From CIAM to Seoul
Founding of CIAM 1928: Ernst May, City Architect of Frankfurt vs. Le Corbusier
Taylorism, the division of labor, and women entering the workforce
CIAM 2: 1929
Ernst May, City Architect
Minimum Dwelling Unit
Die Wohnung fur las Existenz minimum (Siedlungen)
CIAM 3: 1930 Rationelle Bebauungswiesen (Rational Site Planning). A rejection of the ‘piecemeal’ urbanism of CIAM 2
Palace of the Soviets competition 1931
The loss of modernism to reactionary Stalinism.
CIAM 4: Functionalist City 1933
On a chartered cruise ship from Marseilles discourse moves from Moscow to Barcelona. A rejection of the garden city, hints at public space through appropriation of existing urban areas.
1933 Athens Charter by Le Corbusier
single-handedly published after CIAM
Sert: Macia Plan for Barcelona, 1935
Integrating the city core

Szymon Syrkus a d Jan Chmielnews ki, Functional Warsaw, 1934 -37
A city core tied to its region through infrastructure
Le Corbusier: Project for Paris, 1936
Neighborhood reorganization
“The dream cities of functionalist architecture conceived in the twenties, where high buildings would be surrounded by vast public parks, would be an anti-civic Utopia. Many architects are now convinced that such cities developed as continuous parks would lack urban quality and visual interest. We need shops, lights, life, near the ground. –

JOSEP LLUIS SERT, 1955
Fumihiko Maki, student; Sert, critic 1954.
Reference a 1953 article by Werner and Sert, ‘Can Patios Make Cities?’
Team X splits from CIAM and tries to promote an alternative vision. “The core is a realization, not a space.” In 1954 they reject the four urban functions.
Sert’s reaction to team X was to increase intellectual production for the concept of ‘Urban Design’. Published 1941

Shepley, Bullfinch, Richardson with Sasaki: Quincy House 1955 and the introduction of interdisciplinary architecture + landscape

Perceptual Form of the City, Kepes and Kevin Lynch

Edmund Bacon, author of Design of Cities, director of Philadelphia Planning: articulation of space for experience by the people

Jane Jacobs, Washington Square Park protest 1953: Importance of street life
Victor Gruen, Fort Worth Masterplan, 1955: little demolition of existing and complete pedestrianization of the core.
Sert Jackson: Holyoke Center, Harvard 1958-66
Urban Design Conference 1957 after the dissolution of CIAM. Added tenets included mix of densities, separation of car and pedestrian, and the need to re-urbanize cities instead of suburban development. In a personal meeting with faculty, Sert talks about taking the ideas to developing nations in Asia and Latin America, seeing the lack of support in the U.S.
Attempts at urban design on the periphery: the shopping center, 1951

Urban Design falls out of the mainstream: The Shape of our Cities by Sert and Tyrwhitt is rejected by Harvard University Press and Life Magazine.
Further out of the mainstream:
Christopher Alexander, Peter Chermayeff, Low Rise High Density: algorithmic architecture 1963
In 1960, the first Urban Design Degree is offered at Harvard.
In 1935, Catherine Bauer brings CIAM’s ideas to the U.S. After decades, the collision of modern idealism and American bureaucracy ends in disastrous results.
1966 Southern Seoul masterplan based on the shape of the Mugunghwa flower

Corbusier’s plan for 3M inhabitants
Park Hunshik’s masterplan for southern Seoul 1963

American suburb
HURPI (Housing and Urban Planning Institute) was established in 1965 by the U.S. based Asia Foundation with Oswald Nagler as its head.
HURPI South Seoul masterplan for 1.2M inhabitants 1967

Sert, neighborhood unit plan for 960,000 inhabitants, 1944
Minimum dwelling unit HURPI, ca 1965

Minimum dwelling unit 1929
Market as center of Neighborhood unit, Suwon 1967


The living neighborhood is a complex of little organisms like this East Harlem store-front church and store.
Winners of the Mok-dong competition and the built project advised by Nagler (right) 1983
SNU Masterplan, Dober Paddock
Upton, 1971

Quincy House 1955
Insadong, Seoul pedestrianized in 1996 under Kang Hong-bin, HURPI graduate and vice-mayor of Seoul

Victor Gruen, Fort Worth Masterplan, 1955
John Hong: Clover at Holyoke Center, Harvard 2014
Seoul Biennale International Studio Sites

Venues and Sites

The Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP) and the Dongdaemun Museum Village located in the city center of Seoul are the two main venues of the Seoul Biennale. These two contrasting sites are witnesses to present urban regeneration of Seoul and its past urban patterns.
City Architects: Ernst May 1927 in Frankfurt, Seung H-Sang 2014 in Seoul