

The Museum of Modern Art

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FIVE PROJECTS BY MIES VAN DER ROHE ON VIEW AT MUSEUM

Seven monumental drawings for imaginary projects by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe are on view through February 9 on the ground floor of The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition marks the acquisition of the important elevation drawing of 1922 for the Glass Skyscraper project, gift of George Danforth.

The drawings were made for five imaginary projects: the Friedrichstrasse Office Building, 1921; the Glass Skyscraper, the Concrete Office Building, and the Brick Country House, all of 1922; and the Concrete Country House of 1923. Imaginary projects have had as much influence on the development of modern architecture as executed works, and this was particularly true in the years after the first World War, when economic disruption compounded the difficulties of finding enlightened clients. Mies van der Rohe, an ardent participant in avant-garde movements, exhibited the drawings and models for the five projects in 1923 with the "Novembergruppe", a leading artists' association, of which he was president at the time.

Because the drawings were expressly made for exhibition purposes, they are unusually large and have a manifesto character. "An exceptionally gifted draftsman, Mies van der Rohe had acquired, early in his career, a special virtuosity for drawing with charcoal," explains Ludwig Glaeser, Curator of the Museum's Mies van der Rohe Archive and director of the exhibition. "This technique was most suitable for the forceful rendering of his visionary images, conveying with equal suggestiveness the transparency of glass walls and the solidity of concrete structures. The prevalence of elevations and the reduction to essentials that was to become proverbial for Mies van der Rohe

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reinforce the monumental nature of the projects."

The drawings on view are part of the Mies van der Rohe Archive which was established by the Museum in 1968, the year before the architect's death. The Mies van der Rohe Bequest, which included all of his drawings and work-related documents -- more than 15,000 items -- represents the Archive's principal holdings.

Photographs and additional information available from Michael Boodro, Assistant, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 Street, New York, NY 10019. Telephone (212) 956-7504; 956-7501.
