



## Mapping Lilly Reich<sup>1</sup>

Laura Lizondo-Sevilla

Universitat Politècnica de València ✉ 

Débora Domingo-Calabuig

Universitat Politècnica de València ✉ 

<https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/aris.96371>

Recibido: 7 de junio de 2024 • Aceptado: 8 de noviembre de 2024

**ENG Abstract:** Lilly Reich's architectural legacy has been recognized inconsistently by critics. Praise, ambiguities and omissions have shaped the historical account of one of the first women who, with formal training and as a member of the German Werkbund, innovated in the design of ephemeral architecture, interiors and furniture. Through research based on historical archives, this article maps in detail her professional career and achievements—as an architect and designer, alone and in collaboration with Mies van der Rohe—and compares what she did with what was said about her. The research shows that the parallel line between her work and critique vanishes from when she worked in association with a master of the Modern Movement. The study also finds that the history of later architecture did not recognize her work for decades. The closer Lilly Reich got to Mies the more she disappeared...

**Key words:** Lilly Reich; Architect; Designer; Modern Movement; German Werkbund.

## ES Cartografiando a Lilly Reich

**Resumen:** El legado arquitectónico de Lilly Reich ha sido reconocido por la crítica de forma discontinua. Elogios, ambigüedades y omisiones han configurado el relato histórico de una de las primeras mujeres que, con formación reglada y en calidad de miembro del Werkbund Alemán, innovó en el diseño de arquitecturas efímeras, interiores y mobiliario. Este artículo, a través de un trabajo fundamentado en archivos históricos, mapea detalladamente su carrera profesional y sus logros—como arquitecta y diseñadora; en solitario y en colaboración con Mies van der Rohe— y compara lo que hizo con lo que de ella se dijo. La investigación demuestra que la línea paralela entre su obra y crítica se esfuma a partir de trabajar asociada a uno de los maestros del Movimiento Moderno. Asimismo, el estudio constata que la historia de la arquitectura posterior tampoco reconoció su labor durante décadas. Conforme Lilly Reich se acercaba a Mies, iba desapareciendo...

**Palabras clave:** Lilly Reich; Arquitecta; Diseñadora; Movimiento Moderno; Werkbund Alemán.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. 2. Reich and Mies, 19,5 kilometers away. 3. Reich and Mies, 6,2 kilometers away. 4. Reich and Mies, 1,3 kilometers away. 5. Reich and Mies, 70.000 kilometers away. 6. Conclusions. References.

**Cómo citar:** Lizondo-Sevilla, L.; Domingo-Calabuig, D. (2025). Mapping Lilly Reich. *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad*, 37(1), 85-104. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/aris.96371>

### 1. Introduction

The closer Lilly Reich got to Mies, the more she disappeared... From the beginning of her professional career until the outbreak of World War II, Lilly Reich moved her atelier on two occasions, both coinciding with key moments in her relationship with Mies van der Rohe: when she met him and when she began to collaborate with him. However, the wake of the woman who had begun to establish herself in the media as one of the most influential figures of the German Werkbund was diluted the closer she got to him. Her gender was undoubtedly a determining factor in the prolonged invisibility of Reich, which meant that her architectural legacy was

<sup>1</sup> This article is the result of the research developed for the making of the documentary [On Set with] Lilly Reich. The project has been produced by Avelina Prat and the *Fundació Mies van der Rohe*, the institution that convened the award and the first funding body. Likewise, there have been other institutions that have joined as collaborators in financing the documentary, such as the Department of Research, Culture, and Sports (*Generalitat Valenciana*), *Institut Valencià de la Cultura*, à MÈDIA (*Mitjans Públics Valencians*) and The Museum of Modern Art of New York.

not recovered until half a century after her death. Paradoxically, one of her few writings augured that time would be a decisive factor in the deserved recognition of women's work: «Good things take their time, and here it will be essential to discuss the spirit of the woman, who wants to be what she is and does not want to appear to be what she is not» (Reich, 1922, p. 9).

## 2. Reich and Mies, 19,5 kilometers away

Lilly Reich, born in June 1885 in Berlin (*Yorckstraße* 61), was an enlightened woman with an unusual cultural grounding for her time. The fact that she was the daughter of a Siemens engineer and grew up in a privileged socio-cultural environment enabled her to receive a comprehensive education. During her childhood and adolescence, she studied at a girls' school in Berlin, where she obtained her high school diploma and learned *Kurbel* embroidery, a textile technique using the typical sewing machine of the *Jugendstil*. At the age of twenty-three, she moved to Austria, where she studied at the *Wiener Werkstätte*, combining the theory of Josef Hoffmann with visits to interior design exhibitions. In Vienna she cultivated a love of linear, unornamented design, and an understanding of materials and their perfect construction. On her return to Berlin two years later, she studied at *Die höhere Fachschule für Dekorationskunst* under the guidance of Else Oppler-Legband. At this school, jointly founded by the German Werkbund with a teaching staff that included Herman Muthesius and Peter Behrens, Reich specialized in window display and set design, at the same time as being introduced to the most sophisticated circles of fashion and design.

With this solid grounding in the applied arts, it comes as no surprise that in 1911, Reich opened her first «atelier for interior design, decorative arts and fashion» (Günther, 1988, p. 10), in western Berlin (*Rosenheimer Straße* 24), just three kilometers from her family home. She began designing window displays for the Wertheim Department Store and soon received her first major commission, the interior design and furnishing of several rooms at the Youth Centre in *Goethestraße*, Charlottenburg, designed by the architect Hermann Dernburg. This early project had already been reviewed in two construction journals by two renowned art critics: Max Osbor in *Die Bauwelt*, and Robert Breuer in *Fachblatt für Holzarbeiter*. Osbor's publication (1911) included an image of the children's room, showing the perfect mastery of proportions, the elegance of an abstract design and the practicality of extendable furniture made of unusually narrow wooden profiles. Breuer's text showed the playroom and emphasized the formal and constructive simplicity of an efficient and versatile approach (Fig. 1):

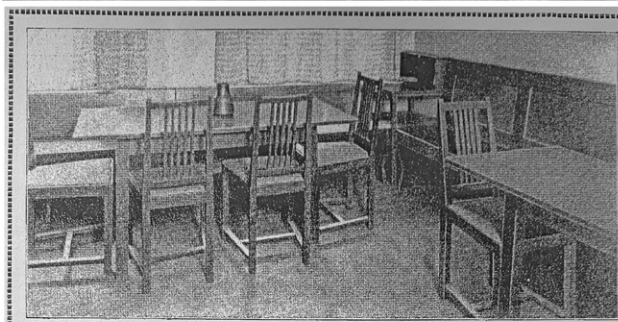
This home is an integral system; its functionality is perceived as a whole (...) it is an exercise in austerity, with no compromise on comfort or good taste (...) Further proof that her architecture is not based on peculiar single forms, but a sensible and harmonious economy of simple elements. (1911, pp. 41-42)

It is hard to imagine a more positive appraisal of a first job.

Her second commission was for a series of works for the exhibition *Woman at Home and at Work*, 1912. The exhibition, held at the Zoological Gardens in Berlin, was organized by the *Deutsche Lyzeum-Klub*, an exclusive association of women professionals and academics that even published its magazine, *Neue Frauen-Zeit*. The exhibition covered every sphere of activity, domestic, industrial, and professional, in pursuit of the goal of giving visibility to the achievements of the German women. Reich designed a worker's apartment in Hall II, an industrial building dressed by Reich and Oppler-Legband as an «architectural construction» (Deutscher Lyceum-Club, 1912, p. 71). From the luxury and exoticism of Hall I designed by Fia Wille, the visitor entered Hall II, where the everyday life of the domestic sphere, agriculture and industry represented the middle and working classes. In contrast to the previous room, Oppler-Legband and Reich avoided ornamentation, emphasized functionality and used linear forms (Fig. 2). Max Osborn (25 February 1912) described the journey towards progressive diversity as perfect, and said that none of his male predecessors had achieved a similar result in these rooms. Paul Westheim, however, a well-known historian and promoter of modern art, in disagreement, wrote a series of reviews in the magazine *Kunst und Handwerk* and in the newspaper *Das Kunstgewerbeblatt*, in which he aggressively resisted integration of the *feminine* into modern design, considering them mutually exclusive in nature.

Lilly Reich was the only professional to design an *Arbeiterwohnung* – a worker's apartment, for a family consisting of a man, his wife, and their baby, – a home which, according to the catalogue, see Fig. 2, was conceived «from the perspective of simplicity, economy and practicality» (Deutscher Lyceum-Club, 1912, p. 102). Designed with financial constraints, the apartment was limited to one bedroom and a living room with a kitchen, which included a sink for washing and bathing. Reich designed a comfortable, hygienic and flexible space capable of providing multiple functionalities. The *Vossische Zeitung* noted that Reich's design met with great approval (D.W., 27 February 1912), and the medical journal *Medizinische Klinik* praised Reich for «how much can be achieved with humble means as soon as female taste and a practical gaze are brought to bear on the solution of such problems» (Fr, 1912, p. 382). However, the apartment was criticized by Paul Westheim: «The core of the problem has been sacrificed to a desire for ornament, failings of the architecturally inept woman» (1912, p. 142); «The bit of unarchitectural cuteness the designer introduces here is, if not a misconception of the entire assignment, a concealment of her weaknesses» (1911-12, p. 268). Objectively, Reich's apartment was built for four times less than those designed by *Jugendstil* architects, who polemically embraced the supposedly feminine weakness of ornament while Reich was actively trying to suppress ornament in favor of the sensuous effects of the material itself. However, critics in the first half of the twentieth century acknowledged women's commitment to artistic tasks but considered them unsuitable for the practice of architecture.





Hermann Mönchhausen

Spielzimmer eines Berliner Jugendheims.

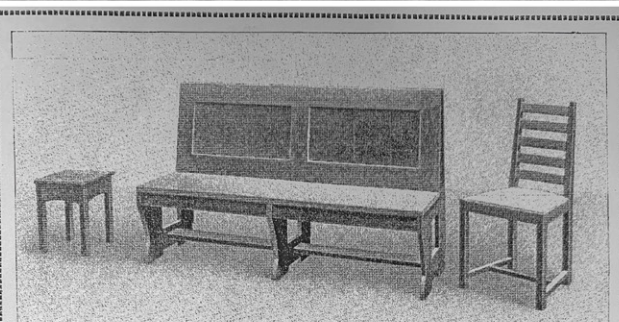
**Jugendheime.**  
 Von Robert Breuer.

Der Respekt vor dem Wesentlichen ist uns zum Gesetz geworden. Wir wollen, daß es nicht angeht, nach dem Maß einer Skulptur den verschiedenen Aufgaben die gleiche formale Lösung zu geben. Wir haben wieder begreifen, daß bestimmte Dialektik, bestimmte ökonomische Schichten und politische Mächte die Träger bestimmter Formen sind. Woraus folgt, daß es eine Schwäche bedeutet, wenn die eine Volksschicht bei der anderen Ansehen macht. Welche Schwäche zur Schande wird, wenn die Bogenden aufsteigend, die Hochgebildeten rückwärts sind. Das aber war die Sachlage während der Zeiten, da das bereits zum Bewußtsein, zur Organisation und zur Macht gekommene Proletariat es immer noch für nötig hielt, die konventionelle Sitze zu nutzen. Nun sind wir endlich so weit, daß das Volk in seiner Ganzheit begriff, wie es Recht und Vermögen habe, seine eigene Art in sichtbare Form, in einen Stil zu projizieren. Es war nur selbstverständlich, daß von solcher Erkenntnis rückwärts Gebrauch gemacht werden mußte, als es galt, jungen Berliner Arbeitern Heimstätten zu schaffen. Es war nur natürlich, daß solchen vom Instinkt des Volkes diktierten Willen alsbald ein Erkenntnisorgan zur Verfügung kam. Das war immer so im Verlauf der Geschichte aller Stile und Wandlungen, daß dem greiften und kongruierten. Selbstbewußtsein einer Menschheitsstufe zur rechten Zeit die zuwachen, die dem neuen Empfinden eine neue Materialisation zu geben vermöchten. Das Verdienst um das Zukunftsgeheimnis verteilt sich in all solchen Fällen gleichmäßig auf den Betreuer wie auf den ausführenden. Der organisatorische Wille, der die Jugendheime für notwendig erkannte, die Jugend, die für solche Heimstätten reif wurde, ein jeder dieser Schätzer hat an den endgültigen Räumen nicht weniger mitgeteilt als Hermann Mönchhausen, der eigentliche Baumeister. Daß aber Mönchhausen in so trefflicher Weise dem drängenden Willen Gehalt gab, das spricht für das geistige feine Begabung und die Fortschrittlichkeit seines Könnens.

Es sind bisher zwei Jugendheime eingerichtet worden; beide mußten in Berliner Mietwohnungen untergebracht

werden. Das im Norden ist das frühere; das des Ostens zeigt deutlich, wieviel Mönchhausen an dem ersten Versuch gelernt hat. Hier wie dort waren all die Mühsalstage der Droghatetage zu überwinden; hier wie dort mußte auf das Gewandte gerechnet werden. Es kam darauf an, mit einem Minimum an Geld möglichst wohlfeile Räume zu schaffen und überdies praktische, widerstandsfähige, lebensmäßig anzuwendende Möbel. Das ist gelungen; durch eine geschickte Wanderteilung und eine zweckmäßige und angenehme Disposition der wichtigsten Holzkörper, durch ein feinsinniges von farbigen Betonungen und vor allem durch das gegenwärtige Klängen dieser zerstreuten Elemente wurde eine ebenso ruhige wie einladende, ebenso bescheidene wie selbstbewußte Stimmung erreicht. Das ist besonders für das zweite Heim gut gelungen; hier spielt die Farbe eine entscheidende Rolle; kräftige Bilder hängen klug verteilt an den Wänden, die Fensterbänke mit ihren luftigen Blumenmüllern tragen ein hübsches Blüten- und Zweiten durch die Zimmer. Hier empfindet man ganz selbstverständlich und unaufbringlich das Räumliche als eine Wohltat, als ein Mittel, die Lebenslust zu steigern. Hier muß sich die Jugend wohl fühlen. Sie wird gebündelt durch ein gewisses Maß architektonischer Begrenzung, durch die Reinlichkeit, die Reinen verübten Wandel und keine handlungsfähige Überfülltheit duldet; sie wird bereichert durch den Komfort, der bisher ihr wohl meist ungewohnt war, den sie aber sofort als berechtigt und wertvoll erkennt. Die milde Festigkeit und die farbige Harmonie der Räume muß diesen Jünglingen und Mädchen, denen die Stille des Hinterbaus und die fahle Trübseligkeit der Mietkammer bisher die Sinne abtödete, zu einer Erlebung zugleich zu einem erzieherischen Ansporn, zu einem Ideal und einen Sprungdreht sozialer Erkenntnis werden. Was tausend gute Lehren nicht vermöchten, leiten diese wohlhabenden Räume mit ihrem stillen Ernste und ihrer zwanglosen Feinheit mühelos: die Entwohnung von der

Der bedeutende Baumeister dieser Dörfer war nicht ein Mann von Köhlerer Sinne, Berlin, empfindet er, ist ein köhlerer, sozialer Drecks, die hierhergehenden empfinden Druckverhältnisse durch eine glückliche, aber billige Dorn zu erlösen.



Stuhl, Bank und Hocker aus dem Jugendheim<sup>1</sup>.

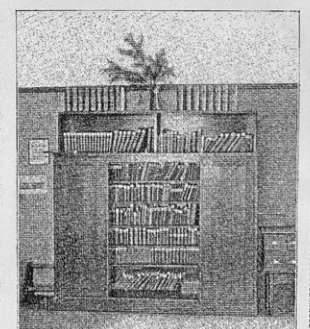
Kneipe, vom Klentopp und der Parkbank, die Bestimmung auf die Würde der Persönlichkeit und der zu repräsentierenden Klasse. Solche Wirkung des Raumes wird von den einzelnen Möbeln trefflich unterstützt. Mönchhausen begnügte sich mit wenigen, aber gut durchdachten und schön gefärbten Typen. So sah er fünf Arten von Stühlen, die aber dem Stoffe nach alle identisch und nur in der Rückenlehne variiert sind; durch ihre Artverwandtschaft wirken sie die Disziplin der Zusammengehörigkeit, durch ihren lockeren Wechsel einen Anreiz zum freien Spiel der Kräfte. Dabei sind sie, was die Konstruktion betrifft, auf das äußerste des notwendigen Gerätes reduziert und konnten gerade dadurch die Stoffkosten sparen, ohne den Preis zu überschreiten. Die nach gepolsterten Sitze sind herausnehmbar. — Nicht minder schön und anpassend, auf den Typus diszipliniert, ohne Langeweile, machte Mönchhausen die Tische. Sie überzeugen durch ihre dem Auge fühlbare Standfestigkeit. Sehr schön einen unansehnlichen, ganz notwendigen, Rehen die Bänke. Ein sehr reiches Möbel, ganz notwendig und zweckmäßig und zugleich von edler Haltung und höchstem Reiz, ist der offene Stuhlsitz. Unwillkürlich denkt man an Japan und zugleich daran, wie gerade diese Öffnungen ein lebendiges Beispiel für die pädagogische Kraft der charakterhaften und schönen Form sind. Solch ein optisch gefälliges Möbel muß sich dem Gefühl einbrennen, muß die Lust am Leben steigern, muß zu einem Symbol der Ordnung und der höchsten Würde werden. — Für die Stühle wurde Birne, für alles übrige Geht Hieser verwendet. Das Holz erleiht braune oder schwarze Beize; zu Braunfärbung Mönchhausen ein grünes, zu Schwarz ein braunes Stadtpolster.

Der will betonen, daß diese Jugendheime unverfälscht und selbständig erzielbare Ergebnis stützen für den Kulturwillen und die junge Kraft des Proletariats. Der erzieherischen, welche wichtige Mittel hier geschaffen wurde, die sich für die Ansprüche des Nachwachsenden zu mehr, ihm milder, aber auch selbstbewußter zu machen. Wer möchte es danach für möglich achten, daß die preussische Regierung an einer Bewegung, die solche Frucht trägt, Argernis nimmt.

Bei dieser Gelegenheit veröffentlichen wir zwei Ansichten aus dem neu eröffneten Jugendheim der Stadt Charlotten-

burg. Dies Heim ist eine sehr umfangreiche Anlage; kein Betrieb, der alle Stadien der Fürsorge am Kinde, von der Krippe und dem Fort bis zur Hauswirtschaftslehre umfasst, fällt ein ganzes Haus. Auch hier mußte bei der Zimmer-einrichtung die größte Sparfahigkeit walten, ohne daß darunter die Wohnlichkeit und der gute Geschmack leiden durfte. Wie gut das gelang, davon geben vor allen die von Frau Reich Klug Reich disponierten Räume schönen Beweis.

Mit Geschick wurden die Capen durch geringe Abänderungen, wechselnde Farbgebung und variierte Kombinationen des geruht, Zimmer von völlig verschiedenem Ausdruck zu schaffen. Wieder ein Beweis dafür, daß es nicht auf absonderliche Einzelformen ankommt, vielmehr auf vernünftiges und harmonisches Wirksamkeit mit möglichst feinsten Elementen.



Jugendheim 1: Bücherregal.

Figure 1. Lilly Reich, Youth Centre in Charlottenburg, Berlin, 1911.

Photo credits: top, Die Bauwelt 9 [21 January 1911]; bottom, Fachblatt für Holzarbeiter 6 [1911].





**DIE ARBEITERWOHNUNG**

Entwurf der Möbel: Frä. Lilly Reich, Rosenheimer Strasse 24.  
 Ausführung der Möbel: Linke, Köpenicker Strasse 175.  
 Herd: Firma A. Voss sen., Sarstedt und Hannover.  
 Schulwandtafel: Friedrich Binsky, Berlin, Lange Strasse 75.  
 Gasbeleuchtung: Berlin-Anhaltische Maschinenbau-Aktien-Gesellschaft, Berlin.

Gruppe 3:

**Die Arbeiterwohnung.**

Raum 42.

Entwurf: Frä. LILLY REICH.

Die Einrichtung der Arbeiterwohnung ist von dem Gesichtspunkt der Einfachheit, Billigkeit, Zweckmässigkeit geleitet. Wert wurde besonders darauf gelegt, gutes Material, gute solide Arbeit, einfache Formen zu geben und doch einen behaglichen Eindruck zu erzielen. Wohnplatz und Küche liegen in einem Raum. Die Möbel in beiden Zimmern sind aus Kiefernholz gefertigt, in der Küche gestrichen, im Schlaf- und Wohnraum gewachst und unpoliert. Die Farbe und Art der gewachsenen Möbel ist gleich gewählt, um bei verminderten Räumen die Möglichkeit zu geben, die Möbel untereinander zu stellen. Jedes Möbel ist zweckmässig und platzausnützend gearbeitet. Der Herd, ein neues Modell der Centralwerkstatt, ist geschlossen und besitzt dadurch den Vorzug, die Wärme zu sammeln und Gas zu sparen, der Unterbau ist ausgenutzt als Geschirrschrank. Die Fensterbekleidung ist einfach, um Licht und Luft hereinzulassen und keine Staubfänger zu schaffen. Die Stoffe hierzu ebenso wie zu dem Sofabezug sind im Preise den Gesamtkosten angemessen. Die Einrichtung kostet 681.50 Mark. Speisekühlschrank: Frau Lise Lend, Mannheim.

Ausführende Firmen:

Möbel des Wohn- und Schlafzimmers:  
 Hermann Hetzel & Co., Elisabethufer 53;

Möbel der Küche:

Franz Linke, Küchenmöbelfabrik und Lager, Köpenicker Strasse 175;

Gasherd, Gasautomat, Volksbadewanne:

Centralwerkstatt Dessau, Spezialfabrik für Gasapparate der Deutschen Continental-Gas-Gesellschaft.

Inventory der Arbeiterwohnung.

Schlafzimmer: Ein Kleiderschrank 75.— M., ein Waschtisch 38.50 M., zwei Betten à 52.50 = 105.— M., ein Nachtschrank 25.— M., ein Spiegel 16.50 M., zwei Stühle à 10.— M. = 20 M. Summa: 280.— M.

Wohnzimmer: Ein Schrank 99.— M., ein Bücherbord 16.50 M., ein Nahtisch 23.— M., ein Esstisch 33.— M., zwei Stühle 20.— M., ein Lehnstuhl 40.— M., Sofa 90.— M. Summa: 321.50 M.

Küche: Ein Küchenbüfett 50.— M., ein Geschirrschrank 11.— M., ein Tisch mit Linoleum 10.— M., zwei Stühle à 4.50 M. = 9.— M. Summa: 80.— M.  
 Schlafzimmer 280.— M., Wohnzimmer 321.50 M., Küche 80.— M., Gesamtsumme: 681.50 M.

**AUSSTELLUNG „DIE FRAU IN HAUS UND BERUF“**  
 BERLIN 1912 · 24. Februar bis 24. März ··········· Ausstellungshallen am Zoologischen Garten

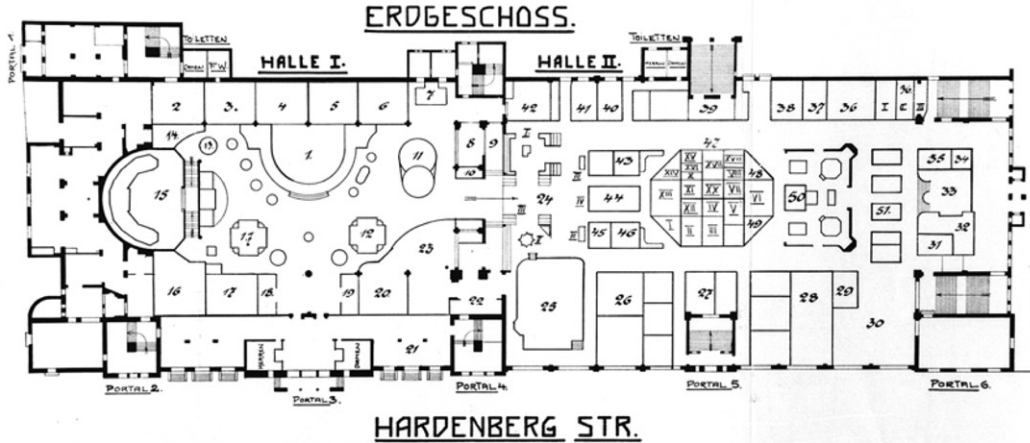


Figure 2. Die Frau in Haus und Beruf, Berlin 1912

Photo credits: catalog

Despite these initial successes, the most important event in Reich's career that year was her induction into the German Werkbund, all the more so given the limited representation of women. She then began to work as head of the window display department, which led to the design of temporary installations, progressively on a larger scale and with greater media impact. Her first work for the Werkbund was the window display for the Elefanten-Apotheke in Berlin, reproduced in the *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes* (1913). The yearbook image showed a new way of displaying the product. The serialization of the individual object –accompanied by the utensils used in the manufacturing and packaging processes– created a spatial unity through grouped composition, geometric abstraction and the background-figure principle.

The First World War broke out shortly afterward, but Reich did not cease her professional activity at the Werkbund; on the contrary, she began accumulating work. In 1914 she was the *Schriftführerin* of the House of Woman section of the German Werkbund exhibition in Cologne and, together with Ana Muthesius and Oppler-Legband, the designer of all the window displays. In 1915, she was also the artistic director of the exhibition for the Werkbund Committee for the Fashion Industry in Berlin in collaboration with Lucius Bernhard, and in 1916-1917, she was responsible for selecting the women's work at the Swiss Werkbund exhibition. In addition, during this period, Reich turned her studio into a dressmaker's shop, producing her own fashion and furniture designs, some of which were published in journals, magazines and the specialized press. An example of this was the suite of furniture commented on and illustrated by Breuer in the article *Die Frau als Möbelbauerin* which, once again, was published by the professional journal *Fachblatt für Holzarbeiter* (Breuer, 1915). The design under review consisted of a bedroom composed of five elements –a bed, bedside table, chest of drawers, chest of drawers and wardrobe– made of wood and ornamented with geometric carvings. It was a less conceptual design than the one presented in Charlottenburg and closer to the *Typenmöbel* furnishings designed by Bruno Paul, a system with which Reich was familiar.

After the end of the war, Reich embarked on a professional period of great renown. In February 1920, together with Margarete Neumann, she curated the Berliner exhibition, Fashion Craft, organized for the Association of the German Fashion Industry. She also designed a textile stand on her own, which was included in the exhibition catalogue (VV.AA., 1920, pp. 3-5). The three images preserved at the Museum of Modern Art of New York (MoMA) reveal a series of architectural fundamentals that recurred throughout Reich's career: circular geometry, the free-standing plan and chromatic-material contrast. The confrontational dialogue between the industrial sphere and the handmade textiles was the setting for the text written by Reich (1920) for the bulletin of the Association of the German Fashion Industry: the artist-craftsman had to respect the laws of working with the machine, but at the same time exert their own influence over it. Reich re-emphasized this idea in one of her few manuscripts, titled *Modefragen* (1922), published in the Werkbund journal *Die Form. Monatsschrift für gestaltende Arbeit*. In it, she called for art to be consistent with the spirit of the age, in terms of reconciling craft and industry and the role of women in modern society. After all, Reich exemplified these principles to perfection, especially after she became the first woman to be appointed to the board of directors of the German Werkbund on 25 October 1920.

In the following years, Reich's exhibition work became even more important in the Werkbund: she selected the more than 1,600 German design objects included in The Applied Arts Werkbund exhibition at Newark Museum in New Jersey, Spring 1922; she took on multiple responsibilities at the International Frankfurt Fair, being responsible for setting up the traveling exhibition *Die Form*, Autumn 1924; she was a member of the commission of the Werkbund House for the period 1922-25, managing the quality control of the products on display and designing all the window displays; and she was responsible for the display design of the Werkbund's Atelier for Exhibition Design and Fashion, twice yearly, 1922-26.

At nearly forty years of age, Reich was an independent and reputable professional, directing exhibition projects and producing her own designs. This gradual evolution gave her visibility among her peers and allowed her to maintain a network of collaborative contacts with other professionals. At the same time, her career was making a positive impact in the media, and the *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt* featured her as «a person equally gifted as an organizer and an artist» (Anonymous, 19 March 1924). In this context, 1924 marked a turning point in Reich's career.

Firstly, it was a year of traveling and moving. Not only did she visit the new residential developments in England and Holland, but she moved continuously between Frankfurt and Berlin, dividing her work between three complementary studios: the newly opened Atelier for Exhibition Design and Fashion in Frankfurt am Main (*Fahrgaße* 43), the plan to open a clothing and linen workshop in the same city, and her Berlin atelier, relocated that year a few kilometers further west, right next to the exhibition grounds (*Heilbronner Straße* 19). Secondly, it was the year she met Mies van der Rohe, a new member of the Werkbund, and with whom she began a professional dialogue that had far-reaching repercussions on her architectural career.

Ludwig Michael Mies Rohe's early career had nothing to do with that of Lilly Reich. With no formal training in design or architecture, Mies learned his craft through practice, mainly in the studios of two leading architects of the Wilhelmine period: Bruno Paul (*Prinz-Albrecht-Straße*, June 1907 - May 1908), and Peter Behrens (*Neubabelsberg*, Potsdam, October 1908 – early 1912, intermittently). In 1913, Mies set up his own office, first in Berlin's Steglitz district, (*Süden Straße* 14) and one year later in the small town of Lichterfelde (*Moltke Straße* 45). In 1915, separated from his wife and daughters, he moved again to set up his studio and residence at *Am Karlsbad Straße* 24. This biographical moment represented a turning point for Mies, who changed his surname to Mies van der Rohe and «dedicated himself fully to architecture» (Colomina, 2009, p. 5). Mies joined the various avant-garde circles with renewed energy and published a series of texts and theoretical projects, which had nothing to do with the single-family houses he designed for wealthy clients on the outskirts of Berlin. However, in 1924, as a newly appointed member of the Werkbund and with a studio six kilometers from Reich, Mies had not yet built anything that was published in the avant-garde magazines and journals of the time.



### 3. Reich and Mies, 6,2 kilometers away

After thirteen years in her first studio, Lilly Reich moved to *Heilbronner Straße* and took on the largest commission of her career: the organization and design of the From Fiber to Textile exhibition for the International Frankfurt Fair, Autumn 1926. Reich's work was comprehensive, ranging from selecting companies and products to designing every detail related to the textile materials. As she had already tried out on a small scale in the Elefanten-Apotheke, rationally produced objects in conjunction with raw materials and industrial machinery structured the exhibition space. The ten or so photographs preserved at the MoMA show how the large space of the *Festhalle* was the stage for the textile manufacturing processes and the support for the striking signage that floated in the air, guiding the visitor along a free and continuous route (Fig. 3). «This is a pioneering display of objectivity (...)» (Anonymous, 1926, p. 5) in which Reich established herself in the media through her organizational talents and her «exemplary objectivity» (Anonymous, 27 September 1926). Furthermore, it was Reich's last exhibition in Frankfurt, as announced by J. Modlinger, who praised her ability to design functionally and innovatively, considering her on the same level of competence as the male gender:

As things now stand, she is leaving, not without giving us in the exhibition *From Fiber to Textile*, a last look at the expressive abilities with which she is endowed and which strike the chord of our time so clearly, as only a male hand would ever have done. (24 September 1926)

On returning to Berlin, Reich took on a new professional challenge. Mies van der Rohe, promoted to first vice-president of the Werkbund, sought her expertise to develop the direction of his debut exhibition, *The Dwelling*, which was to be held in Stuttgart from July to October 1927. This first collaboration marked Mies' entry into temporary architecture and Reich's breakthrough in exhibitions of built architecture. Many photographs immortalize Mies in Stuttgart during the various phases of development, but there are no photographs of Reich. Franz Schulze, however, states that Reich and Mies «shared a small flat in Stuttgart during the preparations for the Weissenhof» (2012, p. 139), indicating that their relationship was personal as well as professional.



Figure 3. Lilly Reich, International Frankfurt Fair, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1926.

Photo credits: Mies van der Rohe Archive, The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala, Florence.



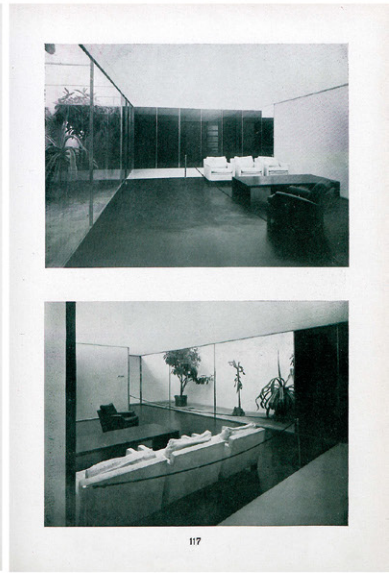
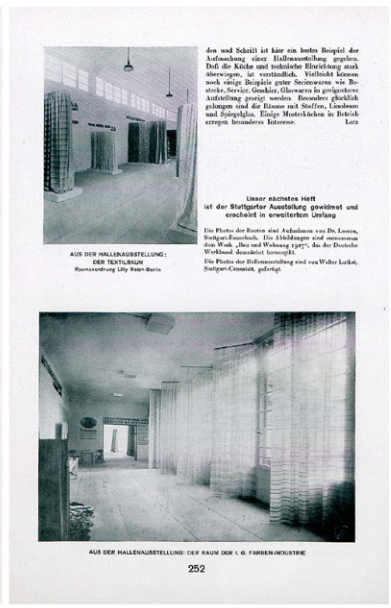
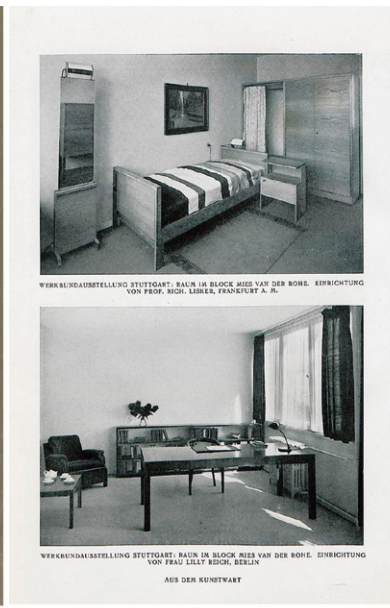
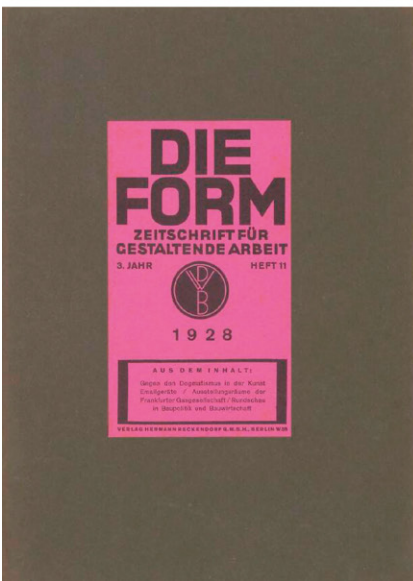
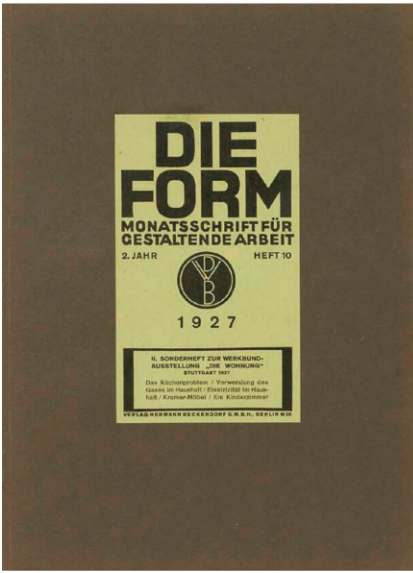
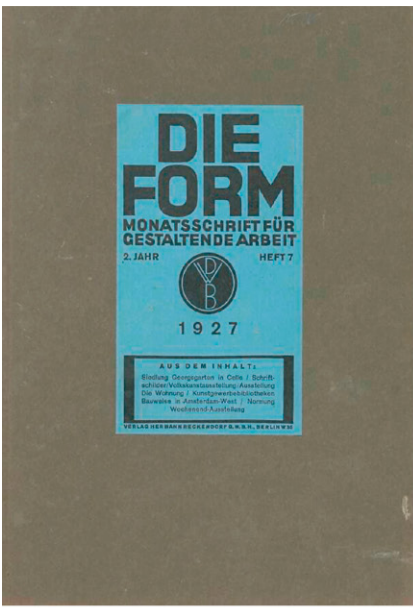


Figure 4. Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe, The Dwelling, Stuttgart, 1927

Photo credits: Die Form [1927].

The Reich-Mies partnership established clearly differentiated roles from the outset. Mies was responsible for urban planning and building, and Reich for residential interior design and the design of all the industrial

facilities. Thus, Mies developed the master plan for the Weissenhof Housing Settlement and the project for the colony's only apartment building. Reich was responsible for the interior design of flat number 9 and the installation of six of the nine industrial product rooms in the *Gewegehalle-Platz*. According to the catalogue, the rooms 4 and 5 – the Linoleum Hall and the Plate-Glass Hall– were designed by both of them, and these adjoining and connected spaces were their first joint project. In Stuttgart, with the exception of the furniture designed by both of them for the exhibition –MR10 and MR20 chairs and MR1 stool, whose acronym unfortunately implied full authorship by Mies– Reich's work was recognized with a certain autonomy (Fig. 4).

Reich was the only woman in the exhibition to design a residential unit in its entirety. The one-bedroom flat, located on the first floor of the Mies block, was an open-plan living space, equipped with simple, functional and refined furnishings predominated by lacquered steel and glass. Reich also used textiles to make the space more flexible and to filter the light. The most widely disseminated image was the dressing room, a space connected to the bedroom utilizing a functional curtain/wall hung employing a tubular profile.

The exhibition project for the galleries, some of which were published in the journal *Die Form*, also won critical acclaim. Of the four halls she designed on her own, Hall 1 –for industrial products and household equipment– was the most striking. The hall's structure served as a module for a much more abstract formal composition than in Frankfurt. As Wilhelm Lotz described, Reich created a homogeneous ensemble in which the objects were perceived clearly and cleanly, displayed on white free-standing panels:

[Lilly Reich], has given the exhibition a framework, which could not have been thought out more discreetly and fortunately. Willi Baumeister's typography fits beautifully into this framework. With white walls and lettering, this is the best example of the presentation of a room exhibition. (1927, pp. 251-252)

The catalog named Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe –in that order– as the Plate-Glass Hall and Linoleum Hall designers. The room, which advertised the glass of the company *Verein Deutscher Spiegelglasfabriken GmbH*, was designed with precise dimensions, 12,5 x 16,2 meters, and was divided into six spaces: two patios and four domestic rooms identified by sober and elegant furniture made of polished rosewood, designed by Reich. The different rooms were structured using a continuous, labyrinthine route, spatially organized by the glass partitions. This material was also the protagonist in the Linoleum Hall, in this case as a finishing surface. Linoleum from the *Deutsche Linoleum-Werke A-G* surrounded the perimeter - accompanied by large-scale graphics and texts - and organized the space of the room into four distinct sectors, all of them following the principles of abstraction, horizontal tension and background-figure.

The two collaborative installations were designed without defined limits between them. The floor was covered with linoleum and the ceiling with stretched silks and cottons that allowed the overhead light to be filtered. The linoleum and glass planes boldly added color, complexifying the sensory perception. Moreover, the glass used different forms and degrees of transparency, so rhythm, size and opacity impacted the viewer's speed. These gradients were most evident in the two mock patios that introduced nature and art. The transparent patio gave a clear view of the vegetation, and the translucent patio gave a veiled view of the sculpture *Mädchen Torso, sich umwenden* (Wilhelm Lehmbruck 1913). All these nuances led the catalog to refer to the Plate-Glass Hall as *Raumgestaltung*, distinguishing it from the others by its architectural character (Much et al., 1927). In *Frankfurter Zeitung* newspaper, Siegfried Kracauer described the experience of circulating within this space as extraordinary: «[Any] movement magically produces shadow plays on the wall, disembodied silhouettes, hovering in mid-air and getting mixed up with the reflections in the actual glass space» (31 July 1927).

At the same time as the exhibition in Stuttgart, Mies was completing the Wolf House in Gubin, Poland (1925-1927), the first villa on which Reich collaborated in its interior design and furnishings. Coincidentally, the critics have considered that this house differed substantially from his villas of a few years earlier, the Mies' first modern house where he experiments with new forms (Scharnholtz, 2001). Reich could therefore be said to have influenced Mies' modernization, something he had been desperately trying to do since his paper architectures of the 1920s.

#### 4. Reich and Mies, 1,3 kilometers away

After finishing her work in Stuttgart, Reich moved her Berlin office, combining it with her residence for the first time. Her «atelier and living quarters» (Günther, 1988, p. 10) were in *Genthiner Straße 40*, just under a kilometer away from Mies' home and studio. The reasons for this second move are unknown, but they may relate to how Reich and Mies worked collaboratively through a dialogue fueled by continuous criticism and suggestions (Spaeth, 1985). Accounts from students and employees of the two studios report that Reich was in the habit of going to Mies' office in the evening. There, they would discuss joint commissions and move on to talk about his drawings and «her ideas always ready in her head» (Glaeser, 1977, p. 10). Cristiane Lange adds that Reich's work also involved the construction of models (Lange, interview, 27 October 2021; Prat, 2022). So in September 1927 Reich began a professional venture together with Mies, putting her solo career on hold and collaborating with him exclusively.

The decade in which the architectural studios of Reich and Mies converged in neighboring streets was a time of experimentation in the field of ephemeral architecture for both –creating more than eighty exhibition spaces (Lizondo, 2012)– and for putting it into practice in their built architectures. Despite this, the collaboratively developed architecture was not recognized as such, even by the critics of the time, and most of the work done as a team was published as belonging to Mies and subsequently categorized by historians as the



unique legacy of Mies van der Rohe. These are widely analyzed works in which Reich's co-authorship has been overlooked for decades.

This was the case in the first project they undertook after returning from Stuttgart, the Velvet and Silk Café, a space belonging to the Berlin exhibition Women's Fashion and organized by the Imperial Association of German Fashion Industry during September and October 1927. In an industrial warehouse, hidden behind tulle and silks, the exhibited material was displayed similarly to the Plate-Glass Hall; the canvases configured the exhibition space to expose themselves at the same time. The large canvases of silk —silver, gold, black and lemon yellow— and velvet —black, orange and red— suspended by cables and rolled up in metal tubes, respectively, delimited ambiances and entered into dialogue through formal, material and chromatic contrast mechanisms. This ethereal and elegant textile atmosphere, complemented by tubular steel furniture from Stuttgart, was published in the journal *Cahiers d'Art* (Zervos, 1928) and the newspaper *Die elegante Welt* (1927) without mentioning Reich.

Something similar happened at the International Exposition of Barcelona held between March 1929 and January 1930. This was a major commission, and included the design of the national pavilion, a commercial pavilion for the German electrical industry and twenty-five industrial exhibitions located in the palaces of Montjuïc. The documents preserved at the MoMA and the testimony of Sergius Ruegenberg (2000)<sup>2</sup>, an employee of Mies' office, state that Reich was responsible for the design of all the German displays, all of which were distinguished from other countries by the use of repetition and stacking systems capable of advertising the industrial product and the space it was capable of generating. However, few documents of the time mention her as the author. The journal *Die Form* included her in the photo captions as the joint author (Bier, 1929), and Epifanio de Fortuni mentions her in the *Diario Oficial de la Exposición* as a decorative artist (1929/30) (Fig. 5).

which went far beyond the national debate (Miller, 1999). The exhibition *The Dwelling in Our Time*, part of the German Building Exposition, attracted the presence of leading architects and critics. Ludwig Hilberseimer (4 August 1931), Max Osborn (9 May 1931), Wilhelm Lotz (1931), Henry-Russell Hitchcock (October–December 1931) or Philip Johnson (January 1932), were some of them. Continuing with the usual allocation of responsibilities, Mies directed the exhibition of progressive, anti-bourgeois housing built on a real scale inside an industrial building, while Reich was responsible for the Material Show, the product exhibition located in the perimeter gallery of the mezzanine and visually related to Mies' master plan. Following the structural rhythm of the building, Reich arranged the materials in spatial progression from two to three dimensions showing their capacities to be both the origin and result of the architectural configuration; a rational yet sensual sequence with didactic connotations for the viewer.

While the German journal *Moderne Bauformen* reported how the Reich's work «initiates a unique and new path» (Hoffmann, 1931, p. 373), the North American critique was quite different. Johnson (1931) did not include her in the article he published in *T-Square* and Hitchcock attributed her with a secondary role in the Harvard magazine *Hound and Horn*:

The main interest of the exhibition was to be found in Room II, which had come into being entirely under the direction of Mies van der Rohe. From the kinds of marble on display, woods, and fabrics —which were selected by Mies and arranged by Lilly Reich— to the Mies house at the center of the composition, everything is arranged with a clarity of vision that can only be achieved by a single positive taste control. (1931, p. 94)

During May and August 1931 Reich and Mies tackled a new exhibition project in Berlin, the repercussions of Reich was also involved in the configuration of the ground floor, designing the interiors of two of the apartments in the block known as the Boarding House, and building the only dwelling of her career<sup>3</sup>.

In the collective housing building, Reich designed the Apartment for a Married Couple and the Apartment for a Single Person (also called Apartment for a Bachelor), the latter in collaboration with Mies. Thanks to the layout of the functional curtain/wall and the compactness of specially designed furniture, she achieved elegance and spaciousness despite the small size of the apartments. «The furniture, instead of simply filling the space or even compressing it, can also have an amplifying function» (Völckers, 1931, p. 270), based on a «strict order and enlivened by radiant colors» (Rischowski, 1931, p. 251). The cooking cabinet, made by Otto Kahn and arranged in both flats, was particularly praised for its versatility and innovation: «[if you ignore the lack of ventilation] it represents a real breakthrough compared to similar attempts shown in Stuttgart» (Zimmermann, 28 July 1931). She was also recognized in the report on German architecture that the French magazine *L'Architecture Vivante* published in 1931, appearing in the credits as: «Lilly Reich, arch» (Badovici, 1931, p. 27).

In contrast, her Ground-Floor House received divergent criticisms. The fact that it was built connected by a wall to the House for a Childless Couple designed by Mies —perhaps the ideal house for each of them to live in independently but in close proximity— testified, in comparison, to Reich's lesser expertise in building practices. Described as realistic, functional, cramped and furnished with cozy furniture (Völckers, 1931, p. 270), Reich's house was «architecturally rigid and lacking the elegance of the expert» (Günther, 1988, p. 37) (Figs. 6a & 6b).

<sup>2</sup> Ruegenberg stated that for the Barcelona designs they equipped a specific studio in a basement near their Berlin offices, which was temporarily called International Exposition of Barcelona 1929. Construction Department of the German General Commissariat. In fact, this is how it appears on the letterheads of letters written during the process and preserved at the MoMA (Ruegenberg, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Drawings made by Lilly Reich for this exhibition are included in *The Mies van der Rohe Archive* (Drexler and Schulze, 1986).



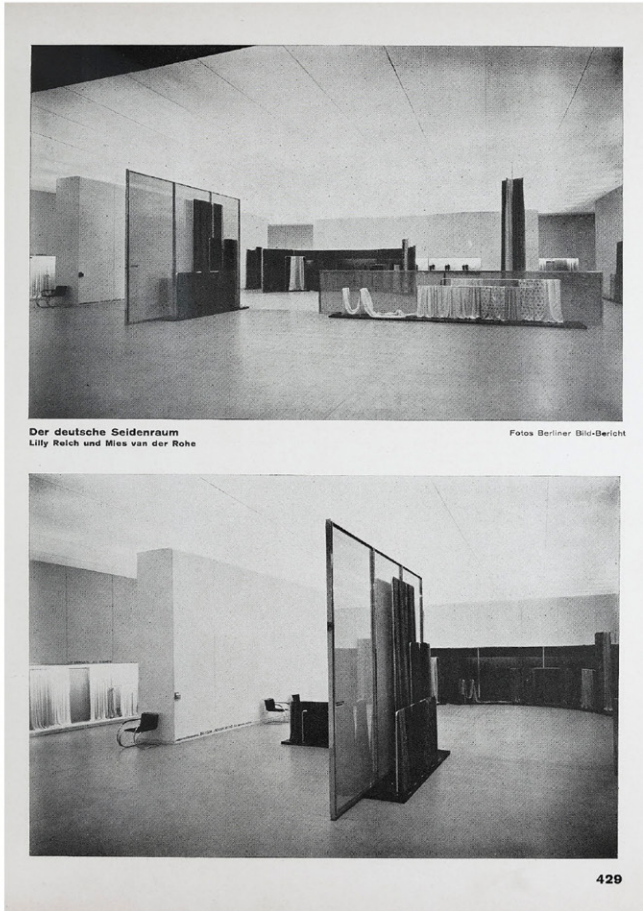
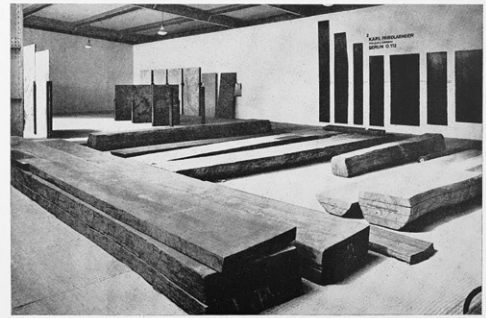


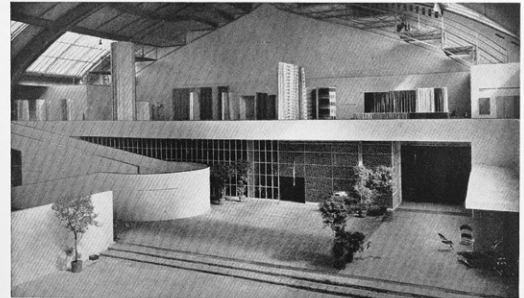
Figure 5. Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe, Exposición Internacional, Barcelona, 1929

Photo credits: top, *Diario Oficial de la Exposición* 18 [9 June 1929]; bottom, *Die Form* 16 [15 August 1929].



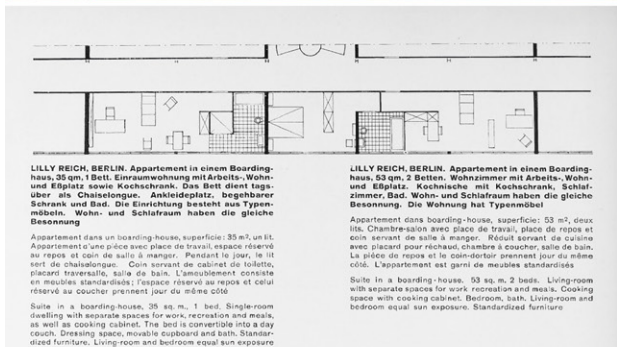


Aus der Materialien-Schau auf der Galerie. Leitung: Lilly Reich  
Vorn: Holz und Furniere der Firma Karl Friedländer, Berlin, im Hintergrund: Gruppe Marmor  
Empreinte & exposition des matériaux, établie sur la galerie. Direction: Lilly Reich  
A l'avant-plan: bois et placages; à l'arrière-plan: groupes en marbre  
Part of the display of materials in the gallery. Management Lilly Reich  
Timber and veneer in the foreground and, in the background, a group of marble slabs  
Fotos: C. Rehbein, Berlin



Blick gegen den Aufgang und die Galerie, darunter Wohnhochhäuser-Gemeinschaftsräume von Walter Gropius. Auf der Galerie die Gruppe „Textiles“. Anordnung: Lilly Reich. Rechts: Stahlmöbel von Brüder Luchhardt  
Vue donnant sur l'escalier d'accès et sur la galerie, en bas: salles de réunion de maison d'habitation en hauteur, par Walter Gropius. À la galerie, le groupe „Textiles“, aménagement: Lilly Reich. À droite: meubles d'acier de Brüder Luchhardt  
Looking towards the staircase and the gallery underneath which are public rooms in a high dwelling-house, by Walter Gropius. On the gallery is the group „Textiles“, arranged by Lilly Reich. To the right: steel furniture by Brüder Luchhardt  
Fotos: C. Rehbein, Berlin

211

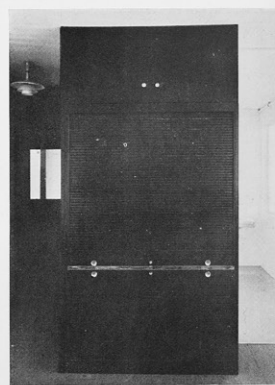


Tischlerarbeiten: W. Goldbach Nachfolger, Berlin  
Metallmöbel: Berliner Metallgewerbe Jos. Müller, Berlin-Neukölln  
Polsterarbeiten: Günther & Co., Berlin



Foto: Berliner Bild-Bericht  
Blick gegen die Bücherwand der 35 qm Einraumwohnung

254



Schrankküche geschlossen. Siehe Bild gegenüber



Blick gegen den Küchenschrank der 35 qm Einraumwohnung. Siehe auch Bild auf S. 254 r.



Foto: Berliner Bild-Bericht  
Blick in den Wohnraum der 53 qm Wohnung. Im Hintergrund der Küchenschrank von der Seite gesehen

255

Figure 6a. Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe, *The Dwelling in Our Time*, Berlin, 1931

Photo credits: *Die Form* 7 [15 July 1931].





Figure 6b. Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe, The Dwelling in Our Time, Berlin, 1931

Photo credits: top, *Die Form* 6 [15 June 1931]; bottom, *Innen-dekoration* 42 [1931].

Hitchcock and Johnson's critique was decisive in recognizing Mies (and the invisibilization of Reich) in the United States. Before visiting The Dwelling in Our Time, Johnson already admired Mies' architecture. In letters written to his mother, Mrs. Homer H., Johnson explained that «the very great architect here that does the best interiors in the world [Mies]» (letter, 21 July 1930), would remodel his apartment in New York. Correspondence from the newly appointed Director of the Architecture Department of the MoMA neglected Reich's work, attributing all credit to Mies. In fact, Johnson re-emphasized Mies' interior design work at the MoMA's Modern International Architecture Exhibition in 1932. In the catalog titled *Modern Architecture*, he writes:

In his peculiar treatment of space and his keen sense for decoration and materials Mies is unique (...) As an artist of the plan, as a decorator in the best sense, as a creator of space, he has no equal. (Barr et al., 1932, p. 114 and 117)

In this exhibition, Barr, Johnson and Hitchcock displayed the models of the ten architects they considered to be representative of the avant-garde and who qualified as International Style, including Mies van der Rohe. In fact, Mies' (and Reich's) Tugendhat House was chosen as the emblem of the exhibition, featuring as the cover image of the publication. In addition, Mies took charge (possibly together with Reich)<sup>4</sup>, of the design of the «bases for models, tables for the literature, chairs, photograph racks and partition screens of glass and

<sup>4</sup> According to the images in the exhibition, the bases of the models were covered with hanging fabric skirts at different heights and slightly draped, concealing the supports. It is clear that the use of textiles in this particular way was characteristic of Reich from the beginning.



metal» (Egler-Gerozissis, 2023, p. 69). As such, the exhibition, the catalogue and the book *The International Style* served as a letter of introduction to America for Mies, not for Reich, whom Johnson only referred to in the catalogue once as Mies' partner: «Since 1927 Lilly Reich has been associated with Mies in the designing of interiors and displays at exhibitions» (Barr et al., 1932, p. 120).

While Reich's work as an exhibition architect was gradually diluted, the interior design work she simultaneously carried out in the buildings constructed together with Mies was omitted outright. Consequently, no publication of the time reported on Reich's co-authorship in the Barcelona Pavilion (1929), the Lange and Esters Houses (Krefeld, 1927-1930), the Tugendhat House (Brno, 1928-1931), the Hess Apartment (Berlin, 1930), the Philip Johnson Apartment (New York, 1930-1931) or the Lemke House (Hohenschönhausen, 1934). It was only attributed to her a few pieces of furniture specifically designed for these projects<sup>5</sup>, and remarkably, she was the first woman to design a complete series of tubular steel furniture manufactured by *Bamberg Metalwerkstätten*.

Additionally, from January 1932 Lilly Reich was head of the textile and interior design workshop at the Bauhaus in Dessau. Introduced to the school of architecture through Mies, who had been its director since August 1930, Reich combined the workshops for furniture, metalwork, mural painting and printed fabric design. Unfortunately, her teaching experience was not extensive. Together with Mies, she experienced the transfer of the Bauhaus to Berlin at the beginning of 1933 and its inevitable closure six months later. The rise of the Nazi government not only led to the closure of the Bauhaus, but also the forced adjustment of the Werkbund's policies and the reconsideration of modern architecture as a whole. With few commissions to work on, Reich and Mies completed the Lemke House and planned their last two joint exhibitions.

The German People-German Work exhibition, held between April and June 1934, was the first representative exhibition of the new regime, an aspect that was made explicit in its advertising. Although some architects of the Modern Movement were still allowed to participate in the exhibition –Bayer, Gropius, Reich and Mies– the catalogue (1934) only named Dr. Ernest W. Maiwald as being exclusively responsible for the event. Reich and Mies built the glass, ceramics, porcelain and mining displays, offering an elegant and practical design, which Hitler, however, took as an insult: «He didn't like the exhibition (...) He thought it was bad: it angered him» (Hochman, 1989, p. 213).

One again, the catalogue of The Imperial Exposition of the German Textile and Garment Industry attributed Reich and Mies' project to another professional (1937, p. 94), to Ernest Sagebiel a Nazi party architect. The drawings preserved in the Mies van der Rohe Archive, signed by Reich's studio, show a design similar to the textile stands in Barcelona or Berlin, giving prominence to a nine-meter-long, sinuously curved, free-standing plane of colored glass. However, Sagebiel considered the design to be constructively complex and too modern, and modified it to the point where it had little in common with Reich and Mies' original project.

During the uncertain pre-war period, and with the increasingly real possibility that Mies would emigrate to America, Reich returned to independent work, mainly on furniture and home interiors. She also developed exhibition displays for *Villeroy & Boch, Vereinigte Lausitzer Glaswerke* –Leipzig Spring Fair 1935 and 1936 respectively–, and the German Textile Industry display for the International Exposition of Arts and Techniques Applied to Modern Life of Paris, 1937. None of these projects were published<sup>6</sup>. The only mention of Reich in this period –the last one before she parted company with Mies– was made by George Nelson in the professional journal *Pencil Points* in September 1935 (p. 455). Nelson's article specifically referred to Reich's authorship of the Velvet and Silk Café, but not her involvement in projects as significant as the Tugendhat House or the Barcelona Pavilion.

On 1 September 1938, Mies van der Rohe began his teaching career in America as head of architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology and set up his architecture studio at 230 East Ohio Street, Chicago. Only four months later, on 15 December 1938, Mies inaugurated the Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), an exhibition that has recently become known thanks to the discovery of an eight-page press release written by John Barney Rodgers preserved in the AIC Archives Research Center, and seven photographs at the University of Michigan (Lizondo et al., 2023). Ironically, Mies prepared this first monographic exhibition from the material that Reich managed to send him from Berlin before the outbreak of World War II (Schulze, 2012, p. 237). But Lilly Reich's name did not appear in the page press release, either as an intermediary or as author of much of the material exhibited. Even so, Reich traveled to Chicago in July 1939 with the unsuccessful intention of staying with him, and upon returning to Berlin she continued to manage his personal and business affairs from afar<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Today there are still doubts about Reich's role in the MR10 and MR20 chairs, the MR1 stool, the Barcelona chair or the daybed, the latter published in 1933 under Reich's name on page 97 of the catalogue of Graff (1933).

<sup>6</sup> These projects became known thanks to the work of Sonja Günther in the 1980s. Günther discovered a list of documents dating from 1947, citing the existence of 19 drawings, 45 rolls of plans and a number of photographs. Many of these documents were in the Mies van der Rohe Archive at MoMA, stored as belonging to Mies. Günther identified and catalogued them with the initials LR.

<sup>7</sup> «There is no document that explains why Lilly Reich returned to Berlin. Reich had a strong sense of responsibility for work and family. Someone had to take care of Mies' office, his correspondence, and the legal disputes over his patents. Moreover, during his stay in Chicago he realized that nothing in America was going to be as it had been before. At the beginning of the war Reich packed up her own and Mies' papers and stored them outside the city in the country house of a former employee. Soon after the end of the war, the death of Lilly Reich and the fact that Germany was divided meant that the boxes were not sent to Mies' Chicago office until the 1960s. But Mies never opened them. He had created a new image for himself as an American architect and was not interested in reliving his life in Germany. Later, those boxes were donated to the MoMA, and the documents (Mies' and Reich's) came to form a part of the Mies van der Rohe Archive». (Lange, interview, 27 October 2021)

## 5. Reich and Mies, 70.000 kilometers away

[To Mies van der Rohe] I am sad that I have received only the slightest word from you in the last weeks, which pertains solely to business affairs. Perhaps you have no time, perhaps you have sent more letters than I know. That the mail connections stop now makes it all the harder to bear... (Hochman, 1989, p. 308)

Distressed by the turmoil affecting Germany and the unidirectional nature of her relationship with Mies, Reich survived by designing furniture and interiors, mainly for the Lange family. Examples of this were the relocation and furnishing project for the Krefeld Section Offices, the remodeling of the houses for Lili Jörn Lange and Hermann Lange Jr. or the design of individual pieces for Marie Lange or Mr. and Mrs. Crous. She also worked on projects for acquaintances –such as the Schäppi Apartment in Berlin or the modular wardrobe system for Jürgen Reich, Lilly Reich's nephew and godson– and in product design –including her record player design for Telefunken or a series of neon plugs for Siemens– (Fig. 7).

In 1943, her studio and residence on *Genthiner Straße* was demolished by bombs and Reich moved temporarily to Zittau for compulsory service in the Todt Organization. Subsequently, unable to survive she worked for Ernst Neufert and Hans Scharoun. In 1945, after the end of World War II, Reich enthusiastically resumed her professional activity by diversifying her fields of work. She founded a new «studio for architecture, design, textiles and fashion» (Günther, 1988, p. 11) at *Hohenzollerndamm* 112, participated in the revival of the Werkbund, returned to teaching at the *Hochschule für bildende Künste* in Berlin, and theorized about post-war reconstruction (Reich, 2 April 1946).

In 1947 the magazine *Bauen und Wohnen* highlighted her designs for Mrs. Boissevain in Lichterfelde, and recognized her past contributions: «The architect, once again, resorts to the free division of space (...) the luminosity, the practical use and the beautiful design, which seduces by its clarity (...) a woman whose designs have already contributed greatly to the new construction» (Blomeier, 1947, p. 332f). Perhaps Reich was returning to the media, or perhaps it was intended as a last tribute in her lifetime. On 11 December 1947 Lilly Reich died in Berlin. In the two publications that reported her death, she was remembered as the well-known Berlin architect whose rich oeuvre «included designs for furniture, fabrics, interiors, all of great elegance» (Anonymous, 1948, p. 33), and as a great designer:

Her excellent display work, distinctive rooms, practical kitchens, and simple furnishings radiate a higher conviction. (...) All her works are among the most elegant solutions of our time in terms of design and the extraordinary choice of materials. (Anonymous, 1948, p. 106)

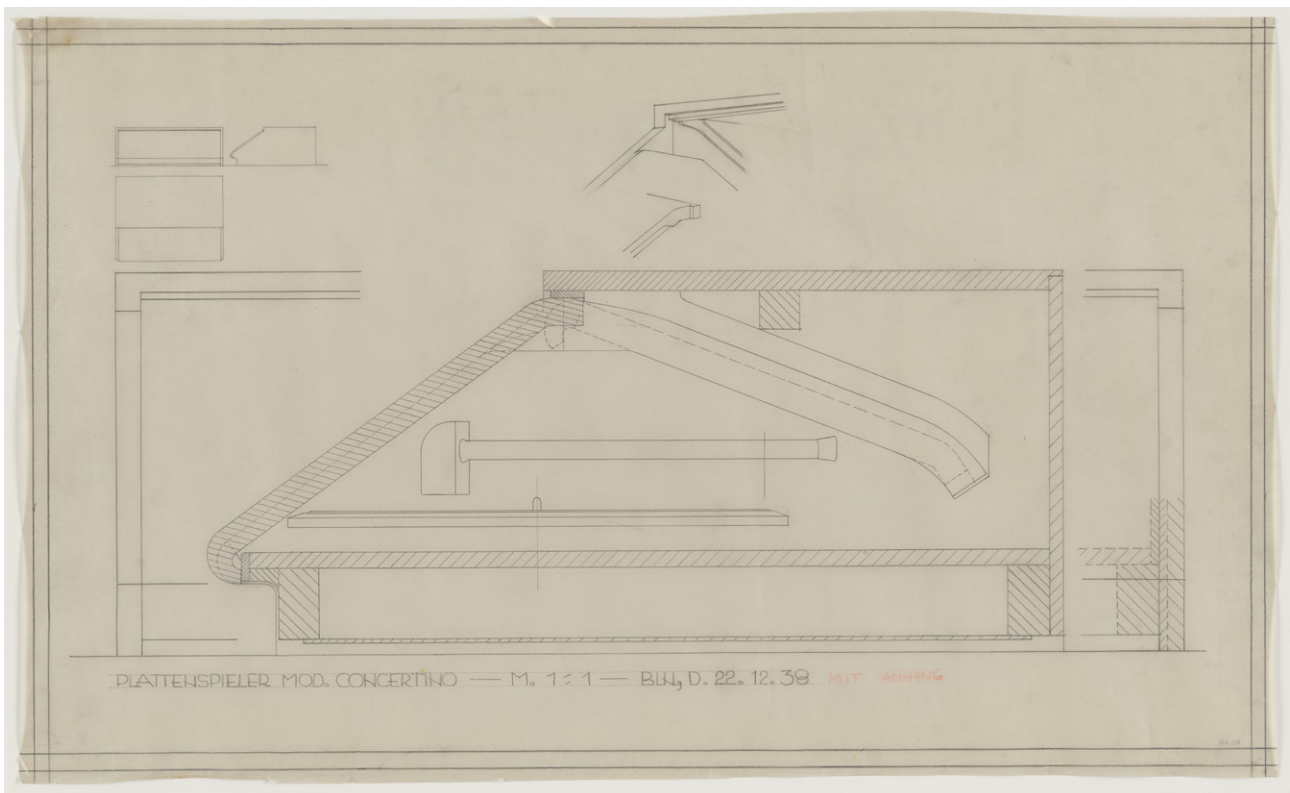


Figure 7. Lilly Reich, Design for Telefunken Record Player, Concertino record player. Elevations, plan, section, and perspective of details, 1938.



It is curious that on the day of his death, part of his work was on display in the MoMA's second floor gallery. The exhibition titled *Mies van der Rohe, 16 September 1947 - 25 January 1948*, curated by Johnson and designed by Mies, featured the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House in the center of the room. As he had done fifteen years earlier, Johnson referenced her in the catalog with admiration, despite hinting that it was she who had learned from Mies: «his brilliant partner, Lilly Reich, who soon became his equal in this field» (1947, p. 49). But Johnson's regard for Reich was to be further complicated in the discussion between Johnson, Ludwig Glaeser –curator of the Mies van der Rohe Archive– and Arthur Drexler –director of MoMA's Department of Architecture and Design–, included in the third edition of the Mies van der Rohe catalog. Ignoring the pejorative adjectives that Johnson dedicated to Lilly Reich (calling her a jealous and unpleasant woman), he negated Reich's work: «He [Mies] did everything». To which Glaser replied: «There is in the Archive evidence to the contrary». Johnson's response was, to say the least, contradictory, stating that Reich deserved all the credit for the furniture: «I felt that he did all the design at the *Bau-Ausstellung*. The white room she may have done, because Mies never really got into furnishings in spite of the amount he talked about it, and I don't blame him» (Johnson et al., 1977, p. 205-2011).

## 6. Conclusions

A chronological analysis of references to Reich during her lifetime shows that from 1927 onwards, Mies was mentioned three times more, even though all the published projects were jointly authored. This is the case in the journal *Die Form*, where we see these omissions and how the references to her are increasingly discriminatory: in the displays made alone for Stuttgart she was reduced to appearing in the photo captions, at the joint expositions in Barcelona she was subordinated, and in the case of the Brno house she was directly excluded. Reich received no national or international recognition during her lifetime for her work on the highly distinguished Tugendhat House (Fig. 8). She did not appear in the pages of the French magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (Argus, 1931, p. 85), or in the Dutch magazine *De 8 en Opbouw* (Oud, 1936, p. 15).

After Reich's death, the situation became even worse; historians forgot all about her architecture, and it was not until the 1960s that she was mentioned again, mainly in the monographs dedicated to Mies van der Rohe. Moreover, almost all of them name her with inaccuracies inherited from past discourses that do not entirely recognize her work. For Peter Blake, Reich is «a brilliant furniture designer» (1960, p. 197), and for Peter Carter she was Mies' collaborator in his exhibition designs (1961). Ludwig Glaeser introduces the influence that Reich may have had over Mies, possibly because she experienced this association as a Bauhaus student: «It is certainly more than a coincidence that his involvement in furniture and exhibition design began in the same year as his personal relationship with Lilly Reich» (1977, p. 8).

Significantly, however, the figure of Lilly Reich gradually faded away over the next forty years until she was omitted from virtually all accounts of twentieth century architecture. She does not exist for Bruno Zevi, Emil Kaufman, Manfredo Tafuri, Sigfrid Giedon, Nikolaus Pevsner or Leonardo Benevolo, who only includes her in a photo caption (2007, p. 508). Other authors refer to her with little precision. For Kenneth Frampton Reich influenced Mies to continue the expressionist aesthetic and to use Russian-style colors (1980, p. 163); and for Ignasi Solà i Morales, she was literally an imitator of Mies' designs (1985, p. 120). Frank Shulze even goes so far as to judge her physical appearance: «Mies' reputation for being partial to good-looking women hardly rested on his relationship with Lilly Reich. Physically plain, she might have appeared coarse, except that she kept herself as carefully groomed as one might expect of a professional *couturière*» (1985, p. 139).

Fortunately, shortly afterwards, a series of researchers, not coincidentally all women, offered a new vision of Reich's work. Sandra Honey was the first to point out her influence on Mies, –«It was 'certainly more than a coincidence that Mies' involvement in furniture and exhibition design began the same year as his personal relationship with Lilly Reich» (1986, p. 19)– and Sonja Günther (1988) was the first to publish a monograph on Reich, a document that marks a before and after in her line of recognition. The following texts by Elaine Hochman, Matilda McQuaid –who wrote the second monograph on Reich as a result of the monographic exhibition organized by MoMA (1996),– Magdalena Droste, Christiane Lange, Beatriz Colomina or Wallis Miller created a new profile and brought Reich back to the pages of academic books and journals, where numerous research articles are delving into different aspects and contributions of her legacy. Now, far from the inaccuracies of a collaboration between two individuals of different genders, Lilly Reich is a figure of the Modern Movement with a linear and continuous biography, far removed from the confusing succession of praise, subordination and omission recorded in the media narrative. Her work with Mies is being recovered on equal terms, and her earlier career is being explored in greater depth.

Architect, designer or furniture designer? Associated, partner, collaborator or closest employee (*engster Mitarbeiterin*)?<sup>8</sup> Trailblazer or disciple? (Fig. 9). In short, Mapping Lilly Reich explores how one of the first women to achieve great architectural goals in early 20th century Germany disappears as her personal and professional life comes into closer alignment with that of Mies van der Rohe. The closer Lilly Reich got to Mies the more she disappeared... (Figs. 10a and 10b).

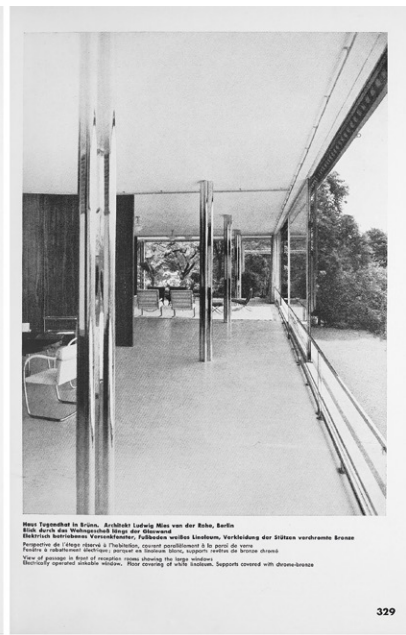
<sup>8</sup> A term used to refer to her by some of her contemporaries (Hahn, 1985, p. 281).



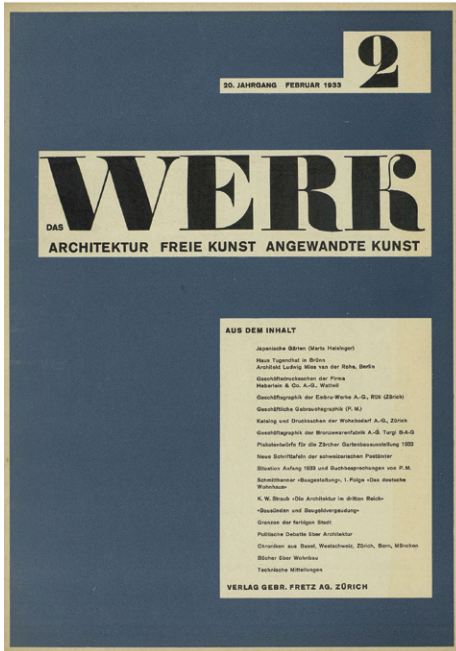
Haus Tugendhat in Brünn. Architekt Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Berlin.  
 Ansicht des Hauses von der Ost-Seite aus. Der Eingang von der Straße, rechts im Obergeschoss.  
 Ansicht des Hauses von der Ost-Seite aus. Der Eingang von der Straße, rechts im Obergeschoss.  
 Die Terrasse des Hauses ist durch einen hohen Rand von der Straße abgetrennt.  
 Die Terrasse des Hauses ist durch einen hohen Rand von der Straße abgetrennt.



Haus Tugendhat in Brünn. Architekt Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Berlin.  
 Ansicht des Hauses von der Ost-Seite aus. Der Eingang von der Straße, rechts im Obergeschoss.  
 Ansicht des Hauses von der Ost-Seite aus. Der Eingang von der Straße, rechts im Obergeschoss.  
 Die Terrasse des Hauses ist durch einen hohen Rand von der Straße abgetrennt.  
 Die Terrasse des Hauses ist durch einen hohen Rand von der Straße abgetrennt.



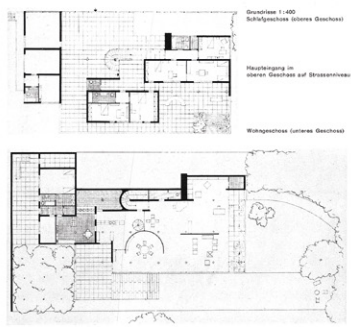
Haus Tugendhat in Brünn. Architekt Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Berlin.  
 Blick durch die Wohnkammer in Richtung der Terrasse.  
 Elektrisch betriebene Vorrichtung, fallendes weißes Leinwand, Verkleidung der Stützen verchromte Bronze.  
 Partitions der Höhe (Höhe 2,10 m), in der Höhe 1,80 m, in der Höhe 1,50 m, in der Höhe 1,20 m.  
 Partitions der Höhe (Höhe 2,10 m), in der Höhe 1,80 m, in der Höhe 1,50 m, in der Höhe 1,20 m.  
 Partitions der Höhe (Höhe 2,10 m), in der Höhe 1,80 m, in der Höhe 1,50 m, in der Höhe 1,20 m.



Haus Tugendhat, Brünn (Tschechoslowakei)

Im Haus Tugendhat sind die Prinzipien der modernen Architektur nicht nur ihrer wirtschaftlichen, wohl aber auch ihrer künstlerischen Seite mit einer Konsequenz im Grunde vollständig, wie es kaum einem anderen Haus der grossen Häuser von Le Corbusier ausgenommen. Es ist ein Beispiel mehr für das gerade von den modernen Architekten selbst so oft verkündete klassische Beispiel der modernen Architektur: es ist gewiss nicht Zwang zur Symmetrie, der hier die modernen Formen anzuwenden hat, sondern die reine Freude an ihnen und an den neuen Materialien. Das Ornaments, das früher die Mittel war, das Behalten und die geordnete Lieblingssache des Bauherrn zu deklarieren, hat die Rolle der förmlichen Begrenzung an Materialien abgetreten, die durch ihre Masse Struktur und ihre selbstliche Farbe dem Einwirk

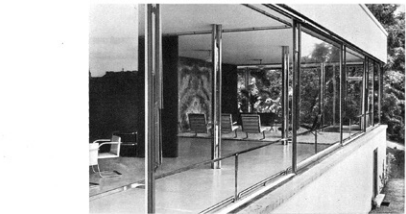
des Glanzes, Anserwürden und Geordnetes korrespondieren. Das Wohnschloß ist ein einziger grosser Raum von 11 x 7 m, durch die halbkreisförmige Ovale, Ovale und das Halbkreis aus Holz nur optisch in einzelne Abteilungen, weniger in Landschaften von verschiedenen Charakter geteilt, die nicht durch ihre Wände gegeneinander abgrenzen sind. Es ist hier an Mies van der Rohe der modernen Formensprache besteht, die parallelten und nationalen Geschmacksunterschiede unmerklich auszugleichen. Wie sich die Wohnkammer mit dieser Räume abfindet, kann nur die Erfahrung klären; die Bewohner des Hauses können sich in diesem Aufsatze der «Form» (Möb. 11, 1933) begreifen darüber.  
 P. M.



42



Wohnschloß aus hangelassen polierten Oxydplatten im grossen Wohnraum, rechts dahinter Lesesaal.  
 (Möb. 11, 1933). Sitzes verchromte, verchromte Leinwand.  
 Haus Tugendhat in Brünn. Architekt Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Berlin.



44

Figure 8. Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe, Tugendhat House, Brno, 1928-31

Photo credits: top: *Die Form* 9 [15 September 1931]; bottom: *Das Werk* 2 [1 February 1933].





Figure 9. Lilly Reich, 1935

Photo credits: Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer Papers, Ryerson and Burnham Archives. The Art Institute of Chicago.

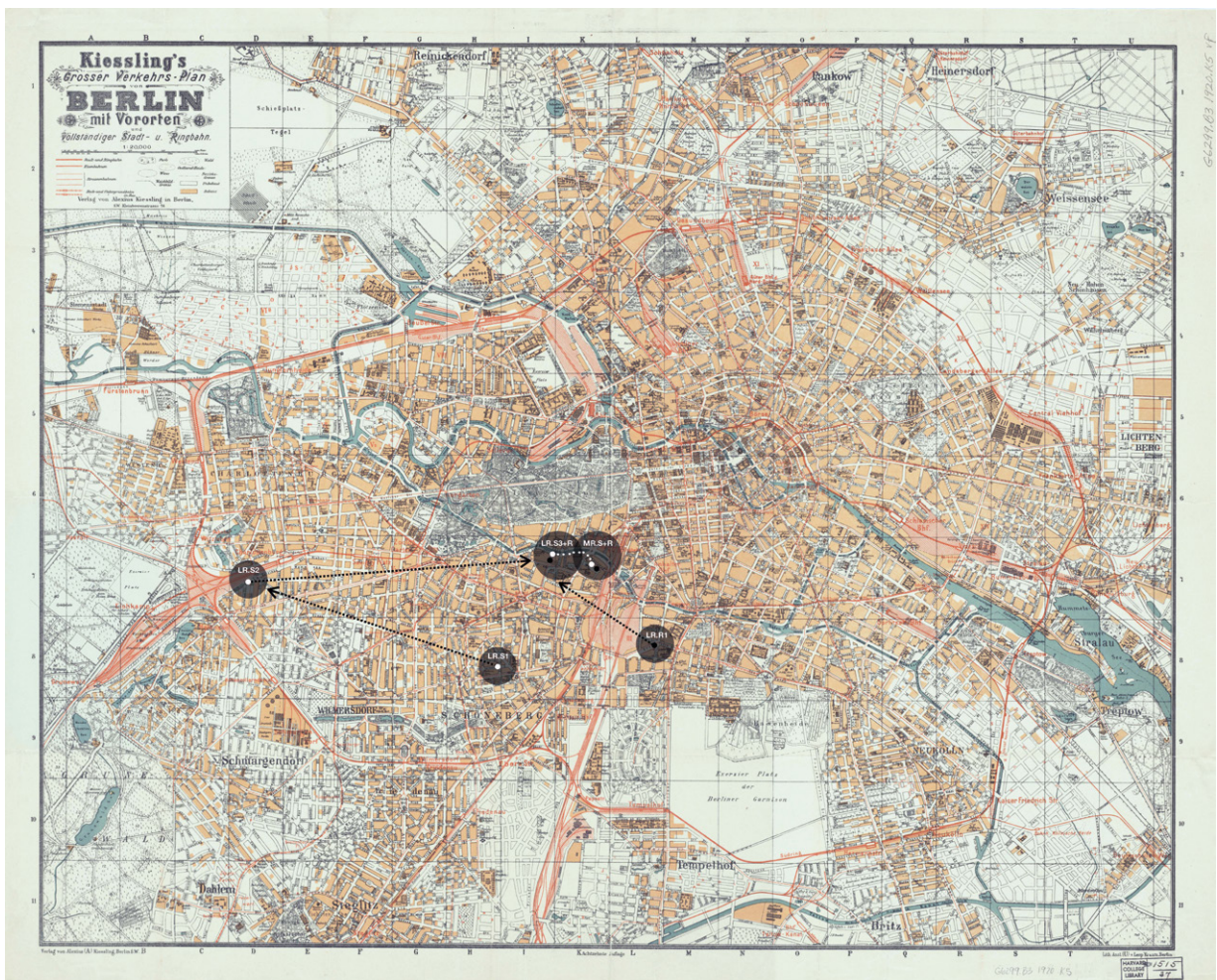


Figure 10a. Location of the different ateliers of Reich and the office of Mies van der Rohe, cartography 1920.

(Photo credits: author's collage).



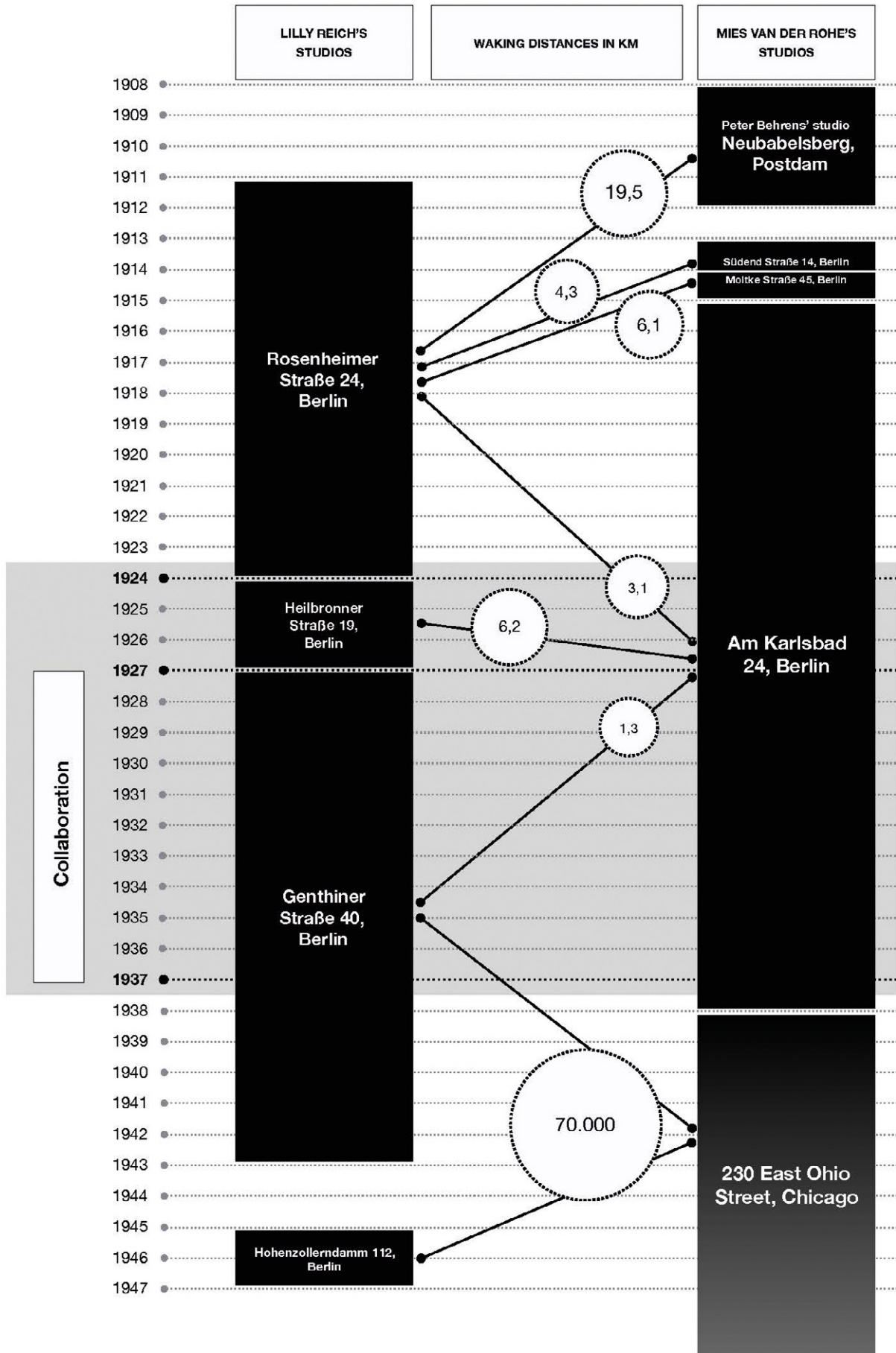


Figure 10b. Distance-time relationship between the offices of Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe

Photo credits: author's collage.



## References

- Anonymous. (1 January 1948). Lilly Reich. *Das Werk*.
- Anonymous. (19 March 1924). Werkbund-Gedanken. Supplement to the *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt*.
- Anonymous. (1926). *Der Konfektionär*, (77), 5.
- Anonymous. (1948). Lilly Reich zum Gedächtnis. *Bauen und Wohnen*, (III), 106.
- Anonymous. (21 September 1927). *Die elegante Welt*, (19), 59.
- Anonymous. (27 September 1926). Frankfurter Herbstmesse. *Die Frankfurter Zeitung*.
- Argus. (1931). *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, (9), 85.
- Badovici, J. (1931). Appartement d'une pièce, par Lilly Reich. *L'Architecture Vivante* (Autumn-Winter), 27.
- Barr, A.H.Jr. et al. (1932). *Modern Architecture International Exhibition*. The Museum of Modern Art.
- Benevolo, L. (2007). *Historia de la arquitectura moderna*. Gustavo Gili.
- Bier, J. (1929). Mies van der Rohe Reichspavillon in Barcelona. *Die Form*, 4(16), 423-430.
- Blake, P. (1960). *Maestros de la Arquitectura*. Víctor Leru.
- Blomeier. (1947) *Bauen und Wohnen*, (II), 332f.
- Breuer, R. (1911). Jugendheime. *Fachblatt für Holzarbeiter*, (6), 41-42.
- Breuer, R. (1915). Die Frau als Möbelbauerin. *Fachblatt für Holzarbeiter*, (10), 101-104.
- Carter, P. (1961). Mies van der Rohe. *Architectural Design* 31(March), 195-221.
- Colomina, B. (2009). Mies' House: exhibitionism and collectionism, in M. Puente (Ed.), *Mies van der Rohe. Casa Houses*. 2G (48/49, pp. 4-21). Gustavo Gili.
- D.W. (27 February 1912). Momentbilder von der Frauenausstellung. *Vossische Zeitung*.
- de Fortuni, E. (1929-30). Alemania en el Palacio de Agricultura. *Diario Oficial de la Exposición Internacional de Barcelona*, (12), s/p.
- Deutscher Lyceum-Club. (1912). *Ausstellung Die Frau in Haus und Beruf, Berlin 1912. 24. February bis 24. März Ausstellungshallen am zoologischen Garten*. R. Mosse.
- Droste, M. (1996). Lilly Reich: her Career as an Artist, in H. Schoenholz Bee (Ed.), *Lilly Reich. Designer and Architect* (pp. 46-59). The Museum of Modern Art.
- Eggler-Gerozissis, M.E. (2023). 'A Decorator in the Best Sense': Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Lilly Reich, the Fabric Curtain Partition, and the Articulation of the German Modern Interior. [PhD diss., The City University of New York].
- Fr. (1912). Aertzliche Tagesfragen: Die Ausstellung 'Die Frau in Haus und Beruf. *Medizinische Klinik:Wochenschrift für praktische Ärzte Berlin*, 8(9), 382.
- Frampton, K. (1980). *Modern Architecture, a critical history*. Thames &Hudson Ltd.
- Glaeser, L. & MoMA. (1977). *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Furniture and Furniture Drawings from the Design Collection and the Mies van der Rohe Archive*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Graff, W. (1933). *Jetzt wird Ihre Wohnung eingerichtet*. Muller und Kiepenheuer.
- Günther, S. (1988). *Lilly Reich 1885-1947. Innenarchitektin. Designerin. Ausstellungsgestalterin*. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.
- Hahn, P. (1985). *Bauhaus Berlin: Auflösung Dessau 1932 - Schließung Berlin 1933, Bauhäusler und Drittes Reich. Eine Dokumentation, Zusammengestellt vom Bauhaus-Archiv*. Weingarten,
- Hitchcock, H-R. (October-December 1931). Architectural Chronicle. Berlin-Paris-1931. *Hound and Horn*, 5(1), 94-97.
- Hochmann, E. (1989). *Architects of Fortune. Mies van der Rohe and the third Reich*. Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Hoffmann, H. (1931). 'Die Wohnung unserer Zeit' auf der Deutschen Bauausstellung Berlin 1931. *Moderne Bauformen*, XXX(8), 373, 392.
- Honey, S. (1986). Mies in Germany in F. Russell (Ed.), *Mies van der Rohe. European Works, Architectural Monographs* (vol. 11, pp. 11-25). Academy Editions / St. Martin's Press.
- Johnson, P. (1947). *Mies van der Rohe*. The Museum of Modern Art.
- Johnson, P. (21 July 1930). Letter to Mrs. Homer H. Johnson, Philip Johnson Papers, MoMA.
- Johnson, P. (January 1932). The Berlin Building Exposition of 1931. *T-Square*, (2), 17-19, 36-37.
- Johnson, P., Glaeser, L. and Drexler, A. (1977). Epilogue: Thirty Years After, in P. C. Johnson (Ed.), *Mies van der Rohe* (3rd ed., pp. 205-211). The Museum of Modern Art
- Kracauer, S. (31 July 1927). Das neue bauen. Zur Stuttgarter Werkbundaussstellung: Die Wohnung. *Frankfurter Zeitung*.
- Lange, C. (27 October 2021). *Interview by Débora Domingo-Calabuig & Avelina Prat-García, Krefeld, Germany*.
- Lizondo-Sevilla, L. et al. (2023). The Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe. *Art Institute of Chicago, 1938-1939. EGA*, 28(48), 86-99. <https://doi.org/10.4995/ega.2023.18901>
- Lizondo-Sevilla, L. (2012). *¿Arquitectura o exposición? Fundamentos de la arquitectura de Mies dan der Rohe*. [PhD diss., Universitat Politècnica de València].
- Lotz, W. (1927). Werkbund-Ausstellung. Die Wohnung. Stuttgart 23. Juli - 9. Oktober 1927. *Die Form*, 2(8), 251-252.
- Lotz, W. (1931). Die Halle II auf der Bauausstellung. *Die Form*, 7(6), 241-249.
- Ludwig Hilberseimer, L. (4 August 1931). Epilog zur Bauausstellung. *Die Weltbühne*, 27(31), 194-196.
- McQuaid, M. (1996). Lilly Reich and the Art of Exhibition Design, in H. Schoenholz Bee (Ed.), *Lilly Reich. Designer and Architect* (pp. 8-45). The Museum of Modern Art.
- Miller, M. (1999). *Tangible Ideas: Architecture and the Public at the 1931 German Building Exhibition in Berlin*. [PhD diss., Faculty of Princeton University, New York].
- Modlinger, J. (24 September 1926). *Die Frankfurter Zeitung*.

- Much, F.J., Klotz, H. and Debus-Steinberg, A. (1927). *Amtlicher Katalog der Werkbund-Ausstellung Die Wohnung Stuttgart 1927*. Stuttgarter Ges. für Kunst und Denkmalpflege. Reprint in 1998.
- Nelson, G. (1935). Architects of Europe Today - Mies van der Rohe. *Pencil Points* 16(September), 453-460.
- Osborn, M. (1911). Das Charlottenburger Jugendheim. *Die Bauwelt*, 9(21 January), 17-20.
- Osborn, M. (25 February 1912). Frauenarbeit in Kunst und Kunstgewerbe. *Berliner Morgenpost*.
- Osborn, M. (9 May 1931). Rundgang durch die Bauausstellung. *Vossische Zeitung*, 1st supplement.
- Pieter Oud, J.J. (1936). Mies van der Rohe. *De 8 en Opbouw* (March), 15.
- Prat, A. (2022). *[On set with] Lilly Reich* [Documentary]. Avelina Prat; Fundación Mies van der Rohe.
- Reich, L. (1920). Die Ausstellung Kunsthandwerk in der Mode. *Mitteilungen des Verbandes der deutscher Modernindustrie*, (10), 208-211.
- Reich, L. (1922). Modefragen, *Die Form. Monatsschrift für gestaltende Arbeit*, (5), 7-9.
- Reich, L. (2 April 1946). On the Reconstruction of Schools [unpublished manuscript].
- Rischowski, E. (1931). Die Wohnung unserer Zeit. *Innendekoration*, (42), 251.
- Ruegenberg, S. (2000). *Architekt zwischen Mies van der Rohe und Hans Scharoun*. Museumspädagogischer Dienst Berlin.
- Scharnholtz, L. (2001). Wolf House, Gubin, 1925-1927, in T. Riley and B. Bergdoll (Ed.), *Mies in Berlin* (pp. 202-205). The Museum of Modern Art.
- Schulze, F. (1985). *Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography*. University of Chicago.
- Schulze, F. & Windhorst, E. (2012). *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Una biografía crítica*. University of Chicago Press.
- Solà-Morales, I. (1985). *L'Exposició Internacional de Barcelona 1914-1929: Arquitectura i Ciutat*. Fira de Barcelona DL.
- Spaeth, S. (1985). *Mies van der Rohe*. Rizzoli.
- Stratigakos, D. (2008). *A Women's Berlin: Building the Modern City*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Völckers. (1931). Die Halle II der Deutschen Bauausstellung Berlin 1931. *Stein Holz Eisen*, (14), 270.
- VV.AA. (1920). *Kunsthandwerk in der Mode, Ausstellung der deutschen Modeindustrie*. Staatliches Kunstgewerbemuseum.
- VV.AA. (1934). *Ausstellung Deutsches Volk, Deutsche Arbeit, Berlin*. <https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/search?-searchCode=LCCN&searchArg=2005681963&searchType=1&permalink=y>
- VV.AA. (1937). Die Texilausstellung Berlin 1937. *Monatshefte für Baukunst und Stadtbau* 21 (1937), 195 / 'Spitzenleistungen,' *Amtlicher Führer durch die Reichsausstellung der deutschen Textil- und Bekleidungsirtschaft*.
- Westheim, P. (1911-1912). Die Frauenausstellung, Ein Nachwort. *Kunst und Handwerk*, (62), 268-74.
- Westheim, P. (1912). Kunstgewerbliche rundschau. Berlin. Die Frau in Haus und Beruf. *Das Kunstgewerbeblatt*, 23(7), 142-143.
- Zervos, C. (1928). Mies van der Rohe. *Cahiers d'Art*, (3), 35-38.
- Zimmermann, H. (28 July 1931). Küchen- und Wohnungsgestaltung 1927-1931. *Stuttgarter Neuen Tagblatt*.