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The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
June 2001

MoMA PRESENTS THE FIRST IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE EARLY CAREER OF ARCHITECT LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE

Exhibition Focuses on the Lesser-Known Aspects of Mies's Early Work that Relate to Europe and Berlin as an Architectural and Cultural Landscape

Mies in Berlin

June 21–September 11, 2001

Media Preview

Wednesday, June 20, 2001
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Remarks at 11:30 a.m.

Mies in Berlin is the first in-depth look at the early career of architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (German, 1886-1969). The exhibition and accompanying publication examine all of Mies's architectural work, including his more traditional projects, from the time he arrived in Berlin in 1905 and established his practice there in 1913, until his emigration to the United States in 1938. ***Mies in Berlin*** features 47 of Mies's projects in Europe, represented by over 288 drawings, many of which have never been exhibited in the United States, and 14 scale models specifically commissioned for the exhibition, in addition to the architect's own model of the Tugendhat House in Brno, Czech Republic. New and archival photographs of Mies buildings are presented along with related paintings, sculptures, and films. The exhibition, on view from June 21 to September 11, 2001, is organized by Terence Riley, Chief Curator, Department of Architecture and Design, The Museum of Modern Art, and Barry Bergdoll, Professor of Art History, Columbia University.

Concurrently with the presentation of ***Mies in Berlin***, the Whitney Museum of American Art presents ***Mies in America*** from June 21 to September 23, 2001. Organized by Phyllis Lambert of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, this exhibition looks at Mies's work from the time he established himself in Chicago in 1938 until his death in 1969.

Mies is best known today as the leading and most influential exponent of the refined glass-and-steel architecture of the mid-20th-century in America and abroad. However, ***Mies in Berlin*** focuses on the lesser-known aspects of Mies's early work that relate to Europe and to Berlin as a specific architectural and cultural landscape. These aspects traditionally have been neglected in considering Mies as an "International Style" architect or from an American point of view, which

was increasingly the case after he emigrated. ***Mies in Berlin*** examines the architect's more traditional work alongside his avant-garde projects and stresses the site-specific qualities of his works to demonstrate that his German career was not merely a prelude to a more mature phase of his career in America. By asserting a more continuous and complex evolution of the architect's design methods--his theories of nature, materials, and modern space and dwelling--the exhibition invites reconsideration of a key figure of the modern movement.

The exhibition and publication, according to Mr. Riley and Mr. Bergdoll, "attempt to offer new insights and new questions about Mies's significance, both historically and in our new century, that might be developed in the ongoing critical appraisal of the legacy of architectural modernism."

Mies in Berlin

The exhibition ***Mies in Berlin*** consists of drawings, models, and new and archival photographs of 47 projects that Mies worked on during his time in Europe. Examples of his more traditional projects from before or soon after World War I include Mies's first independent commission, the Riehl House (Potsdam-Neubabelsberg, 1907), the Perls House (Berlin-Zehlendorf, 1911), and the Kröller-Müller Villa Project (Wassenaar, the Netherlands, 1912-13, unbuilt). Other projects include the Weissenhof Apartment House (Stuttgart, 1926-27); the German Pavilion in Barcelona, which was built originally for the 1929 International Exposition, demolished in 1930, and rebuilt on the original site in 1986; the Tugendhat House (Brno, Czech Republic, 1928-30); the Reichsbank Project (Berlin-Mitte, 1933, unbuilt); and the Resor House Project (Jackson Hole, Wyoming, 1937-38, unbuilt), on which he began work before emigrating to the United States.

The exhibition presents some 288 original drawings from major collections around the world, most of them from the Mies van der Rohe Archive at The Museum of Modern Art. Many drawings in the exhibition have rarely been exhibited, including the recently rediscovered large-scale competition proposal for a monument to Otto von Bismarck, the "father" of German unification. This full-color, 5-by-8-foot courtyard perspective from 1910 has never been seen in a major exhibition.

In addition to Mies's own model of his Tugendhat House, 14 new scale models are presented. Included are the Riehl House, Urbig House (Potsdam-Neubabelsberg, 1915-17), Esters House (Krefeld, 1927-30), Hermann Lange House (Krefeld, 1927-30), German Pavilion, Barcelona International Exposition, Hubbe House Project (Magdeburg, 1934-35, unbuilt), and the Resor House Project. These models are made at a consistent scale, allowing easy comparison, with particular emphasis on the role of context and landscape in Mies's early designs.

Video and digital models commissioned for the exhibition further enhance the viewer's understanding of the relationship between Mies's architecture, interiors, and the landscape. There are virtual walk-throughs of the Riehl House, the Wolf House (Gubin, Poland, 1925-27, demolished c. 1945), the Hubbe House, and the Resor House. Also included is a digital model of the development of the Weissenhof housing colony in Stuttgart (1927), for which Mies was the master planner as well as the architect of the largest building in the colony. A video projection about Mies's work on exhibitions includes virtual walk-throughs of the Glass Room exhibit, done for the 1927 exhibition *The Dwelling*, and the Single

Story House done for the Berlin Building Exhibition of 1931. Finally, a digital kiosk is devoted to the influential avant-garde journal *G*, which Mies directed starting in 1923. The kiosk allows visitors to click through five *G* magazines and a few related translations and artworks.

Presentation renderings by architects Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Peter Behrens, and Hendrik Petrus Berlage, Mies's acknowledged masters, are featured for the first time alongside Mies's work allowing viewers to trace principal influences on his architectural development and on his large-scale, full-color rendering techniques. Original paintings, sculptures, drawings, and films featured in *G*, including works by Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, and others, will also be shown.

A selection of 16 photographs from the project *l.m.v.d.r.* by the Duesseldorf-based photographer Thomas Ruff is featured in the exhibition. Ruff began taking photographs of Mies's buildings in 1999, and he digitally manipulated those as well as archival pictures. These large-scale photographs serve as a visual essay on Mies's early work, challenging long-held assumptions about the architect, making the familiar distinctly new. Eight of these images were specifically made for the exhibition. Also included are new color and black-and-white photographs by contemporary architectural photographer Kay Fingerle that document all of Mies's extant works, including those located in the former East Germany.

Mies van der Rohe and The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA, more than any other institution, has helped construct the image of Mies that survives to this day. In 1932, Mies was featured in the Museum's first exhibition of architecture, *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, organized by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Mr. Johnson, Mies's long-time champion, was director of the Museum's newly created Department of Architecture from 1932 to 1934 and from 1946 to 1954 (it was renamed the Department of Architecture and Design in 1949). The first retrospective of Mies's work was a 1947 exhibition titled *Mies van der Rohe*, also organized by Mr. Johnson. The publication for that exhibition is considered the most enduring of all the Mies histories. In 1986, a posthumous exhibition held in honor of the centennial of the architect's birth was organized by Arthur Drexler, head of MoMA's Department of Architecture and Design from 1956 to 1987. Presented at the height of architectural postmodernism, that retrospective found a chilly critical reception. Fifteen years later, curators Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll aim to situate Mies in a series of overlapping contexts that define his architectural ambitions and practices.

Catalogue Information

Mies in Berlin is accompanied by a scholarly 392-page catalogue, published by The Museum of Modern Art (clothbound $70; paperbound $35). The book, edited by Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, attempts to open new territory for discussion and interpretation of the German career of Mies. An in-depth press release is available.

Travel Information

Mies in Berlin will subsequently travel to the Altes Museum, Berlin (December 14, 2001, to March 10, 2002), the Fundacio la Caixa, Barcelona

(July 30 to September 29, 2002), and other venues to be announced.

Sponsorship

Mies in Berlin is made possible by UBS PaineWebber and the Getty Grant Program. Generous support is also provided by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc., Peter Norton, Norton Family Foundation, Tishman Speyer Properties, and Knoll, Inc. Additional funding is provided by Elise Jaffe and Jeffrey Brown, Mrs. Frances Lewis, Sarah Peter, and The Government of The Federal Republic of Germany.

Mies in America **at the Whitney Museum of American Art**

Mies in America--a comprehensive survey of the architect's work from the time he established himself in Chicago in 1938 until his death in 1969, organized by Phyllis Lambert of the Canadian Centre for Architecture--will be shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, from June 21 to September 23, 2001. Together, the MoMA and Whitney exhibitions reexamine both Mies's work in its original context and what it has to offer to the ongoing critical reevaluation of the legacy of modernism. MoMA and the Whitney will coordinate various aspects of their Mies exhibitions, including opening events and membership privileges. A major symposium on September 8 at Columbia University, cosponsored by MoMA, the Whitney, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture, explores Mies's impact on contemporary architecture. A joint Web site provides biographical information on Mies, as well as a selection of his projects from both Europe and America. The site can be visited at **www.moma.org/mies** or at **www.whitney.org/mies** starting on June 21.

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