

A professional photographer, I seek to record interactions as an observer. The project to document Brasilia and Chandigarh, two modern cities reaching their fiftieth and sixtieth birthdays respectively, presented me with new challenges. Set some 14,000 kilometers apart and drawn from the revolutionary voices and ideals of Modernism, these two cities have also evolved in distinct ways. I am most interested in *portraying how people are living, thriving, or coping with Modernism today.*

In Brasilia, Oscar Niemeyer's buildings float in a dreamlike way across vast expanses of green. They drift in the background of planned vistas that are intended for the passing glance from an automobile. The city center feels markedly devoid of life in plazas, where the pigeons far outnumber the people. However, in great contrast, the city becomes alive inside spaces—behind the doors of residences, in bus stations and underpasses, or within cars. Oddly the satellite communities that were originally built for the construction workers of Brasilia are the places where the quotidian South American outdoor culture happens. There the community spends its days on sidewalks and children play in the streets.

In Chandigarh, perhaps the most orderly city in India, the citizens have found new ways of occupying the spaces and adapting the city to their own needs. The nooks that Le Corbusier designed originally to dilute the Punjabi sun are used by outdoor businesses that rig up their own canopies. Le Corbusier's city sixty years later could easily have become a drab concrete expanse over a grid. Instead, women in saris, populated city parks, and cricket games bring color and life to the place. The city plan reduces the traffic snarls that plague other Indian cities. The different scales of government, commercial, and domestic spaces allow for a structure of work, play, and carrying on with one's way of life. The abstract concrete sheds are being taken over by people for very different purposes than Le Corbusier ever could have imagined.