



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe



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Mies's career took off in the fertile atmosphere of Berlin after the First World War, where leading artists and intellectuals were forming a community that would draw the brightest talents from across Europe. His visionary submission for the 1921 Friedrichstrasse skyscraper competition, while not a winner, was an unprecedented embrace of the new materials of steel and glass that later defined modernist architecture.

As the decade progressed, he received larger and more prominent commissions, culminating in the offer to design the German pavilion for the 1929 World's Fair in Barcelona. The small structure he built, with its flowing spaces, rich marble walls, and custom-designed furniture was an enormous success. It was around this time that Mies formed a highly fruitful partnership with the architect-designer Lily Reich, with whom he collaborated on numerous projects. Their partnership lasted until his emigration to the United States in 1938.

One of the leading lights of modernist architecture, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe created a body of work—ranging from tubular steel furniture to iconic office buildings—that influenced generations of architects worldwide. From domestic spaces like the Villa Tugendhat in the Czech Republic to large, elaborate office towers like New York's Seagram Building, he imbued his buildings with a fluid spatial harmony reflective of his oft-quoted aphorism,

“less is more.”

While this quote may seem to reflect an overriding interest in achieving minimalist perfection, his passion for rich materials, surfaces, and texture reveals a creative mind equally preoccupied with the minutiae of architectural space, or, as in another quote attributed to him: “God is in the details”.



Nearly as important as the legacy of his buildings is Mies's impact as a teacher of architecture. In Germany, he served as the final director of the influential Bauhaus school until its closing under pressure from the Nazis in 1933. Shortly after his arrival in the United States, he was offered the directorship of the Armour Institute in Chicago (later renamed the Illinois Institute of Technology), where he shaped a curriculum that influenced a generation of American architects.

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America afforded Mies opportunities to work on a far larger scale than he had in Germany, as evidenced by the collection of sleek, glass-skinned office and apartment towers that populate cities across North America. Though in the period after his death many architects rejected his strict formalism in favor of the more eclectic language of postmodernism, his legacy continues to inform the teaching and practice of architecture today.





Who is Ludwig Mies van der Rohe?

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was a pioneering architect whose works, alongside Le Corbusier's and Walter Gropius', defined a separate strain of modern architecture known as International Style.

He was a true modernist pioneer and an iconic figure of 20th century architecture and design. Sustained by his famous trenchant statements like 'less is more' and 'God is in the details', the textures of his Barcelona Pavilion (1929/1986), the steel-and-glass aesthetic of the Seagram Building (1956–1958) and his paradigmatic examples of domestic architecture like the Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois (1945–1951), have become some of the world's most emblematic and widely-recognized architectural elements and structures built in the last century.

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Barcelona Pavilion

1929

Together with designer Lilly Reich, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was commissioned to design the German pavilion for the Barcelona Exposition in 1929. This building later became known as the Barcelona Pavilion. The use of different kinds of marble from all over the world, the combination of glass and steel made the structure stand out from the exhibition program. The pavilion also held an official reception of the King of Spain at the time. The Barcelona Pavilion also showcased Mies's iconic Barcelona chair and served as an introduction of new architectural trends to the world.

The building was dismantled after the exposition and its elements were sent back to Germany to be reused for other buildings. Fifty years later, realising the architectural importance of van der Rohe's pavilion, the Barcelona City Council urged to reconstruct it. The city ensured that materials for the reconstruction would be sourced from the same locations as the original building, with different marbles coming from Rome, Greece and the Atlas Mountains. Construction was completed in 1986.



Villa Tugendhat

1930

The Exposition brought critical acclaim to Rohe, as the wealthy of Europe started showing great interest and fascination towards spacious modern homes and villas, like the Tugendhat House designed by Mies in 1930, built in Brno. Clients of the project were elite newlyweds Grete and Fritz Tugendhat, who had met Mies in Berlin in 1927 and were already impressed by his simple and spacious design for the Zehlendorf House of Edward Fuchs (1928).

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Farnsworth House

1951

Designed 1945 and eventually completed in 1951, the Farnsworth House is a bright, one-floor weekend house in what then was a rural setting by the banks of the Fox River, southeast of Chicago. The home is one of the few examples of domestic 'Miesian architecture' in the United States. The house embraces van der Rohe's dedication towards the harmony between man-made structure and nature, and it is widely recognised as an iconic masterpiece of the International Style.

The construction was fleckered by the conflict between Rohe and the commissioner due to the escalating construction costs that eventually led to an unfinished project and to the construction of an empty house. The home was eventually furnished as the result of the mediation of Rohe's former employee. The client, Dr Edith Farnsworth eventually began using the house as her weekend retreat, often hosting guests who came to see now the completed work of the world-famous architect. The house currently operates as a historic house museum.





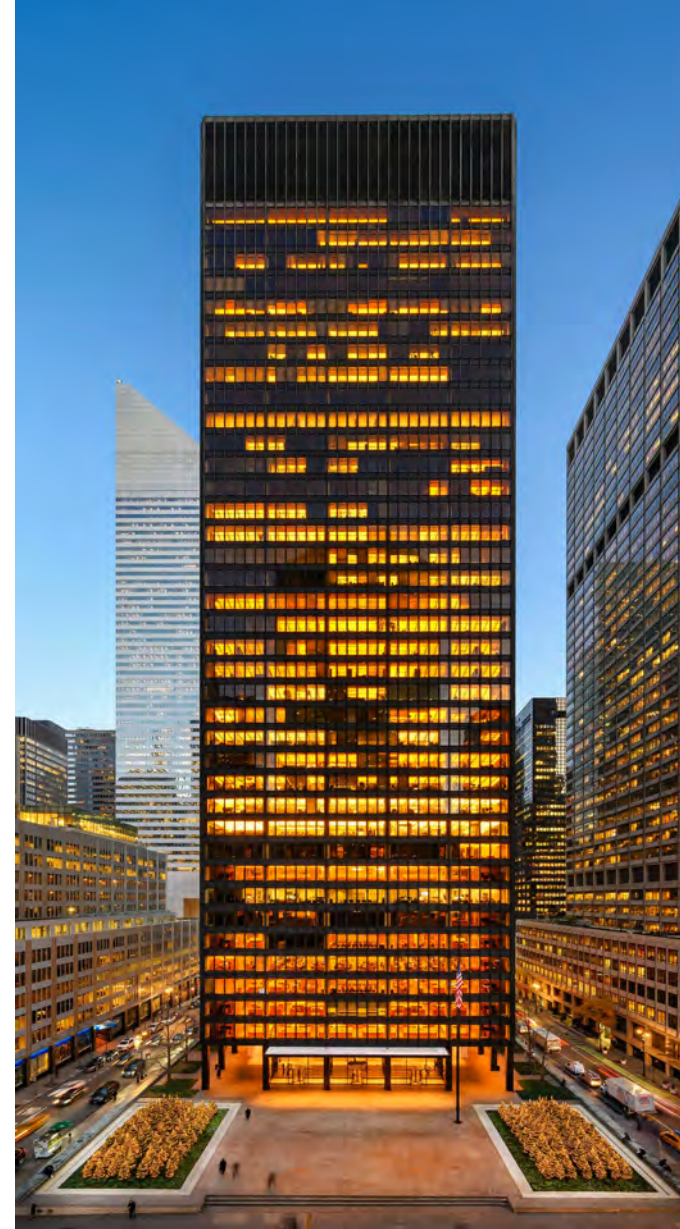
Crown Hall

1956

Completed in 1956, Crown Hall is the home of the College of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, where van der Rohe was the school's director for twenty years. He made the school world-renowned for not only for its defining role in architectural education but also for its campus building, that Mies himself designed in the late 1940s. The Crown Hall was an elegant addition to the campus that clearly illustrates the architect's simple steel-and-glass construction technique.

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Seagram Building

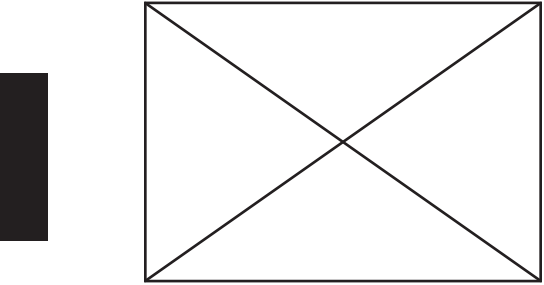
1958

Setting the standard for the modern skyscraper, the 38-story Seagram Building is located in the heart of New York City on Park Avenue.

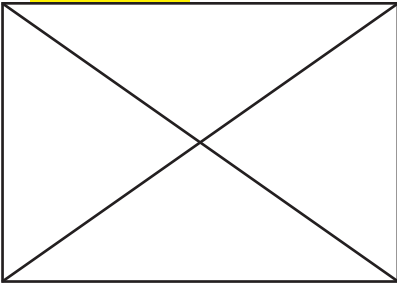
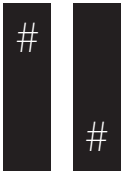
The elegant structure was van der Rohe's first tall office building construction as well as the first modern building in a major metropolitan city to have an extruded bronze curtain wall, that is visible from the outside and runs vertically, separating the large glass windows.

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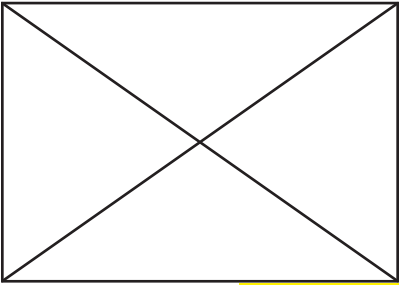
Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space.



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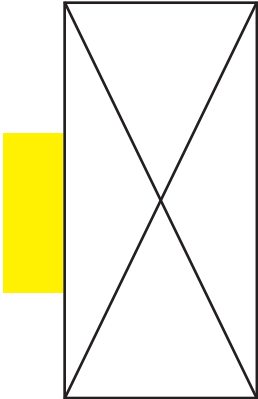


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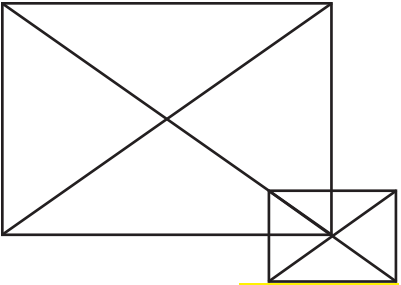
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