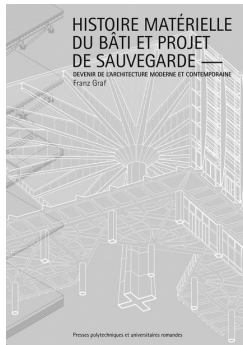


## BOOK REVIEWS



### **Histoire Matérielle du Bâti et Projet de Sauvegarde: Devenir de l'Architecture Moderne et Contemporaine**

Edited by Franz Graf  
Publisher: Presses Polytechniques  
et Universitaires Romandes  
ISBN: 978-2-88074-993-4  
Language: French  
Year: 2014

Modern and contemporary construction emerged as the exercise of architecture as a profession, both in its scope, and in the theoretical issues it raised.

The architectural project, the nearest to the final and existing project, is defined as a backup, that is to say a conservation project that also suggests a new materiality. The application of new materials requires a refined knowledge concerning the maintenance, preservation, restoration or even “weiterbauen” to implement. The history of the materiality of a building constitutes a fundamental and primordial aspect, which requires a thorough knowledge of different types of materials, construction sites and construction systems developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This collection of essays and critical reflections intends to participate in the recognition of this new discipline that is both the history of materials and preservation planning projects. An active knowledge combined with the practice, research and education in architecture. Based on a unique approach highlighting the construction itself, this reference book requires an expansion on contemporary architectural research as well as a consideration for preserving the quality of the most recent constructions.

From the Publisher.

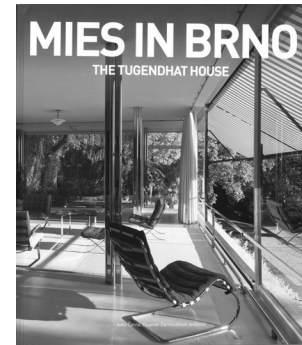


### **Photography & Modern Architecture in Spain 1925-1965**

Edited by Iñaki Bergera  
Publisher: Fundación ICO,  
La Fábrica, Madrid  
ISBN: 978-84-15691-72-3  
Languages: Spanish & English  
Year: 2014

*Photography & Modern Architecture in Spain 1925-1965* presents the reverse side of those historical “anthologies of projects & buildings” that books and magazines used to create the collective imaginarium of the Spanish modern architectural scene through the years: the side of the photographers that depicted these architectures. This catalogue complements the eponymous exhibition held in Madrid at the ICO Foundation from July to September of 2014, and is also an outcome of a sponsored research project led by Iñaki Bergera and developed by a team of sixteen researchers from different universities in Spain. The editor, Víctor Pérez Escolano and Alberto Martín open the book with three essays that underline the void that persists in contemporary historiography in terms of the photographers’ role in the construction of Spanish architectural culture, in order to introduce a subsequent “anthology of architectural photographs” that unearth documents from more than twenty archives. Well-known photographers, such as Francesc Català-Roca, Joaquín del Palacio/Kindel, or Nicolas Muller, but also lesser-known and even forgotten professionals such as Jesús García Ferriz, José Galle Gallego or Cristóbal Portillo, are shown in these pages as a collective recognition of their artistic work. This is a document without precedents, which finds a place in the history of Spanish architecture for that delightful partnership represented by the work of architecture and its dissemination through its photographic reproduction.

Lucía C. Pérez Moreno.



### **Mies in Brno. The Tugendhat House**

Edited by Iveta Černá and  
Dagmar Černoušková  
Publisher: Brno City Museum  
ISBN: 978-80-86549-23-1  
Language: English  
Year: 2013

Grete and Fritz Tugendhat’s house was designed in 1928-1929 by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, one of the most distinguished architects of the twentieth century. The house is quite exceptional for its construction, spatial arrangement, interior furnishing and interaction with the garden and technical facilities. The importance of this unique work of art for the history of modern architecture was proclaimed in 2001 with its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Tugendhat House was built in multicultural Brno, which played a leading role in European modern architecture in the period between the two world wars. The house’s enlightened owners, however, did not long derive pleasure from it. After 1938, when the Tugendhats abandoned Brno ahead of the coming Nazism, the building’s function was transformed in a similar way to the dramatic historical events in the area where it stands. After many decades of indifference, it gained the attention it deserved only after the revolution in 1989.

The monograph *Mies in Brno. The Tugendhat House* is the first comprehensive work about the history of this celebrated icon of modern architecture, from its origins up to its renovation and restoration in 2010-2012.

It presents not only well-known facts about the building, but also a range of new information which has so far not been published. The book loosely follows on from the ambitious publication projects tracing Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s work in the USA and in Germany (*Mies in America* and *Mies in Berlin*).

From the editors.

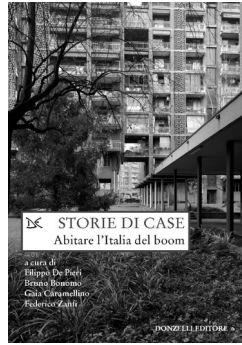


**Architektur der Sehnsucht. 20  
Schweizer Ferienhäuser aus dem 20.  
Jahrundert**

Edited by Reto Gadola  
 Publisher: gta Verlag  
 ISBN: 978-3-85676-322-0  
 Language: German  
 Year: 2013

A cottage has always other functions than the housing one: it offers space for dreams, illusions, adventure, relaxation and inspiration. *Architektur der Sehnsucht* presents small recreational buildings, embedded into the most beautiful regions of Switzerland. The resulting 1920-1980 buildings are from the “classical” modernism, continuing through the run-up to the World War II, the post-war era, and from burgeoning postmodernism. Many of the builders are renowned architects such as Alfred Roth, Lux Guyer, Ernst Gisel or Rudolf Olgiati, but there are also some unknown gems and architectural surprises among the works. Each house is presented with informative and descriptive texts, current photographs and plan drawings. The 6 in-depth essays developed by architects, historians and art historians, together with the 20 building monographs, offer an unexplored perspective on the architectural history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Translated from the Publisher.



**Storie di Case.  
Abitare l'Italia del Boom**

Edited by Filippo De Pieri, Bruno Bonomo,  
 Gaia Caramellino and Federico Zanfi  
 Publisher: Donzelli editore  
 ISBN: 978-88-6036-879-9  
 Language: Italian  
 Year: 2013

The episodic film, composed of a number of short and apparently disconnected stories, was a particularly common form of expression of the Italian postwar cinema. Introduced at the beginning as a translation of international models, the episodic film quickly reached a broad spectrum of experimentations, involving almost all important and lesser known Italian directors from the 1950s to the 1970s. These movies were usually characterized by unpretentious and light autonomous stories that were connected by a wider general theme. What made these experiments particularly successful and interesting was their narrative method: avoiding the form of a novel, these juxtaposed episodes, often just satirical comments, were able to narrate in an original way bigger contemporary issues, wider critiques of national costumes, and were offering often unusual portraits of the rapidly changing Italian society.

*Storie di Case. Abitare l'Italia del boom*, edited by F. De Pieri, B. Bonomo, G. Caramellino, F. Zanfi is, in a kind of way, an episodic film of the history of Italian architecture and cities of the 1950s and 1970s. The book comprises 23 short stories about 23 unknown and apparently anonymous buildings, chosen almost casually from the vast urban landscape of three major Italian cities (Rome, Milan, Turin). The research, conducted with accuracy through archival and oral sources by different authors, aims to investigate, as De Pieri calls it in the introduction, the “ordinary landscape” of Italian postwar reality. The objects of the historiographic analysis are not

the masterpieces of the residential architecture of Albini, Gardella or Moretti, not the vicissitudes of the housing complexes of the national program Ina-Casa, but buildings that have never been part of any institutional history of architecture, houses that have never been mentioned in any city or architectural guides.

However, these micro-histories have many common themes. Here it is useful to state just two of them: on one side they all talk about the physical outcomes that Italian modernization left on the city, during its fastest growth; on the other side they describe the “taste” of modernization that characterized the city’s common inhabitant. The urban sprawl of the postwar cities was formed entirely by buildings built by real estate companies, in an endless negotiation with the State, often altering its original master plans: a process that took place outside the jurisdiction and the ideological aspiration of the Italian official architectural culture that provoked debates, polemics and finally epochal disillusionment. But, at the same time, the reality of this historic process, condensed in the buildings that are the subject of this book, reveals the desires and the aspirations of a nation (“a collective autobiography”, to recall again De Pieri) that created after the war, almost from nothing, its identity and ultimately its innovativeness. The many details that are reported in the essays, together with a brilliant photographic reportage made by Stefano Graziani, constitute a small encyclopedia of the visual imagining of the Italian economic miracle, which reveals an incredible general belief in modernity of that period, which is today totally lost.

This precious collection of details, these numerous small stories, sometimes lack a general recapitulation. The voluminous evidence gathered by the authors does not always automatically lead to conclusions, especially in understanding the homogeneity or diversity shared by the different case-studies. But as it often happens with an intriguing story, one is always curious to learn more about it.

Luka Skansi.