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FREDERICK J. KIESLER ARCHIVE

N.B. This is a copy of a typescript prepared by Lucy Lippard -biography - Kiesler - for the Guggenheim Museum show in 1964. - 17 pages herewith

A xerox copy of this was placed in Kiesler artist file in Library (when this was originally).

NOTE: THIS WAS NOT GIVEN TO MOMA LIBRARY BY MRS. KIESLER - but will be kept here as part of Kiesler Archive.

I.F. & P.L.M.
August 1977

was taken up again in 1950 (see bibl.96). Lived for several years on relief, frequenting the artists' cafes and participating in Vienna's ^{lively} artistic life. ^{19...} ^{was had seen} Married Steffi Fritsch, philology student, at the University.

"The years 1922, 1923, 1924 ~~1925~~ the most fruitful years of my life" (bibl. 27).

1923 Designed first "endless house" as a space theatre. April: designed Berlin production of Karel Capek's R.U.R., at the Theater an Kurfurstendamm, using ^(see bibl. 28) motion pictures as backdrops. ^{The} "Space stage" for Emperor Jones at a small theatre in East Berlin (Emperor played by Oskar Homolka), with sets in continuous motion coordinated with the play and lighting.

Joined De Stijl group. Theo van Doesburg discovered ^{him} Kiesler at R.U.R., came to the theater with Schwitters, Richter, Moholy-Nagy, Lissitzky and Graeff; they carried Kiesler to a cafe where they met Mies van der Rohe and "talked all night".

1924 Artistic director and architect for the International Exhibition of New Theatre Technique, part of the International ^{at} Music and Theatre Festival of

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FREDERICK J. KIESLER - ARCHIVE - ITEM 39

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August 1977



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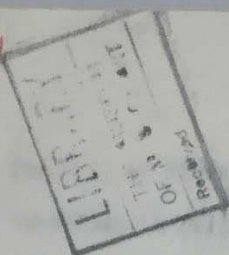
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Kiesler bio bibl. by Lucy Lippard for Guggenheim Museum 1964

FREDERICK KIESLER: BIOGRAPHY



- 1896-1909 Born Vienna, September 22, son of Julius and Rosemarie (Meister) Kiesler. Mother died a year later. Father sent him to Business School, but he left after three months to go to the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, where he was immediately admitted to advanced classes. After receiving diploma (M.A.), attended the Technische Hochschule (Institute of Technology) for a year. Won "various first prizes". *Met Otto Wagner.*
- 1910 Began as an architect, ^{ed}Working with Adolf Loos on the first slum clearance and rehousing projects, Vienna.
- 1914-1917 Drafted and served three years in the armed services, partly on the front.
- 1918-1922 Back to Vienna. Began a "galaxial" mural consisting of several units, which was taken up again in 1950 (see bibl. 96). Lived for several years on relief, frequenting the artists' cafes and participating in *Vienna's lively* artistic life. ¹⁹²¹ Married Steffi Fritsch, ^{who had been a} philology student, at the University.
- # "The years 1922, 1923, 1924 ~~were~~ the most fruitful years of my life" (bibl. 27).
- 1923 Designed first "endless house" as a space theatre. April: designed Berlin production of Karel Capek's R.U.R., at the Theater an Kurfurstendamm, using ^(see bibl. 28) motion pictures as backdrops. "Space stage" for Emperor Jones at a small theatre in ^{The} east Berlin (Emperor played by Oskar Homokka), with sets in continuous motion coordinated with the play and lighting. Joined De Stijl group. Theo van Doesburg discovered ^{him} Kiesler at R.U.R., came to the theater with Schwitters, Richter, Moholy-Nagy, Lissitzky and Graeff; they carried Kiesler to a cafe where they met ^{Mies van der Rohe} and "talked all night".
- 1924 Artistic director and architect for the International Exhibition of New Theatre Technique, part of the International ^{ed} Music and Theatre Festival of

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The City of Vienna (see bibl. 85). "The Endless", a space-stage, exhibited in full-scale model. Devised suspension method of exhibition, "Léger and Trager" (see bibl. 1). Léger stayed with Kiesler in Vienna for two weeks.

See Addenda

1925 Appointed by Josef Hoffmann to design the ^{exhibit} Austrian ~~section~~ of the International Theatre Section ^{In the Grand Palais} at the Exposition Internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, at the Paris World's Fair, ~~in the Grand Palais~~. ^{Also} Planned his only "neoclastic" building, the Optophon, but it was not executed. His "City in Space" at the ^{Exposition} Grand Palais brought him much acclaim from the avant-garde. (see bibl. 29). Through Léger, met Le Corbusier.

1926 At the invitation of the Little Review and the Theatre Guild, came to New York to create an exhibition of international theatre technique for the opening of Steinway Hall in New York. ^{found} that the proposed stipend from Otto Kahn was not forthcoming, although exhibition was finally mounted under the sponsorship of several theatre groups (see bibl. 86), and the plans for "Endless" ^{were} shown. ~~here~~. Sold his house in France and turned down work with Piscator in Berlin to stay and work on commissioned theatre in Brooklyn, which also fell through. Invited to be an associate in Harvey Wiley Corbett's architectural firm, 1926-28. Bauhaus asked him to write a book, City in Space.

1927-1928 Designed a museum project for the Société Anonyme. Won competition for Community center and playhouse at Woodstock, New York (moveable partitions). Designed cinema Film Guild Cinema for Simon Gould, ~~(Steinway Hall)~~ ~~remains unchanged except for proscenium~~; built in 1930, with first built-in Screen-O-Scope for enlarged screen projection; now Eight Street Cinema, remains unchanged except for proscenium. Wrote Contemporary Art Applied to the Stage

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and its Display (bibl. 5).

1928-33 First application of modern design techniques to American commercial display in Saks Fifth Avenue display windows. Remodeled a bookstore, American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen constructed exhibition of Association of American Designers (March, 1930) Grand Central Palace); served as consulting architect for National Public Housing Conference; created new lighting equipment and built small model of "Space House". ~~(See bibl. 36, 37, 38, 40)~~ exhibited at Grand Central for "Modernage". 1931-32 "The Universal", a "transformative" theater built in Woodstock for J.P. McEvoy.

1934-37 Director of Scenic Design, Juilliard School of Music. Designs sets for Juilliard and Metropolitan Opera, including Helen Retires by George Antheil ~~(1934)~~ ^{and} Ariadne on Naxos (1934), Maria Malibran (1935), Tales of Hoffman (1939), Le Donne Curieuse (1940), ^{The} Magic Flute (1940), In the Pasha's Garden, as well as No Exit and Angélique (1948-49), for the stage. (See bibl. 33, 35, 38)

1934: First plans for Endless House exhibited in Paris; 1935: City of Buffalo award for Best Store Design of the year (built, 1936). 1936: devoted himself to ~~xxxxx~~ interior designs and furniture, "space House" (See bibl. 5, 31, 32)

1936-42 Director of the Laboratory for Design Correlation of the School of Architecture, Columbia University.

1937 -39 Series of articles for Architectural Record (bibl. 11). Designed a new exhibition hall for Columbia School of Architecture; Member Advisory Board for the Advancement of Science and Art at Cooper Union.

1940 ^{and built} Designed Art of This Century Gallery for Peggy Guggenheim, New York; opened 1942 (see bibl. 36, 37, 38, 40).

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- 1947 To Paris to direct installation ^{at the Galerie Maeght} of the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme and design the Salle des Superstitions in which were exhibited painting and sculpture by Ernst, Miro, Matta, Duchamp, de Diego, Donati, sculpture after Kiesler drawings by Etienne ^Martin and David Hare, and Kiesler's first sculpture, Totem of Religions. (see bibl. 74, 75, 80).
Designed exhibition Bloodflames 1947, Hugo Gallery, New York (see bibl. 89).
General Association with Surrealist movement in 1940's, New York and Paris.
1947-48: first version of sculpture Galaxy (Collection ^{Governor} Nelson A. Rockefeller) constructed for production of Milhaud's Pauvre Matelot, Juilliard School of Music, New York.
- 1952 Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquires small model of Endless House and exhibits Kiesler's work in three different exhibitions. (see bibl. 92, 93, 94).
- 1955 Designed and built ~~Exxon~~ Festival Theatre at Ellenville, New York, (see bibl. 51.)
- 1956 Designed ~~xxxx~~ plans for extension of John Jacob Astor House, West Palm Beach, Florida. *with other Surrealists in New York, acted in Hans Richter's film, 8x8.*
- 1957 Formed architectural firm with a former student, Armand Bartos. Kiesler & Bartos built World House Galleries, New York (see bibl. ^{2/22} 52, 54) and designed plans for Benjamin Javitts residence, Greenwich, Conn., and Karl Robbins House, West Palm Beach, Florida.
- 1958 Large grant from D.S. and R.H. Gottesman Foundation ^{to Museum of Modern Art Department of Architecture} for "preparation of ^{design} working drawings, engineering studies and models of Frederick Kiesler's project for an 'Endless House'". Designed and built Venetian Theater, "Caramoor", Katonah, New York. Fellow of the Graham Foundation, Chicago.
- 1959 Commissioned to develop plans for a large hospital unit of the Albert

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- I Einstein Medical Center, New York, ~~and~~ designed and built Ullman Research Center at Albert Einstein (~~with Max Baer and Max Baer~~ Center), ~~and~~ Kamer Gallery, New York. Designed "Shrine of the Book", a "sanctuary for the Dead Sea Scrolls" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (all the preceding in association with Armand Bartos).
- 1960 ~~larger model~~ Expanded model of the Endless House exhibited ^{ed} at the Museum of Modern Art (see bibl. 98); exhibition of architectural plans at University of Houston, Texas. Kiesler and the Endless House subject of television program, "Camera Three", on CBS. (see bibl. 56).
- 1961 Commissioned by Ford Foundation to design plans and models of "Universal Theater" as one of eight projects for "The Ideal Theater" (see bibl. 59, 60, 61, 101); ~~Exhibits~~ Project models and plans still on exhibition tour of U.S., 1964.
- 1962 Lectures on art and architecture at University of Houston and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. Appeared on "Camera Three" with theatrical producer Robert Whitehead; ~~program~~ program devoted to Kiesler's "Universal Theater".

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revised note to section IV. p.9 :

Only one-man exhibitions and major or representative group exhibitions have been listed. Title, place, and date are given first, followed by catalogue and review information when it exists; reviews with no author listed are anonymous.

BIO.

p. 2, revision of 1925:

1925 Appointed by Josef Hoffmann to design the Austrian exhibit of the International Theatre Section in the Grand Palais at the Exposition Internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, World's Fair, Paris. "City in Space" brought much acclaim from the avant-garde. Also planned his only "neoplastic" building - the Optophon - but it was not executed. Through Léger, met Le Corbusier. The Vienna "space stage" adapted for a production of Wedekind's Franciska, Vienna and Berlin, 1925.

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FREDERICK KIESLER: SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Entries are arranged chronologically; complete coverage of the artist's activities in architecture, theatre design and industrial design has not been attempted.

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83. Banham, Reyner, Theory and Design in the First Machine Age, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1960, p. 185, 197-98, fig. 76.

84. Burchard, John and Bush-Brown, Albert, The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History, Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1961, p. 447, 468.

IV. EXHIBITIONS AND REVIEWS

see
addenda
for
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note

Only major group exhibitions have been listed; ^{place} title and date of exhibition are listed first, followed by the catalogue if there was one, and finally, by reviews.

85. Internationale Ausstellung Neuer Theatertechnik, Konzerthaus, Vienna, 1924. "Katalog, Programm, Almanach" edited by Kiesler, Würthle & Sohn, Vienna, 1924; "Abrüstung der Kunst", p.5; Texts by Kiesler: "Das Railway-Theater", inside front cover; "Das Nature Morte Viante", p. 20-21; "Mechanische Raumszenerie", p. 24-25; "Debacle des Theaters: Die Gesetze der G-K Bühne", p. 43, 45-47, 50, 52-58 (reprinted in bibl. 86).

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86. International Theatre Exposition, Steinway Building, New York, Feb.27-March 15, 1926; Organized by Frederick Kiesler and Jane Mapp, sponsored by Theatre Guild, Provincetown Playhouse, Greenwich Village Theatre, Neighborhood Playhouse. Texts by Kiesler: ^{translated} Catalogue, Foreword ^(reprinted in bibl. 2); "Debacle of the Modern Theatre", p.14, 16-18, 20, 22-24, (from bibl. 85); cat. nos. 29-64.

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87. Cubism and Abstract Art, Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 2- April 19, 1936. Book by Alfred H. Barr Jr., Museum of Modern Art, 1936, p. 140, 144, 153, 155; cat. nos. 364-66.
88. Ten Years of American Opera Design: 1931-1941, New York Public Library, ~~1941~~ November 13 - Dec. 10, 1941. "Introduction" to catalogue by Kiesler, p. 3-7. Reviewed in Architectural Forum, vol. 76, no.1, Jan. 1942, supp. p. 14, 16.
89. Bloodflames 1947, Hugo Gallery, New York, , 1947. Catalogue by Nicolas Calas includes statement by Kiesler p.2; architectural layout of exhibition by Kiesler. Reviewed by Judith Reed Kaye in Art Digest, vol.21, no.12, March 15, 1947, p. 15.
90. Le Surréalisme en 1947, Galerie Maeght, Paris, ^{Summer} 1947. Installation directed, Salle des Superstitions designed by Kiesler. Catalogue edited by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp, Pierre à feu, Maeght, Paris, 1947, p. 8, 9, 11, 136; text by Kiesler, "L'architecture magique de la salle de superstition", p. 131-134. See also bibl. 41, 74, 75.
91. The Muralist and the Modern Architect, Kootz Gallery, New York, Oct. 3-23, 1950. One-family version of the "Endless House" exhibited with sculpture by David Hare. Reviewed in Art Digest, vol. 25, no.1, Oct. 1, 1950, p. 11, 29; Art News, vol. 49, no.6, Oct. 1950, p. 48; Arts and Architecture, Los Angeles, vol. 68, no.4, April 1951, p. 18-19.
92. De Stijl, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, July 6 - Sept. 25, 1951. Catalogue p. 108, ~~excerpt~~ from bibl. 4.
93. Fifteen Americans, Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 9 - July 27, 1952. Catalogue edited by Dorothy C. Miller, p. 8-9, 46; "Note on Correalism" by Kiesler. See also bibl. 46.
94. Two Houses: New Ways to Build, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Aug. 26- Oct.

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13. 1952. Reviewed: "New Ways to Build: Fuller's Geodesic Dome House and Kiesler's Endless House at the Museum of Modern Art", Art Digest, vol.27, no.1, Oct. 1, 1952, p. 15-16; Interiors, vol. 112, ^{no.3} Oct. 1952, p. 10,12.

95. De Stijl: 1917-1928, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Dec. 1952- Feb. 1953, Catalogue by Alfred H. Barr Jr., Museum of Modern Art Bulletin, vol.20, no.2, Winter 1952-53, p. 4,10, pl.14. Reviewed by Kermit Lansner: "A World of Order", New Republic, vol. 128, no.4, Jan. 26, 1953, p.22.

96. Galaxies by Kiesler, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, Sept. 27-Oct.19, 1954. Exhibition notice with text by Kiesler. Reviewed: T[omas] B. H[ess], Art News, vol.53, no.6, Oct. 1954, p.51; Stuart Preston, New York Times, Sunday, Oct. 3, 1954; New York Herald Tribune, Oct. 3, 1954; Time, Oct. 11, 1954, p.96; Martica Sawin, Arts Digest, vol.29, no.2, Oct. 15, 1954, p.21; Robert M. Coates, New Yorker, Oct. 16, 1954, p. 74,76; Interiors, vol. 114, no.4, Nov. 1954, p.166-67.

97. Beck, Cage, Kiesler, Rexroth, Great Jones Gallery, New York, April 12-May 1, 1960 (drawings for Endless House). Statement by Kiesler on exhibition in "Form Is a Language", Art News, vol. 59, no.2, April 1960, p.35.

98. Visionary Architecture, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Sept. 29-Dec.4, 1960. Checklist with notes by Arthur Drexler.

? → 99. . University of Houston, ¹⁹⁶⁰ architectural plan 5

100. Shell Sculptures and Galaxies by Kiesler, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, Jan. 10-28, 1961. Reviewed: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ L[awrence] C[ampbell], Art News, vol.59, no.10, Feb. 1961, p. 10; S[idney] T[illim], Arts, vol.35, no.6, March 1961, p.54; Dore Ashton, Arts and Architecture, vol. 78, no.3, March 1961, p.7.