again.

- 1 This article draws on my dissertation: *Mass-Produced Aura: Thonet and the Market for Modern Design, 1930-1953* (PhD, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, 2008). Thonet refers to that of the entity "Thonet-Kohn-Mundus," which grouped together Gebrüder Thonet, Jacob & Josef Kohn and Mundus. The firm split in 1938: assets "west of the Rhine" were transferred to Panama and New York as Thonet Industries; assets "east of the Rhine" became Gebrüder Thonet. Gebrüder Thonet has developed new product lines with European designers; Thonet Industries was integrated into the Commercial Furniture Group as of 2006.
- 2 T3-2, Fondation le Corbusier.
- 3 "Humble Seats for the Many," *Fortune Magazine*, 15 July, 1945: 231-235.
- 4 Charles Edouard Jeanneret, *Étude sur mouvement d'art décorative en Allemagne*, (New York: DaCapo Press, 1980).
- 5 George Marcus, *Le Corbusier: Inside the machine for Living*, (New York: Monacelli Press, 2000), 23.
- 6 Author's translation of title. The most significant treatment of this text is: Jean-Louis Cohen, *France ou Allemagne? Un livre inédit de Le Corbusier* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2008), B1-20, Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.
- 7 Cohen, 57.
- 8 See Stanislaus von Moos and Margaret Sobiesky. "Le Corbusier and Loos," *Assemblage* 4 (October 1987), 24-37. See also Beatriz Colomina, "L'Esprit Nouveau: Architecture and Publicity," *Architectureproduction* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1988).
- 9 Mary McLeod, "Architecture or revolution, Taylorism, technocracy, and social change," *Art Journal* 43, no. 2 (1983), 132-147.
- 10 In images of interiors, the emphasis of caption is on standardized objects: only the brand Thonet is named. Le Corbusier, *Almanach d'Architecture Moderne* (Paris: Les Editions G. Cres et Cie., 1925), 161.
- 11 Letter from Leopold Pilzer (President of Thonet-Mundus) to Le Corbusier and P. Jeanneret, 28 September 1929, E2-19-22, Fondation le Corbusier.
- 12 Jury notes sent to Thonet Industries, Burgasser Archive, York, PA and E2-19-83 Fondation le Corbusier.
- 13 The value of \$50 in 1929 would be approximately \$600. The prize money was listed in dollars (from \$75 - \$225) in this article which announced the competition in the French press in *Art et Decoration* 55 (1929), 10.
- 14 Letter from Charlotte Perriand to Thonet-Frères, October 4, 1929, cited in Jacques Barsac, *Charlotte Perriand: un art d'habiter, 1903-1959*, (Paris: NORMA, 2005), 76.
- 15 Mary McLeod, *Charlotte Perriand: An Art of Living* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2003), 36-65.
- 16 The photograph is dated 18 November 1929.
- 17 "Metal furniture," *Architectural Review* (July 1930): 39.
- 18 Thonet Frères catalogue, *Le fauteuil d'aujourd'hui*, Burgasser Archive.
- 19 "Thonet Muster," Fe 2-3. Lorenz Papers, Vitra Archive, Vitra, Weil am Rhein.
- 20 Scholarship was relatively late in discovering the identity of the "architect-designer" Béwé. Christopher Wilk assumed that Béwé was simply another designer in his book, *Thonet: 150 Years of Furniture* (New York: Barrons, 1980) and his article "Furnishing the Future: Bent wood and metal furniture, 1925-1946" (*Bentwood and Metal Furniture 1850-1946*, ed. Derek Ostergard [Washington: University of Washington Press], 1990, 121-173). Vitra Museum Director Alexander Von Vegesack does note Bruno Weill's pseudonym as Béwé in *Thonet: classic furniture in bent wood and tubular steel* (New York: Rizzoli, 1997); *Das Thonet Buch* (Munich: Bangert Verlag, 1987); *Deutsche Stahlrohrmöbel: 650 Modelle aus Katalogen von 1927-1958* (Munich: Bangert, 1986).
- 21 Thonet Muster, Fe 2-3, Lorenz Papers, Vitra Archive, Vitra, Weil am Rhein.
- 22 Thonet-Frères to Charlotte Perriand, Le Corbusier, Jeanneret, 19 July 1930, FLC T2-6-200. Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.
- 23 "Stockholm, 1930," *Architectural Review* (August 1930): 54-55; 68-71; 68.
- 24 Barsac, 87.
- 25 "Tous nos modèles sont déposés et brevets conformément a la loi. Les contrefacteurs seront poursuivis," *Mobilier et Décoration* (March 1933) : 1-4. This schematic visual language may have relationship to theories about visual language put forth by Moholy Nagy and Kepes. See Reinhold Martin, "Pattern Seeing," in *The Organization Complex: Architecture, Media and Corporate Space*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003): 42-80.
- 26 Catalogue 3602, Burgasser Archive.
- 27 DESTA to Le Corbusier, 29 May 1930, FLC T2-6-197-198, Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.
- 28 Marcus, 284.
- 29 Minutes of the August 31, 1948 meeting held in order to consolidate the firm's assets from International Furniture Inc. in Panama and Mundus AG in Zug to International Furniture Inc. in Delaware are located in the Bugasser Archive.
- 30 Vitra's persuasive blending of a museum and archive with its production facilities integrates architectural buildings as collectibles—a scale of operation that dwarfs that of the corporate museum created in Thonet's One Park Avenue headquarters.
- 31 Dr. Sonja Gunther, "Introduction," *Thonet Tubular Steel Furniture* (1930-1931), ed Alexander von. Vegesack (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Publications, 1989), 12.
- 32 Alan Powers, "Architects and furniture: a 20th-century story," *Architectural Design* 72, no. 4, (July 2002): 84-89.