

The Museum of Modern Art

West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE: ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

February 2 - March 20, 1966

Wall Label

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe has decisively influenced the course of architecture in the 20th century. His European work was distinguished by the use of space as a fluid, almost tangible medium; in the United States his buildings are best known for their structural clarity and flawless detail.

Like Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, Mies is a superb draftsman. Each of the five projects which first established his fame in the 'twenties presented an architectural idea through brilliantly executed pictorial images. One of these drawings - the famous 1919 project for a glass skyscraper on Berlin's Friedrichstrasse - has recently been added to the Museum collection and is shown here for the first time. Apart from the originality of its architectural concept, which exploits transparency and sharp angles, this drawing is remarkable purely as a vision of a crystalline tower dominating a dark, deserted street - mystery and the machine-age combined in a single, ominous image.

The 78 drawings by Mies van der Rohe in the Museum collection, from which this exhibition has been selected, include casual sketches and notations; interior perspectives showing the placement of wall planes and works of art; studies in which works of art alone are used to define architectural space; and studies of structural details. Photographs of real sites and works of art are often skillfully combined with line drawing. (Reproductions of a single Braque painting appear in 5 drawings, cut up in different ways to exploit various details for their effect on the scale of a room).

Some of these drawings are among the most compelling architectural images ever made, and they reveal even more clearly than do photographs of actual buildings the development of Mies' ideas about structure and space.

Arthur Drexler

This exhibition is presented in honor of the architect's 80th birthday. A checklist identifying the drawings on view is available in each gallery.