

MODERNISM II

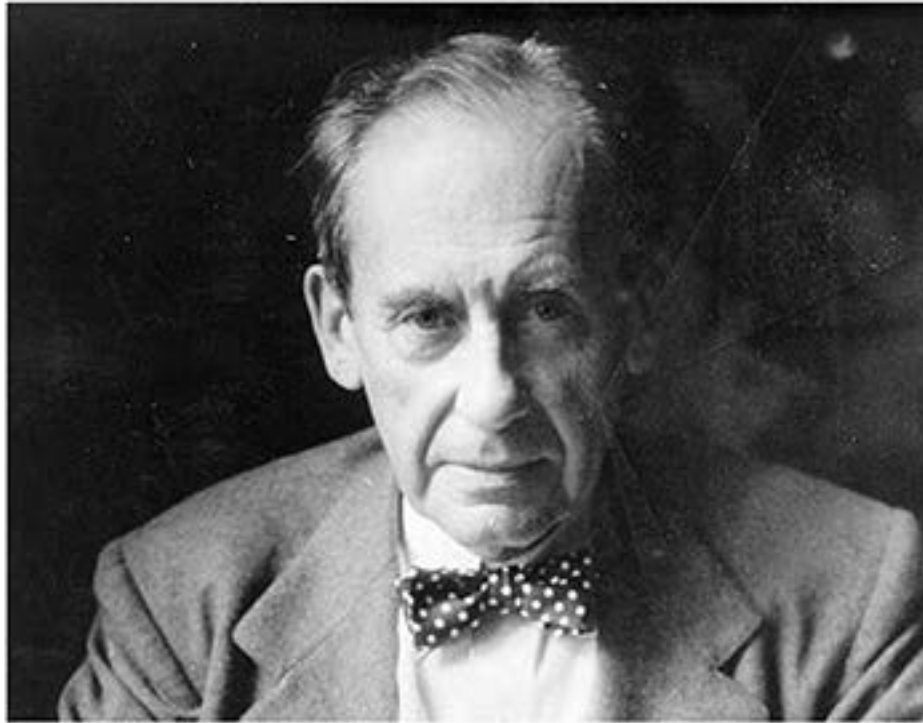
Gropius and the Bauhaus, Mies van der Rohe, etc.

Introduction to Architectural History

Eugene Han

Spring 2020, 7:15 – 8:30 pm

Remote



Walter Gropius

German → American; 1883 - 1969

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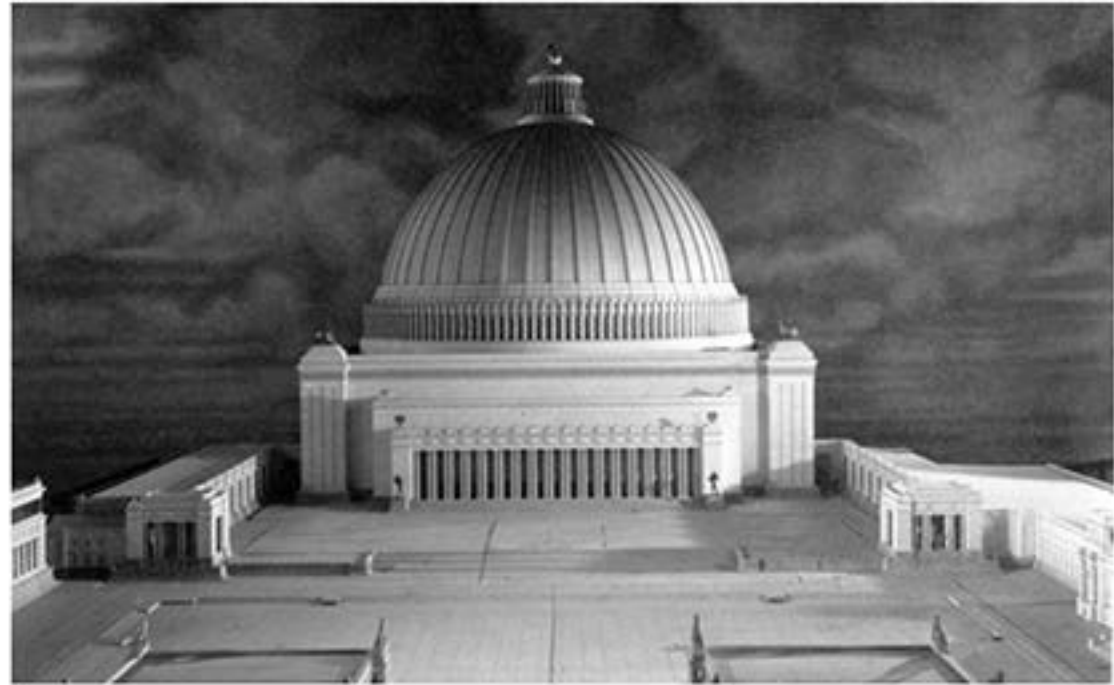
- Among the most important figures was Walter Gropius
 - Known as much for his design work as his pedagogy



Hitler with Nazi party architect Albert Speer

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1. The context in which he was working, namely that of the period immediately preceding the second world war.
 - a. Third Reich's architectural preference – and so by extension the endorsed style - namely in a kind of caricature of a neo-classical style



Hitler with Nazi party architect Albert Speer

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- a. This is not just about aesthetics, but about a state's image of a 'New Rome'



Hitler admiring Modernist works of art (/s)

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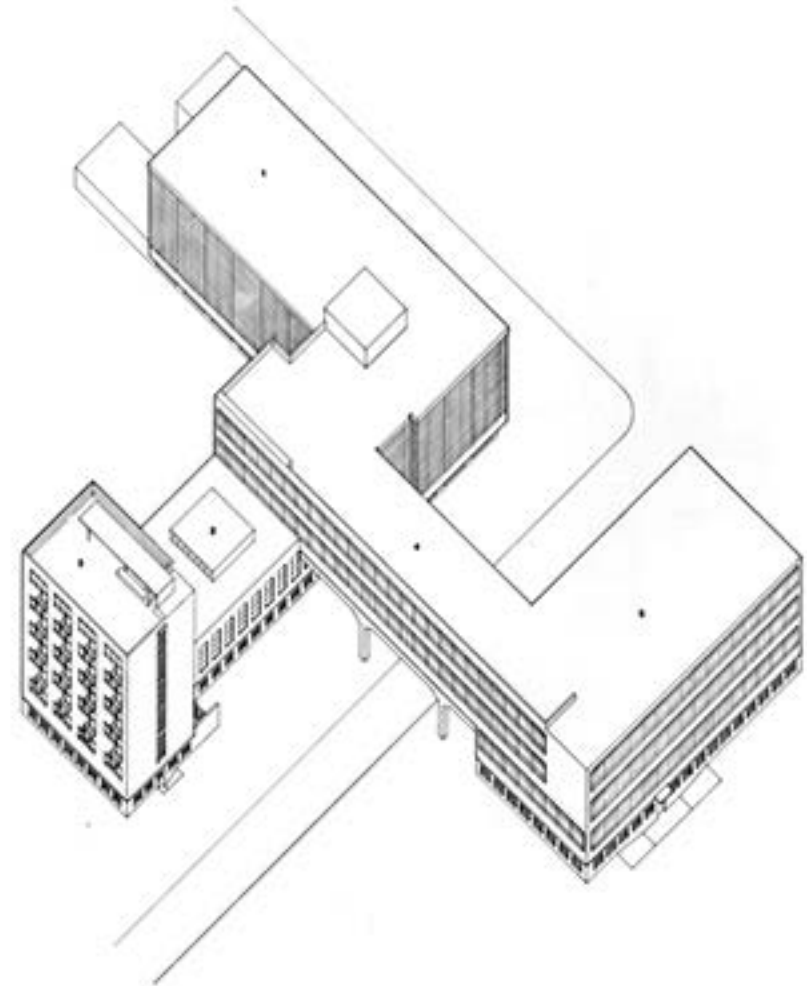
1. This preference for classical styles extended to art.
 - a. What was endorsed, and therefore permitted, was resolutely non-modern. Instead, works of ancient Greece and Rome were admired (again, Neo-Classical).



Degenerate Art Exhibition (1937)

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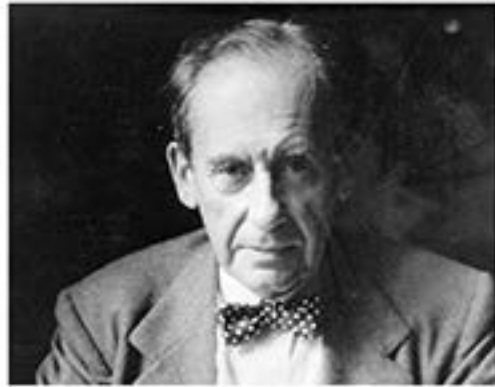
1. And so artists whose works didn't fit into the Classical/Neo-Classical mold had to find alternative means for exhibition



Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Dessau, Hochschule für Gestaltung (College of Design) (1925)

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1. Bauhaus translated directly means 'Building House' (School of Building)
 - a. German art school that was opened in 1919, and closed down just before WWII.
 - b. Famous for integrating multiple art forms (painting, architecture, furniture, dance) with industrial forms of manufacture/production.



Walter Gropius
1919 – 1928
Weimar (1919), Dessau (1925)



Hannes Meyer
1928 – 1930
Dessau

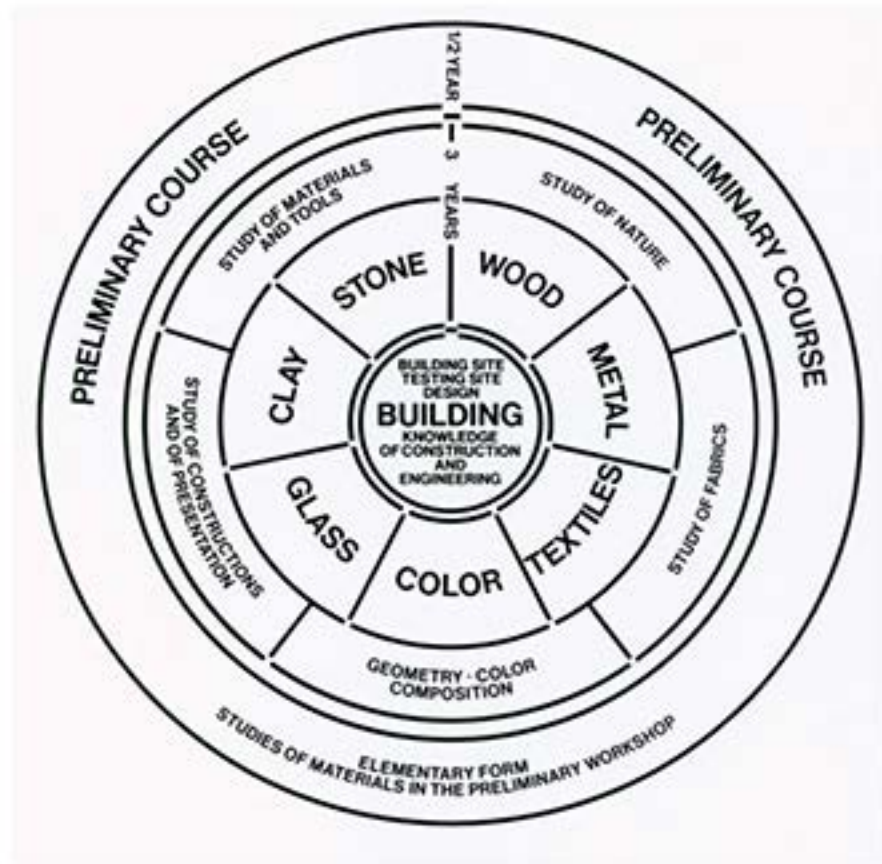
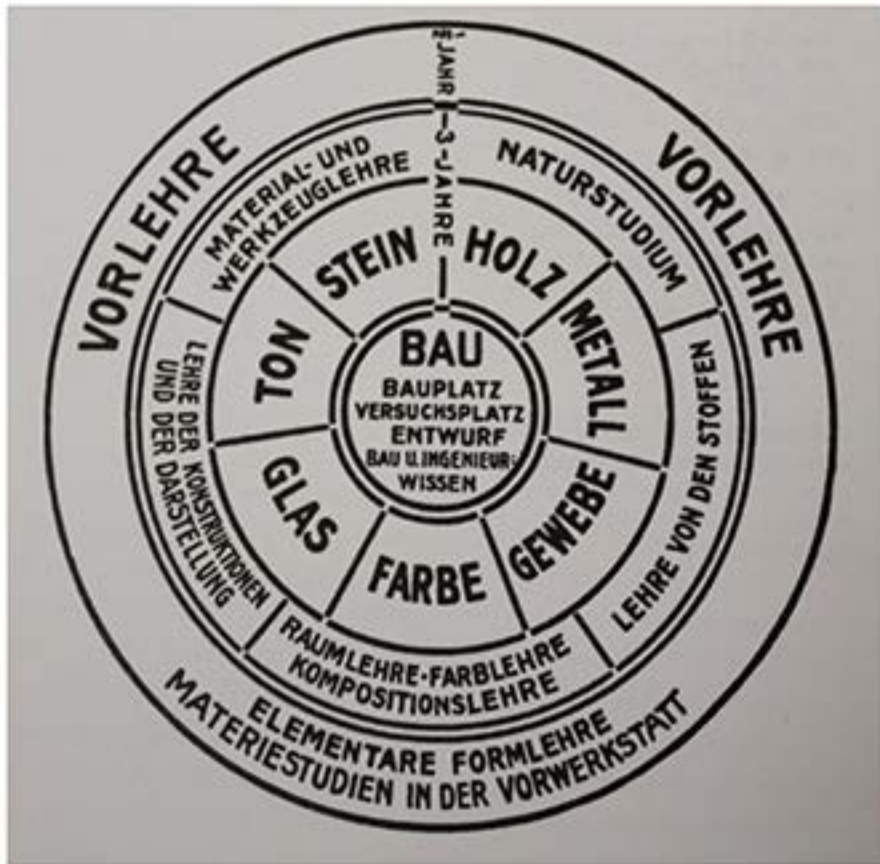


Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
1930 – 1933
Dessau, Berlin (1932)



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1. Throughout its tumultuous history, the Bauhaus had 3 directors (Gropius, Meyer, Mies van der Rohe).



Schema of teaching plan at the Bauhaus (1922)

Handicraft or Machinery

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1. Gropius' his ambition was to develop a curriculum that embraced new technologies, particularly regarding production and manufacture, while maintaining the role of the artist.
 - a. To him, the adoption of technology did not mean the loss of individuality.
 - b. It wasn't a question of Handicraft *OR* Machinery

Handicraft and Machinery

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1. But of Handicraft *AND* Machinery.

[The machine is] "... an instrument which is to relieve man of the most oppressive physical labor and serve to strengthen his hand so as to enable him to give form to his creative impulse."



Paul Klee



Josef Albers



Wassily Kandinsky



Anni Albers



László Moholy-Nagy



Theo van Doesburg

1. Among its faculty, it had some instructors that would become quite renowned later on, particularly in the fine arts.
 - a. The developing Nationalist Socialist Party undoubtedly looked to foster an ethnic nationalism against anyone considered impure
 - b. The institution as a whole was resolutely against the rising xenophobia of the

Bauhaus

Black Mountain College

Illinois Institute Technology

Yale University

Harvard University

Pratt Institute

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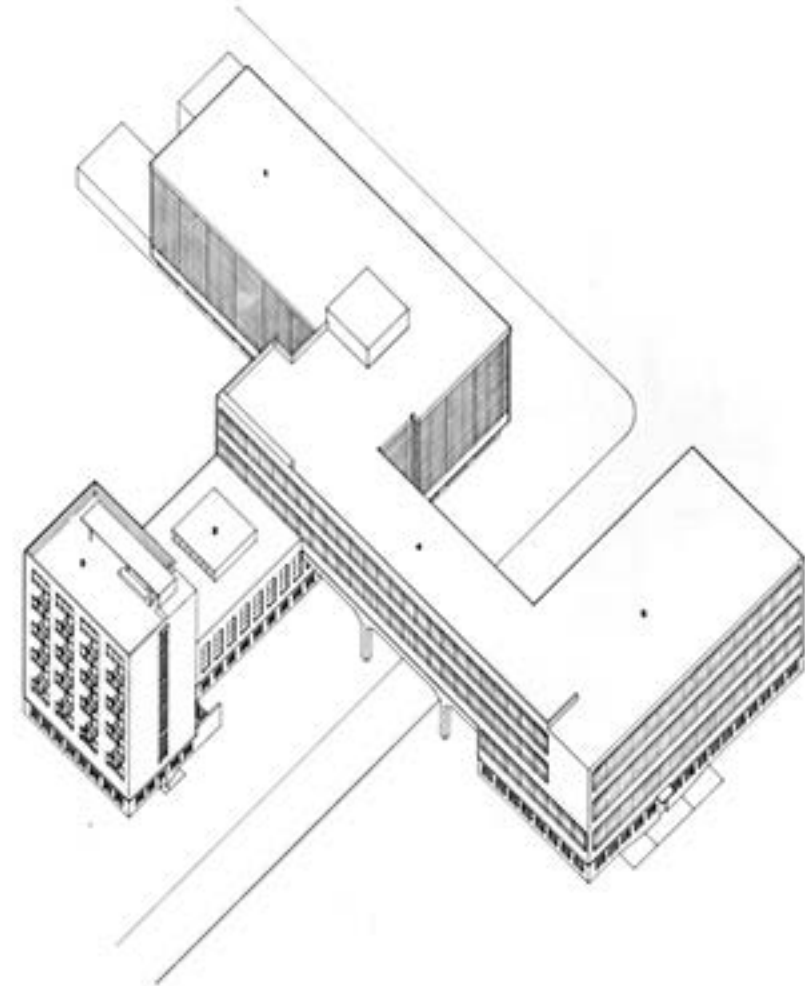
1. Lucky for the US, a lot of the best artists and architects emigrated to the US as the war was just around the corner
2. Gropius himself went from directing the Bauhaus to joining the faculty of Harvard University in 1936.



Marcel Breuer, *Club Chair (The Wassily Chair)*
Marianne Brandt, *Model No. MT49*
William Wagenfeld & Jakob Jucker, *MT8 Lamp*
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe & Lilly Reich, *Barcelona Chair*

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1. Here are some of the most famous works that were produced within or around the Bauhaus culture.
 - a. These included furniture as well as household furnishings.
 - b. Again, for Gropius, the adoption of the machine, if done correctly, did not lose, but enabled the role of the artist.



Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Dessau, Hochschule für Gestaltung (College of Design) (1925)

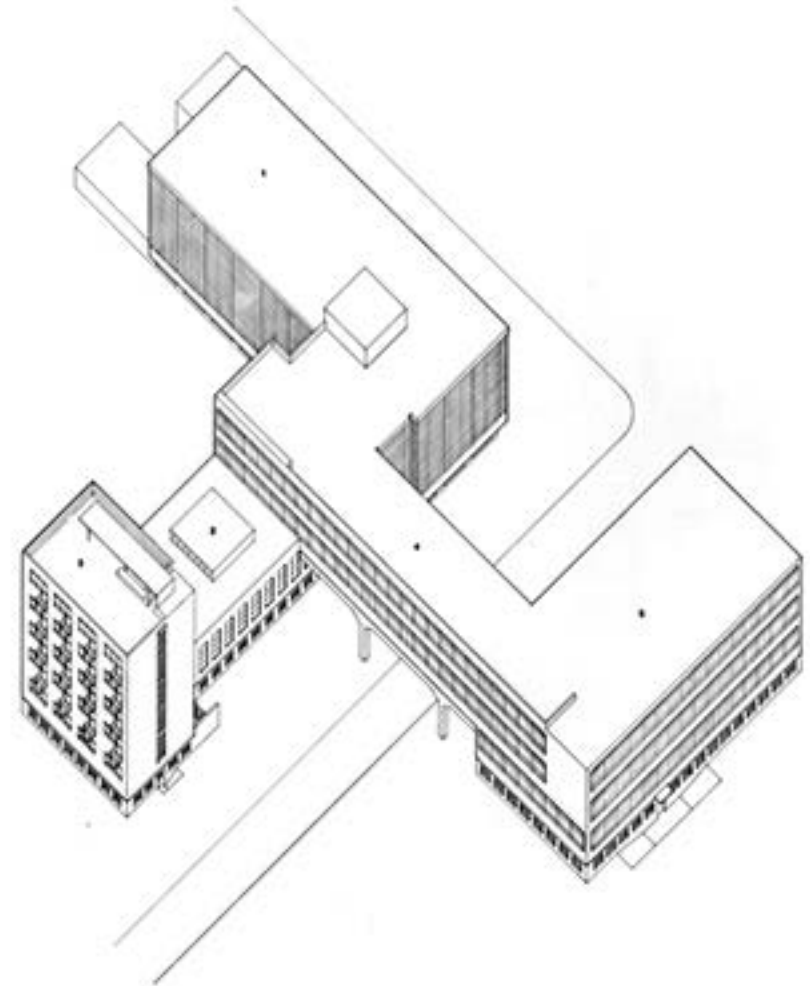
1. Bauhaus (Dessau) was **designed by Gropius.**

1. **Included some high-tech innovations that demonstrated his commitment to technology**

Curtain-Wall

A building system in which the outer layer (such as windows – or ‘glazing’) is non-structural. Therefore, the ‘curtain’ must be fastened to some other structural system (e.g. floors, columns, etc.), and as such is often lightweight.





Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Dessau, Hochschule für Gestaltung (College of Design) (1925)



Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Dessau, Hochschule für Gestaltung (College of Design) (1925)
Right: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris

1. (contrast this with Beaux Arts) –to align the arts with new possibilities brought about by industry.



Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Dessau, Hochschule für Gestaltung (College of Design) (1925)

1. The building was itself a manifesto for design.



Pan Am Building (MetLife Building), NYC (1963)

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1. Pan-Am Building in NYC.
 - a. Highly contentious even when it was erected.
2. Telling of the Modernist approach in general



Pan Am Building (MetLife Building), NYC (1963)

- Prominent placement not only above Grand Central Station, but because it sits 'off' the Manhattan grid, between 42nd and 45th.



Pan Am Building (MetLife Building), NYC (1963)
Grand Central Station before Pan Am Building



Helipad atop Pan Am Building.

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- a. Helicopter service to top of building.
- b. An accident in the late 1970s, killing a few people (and pedestrian on street level), so helipad service was halted.



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- Switched to MetLife in 1992

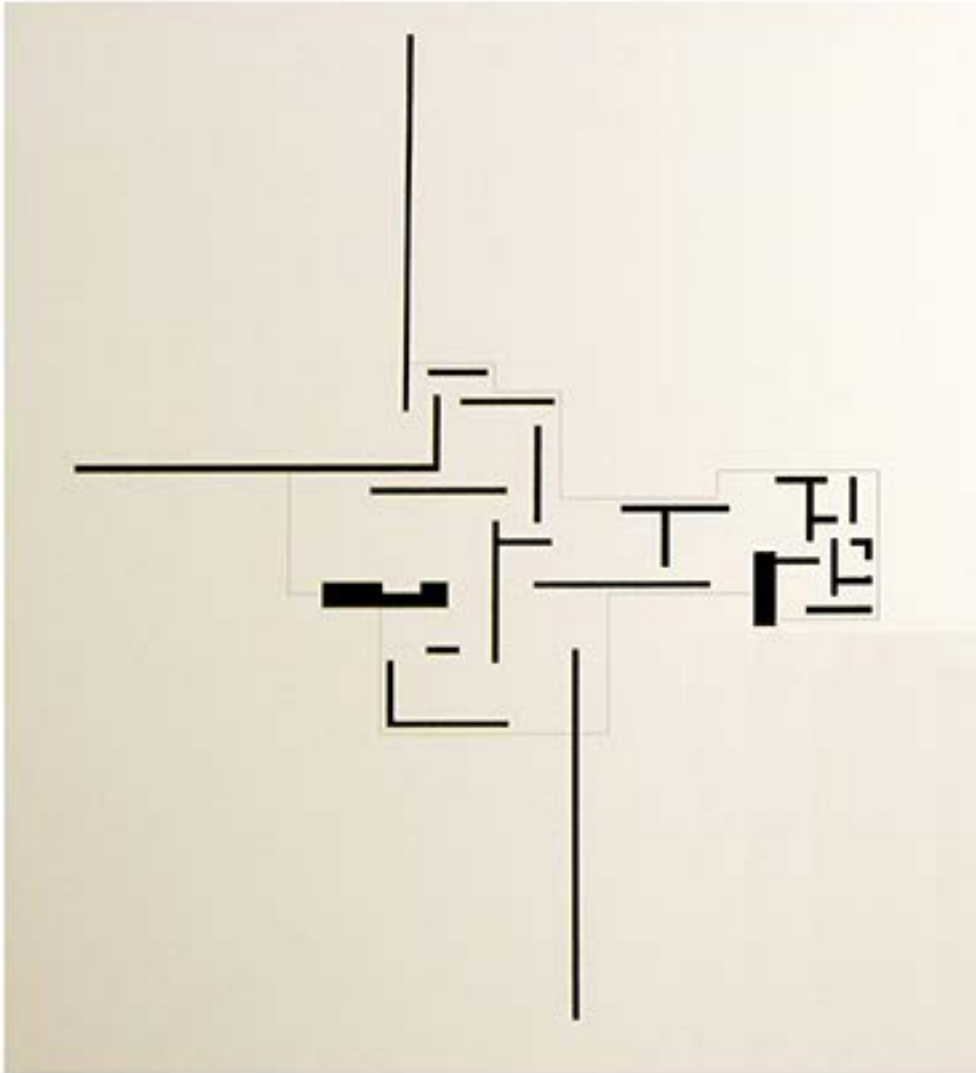


Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

German → American; 1886 - 1969

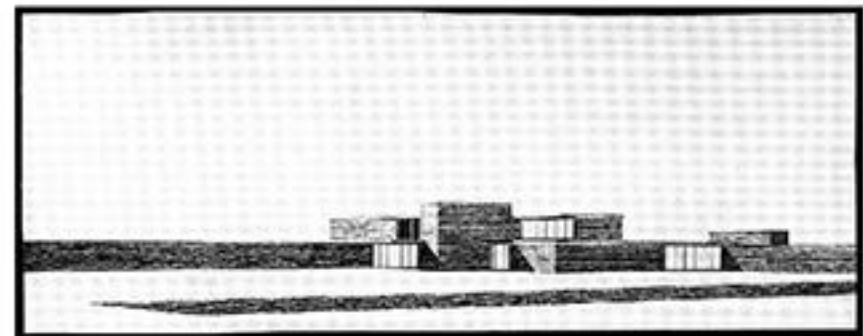
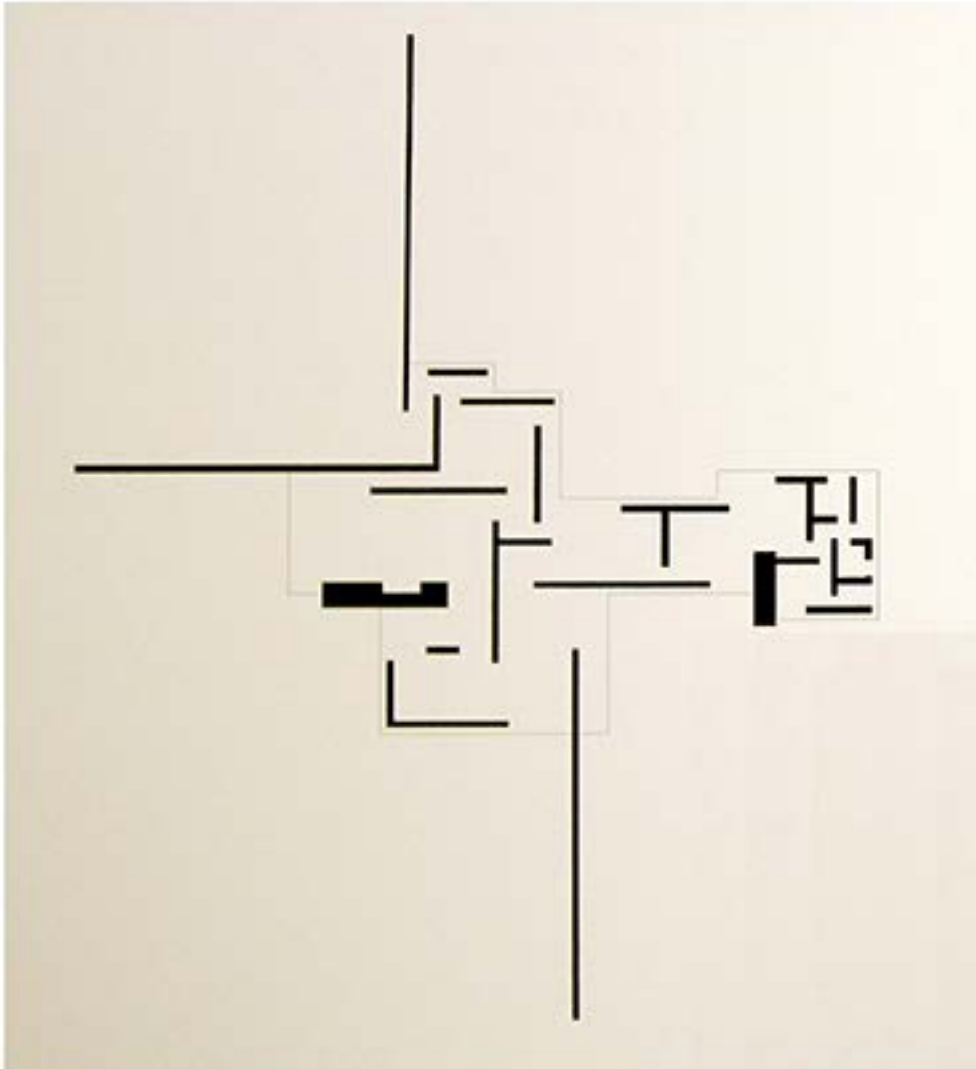
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- Last director of the Bauhaus
 - Responsible for developing an architectural style that defined a number of decades of American corporate architecture
 - 'glass box' aesthetic
- Responsible for a number of well-renowned buildings, most in use today



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- A very telling diagram that explains most of Mies' approach and design philosophy
- Through architecture, he wanted capture moments of infinite space



Brick Country House (1924)

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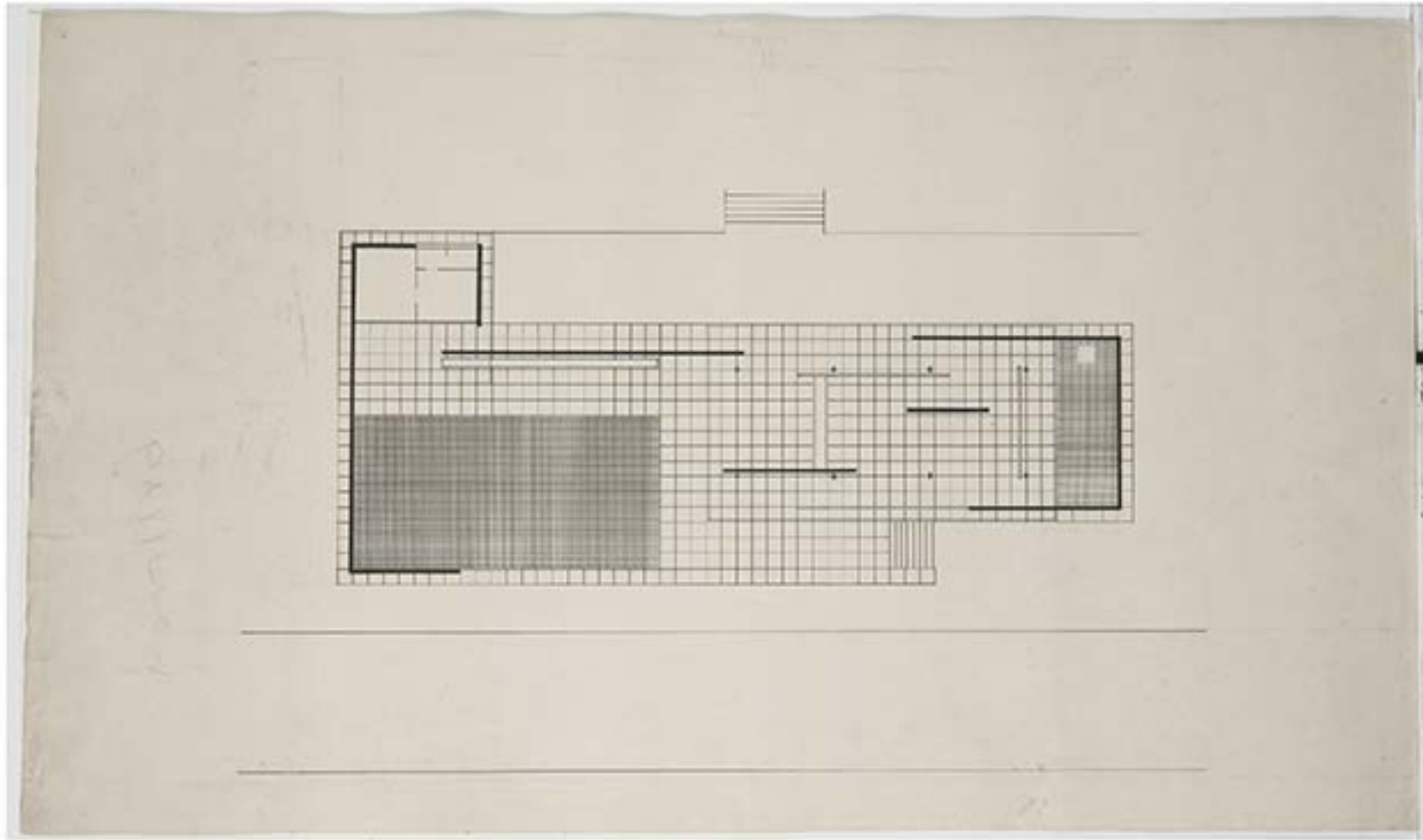
- Building version of diagram on left



*German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion*

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- Represented Germany, under the Weimar Republic (1919 – 1933, the interwar period)
 - Wanted to represent openness, liberality, modernity, and internationalism
- Pavilion taken down in 1930 as planned (exhibition timeline)
- Rebuilt in 1986 due to 'popular demand'
- Exemplar of the 'International Style'
 - Not about place, but about a transcendent truth to architectural form



German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion

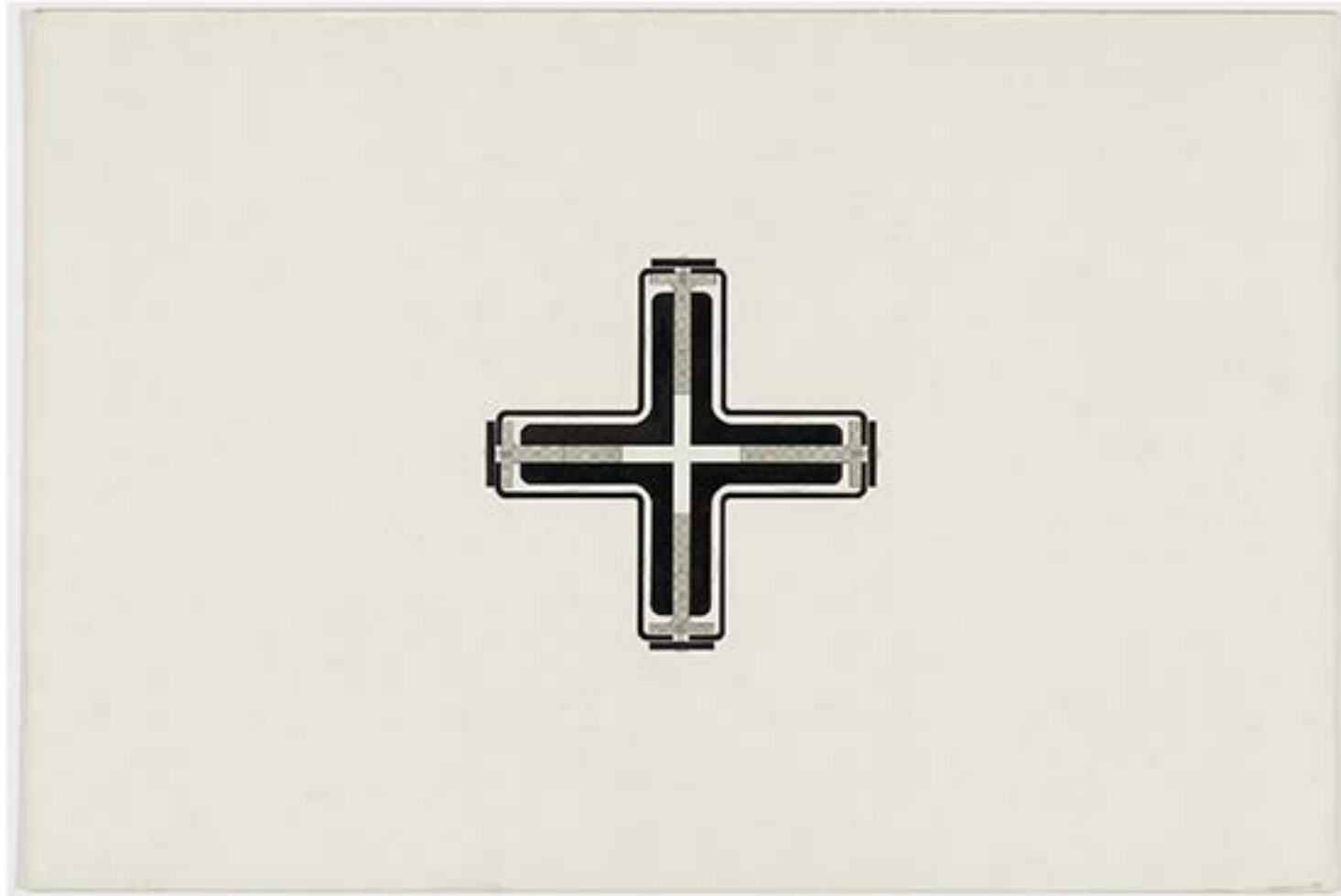
- Roof slab supported by 8 cruciform steel columns clad in chrome



German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion



German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion



*German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion*

- An important detail of the Barcelona Pavilion is what has become known as Mies' 'Cruciform Column'



German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion



German Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain (1929 & 1986)
Barcelona Pavilion

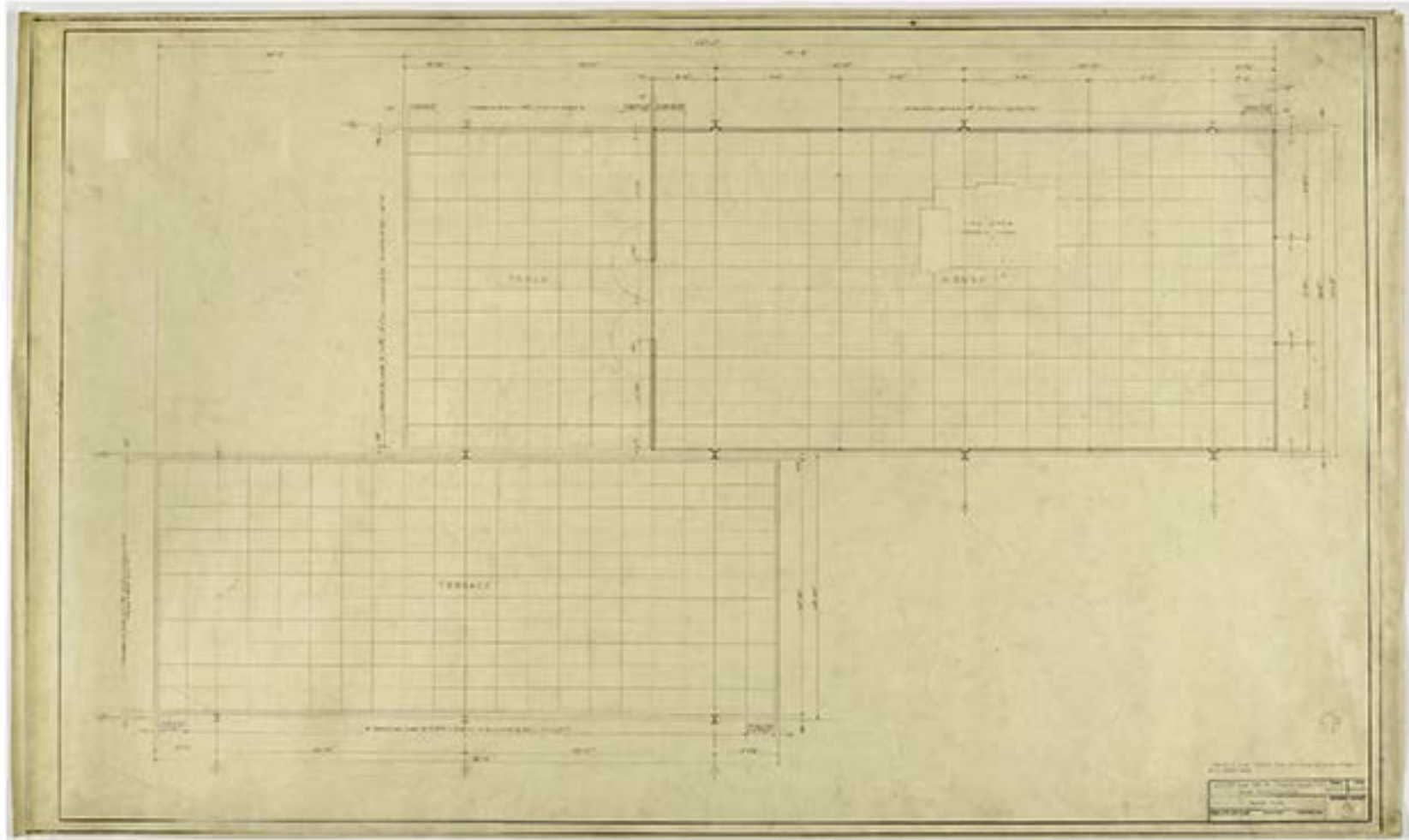
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- Photograph of cruciform construction
 - Notice inner angle irons ("L" shaped extrusions)



Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)

- Clear hovering horizontal planes, more so than the Barcelona Pavilion
- Rarity in which white was used as the dominant color
 - Often black or rusted copper



Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)



Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)

- Looking towards the 'entrance'
 - Remember, home is secluded, not on a suburban main street
- Entire envelope made of glass, only moveable curtains for privacy



Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)

Details – walls don't go up – continuity of space



Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)



- Lifted up
 - Practical – Fox River rises seasonally
 - Conceptual – ‘floating home’, pure geometry



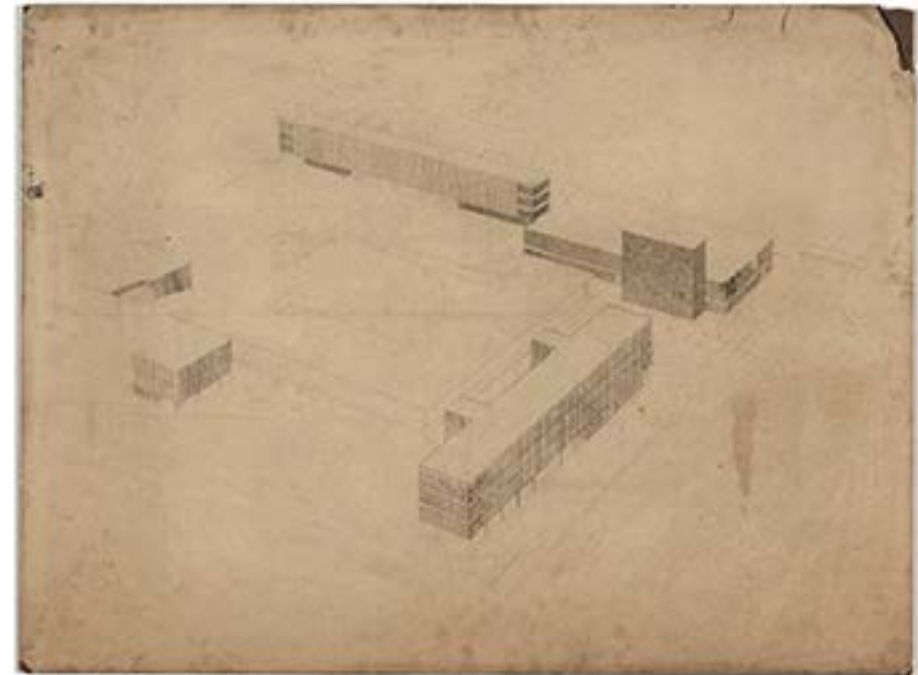
Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)

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- Not enough of a rise!



Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois (1951)



Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Illinois (1940s – 1970s)

44

- Soon after his immigration to the US Mies was chair of Architecture department of IIT from 1938 – 1958
- Mies was given carte blanche for the commission
- Radical departure from typical campus layout
- Not all buildings were completed by Mies, given over to SOM (but still w/ Mies' style)



Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Illinois (1940s – 1970s)



Crown Hall, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Illinois (1956)

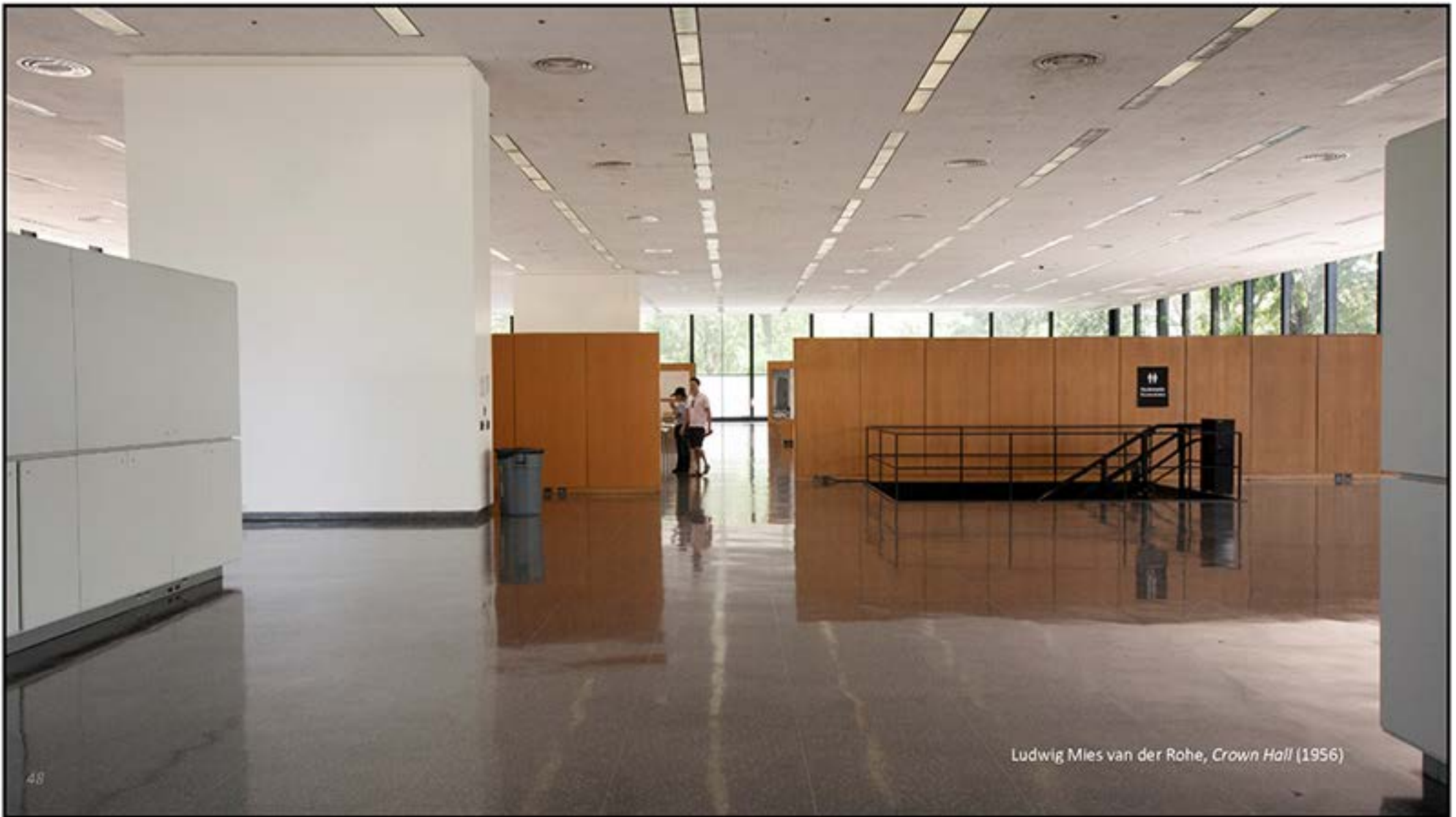
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- Most important building on Campus, *Crown Hall*



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Crown Hall* (1956)

- Same ideas as in the Farnsworth House and Barcelona Pavilion
- Clear ribbon of 'forest' around studio



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Crown Hall* (1956)

- Typical Mies move
 - 'Big open box' on ground level
 - Smaller rooms in basement



*Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave, New York City (1958)
w/ Philip Johnson*

49

- One of the most important early modern skyscrapers
 - Largely defined image of the American skyscraper, and spawned countless copies
 - Novelty in planning (plaza + setback)



Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave, New York City (1958)
w/ Philip Johnson

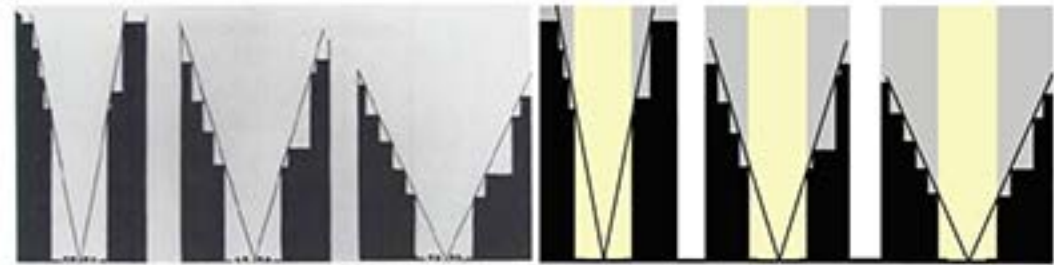


Fig. 75 Zoning diagrams, three height districts.

51

- Revision of 1916 zoning law, into 1961 new zoning resolution
 - Extra height for more public space
 - Encouraged privately owned public space to open up the densification of urban development



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- Examples of the prevalent ziggurat style buildings
 - Think Art Deco

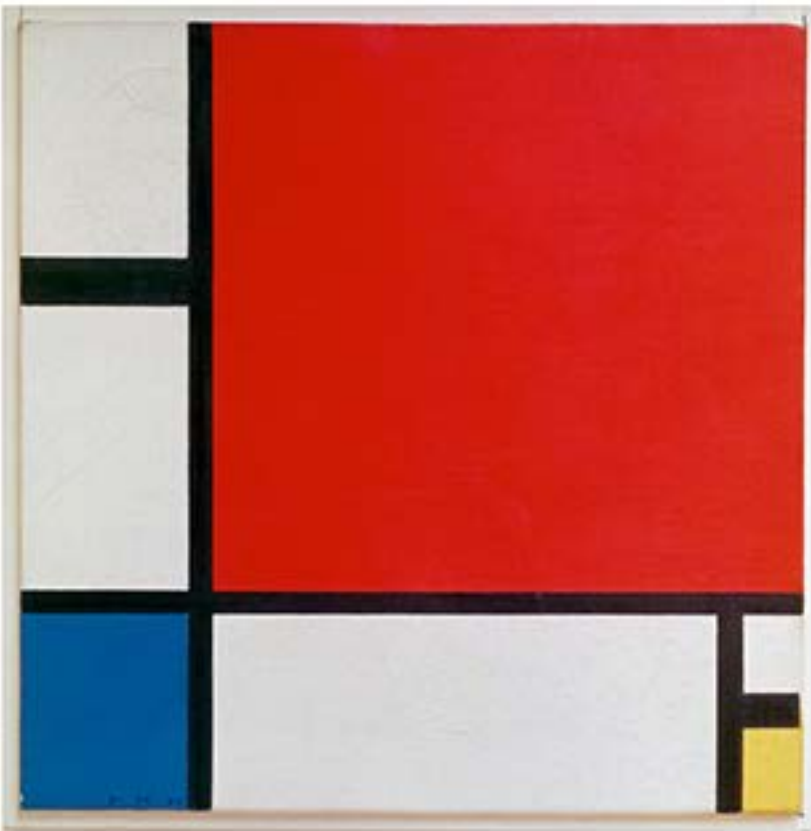


Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave, New York City (1958)
w/ Philip Johnson

De STIJL

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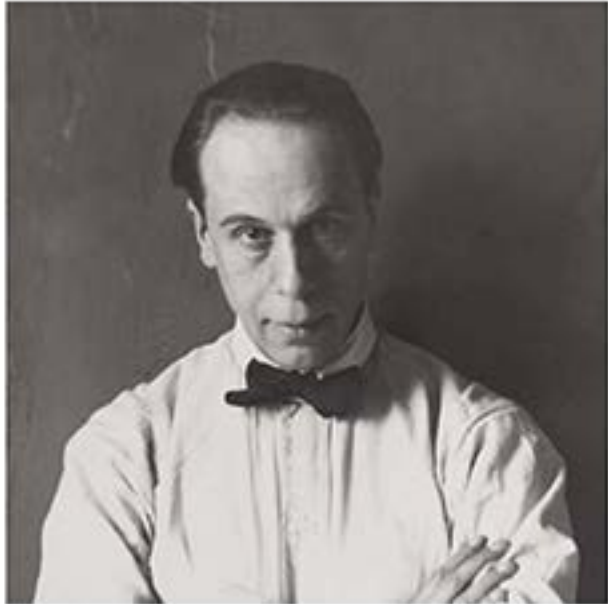
1. Modernism not all about Le Corbusier and Mies
2. Some minor movements and second-generation Modernists worth mentioning
3. Concurrent to the Modernism was the movement known as De Stijl (The Style).
 - a. Heavily (almost completely) centered in the Netherlands.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition in Red, Blue, and Yellow* (1929)
Piet Mondrian, *The Gray Tree* (1912)

55

- The paintings of Piet Mondrian probably best known example of De Stijl

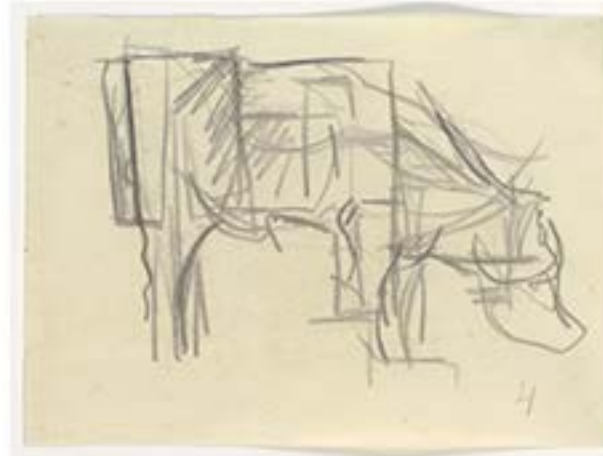


Theo van Doesburg

Dutch; 1883 - 1931

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1. An artist/designer within the De Stijl, Theo van Doesburg.
 - a. His paintings are highly reminiscent of Mondrian's, however his oeuvre extends into design and architectonic projects.



Theo van Doesburg, *Study for Composition VIII (The Cow)* (c. 1917)

1. The basic idea of De Stijl is wonderfully illustrated in this series of sketches by van Doesburg.
 - a. The idea wasn't so much to abstract recognizable forms into geometry, but to identify the infinite geometries inherent in everyday objects
 - b. This idea was resonant with Mies' attempt to 'capture' infinite space within



Left: Theo van Doesburg, *Preliminary color scheme for floor and long walls of dance hall in Café Aubette* (1927)
 Right: Theo van Doesburg, *Space-Time Construction #3* (1923)

1. Also echoing Malevich's Suprematism (*Architectons, Black Square*)
 - a. Clearly *architectural*, but not necessarily flushed out building designs.
- Unlike Malevich, regular use of primary colors
 - Primary (blue, red, yellow), matching idea of infinite space – basic geometry + colors



Gerrit Rietveld

Dutch; 1888 - 1964

- Another artist/design/architect was Gerrit Rietveld, who produced the most recognizable De Stijl work of architecture.



Gerrit Rietveld, *Red and Blue Chair* (1919 and 1923)
Gerrit Rietveld, *Zig Zag Chair* (1934)

Famous for his iconic furniture designs (still manufactured and sold today).



Schroder House, Utrecht, NL (1923 – 4)

1. Schroder House – the fact that it looks like a Mondrian painting is not subtle in the least.



Schroder House, Utrecht, NL (1923 – 4)



Schroder House, Utrecht, NL (1923 – 4)

- De Stijl references are explicit (in right picture, his *Red and Blue Chair*).



Marcel Breuer

Hungarian → American; 1902 - 1981

64

1. Among the second-generation Modernists, one of the most notable was Marcel Breuer.
 - a. Note that many second-generation Modernists were emigres, from Europe to the US.
 - b. Was educated by Gropius at the Bauhaus.



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Marcel Breuer, *The Met (Breuer)*, NYC (1966)

1. The Met (museum) in New York City (Madison Ave and 75th)
 - a. Departure from the steel-and-glass that was typical of early to mid-Modernism.
 - b. Instead, heavy form, seemingly cantilevering over the sidewalk.



Marcel Breuer, *The Met (Breuer)*, NYC (1966)

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1. Interior views of the Met.
 - a. Often quite divided opinion on the success of the building, with some seeing it as a powerful formal expression, with others' distaste as a brutish space, weight and heavy in relation to its art.
 - b. Was an important example of a movement called 'Brutalism' (which we won't



Left: *Wassily Chair*
Right: *Cesca Chair*

1. Breuer acclaimed (like many Modernists) for his furniture as well.
 - a. Not coincidental – think of the Bauhaus and Gropius’ ambition to integrate the arts.



St. John's Abbey Church, Collegeville, MN (1961)

1. St. John's Abbey Church in Minnesota.
 - a. Almost Corbusian front bell tower.
 - b. No intention to hide or render over construction process, permanently marked in concrete.
 - a. Celebration of modern construction techniques



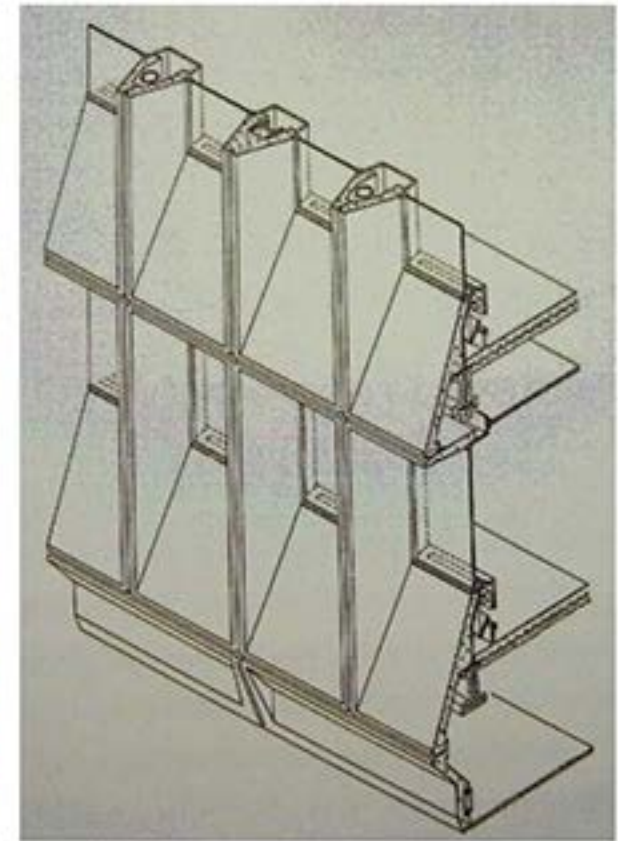
St. John's Abbey Church, Collegeville, MN (1961)

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1. Cavernous interior, with massive span lateral span across space.
 - a. Interior lighting recalls Le Corbusier's *Ronchamp Chapel*, with stained glass pouring into a darkened concrete shell.



St. John's Abbey Church, Collegeville, MN (1961)





Marcel Breuer, *Pirelli Tire Building*, New Haven, CT (1970)

MODERN RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

THE 'CASE STUDY HOUSES'

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1. Rewinding a few decades back, the shift towards Modernism in the US, namely on the West Coast with residential works.
 - a. A pivotal project that established the 'look' of much of Modern architecture was a series of houses known as The Case Study Houses.



Case Study House No. 22
Pierre Koenig



Case Study House No. 8
Charles and Ray Eames

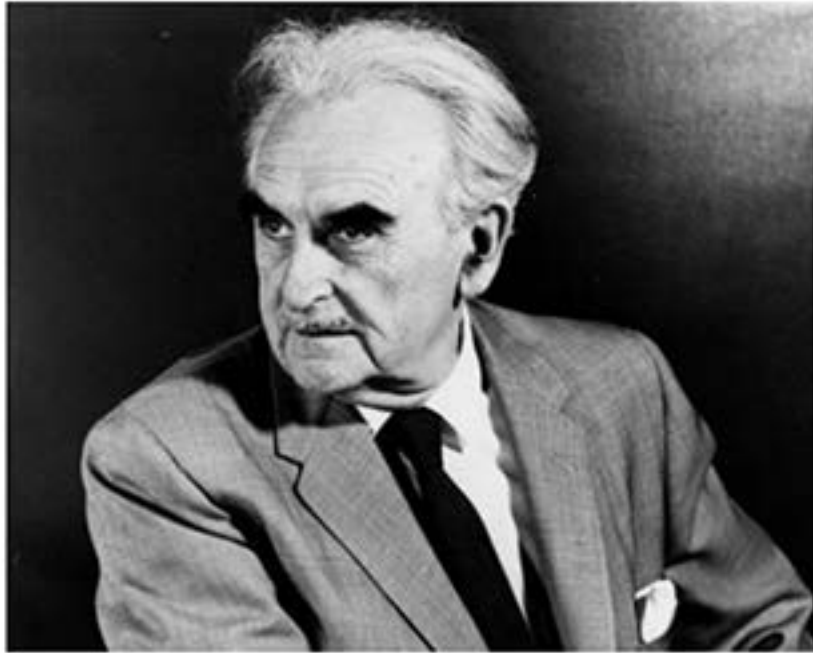


Case Study House No. 16
Craig Ellwood



Case Study House No. 9
Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen

1. Prototypical experiments for residential architecture
 - a. Sponsored by *Arts & Architecture* magazine
 - b. The task was to build post-war (WWII) housing that was inexpensive, relatively easy and quick to build.
 - c. To house the population boom following the war.



Richard Neutra
Austrian/American; 1892 - 1970



- a. Again, think of the Bauhaus building.
- b. Modernist lines (long, thin lines, flat roofs) are particularly usable in Southern California – no snow, little rain.





Richard Neutra, *Miller House*, La Jolla, CA (1938)



Richard Neutra, *Grace Miller House*, La Jolla, CA (1938)



1. Neutra's own studio in La Jolla (towards San Diego).
 - a. Recalls aspects of Mies' Farnsworth House... built almost 15 years after Neutra's studio.



Richard Neutra, *Neutra VDL Studio and Residences*, La Jolla, CA (1932)



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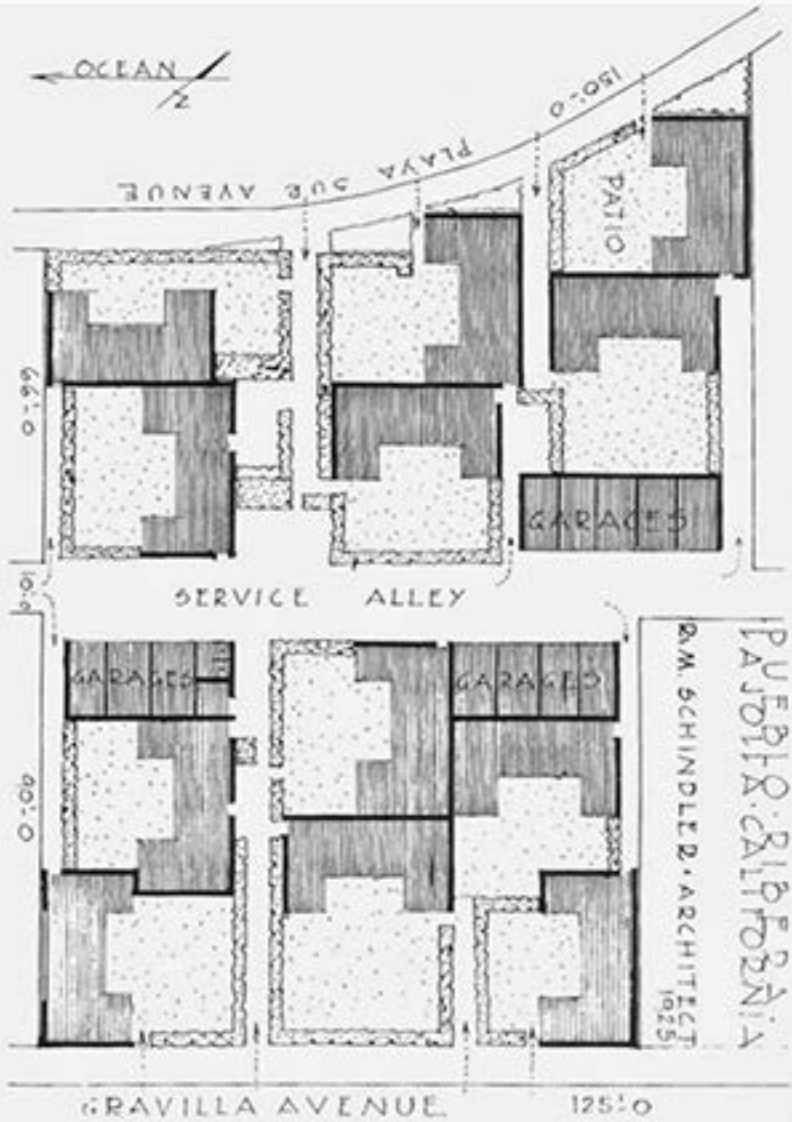


Richard Neutra, *Neutra VDL Studio and Residences*, La Jolla, CA (1938)

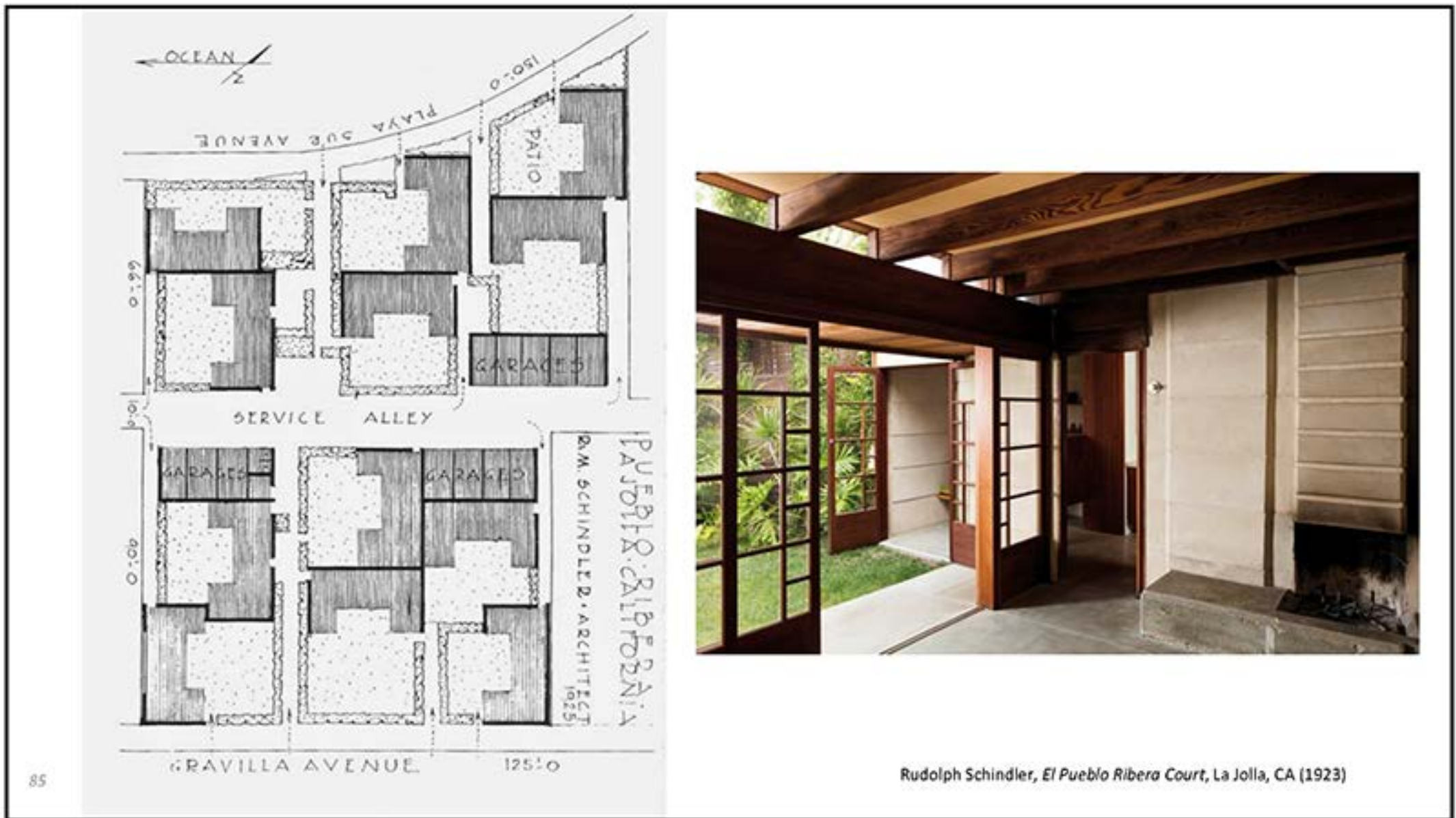


Rudolph Schindler

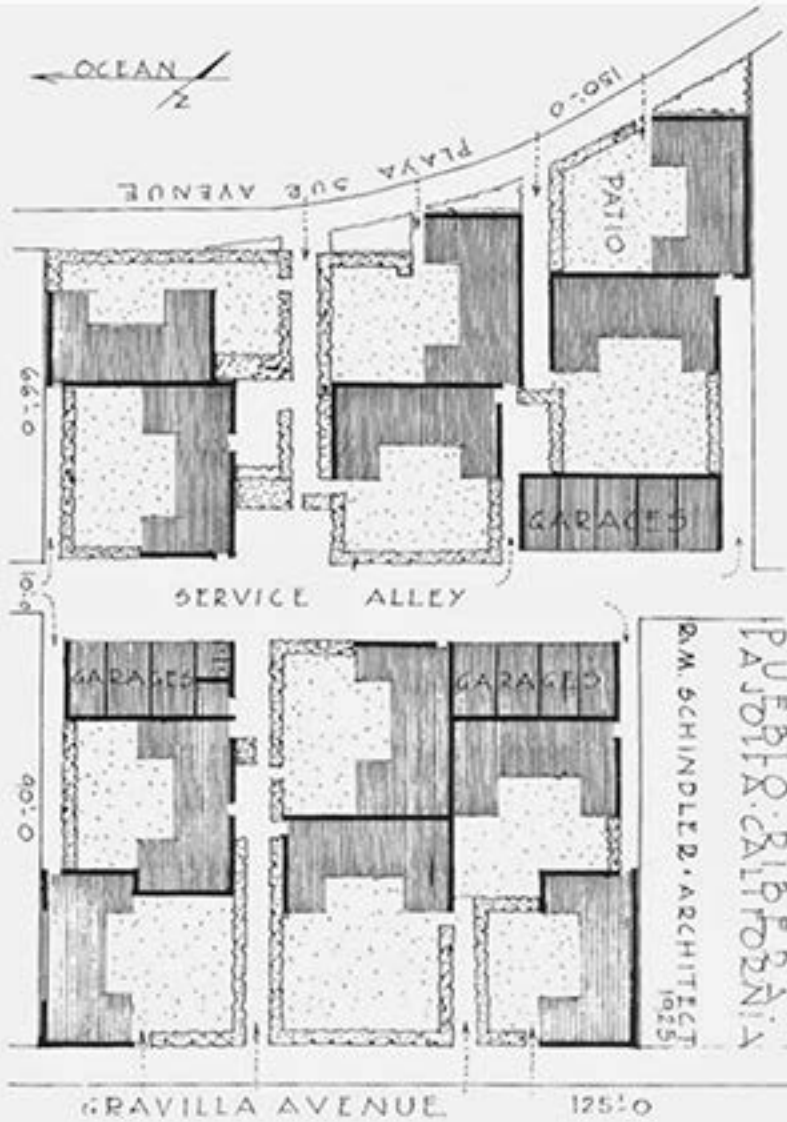
Austrian/American; 1887 - 1953



Rudolph Schindler, *El Pueblo Ribera Court*, La Jolla, CA (1923)

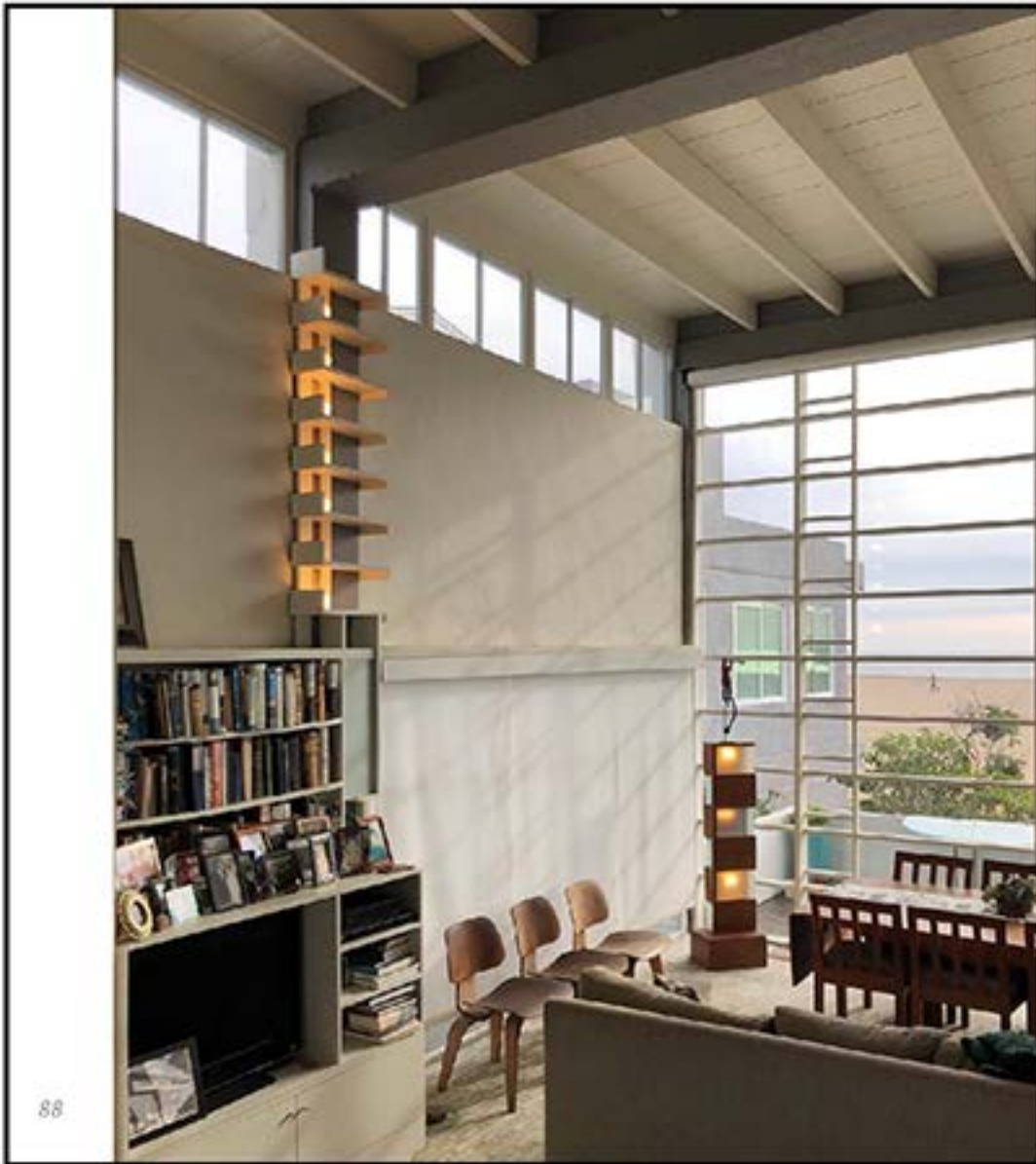


- Intended to merge 'Pueblo style' houses with Modernist aesthetics (which in themselves were heavily influenced) by Japanese traditional architectural



Rudolph Schindler, *El Pueblo Ribera Court*, La Jolla, CA (1923)





Rudolph Schindler, *Lovell Beach House*, Newport Beach, CA (1926)

- a. Clear East Asian influence with partitions
 - a. Full height sliding screens allowing for flow between interior volumes.