

## Living in the Stuttgart Weissenhofsiedlung 1927-2017, in-depth focuses and interpretations

Goethe-Institut I Rome, May 9-June 17, 2018

Open House Roma, May 12-13, 2018

The exhibition features the work of in-depth study and creative interpretation of some aspects of the Stuttgart Weissenhof Estate, a small experimental neighbourhood built by some of the major European architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century under the direction of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The settlement was part of a big exposition planned by the Deutscher Werkbund from July to September 1927 also as a response to the acclaimed 1925 Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts of Paris. It featured 60 lodgings in total, mostly different from each other save for those designed by Dutch architects Oud and Stam. Only 11 of the 21 original buildings have survived in their original shapes.

The estate as well as the entire Ausstellung were the meeting point of German and European *fortschrittliche* – progressive – artists following the painful phase of post-war ‘stabilisation’ that culminated with the draft of the Constitution of the Weimar Republic in 1919. One of the surviving buildings, namely the Haus 14-15 created by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret now featured in the Unesco World Heritage list, currently shelters a museum on the history of the estate.

Besides its architectural and artistic values, the Weissenhofsiedlung encapsulates the history of Germany itself in political, entrepreneurial, and artistic terms 1919 through 1927: the street names – given in 1927 and remained unaltered ever since – feature Friedrich Ebert, President of the Republic 1919-1925; Walther Rathenau, national hero; Peter Bruckmann, the main organizer of the event; Adolf Hoelzel, who directed the Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart for several years and helped train the new generation from Itten to Schlemmer; and Bernhard Pankok, co-founder of the Werkbund and director of the Stuttgart Decorative Arts School, one of the cradles of the renewal of 20<sup>th</sup>-century European industrial design.

Our aim was to discuss some of the remaining historical buildings in their organizational, material, and aesthetic aspects. Not all the surviving 11 buildings of the Colony were the object of analyses and interpretations, nor were the buildings our only focus: architecture was explored in Mies van der Rohe’s Haus 1-4; design and communication considered a wider number of buildings, while artistic recreations took inspiration from the works of two personalities who prevailed in the complex: Willi Baumeister and Richard Lisker.

Therefore, the exhibition itinerary is divided in 5 sections: 1) Architecture designs and models; 2) and 3) Interpretations and concept of Product design, graphics, and communication; 4) Original artistic re-elaborations; 5) City and interiors in the German cinema of the 1920’s including some rare period films.

The exhibition, organized with the Rome Goethe-Institut by Embrice2030, the Roma Tre University Department of Architecture and the Sapienza University Department of Architecture Planning, Design and Technology, is curated by Milena Farina, Giovanni Longobardi, Giovanna Spadafora and Giuliano Valeri for Roma Tre; Federica Dal Falco and Sabrina Lucibello for Sapienza University; Vittorio Giusepponi, Diana Giaisa Rinaldi, and Carla Scura for Embrice2030.

The exhibits are the outcome of a workshop on this theme held at the Goethe-Institut last year with the participation of architecture undergraduates and post-graduates of both Roman universities along with researchers and young artists revolving around the association for social promotion Embrice2030.