

The Museum of Modern Art

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LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE: DRAWINGS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), one of the major innovators of modern architecture, was a superb draftsman whose architectural drawings have been called "the most beautiful renderings of the century." The Museum of Modern Art has published a selection of these drawings from its own Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Archive which was established in 1969 as a repository for the architect's drawings and documentary materials.

This publication, LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE: DRAWINGS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, is a valuable addition to any book collection or library with its 31 plates, 10 of which are in color, as well as 20 text illustrations. They are accompanied by an introduction and notes written by Ludwig Glaeser, Curator of Architecture at The Museum of Modern Art. Intended also as an educational tool for schools, it is available in two editions: spiral bound (\$20.00) and, a limited edition, boxed, unbound sheets (\$75.00).

The pages of both editions are 18 x 24 inches, a size sufficient to capture the spirit and proportion of architectural plans, and to reproduce several of the drawings in the same size as the originals. All of the plates were printed from the original drawings, which, with few exceptions, were given to the Museum by the architect himself. Since Mies's death in 1969, the archive has received several thousand additional drawings.

This book will be of particular interest to scholars since Mr. Glaeser's research produces a revised chronology of Mies's early work, confirmed by the architect before his death. The notes also contain carefully selected supplementary material such as reconstructed plans and illustrations of projects not included in the plates.

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All of the plates represent projects which were never actually built, since, with few exceptions, only drawings of unrealized work have found their way into the Museum or any other collection. Each of the five projects conceived between 1921 and 1923, which first established Mies's fame as one of the founders of modern architecture, presented architectural innovation through brilliantly executed drawings. Three of these projects -- the Friedrichstrasse Office Building (1921), the Glass Skyscraper (1921) and the Concrete Office Building (1922) -- are in this publication and are among the most compelling architectural images ever made.

Both the Friedrichstrasse Office Building and the Glass Skyscraper drawings express the main tenets of the new architecture: the uncovering of internal structure through the use of transparent facades. The nine-foot long charcoal drawing for the Concrete Office Building, presumed lost until it was rediscovered in 1968, is a powerful expression of what Mies called "skin and bone construction."

The book also offers fountain pen sketches, which Mr. Glaeser says "are as personal as handwriting and as incidental as notebook entries -- which, in many cases, they obviously were." Drawings in the book are grouped by technique but the selection also maintains a more or less chronological order with the earlier sketches and more elaborate pencil perspectives at the beginning. The later drawings are montages combining drawings with cut-out reproductions and hard-line studio drawings, some of which were executed with the help of students or draftsmen.

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE: DRAWINGS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART. Introduction and notes by Ludwig Glaeser. 31 plates (10 in color), 20 text illustrations. Limited edition of 125 copies, unbound sheets, boxed \$75; spiral-bound edition \$20. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed in the United States and Canada by The Museum of Modern Art, New York; in the United Kingdom by Trans Atlantic Book Service, Ltd.; and internationally by Feffer and Simons, Inc.

Review copies and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director and Diana Goldin, Coordinator, Press Services, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York 10019. 956-7501, 7297.