

**MIES**

**IN THE  
MoMA ARCHIVES**

The Museum of Modern Art and Mies van der Rohe have a very distinctive history. From the early days of this institution, founding Director Alfred H. Barr, Jr. had a keen interest in the work of Mies. He cultivated a relationship with the great architect and nurtured wide-spread recognition of his work. In considering an architect for the Museum's 1939 building – an early landmark of the "International Style" in America – Barr ardently wished to employ Mies as co-architect. Unfortunately, he was overruled and the commission was given to Trustee Philip Goodwin and his assistant, Edward Durrell Stone. The following year, Barr suggested to Helen Resor that she consider Mies for the design of her country house in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. It is this commission which brought Mies to the United States, and thus forevermore changed the landscape of modern urban America.

Over the decades, MoMA continued to champion the work of Mies. Beginning as early as 1932 with its exhibition of *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (the occasion at which the term "International Style" was christened) and its related publications by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, MoMA introduced the work of Mies and his colleagues to the United States. This was followed fifteen years later with Mies' first major retrospective, presented at the Museum in 1947 and circulated around the country to thirteen venues over the course of two and a half years. Philip Johnson wrote the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition; the book was the first publication in English devoted to the work of Mies and the text achieved canonical status.

In 1969, the Museum mounted a memorial exhibition in honor of Mies. MoMA organized an exhibition on the theme of Mies' Barcelona Pavilion in 1979. The exhibition, consisting of original drawings, studies, plans, photos, a model, and a Barcelona chair and ottoman, was shown in four countries, though it never appeared in New York. A large-scale, posthumous retrospective occurred at MoMA in 1986 on the occasion of the architect's centennial.

Both Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and Philip Johnson – architect, Trustee, and former head of the Museum's department of architecture and design – as well as other MoMA staff, had long championed the work of Mies. In their own words, Barr considered Mies "the greatest architect of our generation" and Johnson regarded him as "a leader of revolutionizing modern architecture and the arts."

*The Museum of Modern Art Archives was established in 1989 by resolution of the Board of Trustees as an independent Museum program to preserve and make accessible the Museum's historical records to staff, outside scholars, and researchers. Additionally, the Museum Archives is the custodian of primary source material and other historical documentation related to the history of twentieth-century art. Documents in this exhibition, on view summer through fall 2001, were selected from the holdings of the Museum Archives for display in conjunction with the current exhibition Mies in Berlin [June 21–September 11, 2001].*

*This exhibition was organized by members of the staff of the Museum Archives: Michelle Elligott, Michelle Harvey, Jeremy Melius, and Kathleen Tunney.*

- i. **Mies van der Rohe is Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s first choice for associate architect working under Phillip Goodwin on the Museum's 1939 building at 11 West 53 Street. Barr is overruled by several Museum trustees who allow Goodwin to appoint his assistant, Edward Durrell Stone.**

*Letter, Tom Mabry—Alfred H. Barr, Jr., June 18, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Cable, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—Tom Mabry, July 6, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Letter, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—A. Conger Goodyear, July 6, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Cable, A. Conger Goodyear—Alfred H. Barr, Jr., July 7, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Typescript Draft of Cable, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—Nelson A. Rockefeller, July 7, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Letter, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—Joseph Hudnut, July 10, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Letter, Mies van der Rohe—Alfred H. Barr, Jr., July 14, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Letter, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—Joseph Hudnut, August 26, 1936*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.18.

*Photograph of the Goodwin-Stone Building, 1939*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Event Photographs, "MoMA Construction, 1938".

- ii. **Barr recommends Mies to Helen Resor for the design of her country house in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This occasion brings Mies to the United States for the first time.**

*Letter, Helen Resor—Alfred H. Barr, Jr., February 8, 1937*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1c.

*Letter, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—Mies van der Rohe, February 11, 1937*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1c.

*Letter Helen Resor—Alfred H. Barr, Jr., July 12, 1937*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1c.

*Letter, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—Helen Resor, October 2, 1937*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1c.

- III. **MoMA's 1932 *Modern Architecture* exhibition introduces Mies and coins the phrase "International Style" to describe the works on view.**

*Exhibition Brochure*

*Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. # 15, February 9–March 23, 1932].

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Scrapbooks, Album 1.

*Installation Photographs*

*International Exhibition of Modern Architecture* [Circulating version of MoMA Exh. #15, on view at Bullock's Wilshire Department Store in Los Angeles].

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, Album A1(1).

- IV. **Mies' first retrospective occurs at MoMA in 1947. Philip Johnson pens the definitive catalogue.**

*Press Release*

*Mies van der Rohe* [Circulating version of MoMA Exh. # 356, 1948–1951]

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, II.1774(4).

*Itinerary*

*Mies van der Rohe* [Circulating version of MoMA Exh. # 356, 1948–1951]

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, II.1774(4).

*Reproductions of Text Panels*

*Mies van der Rohe* [Circulating version of MoMA Exh. # 356, 1948–1951]

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, II.1774(4).

- V. **Other MoMA exhibitions devoted to Mies include: a 1966 show of his drawings, the 1969 memorial exhibition, and the 1979 internationally circulating exhibition *Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion*.**

*Exhibition Brochure*

*Mies van der Rohe Drawings* [MoMA Exh. # 790, February 2–March 23, 1966]

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Records, "Mies van der Rohe Archive, Architecture and Design, February 2–March 20, 1966."

*Memorandum, Richard L. Palmer—Gerry Marenoff, August 19, 1969*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Bates Lowry Papers, I.3.

*Reproduction of Text Panel*

*Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion* [ICE-F-192-79]

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion*. (ICE-F-24-54): box 115.2.

*Installation Photograph*

*Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion* [ICE-F-192-79] in Bilbao

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion*. (ICE-F-192-79): box 115.4. (Bilbao).

*Installation Photographs*

*Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion [ICE-F-192-79] in Jerusalem*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion*. (ICE-F-192-79): box 115.5. (Jerusalem).

*Exhibition Catalogue*

*Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion [ICE-F-192-79]*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Mies van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavillion*. (ICE-F-192-79): box 115.3.

**VI. In 1986, MoMA organizes *Mies van der Rohe Centennial*.**

*Press Clipping, "Mies at MoMA: A Visionary in Context." Art News, May 1986, pp. 1-2.*

*Mies van der Rohe Centennial [MoMA Exh. # 1415, February 5–April 15, 1986]*  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Records, "Mies Magazines, February 5, 1986."

*Press Release*

*Mies van der Rohe Centennial [MoMA Exh. # 1415, February 5–April 15, 1986]*  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Records, "Mies: Press Materials and Media Coverage."

*Invitation to Media Preview*

*Mies van der Rohe Centennial [MoMA Exh. # 1415, February 5–April 15, 1986]*  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Graphics, 579.

*Exhibition Brochure*

*Mies van der Rohe Centennial [MoMA Exh. # 1415, February 5–April 15, 1986]*  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Graphics, 580.

*Press Clipping, "Mies van der Rohe Rediscovered." Inland Architect, March/April 1986, pp. 2, 7.*

*Mies van der Rohe Centennial [MoMA Exh. # 1415, February 5–April 15, 1986]*  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Records, "Mies Magazines, February 5, 1986."

*Press Clipping, "Architect of Pure Reason." House and Garden, March 1986, p. 1.*

*Mies van der Rohe Centennial [MoMA Exh. # 1415, February 5–April 15, 1986]*  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Records, "Mies Magazines, February 5, 1986."

**VII. Philip Johnson speaks of Mies and his influence.**

*Excerpt from Philip Johnson's Oral History, 1991*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Oral History Project; interview with Philip Johnson, 1991, pp. 114–115.

*Speech by Philip Johnson, February 7, 1961*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Philip Johnson Papers, I.52A.

*Scrapbook*

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Scrapbooks, 76.