

PRESS RELEASE

**Meeting Architecture Part II:
Architecture and the Creative Process**

A programme of lectures and study-exhibitions

17 December 2014: Part VII

**Jean-Louis Cohen:
War As A Creative Force:
British Architecture 1939–1945**

18.00: Lecture by Jean-Louis Cohen introduced by Franco Purini

'When the Museum of Modern Art opened in 1941 its show *Britain at War*, it insisted that *the machines of civil defence* had to be *neatly designed, as this neatness is a sign of order and of something clean and good which survives the inevitable disorder and mess of war*. The persistence of *good design* was not the only characteristic of wartime British architecture. Research thrived on prefabrication, and the use of new materials. The policies of camouflage inspired creative uses of colour, while architects started experimenting by trial and error, in parallel with what scientists and engineers were then inventing in the name of *operational* research. When discussing in 1946 *Science*

in *Architecture* in the *RIBA Journal*, physicist J.D. Bernal could consider that wartime projects could also lead the architects to engage in post-war strategies that needed to be as sociological as they were technical.' [Jean-Louis Cohen]

Jean-Louis Cohen's lecture *War as a Creative Force: British Architecture 1939–1945* is the second event in this year's **Meeting Architecture**, a programme that focuses on the relationship and the cross-over between architecture and some of the other creative processes in a series of lectures and study/exhibitions by some of the leading figures in architecture, art and film.

Jean-Louis Cohen is the curator of the exhibition ***Architettura in uniforme. Progettare e costruire per la seconda guerra mondiale*** at the **MAXXI from 19 December 2014 to 3 May 2015**.

Trained as an architect and an historian, Jean-Louis Cohen holds the Sheldon H. Solow Chair for the History of Architecture at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts since 1994. In 2014 he became guest professor at the Collège de France. His research has focused on the French, German and Soviet architectural avant-gardes, on colonial situations and on Paris planning history. His thirty books include: *Architecture in Uniform* (2011), *The Future of Architecture since 1889* (2012), and *Le Corbusier: an Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (2013). He has curated numerous exhibitions, including the centennial show *L'aventure Le Corbusier* (1987), at the Centre Georges Pompidou; *Scenes of the World to Come*, at the Canadian Center for Architecture (1995); *Interférences / Interferenzen — Architecture, Allemagne, France*, at the Musées de Strasbourg (2013); *Le Corbusier: an Atlas of Modern Landscapes*, at the Museum of Modern Art (2007).

Meeting Architecture's next event in February is the lecture ***A Clock Jerusalem: Architecture, Politics, Riots and the belief in a better world*** by the Dutch architect **Wouter Vanstiphout** (Crimson Architectural Historians).

[British School at Rome Architecture Programme, curated by Marina Engel](#)

[For further information](#)

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