

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Mary M. Wolfskill



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Collection Summary

Title: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Papers

Span Dates: 1921-1969

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1938-1969)

ID No.: MSS32847

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

Extent: 22,000 items ; 65 containers ; 27 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and German

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

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

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Albers, Josef--Correspondence.

Baur, Otto--Correspondence.

Behrens, Peter, 1868-1940--Correspondence.

Blake, Peter, 1920-2006--Correspondence.

Bruckmann, Peter--Correspondence.

Clarke, Arundell--Correspondence.

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

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

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

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

Gropius, Walter, 1883-1969--Correspondence.

Hatje, Gerd--Correspondence.

Hilberseimer, Ludwig--Correspondence.

Klee, Paul, 1879-1940--Correspondence.

Le Corbusier, 1887-1965--Correspondence.

Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 1886-1969.

Mächler, M. Martin--Correspondence.

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

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

Peterhans, Walter A.--Correspondence.

Poelzig, Hans, 1869-1936--Correspondence.

Rading, Adolf, 1888-1957--Correspondence.

Richter, Hans--Correspondence.

Ruegenberg, Sergius, 1903- --Correspondence.

Saarinen, Eero, 1910-1961--Correspondence.

Stam, Mart, 1899- --Correspondence.

Taut, Max, 1884-1967--Correspondence.

Tessnow, Heinrich--Correspondence.

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

Organizations

Armour Institute of Technology.

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

Subjects
Architecture.
Universities and colleges--Illinois--Chicago.
Urban renewal.

Occupations
Architects.
Educators.

Administrative Information

Provenance

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

Processing History

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

Transfers

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

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

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

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1886, Mar. 27	Born, Aachen, Germany
1897-1900	Attended the Cathedral School, Aachen, Germany

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

Selected Chronological List of Buildings and Projects, 1907-1968

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1907	Riehl House, Berlin, Germany

- 1911 Perls House, Berlin, Germany
- 1912 Kröller House, the Hague, Netherlands (project)
- 1919 Office building for Friedrichstrasse, Berlin, Germany (project)
- 1921 Glass skyscraper (project)
- 1922 Concrete office building, Berlin, Germany (project)
- 1923 Brick country house (project)
- 1924 Concrete country house (project)
- 1926 Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg Monument, Berlin, Germany
(demolished)
Wolf House, Gubin, Germany
- 1927 Apartment house, Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart, Germany
Silk exhibit for Exposition de la Mode, Berlin, Germany
Glass industry exhibit, Werkbund Exposition, Stuttgart, Germany
- 1928 Alexanderplatz remodeling, Berlin, Germany (project)
Esters house, Krefeld, Germany
Hermann Lange house, Krefeld, Germany
- 1929 German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain
- 1930 Tugendhat House, Brno, Czechoslovakia
- 1931 House, Berlin Building Exposition, Berlin, Germany
Row house (project)
- 1933 Reichsbank, Berlin, Germany (project)
- 1934 House with three courts (project)
Court house with garage (project)
Mountain house for the architect, Tirol, Austria (project)
Glass house on a hillside (project)
- 1935 Hubbe House, Magdeburg, Germany (project)
- 1938 Group of three court houses (project)
Resor House, Jackson Hole, Wyo. (project)
House on two levels (project)

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

Scope and Content Note

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

In the 1920s and early 1930s Mies was active as a private architect in Berlin and also as a member of various organizations related to architecture. Treated in the [Early Correspondence](#) are his connections with the Novembergruppe, a militant revolutionary group of artists, architects and designers; the Deutscher Werkbund, an organization founded by industrialists and architects to improve the quality of Germany's industrial design; and the Bund Deutscher Architekten, a German architectural league. As director of architectural exhibits for the Novembergruppe from 1921 to 1925 and first vice president of the Deutscher Werkbund from 1926 to 1932, Mies was in an influential position to promote his architectural style. The correspondents for this period include business partners, former Bauhaus instructors, and friends such as Otto Baur, Peter Behrens, Peter Bruckmann, Walter Gropius, Paul Klee, Martin Mächler, Hans Poelzig, Adolf Rading, Mart Stam, Max Taut, Heinrich Tessnow, and Theo van Doesburg.

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

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

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

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

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

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

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

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-4	<u>Early Correspondence, 1921-1940</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Organized into private and special correspondence and therein alphabetically by name of personal correspondent or name of organization. Most of the material is in German.
BOX 4-7	<u>Late Correspondence, 1930-1969</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 7-61	<u>General Office File, 1923-1969</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments, newspaper clippings, notes, blueprints, lists, photographs, leases, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or subject.
BOX 61-62	<u>Speech, Article, and Writing File</u> Handwritten and typewritten drafts, printed copies, and notes relating to speeches, articles, and other writings by and about Mies. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 62-65	<u>Miscellany, circa 1937-1969</u> Miscellaneous personal papers, newspaper clippings, calendars, and printed matter. Arranged by type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-4	Early Correspondence, 1921-1940 Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Organized into private and special correspondence and therein alphabetically by name of personal correspondent or name of organization. Most of the material is in German.
BOX 1	Private, 1923-1940, undated A-R
BOX 2	S-Z and unidentified Special, 1921-1934, undated Bund Deutscher Architekten, 1921-1926 Gerichtsverfahren Mächler, 1923-1926 Novembergruppe, 1924-1926 Kartell, 1925-1928 Deutsche Liga für den Unabhängigen Film, 1930-1932 Internationaler Kongress für Neues Bauen, 1930-1933 Deutscher Werkbund
BOX 3	1924-1932 1933-1934
BOX 4-7	Late Correspondence, 1930-1969 Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 4	"A" miscellaneous "B" miscellaneous Bauhaus Birthday congratulations, 1966 Birthday letters, 1951, 1968-1969 "C" miscellaneous Care, 1946-1955
BOX 5	"D" miscellaneous "E" miscellaneous Education requirements for New York license, 1955-1956 "F" miscellaneous "G" miscellaneous "H" miscellaneous Howe, George, 1944-1951 Illinois, Institute of Technology, Chicago, Ill., 1936-1967 "J" miscellaneous "K" miscellaneous

Late Correspondence, 1930-1969

Container

Contents

	Kennedy Library Arts and Architecture Committee
	Kennedy Memorial Library
	Kennedy, Edward M.
BOX 6	Kennedy, Jacqueline, 1964
	Kennedy, John F., 1964
	Kennedy, Robert
	Köstner, Luise, 1949-1950
	Krupp Industriebau, 1961-1964
	"L" miscellaneous
	Leitl, Alfons, 1947-1950
	Luehrsen, Hannes, 1946-1950
	"Mc" miscellaneous
	"M" miscellaneous
	Mies van der Rohe
	Building honors
	Letters of praise
	Miscellaneous
	"N" miscellaneous
	National Academy of Design, 1968-1969
	"O" miscellaneous
	"P" miscellaneous
	Prussian Academy of Arts, 1949-1951
	"R" miscellaneous
BOX 7	"S" miscellaneous
	"T" miscellaneous
	Translations pending
	Travel plans and other subjects
	"U" miscellaneous
	U.S. War Department, 1947
	University of Bochum, West Germany, 1960-1962
	"V" miscellaneous
	"W" miscellaneous
	<i>Who's Who</i> , 1955-1969
	Wiley, Robert C., 1955-1960
	"Y" miscellaneous
	"Z" miscellaneous
	Unidentified
BOX 7-61	General Office File, 1923-1969
	Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments, newspaper clippings, notes, blueprints, lists, photographs, leases, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.
	Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or subject.
BOX 7	"Aa-AI" miscellaneous
BOX 8	"Am-Ax" miscellaneous
	Aachen, 1956-1962

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1963
	Academia D' Architecture, 1961-1969
BOX 9	Academie der Kunste, 1946-1965
	Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 1951-1969
	Acier-Stahl-Steel, 1964
	Aicher, Otal, 1956-1959
	Albers, Josef and Anni, 1949-1965
	Alcoa, 1963
	Aldis and Co., 1946-1952
	Aloi, Roberto, 1959-1962
	Alpha Rho Chi, 1967-1969
	Aluminum-Zentrale E. V., 1961-1963
	American Academy of Achievement, 1961-1965
BOX 10	American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1957-1969
	American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1957-1969
	American Association of University Professors, 1951-1964
	American Express Co., 1958-1967
	American Federation of Arts, 1958-1967
	American Institute of Architects
	1944-1950
BOX 11	1951-1956
BOX 12	1957-1961
BOX 13	1962-1966
BOX 14	1967-1969
	College of Fellows, 1959-1969
	Fellowships, 1950-1954
	Gold Medal, 1959-1960
	Gold Medal congratulations, 1960
	<i>Journal</i> , 1955-1961
	American Institute of Steel Construction, Kimbrough Medal Award, 1954-1966
	American Iron and Steel Institute, Design in Steel Award Program, 1962-1965
	American Society of Civil Engineers, 1951
	American Standard Association, 1949 (?) -56
BOX 15	Applications for employment, 1946-1958
	<i>Architect</i> , 1950-1953
	Architects, San Francisco, Calif.
	Architectura
	Architectural Association, London, England, 1950-1959
	<i>Architectural Design and Construction</i> , 1946-1967
	<i>Architectural Forum</i>
	1940-1962
BOX 16	1963-1967
	Architectural League of New York, 1960-1962
	Architectural Press, 1947-1962
	<i>Architectural Record</i> , 1945-1967

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	<i>L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui</i> , 1949-1966
BOX 17	Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1946-1969 Artists and Performers National Committee, 1963 <i>Arts and Architecture</i> , 1956-1966 Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture 1956-1965
BOX 18	1966-1967 Association of Finnish Architects, 1967 Atlantic Union, 1965-1969 Auditorium, 1960-1967 Autographs and pictures, requests for Avanti chair, 1964 "Ba-Bo" miscellaneous
BOX 19	"Br-By" miscellaneous Baltimore Association of Commerce and AIA, Baltimore, Md., 1963 Barcelona Pavillion, Barcelona, Spain, 1960 Barrow, Luis Carlos, 1963-1964 Bartning, Otto, 1951-1956 Basel-Stadt, 1962-1963 <i>Bauen-Wohnen</i> , 1950-1956 Bauhaus, 1951-1969 <i>Baukunst und Werkform</i> , 1949-1960 Becker, Walter, 1962-1965 Beitz, Berthold, 1960-1964 Bembe, Carl A., 1948-1951 Berlin, Gemany, 1961-1964 Berliner Kunstpreis Jubiläumsstiftung, 1848/1948, 1961 Bernstein, Sioma, 1962-1963
BOX 20	Blake, Peter, 1956-1965 Blaser, Werner, 1956-1965 Bohigas, Oriol, 1957-1960 Boissevain, Edith G., 1946-1947 Bonnet, Felix C., 1940, 1948 Bouverie, David P., 1945-1952 Bowes Realty Co., 1952-1958 Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., 1967-1969 Brandt, Willy, 1962-1964 Breuer, Marie, 1953 British Council, 1968 Bronfman, Edgar, 1960
BOX 21	Bronfman, Samuel, 1955-1969 Browning, Rev. Brownson, Jacques C., 1954-1966 Budek Co., 1949 Bund Deutscher Architekten, 1959-1964 Bunshaft, Gordon, 1958-1961

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Burg, Don J., 1950-1951
	“Ca-Ch” miscellaneous
BOX 22	“Ci-Cu” miscellaneous
	Caldwell, Alfred, 1952-1969
	Callery, Mary, 1957-1963
	Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa. 1947-1964
BOX 23	1965-1967
	Carnegie Clan, Chicago, Ill., 1961-1969
	Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1968-1969
	Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1949
	Carter, Peter, 1961-1967
	Cartier-Bresson, Henril, 1960
	<i>Casabella</i> , 1955-1965
	Casasus, José J., 1965-1966
	Caterpillar Tractor Co.
	Chetlain, Kent G., 1953
	Chicago, Ill., city of, 1946-1969
	Chicago Building Congress, Chicago, Ill., 1952-1962
	Chicago Civic Committee for World Refugees, Chicago, Ill., 1960
	Chicago Department of Urban Renewal, Chicago, Ill., 1963-1964
	Chicago Jaycees, Chicago, Ill., 1969
	Chicago, Ill., Mayor Richard J. Daley, 1957-1967
	Chicago School of Architecture Foundation, Chicago, Ill., 1967-1968
	Chicago World's Fair in 1976, Chicago, Ill., 1963
	<i>Christian Science Monitor</i> , 1951-1964
	Christmas, 1952-1967
	Cicogna, Countess Anna-Marie, 1967
	City Club of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1964-1965
	City Club of New York, New York, N.Y., 1964
	Clarke, Arundell, 1950-1963
	Cleveland Museum, Cleveland, Ohio, 1949-1950
	Clients, prospective
	Colean, Miles L., 1964
BOX 24	College Art Association, 1945-1967
	Columbia University, New York, N.Y., 1959-1968
	Commission on Chicago Architectural Landmarks, Chicago, Ill., 1964
	Commission on Fine Arts, 1964
	Concha, Enrique Gana, 1959-1965
	Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, 1945-1957
	Conservation Foundation, 1965-1967
	Consolidated Press Clipping Bureau, 1947-1948
	Constructa, 1950-1951
	Container Corp. of America, 1964
	Conterato, Bruno P., 1966-1967
	Costello, Milton, 1964

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Cserna, George, 1960
	Cullinan, Nina
	Curtis & Davis, 1962
BOX 25	"D" miscellaneous
	Damora, Robert M., 1947-1963
	Danforth, George, 1948-1968
	Danish Architectural Association, 1965
	Darmstadt, 1950-1951
	Davis, Richard S., 1950
	Dearstyne, Howard, 1943-1969
	Deppen, J. Ralph, 1964
	Deutsche Bank, 1950
	Deutschen Kunstrates, 1956-1961
	Deutscher Werkbund Bayern, 1960
	Die Bauwelt
	Dornbusch, Charles, 1966, 1969
	Dorner, Alexander, 1947, 1949
	Douglas, Paul H., 1954-1969
BOX 26	Drake, William, 1964-1965
	Duckett, Edward A., 1964-1966
	Dunlap, William E., 1965-1968
	"E" miscellaneous
	Ebert, Wils, 1961-1964
	Editorial Ramón Sopena, S.A., 1964-1965
	Editoriale Netro, S.P.A., 1964-1965
	Edging tape machine
	860 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Ill., 1953-1954
	Ellwood, Craig, 1963-1969
	<i>Encyclopedia de L'Urbanisme</i> , Paris, France, 1959-1961
	Engineers, 1954-1955
	Englaender, Kurt, 1948-1949
	Entenza, John, 1960-1964
	Essen, West Germany, 1961
BOX 27	"F" miscellaneous
	Fabric, 1955-1958
	Federal Housing Administration, 1955-1964
	Federal Storage and Moving Co., 1949-1964
	Federal Union, 1964
	Federal University of Paraná, Brazil
	Fermi Memorial, Chicago, Ill., 129556-1957
BOX 28	Fine Arts Commission, 1963
	Fitch, James Marston, 1963
	Ford Foundation, 1959-1965
	Forsee, Aylesa, 1965
	Foundation for the Arts, Religion and Culture, 1963-1967
	Frankfurt, Germany, 1961

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Friedman, Alschuler & Sincere, 1953-1958
	Fujikawa, Joseph Y., 1953-1967
	Furniture
	"G" miscellaneous
	Gallery of Contemporary Art of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1964
	Garrick Theater, 1960
	Garvin (Robert) Associates, 1964
	General Services Administration, 1957-1967
	Genther, Charles B., 1954-1962
BOX 29	German Commander's Cross, 1959
	German Consulate General, Chicago, Ill., 1958-1964
	German embassy, Washington, D.C., 1956-1964
	German (West) television, 1961-1965
	Germanic Museum-Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1950
	Germanisches National Museum, 1957-1958
	Germany, miscellaneous
	Giedion, Sigfried, 1951-1965
	Glessner House, 1966
	Goldberg, Arthur, 1964
	Goldsmith, Myron, 1956-1969
	Gonzaga Preparatory School, 1964
	<i>Good Design</i> , 1950
	Graham, Bruce, 1961
	Graham Foundation, 1956-1969
BOX 30	Graham, Jory, 1962-1969
	Greenwald, Bennet B., 1964
	Greenwald, Herbert S. and Lee, 1946-1965
	Griffith, Gerry
	Grohmann, Will, 1951-1954
	Gropius, Walter, 1938-1969
	Guenther, Georg, 1950-1951
	Guggenheim (John Simon) Foundation, 1949-1959
	Guggenheim (Solomon R.) Museum, 1956-1966
BOX 31	"H" miscellaneous
	(2 folders)
	Haag, G. H. W., 1951
	Hagerty, Julia M., 1959-1964
	Hamburg, Germany, 1961
	Hancock, Eric Gray, 1947-1948
	Harding, Harriet, 1950-1951
	Harris, Elizabeth & E. Newton, 1964-1966
	Harrison and Abramovitz, 1946-1949
	Harrison, Wallace, 1967
	Harshe-Rotman & Druck, 1966
	Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1936-1965
	Hatje, Gerd, 1957-1961

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Heald, Henry T., 1956-1968
	Hedin, Raymond F., 1941-1950
	Hedrich-Blessing, 1946-1969
BOX 32	<i>Heritage</i> (television program), 1959-1960
	Herterich, Frank, 1964
	Hetherington, Clarke, 1950
	Heuss, Theodor, 1959-1963
	Heyer, Paul, 1964-1965
	Hilberseimer, Ludwig, 1957-1968
	Hochschule für bukedbde Künstem 1854-1964
	Hochschule für Gestaltung, 1952-1958
	Hofer, Elfriede, 1959-1962
	Hoffman, Julius, 1956-1965
	Hogan and Farwell, 1965
	Holabird & Root & Burgee, 1943-1953
	Holabird memorial, 1960-1961
	Hollatz, J. W.
	Hotpoint air conditioner, 1955-1956
	<i>House and Garden</i> , 1947-1960
	House and Home, 1955-1965
	Housing and Home Finance Agency, 1954-1964
	Howarth, Thomas, 1951
	Humphrey, Hubert H., 1968
	Huth, Hans, 1960
	Huxtablem Ada Louise, 1966-1969
BOX 33	"I" miscellaneous
	Illinois
	Department of Public Health, 1945
	Governor Otto Kerner, 1966, 1968
	Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Ill.
	Department of Architecture, 1954-1969
	General, 1949-1969
	Personal, 1950-1958
BOX 34	Printed matter
	Public relations, 1947-1966
	Illinois Sesquicentennial, 1967
	Illinois Society of Architects, 1946-1967
	Immigrants Protective League, 1957-1967
	Inland Architect, 1963
	Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1949-1964
	Institute of International Education, 1955-1966
	Institutions, 1953-1966
	Instituto Universitario di Architettura, Venice, Italy, 1967
	Interiors, 1946-1962
	International Movement for Atlantic Federation, 1962-1964
BOX 35	"J" miscellaneous

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Jackson (A. L.) testimonial dinner, 1965
	Janis Sidney Gallery, 1957-1958
	Joedicke, Jurgen, 1961-1963
	Johnson, Lyndon B., 1964-1965
	Johnson, Lyndon B., 1964-1965
	Johnson, (Philip) Associates, 1947-1968
	Jordy, William, 1957-1969
	"K" miscellaneous
BOX 36	Kahweiler, Daniel-Henry, 1960
	Kamphoefner, Henry L., 1962-1963
	Karsh, Yousuf, 1962-1967
	Katzin, Samuel N.
	Kaufmann, Edgar (Kaufmann Department Stores), 1941-1963
	Kaufmann International Design Award, 1960-1965
	Kazi, Abdul-Razzak, 1964-1966
	Keisler, Frederich, 1959
	Kennedy, John F., 1961
	Kennedy, Robert Woods, 1950
	<i>Kentiku</i> , 1963-1965
	Ketterer, Roman Norbert, 1960-1961
	Klee, Paul, 1961-1967
	Kleyer, Erwin, 1950
	Kliegl Bros., 1956-1966
	Knight Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit, 1964
	Knoll Associates, 1956-1967
	Koch, Alexander, 1947-1964
	Koenig, Heinrich, 1963
	Kokusai-Kenchiku-Kyokai, 1950
	Korab, Baltazar, 1960-1965
	Korsmo, Arne, 1949-1950
	Kraemer, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1960-1965
	Krumgold, Joseph, 1959-1968
	Kuh, Katherine, 1964-1965
	Kurze, Siegfried, 1963-1964
BOX 37	"L" miscellaneous
	Lake Forest College, Lake Forrest, Ill., 1953, 1968
	Lambert, Phyllis B., 1955-1969
	Lamensdorf, Leonard, 1969
	Le Corbusier, Charles, 1951-1968
	Leavitt Avenue School, 1968
	Lehmann, Conrad, 1961-1968
	Leverkusen (Stadt. Museum), 1962-1963
	Levitt, Alfred, 1951
	Library of Congress, 1959-1965
	Lincoln Academy of Illinois, Springfield, Ill., 1966-1969
BOX 38	Loebl, Jerrold, 1949-1968

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Lohan, Dirk and Manna, 1951-1968
	Lohan, Karin, 1964
	London roof gardens
	<i>Look</i> , 1957-1966
	Lorenz, Anton, 1949
	Lotus, 1964-1965
	Lowenthal, Arthur David, 1955-1964
	Ludwig, Eduard, 1945-1961
	Lufthansa, 1960-1964
	"Mc" miscellaneous
	McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill., 1966-1967
	McGrath, Norman R.C., 1963
BOX 39	"M" miscellaneous
	Maechler, Martin, 1951, 1956
	Mäckler, Hermann, 1950-1951
	Malcolmson, Reginald F., 1959-1965
	<i>Mark Twain Journal</i> , 1969
	Marlborough, 1962-1964
	Marx, Lora F., 1953-1958
	Marx, Samuel A., 1945-1964
	Mendelshon, Eric, 1949-1955
BOX 40	Mendelshon, Mrs. Eric, 1960
	Metropolitan Structures, 1959-1967
	Metz, Peter, 1961
	Mies European trip, 1953
	Miscellaneous
	Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada, 1962
	Moral, Enrique del, 1947-1948
	Morgan, Sherley W., 1949-1950
	München-Kulturpreise, 1963
	Münch Städtische Galerie und Lenbackgalerie, Munich, Gemany, 1959
	Murphy, Charles F., 1963-1964
	Museum of Contemporary Art, 1969
	Museum of Fine Arts, 1958-1966
	Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y.
	1940-1950
BOX 41	1951-1969
	"N" miscellaneous
BOX 42	Naeff, Paul M., 1939-1954
	National Academy of Design, 1963-1969
	National Broadcasting Company, 1957-1966
	National Conference of Christmas and Jews, 1964-1967
	National Institute of Arts and Letters, 1960-1969
	National Society of Interior Designers, 1966-1967
	National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1964-1965
	Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany, 1968

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Near-North Guild, 1957
	Nef, John, 1954-1969
BOX 43	Nervi, Pier Luigi, 1964
	Neue Heimat, 1963-1966
	Neuhaus, Hugo, 1964-1966
	Neuman, J. B., 1950-1956
	Neutra, Richard, 1955-1966
	New Haven, Conn., 1966
	<i>New York Times</i> , 195-1966
	Newman, M. W., 1966
	Nickel, Richard, 1956-1967
	Nixon, Richard, 1969
	Noehren, Walter A., 1946-1948
	Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1961-1962
	North American Philips Co., 1951
	North Carolina State College, Raleigh, N.C., 1953-1964
	Northern Trust, 1950-1957, 1967
	Nowak, Jerome N., 1963
	Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., 1963
	"O" miscellaneous
BOX 44	Office, new space, 1951-1952
	Optner, Stanford L., 1951-1952
	Orden Pour le Mérite, 1952-1964
	Otto, Frei, 1962
	Otto, Karl, 1946-1967
	Otto, Wolfgang, 1958-1959
	Owings, Nathaniel A., 1951
BOX 45	"P" miscellaneous
BOX 46	Pace Associates, 1949-1961
	Paint
	Park Association of New York City, N.Y., 1964
	Patents
	General, 1923-1947
	Feist, Henry K.
	Nos. 242, 480; 252, 654 (1938-1942)
	Nos., 2, 282, 337 (1942)
	Nos., 2, 283, 755 (1942)
	Lorenz, Anton
	Nos., 497, 956 (1937-1948)
	Nos., 352, 213 (1946-1948)
BOX 47	Peterhans, Walter
	Nos., 242, 480; 430, 974; 252, 654 (1938-1942)
	Nos., 430, 974 (1942-1946)
	Nos., 679, 308; 2, 532, 585 (1946-1950)
	Mauser (Firma), 1938-1941
	Lorenz & Reich, 1937-1940

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

BOX 48	Thonet (Firma), 1937-1940 Larsen, Lewis, 1937-1952 Rasterung für grosse Flächen, 1937-1938 Rasterung Tapeten, 1935-1947 Deutsche Tapeten, 1936-1940 Abbildungen in Druckform und Begleit-Artikel von Alex. Herman, Berlin, Germany, 1935-1938 Patentanmeldung-Sitz-oder Liegemöbel aus federndem Blech, 1935-1938
BOX 49	Payne, Roland M., 1934 Peabody, Bishop Malcolm E., 1947 Peru, Colegio de Arquitectos del, 1964-1965 Peter, John, 1951-1964 Peterhans, Walter and Brigitte, 1959-1967 Picasso, 1961-1969 Pitney-Bowes, 1956-1966 Plum (P. & S.) Lt., 1939-1948 Präsidenten des Bundesrates, 1963 Pratt Institute, New York, N.Y., 1951-1963 Prestini, James, 1964, 1969 Priestly, William T., 1964 <i>Progressive Architecture</i> , 1943-1967 Protestant Business Leaders of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1963-1967 "Q" miscellaneous "R" miscellaneous
BOX 50	
BOX 51	Reynolds Metal Co., 1955-1961 Richman, Robert 1964 Richter, Hans, 1946-1967 Robie House, 1941-1965 Rodgers, John B., 1946-1969 Roosevelt University, Chicago, Ill., 1958-1960 Rosenthal slides, 1953-1954 Rosenthal, Julius, 1946-1952 Ross-McElroy Productions, Inc., 1963-1968 Rothel, Hans Konrad, 1959 Roths, Wolfgang, 1961 Royal Institute of British Architects, 1954-1966 Royal Society of Arts, 1959-1969 Ruegenberg, Sergius, 1948-1967
BOX 52	"Sa-Sn" miscellaneous
BOX 53	"So-Sy" miscellaneous Sarrinen, Saarinen, and Associates, Eero and Aline Saarinen, 1948-1966 Schloss, Jack, 1953-1957 Schramm, Percy Ernst, 1964-1967 Schreiber, Detlef, 1961-1964 Schuetz, Wilhelm, 1948 Schwarz, Maria, 1962-1963

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Schwarz, Rudolf, 1947-1961
	Schwedler, Rolfm 1965-1967
	Schweikher, Paul, 1954-1969
	Schwippert, Hans, 1938-1965
BOX 54	Seagrams, 1965
	Severain, Gerhard, 1946-1947
	Shapiro, Walter, 1951, 1957
	Shaw, Alfred, 1945-1962
	Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1948-1966
	Smith, Florence M., 1965-1966
	Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1960-1968
	Society for Contemporary American Art, 1958
	Society for the Arts, Religion and Contemporary Culture, 1968-1969
	Speyer, A. James, 1954-1968
	Steel, painting procedure, 1965
	Stone, Edward Durell, 1966
	Sudler & Co., 1966-1969
	Sullivan House, 1967
	Summers, Gene R., 1950-1968
	Sweeney, James Johnson, 1947-1969
	Sweet's Catalog Servie, 1946-1964
	Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y., 1948-1953
	"Ta-To" miscellaneous
BOX 55	"Tr-Ty" miscellaneous
	Tamms, Friedrich, 1959
	Tavern Club, 1948-1965
	Taylor, Crombie, 1964-1965
	Technische Hochschule, 1947-1966
	Teebken, Gerd J., 1965
	Temko, Allan, 1964
	<i>Time</i> , 1953-1967
	Trade and Industry Tours Association, 1958-1966
	Treitiel-Gratz Co., 1958-1961
	Tropical Sun Co., 1958-1964
	Twentieth Century (various), 1962-1964
BOX 56	Two Hundred East Pearson Corp., 1941-1969
	Expense books, 1946-1950
BOX 57	"U" miscellaneous
	Union Internationale des Architects, 1953-1966
	United Nations, New York, N.Y., 1960-1961
	United Nations Association of the United States of America
	United States, Department of State, Germanic Section, 1951
	United States Committee for Refugees, 1963-1966
	United States Congress, 1965
	United States consulate, Spain, 1966
	Universidad Industrial del valle del Cauca, 1946-1950

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

BOX 58	University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1948-1968 University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill., 1964 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1956-1966 University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Calif., 1958-1966 University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 1953-1966 University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., 1965-1967 Urban Renewal Administration, 1964 "V" miscellaneous Van de Velde-Gesellschaft, Henry, 1959-1964 Van der Rohe, Georgia, 1945-1964 Van Deventer's S., 1959-1968 Venezuelan Society of Architects, 1965-1966 Verkerke, Clyde J., 1952-1954
BOX 59	Visitors, 1955-1958 <i>Vouge</i> , 1950-1964 Voice of America, 1962 Vollan & Petersen, 1961, 1963 "W" miscellaneous
BOX 60	Wachsman, Konrad, 1950-1965 Walker & Weeks, 1950 Walther, Ernst, 1942-1952 Washburn, Gordon Bailey, 1960 Watanabe, Meiji, 1964 Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich., 1960-1968 Weber, Hugo, 1962-1964 Wells Furniture Makers, 1953-1957 Werner, Dr., 1957-1960 Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 1949-1966 White House, Washington, D.C., 1961-1966 White House Conference on Natural Beauty, Washington, D.C., 1965 Whitlock, Mary, 1962 Whyte, Lancelotlow, 1958-1959 Williams & Meyer Co., 1946-1953 Wingler, Hans Maria, 1959-1964 Winholtz, Wilford G., 1950 Wise (Howard) Gallery, 1964 Wittenborn & Co., 1946-1947 Wong, Yau Chun, 1952-1965 Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Mass., 1961 World of Friends Flour Committee, 1948 World's Fair, Montreal, Canada, 1965 Wright, Frank Lloyd, 1944-1969 Wurster, William W., 1960
BOX 61	"X" miscellaneous "Y" miscellaneous Yale University, New Haven, Conn., 1952-1966

General Office File, 1923-1969

Container

Contents

	Yates, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney, 1953-1968 "Z" miscellaneous
BOX 61-62	Speech, Article, and Writing File Handwritten and typewritten drafts, printed copies, and notes relating to speeches, articles, and other writings by and about Mies. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 61	Addresses AIA Gold Medal speech, 1960 National Institute of Arts and Letters Gold Medal speech, 1963 Memorial speech regarding Herbert S. Greenwald Miscellaneous drafts for speeches Speech notes Articles about Mies
BOX 62	Writings by Mies General re Walter Gropius re Charles Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret) re Walter Peterhans re Frank Lloyd Wright Writings about Mies Interviews with Mies Miscellaneous writings
BOX 62-65	Miscellany, circa 1937-1969 Miscellaneous personal papers, newspaper clippings, calendars, and printed matter. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 62	Biographical material Naturalization papers, 1937-1955 Passport and visas Illinois license, 1938-1951 Honors, 1941-1968 Memberships
BOX 63	Notes Mies signatures Financial papers, circa 1940-1965 Clippings, circa 1946-1969
BOX 64	Calendars
BOX 65	Directories Printed matter