

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Papers
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Washington, D.C.
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Prepared by Mary M. Wolfskill

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Collection Summary

Title: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1921-1969

Bulk Dates: 1938-1969

ID No.: MSS32847

Creator: Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 1886-1969

Extent: 22,000 items

Extent: 65 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 27 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and German

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm74032847>

Summary: Architect and educator. Correspondence, memoranda, writings, articles, printed matter, blueprints, photographs, and other papers relating chiefly to Mies van der Rohe's career as an architect and director of architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology Armour, Chicago, Ill., until 1940, the Institute of Technology, Chicago, Ill., and to his connections with various architectural associations and organizations.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Albers, Josef--Correspondence.

Baur, Otto--Correspondence.

Behrens, Peter, 1868-1940--Correspondence.

Blake, Peter, 1920-2006--Correspondence.

Bruckmann, Peter--Correspondence.

Clarke, Arundell--Correspondence.

Daley, Richard J., 1902-1976--Correspondence.

Doesburg, Theo van, 1883-1931--Correspondence.

Douglas, Paul H. (Paul Howard), 1892-1976--Correspondence.

Greenwald, Herbert S., 1915-1959--Correspondence.

Gropius, Walter, 1883-1969--Correspondence.

Hatje, Gerd--Correspondence.

Hilberseimer, Ludwig--Correspondence.

Klee, Paul, 1879-1940--Correspondence.

Le Corbusier, 1887-1965--Correspondence.

Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 1886-1969.

Mächler, Martin, 1881-1958--Correspondence.

Nef, John U. (John Ulric), 1899-1988--Correspondence.

Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929-1994--Correspondence.

Peterhans, Walter, 1897-1960--Correspondence.

Poelzig, Hans, 1869-1936--Correspondence.

Rading, Adolf, 1888-1957--Correspondence.

Reich, Lilly, 1885-1947--Correspondence.

Richter, Hans, 1888-1976--Correspondence.

Ruegenberg, Sergius, 1903-1996--Correspondence.

Saarinen, Eero, 1910-1961--Correspondence.

Stam, Mart, 1899-1986--Correspondence.

Taut, Max, 1884-1967--Correspondence.

Tessnow, Heinrich--Correspondence.

Wright, Frank Lloyd, 1867-1959--Correspondence.

Organizations

Armour Institute of Technology.
Bauhaus.
Bund Deutscher Architekten.
Deutscher Werkbund.
Illinois Institute of Technology.
Novembergruppe (Association)

Subjects

Architectural firms--Illinois--Chicago.
Architecture, Modern.
Architecture--Societies, etc.
Architecture--Study and teaching.
Architecture.
Schools of architecture--Illinois--Chicago.
Urban renewal.

Occupations

Architects.
Educators.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, architect and educator, were given to the Library of Congress as a bequest of Mies in 1971 and 1973.

Processing History

The papers of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe were processed in 1974. The finding aid was revised in 2007 and 2021.

Transfers

Some photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1886, Mar. 27	Born, Aachen, Germany
1897-1900	Attended the Cathedral School, Aachen, Germany
1900-1902	Student at the Aachen Trade School, Aachen, Germany; worked in his father's stonemason business
1905-1907	Apprentice, office of furniture designer Bruno Paul, Berlin, Germany
1907	Built first house as an independent architect
1908-1911	Architect with Peter Behrens, Berlin, Germany
1921-1925	Director of architectural exhibits for the Novembergruppe
1925	Founded the Zehner Ring
1926-1932	First vice president, Deutscher Werkbund
1927	Director of Werkbund Exposition, Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart, Germany
1929	Director of German Section, International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain
1930-1933	Director of the Bauhaus, Dessau and Berlin, Germany
1931	Director of Werkbund Section "The Dwelling," Berlin Building Exposition, Berlin, Germany
1938	Immigrated to the United States
1938-1958	Director of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology (until 1940, the Armour Institute of Technology), Chicago, Ill
1938-1969	Private architectural practice, Chicago, Ill.
1957	Member, Orden Pour le Mérite, Germany
1959	Received Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects
1960	Received Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects
1963	Received Presidential Medal of Freedom
1966	Received Gold Medal, Institute of German Architects (BDA)
1969, Aug. 17	Died, Chicago, Ill.

Selected Chronological List of Buildings and Projects, 1907-1968

Date	Event
1907	Riehl House, Berlin, Germany
1911	Perls House, Berlin, Germany
1912	Krölller House, the Hague, Netherlands (project)
1919	Office building for Friedrichstrasse, Berlin, Germany (project)
1921	Glass skyscraper (project)
1922	Concrete office building, Berlin, Germany (project)
1923	Brick country house (project)
1924	Concrete country house (project)
1926	Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg Monument, Berlin, Germany (demolished) Wolf House, Gubin, Germany
1927	Apartment house, Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart, Germany Silk exhibit for Exposition de la Mode, Berlin, Germany Glass industry exhibit, Werkbund Exposition, Stuttgart, Germany
1928	Alexanderplatz remodeling, Berlin, Germany (project) Esters house, Krefeld, Germany Hermann Lange house, Krefeld, Germany
1929	German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain
1930	Tugendhat House, Brno, Czechoslovakia

1931	House, Berlin Building Exposition, Berlin, Germany Row house (project)
1933	Reichsbank, Berlin, Germany (project)
1934	House with three courts (project) Court house with garage (project) Mountain house for the architect, Tirol, Austria (project) Glass house on a hillside (project)
1935	Hubbe House, Magdeburg, Germany (project)
1938	Group of three court houses (project) Resor House, Jackson Hole, Wyo. (project) House on two levels (project)
1939-1940	Plans for the new campus, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Ill.; buildings completed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1942-1943 Minerals and Metals Research Building • 1945-1946 Alumni Memorial Hall • 1946 Metallurgy and Chemical Engineering Building • 1950 Boiler plant • 1952 Chapel • 1956 School of Architecture and Design
1942	Museum for a small city (project) Concert hall (project)
1946	Drive-in restaurant (project)
1949	Promontory apartments, Chicago, Ill.
1950	Farnsworth House, Plano, Ill.
1951	Apartment houses, 860 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Ill. Row house, Chicago, Ill. Fifty by fifty house (project)
1953	National Theatre, Mannheim, Germany (project) Convention Hall, Chicago (project) Commonwealth Promenade apartment houses, Chicago, Ill.
1957	Lafayette Park Housing Development, Detroit, Mich.
1958	Seagram Building, 375 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Tex.
1960	Lakeview apartments, Chicago, Ill.
1961	Bacardi Co. administration building, Mexico City, Mexico
1963	School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, Ill.
1966	Martin Luther King Public Library, Washington, D.C.
1968	Chicago Federal Center, Chicago, Ill.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) span the years 1921-1969, with the bulk of the material dated between 1938 and 1969, after Mies's immigration to America in 1938. The collection relates chiefly to professional matters ranging from architectural education and urban renewal to personal recommendations, contributions to publications, and participation in cultural affairs. The papers are organized into five series: [Early Correspondence](#); [Late Correspondence](#); [General Office File](#); [Speech, Article, and Writing File](#); and [Miscellany](#). The material is in English and German.

In the 1920s and early 1930s Mies was active as a private architect in Berlin and also as a member of various organizations related to architecture. Treated in the [Early Correspondence](#) are his connections with the Novembergruppe, a militant revolutionary group of artists, architects and designers; the Deutscher Werkbund, an organization founded by industrialists and architects to improve the quality of Germany's industrial design; and the Bund Deutscher Architekten, a German architectural league. As director of architectural exhibits for the Novembergruppe from 1921 to 1925 and first vice

president of the Deutscher Werkbund from 1926 to 1932, Mies was in an influential position to promote his architectural style. The correspondents for this period include business partners, former Bauhaus instructors, and friends such as Otto Baur, Peter Behrens, Peter Bruckmann, Walter Gropius, Paul Klee, Martin Mächler, Hans Poelzig, Adolf Rading, Mart Stam, Max Taut, Heinrich Tessnow, and Theo van Doesburg.

The success of the Nazi Party meant the decline of the modern architectural movement in Germany. Mies's search for a more receptive clientele ended with his immigration to America in 1938 when he became director of architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology (later the Illinois Institute of Technology) in Chicago. Here he put his ideas into practice and over the next twenty years designed and oversaw the construction, in brick, steel, and glass, of a campus characterized by clarity of design and flexibility of space. He also established a private practice in the city for the design of apartments and office buildings that brought renown internationally.

Mies's American period is documented in his personal and professional correspondence. The latter includes a selection of business correspondence from his private office. Much of the incoming correspondence deals with requests for advice and material illustrating his office buildings, houses, and apartments.

The large number of private architects, schools of architecture of colleges and universities, and architectural publications and associations represented indicates the wide channels of communication Mies had in both America and abroad. Correspondents include prominent architects as well as important social and political leaders such as Josef Albers, Peter Blake, Arundell Clarke, Richard J. Daley, Paul H. Douglas, Herbert S. Greenwald, Gerd Hatje, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Le Corbusier, John Nef, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Walter Peterhans, Hans Richter, Sergius Ruegenberg, Eero Saarinen, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Correspondence between Mies and his collaborator Lilly Reich, 1939-1940, is located in patent files relating to the firms of Mauser; Lorenz & Reich; and Thonet in the [General Office File](#) series.

In the [Speech, Article, and Writing File](#) are acceptance speeches for various medals, memorials to friends, writings on architectural concepts, and explanations on the construction of specific buildings.

The [Miscellany](#) contains much information of a biographical nature. In the clippings file are obituary notices from newspapers throughout the United States.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Early Correspondence, 1921-1940](#)
- [Late Correspondence, 1930-1969](#)
- [General Office File, 1923-1969](#)
- [Speech, Article, and Writing File](#)
- [Miscellany, circa 1937-1969](#)

Description of Series

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