GERRIT Th. RIETVELD

1888 1964

The complete works

Marijke Küper Ida van Zijl

Na gebruik retour aan:

Cecile Bögels,
CM bureau presentatie

GERRIT Th. RIETVELD

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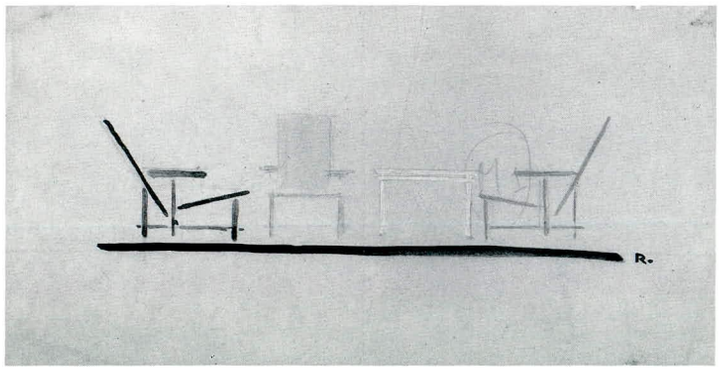
Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992



Drawing
pencil, paint on paper
15,1 x 24,9 cm
c. 1923
RSA

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Foreword

In 1917 Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964) opened a furniture workshop in Utrecht. The following year the prototype of the now renowned Red Blue chair appeared. In 1924, after some ten minor conversions and facade alterations, he designed a dwelling that is now one of the world s famous buildings: the Rietveld Schröder House. Less well-known is the fact that when Rietveld died in 1964 he left an oeuvre containing no fewer than 215 furniture designs, 232 designs for buildings and 249 other designs. Now for the first time Rietveld s legacy has been assembled in one book.

What place will history assign to a furniture maker, designer and architect whose name is generally associated with a chair and a house? For the city of Utrecht, Rietveld always remained a somewhat ambivalent figure – the carpenter who built a house. The city authorities were never cooperative and the only public 'building' he made for them was a bicycle shed by Central Station, that has since been pulled down. And a year before his death a motorway was built almost through the front garden of the famous Rietveld Schröder House. The fact that the house was saved is thanks to Truus Schröder-Schräder, for whom it was built, who also ordained in her will that it remain open to the public after her death. Yet Rietveld bequeathed to the city of Utrecht thirteen private dwellings and housing projects and left the beginnings of a collection which from 1995 will be quartered in a special Rietveld department of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht.

Internationally, Rietveld is recognized as one of the great Dutch artistic talents who emerged in the period between the two world wars. The shining light of Berlage was waning, the brown and plush of the late nineteenth century was discarded, artists and architects with new ideas and outlooks, such as Mondrian, Van der Leck, J.J.P. Oud and Van 't Hoff, were emerging. From 1919, when Theo van Doesburg saw the as-yet-unpainted version of the Red Blue chair and Rietveld joined Van Doesburg's group connected with the *De Stijl* publication, his name became a household word among the international avant-garde. In 1924 the Rietveld Schröder House made an emphatic statement about the De Stijl ideas. His house and his furniture were discussed from Moscow to Madrid and inspired young designers from Utrecht to Weimar.

Furthermore, the ideas that Rietveld had begun to explore in his 1924-built house were to last him a lifetime.

Rietveld's fame, originally confined to a small group of insiders, was to develop into something as large as this retrospective exhibition – the first huge Rietveld survey since his 1958 exhibition in the Utrecht Centraal Museum. The present exhibition shows his development from the start until his death, and has as its point of departure the coherence between Rietveld's furniture and his architecture. It is also the first Rietveld exhibition that will be shown outside Europe. In this publication Rietveld's complete work is systematically opened up. Thanks to a recently completed study of the archives in the Netherlands Architecture Institute, where the Rietveld Archive and the Rietveld, Van Dillen and Van Tricht Archive from the period 1924-1964 are administered, containing several pieces of furniture, maquettes, photos, correspondence and thousands of sketches, as well as those in the Centraal Museum Utrecht, where is kept the Rietveld Schröder Archive, we are now able to present a comprehensive book. The catalogue contains descriptions of 681 items as well as a complete bibliography and biography. It will provide an essential component for any further research on Rietveld.

It is impossible to imagine that once this book has been published the name of Rietveld will mean no more to most people than a chair made in 1918 and a house built in 1924. From now on, the question as to the position Rietveld deserves in history can be expected to get a well-founded answer. Whatever the outcome, we sincerely hope that this book, a joint production of the Netherlands Architecture Institute and the Centraal Museum Utrecht, will prove a stimulus to preserve with care the precious cultural estate of movable and immovable property that Rietveld left us.

Sjarel Ex
Director, Centraal Museum Utrecht

Adri Duivesteijn
Director, Netherlands Architecture Institute

Acknowledgements

This publication, together with the exhibition Gerrit Rietveld 1888-1964 , is the result of years of research and of assembling and administering the collection.

During the preparation of this book and exhibition, help and assistance was provided by many people and institutions.

Our special thanks go to the heirs of Gerrit Rietveld, the heirs of Mrs Schröder and the board of the Rietveld Schröder House Foundation. During all these years, we encountered sincere and personal interest in our work on the part of Mrs E. Eskes-Rietveld, Mrs V. Noppen-Rietveld, Mr B. Schröder and Mr G. van de Groenekan. This was equally true of Mrs M. Schröder and Mrs H. Schröder, who unfortunately did not live to see the completion of this work.

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Rietveld in front of the furniture workshop at 25, Adriaen van Ostadelaan.
Photo 1918.

Gerrit Thomas Rietveld
1888-1964

The first monograph on Rietveld appeared in 1958, written by the American art historian Theodore M. Brown. In the same year his first retrospective was held in the Centraal Museum Utrecht, entitled 'Rietveld. A contribution to architectural renewal.' You might suppose that Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, the most famous Dutch architect of the twentieth century, would in the years that followed have been a subject of systematic study and investigation. You would be wrong. Until the 1980s the work by Brown was the major source of information. Furthermore, international interest in the De Stijl movement from the 1970s on gradually began to cast its shadow over the independent nature of Rietveld's work. The Rietveld retrospective held in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1971 provided insufficient compensation for this tendency.

A distorted picture of Rietveld developed, not only among the public at large, but also among specialists and admirers. In 1980 the American art historian Scott Burton, writing about the Red Blue chair said: '... and it soon became the quintessential De Stijl object, the group's icon. It's too famous, actually. Its celebrity is at the expense of our appreciation of Rietveld's whole range.'[1] The cliché-like picture was strengthened even more by the international exhibition on De Stijl held in Holland and America – with the title 'Visions of Utopia' – in 1982. In the catalogue, Rietveld's work was considered solely from the point of view of De Stijl. The functionalist and idealistic motives in his work, which from the very beginning went hand in hand with his aesthetic ideals, were neglected. In an essay discussing the furniture, Martin Filler links the work of Rietveld, in an associative manner, with the ideas of Mondrian and Van Doesburg. His unrestrained enthusiasm for Rietveld produced the remarkable sentence: 'One can imagine the unrecorded great moment in design history when Rietveld, after prolonged contemplation of the red/blue chair, shook his head and said something to the effect of: "Nee, laten wij het proberen zonder de zijkanten. ("No, let's try it without sides.").'[2] What was already known about Rietveld's development during this period seems here to have been forgotten and the unlimited praise of his early work at the same time produces a smoke curtain that obscures everything made later.

The first correction of the cliché, which strapped Rietveld to his Red Blue chair and the Rietveld Schröder House, was made in 1982 in the collection of essays edited by Carel Blotkamp under the title 'De Stijl: the formative years'. In the article on Rietveld, Marijke Küper describes how he came in contact with De Stijl and in what way this influenced his work. This article was to be the basis for the present study. Also in 1982, the biography of Rietveld by Frits Bless was published.

It was the transfer of the Rietveld Schröder House and the Rietveld Schröder Archive to the Centraal Museum Utrecht in 1987 that set in motion a systematic study of Rietveld's life and work. In the same year it was decided to publish a new book, in combination with a retrospective, destined to travel abroad.

The research gained an enormous fillip from the systematization and scholarly editing of the Rietveld Schröder Archive. Meanwhile, other sources had also become available. The Netherlands Architecture Institute had inventoried the archives of Rietveld, Eskes-Rietveld and Rietveld, Van Dillen and Van Tricht. The collection in the Centraal Museum Utrecht had expanded from the 34 items – furniture and maquettes – donated by Rietveld himself in 1958, to about 150 pieces, with as jewel in the crown the Rietveld Schröder House, opened to the public in 1987. Furthermore, in the second half of the 1980s many items from private collections came on the market. Fortunately, the most important pieces could be kept in the Netherlands. Interest in Rietveld's less-known work increased through all this, as did the desire for greater information about it.

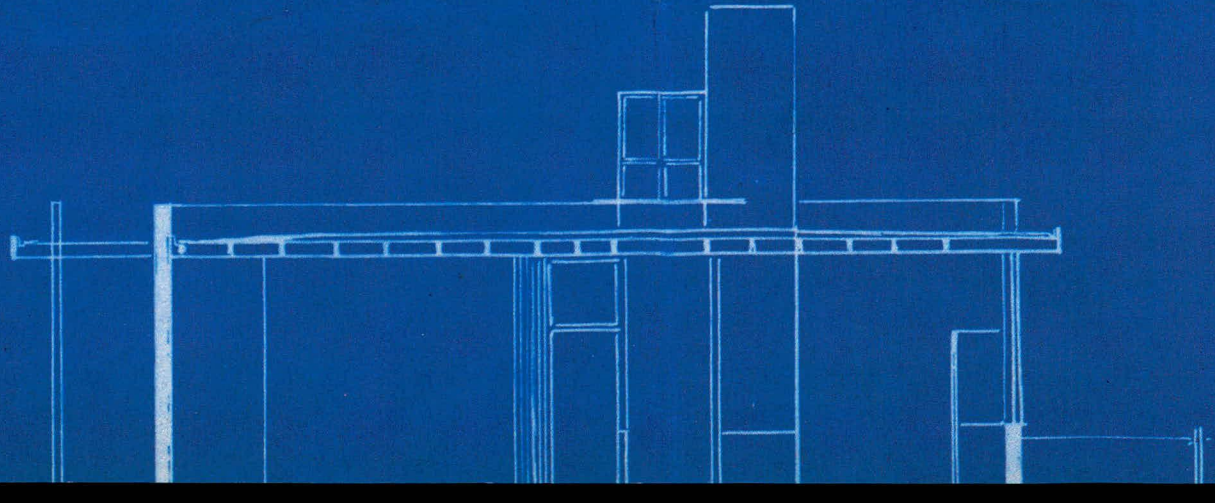
The publications that have appeared over the past years partially met this need. In 1991 Henny Rodijk produced an overview of the private dwellings by Rietveld and to coincide with the present book there will be one on the furniture designs, written by Peter Vöge. These, together with other smaller publications, treat various aspects of Rietveld's work. But there was no complete study.

The primary aim of the present study of Rietveld's work was to provide a complete inventory. This implied not only an examination of the archive material and other sources, but also involved visiting all the extant buildings and holding countless conversations with the clients, the residents, with family, friends and assistants. This book is the first fruit. A second book is in preparation, to contain an extensive biography and an analysis of Rietveld's achievement. This oeuvre catalogue offers the opportunity for the first time of seeing each item within the context of the entire work, thus placing it and interpreting it. This makes it easier to follow the nature of Rietveld's work, which is scarcely possible when presented in a selection that ignores relations between objects.

The extent of Rietveld's work exceeded all estimates. In total 681 numbers have been included in this catalogue and many of these represent not just one object but several designs made for

The Rietveld Schröder House, detail of a design drawing from 1924, RSA.

ZY AANZICHT



one commission, or all the furniture and the layout for one particular interior. The number of designs that were actually made is also far greater than was generally assumed. Furniture that until now had only been known from drawings turned out still to be privately owned, and there is a definite possibility that following the publication of this catalogue even more will surface.

Rietveld was active for almost two thirds of the twentieth century. The Nieuwe Bouwen (Functionalism) movement flourished during his lifetime and also partly turned down a dead-end street. Rietveld was one of the pioneers of this movement. At the same time his work was definitely made in Holland: the background and the financial position of his clients, the regulations with which every architect inevitably has to deal, the technical limitations and the materials available – all these were typically Dutch.

The chief result of this research has been a broadening of outlook – we now see more clearly the essential qualities of Rietveld. Thus we realize that he was not the dogmatic figure he has often been held to be. His ideas were in general very liberal and unrestricted, far more so than many of his colleagues from De Stijl and Nieuwe Bouwen. For although he usually preferred certain stylistic elements such as flat roofs, whitewashed walls and straight lines, he never on principle rejected sloping thatched roofs, green painted planks or curving lines.

He regularly engaged in activities that are not strictly in the realm of architecture and design. During his training he had mastered various disciplines connected with the visual arts such as drawing and painting. He had also studied modelling and was an accomplished metalworker. Although in the days when he worked with De Stijl he theoretically supported the cooperation between painters, sculptors and architects, in practice he kept others as much as possible at arm's length. He preferred to design everything himself, right down to the finest detail, even the lettering on shop fronts or stationery heading for his clients. Later, in his publications and lectures, he expressed his support for the independent development of the various arts, while he propelled the concept of cooperation into a distant future. He was, of course, obliged to cooperate when it came to exhibitions, displays and the designing of trade fairs. Much of this work is far from spectacular – in fact, often downright disappointing. Only certain details reveal the Rietveld touch.

Rietveld was consistent in his ideas, his method and his goal. Already between the years 1915 and 1925 he had established for himself what were to be the central themes of his work. He aimed for an architecture and design that would help people to experience space; for mass production so that everyone could benefit from this work; and for a sobriety that would liberate people from the tyranny of the superfluous. It has become customary to describe Rietveld's work in terms of what he did *not* do, as for example: he didn't use ornamentation, he didn't use unnecessary

forms, he didn't use solid, traditional materials, he didn't make strong constructions.

However, it seems more appropriate to speak of Rietveld's inspired work in positive terms. His was the ability to wipe the slate clean, to give form to the unknown and unimagined and, with the result before him, to pose again the same questions. The much quoted remark that architecture is the creation of space, only means something once you realize how through the years Rietveld put to the test the consequences of this statement, how he continually tried to eradicate the boundaries between outside and inside, between the building and its setting, all the time making use of new technological improvements. For him, the quality of a space was bound up with its 'intact' and 'clear' nature, as he wrote in 1958: '...when we build we should never lose a sense of relativity and we should aim for soberness, but however we are building, it will only become real for us, only bring us joy, if that visual sense of space that we are offering to another as a gift while retaining it ourselves, is not broken up, but remains intact, transparent and above all, clear.'[3]

Here we find the greatest quality of Rietveld's work, and it is only in a complete presentation that we can do justice to his exceptional preoccupation with space. The relatively small appreciation for the designs he made for dwellings in the 1950s can probably be traced back to the fact that people would not or could not recognize this most essential element. At first glance these houses do not appear to differ from much of the postwar building of other architects, with their flat roofs, large windows and whitewashed walls. But the subtle play of balanced measurements, the carefully directed fall of light, the pastel colours and the grey-toned walls, together with the sober finishings, betray the hand of the master.

Rietveld's soberness, his desire to avoid the superfluous, forms a direct link with the attention he paid to the effect of space. It can be seen in both his architecture and his unfussy furniture made from plywood or deal, and in his choice of materials for important rooms where for example, linoleum, painted plywood and simple fabrics sufficed to realize the architectural ideal of a clear and intact space.

The connection between the designs for houses and for furniture becomes plain when they are arranged chronologically. What we notice first is the similarity of form. Colour, asymmetry and curved lines are introduced at the same moment in these two areas. The use of materials also shows parallels. In the case of both furniture and architecture, glass and iron appear on the scene in the second half of the 1920s. There is also a connection in the concentration of activities. A large number of architectural commissions meant in practice few furniture designs, or else furniture that was directly linked to the building in question.

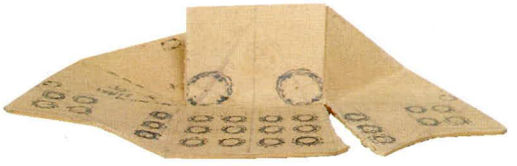
Right from the start Rietveld's work was based on a social awareness. His preoccupation with standardizing and mass

1927

1930/40

1935/40

1935/40



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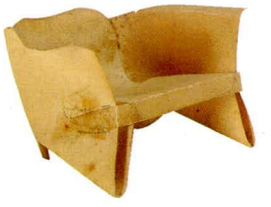

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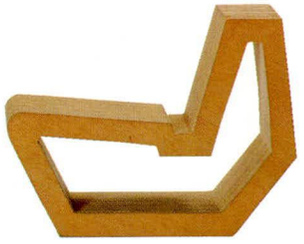
Various maquettes of chairs;
NAi and RSA



1938

1953

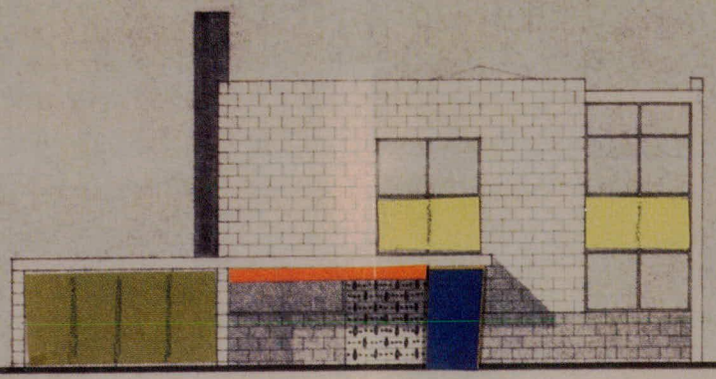
1958

production went together with the wish that the new architecture and designs should serve as wide a public as possible. Furthermore, the industrial production process would, he was convinced, bring to an end the soul-destroying handwork which he knew from experience only too well. This aspect of Rietveld's work is virtually forgotten because of the limited success he achieved in the area. As is often the case, the cliché is absolutely true: Rietveld was far ahead of his time. Both the designs he made for chairs from one piece of material, and the core dwellings in which the sanitary sections were to be made to a standard design, were not taken up until much later by others. At the time when Rietveld launched his ideas, industry was often incapable of implementing them, while the consumer was unprepared to accept them. This overview of Rietveld's work, which also includes all the architectural plans that were not realized, as well as all the prototypes for furniture, shows how systematically he investigated the possibilities of mass production and how effective and forward-looking were his solutions.

There are some popular conceptions about Rietveld that no longer appear tenable when we consider his work as a whole. Rietveld was not a simple cabinet-maker who was discovered by Van Doesburg. Although he had not followed an official training in architecture he had greatly added to his artisanal knowledge by studying. The technical imperfections that are now often the main feature of anecdotal accounts tend to be more characteristic of modern architecture, in which experiments are made with new materials and construction methods, than typical of Rietveld's craftsmanship.

Crucial in Rietveld's development was the De Stijl movement. But that development had begun long before. Thus we see that Rietveld's work is only partially related to the ideas and idiom of De Stijl. As member of the CIAM, Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, and through his publications, he contributed to the passionate discussions on architecture and design that were so essential a part of the Nieuwe Bouwen circles. As teacher at several art academies he disseminated his ideas to an entire new generation of architects and designers. This is clear from his summarized biography that provides a picture of his social activities, and from the list of his published articles, six of which have been translated and included in their entirety in this book.

In his lifetime Rietveld was certainly not a misunderstood genius. Particularly from 1925 to 1935 he was seen as a major figure both nationally and internationally. The trade journals followed his work thoughtfully and critically. This appreciation can be clearly seen from the chronologically arranged bibliography. The years 1935-45 formed a caesura in his career. At the very moment when he was ready to reap the benefits of his architectural reputation, the Depression began to be felt, followed by the Second World War. When this was over and the Netherlands



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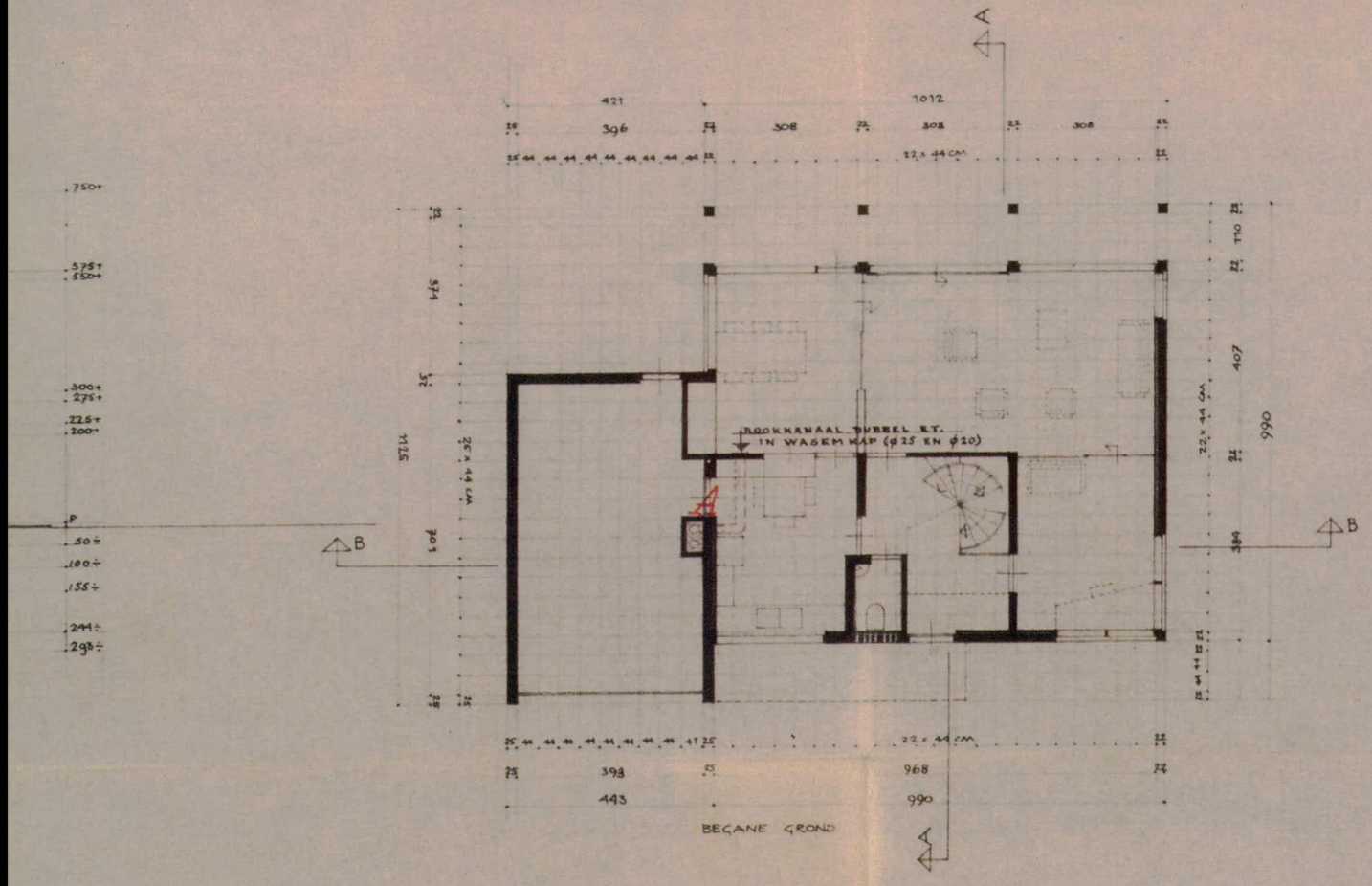


BEGANE GROND

began its postwar reconstruction, Rietveld found himself having to compete with a new generation of architects. Despite his outspoken ideas on social housing, he did not manage to achieve much in this area. Furthermore, many commissions were not realized for apparently trifling reasons – as you can read here and there in the catalogue. Only in the last ten years of Rietveld's career did he receive commissions that were in accordance with his significance in the development of Modernism. The criticism of Modernism for its monotony and predictability, that arose in the 1970s and 80s, is possibly one reason why his later work has received relatively little attention.

It almost appears as if Rietveld foresaw that the outward form of this movement in twentieth-century architecture would come to dominate the experimental content. In an unpublished text containing 'considerations upon architecture' he warns against the following: '... a superfluity of worthless products, too much noise, too many different shapes, too much information. ... This too much also affects our architecture. ... After the stylistic chaos of the nineteenth century there came expressions that were simple and sober. Now all these so-called abstract and functional forms have been multiplied in their hundreds, and the situation is worse than that in the old shop for lamps, crammed full of sham electric candles that just invited someone to pull out a gun and shoot – nowadays the modern shop for lamps asks for a machine gun.'[4]

We should see the contribution Rietveld wanted to make to the renewal of architecture as a permanent process, something that may lead to a variety of architectural forms. Or, as the introduction to the catalogue from 1958 concluded: 'It would be wrong to think that we have reached final solutions. The possibilities offered by technology and spatial relationships are endless.'[5]

The Theissing dwelling, detail of a design drawing from 1958, RSA.

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl
Utrecht, 13 September 1992

[1] Burton 1980.
[2] Exhib. cat. New York/Minneapolis 1982, 130.
[3] Bless 1982, 239.
[4] RSA, unpublished manuscript, c. 1960.
5 Exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 1.

G. Rietveld

elke ware schepping (of ze in den vorm van uitvinding, gebouw, schilderij, dans of muziek verschijnt) verandert het inzicht, de eischen en de behoeften van den tijd en komt in botsing met nog heerschende eischen en behoeften uit vorige perioden.
een schepping moet dus de plaats **veroveren** in plaats van te beantwoorden aan de geldende eischen en de noodzakelijkheid.

rietveld.

Page from *De Stijl* 7 (1927) 79-84, 46.

Introduction

Writing is an art in itself
Gerrit Rietveld 1939

Rietveld is not known as an architect whose work was founded on theoretical reflections. The beginning of one of his first articles, in *i10* from 1927, explains much:
'In order to make something it is, in my opinion, not at all necessary to be able first to give an explanation or justification of why it has to be like *this*: on the contrary, the need to express in form is partially satisfied, if it has already been possible to say it in words. The working process is seldom adjusted to the explanation, no matter how neat that is.'

The number of texts which Rietveld left is much larger than has until now been assumed. He has some hundred publications to his name. When his first piece, 'Note on a child's chairs was published in the July 1919 issue of *De Stijl*, he was 31 years old. At that time Rietveld was still working as a cabinet-maker and not as an architect. This article includes his justification of his decision to make wood joints with dowels.

Rietveld evidently preferred designing and building to writing, that much is clear, but he was convinced all the same of the importance of publishing. It offered an opportunity of bringing his ideas to the attention of a larger public than only his friends and colleagues. His first publications appeared in *De Stijl* and *i10*. Initially, he did not find it easy going. From the correspondence between Rietveld and J.J.P. Oud, who was architecture editor for *i10*, it appears that the latter sometimes had difficulty in discovering exactly what Rietveld meant. In his attempts to communicate his ideas to the reader, Rietveld had the tendency to repeat his train of thought in different words. Furthermore, he had a strong disposition to qualify his statements. He often used subordinate clauses which toned down what preceded them. He urged Oud not to use his texts if Oud thought them 'waffle'. Rietveld was a better and more exciting speaker than writer. The style of his articles is colloquial. They are best read out loud; the proper intonation contributes greatly to a finer understanding.

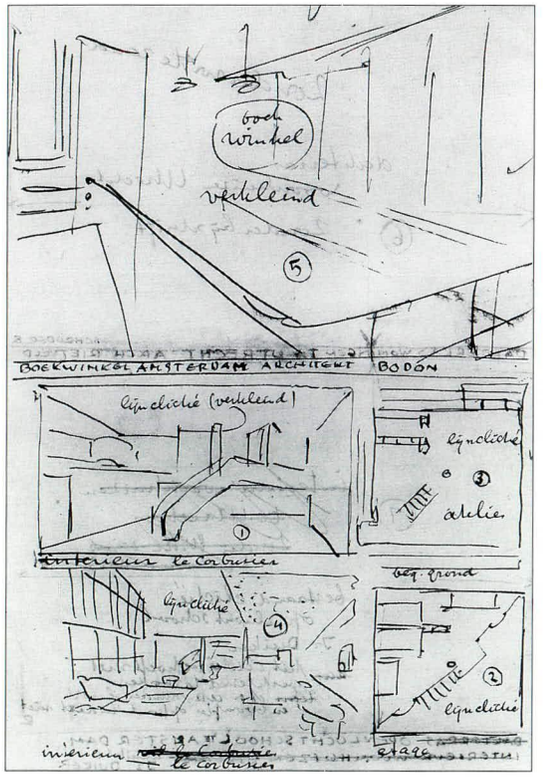
The subjects on which he wrote, varied from discussions of other people's work to more general themes. One of the questions which occupied Rietveld all his life is the relationship between painting, sculpture and architecture. He had a very pronounced opinion on this: everything which impeded a clear perception of the space must be avoided. Colours and forms therefore must also be avoided, to the extent that they blurred the image. The three disciplines had to develop independently of each other before they could be integrated in a single work. In 1928, when Rietveld first wrote about this, the time, he felt, was not yet ripe for it, nor was it ripe in 1964, according to his last writings.

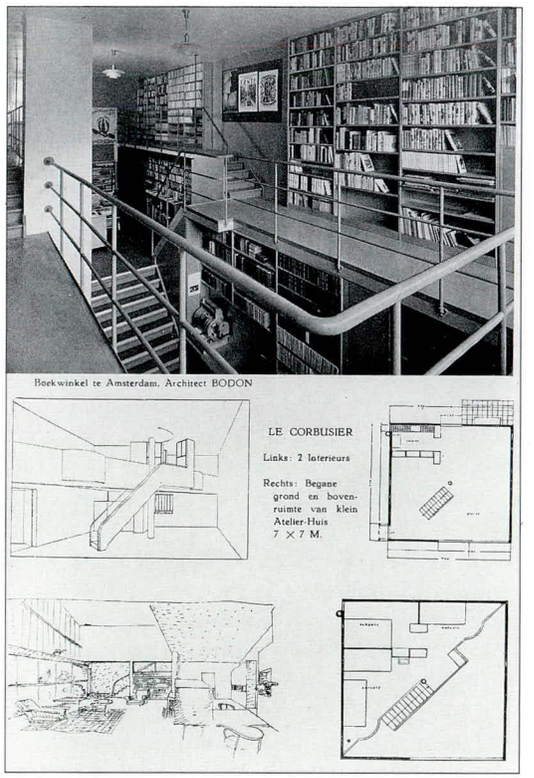
The choice of the six texts printed hereafter aims to give a representative image of Rietveld the 'writer' and the themes which interested him.

The first article, 'Chairs', was published in 1930 in the journal *De werkende vrouw*, which had been founded in that same year. An Harrenstein-Schräder, the sister of Truus Schröder-Schräder, was editor of the journal.
The article was framed with drawings of chairs: medieval, stately and simple chairs, Thonet chairs, chairs by Rietveld himself, by Marcel Breuer and by Le Corbusier, the first chair without back legs – by Mart Stam – and an office chair which Truus Schröder-Schräder had in her house and which Rietveld had drawn. The article opened with a verse (incorrectly quoted by Rietveld, incidentally) from the poem *Der Aesthet* by Christian Morgenstern:

Wenn ich sitze, will ich nicht
sitzen, wie mein Sitz-Fleisch möchte
sondern wie mein Sitz-Geist sich
säße er, den Stuhl sich flöchte.

Rietveld was apparently so taken with the idea that people should not sit as the body desires but as the spiritual requirement dictates, that he had the quote printed on stickers. In the 1930s he occasionally put the stickers under his chairs. The article, one of the few which Rietveld wrote about furniture, is based on the proposition that no solution has yet been found for a chair in which construction and form are satisfactorily united. Machine manufacture, new constructions and materials, concludes





Layout for page and page from *De Vrije Bladen* 9 (1932) schrift 7, New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture.

Rietveld, indicate the direction in which the solution must be sought.

'Rational Design' is a lecture given at the end of the academic year 1952/53, at the Secondary Technical School for Architecture/College of Art in The Hague. In 1950 this college started a course in Industrial Design, which was given on Fridays and Saturdays. The intention was to train designers who would be capable of designing quality products with which the Netherlands could compete with other countries. Rietveld was appointed teacher of practical aesthetics and of design. More than twenty years separate 'Chairs' and 'Rational Design'. In fact, Rietveld was still presenting himself as a rationalistic designer, but with the nuance and self-criticism of someone who has been active in the profession for more than thirty years.

The text 'New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture' appeared in 1932 in *De Vrije Bladen*. In a letter to Oud, in which Rietveld asks him for pictures of his work to use as illustration for the article, he wrote succinctly on the contents: 'I have tried to show how everything led to that [the New Functionalism, M.K.] and what the transitions were.' He told Oud that he mentioned him by name in the article as 'the first to clearly lay down the direction', 'don't get angry about it' added Rietveld. Rietveld himself designed the pages. As illustrations, apart from his own work he chose buildings by J.A. Brinkman and L.C. van der Vlugt, A. Bodon, J. Duiker and J.J.P. Oud. Le Corbusier was the only foreign architect whose work he showed: sketches of a studio-house.

For the publication of 'Interiors', a typescript from 1947 has been used of a lecture which Rietveld gave in March 1948 to students at the academy of Fine Arts in Rotterdam. The text was published in the same year in two parts, in *Bouwkundig Weekblad*. In the introduction Rietveld uses the interior as a metaphor for architectural and urban organization, citing the Rockefeller Plaza in New York as an example of the largest and most exciting man-made interior he has ever seen: 'an almost abstract definition of space'. The text then continues somewhat chaotically, Rietveld often wandering off from the subject, although this is not such a disaster: his words are personal, valuable and topical.

'Some remarks about architecture considered as one of the visual arts', which was published in 1939 in the sixth issue of *De 8 en Opbouw*, is representative of Rietveld's view on the merging of different arts. The observation that art is something different from beauty, and the common confusion between these two concepts, is also the point of departure of the article 'Insight' which Rietveld wrote in 1928. Here his second hobbyhorse was also extensively discussed. As in 'Insight', in 'Some remarks' Rietveld emphasizes the importance of the senses for the experience of reality and for the development of consciousness, but also the limitations of the senses and the subjective character of the information they pass on. He distinguishes the sense of sight into three kinds of perception: 'seeing colour', 'seeing forms' and 'seeing space'. In 1939 he was to repeat: 'In my opinion, the three plastic arts must develop completely independently of each other.' 'A sculpted newel post is *applied art*', he continued, perhaps thinking of Robert van 't Hoff's 'Stijl newel post', 'but a free standing piece of sculpture, a figure, for instance, in which the upper part and back are no less important than the front, can sometimes find such a good setting in a large hall at the foot of a staircase; while losing none of its plasticity, it also fulfils an architectural function.'

Rietveld looked for his examples very close to home, no outdated applied arts but an autonomous sculpture: behind his description lurks the image of the hallway which he had converted four years before for Mrs A.H. Hondius-Crone in Bloemendaal. In that hall, at the foot of the stairs, there was a small sculpture by Jozef Cantré. To attempt to theorize but at the same time remember examples from practice which form the exceptions, created a dilemma – but one which could be overcome. Rietveld often remarked that it was a characteristic of the artist to say one thing one day, and to make the opposite the next.

The last text, 'Architecture', is a lecture from 1958, which was published in 1959 in *De Nieuwe Stem*. It is a text which takes a look at the past and gives examples from Rietveld's contemporary work. Completely in line with his attitude to life he closed the lecture with the words: 'Let me finish then by wishing you enthusiasm, a lust for life, simplicity and sobriety, not to mention your share of good luck!'

Sticker with a verse
from a poem by
Christian Morgenstern,
c. 1930, RSA.

Chairs

Many difficult constructions have been solved satisfactorily and have acquired their generally accepted form; how is it then that a satisfactory solution has not yet been found for a simple construction such as a chair, as, for instance, has been done with the bicycle or, even more simply, spoons?

Sitting is surely a simple enough activity.

The legs of a chair have to maintain the seat at a specific height above the ground. Every movement when one is sitting gives a jolt to the construction and this means that a chair has to be capable of much more resistance than it would require for its simple support function. This is why a chair that is strong enough practically speaking, will have an appearance that, for a simple function such as sitting, is unnecessarily heavy. The best chairs turned out to be those made of a somewhat flexible material, where the resistance is reinforced in proportion to the force applied. (Curved wood: the Thonet chair, or curved steel tubing.) There is still one weak point: that the connecting parts may become movable.

Chairs do not have to be any representation of the idea of sitting, but they are as it were the supporting part of the people who are sitting – the extension of their supple spines; this is why it is not yet over and done with.

A chair has to be more mobile and free in a space than a sofa.

The various ways in which you can sit, as well as the uncertainty about the forces that the construction has to resist and the various shapes of human beings who will occupy a chair, all this means that, instead of being a simple task, chairs have become a complicated problem.

There are probably as many types of chair as there are types of people.

Every chair seems to be a stylization of an attitude to life. The cheapest mass-produced chair, no less than the most imposing armchair, is a being made of wood, cane, leather, plush or metal.

Chairs, though they are familiar objects, are little understood. An article for everyday use whose use has not yet been defined with any precision. A construction whose outward appearance seems to be the main thing. An outward appearance whose purpose is construction and use.

The purpose of every stylistic period is not to come up with variations of form, but rather to find the true and only possible solution for construction and manufacture; a balanced whole in which the practical requirements of a practicable construction are solved in an economical fashion.

Because this ideal has not yet been achieved, a form or method of manufacture has come about by which the object is made of a single piece.

Every period has done this in a different way (one can approach the matter from different angles). This is how all the different sorts came about.

The shape of chairs and their method of manufacture have changed continually and this has become more important than their structures, which, in fact, have differed very little from each other.

Gradually the shape has become regarded as the most important aspect and the solution of the problem of the chair has been treated as a question of form.

Chairs are little by little being freed from their complicated past, because with machine production, new materials and new discoveries of construction have become more important than differences in shape.

As long as people do not once again make all kinds of different shapes for the same invention, chairs will remain a simple and practical article of everyday use.

Rational design

Lecture delivered on the occasion of the end of the academic year at the Art Academy and the Secondary Technical School in The Hague, May 1953.

Designing machine-made products; mass-produced articles. A new profession, or rather, a renewal of interest in a profession that is already a lifetime old.

Construction and design are inseparable in mass-produced articles, because size and shape often contribute just as much to the effectiveness of an invention as do its concept or purpose. The reverse is also true: the shape of an article for everyday use cannot be decided without taking its structure and function into account. Even so it seems necessary for certain technicians to be exclusively concerned with design, although they are expected to work in close contact with production managers.

In order to establish some basic principles for this new profession – one that affects everyone because its field is so extensive – it is not enough to base one's calculations on human needs as suggested by users' demands. If we think of the masses of objects produced in series every day for no other reason than to sell them, without it being in any way certain that they are socially useful, it will not be without experiencing some twinges of conscience that we will help sell these things by improving their design. It is, in fact, not possible to talk about rational design, without first asking whether an article has a generally acceptable use. We should ask ourselves the following:

What are the criteria for the necessity of an article?

Is the mass-production of this article socially and economically wise?

Does this line of production impede, exclude or make superfluous the production of some other article?

What will be the consequences of the mass-circulation of this product?

As long as we are not in a position to give satisfactory answers to all these questions, because of the lack of a generally accepted philosophy of life, each of us will have to decide on the basis of our own conscience what we are or are not prepared to become involved in.

Let us move on to the question of design, which after the example of industries in other countries is now becoming a matter of concern for us too. Is it possible for a design to be rationally determined, that is, based on our reasoning faculty? We judge a design with our senses, not with our reason; with our feelings and, in our case, because we are dealing with visible forms, with our eyes.

We could argue that a study of forms, of the language of design, should precede the actual designing – that is, the study of lines, surfaces and volumes, the combinations of simple basic forms and ellipsoid forms, the interior and exterior aspects, taut and sharp-edged forms, flowing forms, the forms that go with specific materials, and so on, forms that belong to specific mechanized processes such as turning, milling, punching, pressing, boring, casting, welding, etcetera.

I would be the first to admit that there are plenty of rational arguments here, but in the end judging a form depends on what we perceive with our senses; especially if we go one step further and take into account what effect colour has on the end result.

A design only ceases to be merely tangible and becomes a visible object when there is lighting, reflection and absorption.

How can we talk about rational design, then, if the function is not rationally determined and if the design is judged by our senses? Because the main factor in the manufacture of an article for everyday use, in contrast with an object that is made by hand or a craft object, is that it is machine-made. The factory context makes this an undeniably rational process. If our designs are related to this process, we can speak of rational design.

Technical feasibility is what makes the potential usefulness of an object into something that has social relevance; what is more, it also determines the character of the design. The designer's task is to decide on a design at the preliminary stage and to follow it through consistently in all the component parts and during the finishing process. It was a long time before this was clearly formulated and understood.

The correct approach and working method is always so simple and yet so difficult to explain or defend, that many aesthetic and practical considerations, which really belong to another field of activity, easily end up influencing the production process.

Machines have made mass-production possible; it is logical, therefore, that this technical feasibility has become the focus and point of departure for rational design.

During the training course in this academy, and particularly during the past year, we have come up against a great deficiency of technical support needed for actually realizing designs in practice. Too little real contact with the practice of production has meant that the course has been too theoretical; it cost the students too much effort, time and money to achieve anything more than a rather meagre realization of their designs. Those students who had enjoyed a technical training had a clear advantage in the practical work; it was they, however, who felt this lack the greatest. There was also too little opportunity for experiment.

It is, of course, impossible for an art school to have access to the very large and expensive machines that are needed for mass-production, except by developing links with big companies; it is, however, essential that a good workshop with smaller machines be installed, with professional supervision, if students designs are not to fall back on the methods of craft work.

When the fully-fledged student sets up as a designer he will not only have to be technically on the same level as existing industries; he should also know in what direction to look for improvements and to do this he will have to have enough practical experience to be able to deal with all the arguments against his designs and prove that they are technically feasible.

We should not forget that our exports depend on good industrial designers. Our export industry cannot rely, as is the case, for instance, with the Scandinavian countries, on a large-scale production of wood; it is only quality and appearance that can give us the lead. The appearance of our work has for years been spoilt by the export of extinct national curiosities, that have left their mark on Dutch industry as foreigners see us. This has meant that we have for years been isolated from the mainstream and this has left us far behind both technically and aesthetically; it will be very hard for us to catch up.

Because new inventions are constantly elbowing out existing ones, designers are also obliged to innovate constantly. They can, of course, learn many things from their great predecessors of the high period of craftsmanship, but they cannot rely on them. For every technical innovation makes much of what has been achieved irrelevant. Take as an example the old-fashioned door bell. Indoors, it is ornamented and attached to a wrought-iron structure; outside, it has a handsomely designed bell-pull. In the early years of modern architecture a more sober, less ornamental version was produced; it was, so to speak, modernized. What remains now of either of these designs? A little button and the rest is effectively invisible.

Something similar occurs in the field of electric lighting technology; the most modern lighting fittings will eventually be replaced by an invisible source of light, the ideal being a self-lighting wall, something that has already been tried out in America on a small scale. The same goes for the heating and ventilation systems that have been reduced to sometimes no more than a single grille.

These examples are not intended to discourage designers or to suggest that they may become redundant; it is a case of a universal and continuous advance – a getting rid of everything that was unnecessary and over-complicated, an elimination of all superfluous elements. We should treat these examples rather as a warning that we should be particularly careful to acquire some mastery of smaller tasks and of subtle details. Think, for instance, of how ugly a neon light can look if it is clumsily positioned or if attempts are made to turn it into a consumer article. This does not merely contradict the impression of efficiency that neon lighting gives; it is a step backwards.

I have a strong feeling that young people are more open to innovations than we are, since we had first of all to make the break with old traditions (and even worse, with a mixture of styles) and we have already experienced so many transitional phases and innovations that something of the past probably still clings to us. I feel, at any rate, very unsure of myself vis-à-vis young people, who are learning a profession with new confidence. I used to know what I had to do and what was definitely not appropriate; I knew what was ugly and what was beautiful and it seemed to me that I went straight to the point. I get the feeling that it is you now who know what is what, what clothes you like to wear and how you want to relate to each other. What are you still prepared to accept of the old values? What values still hold for the younger generation and which of them are simply old-fashioned nonsense?

You are more in touch with what is being done (including what the older generation is doing) than I am. I find it difficult enough to talk about my own work and attitude to life, because I am unclear as to our common grounds; what are your needs, your joys and desires?

The future is yours; don't wait for the older generation. We expect deeds from you, but we don't yet see enough of them, perhaps because you work with another frame of reference.

We expected, for instance, a general renewal in art after the Second World War, just as happened after the First. Apparently the older generation (I will not mention any Dutch artists) such as Picasso, Moore, Le Corbusier, Neutra, Miró, Wright and Eames still mean something to you; don't let their greatness silence you; you should do what you think right without having doubts.

You should not, however, let yourselves be discouraged by the enormous amount of rubbish that the masses still seem to feel a need for; they clutter up the spaces that we created and which gave us a feeling of freedom. In the end the masses are not so different from us: outside our own profession, we also only accept things once we have become familiar with them;

this may be a brake on progress, but it does give us time to think things through.

Only a few minutes ago I said that industrial design was so important for our exports, but I assume you will appreciate that this so-called national interest is not a justification or a guide to value. It is fairly certain that the constant creation of new needs is not in the general interest of humanity; nor can it even be called progress. A radical austerity would seem more sensible. But is it possible to know what is good? Don't human beings, like everything in nature, depend for their existence on their environment and the influences that surround them? Is our life anything more than certain temporary shifts and currents caused by positive and negative magnetic currents governed by the laws of relativity, whose meaning we are not even capable of knowing? As far as I am concerned, anyone is welcome to the illusion that he is capable of having a positive influence on what goes on in the world. My only illusion is that I am conscious of my own existence, that is, that I experience my self with my view of life as being one of joy, that every new advance enhances my illusion of reality; this is why I am happy to be an artist. Our awareness begins with perception; fortunately there can be no mistake about this.

Art intensifies and expands our faculties of perception and enlarges our view of the world. Do the arts (in our case the plastic arts) still have anything to do with architecture or rational design? In the days of the new functionalism people often firmly denied this; personally I was somewhat worried about the effect of incorrect statements of this kind, even though I understood that this negation was necessary for a while in order to break free of the artificial art of that time.

The artistic urge to create is, in my opinion, the most healthy human expression there is. Human existence is dependent on having what one needs. Just recently I saw a film about a potential food shortage; amongst other things, it dealt with our food resources in the sea: fish that prey on each other and people who catch fish because all the fruit and vegetables are not enough to keep us alive. Compare the subject of this film with a painting; its value does not depend on its size nor on the amount of paint used, but only on the mutual relation of colours and lines.

In art it is the delineation of areas of colour, of volumes and the delineation of unlimited space that creates our perceptual reality. Nothing is wasted or consumed in the process; on the contrary, the more we share our view of life with others, the more it gains in depth. My only illusion in this process is the joy of experience.

I should say something more about form as being inseparable from function. Is it not the case that in nature, form is always more complete, more pure and more definite than it is in the most artistic everyday article? It will certainly be more complete and pure; but just as certainly it will not be more definite, because it is an essential feature of our faculties of perception that we analyze the natural completeness in terms of our different senses, touch, taste and smell, hearing and sight. We approach nature more intensely and clearly (especially at first contact) with only one sense rather than with the full complement of the senses; this is why a single touch by an artist who confines himself to one sense only and who, as it were, lays his finger on a particular natural phenomenon, shows us reality far more clearly than do years of passive familiarity with the same thing. He converts passive impressions into a vital act of perception through which we become one with the object of perception. Our total world view is composed of active perceptions of this sort; it is this that gives us the feeling of participating in nature and in the life of the cosmos.

I should say something more about the difference between an organism and a so-called functional product. In both instances the function acquires visible expression through the form.

In the case of the living organism every fibre and cell is constantly in action to preserve what in our eyes is a perfect whole; this is quite different from the material that a structure or a piece of equipment is made of; this material retains the same chemical composition whether it is used for the leg of a chair or the axle of an engine. Forms – familiar to us from Jugendstil and seen in the most recent Italian style of furniture – that flow into each other to such an extent that they attempt to imitate a living organism are, therefore, feeble, pathetic and untruthful.

Pottery and glassware are an exception to this rule; in the case of well-designed pottery and glassware, every particle contributes to the tension of the whole; in its simplicity it resembles a petrified organism. The difference here is that a shell, for instance, is best suited to the surroundings where it originates, while a glass or a dish is moved from their birthground and should be able to maintain a function in an interior.

Is what I said about rational design also valid for the oldest form of mass-production: printing and the graphic trades? I cannot say for sure; it is too little related to our own profession for me to dare to make any definite statements in the presence of professionals.

I regard the visual aspect of printing as being more related to painting than to any other profession, with this difference that the image must be suitable for *plural* use and possibly more limited use in terms of time.

Anyone who is concerned with mass-production should be able to learn a great deal from the centuries-old technique of the letterpress:

1. The system of matrixes.
2. The fast and flexible combination possibilities.
3. The advanced economic organization of the business and its efficiency, coupled, however, with an enormous wastefulness on the part of the user.

Even though it is so geared to serving the customer, the printing trade, more than any other profession, has much in

common with the visual arts. Artists' studios have often been called the laboratories of the applied arts (for instance, Eames's chair that has become the most popular chair in American industrial production, and which is one of the most eloquent examples of a good industrial product, has a strong kinship with drawings by Miró). The reverse is also true: Léger, for instance, saw in iron constructions not only details but even compositions for his paintings. Sculptors who are crazy about trellis work are at present too numerous to mention and this means that rational design (which, at its best, is a question of pure technical construction) is included in the aspirations of most of the visual arts.

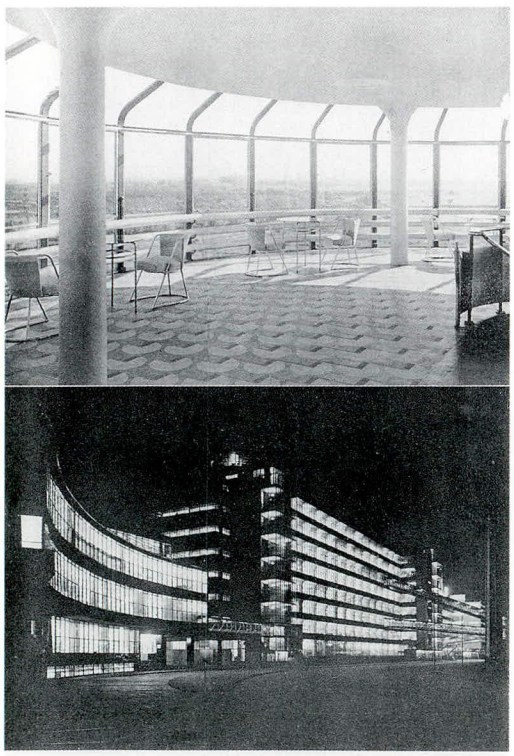
Bearing in mind the titles that Professor Van den Broek and the architect Oud have chosen for their lectures, I have avoided as much as possible talking about architecture; I am confident that they will give you a clear picture of its relation to design. I will however state my views on one more question, and that is how far is it desirable to create architecture out of parts or sections that are machine-made?

That this can be done and that it can even be very beautiful is shown by the Leverhouse in New York; although there are still some concrete floors, stone breastwork and plastered ceilings, the whole is a uniform structure of stainless steel profiles and two sorts of glass, that is quite simply magnifi cent and that has every right to call itself architecture, and good architecture at that, much better than the United Nations Building that was carried out with much less consistency. The former building, that was made for a vast American concern, however, does not mean that it is a good idea for us to work in this way; we can see at a glance that we could not afford either to build or to maintain it. Even though it may look like an advertising stunt, it is not for nothing that two cleaners are polishing the glass and metal day after day, standing on a mobile platform that traverses the whole surface of the building: they are not *only* doing this to advertise their own brand of window wiper.

Could we not have more quickly dealt with the housing shortage if we had started building housing factories immediately after the war? I am quite sure we could have; plenty of studies were made long before the war and even during it. In 1926, for instance, I myself made a first attempt, using unskilled workers, over a period of three weeks. I built a garage with a house above it made of enamelled 3 x 1 m concrete slabs on a steel frame. The fact that my romantically inclined client commissioned a roof and painted the house in brown and cream, because he did not think it was beautiful, is no evidence that the architecture was not good and even as a first attempt it could certainly not be called uneconomical. Even so I regard experiments like these as very provisional studies, because without an enormous industry, capable of continuously delivering completely finished sections to the building site, a system would not be achieved that would be independent of weather conditions and which would, once the foundations had been laid, succeed in reducing the work on the construction site to little more than a sort of complete delivery to the customer. I admit that half-hearted prefabrication, touched up with a little bit of green, can sometimes be very feeble and monotonous, but I see great architectural possibilities in a complete approach.

As far as the solution to the housing shortage is concerned, we have missed a great opportunity and it does not make any sense any more. I do, however, expect mechanized production to replace the work on the construction site in the long term, not just out of sheer necessity, but also because of professional and architectural considerations; the same considerations apply to industrial designers as well.

This new profession, therefore, has a profound impact on our lives and deserves to be taken very seriously.



Fabriek te Rotterdam. Architecten BRINKMAN en v. d. VLUGT

Page from *De Vrije Bladen* 9 (1932) schrift 7, New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture, with an illustration of the Van Nelle Factory, Rotterdam 1926-1930, architects J.A. Brinkman and L.C. van der Vlugt.

New functionalism in Dutch architecture

The new functionalism in Dutch architecture is no different from that of other countries; when people talk about 'international architecture' there, they mean the same thing.

I was asked to discuss Dutch architecture; I have used the opportunity to provide a general survey of the programme of the new architecture.

At the annual Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, whose president is a Dutchman, typical differences of attitude have emerged that, considerable though they may be, have not detracted from the international character of the movement.

I

After the age of period imitations that led to a widespread enthusiasm for craftsmanship, people began to feel a need for truth. This was the original impulse for the renewal of architecture in Holland (Berlage), a renewal that has served us as a foundation.

Some attempts at innovation had already been made, but these failed because they came too early, the professional skills not yet being available and people themselves not yet being ready for them. Even the so-called Jugendstil was not able to stay the course. Solid and reliable craftsmen were not able to adapt rapidly enough to such a free approach, while other architects and laymen, even though they saw that things had to change, may have had too playful an approach to their work for it to be taken seriously. The flower patterns, the weak forms and lines were greeted with disdain – which, on the whole, was quite unfair. Then as now, we realized that we are not capable of assimilating what is good all at once, and if so, that we are unable to exploit it directly; that we have to raise our sights, both individually and in our profession, to be able to see what is good and that we have to have the patience and stamina to wait and see whether it is viable in our day.

The history of the new functionalism in architecture is essentially the history of the renewal process in individual architects and their profession. Instead of looking to Baroque styles, people harked back to periods that showed health. People no longer imitated other styles, but discovered examples of an honest use of materials and of monumental forms. Honesty also consisted in allowing the construction to be seen. Plenty of solid work was done in those years; it was a time for taking stock. Seen from the vantage point of our own period the results still appear to be dominated by form. A strongly expressed attitude to life was also considered important – plenty of philosophizing went on in those days. Even the way in which life was commented on in architecture was dominated by form. By this I mean that the form of the stone volumes that they built was so important that it was all they thought about; also the honesty that was aimed for did not go much further than omitting plasterwork and finishes and allowing joints, joining seams, mortice bolts, nails, unworked iron and rough stone to remain visible.

Architecture was to reintroduce the unity of the visual arts. Mural work and sculpture again became a part of architecture. The collaboration with artists in other disciplines was nothing particularly new; both in the age of period imitations as in that of the traditional styles this was regular practice. In itself it had nothing to do with the renewal of architecture; the approach to collaboration in this period, however, and the calibre of the artists involved compels us to see this time as being the beginning of the new art of interior design.

Artists who had originally worked completely independently (we will see later on that this will always be the only possibility) submitted for a while to the demands of surfaces and constructional elements of architecture. Sculptors devised motifs for the heads of columns and arches; reliefs of the same character as the sculptural-structural stone friezes. Tiles were also used for this purpose and there was even sculpture introduced into the brickwork. Painters who were skilled in making tile-tableaux and paintings on plaster were given whole walls to cover; the important thing in all this was to make work that was an expression of truth and authenticity.

I can still remember one phase of this development – a discussion with an artist of that period, which resulted in the perception that ornamentation should not just be applied, but that the building or object had to be, as it were, a single huge organic form, the ornament being a mere detail of this whole.

By giving things an organic form people tried to make them part of daily life – there have been various attempts at this.

In addition to the constructional style, a type of architecture developed that was a little less concerned with the truth and somewhat more with life. With this I mean the so-called Amsterdam school, that has still not quite ceased to exist. This trend has done us a great service in that it aimed to realize something of Jugendstil. After the death of their great predecessor, the architect De Klerk, people soon ended up with sculptural forms.

Of the ideas that had a genuine architectural function, and which, because of their old-fashioned brick constructions, gave an impression of being heavy sculptural volumes, only the outward appearance was retained; they were presented as the style and the fashion of that age. This had plenty of consequences; it was a frequent pretext for artifice in all the trades that have always developed around architecture. The activity of the planning authorities ensured that nothing happened in housing except new facades (with which we are still stuck). These bodies were to blame; it would not have been such a great mistake, however, if they had only taken the trouble to see that these facades did not just make the street look pretty, but were also suited to houses that were fit to live in.

We learnt during that period how difficult it is to let things have the place that belongs to them.

If the essential character of a thing were not indestructible, if the house that every effort had been made to transform was not also in a way very convenient for living in, we would never have come back to the right path again. People knew as well then as we do now, that a house is for living in; why then did we worry so much about shapes? How could the domination of form end up in the current sober solutions?

First of all we have been strongly influenced by the American architect, Lloyd Wright. Eventually we went back to basics. It started with small things. Some people replaced emphatically shaped pieces of furniture with simple boxes. Something that on a large scale would have been impossible to handle and which in any case no contracts were given for was first achieved on a small scale. Furniture and interiors turned into a practising field. How many victims were due to these experiments can easily be imagined.

If one worked as an architect in the same city for a long time, one's good name was no longer worth anything. Personally I still feel very guilty towards many people, whose outlook in this respect was not sufficiently broad to see that all this was necessary as a transitional stage or else who took no pleasure in the situation.

We should not be surprised if people continue to fear the new, even now when architecture has for a long time acquired sounder foundations. Once a Dutchman has paid his lecture fees, his attitude is usually fixed for life. Luckily there are always people who remain open-minded and make it possible to go on working. It is a striking fact that it is not always the best professionals in a field who make the new discoveries; they may not even be on the lookout for anything new.

Laymen clients have achieved much more in this respect. Without being familiar with the profession and all the difficulties associated with it, they have always corrected, criticized and suggested directions that pointed towards life.

Architects, painters and sculptors have begun to define their own field very precisely. The painters gave us nothing but colour, completely flat and primary. Sculptors began with a cube and slowly began to explore other shapes. The architect was left in charge of space – he attempted to define this in such a way that comparable spaces were obtained both inside and out. The De Stijl group. It was clear that the materials and their forms belonged to sculpture, that the light-reflecting surfaces of walls were the painter's domain; the architect was left with nothing but empty space. His only concern was its character and its impact on the people inside, on top of or around it.

I deliberately avoid mentioning the social changes that have always occurred parallel to renewals in architecture; I do this first of all because these changes cannot simply be treated as incidental events and in the second place because my subject is architecture and I want to treat it entirely in architectural terms. These terms however are always affected by social requirements.

For architecture this means that the general has priority over the personal – standardization, building and development possibilities in general, the question of the flow of traffic, mass-production, and so on, as far as communal things are concerned. Apart from this, one can turn one's mind to the free development of the personal element; this is something we will deal with later on. These things are not so easily implemented socially speaking, even if people are convinced of their necessity.

Our profession is a society in miniature and similarly it is very much stuck in certain ways of working, rules and regulations, notions of reliability and, above all, the limited range of architecture itself. Nobody was equal to the renewal in its entirety; they always got bogged down in the details. Unless we traced everything back to its origins, it was beyond our power.

Painters and sculptors and architects have all approached their task in very abstract terms. The architects have made spaces that are utterly sterile, not having a clear concept of what was to be done with them. 'Purity' was their highest value. Their goal was an unattainable purity; people made use exclusively of primary forms and colours, because they were unable to cope with all the other ones. The most important thing that has been achieved is an appreciation of the concept of 'emptiness' that for so long was scoffed at and equated with poverty.

Instead of making life easier, they have got rid of everything that reminded us of life. One might explain this by arguing that

people made buildings not for life as it was, but more for life as people imagined it ought to become.

Even though their spaces were unpractical in layout and furnishings and not easy to live in, and though quite a few sacrifices were required of the occupants, they have still achieved their exact aim: after many hardships the genuine new life with its new demands has developed in these spaces: through complete negation it freed itself from the originally insurmountable conventions.

II

To recognize and satisfy the new demands for housing, to make this new life comfortable and untrammelled: architects would not so quickly have seen this as their task, had they not been open to the influence of the Dadaists, who mocked at the sterility of art, which appeared to be so far removed from life.

The work of the Dadaists betrays a lively and witty temperament. They had a sure feeling for what was natural, logical and honest. Not accepting the consequences of their own insights, and not bothering or wanting to bother about the difficulties in the way of promoting correct values and therefore never distracted, they were all the more capable of exposing faults.

The work of the Dadaists of course was not taken seriously, because in many respects they chose the easy way. Even so, the young artists of that time deserve respect because, no matter what it cost, they were prepared to break with their mistakes to achieve clarity.

The appearance of machines has also contributed a great deal towards turning the form-question into a life-question. Machines, which had already had an opportunity in the quest for honesty, found in the new style the straight-lined and simple forms that were appropriate for mass-production. Technology that was accustomed to fitting in with predetermined forms, could now present its own shapes that were the result of construction work and factory production. Form was no longer an obstacle. At last it was possible for us to concentrate fully on making houses that would be pleasant to live in. One of the first people to argue for avoiding predetermined forms in architecture was the architect Oud. I am sure that if we ever achieve a correct programme for the activity of the functionalist architects, it will be better, at least for the time being, not to bother about art. We should however never forget that our advanced insight would not have been so clear without the unswervingly critical, self-renewing energy of art. Even if art has become irrelevant to architecture at present, we can be sure that every time it is called for, it will be art that provides the spark of innovation in a system that so easily lapses into rigidity.

During the world war a great deal of experimentation took place in Holland; at the same time, in France, the brilliant Le Corbusier, has worked and produced writings with the aim of replacing a worn-out romanticism with new life. He began by completing many private contracts with an ease and genius that has astonished everybody.

Since the world war thousands of German architects have visited Holland; the technologically minded Germans saw at once that the functional character that was the main feature of the new architecture was very suitable for the rebuilding of Germany. What we would have been so happy to have built here has been realized on a vast scale there, not just by private contractors but also by the state and by local councils. I will mention just one example: the new development in Frankfurt, that has become renowned throughout the world as a model of town planning. The architecture of this project was a feat of advanced technology and this has meant that the German *neue Sachlichkeit* has become an example for the whole world, something, in my opinion, that it never was before.

Not only in Holland, but in Austria and France (and maybe Japan and Russia, currently very much influenced by Germany, will soon follow), people now see very clearly that the German programme for a new functionalism is much too narrow, uncompromising and lacking in flexibility.

Most of this work is now experienced as technological fanaticism; another part is regarded as a fashionable fad and the rest as a genuine solution for the housing problem (minimum dwelling, shared kitchen, district heating, launderette); it can then, in part, be described as 'befreites wohnen' (liberated living). It is this part, however, that is too much linked to special circumstances to mean freedom for us.

In Vienna there is at the moment a large international exhibition of 70 furnished dwellings. About 25 Austrian and five foreign architects were left entirely free to produce what they wanted. The city of Vienna and the Austrian *Werkbund* carried out a large-scale promotion of the new architecture.

The programme of the new functionalism is as follows: to determine scientifically the correct requirements for good housing; to ascertain the best systems for insulation, absorption, reflection, drainage, etcetera, including all these aspects in the construction in a single operation; and, finally, to industrialize the as yet primitive activities on construction sites.

A special commission, seeking advice from specialists in hygiene, chemists, doctors, psychologists etcetera, will be responsible for ascertaining what are the essential requirements of good housing.

Industrialization is necessary both for the new organization of labour (the work that was begun by A has to be taken over by B some hours later) as well as for the improvement of the quality of the work. The attempt to achieve a new functionalism is not an attempt to attain a predetermined goal; it is not, in fact, an 'ism' or an ideal; it is simply architecture sticking to its own function.

The new functionalism in architecture is something quite different from the current notion of business efficiency. For

instance, if a modern architect instals central heating and a hot-water system, instead of providing ornaments for the facade and interior of a house, this may mean new functionalism; but if a client wants to measure the value of a house on the basis of the number of radiators, washbasins or cupboards, this is perhaps just being businesslike; it certainly is not what we mean by 'new functionalism'. It is businesslike to demand value for money, and the term 'new functionalism' does include a notion of efficiency; but the term on the whole denotes a quite different value. It comes down to whether one is giving more room to one's life or less.

The shelter a house should offer, its essential function, means no more than that it should shut out the undesirable influences of nature while at the same time being as open as possible to those influences that *are* desirable.

In a word, professionalism means: to be able to determine scientifically, 1. what are the elements that one cannot do without; 2. what materials and structures are essential for the economical delineation of a space that is conceived of in these terms.

It is not a matter of stone, glass, iron, or of their shapes, nor of monumentality or beauty or imposing structures; nor does it have to do with what it stands for, that is, the attitude towards life implied in it; nor is it even a question of showing its interior at the outside. It is a matter of the proportions and quality of the emptiness around, in between or on top of the materials that are used. Architecture where the outward appearance is influenced by considerations of beauty, is never effective architecturally speaking, but only in a plastic sense. What I mean is that even the beauty that was intended is not attained, because plasticity is not what is required in architecture.

Architecture that is nothing more than the elements that are essential for defining the space it creates, may be beautiful, monumental or imposing, but it will always work as architecture.

III

Functionalism, which is almost a synonym for necessity, is not what some people think: a sort of impoverishment or austerity, the omission of everything that is thought to be attractive and pleasing.

It is a question of the right attitude. Anyone who thinks that it is an attitude of being content with less based only on economic need or idleness has not really grasped our purpose. It should rather be thought of as eliminating everything that is superfluous. This is also what the word means in a social sense: it is a sort of spatial hygiene. I will discuss this in more detail later. Of course, promoting the new functional architecture would be inconceivable without what is called town planning; this does not mean that the conglomerations which we now refer to as cities ought to be maintained. It is impossible to convert an old city into a new one. Just as a firm needs to be organized in an economically effective way, society will also have to be regulated on a sound economic basis. All general necessities will have to be dealt with collectively; all personal needs that are not a threat to society, should be tampered with as little as possible. Anyone will appreciate that a dwelling in a highly organized city will have a completely different function from our own individual houses. When the functions have been ascertained, the resulting measurements will quite definitely not be a matter of aesthetics; this, however, does not mean that a city like this cannot be very beautiful.

One example will serve to show what I mean: anyone who knows anything about the laws of perspective knows that everything that is viewed from a certain distance will be subject to these laws, even if no attention is paid to them during construction. On reflection, a street, a road, a bridge, an orchard – everything, in short – will comply with the laws of perspective that it cost so much ingenuity to discover. Of course this will be clearer in some cases than in others. The same is true of beauty. The greatest mistake one can make in aesthetics is to try to make something beautiful by following aesthetic laws.

We would do better to inform ourselves of the essential character of a thing and then to see that no superfluous elements start to dominate and get in the way of our intentions. If living in a tent and a camp is more attractive than in a house in a street in a city, this suggests that there must be something wrong with architecture as it is. It is not always because people have less work to do outdoors. It is simpler there; more primitive certainly, but often less superfluous than at home.

Mistakes in architecture sometimes come from inexperience; much more frequently they are the result of an abuse of professional skills. Architecture is a highly demanding profession; mistakes are dangerous; a variety of calculations are made, especially financial ones. A variety of technical skills are drawn on and yet too little attention is paid to whether the house is actually fit to live in.

If you were to read the regulations for let's say the thickness of walls in the building code, your hair would stand on end. These walls are placed between people and people, between people and the woods, the sea and the sun. Separate laws apply between such walls.

Fortunately there is always a reverse to the mistakes made in architecture (except ones of construction). A section of a building or a situation that we have not completely analysed at the design stage, will never be rectified in the construction just by accident; no, one cannot forget anything without having to pay a price for it; but even so there is always some advantage one can weigh against it. Even a house made with the only aim of making money proves in the end to be fit to live in to some degree.

Of course, the reverse is also true: what we want to achieve will also never turn out exactly as we had planned, because

there are always small factors, not so much in the construction or the building process, but factors in our initial estimate, in our evaluation of the use of the building, that we did not know of beforehand and which will be different again the next time round.

Being at home has become a universally accepted notion. Feeling at home is something that is not subject to logic. What is new is usually only admitted when nothing has to be sacrificed of the old surroundings that one was used to.

This means that a house is a complicated thing.

The slogan: *befreites wohnen* sums up the goal of present-day architecture perfectly:
freedom from unnecessary work;
freedom from unnecessary visual elements.

The expression 'functional architecture' is related to the expression 'befreites wohnen'.

It is not yet generally known that one does not need heavy stone volumes to insulate a house or a large work space such as a factory. We have still not put the monumental period behind us.

The factory built by the architects Brinkman and Van der Vlugt in Rotterdam remains to this day the best building in Holland in the new functionalist style. It is no accident that the construction of this building was carried out in full partnership with the clients. First of all, any experiments that did not work out were replaced with better products – something that cost a great deal of money. More important, however, is the fact that the company's organization was in complete agreement with the architecture and remained so after it was put into operation. The building is unusual in that it is not in fact a single entity determining everything, and containing all the different sections (the machines, the employees, etc.); this building is only a shelter, floor, roof and insulation system to serve the company. In this architecture the company remains the most important consideration. This is the building's most beautiful and essential achievement; it was because its pretensions were so modest that the building has become so famous throughout the world. Of course one could point out other good examples; it has nothing to do with size. I chose this building as an example, because its proportions convey its message so clearly.

The dimension of space is the essential component of architecture. Architecture should have as little outward appearance as possible. This is in contrast with monumental architecture (I do not include those periods that are stylistically interesting here) that is material and forms of material both inside and out.

Outward form is what characterizes sculpture; the plastic dimension is good and beautiful in itself, but is not applicable to architecture.

The greatest change that architecture has gone through in recent times has been its liberation, its separation from the plastic dimension. The latter encircles itself. Architecture becomes an environment and nothing more. The result is that architecture has become less weighty; but at the same time it is much more functional and human. The building is no longer a thing that exists in itself or that stands for something; rather, it is in active relationship to human beings and human beings will then also have to adopt an active attitude towards it in order to be able to experience its qualities.

This architecture (and this goes primarily for dwellings that have as their point of departure human beings as living creatures) does not just contain its own possibilities of advancement, but – I am returning here to the question of spatial hygiene – it will lead still more to the advancement of the human being.

In connection with the expression 'human advancement' – in contrast to the aim of many architects at the advance of architecture and the advance of the parts – I would like to say something in passing about the nature of art in general, even though I said it would be better provisionally not to bring art into any discussion about architecture.

The artistic influence that has blurred the boundaries of architecture for a long time and has stood in the way of its development had very little, in fact nothing at all to do with art as such. Through a confusion between the notion of art and that of aesthetics much damage has been done. It was rather a case of the influence of aesthetics presenting itself as being artistic.

Aesthetics is a summing-up; it is a reflection on something that already exists. One can just as easily say that nature is beautiful as one can say this of art or technology. Aesthetics exposes the laws of the necessary relationship between the parts. When someone says that something is not beautiful, this generally does not say much for his attention. In fact one discovers regularity in everything that one analyses deeply enough. On the other hand it is a great mistake to be too flippant about this. It is a mistake to say: if I have experienced joy in something, I can afford a disappointment. Something can resemble something else that is beautiful and still be disappointing, because in other respects it falls short of it. This is what has given beauty the reputation of being untrue, while in fact it is simply the recognition or discovery of what is systematic – that is, the regular character of what exists; not the rules according to which something beautiful is made.

There is nothing against liking something nor – if one gets pleasure from it – against searching for the laws that beauty seems to obey; nor is there anything wrong with constructing a science – aesthetics – around it; there is, however, something very wrong with using this to get in the way of architecture (the planning authorities) and to build houses that are less fit to live in.

Art is something quite different. Art is a deed.

In general, art is not something that one enjoys. Art is more a burden for the ordinary citizen than a delight. *Art certainly does not mean making something beautiful.* Art does not have any transcendental aim or implications. Art has the purpose of developing a specific sense and making it healthy. Art is the one-sided, but immediate experiencing of reality, the simple and ordinary reality that we only need to open our eyes (this is certainly a prerequisite) to see or to stretch out our hands to touch. You would not think that so simple a thing as this, would be so precious.

I will try and say precisely what I mean by this: our senses are the only contact between ourselves and what can be perceived.

The sense of touch, of feeling, is something that I regard as an undifferentiated sense, one that is experienced by our whole body.

The differentiated senses are those of sight, hearing and taste (including smell).

Sight, for instance, can again be divided into three senses, that is, the sense of colour, the sense of space and the sense of form.

According to the development of these senses, our being will be more or less open to what there is to perceive; our consciousness will also develop, because the range of our faculty for thought is entirely dependent on the development of our faculty of perception. *Our own personal well-being depends on the health and the degree of development of these senses.*

Our sense of colour is dependent on the state of our retinas. When the three different sorts of nerve-endings, that are sensitive respectively to the impressions that we call red, yellow or blue, are located completely separate from each other on a tightly stretched retina, our sensitivity to colour is more intense.

The state of the retina is different in the case of our perception of forms. In order to perceive an object at a greater distance, our retina must adjust itself so that it is further from our lens, than it needs to be to see an object in sharp focus which is close at hand. In order to see in focus the total form of an object extending from nearby to further off, one's retina has to bend in relief, as it were, so adjusting to the object of attention; someone who can do this will develop a better sense of form than someone who can only see parts of each form in focus.

Our sense of space depends rather on the breadth of our optical angle. Most people see only a small part of a space simultaneously. Their eye always picks on just one detail and a larger empty space is unclear for them, because the view is too unlimited for them to see it properly. I believe that this explains why many people feel the need to fill their interiors and cover their walls, so that no space remains empty, while other people feel a strong need for space.

If the health of our senses (via our consciousness) determines our mental state, then art in general is sensible *and* essential because it is the only thing that gives us the possibility (without any negative aspects) of being able to control our own well-being.

Architecture as an art form contributes to the development of our sense of space; in other words, it makes a very limited (specific) contribution to the development of consciousness that can still be very influential, because we come into contact with architecture all the time.

Sports train our muscles to execute *well-coordinated movements*. In the same way architecture as an art form, in contrast with a purely passively experienced, chaotic experience, should be a clear spectrum of exclusively active, well-coordinated (if possible, undiluted) sensory impressions.

It is therefore casting no aspersions on the value of art, if we choose to separate it provisionally from architecture; rather it is a matter (setting aside of course the confusion with aesthetics) of actually being open to art. Without this basic requirement it has nothing to offer us.

Due to wrong education and a great deal of confusing talk about beauty and ugliness, about transcendental values and mysticism and nonsense like that, many people still do not even suspect the actual value of art.

In society, too, the function of something is always measured in terms of the quantity, the features or the quality of the thing itself; or else, in exceptional cases, according to the pleasure or gratification or convenience that it offers us. We almost never appreciate anything (with the possible exceptions of sports and music) in terms of the opportunity it gives us to exercise our faculties and skills.

IV

Clearly, architecture should not be too much in advance of the general development of humanity; we can only accept something that is within or almost within our comprehension and that we are mentally ready for.

It is not the amount of food that determines one's physical growth. Nor is it the volume of sound that determines the quality of the music. It is not the amount of colour that determines one's feeling for colour. We are only capable of accepting something that we are prepared for.

Too little can save energy, too much exhausts it.

The right proportions and properties of the homes of the future will depend not only on the maximum amount of sun allowed to enter them, or on the minimum requirements of finance or indolence, but on our desire for life. There is a verse in Ecclesiastes that does not sound very Christian: 'Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works.' This statement sounds to me identical to that of the new functional architecture. Limitations born of necessity can and must develop into a joyful liberation from all that is superfluous.

The great volumes that we passively submitted to have been replaced by small nuances that sharpen our critical faculty. A large amount of colour will make less impression on someone with an underdeveloped colour sense than a small subtlety of shading will make on someone with a highly developed sense of colour.

We do not need to write this up in the losses column; on the contrary, it is a sign of progress that the huge monumental edifices will belong to the past and that we now also take an interest in small practical houses. Our pieces of furniture too are no longer heavy immobile objects. They are no longer exclusively intended for a single purpose nor, in fact, made for exceptional surroundings. They are beginning to consist of small, light sections that can be assembled, so that one can construct a sort of framework as large as one wants; a piece of furniture consisting of supporting surfaces, in combination with open and closed boxes, drawers, and so on; not just for the welcome variety provided by new materials, because otherwise one would easily get a complicated wooden booth executed in chromium-plate – fashionable fads, curiosities at best. The aim is to preserve a free, light and unbroken space, that gives clarity to our lives and contributes to a new sense of life.

If architecture is genuinely to contribute to human advancement and not just satisfy our indolence, this *must* come about, otherwise it has no function at all and all our efforts will be in vain – it will have to renounce any aspirations to primarily being beautiful and monumental or even good.

One thing more. Let's keep it always in mind. The house for people who want to live according to established norms exists already. We are all too familiar with it. The more solid and indestructible and complete it is made and the more perfect, the less chance there is that we will ever put it behind us.

The fact that in our better moments we are more comfortable sitting on a table than in a chair, or the fact that we don't need a house, table or chair at all, means that the house of the future (the house for the new generation) cannot and must not aim to conform to the notion of 'living' that is now prevalent.

Interiors

As I draw near to Amsterdam in the train from Utrecht I can see the less enclosed housing units at the back of the blocks of flats. One would need plenty of fantasy to imagine the residents of these flats feeling joy; it is much easier to picture the cares and drudgery that must be the order of the day in these cheerless dwellings. Early every morning a block of flats of this sort pours a large proportion of its residents out down the long streets toward factory, office or shops. As you reach the city centre, however, you become reconciled to the fate of these flat-dwellers; because after all people do not just live in a flat or a street, they also feel at home in Muntplein, along the canals and on the river IJ; after all, they do live in Amsterdam.

And so we come to the concept of an interior; every space with walls around it is a specific interior. Whether the room has a roof that keeps out the light or one that lets it through; whether it is entirely or only partially enclosed; whether the walls have wallpaper; or whether it is the stone gables of the houses surrounding the space: all these things do no more than give the interior its specific character. The fact remains the same; Utrecht, for instance, also has something that is all its own; it has a middle.

Apart from some very intimate little streets and widenings of streets (we can hardly call them squares), what gives Utrecht its character is that it is built round the mighty cathedral tower. This not so much a question of the actual layout of the city but of its skyline. There are people who feel at home in Utrecht like a cat in a basket.

In most cities squares are like large rooms, *common living space* connected by corridors.

Every interior, no matter whether it is a station, a post-office, a museum or someone's home, is part of the city, the region, the country; and the faster the traffic, the larger the city, region or country in which one lives.

I felt this very much in America, where everyone feels like the inhabitant of a huge country and no one misses any chance of travelling through as large a part of the country as possible as though it were their own home in which no room is left unvisited.

This is why the notion of neighbourhood, as it is called, is so oppressive for me and leaves me at best feeling frustrated. In the city one's own little circle stops and what is general and common to everyone begins. The hospitable space where everyone is equal and where all the inhabitants of the city are equally at home.

This is why I have begun my discussion of interiors with these considerations.

If city planners in general had more of a feeling for interiors, there would be more cities that people would enjoy living in.

The largest and most exciting man-made interior I have ever seen is the Rockefeller Plaza in New York. This is a small square of perhaps 200 x 100m surrounded by the sheer and unbroken facades of three very tall buildings that in combination have the effect of offering an almost abstract definition of space, because the height of these buildings matches the size of the square. You should not imagine that it is sombre there; nowhere else is it so light because the enormous surfaces of about 15,000m^2 of stone and glass serve as reflecting surfaces that closely resemble a natural phenomenon. Every shift of light – through passing clouds, for instance – has an effect on the space; it is not just the sunken skating rink, the bronze monument and the restaurants that surround the square that attract the attention of the hundreds of viewers who gaze silently upwards; rather it is the sheer effect of the space itself. It is not picturesque like a view of an Amsterdam canal; it is not something to be sketched or photographed: it is only with one's own eyes that one can marvel at it.

Let us go back now to a less gigantic interior, the more enclosed and, if need be, locked interior, the little spot where we take shelter when it rains or is too cold or too warm, where we spend our nights and where we start out from to go to our daily work. A more immediate and personal environment whose proportions are our own and where we are better able than anywhere else to form an opinion about events in general and about what is happening to us in particular.

My discussion of the broader sense of the word interior will have made it clear that what we call our own *home* does not need to imply any feeling of an imposing space, if we live in a city that already gives us this sufficiently. In a city that is well

constructed, the scale of one's own house can be more like that of a big jacket with inside pockets than a castle. The worse the city, the larger one's own home will be.

Just as a house in a city, or in a street, a neighbourhood or a region is not something to be seen in isolation, so one cannot see a room without thinking of the rest of the house and its surroundings. It is the relation it has with space that gives a room its meaning, just as it is the relation and positioning vis-à-vis each other of the different pieces of furniture that give them a significance that they do not get from their particular shape or any special features they may have.

The most important function of an interior is that of providing rest and clarity, that is, it should have a certain simplicity and its character should be unequivocal; this, however, is something that depends on a combination of many factors.

The quality of the empty space is produced by the incorporation of many materials and elements of construction, measurements, the incidence of light, colour, the degree of damp, the temperature, acoustics, and so on. All these features have to be considered from the point of view both of the maker and the occupant.

We will successively consider the interior from the point of view of the *function* of the house as opposed to the attitude of the occupant. Openness as opposed to being enclosed. Matter versus empty space. Visibility of construction versus spatial experience. Everyday upkeep versus economics and building costs. The practical aspect versus beauty. Colour and plasticity in the interior. The construction – craftsmanship versus machines. The personal article versus the mass-produced one. Industrial design. Furnishings and fittings.

An interior is only good when it is the product of a clear attitude towards these possibilities, without the occupant being constantly reminded of all these problems. A good building or interior is a clear choice, not a compromise between different requirements and contradictions.

Requirements for use

Every interior has a specific purpose. Even in the case, for instance, of a showroom where nothing is actually done, we can still think in terms of functionality. It is not enough that all the material on display has a place; it must be arranged in an orderly way.

A house must allow for many different activities taking place; some more than once every day, others with long intervals in between. The layout of the house classifies and orders these activities and the way it is furnished should help to make the routine chores easier and speed them up.

A skilled craftsman, even if he has worked for fifty contractors, can still learn something from the fifty-first; there may be special requirements, but at the same time every house must fulfil its function effectively. It should have a general exemplary value as well.

We should also make allowance in our calculations for changes that may take place in social relations, such as a reduced prevalence of household help, or the possibility that women may have a work situation outside their own home. This occurs, for example, in Sweden, and it requires special child-care arrangements and a simplification of the house.

The home should in many respects make family life more easy; labour-saving devices, however, are not everything, because if household facilities become too complicated they will themselves require upkeep and checking and so defeat their own purpose.

From a human point of view, too, the concept of convenience is not everything. Living in a house is an *activity* and it implies a certain *joie de vivre* and the notion of creating one's own atmosphere, or no atmosphere at all if that is what one wants to call it, but at any rate a home environment that suits us. Even those people who are least curious or informed about this subject, people who are so preoccupied with how busy they are, that they let themselves be buried in a motley assortment of other people's leftovers, past and present, create with this negative attitude an environment that is peculiarly their own.

Interior designers (men or women) also draft construction plans and I can easily imagine situations where these may be of some relevance to the architectural construction plan, especially if it is a design for a mass-product.

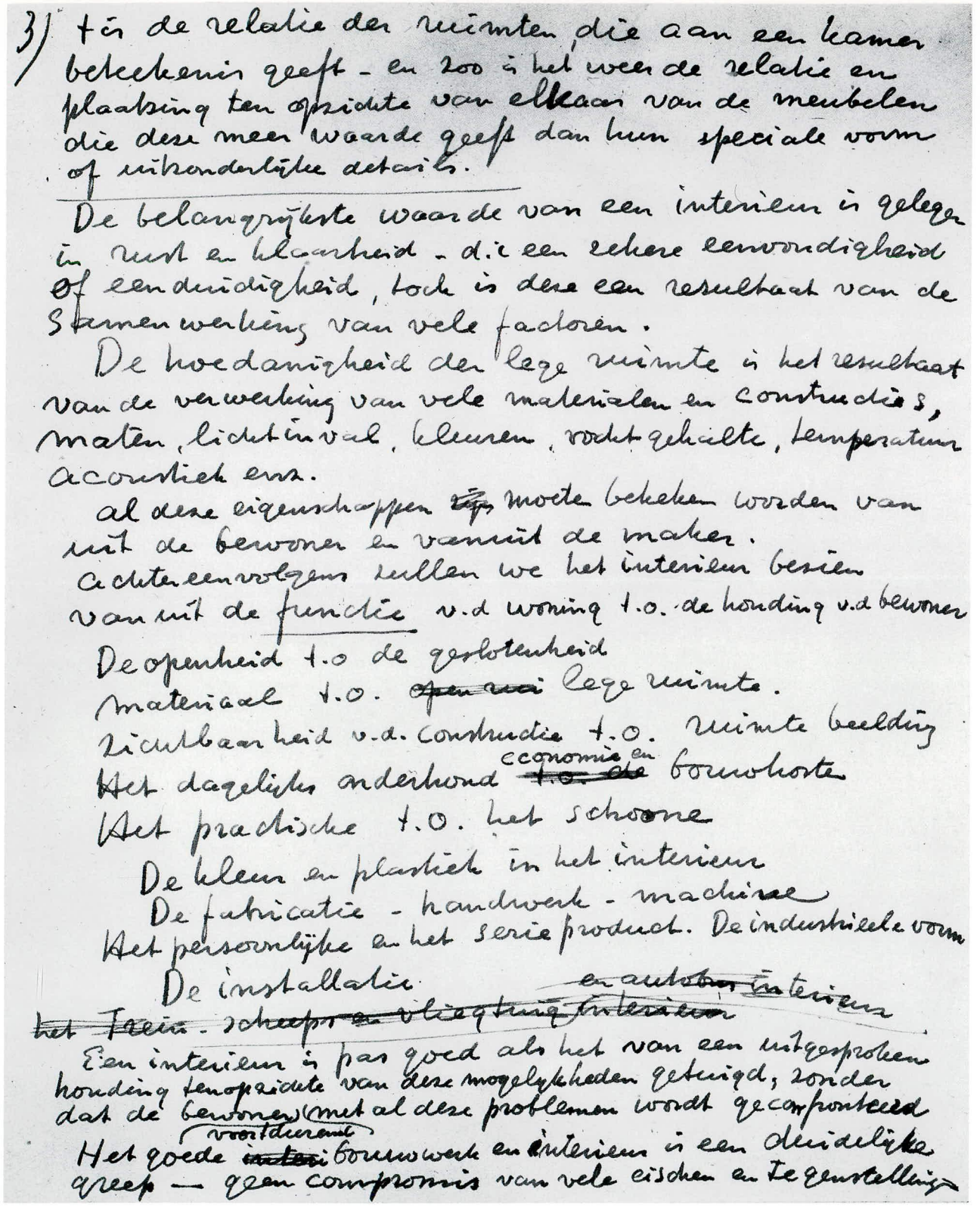
The problem of openness versus being enclosed, contact with nature or being cut off from nature

The open or closed character of an interior is not a question of fashion or of being more modern or less; it depends on its purpose. A library, for instance, may be an enclosed space – this encourages concentration and it also provides room for plenty of shelves – a happy coincidence.

A more enclosed space will also be more sound-proof. Too much sunlight will also mean that the paper will fade. This does not however mean that one can assume automatically that seclusion and concentration always go together and that small windows and homeliness are synonymous; this sort of notion is all too simplistic. Sunlight is indispensable for all forms of life, both plants and human beings: this is the reason for having large windows. A large or small area of glass, then, is not a question of tradition or modernity but rather of what is appropriate to the situation.

A large window has little effect if the light immediately escapes again through a second window, as too often happens with large corner windows; only if there is a surface next to or opposite the window that reflects or conveys the light to the other parts of the interior does a window make sense as a receiver of light.

I have succeeded more than once in clearing up a house that was being renovated, or a room that was too dark, by bricking



3) t is de relatie der ruimten, die aan een kamer beteekenis geeft - en zoo is het weer de relatie en plaatsing ten opzichte van elkaar van de meubelen die deze meer waarde geeft dan hun speciale vorm of uitzonderlijke details.

De belangrijkste waarde van een interieur is gelegen in rust en klaarheid - d.i. een zekere eenvoudigheid of eenduidigheid, toch is deze een resultaat van de samenwerking van vele factoren.

De hoedanigheid der lege ruimte is het resultaat van de verwerking van vele materialen en constructies, maten, lichtinval, kleuren, vochtgehalte, temperatuur acoustiek enz.

al deze eigenschappen ~~zijn~~ moeten bekeken worden van uit de bewoner en vanuit de maker.

achtereenvolgens zullen we het interieur bezien van uit de functie v.d woning t.o. de houding v.d bewoner

De openheid t.o de geslotenheid

materiaal t.o. ~~open rui~~ lege ruimte.

zichtbaarheid v.d. constructie t.o. ruimte beelding

Het dagelijks onderhoud ~~t.o. de~~ economie en bouwhorte

Het practische t.o. het schoone

De kleur en plastiek in het interieur

De fabricatie - handwerk - machine

Het persoonlijke en het serie product. De industrieele vorm

De installatie

~~het Trein - scheeps en vliegtuig interieur~~ ~~en autobus interieur~~

Een interieur is pas goed als het van een uitgesproken houding ten opzichte van deze mogelijkheden getuigd, zonder dat de bewoner (met al deze problemen wordt geconfronteerd

Het goede ~~interi~~ voortdurend bouwwerk en interieur is een duidelijke greep — geen compromis van vele eischen en tegenstellingen

Page from the manuscript of *Interiors*, 1947, RSA.

up a window. The question of light and reflection is of primary importance in designing an interior.

The problem that – even though our medium is matter – our aim is to create space.

When we work, we work with materials. Thousands of bricks, cubic metres of wood, solid substances, some light, others heavy, some of them transparent, but most of them opaque. All these substances are given their inevitable shapes. Most of these shapes can be seen; some however will be covered, but they all have definite plastic qualities; and that is not all: they also have a colour, the natural colour of the material or a protective layer or finish.

But what one creates with these delineating substances is an empty space. It is the interior designer's task to see that the different shapes of the materials used – in other words the plastic dimension that emerges from the architecture – remains secondary and that the space occupies the foreground. This brings us at once to the problem of visibility or that of suppressing what is called 'honesty'.

Shapes determined by structure or shapes and colour that are psychologically determined.

Is a doorway first and foremost simply a hole in a wall or is a door only a door when it has a heavy frame with architrave and lintel – profiled woodwork – jambs with stiles and locking pins – panelling with rebate joints – surface-mounted hinges – lock plates – brackets and threshold.

Either for practical reasons or because a space is small or through a desire for simplicity, the general trend is towards a new, more simple reality.

The problem of: colour – plasticity – finishing layer – psychology of colour – colours to highlight the fittings and for providing bearings – the presence of paintings – sculpted and crafted objects.

The three visual arts together determine the character of an interior, each contributing its own means. The sculptor determines the shape of the material and draws our attention to the appearance of things. The painter does the same with colour and colour organization and characteristic delineation, and the spatial artist creates the environment and the proportions appropriate to our time. All three of them work from the point of view of their own discipline, but with the same aim in mind; the greatest possible clarity means rendering the character of our time visible. What music does for the ear, the visual arts do for our eyes.

The problem of how the three visual arts can be combined in the same interior will be resolved as the work progresses; murals or separate paintings – free-standing sculpture or built-in sculptural elements.

It is not something that can be decided in advance; if it is good we will recognize it as such – art is not made according to a set of rules. Not even architecture. Of course it can be instructive to state certain guidelines; the mistake is to allow them to be binding; mutual discussion can be very enlightening and stimulating; the artist needs to feel free from pre-established guidelines or agreements so that he can find the rightway spontaneously; no hankering after prettiness – no extra appendages with the pretext of so-called ornamentation – no noble forms as opposed to base forms – no quest for beauty – because clarity of purpose is the basic means in architecture for creating a new space if what is involved is an experience of space; then, for each expression of the visual arts it is visibility that is primary, and the regulation of air, warmth, moisture and ventilation are also of great influence.

The colour of the reflecting surfaces is also of primary importance for the visibility of the space; for one's *experience* of the space, however, the way in which sound reverberates is also important. The insulating potential of walls – their hardness and the nature of the surface is relevant in this context. In the case of very high or very low temperatures the desired temperature cannot be achieved without an artificial system of heating or cooling; in our temperate climate, however, it is possible so to select materials that the level of noise and warmth can be regulated in a natural fashion by opening and closing windows and by boosting the temperature. In large spaces, such as theatres and department stores where many people are present at the same time, the circulation of air has to be artificially regulated.

The last word has not yet been said about the various existing systems and the new possibilities in this field. The problem is that if a specific heating system turns out to be inadequate, it is not easy to switch to another because every system has specific architectural requirements.

In America there are no stoves or radiators in dwellings; in the cellar a simple system of pipes is heated up and conveys the warm air directly to the rooms. Given the open layout of the houses this simple system works very well.

The problem of layout – movement through the house – the problem of unity of construction

In addition to the ground plan of a house, the direction of movement through the house that decides the layout of the rooms is very important, whether we are talking about an exhibition space or a living room; a good degree of space should be reserved for movement and the main supports should be situated regularly and placed conveniently, taking account of possible differences in the height of objects. Stationary objects or pieces of furniture should either form a whole with the wall or serve as a secondary part of the layout. Movable pieces should preferably be low.

It is obvious that use itself leads to a sort of floor plan in every interior, because we move along the floor and not along

the walls or the ceiling; this layout of the floor space, however, needs to be matched and continued by the walls and the ceiling – or to be more precise, they must adapt to the floor; it is possible for the six surfaces of a space to rhyme in terms of materials, proportions, lay out and workmanship, colour and lighting.

To be alert to all this is one of the main qualities of a good interior designer. In this connection it is very useful to make maquettes to achieve a good balance of dimensions.

Whatever one makes – a building, an interior or a piece of furniture – there is always a certain unity in construction or the construction implies certain solutions; together with the function of the construction and the three-dimensional balance this will determine both shape and finish.

The problem of sun, daylight and artificial light

Unless the roof of an interior is made of glass or some other transparent material, such as one finds, for instance, in an exhibition hall, the roof takes away most of the daylight. Only with free-standing houses that are not surrounded by any high vegetation will the light of evening and early morning fall for a short time deep into the interior; the midday light will fall on one side only, close to the window. Most of the light must come from sunlight on clouds or else it will be reflected by the environment. The north side is not the worst off, because it receives light reflected from the sunlit side opposite. It goes without saying that the walls of the interior should have good reflecting surfaces and be able to distribute the light in order to make the best possible use of it.

In the design and layout of interiors one must take into account the fact that evening light does not usually come from the same side as daylight. The various possibilities of artificial lighting will form no small part of the task of our profession; one should also be aware of possible changes in colour, given that artificial light comprises a less complete spectrum than daylight. Some essentials of colour theory form part of the basic equipment of the interior designer.

The problem of manufacture and tools – manual work versus machine-made products

Whatever it is we design, we have to think first how it should be made. What material? What method of construction? What tools or equipment are needed to work the materials?

The difference between manual work and work that is done by machines is not a difference of principle, but of degree. One cannot work iron manually or cleave or shorten wood by hand. In the beginning there was a sort of hatchet; this turned into a chisel. Later on came the plane, i.e. a fixed chisel that is slid across the wood; now we have the lathe which is nothing else but a rotating chisel that the wood is pressed up against.

The design needs to match the method of work that has been opted for, but in such a way that the more directly the method of work leads to designed structures, the more artistic the finished product will be. I say this in contrast to the current notion that a thing only becomes artistic through incidental additions; the same goes for manual work as for machine-made products. Good old-fashioned stylish products are proof of this.

There is yet another important factor one has to take account of in designing the things that we move among every day: repetition. There is a great difference between whether a thing is made only once, or just a few times, or is mass-produced. For a long time people have underestimated the importance of form in a product that is mass-made. Now they are beginning to see that it is much more difficult to hit on a form that maintains its quality in constant replication, than to find a form for one particular situation.

We hope that the activity for industrial design will be in good hands and that it will produce results.

The personal aspect does not have to suffer; depending on their application and where they are situated, good quality neutral objects are a fine means for creating a personal environment. It is, however, completely mistaken for a designer to want to impose his own personal stamp on something that is made for general use; it would be impossible for the occupant to use it in a personal way.

It is the fundamental forms that are important here; all other forms derive from them.

The problem of upkeep and damage

There are materials with which one can achieve beautiful results, for instance in the field of wall decorating, carpeting or upholstery. Materials that are extremely suitable for a display window, but are quite unsuitable for use in an interior. Materials such as cellophane, different sorts of paper, corrugated paper, gauze, blown glass or plate glass, are already spoiled even before they are cleaned. The contrary is true of indestructible materials such as stone, bronze, iron, hardwood or tiles.

Most of these heavy materials require upkeep just as much as the lighter materials, mainly against soiling; and precisely because they look so strong they get used a lot and so, even though they are not easily damaged, they do acquire scratches and stains on the surface, or become discoloured. A housewife or cleaner can do little against this and needs to hire professional help, so that the usefulness of the object has to be balanced against the costs of upkeep.

Finding for a particular interior a combination of materials with an appearance encouraging carefulness and which does not gather a lot of dirt or where the dust is not very noticeable, so that one does not have to be continually resorting to dusters, brushes and water to make them look neat, is not easy and can often not be done with so-called imperishable materials. And to do all this without the wall becoming dirty when the floor

is cleaned and having to prevent dirty edges by using glass scutcheons, polished wainscotting, boards between the stairs and the wall, carpets on the stairs, cellophane on lampshades, dust-covers on the arms of chairs, and so forth, is very difficult and requires a strongly developed sense of materials.

We realize increasingly that in fact the upkeep is our own task and that this does not just mean repairing things; simply keeping them clean is also upkeep. What is more, we have to make the calculation with everything that we introduce for our convenience or pleasure: will it be worth the trouble in the long term, or would I do better to simplify my life? Simplification, of course, is something that can mean either gain or loss.

The designer must never do more for his customer than fill in the background. The life of the person who is to occupy the space he creates must not be intruded on – he should not put in any unnecessary fixtures but leave space for other possibilities as indicated in the design. There must be enough left for the occupant to leave his or her personal stamp on the interior and this goes also for the daily upkeep of the house. The materials must be chosen in such a way that the upkeep gives satisfaction.

The more gradual the evolution of the designer the better he will be able to satisfy his customer in this respect. If he is a pioneer, then the occupant will sometimes have to bear with him a bit, and not change the layout to suit his own taste as soon as he spots an element that looks unpractical. The designer may in the course of further development find the correct way of finishing it off.

A major task for interior designers is finding a finish for the floor, one that is hygienic but not too resonating when one walks on it, nor easily scratched or leaving too many footprints. Also finding a good finish for walls and ceiling for dry prefabricated elements, one that does not make one think of a cardboard box and where the sections, instead of resulting in disintegration, by their carefully chosen size create a restful background.

In the next few years we will have to focus all our attention on mass housing and the interior designer will have to gain influence in this sphere.

I expect a development in the direction of a factory-made core that will incorporate all the technical devices, such as staircase, doors, bathroom facilities, kitchen, heating and air-conditioning, all supply pipes and waste pipes and all the mains-systems. It will then be possible to add neutral rooms of whatever size one requires; and full attention can then be paid to complete these neutral areas in a way that is appropriate to their specific purpose.

The problem of mobile interiors in buses, trains and aeroplanes

This is where new materials will be most widely used. Aluminium, rubber, sunken panelling, fibrous bakelite, nylon, special sorts of glass, prefabrication of industrially produced parts. It is odd, for instance, that in intercity trains where masses of people travel at high speed, doors of 50cm are regarded as adequate while doors with a minimum of 80cm are thought to be hardly wide enough in houses and corridors. It occurred to me that the smooth shapes and shiny materials must play a role here.

A more widespread use of so-called dry materials for factory-made elements of houses will, in my opinion, not only open up new perspectives in housing; plenty of space and construction time will also be saved, with staircases, entrances and fittings.

Much experience gained in the use of new materials and structures and the resulting new forms will also have an impact on new housing; the reverse, however, is not true: not many of the elements of existing housing will be suitable for use in these moving interiors. It is complete nonsense, for instance, to including elements of domestic comfort in these travelling interiors, such as the fastened-back curtains adorning the windows of airplanes and modern buses. In a bus belonging to one of the most modern American airlines I saw beautiful, practical and elegantly slanting windows completely messed up by little symmetrical curtains framing them.

In Sweden I saw something really practical, a tiny shift in the two adjacent seats so that the elbows of the travellers came behind each other instead of being on the same level.

Furniture – tools – furnishings

The layout of large public spaces should have a value that is generally acceptable, but the layout of the interior of a house is something extremely personal. The more rational the design of the homes we want to build, the greater the need to let the interior allow for individual use; whatever this means, however, it does not mean that we have to impose something on the occupant; nor does it mean that everyone has to put up with some furniture and decorative objects that they cannot in fact relate to, but which they have become so used to that they have ended up feeling at home with them (habit is second nature). It is quite a different matter when people have particular reasons for surrounding themselves with these things – it should not be excluded.

Our work is rather to keep the rooms as neutral as possible and to use shapes for furniture and appliances that are so primary that all combinations are possible, without the occupant feeling imposed upon. We should do the same with every piece of decoration or ornament; better still, in my opinion, we should leave it to the occupant to bring in any additional sculptural element or painting insofar as he needs it, has the time for it and is interested in it.

Should an item of furniture or a household article be completely smooth or lacking in ornament? This is something I want to discuss in detail.

Is a household article something that should be thought of as a tool that makes some functions easier or more pleasant to carry out? Then the difference between this and a tool that is used for making household articles is simply the following: the tool is also suitable for making other things while a household article is intended for only one function (a fork, a razor). For this very reason, a set of tools has a more general value, but it can only be used by people who have the skill and this takes practice. A household article is more individual in its application, but is meant for everybody and the less practice it requires the better.

The thought that a whole nation can drink from the same design of glass is greater than the thought that asingle person may get pleasure from something exceptional, or that everyone might have their own design of glass.

The mass-produced article, however, is not necessarily less beautiful; on the contrary, people can devote more attention to a design that will be used for a series of 100,000 than to a design for a single object.

Of course, people can use a household object as a body or a panel for its plastic or painterly function (a vase, a box, a tray etc.); one can achieve an effect by contrasting the surface – matt versus shiny, transparent versus opaque – or by contrasting materials, such as inlay work. These are possibilities that belong to the realm of painting or sculpture, not to architecture; what is more, they do not even belong to the field of applied art but to fine art in combination with a deliberate restraint in the choice of materials. In terms of mass-produced articles, we shall only give detailed consideration to the workmanship that derives from the processing of the product.

Just as beating metal results in dents and bumps that can sometimes suggest figurative images, so turning an object can produce ribs, pressing or pounding can create folds, chiselling creates a wave-effect, and so on. The machine works less schematically at producing the intended shape, but sometimes deviations from the abstract shape remain that we would be wrong to ignore. We can even accept them because it only makes sense to achieve perfection in form in very few instances, such as instruments, especially in terms of upkeep and possible damage – some of their parts sometimes still being coated with enamel.

Industrial design, however, does not allow any room for manoeuvre – machine processing presents us with the style of our times – yet we are at the very beginning – most promising are new products that have no tradition – because the tradition of use, craftsmanship and the trade that is geared to it makes it almost impossible to push a new mass-produced variant through.

In the case of fabrics, a difference in colour resulting in a design is considered justified if it stems from the method of weaving and from the sort of material used; the fabric sometimes gains from this, for example in suppleness, fewer creases, lighter, and so on. Typical everyday materials such as linen, duck, cotton and wool fabrics – tweed, gabardine and similar cloths – will always last longer than designs that are constantly changing, and which will continue to do so because the combination of threads is so much less convincing. In the case of fabrics for women's clothes, other arguments apply that do not concern us here.

The specific nature of a material is almost always revealed by so-called faults or shortcomings in production; to be able to exploit these with a view to their eventual form they will take is the sign of a master craftsman.

Our profession is an old one and contains many examples we can draw on; we can learn a great deal from what has been done already, from the Egyptians to the Renaissance. There are many kinds of joints, structures, fabrics, methods of furnishing, methods of finishing – which will always remain useful – there is a whole range of objects people have surrounded themselves with throughout the ages; universally valid principles can be discovered in all these things and it is important to know what they are.

We should, however, always remember that every age has its own rhythm, which, while certainly connected with previous ages, in a certain sense also opposes or reacts against them.

Anyone who wants to learn a profession thoroughly needs a store of ready knowledge; at the same time one should always bear in mind that our age is striving to free itself of many things that were previously indispensable.

What is essential, talking about interiors?

Is it a matter of the greatest possible functionality and convenience, and, in the case of private houses, not just convenience but domesticity – being able to relax after the day's work? There is no doubt that the slogan of the so-called new functionality, the machine for living, expressed very clearly that what was wanted was a house that would answer people's daily needs so directly that it would give them spare time for study, rest or relaxation.

This is a very important task and the phrase of the Swiss architect Gideon, 'befreites wohnen', stresses the considerable advantages of the new interior. It implies openness both in terms of space and mentality, even if the expression is a bit negative – the words 'befreites wohnen' relate more to what we have left behind, than what we have achieved; it does, however, suggest possibilities.

Art, in fact, has another function that is entirely different; it can reflect existing conditions; it can also break with them; just like insights and discoveries, art can pave the way for a new age. It arouses desires and incites the realization of new relations.

Art is an important factor in the renewal and continuity of conscious life.

Art achieves this by developing the faculty of perception; all

art forms are predominantly concerned with the development of one or other of our senses.

The so-called visual arts develop our ability to see and observe. Architecture and interior design concentrate on seeing spatially – that means, in a rather literal sense, seeing with both eyes at once and developing stereoscopic vision.

Our increased receptivity means that our world view expands because only what we are receptive to can become part of our reality.

The one-sided talent of artists, particularly when a new style is just beginning, enhances receptivity in every field of art, because the focus of attention is sharpened. The painter shows us unknown colour relations. The sculptor shows us forms that up till now have been disregarded, and the spatial artist not only makes space visible but by doing so imbues our lives with a sense of proportion (assuming you are a client of his).

In the joy that comes from our increased receptivity and the resulting expansion of our world view, we see that architecture has achieved its end; this is the secret of true beauty.

Another great truth which can be discovered in art is that it satisfies desires not by making more and more demands (as is the case with luxury stimuli), but by making less. It is clear, for instance, that the artistic value of a painting does not depend on the quantity of paint or the size of the canvas; its artistic value is dependent only on the way in which it is able to increase our receptivity to colour organization.

This is why the artist, often considered the least socially relevant of all people, is essentially the best economist; therefore, all art that is genuinely alive is socially justified – and this is more important than any practical usefulness it may have.

Never forget that this economic factor is one of the greatest values of art and that it is here that we find the explanation of the fact that the real artist rejects possessions and repudiates power.

I dare to go even further and say that it is here that we find the germ of a peaceful society.

Seen in this way, our work is justified in its goal; and that goal is therefore not creating beauty, or producing luxury, or gratifying our senses or our love of comfort. First and foremost it should stimulate our sensitivity to space, by proposing new spatial principles. In everything that we do in the realm of interior design – all the ready knowledge we can bring to bear, everything that we make or give a place to, every colour we choose, every material we select, for each point where light falls and for each light-reflecting surface – in all this, how we use space must be our primary concern. If we accept this, then we are working in a field in which the interior designer can be influential. If we admit that there is currently little desire for a genuine renewal in interior design, that people even state with a certain pleasure that this aspiration is fortunately a fad that has passed, because people feel happy with shiny brown wood – what is it, then, that gives us the right to continue on the path to clarity?

Does it make sense to produce something that only a few individuals are looking for? The only answer to this is the joy we experience again and again from something we have tried and achieved.

...Before fire was discovered, did anyone feel a need for it – perhaps they burnt the person alive who discovered fire; perhaps the person who invented the wheel was broken on it. But it was their delight in what they achieved that gave them the certainty that it would also bring joy to the community.

Some remarks about architecture, considered as one of the visual arts

Writing is an art in itself; philosophy which determines the role and relevance of architecture and the other arts in modern life is a discipline that I am unfamiliar with; I have however read many vague and incorrect remarks and criticisms about art that happened to have been persuasively written; for this reason I can no longer be silent about how I myself as an architect think about architecture.

Works of art from the past have one thing in common that gives them a very direct appeal: *clarity*. This is in no way obscured by their distance in time or by any difference in their view of life. Contemporary art, art criticism and attempts at analysis usually lack this clarity.

Differences in views of life and in social status cannot be ignored. Why is it that with the best will in the world there continues to be so much disagreement about how contemporary art is to be appreciated and understood? Because when people talk about art they do not easily understand each other; it ends up being a matter of emotions.

Contemporary art has something intimidating about it, because it attempts to wake people up while at the same time it does not provoke any associations with feelings that one can recognize.

Perhaps the greatest mistake is that people constantly talk about *beauty* when they mean art and vice-versa; a mysterious gap between art and down-to-earth social existence seems to be maintained.

If someone says that art and beauty begin where usefulness ends, everyone accepts this without question, as though art had to be estranged from society; and when spirit and soul are discussed everyone behaves as though they know what is being talked about.

The following words are often used in connection with art and people appear to have no quarrel with them: spiritual necessity, culture, style, philosophy of life, idealism, dream, meaningfulness, magic, liberation from the material world, blood longing, the soul's desire, loftiness of spirit, etcetera. All these words of course suggest something of the character of art, but they hardly lead to clarity and comprehension.

Perhaps I am oversimplifying, but for me a work of art is a work involving the pleasurable experiencing of a portion of reality (I mean that we experience the depiction, not some happy event or other that is depicted); this is in contrast with the many experiences that we are constantly subjected to in passivity. If I could be sure that this simple statement of mine would be accepted without question I would not say any more, because, not being a man of words, I am afraid I will obscure things again through statements that lack clarity. I am however quite certain that it will not be so quickly assented to and I therefore feel obliged to explain what I mean in more detail.

In the general turmoil of society and the tedious routine of everyday life we absorb (passively) much more than we (actively) perceive.

To a great extent the vast amount of work carried out is no different from that which grinds down the machines.

We acquire more knowledge through impressions and memories than we become aware of through direct observation.

We do not know what height or depth the spark of our awareness originates in; what we do experience is the *pleasure* of creation in the expansion of our being and *sorrow* in its decline. With every act of observation our being expands. Every passively received sensation diminishes it.

Our existence oscillates

between life and death,
between hope and fear,
between love and hate,
between health and sickness,
between growth and decay,
between joy and sorrow.

Every work of art contributes something to the activity of the senses, not because the artist is a greater human being, but because, having a one-sided character, his nature is more defined or concentrated; for this reason he is able to create more intensely on a single point. It seems to me to be correct to call a work of art a creation', because the *creative* aspect is the essential element in a work of art: growth, joy, love, hope, life. (It is the consoling element that is inherent in it that we call beauty, in contrast with passivity that brings no consolation.

Furthermore we also call things beautiful out of a feeling of sympathy or because we associate them with something pleasurable.)

Our faculty of perception can be defined as follows:

The undifferentiated faculty of perception is called: feeling.

The whole body is in different parts sensitive to a different degree to light, warmth, air and stimuli originating in pressure or vibrations; this is particularly the case with the eyes, the nose and the ears. We call the unity of the undifferentiated sense impressions: the unconscious. Knowledge is not generated, then, but through the prism of the senses: hearing, sight, smell and taste. With animals some senses are more strongly developed; their interplay, however, seems to be less complete.

Let us confine ourselves to sight since we are talking here about the visual arts in particular. (I would be delighted to learn more about the other senses from other people.)

All perceptions and sensations combine to form knowledge; they all bring about an alteration in our situation, either happiness (growth) or sorrow (decline). (We call the perception of our own existence memory and self-knowledge.)

Seeing colour:
our retina differentiates between red, yellow and blue
(3 types of nerve ends).

Seeing forms:
concave, flat and convex (curving of the retina;
adjusting of the lens).

Seeing space:
in, around and between (wide-angle lens).

Each of these categories is a special form of sight (every artist is more strongly developed in one or more forms); it is a qualitative selectivity in the activity of our retinas. An idea of what I mean by activity and specialization of the senses can be seen in love; the object is viewed with more than normal attention – love is blind to everything else.

These limitations on sight are necessary for making distinctions; the same also goes for what is visible: unlimited space is not visible (in fact it does not exist); the spatial value of a tower, for instance, is that it determines space and indicates height; the space around the tower becomes 'real'.

Light that never comes up against a reflective surface, does not illuminate the space.

Matter is visible through its own limitations; the limit or boundary is the separation between a substance and what surrounds it. An area of colour that had no end would not be perceived as colour, because colour itself needs contrast or complement (through being bounded) in order to be colour; if this is absent or only partially present, our sense of colour attempts to create this contrast or complement: or to put it more precisely: the surrounding area becomes colour through the area of colour that it surrounds.

Talking about the nature of art Tagore says: through the limiting of the unlimited, truth becomes reality. Every work of art illuminates a facet of the observer's reality, enables us to experience the joy of creation, which is the ground of our being, all over again.

Every work of art preserves us against decline.

The following statements are based on the explanation above:

There is no objection to the expression of power, of a philosophy of life or beauty in a work of architecture; one should, however, not forget that things like this are the equivalent of, for instance, depiction in a painting; the essential thing in building is the way that the space within and around it is defined.

If emotions such as hate, fear or sorrow, or something that is unpleasant, are depicted in a painting, it is still possible to talk about a beautiful painting, because it is the way in which the colours are defined, the organization of colour, that determines the value of a painting, not the subject that is depicted.

In the art of advertising, articles are proclaimed as being indispensable for our existence; it is in the nature of the profession that they have to persuade their viewers and so they must contain material for passive perception rather than active observation; this is why advertising, however effective it may be in terms of imagery, remains secondary as a form of art.

It is difficult to build houses that transcend the simple desire for comfort of the occupants.

The activity of observation in the work of art has nothing to do with a sort of impetuosity of brushstrokes or virtuosity of line or anything of that kind; nor is it the dramatic, comic or epic character of the subject. It is a question of clarity; the unambiguous way in which space, colour and materials, by being given definition, become a part of our existence.

A painting can be what is called 'plastic' or depict space (Vermeer's *Milkmaid*, for instance); its value is not primarily its depiction of space, because this remains on the level of depiction and this is always achieved in painting by colour organization.

As with life, it is also the essence of art works, that we only appreciate them when we are ready for them and that their true significance is often obscured by contingent circumstances – historical ones, for instance – that also have their importance.

We perceive all colours, except for red, yellow and blue (people who work with colour call these colours the primary ones), as mixed; in other words with two thirds of our colour sense at one time. In physics people do not talk about colours, but about specific wave lengths of light; this makes for a great deal of misunderstanding between physicists and those susceptible to colour.

A wall in the interior of a house has an architectural function that is completely different from the background in a painting; if the painter treats the wall as defining the space he is very unfree; if he does paint freely he can hardly be held responsible for the architectural function of the wall.

As far as architecture is concerned the sculptor does not have it much easier than the painter.

People often confuse plastic organization with spatial definition.

If an element of plasticity is used to provide detail or to highlight scale in a work of architecture, the emphasis is mistakenly laid on the plastic qualities of elements of architectural construction. (This is not the case when the plastic elements are applied independently.)

In my opinion, the three plastic arts must develop completely independently of each other.

A sculpted newel post is applied art, but a free standing piece of sculpture, a figure, for instance, in which the upper part and the back are no less important than the front, can sometimes find such a good setting in a large hall at the foot of a staircase; while losing none of its plasticity, it also fulfils an architectural function (contributing to the position and proportions of the space).

Architecture as an independent form of art and functional or practical construction work have one and the same goal, that is to define the character of the space (whether or not in the interest of humanity; military fortifications are a typical feature, for instance, of our old cities). The social goal in architecture is the same as is the subject matter in painting (I do not underestimate its importance). Architecture that does not have this as its foremost function will never become a work of art just because sculptural ornament or murals have been employed.

Human and social requirements, like expressions of power, can easily be greater than the goal or function of the work of architecture; people may of course be served by this, but it adds nothing to the architecture.

For the architect who aspires to be an artist more assignments are unacceptable than otherwise.

The architect will only be able to practise the art of working with space with a view to influencing new building; less abstract architecture (spiced with figurative elements) has the direct advantage that it is more readily accepted; its drawback is that it quickly ages, even for enthusiasts.

Painterly effects and colour dilute plasticity; sound in a sound film distracts attention from what is seen; and the visible aspect can at moments detract from one's experience of sound; in my opinion, this will seriously damage the artistic development of film and indeed has already done so.

I think it is a great mistake to talk about higher or lower senses (material and spiritual); it is of course true that taste and smell serve more everyday and direct necessities of life (eating and breathing), while hearing and sight can remain unexercized for a long time without leading directly to hunger, exhaustion or sickness (it also takes longer before their lack is compensated for), but this does not make the latter senses any less real and certainly does not mean that they are of a higher order; each one is useful at times.

In addition to the visual arts (the art of sight) it is also useful to think about music and rhetoric (the art of hearing). What is unclear in one field of activity is sometimes clarified in another.

Comparisons can also be made between taste and the sense of smell (this is something that is commonly done in everyday life; people talk about taste when referring to the sense of beauty; even though in other respects people seem to be ashamed of it, because people think that taste is a purely physical sense and of a lower order).

Delicious has something in common with beautiful and distasteful with ugly. What one person sees as beautiful is ugly for another. Beautiful and ugly (delicious and distasteful) are not always suitable measures for good and bad.

Exercising the senses is for the body what tuning is to the motor, while sport makes one think of running a motor in.

The architects of functional building want to satisfy both the spiritual and the material needs of humanity; of course they mean only those needs that can be satisfied through architecture, and of these again only those needs that are worthy of a human being.

Can these requirements be put forward as a precise programme for now and for times to come?

The best thing that architects, who are by no means necessarily judges of human nature, can do is to keep the space open for this possibility. If an architect is also an artist, he will do this as a matter of course.

A style was a plastic expression, theoretical in character in a specific time, in a more or less isolated country. Through photography and the expansion of the possibilities of travel we first began to become familiar with all styles, to such a point that we have murdered all styles; abstract art has introduced a new alphabet. Functional architecture is a liberated architecture.

In my opinion it is no longer possible for us to have separate styles for different countries; what will occur will be a general growth in the quality and artistic sense of the movement for pure stylelessness that has just begun to emerge.

The chance of a modern development in ornamentation is in my opinion very small, since the three visual arts, once they are finally free of each other's domination, will not so easily feed off each other once again.

If in spite of this or because of cultural obligations a new style still emerges, then we should regard this as a reaction.

Perhaps it will be a temporary and hopefully beautiful mistake.

How far such reactions are still necessary in our time, is not for an architect to decide.

Architecture

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity of stating my views on contemporary architecture – the architecture that should now be setting the pace. You think it is possible to learn from what was going on in our childhood time. I agree that one can compare our early years (then) and yours (now). But a time will come (when that will be, you can never tell) when older people will start appreciating the future as compared to what happened in the past; what you get then is, at best, a *present* that has more connection with the *past* than with the *future*. For instance, in our youth we were able to admire Berlage's work and even continue it, but he was incapable of appreciating *our* work *and even had serious criticisms of it*. I think that the best thing is to tell you something about the events of my youth, my attitude to them and about what we were trying to achieve; then, when I go on to tell you what I think about the present, you will be able to say: We know who is talking.

First of all, something about myself. I was not a very strong child and I was a dreamer, greatly astonished that such a wee morsel of life could be aware of its own existence. When it was that I first began to have some notion about this existence, I can't remember. This seems reasonable because with the first dawning of consciousness one can hardly speak in terms of memory. I was also aware at a very early age (maybe even more than I am now) of the relativity of everything that we perceive, appreciate and try to evaluate. My parents, you see, were so different in temperament that I always felt they lived in different worlds that collided from time to time in practical situations, without them realizing the pain they were causing each other. What my mother regarded as the finest and best things of life, was bad, even wicked, in my father's eyes.

I tried in my own way to arrive at an objective idea of things, but that was far from easy! For instance, if I looked at a picture in the paper, what I saw was not just letters and illustrations of people; I also saw the dots of the screen. I understood that that was not what I was supposed to see. I was supposed to see a picture in a specific scale. If I took a magnifying glass, then I saw a variety of dots without them making any picture; if I used a microscope, I saw fibres, threads and blotches. I knew that I had to see a newspaper and letters and a picture, and I adjusted myself to that scale. In the case of a newspaper the scale was fairly clear, but there are things and concepts where it is not so clear what scale you must adopt to experience them; simply through the scale that you adopt to see things, then, you end up realizing that there are different forms of reality. Not only that, but different creatures have different senses. Which is the true reality, then? Ours or theirs? Only what we are capable of seeing, hearing and tasting with our specific, limited perceptive faculties – and then only in a scale that we might call a human scale — this, and this only, is our reality.

This reality has developed gradually according to particular patterns, beginning with the first dawning of our consciousness. Step by step we have given meaning to all sorts of combinations of our perceptions, until our surroundings have become a single and infinite image of the world.

The sense of the relative nature of all certainties has cast its influence over my youth, my activities and my works; it has meant that I have remained free of prejudice and, above all, without certainties. Hegel said: As for human consciousness, we cannot have too high an opinion of it; I agree with this totally, but only because it is the only means *we* have of understanding our own existence; we will have to make do with it, even if we end up concluding that our consciousness is an illusion.

There is something else that always preoccupied me and that is the question about what path this line of consciousness follows. Where does it begin, how does it continue and where does it end? And on what point on this line is the artistic act of creation situated?

Over the course of time it became clear to me that everything influences everything else and that this influence itself moves via numerous stages of development towards the making of distinctions; the distinguishing of differences in the undifferentiated state of nothingness. Every piece of matter, every thing reacts to the *imprint* or *influence* that another thing or piece of matter has on it.

Where and when the process of reaction of pieces of matter, things or organisms becomes conscious of this influence, is impossible for us to reconstruct, even in our own case; how

could we ever know how and when other chemical combinations or organisms began to become aware of their reactions?

What we can be sure of, however, is that everything in the universe lives as we do: first it is entirely submerged in the total cosmic system; then, it slowly develops into a particular organism, until it gradually comes to distinguish different impressions and eventually to separate these impressions into categories such as light, sound and taste. These are permanent impressions of this new *self*, impressions that combine with each other and acquire a particular meaning in the form of memory. I had the idea that this was how our own consciousness developed, through continual combination and merging of these impressions with already established memories. This process seemed to me to be the same as what we call thought. It included particular stopping points that were synonymous with my definition of knowing.

These stopping points are, in my opinion, never final: moreover, the knowledge we have acquired is only valid in relation to our mutual agreements and recognized concepts or presuppositions. Our thinking faculty is constantly fed with new sense-impressions and activities; otherwise it would slowly run down in a closed cycle of logic. Running down is what happens anyway, because life is a temporal phenomenon that (in its specific form) ends where it began: as evenness and undifferentiated sensitivity in the activity of the universe.

Bearing all this in mind, I realized at an early age that we ourselves cannot have any influence whatsoever for good or evil, *either* in the chemical process of matter that moves endlessly in search of balance, *or* within the cycle of our own process of consciousness. My view of life is mainly founded on this idea.

We were brought up with the notion that it was our duty to do good and to avoid evil; the material plane was regarded as base and wicked, and the spiritual (something that I have never understood) was thought of as high and good. When this duty to elevate everything to a spiritual level – that proved so impossible to live up to – fell from my shoulders through the realization that all our comings and goings are only incidental phenomena in the vast activity of the universe, my life became lighter. That was when I realized that, illusory or not, nothing is more important for us than the joy we experience in our temporal growth and the temporal prolonging of our perception of ourselves and our environment. Every act of creation occurs in that area of ourselves that is not yet quite conscious; it is a constantly new discovery of our own existence – the self and its environment; an environment that, being the opposite of our self, is the true mirror image of ourselves, while at the same time we are the mirror image of the environment (*together they form a single world image*). For egoist reasons we will love our environment and our neighbours as ourselves. There is no profession that is so much aimed at the realization of the spatial extension of our self and making it possible to experience it on a human scale, as architecture, because the medium of architecture is space; for this reason we should never deny the artistic element in architecture; it is the most direct of all the arts. Here we come up against the basic principle of functional architecture from another point of view than that of the necessary and practical detailed enumeration of social and personal requirements.

That does not mean that every piece of architecture has to be a work of art – maybe it is enough if one in a thousand is. Not deliberately, but quite simply following my own needs, I ended up being constantly preoccupied with spatial problems. I experienced this as a life necessity; it is from this point of view that my own modest contribution to the development of architecture should be seen and understood. It was not a question with me of any deliberate aim or idea of working systematically in a particular direction; rather it was a matter of seizing on chance circumstances out of self-preservation. This is a way of life that is wasteful of energy, but I don't know an alternative. I am fully aware that with these statements about my philosophy of life, I have said nothing new, or at least nothing that has not already been rendered superfluous by more accurate ideas, discoveries or experiences. It was simply the view of life that gave form to my work before and during my collaboration with the other members of De Stijl.

You should not forget that even though De Stijl was a purely artistic movement, its architect members were well aware that, as a result of the rapid development of science and techniques, it was essential to bring about a renewal of architecture by machines. And for precisely this reason it was essential to make a fundamental reappraisal of our working methods, right down to the most basic details, both in terms of construction and of spatial design. In those days the problem was to replace the architecture of self-contained building volumes with a spatial architecture; this was to be achieved through definitions and restrictions that would give the fullest possible experience of the relation of inside to outside. We had to arrive at a new language of forms for architecture; in our case this meant new spatial proportions; new letters, new words, new sentences.

An analysis of the different faculties of perception was made: hearing, sight, taste and smell. We confined ourselves mainly to sight; and this we proceeded to divide into the perception of colours, forms and spaces. The perception of colour was again divided into the perception of red, yellow and blue. The perception of forms was divided into the three dimensions of volumes, into flat surfaces, concave forms and convex forms. The perception of space was also divided into three aspects; the distinction between inside and outside, between closed and open and between light and dark. In order to have complete control over our shapes we made exclusive use of right-angled forms and spaces; this meant that *inside* and *outside* stood in a relation of equality with each other. If one uses round shapes, the *inside* acquires a completely dif-

ferent character from the *outside*; the *outside* is much more shut out and the inside is much more *enclosed*. In the case of colours we have for a long time avoided using mixed colours, not because we thought they were wrong, but because we wanted, at least for the time being, to exclude any elements that might suggest the feeling of traditional forms. In order to keep things simple, we made everything into boxes; boxes of wood, boxes of stone, boxes of steel and glass. In many cases this was quite right and proper: the greatest simplicity is also the easiest to combine with other structures.

Construction and spatial design sometimes needed something more. I experimented with a constructional frame where the units were not simply joined to each other, but continued in all three directions. My idea then was to close this space-defining frame with two-dimensional surfaces. I experimented with three-dimensional combinations of surfaces, combinations that were continuations, as it were, of the spatial frame; as few surfaces with apertures as possible were included and as much contrast as possible between open and closed.

This problem has still not been satisfactorily solved. When you see a skeleton of concrete or iron, your expectations are aroused that the architecture will be good – it gives a boundary to the interior space and there is a good relation between inside and outside. When the wall elements are installed, however, this is usually a disappointment architecturally. This would seem to be a task for the younger generation of architects – even so the chances are a hundred to one that the solutions will be found somewhere quite different from where we were looking. To give just one example of a radical and modern solution that was quite different from what I was looking for. In the American pavilion at the Expo I saw a film that was projected on all the walls of a many-sided auditorium. This projection worked in a way that was completely spatial even though each surface only contained an ordinary flat projection. For years I had been looking for a system for creating a stereoscopic film; I thought I had succeeded in finding one, by using two different projectors, one for the left and one for the right eye. The difficulty was that each eye should see its own projection and not the other. I tried to solve this spatially by imposing two spaces on top of each other, but this was still too complicated to show to a large audience. It could also be achieved with coloured glasses, with prisms, mirrors and so on. All these different solutions were unpractical for a large audience. At the Expo there were none of these drawbacks. These were perfectly ordinary projections that you stood in the middle of, just as you are in reality. It was the same as the old panoramas but with motion; it was a pleasure to see how the Americans had come up with a solution that was both technically simple and radical, without any fuss or unnecessary problems.

It will often work out like this in architecture; the solution of a problem is sometimes to be found in a completely different place than one originally thought; moreover solutions are often very different for different times. In the course of the centuries architecture has gone through many changes. Many notions have been praised to the skies only to end up being out of date. In our times there is a great deal of discussion about architecture – perhaps too much. We are a country of many thoughts and afterthoughts. While almost everywhere else new ideas and methods of construction are gradually taking the place of the classical notions, we are still involved in countless compromise solutions: such as Cuyper's attempt to wed the Gothic style with the Renaissance or Berlage's return to the earliest European brick buildings. The idea behind all this was to escape from the nineteenth-century chaos of styles and to create a healthy foundation for a new architecture.

Meanwhile and afterwards many attempts were made to produce new shapes that, through their relation to so-called organic forms, were supposed to express both vitality and practicability. In nature every organism constantly strives to obey the laws without which it cannot survive. If an organism does no more than just grow and hold its own, it remains chemically and statically in an unstable balance with its whole environment; this is why everything that lives and grows has to be both a phenomenon in itself *and* completely adapted to its environment. We can learn a great deal from nature, but one would be displaying little grasp of its endless variety and complexity (in nature, after all, everything both exists and is influenced by everything else) if we tried to imitate it with our creations. The Greeks felt the need to give a plastic expression to the invisible tensions in columns by introducing a slight thickening half way up and to distract our eyes from the unstable balance with elegantly arranged acanthus leaves and spirals. In the Renaissance the same elements that had been used to lend emphasis became figures with a power of their own. In *Jugendstil* the shapes of plants are sculpted at all the joints to give an impression of charm and ease and so to maintain a sense of balance. This has nothing to do with the reality of nature and not much either with the reality of architecture either; it aims to suggest that the new is also practicable. Of course people realized that a new style would come that would break free of the traditions. The Amsterdam School, with its plastic forms, also made attempts at 'naturalness'. Even though they failed, they were very interesting and useful as a transitional phase. In the age of the development and popularizing of the natural sciences these ideas were no longer relevant.

It was the members of the De Stijl group who saw that the development of a new style – of an architecture, that is, with a purely contemporary appearance – could only be achieved by completely renouncing every imitation of what people called 'living nature'; and because every old style had imperceptibly invented of every piece of architecture, every piece of furniture – every household article, even – a sort of person that shared our lives, it was necessary to avoid every traditional form and

working method. It is sometimes thought – incorrectly – that the new forms of art and architecture are something that people can use in any way they please, or else that they can choose either to use them or not. Even the leaders in different professions, who regard it as essential to be advanced in their own field, see innovation in architecture as something superfluous or disturbing and are prepared to settle for a few technical devices that save time and energy. Of course, this is just not good enough. Science, technology and art, in architecture as much as anywhere, influence each other; art creates, sometimes unconsciously, an atmosphere in which science and technology are appreciated and have room to deploy themselves. And the rapid advances of the sciences have brought new technical possibilities as well as evidence for our contemporary expanded world view (if you compare Dante's world view with that of Einstein you will understand what I mean). In our world view, technology has a vital place. The first steps in the development of technological constructions were taken with great difficulty because people regarded them as materialistic and ugly: it is interesting to see how later on it has above all been artistic movements with their functional creations that have stimulated a refining of technological constructions. De Stijl achieved this by arousing interest in the three-dimensional applications of simple steel profiles; and a painter like Léger did the same simply by painting them and ridding them of their symbolic, pretentious or over-sophisticated attributes that *had camouflaged them as time passed.*

I should also state what I think are the most urgent problems for present-day architecture. First of all it must achieve the transition from the construction and design of building *volumes* to the creation of an experience of *space* both *in* and *around* a building, like a square in a city or the landscape. We have already discussed this. Then there is the question of the construction. This does not in the first place have to be monumental, but should rather be visually effective in giving spatial definition to the functional space. Then there is the question of sobriety: because of their superior position in nature, human beings are inclined to try and exploit everything to gratify their endless demands. I think that sobriety conceals an abundance that we have hardly begun to appreciate. Would it not be useful to reduce to a minimum the chaotic production of pseudo-useful articles so that our society whose resources are anyway under such great strain would have more energy left for the fulfilment of genuine human needs and desires? This also has a bearing on contemporary architecture.

I would like to warn against the many affectations of modernity that one finds in the new architecture (I mean the architecture of the new generation). Some buildings are made with whole series of the latest advances in new architecture: superfluous details in the design that are particularly intended to impress one with the idea that the building in question is a modern one. There are so many obvious solutions in architecture which no one has ever made use of, that if one wants at all costs to make something new, it is easy to do so without resorting to kitsch. Kitsch is a joke that is soon out of date. There are very few buildings in which the requirements of function, everyday use, circulation, fittings and spatial atmosphere are in complete harmony with the construction; usually *choices* have to be made from a number of possibilities which are then brought together in a single selection that pays equal attention to all the different aspects. It is a selection like this that makes a building modern – much more than any use of the latest materials and construction techniques. It is even possible to preserve or revive forms that belong to bygone world views. In our youth we struggled to break free from inflexible traditions. Now a struggle needs to be waged against the pseudo-modern that has developed into a sort of decorative formalism. This is a dead-end street. It is partly the result of an exaggerated enthusiasm for everything that is modern and partly a statement of incompetence. There are, however, enough fully-fledged talents among the younger generation for me not to be worried about the future of architecture. From my description of the work of De Stijl you already know what I think about the combination of the three forms of visual art.

While all the visual arts are combined during the final phase of a stylistic period (the Baroque, for instance), in the early phases, and especially in the early phase that we are now experiencing, they are more independent of each other. That is why a distinction has been made between architecture as space, painting as colour and sculpture as form. Sculpture combined with architecture has again taken the path of the liberal arts. The Baroque painting of panelling on walls and ceilings was intended to create an experience of space, and the architecture of that time was also painterly. Architecture has now once again returned to creating an experience of space and painting has once more become an independent experience by means of colour. All the combinations are still possible; to use them, however, would be a sign that a period was coming to a *close*, while in fact it has only just begun.

It is particularly important to remember that it is not necessary to take the separation of the three visual arts to fanatical extremes, because there is no material that does not have its colour, and no colour that is not dependent on the chemical substance it is made of, and no space is visible without being bounded by light-reflecting surfaces. It is rather a question of directing our attention as clearly as possible; so that there is not too much that has to be taken in all at once; because, in fact, every work of art is an attempt to achieve consciousness through a search for the laws of nature by a process of analysis. An interior, where *openings*, *walls*, *roofs* and *floors* combine to form a clearly circumscribed structure, functioning both as an easy to regulate shelter against nature and the environment, while at the same time being responsive to them – an interior like this where the enclosed parts serve to absorb and

reflect and which, in combination with other elements, create a pleasant atmosphere for our everyday life, will need little or no colour or sculptural additions. If an interior (or group of interiors) is a more or less regularly shaped amount of cubic metres, then colour and ingenious artificial lighting will help a great deal, however functional the positioning of the fittings. The rejection of the laws of statics means that they crop up again unexpectedly. Something similar occurs if one confuses the laws of sound with those of sight.

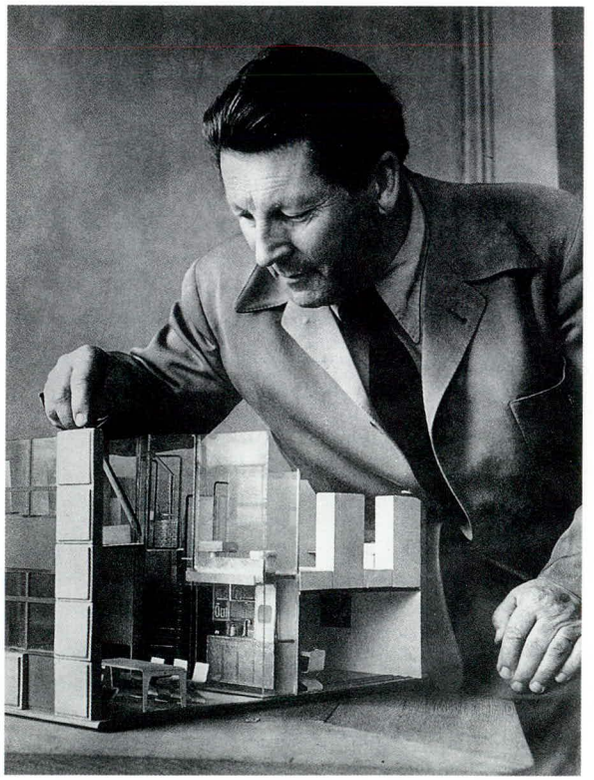
One of my last commissions was the interior of a working area for the international press in the new Unesco building in Paris. It was more a fortuitous extra space that had become available in the basement of the connecting corridor between the congress building and the administrative department, than an area for a press room. The fact that the space was situated precisely in the bend on both sides of a dilatation seam, meant that there were irregularly placed columns supporting the superstructure. These were very awkward from the point of view of finding places for the numerous tables, chairs, desks and cupboards, telephones, translation equipment, and so forth. To give an interior like this an attractive appearance and to create a pleasant working environment meant not only that the fittings had to be well designed and placed, but that a sort of juggling with lines and colours was also called for. This was a task in itself, that did not have much to do with architecture as such, but had a certain attraction as a challenge to ingenuity. In a situation like this I would have been pleased to call in a painter, but firstly there was no money and secondly I think it is insulting to expect painters to do an architect's dirty work for him, especially when they are so rarely considered for the prestige projects. The few painters who were given a stretch of wall in the Unesco building turned out to be so poorly qualified for their task that it has done nothing to change my opinion about colour in interiors.

Another point should be made. The numerous methods of communication that are now available mean that the scale has become increasingly large if we are to appreciate something; the distances that one is able to imagine and experience have also become increasingly large. It must have had an enormous impact on our feeling for proportions. That does not mean that everything should become larger and more imposing; on the contrary, is it not our interest in and knowledge of the smallest of all things, *the nucleus of the atom*, that has enabled us to unleash the greatest source of power? Something similar might also take place in architecture.

It is also a good characteristic in the new architecture to avoid the desire for perfection. Every space remains only a *little part* of the building and every building is only a *part* of a neighbourhood, city and district. Being only a *part* means that it is also open to everything else; there is no question then of being closed off, but rather of possibilities of expansion and combination. In this approach to architecture I see a parallel with our social idea of cooperation, in which every person is also part of a larger activity.

Finally I should say a few words on a subject that is very dangerous particularly for the young: that is the question of popular geniuses and virtuosi in our profession. I think the time for such people is past and gone. In the catalogue for the exhibition of Fifty Years of Modern Art in the Brussels Expo, the introduction states that, 'The fact that Cubism was able to express its principles in formulas explains its widespread influence throughout the world, an influence that carries with it the danger of rapidly running out of inspiration or else of turning into a new academicism. Numerous talented artists have never been able to replace the rare genius.' This statement may be true of Cubism in painting, but it definitely is not true of modern architecture that has also spread throughout the world with great rapidity. The genuine work of innovation is yet to come and for that purpose well-chosen teams of young talents will choose their own direction; in that case numerous talented individuals will replace the rare genius.

To say anything more might only cause confusion (if it isn't confused already). Let me finish then by wishing you enthusiasm, a lust for life, simplicity and sobriety, not to mention your share of good luck.



Rietveld with maquette
of a core house.
Photo 1941.

Catalogue key

Selection

The catalogue includes all realized and unrealized architectural designs for which more information was available than just a sketch, all realized furniture and other objects, all realized autonomous typographic designs and wide selection of the furniture, the objects and the typography about which it is not known whether they were realized or not.

Composition of the catalogue entries

A catalogue entry number is allotted to one coherent design. This can vary from a unique object to a series of designs. The catalogue entry contains, insofar as they are known:

the description

The word design is placed before the description if the design was not realized or if it is not known whether the design has been realized.

the postal address

The address is added to architectural and interior designs.

the material

In the case of furniture and other objects, the types of material are generally named. In the case of one-offs the specific materials are given. For pieces which are known in more than one version the materials of the object pictured are given in the photo caption.

the dimensions

The dimensions are given for one-offs. For furniture and other objects which are known in more than one version the dimensions of the object pictured are given in the photo caption.

the dating

For architectural designs, two dates in years indicate the duration of the project. With other designs, this indicates the period within which the design was created. The word *circa* (c.) is added when the duration of a project is not certain. No distinction is made between an exact dating on the basis of sources and a dating on the basis of scientific attribution.

the client

For the architectural and interior designs, the client is named. For private houses, which were usually commissioned by married couples, the family name is given.

co-designers and assistants

If a design was created together with others and their input into the design was essential, their name is given separately with the designation 'co-designer'. The word 'with' is placed before the name of draughtsmen and other assistants who did not contribute to the design, but did have an important share in the realization. If the collaboration extends to people who were not employed by Rietveld's office, the expression 'in collaboration with' is used.

On 1 January 1961 Rietveld formed a partnership with the architects Joan van Dillen and Johan van Tricht, in which they functioned as a triumvirate. All designs created after that date are formally attributed to the Rietveld, Van Dillen and Van Tricht Partnership.

the condition

With the architectural designs, it is indicated, if known, whether they are altered, restored or lost.

the whereabouts

For one-offs the whereabouts are given, or in a few cases, the auction where the piece was last seen. If it is known that a piece has been lost this is mentioned in the text. With furniture designs and other objects which are known in more than one version, the whereabouts of the object pictured is given. The abbreviations NAi, SMA, CMU and RSA refer to, respectively, the Netherlands Architecture Institute, The Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Centraal Museum Utrecht and the Rietveld Schröder Archive, located in the Centraal Museum.

the commentary

Some of the catalogue entries are provided with a text, in which the facts, the backgrounds, the specific characteristics and the significance of a design are gone into more deeply. Taken as a whole, these texts cover almost every aspect of Rietveld's oeuvre.

the illustrations

The goal in the illustrations is to reproduce a design in the most authentic manner possible. The preferred means for this is the photographic material in the archives. In the photo caption only that information is given which deviates from the text with the general catalogue entry number, or which is not given in this text.

Chronological order of the catalogue numbers

The designs are included in chronological order, defined by the last year of the date. Within a year or a period, we tried to place the designs in order of creation.

Where this ordering led to illogical results, exceptions were made. For example: the furniture of the Rietveld Schröder House, which was probably created between 1924 and 1930, is given immediately after the Rietveld Schröder House and not in 1930.

Sources

Unless otherwise indicated, data are derived from the Rietveld Schröder Archive in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, and the Rietveld and Rietveld, Van Dillen and Van Tricht archives in the Netherlands Architecture Institute.

Authors

Both authors are responsible for the structure of the publication. However, in putting together the catalogue section the tasks were divided as follows: Marijke Küper is responsible for the introduction to Rietveld's texts, the biographical data and the catalogue numbers concerning architecture, and Ida van Zijl for the catalogue numbers concerning furniture. The authors share responsibility for the other catalogue numbers.

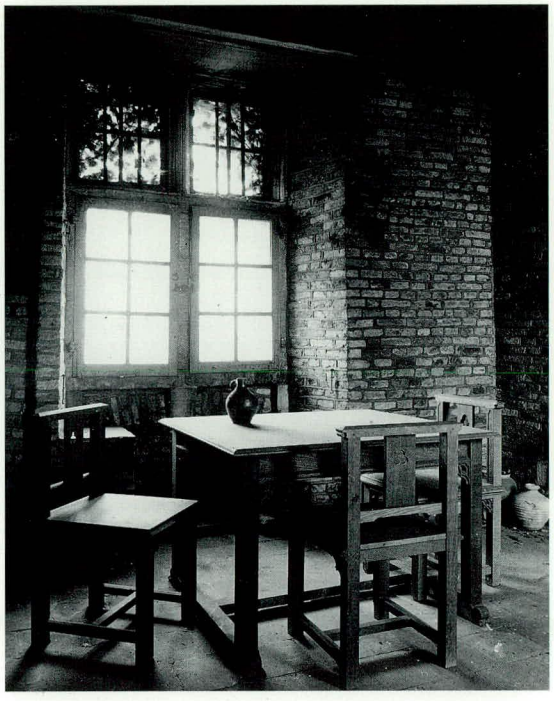
1 Table and three chairs, gatehouse, Slot Zuylen

oak
table 75 x 111 x 94cm
chair 83 x 46 x47cm
c. 1906
Slot Zuylen, Oud Zuilen

According to the catalogue of Rietveld's first retrospective exhibition in 1958 in the Centraal Museum Utrecht, this suite of furniture, commissioned by F.L.S.F. Baron van Tuyll van Serooskerken, dates from 1900 and was Rietveld's first design. It was made by his father's furniture firm.[1] The commission was however probably connected with the restoration of the gatehouse in 1906.[2] The furniture should, therefore, be dated at around 1906.

[1] exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 2.
[2] Van der Goes 1986, 15-32.

Interior gatehouse Slot Zuylen

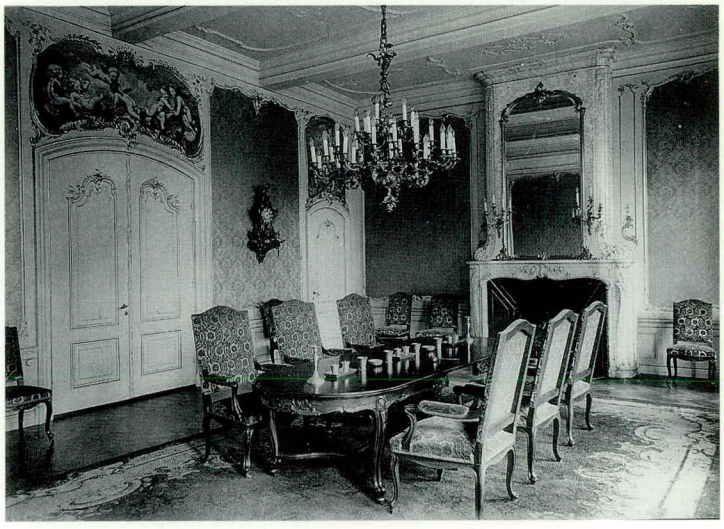


2 Interior conference room, Utrechtse Hypotheekbank
Drift 17, Utrecht

c. 1906

The Utrechtse Hypotheekbank bought the premises at number 17, Drift in 1900. In the following years the building was converted and the interior completely renovated under the direction of the architect, P. Houtzagers. The furniture and panelling of the conference room were executed in Rietveld's father's workshop. The paintings above the doors were done by Rietveld. Houtzagers was also the principal of the Municipal Evening School for Industrial Art in Utrecht. Rietveld had enrolled as a student there in 1904 and continued to follow courses until September 1908.

Interior conference room Utrechtse Hypotheekbank



1906

3 Tea table

wood
c. 1900-1908

Two virtually identical photo albums have been preserved from Rietveld's first retrospective exhibition in 1958. Not all the objects in the photos are described in the catalogue.[1] The tea table, chair (no. 4) and side table (no. 5) were shown as a group in 'Room 1 "The Old Craft" ± 1900 – ± 1908.' The tea table was also shown in the exhibition in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum in 1971.[2] Their present whereabouts is unknown.

[1] exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 2.
[2] exhib. cat. Amsterdam 1971, no. 2.

4 Chair

wood
c. 1900-1908

This is presumably the mahogany chair in the catalogue of the 1958 retrospective exhibition (see also no. 3).

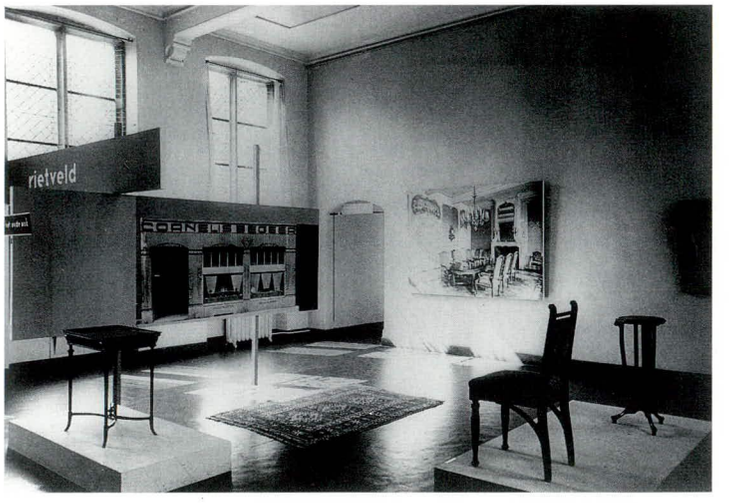
exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 2, no. 3.

Room I exhibition 'Rietveld. Bijdrage tot de vernieuwing der bouwkunst' CMU 1958

1908

5 Side table

wood
c. 1900-1908



6 Gate

wrought iron
c. 1900-1908
client
C.J.A.Begeer

In the catalogue of the 1958 retrospective exhibition the entry for number 6 reads 'wrought iron gate, originally belonging to the showrooms designed for Carel Begeer, Oude Gracht 187, Utrecht'.

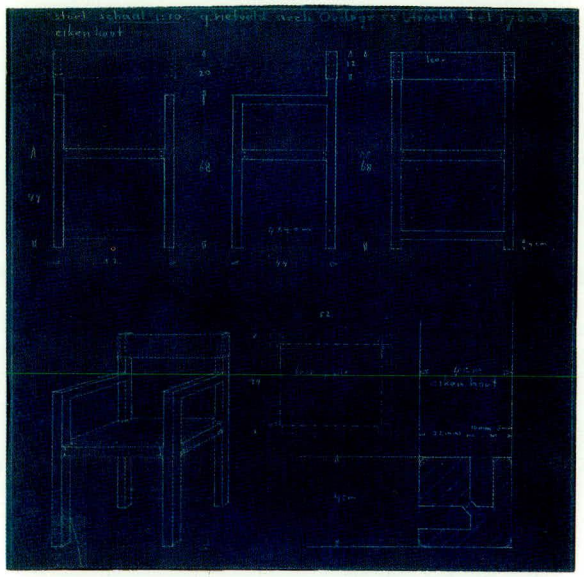
7 Upright armchair

wood, leather
1908

This is the first example of a chair that Rietveld reduced to its essentials: legs, seat and back. He used a cheap wood, deal, and a simple design. The back consists of a strip of leather fixed with copper nails. In an early working drawing of this chair in the Rietveld Schröder Archive the leather piece for the seat is missing. After 1930 Rietveld introduced a number of changes in the thickness of the rails for the seat and in the position of the back rail and the leather back. These changes gave more balance to the open planes of the chair and made it look more elegant. The leather piece on the seat is lined with a layer of felt. The expression 'upright armchair' is used in the 1958 catalogue.

exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, no. 4.

Design drawing
blueprint
25 x 24.5cm
c. 1935
RSA



Upright armchair
deal, leather
85.5 x 55 x 40cm
CMU

1908

8 Tombstone E. Nijland

Rietveld was given this commission by Carel Begeer, a good friend of E. Nijland, the headmaster of the Dutch Reformed High School.

marble
1909
client
C.J.A.Begeer
Eerste Algemene
Begraafplaats
Soestbergen, Utrecht

9 Medal 'In honour of Mr. J. van Heukelom'

The medal was struck by Cornelis J. Begeer's Koninklijke Utrechtsche Fabriek van Juweelen, Zilverwerken en Penningen. Rietveld worked for some time in Carel J.A. Begeer's studio. Only the reverse side with legend and coat of arms were modelled by him.

bronze
7.5cm diameter
1909
Stichting Het Van
Kempen en Begeer
Museum, Zoetermeer

Zwierzina [1935] 53, no. 868.

10 Portrait J. van Noordenne

This painting was mentioned in the entry form for the exhibition of the Painting and Drawing Society 'Kunstliefde', 12 April 1912, and also in the exhibition catalogue. Next to the price is the word 'sold'. The portrait was probably commissioned.

oil on panel
50 x 39.5cm
signed: GR
dated: 1910
private collection,
Amersfoort

11 Medal '70th birthday of S. van Haeften-Van Eik'

This medal also has a legend and coat of arms on the reverse modelled by Rietveld (see also no. 9). The medal is only known from the literature.

1911

Zwierzina [1935] 59 and 60, no. 952.

1909

12 Cupboard

oak, bronze
150 x 100 x 51cm
1911
Limburg Antiquairs, Amsterdam

The cupboard, the table, the settee and the linen cupboard (nos 12-15) were made by Rietveld on the occasion of his marriage to Vrouwgien Hadders. All four of these pieces of furniture were exhibited in 'Room II "First attempts at innovation" ± 1908 – ± 1915' in his first retrospective exhibition, in the Centraal Museum Utrecht, 1958. The accompanying caption reads: 'The architect P.J. Klaarhamer drew Rietveld's attention to the problem of design and scale; this was the beginning of his first attempts to modernize design.'[1] The proportions of this cupboard are based on a metre module. Rietveld often used this module both in his architecture and in his furniture.

[1] exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 3.

13 Table

oak
1911

The octagonal table top that Rietveld made for his marriage (see also no. 12) has a frame with eight panels. The tapering legs follow a medieval model that was often used round 1910. Influences of both Berlage and Van den Bosch can be recognized in this design. The legs were shortened later on. The design was, with certain alterations, made by G. van de Groenekan for the Verrijn Stuart family in 1941. The lower part of the legs are not tapered here and the wooden support for the crossed legs do not jut out at the ends.[1] G. van de Groenekan began to work as Rietveld's assistant in 1917 and took over the furniture workshop in 1924.

[1] auction cat. 'Elvis', Christie's Amsterdam, 6 November 1986, no. 484.

Table
shortened
45.5 x diam. 110cm
private collection, Blaricum

1911

14 Bench

The way that the legs are fitted to the seat is striking. They are encased in an iron 'cuff', the flange of which is screwed to the wooden frame.
The bench was in Rietveld's own house (see also no. 248).

oak, iron
38 x 45 x 179.5cm
1911
Bertus Mulder, Utrecht

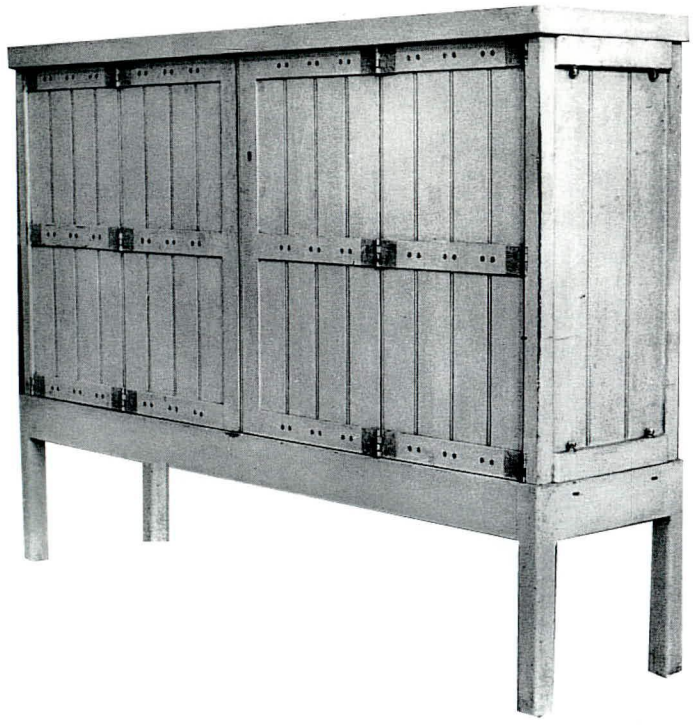
1911

15 Linen Cupboard

The linen cupboard was part of Rietveld's marriage furniture (see also no. 12). The design of this white painted linen cupboard resembles that of a cupboard by H.P. Berlage from 1895.[1] The boards are fixed to the frame with screws. The wide doors are hinged in the middle.
Its present location is unknown.

deal
1911

[1] Bless 1982, 21-22, ill. 17.



Linen cupboard
photo 1958

16 Portrait A. Begeer

oil on canvas
100.5 x 65.5cm
signed: Rietveld
1910-1912
client
C.J.A. Begeer
private collection,
Antwerp

In the entry form for the exhibition of the Painting and Drawing Society, 'Kunstliefde', 12 April 1912, this painting was described as a 'Portrait of the late Anth. Begeer'. Next to the price is the word 'sold'. It is not mentioned in the exhibition catalogue. Rietveld made the painting after Anthonie Begeer's death; it was probably commissioned by his son, Carel J.A. Begeer.

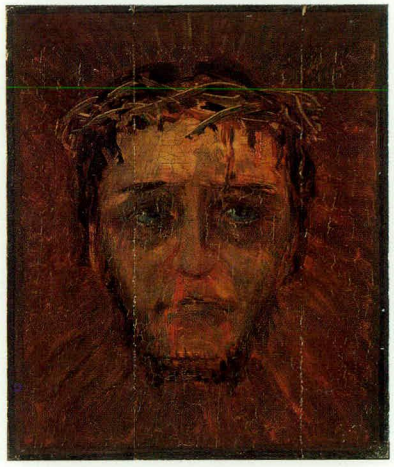
1912

17 'O Sacred Head Sore Wounded'

oil on panel
1911-1912

This painting was mentioned in the entry form for the exhibition of the Painting and Drawing Society, 'Kunstliefde', 12 April 1912 and in the exhibition catalogue. The price was stated there as being Dfl. 40. In 1971 it was still in the possession of Mrs T. Schröder-Schräder; since then, however, its whereabouts are unknown.

photo 1971



18 Portrait Mrs Koelman

1911-1912

This portrait of Mrs Koelman is mentioned in the entry form for the exhibition of the Painting and Drawing Society, 'Kunstliefde', 12 April 1912 and in the exhibition catalogue. Next to the price is the word 'sold'. The painting was probably commissioned.

19 Hobble cart

wood
c. 1914

Rietveld probably made this hobble cart after the birth of his first child in 1913. The cart is an extremely simple construction of boards and nails.

Rietveld and his three eldest children at the Rhijnauwen 'chicken bridge'
photo c. 1920

20 Spoon

silver or silver plate
c. 1905-1915

Like nos 21-23 this design was possibly a product of Rietveld's activities in Carel Begeer's studio from c. 1904 to 1908. Its present whereabouts is unknown.

exhib. cat.
Amsterdam 1971, no. 8.

21 Spoon

pewter
13.3cm
c. 1905-1915
private collection,
Hoevelaken

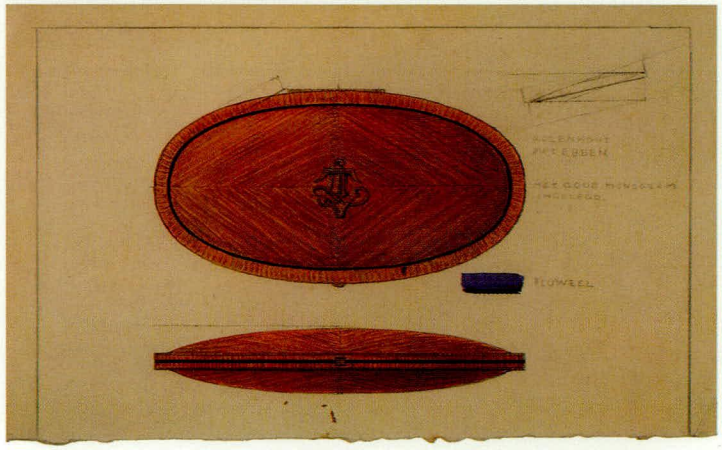
22 Spoon box

c. 1905-1915

The spoon box is mentioned in the 1971 Amsterdam exhibition catalogue, no. 7. Its present whereabouts is unknown.

23 Design jewellery box

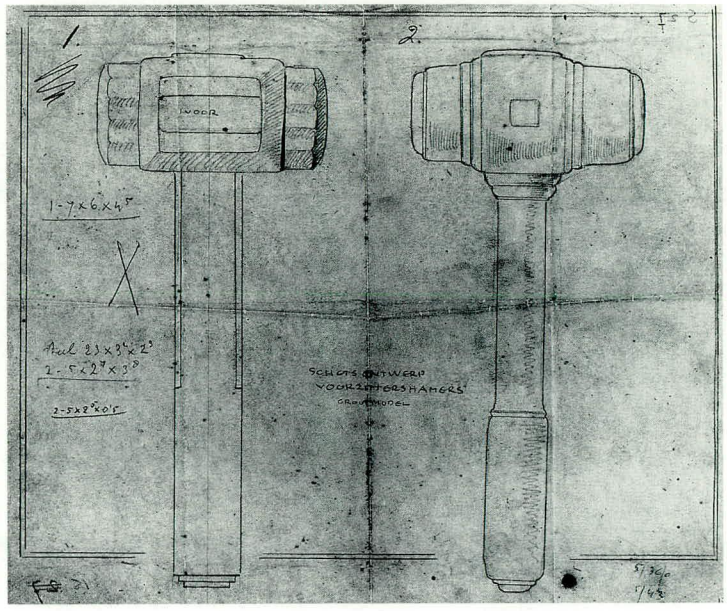
c. 1905-1915



Design drawing
pencil, paint on paper
15.5 x 23.9cm
RSA

24 Design gavel

c. 1905-1915



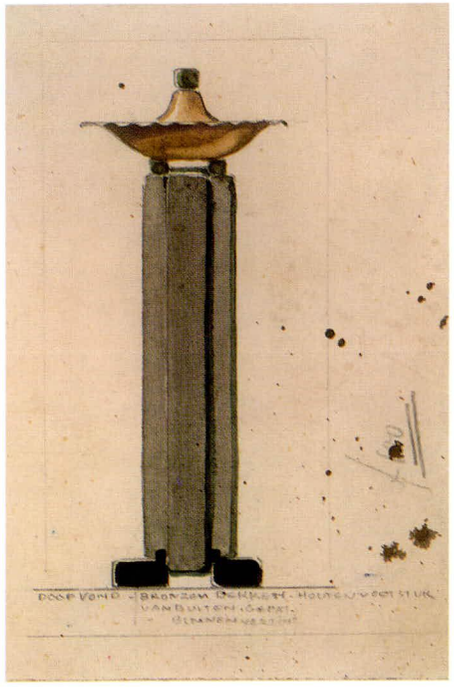
Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
31 x 35cm
RSA

1915

25 Design baptismal font

c. 1905-1915

This unsigned and undated design, in pencil and watercolours, has the character of a presentation drawing. According to the note on the watercolour the bronze basin of the font is patinated on the outside and pewter-plated on the inside.



Design drawing
pencil, paint on cardboard
14.7 x 9.1cm
RSA

26 Furniture Schelling

1916

H.G.J. Schelling commissioned Rietveld to design a number of pieces of furniture on the occasion of his marriage. This was the beginning of a lasting friendship that was extremely fruitful for Rietveld. Schelling, an architect for Dutch Rail, provided him with a number of commissions. The child's high chair of 1919 (no. 42) and several other pieces in the years that followed were either specially commissioned by Schelling or else he bought them from Rietveld. They collaborated closely on a number of designs. In the retrospective exhibition in the Centraal Museum Utrecht in 1958 there was a 'deal cupboard designed by H.G.J. Schelling and realized by Rietveld'.[1] According to the family, the marriage furniture consisted of a cupboard, a sideboard, a table, a poster frame, a hat stand and an umbrella stand.

Interior
photo c. 1932

[1] exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 3, no. 14.

1915

Stylistically this furniture resembles that made by Rietveld for his own marriage in 1911. The wide linen cupboard is comparable in design and measurements with the one in Rietveld's own house (no. 15), except that it has four doors instead of two. The woodwork was painted white, the horizontal strips grey and the hinges were finished with a red-orange lead paint. The cupboard, sideboard, hat stand and umbrella stand are still in the possession of Schelling's family.[2]

[2] Told by J.K. Roessingh-Schelling.

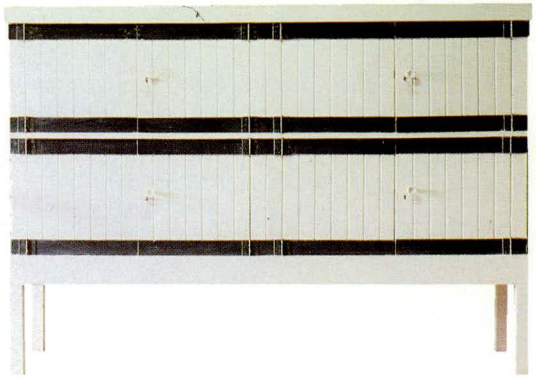
27 Furniture Verloop

c. 1915-1917

In 1918 Rietveld made some pieces of furniture for J. Verloop, who was the owner of a house designed by Robert van 't Hoff, at Ruysdaellaan 2, in Huis ter Heide. Rietveld himself stated that these pieces were inspired by some photos in a book about Frank Lloyd Wright. After seeing the furniture, Van 't Hoff visited Rietveld: this was probably the beginning of Rietveld's contacts with the De Stijl group. The date 1918 that Rietveld mentioned is unlikely.[1] The request for a building permit for the Verloop house is dated 26 October 1914. The work of construction would largely have taken place in 1915.[2] The Verloop family moved to De Bilt in November 1917.[3] The furniture would, therefore, presumably have been ordered in 1915 or 1916. According to Bless, there were among the furniture ordered by Verloop copies of the chairs in Coonley house that dated from 1908. Rietveld himself designed a sideboard of wood, glass and black marble. In the perspective sketch the resemblance to Wright's furniture is striking. Rietveld placed the hinges of the wide lower doors in the middle as he had done with the linen cupboard (no. 15). The furniture has been lost.

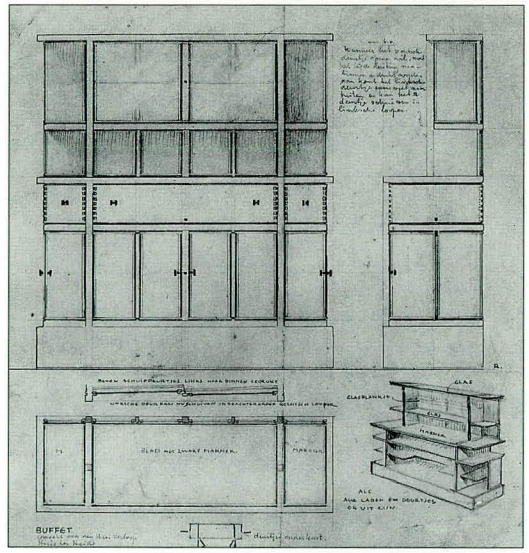
[1] Brown 1958, 23.
[2] Vermeulen 1982, 215.
[3] Bless 1983, 24 and 25.

1916



Cupboard
oak
90 x 160 x 50cm
private collection, Bunnik

Sideboard
oak
90 x 160 x 50cm
private collection, Utrecht

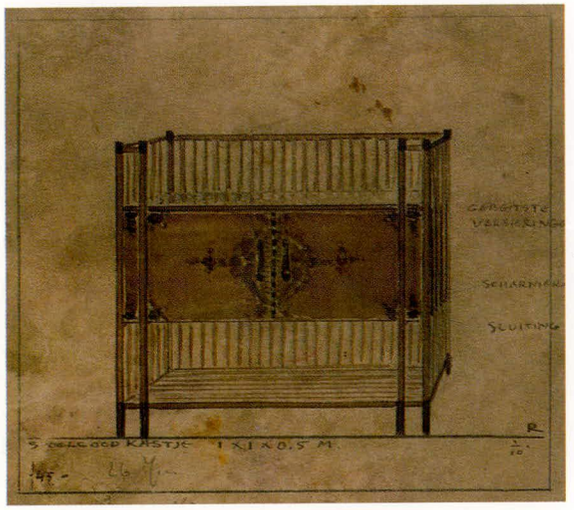


Design drawing
sideboard
pencil on paper
29.3 x 27.1cm
RSA

28 Design toy cupboard

c. 1915-1917

Like the font (no. 25), this design in watercolour and pencil on paper with Rietveld's signature resembles a presentation drawing. The price is mentioned here too: Dfl. 100.
The wooden cupboard has stained decorative work. Rietveld often used stain to give the wood a colour.
This toy cupboard was also designed using a metre as the basic measurement. The angular shape together with the wooden bars reminds one of Frank Lloyd Wright and suggests that it dates from between 1915 and 1917.



Design drawing
pencil, watercolour on paper
21 x 23.4cm
1915-1917
RSA

29 Logo

1917

Rietveld probably designed this logo on moving to his own workshop in the Adriaen van Ostadelaan in 1917.
The logo was also affixed to the display window of the premises.
Up until the beginning of the 1920s Rietveld employed fairly old-fashioned characters influenced by Jugendstil for his own typography.

Woodcut
ink op paper
7.9 x 4.7cm
RSA

1917

30 Birth announcement card Johanna Karin Schelling

1918

31 Cot

oak
1918
Schelling heirs,
Amsterdam

The cot was made for Johanna Karin Schelling, born 19 May 1918.
The design contains some ingenious devices. It is made of four detachable sides that are fastened at the corners with square balusters. The curtain stand can be pulled forward. Along the lower part of the sides of the cot some lines by the Indian philosopher-poet, Rabindranath Tagore, are carved:
two lives made one and visible as one
o love thou art a child
you were hidden in my heart as its desire, tagore
Opinions differ about the date of the cot and about whom it was made for. The descendants of the Schelling family are convinced that it was made for their family and that their father had an important share in designing it, particularly in the choice and design of the verses. Schelling was very interested in Tagore's work and had all his books of poetry. The first volume of Tagore's poems to be translated into English appeared in 1913.[1] A cupboard designed by Schelling and made by Rietveld in the 1958 exhibition in the Centraal Museum Utrecht is evidence that they did in fact sometimes collaborate on pieces of furniture. The stylized figures of women supporting the cot are comparable with the decoration on Begeer's shop front of 1919 (no. 43). It is thus quite possible that it was made for the Schelling family (see also no. 26). However, Mrs E. Eskes-Rietveld, Rietveld's oldest daughter, is of the opinion that this cot was made for her birth in 1913 and that it was only later that it passed to the Schelling family.
A letter to Oud shows that Rietveld made a cradle for his son Jan in 1919 (no. 40).

[1] Letter to the Centraal Museum Utrecht, 22 August 1983.

1918

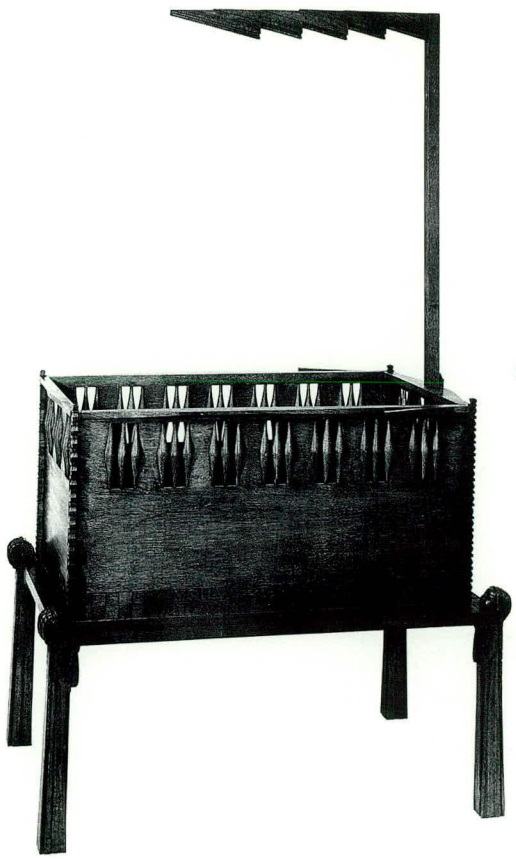


photo c. 1919

32 Commode

oak, walnut, plywood
87 x 101 x 54cm
1918
private collection,
Hoevelaken

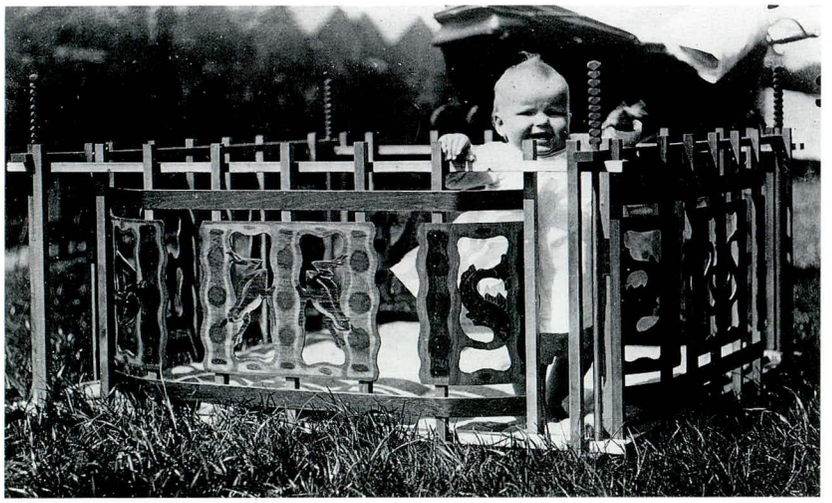
This commode was made for H.G.J. Schelling's oldest child.

33 Playpen

wood
1918

The playpen was made for H.G.J. Schelling's oldest child. It can clearly be seen in a photo of 23 April 1919. The balusters at the corners have the same structural function and are decorated with the same wood carving as the corner posts of the cot (no. 31). Similar to the slat armchair (no. 35) the horizontal and vertical posts jut out beyond each other. This design is not at all appropriate for a child that has just learned to stand and walk. All that remains of this playpen is one of the balusters that is still owned by the family.

photo 23 April 1919



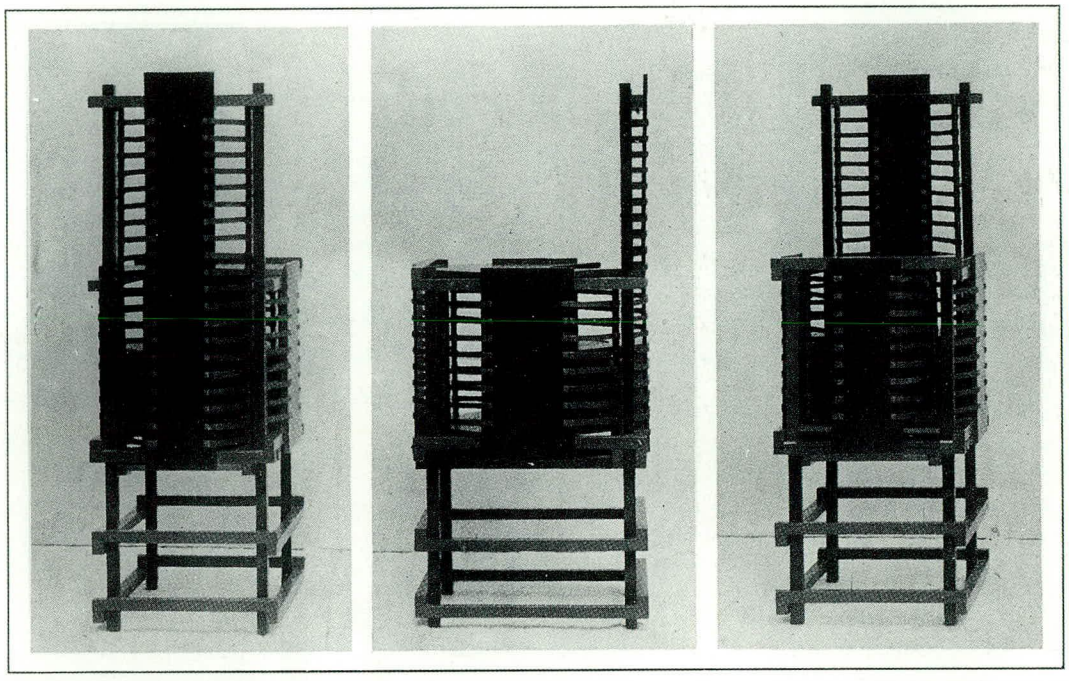
34 Child's chair

wood, leather
1918

Rietveld made this chair for H.G.J. Schelling's first child, born 19 May 1918. A family photo of 15 June 1919 gives an exact date before which it must have been made. Probably there was only one such chair made, but it has been lost. Stylistically speaking this child's chair looks as though it were made before the slat armchair (no. 35) and not in 1919 as Brown supposes.[1] This design was the first piece of Rietveld's furniture to be published in *De Stijl*. There he explained his design: 'Complying with the basic requirements comfortable and steady, adjustable in height, washable, not too heavy or too solid-looking I aimed to achieve a symmetry that would give a clear sense of the thing itself, without any unnecessary elements. The wood is green, the strips of leather are red, the pegs that fasten the strips in the holes in the planks are light green. A red leather cushion can be hung from the top rail on the back. The frame in front and the tray are detachable. The customary peg-and-hole method of joining wood, by which the posts support the rails, is still used for almost everything. Admittedly, it gives one satisfaction while working at it, and it is a beautiful sight to see a set of rails and posts with pegs and holes and grooves. When, however, the object has been assembled, nothing of this very costly system of joints can be seen. It also results in a surface that is not always what one intended. It is understandable that people felt like using decorative work to give extra emphasis to the construction. The system of wooden joints used here speaks for itself with its simplicity and clarity. In addition it is exceptionally strong because the ends of the wood preserve all their strength. It requires little time to make, something that is also appropriate for the modern organization of work. The greatest advantage is that it gives one a great deal of freedom in placing the rails, so that they have more possibilities of spatial expression and one is no longer restricted by a construction-dependent surface'.[2] Rietveld deliberately avoided using the traditional peg-and-hole joint, because a dowel pin structure gave him more spatial freedom; it was also more appropriate to modern methods of production. This attitude implied a revolutionary break with his earlier work that was still clearly influenced by Jacques van den Bosch, P.J.C. Klaarhamer and H.P. Berlage.

[1] Brown 1958, 17, no. 8.
[2] *De Stijl* (1919) 9, 102, suppl. XVIII.

1918



BIJLAGE XVIII VAN „DE STIJL", 2E JAARGANG No. 9. VÓÓR-, OPZIJ- EN ACHTER-AANZICHT VAN EEN KINDERSTOEL. MAKER: RIETVELD.

35 Armchair 'the Red Blue chair'

wood
1918

This chair is made of seven rails and six posts for the frame, two struts for the arms and two boards for the back and the seat. The rails and posts, and the arms, are joined with dowel pins so that they jut out beyond each other at right angles. The boards for the back and the seat are nailed to the rails. This design allows for a free choice in the size and positioning of the different parts. In the text accompanying the illustration in *De Stijl* Rietveld describes what he had in mind with this chair: 'With this chair the aim was to keep each part simple, preserving the form inherent in the original use and character of the material, the form that most easily leads to a harmonious entity based on a standard module for all the separate elements. The design enables the parts to be joined without any deformations, so that no one part is too dominant or is subordinate to another; as a result, the design occupies the space clearly and freely as a single entity, the form being more important than the material. This way of joining wood makes it possible to design a large chair like this with 2^5 x 2^6cm rails.'[1]

Rietveld has as it were broken an armchair down into its basic components and has reduced these to their most basic forms. He combines the elements again in a harmonious spatial composition that does not interfere with the independence of the separate parts. According to a letter that Rietveld wrote to Van Doesburg,[2] the aim was to make a piece of furniture without any mass or volume, that did not enclose space, but allowed it to continue uninterrupted. The side planks under the arms in the first versions conflicted in fact with his intentions and were omitted quite early on.

Rietveld not only had a new type of form in mind; he also aimed at a mechanized production for his pieces of furniture. In an interview with Piet van Moock in 1963 he says: '... the so-called Red Blue Chair, the chair made of two boards and a number of posts, is made to show that it is also possible to make something beautiful that functions plastically in space using pure taut machine-produced things.'[3]

In terms of design the chair works well. The position of back and seat and of the joints for the rails and posts results in a distribution of body weight that means that the chair can be made from quite narrow posts and planks.[4] The aim of achieving a cheap form of mechanized production meant that Rietveld opted for standard one-inch planks. According to G. van de Groenekan, 5/4 wood was used later on, so that the rails became thicker and stronger. The various versions of the armchair, therefore, also vary in material and measure-

'the red blue chair'
five-plywood, beech
86.8 x 65.9 x 82 cm
version c. 1925
CMU

1918

ments. The proportions remain the same: they are based on a standard module of 10cm. Rietveld, however, rarely kept rigidly to this. The proportions also had to be *seen* to make sense.

According to most commentators, the chair dates from 1918.[5] It was published for the first time in the September issue of *De Stijl*. It was probably shown in the Haarlem Museum for Industrial Art in the same year, in an exhibition held from 22 September to 22 October.
G. van de Groenekan, who started working with Rietveld in the winter of 1917-1918, insists that the first version was made in the summer of 1918. According to him, the photo of Rietveld in his chair in front of the workshop in the Adriaen van Ostadelaan surrounded by his staff was made that year to celebrate the chair.

The work of Frank Lloyd Wright and H.P. Berlage has often been cited as being a source of inspiration for the armchair. The sloping position of the back and the fact that it is independent of the back legs, as well as the fact that it continues past the seat are the most striking resemblances. These elements, however, are of less importance than the fact that the rails and posts jut out beyond each other. This characteristic, common to all Rietveld's pieces of slat furniture, is what gives these designs their open nature. It is precisely this open structure and the spatial character that it creates that is absent in the work of Wright and Berlage.
A second essential difference is the 'baldness' of the parts. This is even more noticeable in the uncoloured version of the chair than in the red blue version. In the uncoloured version one's attention is drawn to the protruding rails and posts, while in the coloured ones the total form is the dominant factor. In the unpainted version the fundamental sobriety is more striking; this is something that is also typical of the upright armchair (no. 7) and it is what makes Rietveld's designs so essentially different from those of any of their supposed precursors. Rietveld's sources of inspiration were in fact probably closer to home. The resemblance between the working methods of Van der Leck and Rietveld that Küper comments on offers a more satisfactory explanation for the invention of the slat armchair. The aims and methods of the two artists are identical: the creation of an open spatial structure by reducing any given reality to its essentials. With Van der Leck this reality consisted of the figurative scenes in traditional painting.

Armchairs
purpleheart
both versions c. 1919
74.3 x 64.8 x 65.4cm
Reinhold-Brown Gallery, New York
88.9 x 66 x 66cm
Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Similarly, Rietveld started out from the traditional types of furniture. It is also very likely that Rietveld was in close contact with Van der Leck's development, because the latter paid regular visits to Rietveld's teacher, the architect Klaarhamer.[6] In his articles about architecture and the visual arts, Rietveld constantly emphasized the leading role of painting in the development of a new style. This primacy of the visual arts could in the case of Rietveld (who was otherwise not very interested in art) derive from the influence of Van der Leck during this important stage of his development.

Interior Til Brugman
photo c. 1924

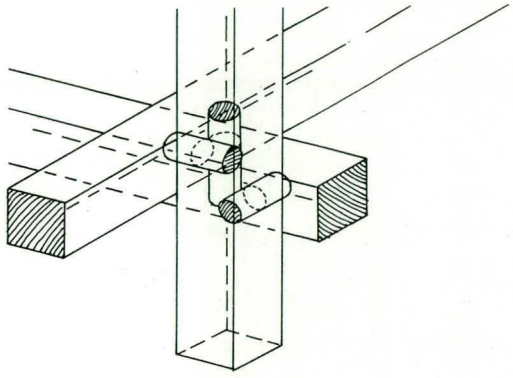
In a number of early publications the slat armchair is illustrated without colour. Also in the first reviews not a word is said about colour.[7]
In 1919 Rietveld used the colours red, blue and yellow for a cradle for his son Jan (no. 40). He did not emphasize the use of the primary colours, however, until the interior he made for Hartog in 1922 (no. 59). The armchair probably acquired its famous colours in about 1923, when Rietveld was also using the primary colours lavishly in other projects. He was possibly inspired to do this by other members of De Stijl, such as Theo van Doesburg and Vilmos Huszár. The use of colour gives extra emphasis to the formal aspects of the design. The independence of the separate parts is increased and the idea of 'material' is reduced. Any memories one may have of a traditional armchair begin to disappear on seeing the abstract composition of space and colours. The superficial comparison with the work of Mondrian, which was extensively discussed in the postwar period in countless publications about De Stijl, meant that the chair played the role of a manifesto for De Stijl. Rietveld himself did not ascribe any absolute value to the primary colours. Right from the start the chair was made in various colours. There was a pink and sea-green one for Charley Toorop, a white one for Til Brugman, and for Paul Citroen a black one with white end grains. Later on Rietveld chose the model as a basis for chairs with a frame of round sticks and of curved tubing, with or without a curved back and seat (nos 94, 146, 147). And in the 1930s there was a version where the more provocative elements were literally left out. This chair was presumably intended for Metz & Co. but was not put into production. The model that was put on the market, by Cassina, does in fact differ in colour and finish from the earlier examples, but this does not make it any less genuine than the many versions that were produced over the course of years.

[1] *De Stijl* 2 (1919) 11, 439.
[2] Küper 1982, 273.
[3] Overy 1988, 61.
[4] Brown 1958, 20.
[5] Bless 1982, 25. Bless supposes that the chair was made shortly after Verloop's commission and for this reason, amongst others, dates the design from 1916.
[6] Hilhorst 1982, 173; Küper, unpublished text 1992.
[7] Küper 1982, 279.

36 Upright chair

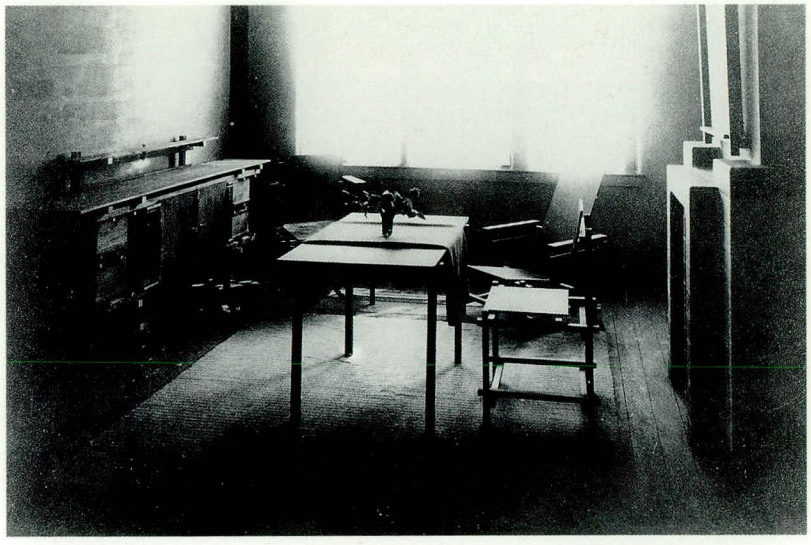
wood
1918

The design principle of protruding posts and rails joined with dowel pins was often used by Rietveld from 1918 to c. 1924. Just as with the armchair (no. 35) various versions of a single model were often made. There is one version of the upright chair with arms and another without; one with a straight and another with a sloping wooden back; and one where the back is made of a piece of leather. In early versions it is only the end grains of the vertical and horizontal posts that are accentuated with colour.
The slat furniture was used by various members of De Stijl for interiors. In 1919 Van Doesburg placed a table and two chairs in the interior that he designed for B. de Ligt. In the show interior for a dwelling by J.J.P. Oud in the Rotterdam district of Spangen there was a table, an armchair, an upright chair, an upright chair with side planks and a sideboard; a frame was hung above the mantelpiece (no. 38). Photos of these interiors were published in *De Stijl* and other periodicals. This helped to spread Rietveld's reputation. Some good friends bought work of his. Both H.G.J. Schelling and P. Elling owned a number of his earlier pieces of furniture.



Upright chair
oak, leather
88.9 x 59 x 60.3cm
Barry Friedman,
New York

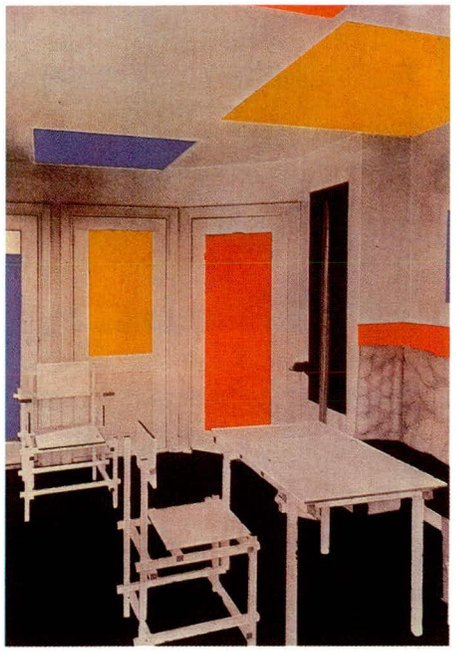
1918



Interior Spangen,
Rotterdam
1920
photo from Reinhartz-
Tergau 1990, 41

37 Table

wood
1918



Interior B. de Ligt, design Theo van Doesburg, furniture Rietveld
photo from *L'Architecture Vivante*, autumn 1924

38 Mirror or picture frame

wood
1919

The frame hung above the mantle-piece in the show dwelling in Spangen (see no. 36).

39 Design child's bed

wood
1919

The bed is mentioned in a postcard from Rietveld to Oud on 13 August 1919. According to Oud's son the bed was never made because Oud thought it was too expensive.

exhib. cat. Amsterdam/Otterlo 1982, 13.

40 Cradle

deal
1919

Rietveld describes the cradle in a letter to Oud on 19 August 1919: 'We've just had another baby. So while I was working on your bed we felt the need for a small light cradle that we could take everywhere. I got the boy to plane some slats and I managed to finish the thing in a single evening, so that my wife found it there the next morning. It is made of red and yellow painted deal covered with a piece of blue fabric. It looks really bright and cheerful'.

Küper 1982, 277 and 278.

41 Sideboard

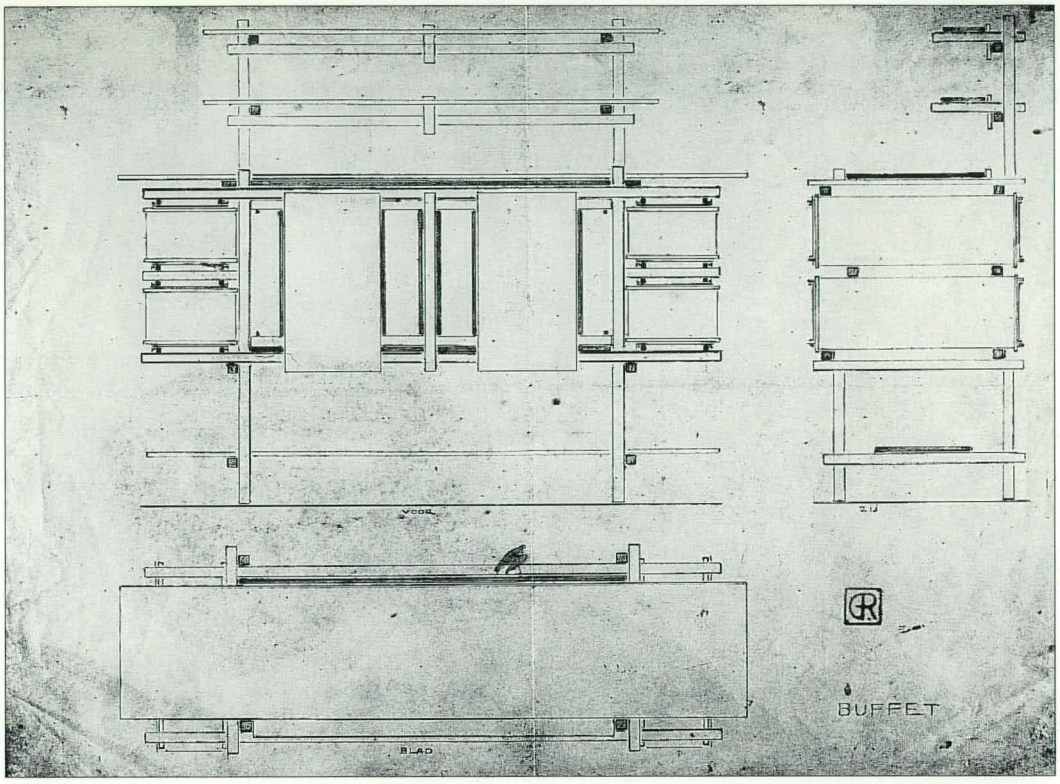
wood
1919

On 20 September 1919 Rietveld wrote to Oud: 'I enclose a drawing of a sideboard with two doors and 4 drawers, 2 shelves on top and 1 underneath and also of 2 chairs. I am only sending it because I felt the need to show it to someone'. A somewhat altered version of this sideboard was made for the show dwelling in Spangen. This version was bought by the architect, Piet Elling. Only one drawer of this sideboard remained after it was destroyed by fire.[1] From this drawer and from photos one can see that the sideboard was made of dark-stained plane wood, with red edges and white end grains. In this design Rietveld tried to treat the drawers as separate elements while at the same time combining them in a harmonious whole.

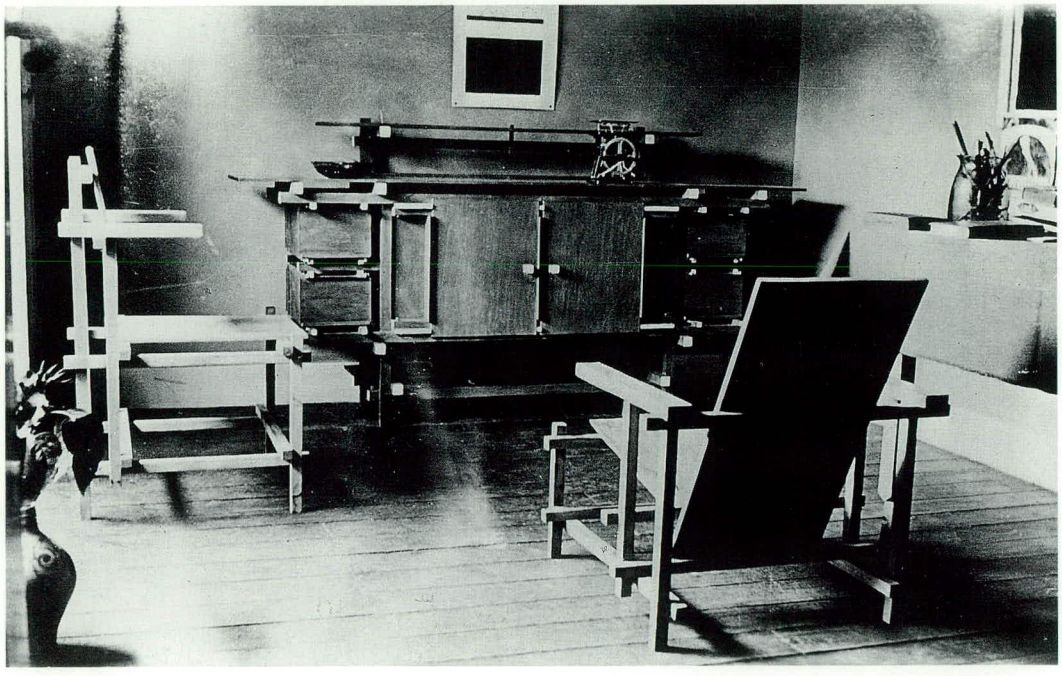
[1] The assumption of J.J.P. Oud's son, Hans Oud, that the city of Rotterdam bought the furniture is based on a misinterpretation of Rietveld's correspondence with Oud, Oud archive NAi.

Küper 1983, 13-14.
Küper 1988, 186-193.

1919



Design drawing
pencil on paper
21.3 x 27.7cm
RSA



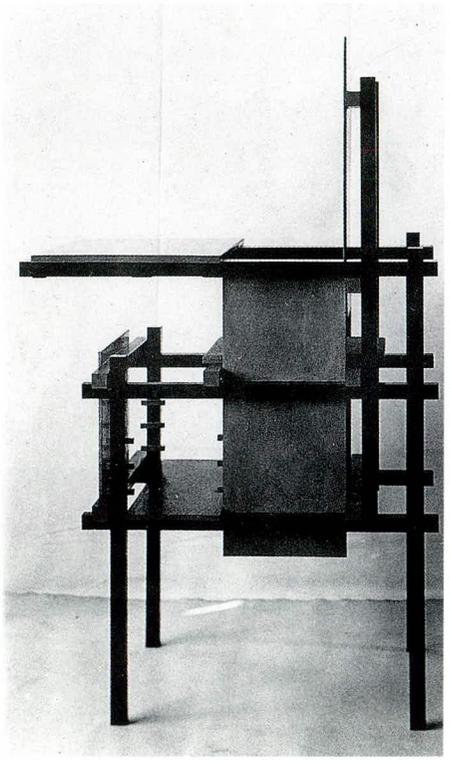
Interior P.J. Elling
photo 14 August 1921

42 Child's chair

wood
1919

Stylistically this chair belongs to the slat furniture of the years 1919 and 1920, but it was only published in *De Stijl* in May 1923.

De Stijl 6 (1923) 5, 64.



43 Conversion shopfront and furniture Cornelis Begeer Jeweller's
Oudkerkhof 27, Utrecht

1919
client
C.L.J. Begeer
altered

The design for this shopfront was Rietveld's first architectural contract. The door of the shop and the windows of the shopfront are surrounded by carved stone ornamental motifs and stylized human figures. According to a report from 1921 of the Utrecht Building Board, the Utrecht Club of the Architectura et Amicitia Society awarded the architect a bronze medal for the year 1920 for this design. The furniture for the shop was also provided by Rietveld. The tables, chairs and armchairs were made of oak, covered with cloth. Rietveld also designed the letterhead for the firm's stationery and printed publicity.

photo c. 1919

Chair Cornelis Begeer
Jeweller's
oak, velvet
(originally cloth)
79 x 54 x 65cm
CMU

44 Ex libris Henri Tibbe

woodcut
1919

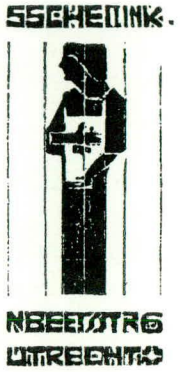
From the bill in the Rietveld Schröder Archive we see that Rietveld received Dfl. 2.50 from Tibbe for a plate.

Woodcut
ink on paper
6.5 x 3.9cm
RSA

Woodcut
ink on paper
4.9 x 2.4cm
CMU

45 Ex libris S. Schellink

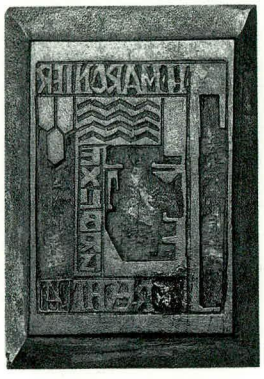
c. 1917-1920



1919

46 Ex libris J.H. Maronier

c. 1917-1920



47 Birth announcement card Jacobus Schelling

1920

Stamp
wood
4.8 x 3.2cm
CMU

Woodcut
ink on paper
6.8 x 4.7cm
CMU

48 Child's highchair

wood, leather
c. 1919

H.G.J. Schelling bought one version of this chair. Another version where the sharp edges of the posts and rails were rounded was probably made for Mr Fraenkel, a teacher of classical languages.[1] Rietveld renovated a drawing room and an attic room for the Fraenkel family in the 1920s (nos 132, 137). They possessed a number of pieces of Rietveld furniture, for instance an asymmetrical settee (no. 136) and a red blue slat armchair (no. 35) that was made with a short back and a horizontal seat at the request of Mrs Fraenkel.[2]

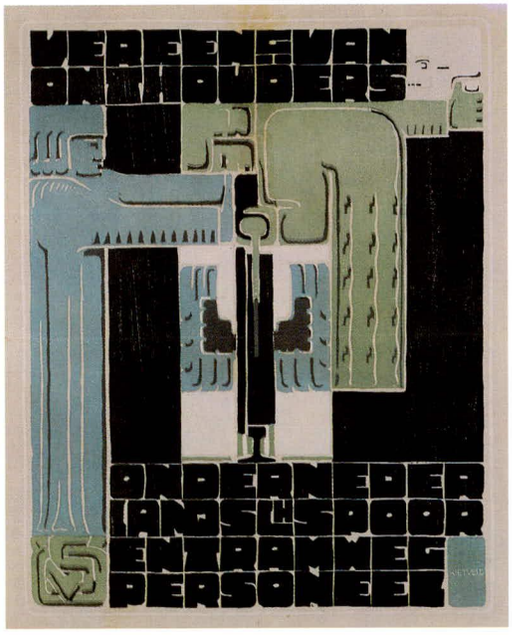
Child's highchair
beech, leather
89.9 x 43.2 x 43.8cm
The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh

[1] Friedman 1988. Friedman dates the chair from c. 1915-1919. This extremely early dating is based on information from one of the sons of the original owner. He assumes, probably incorrectly, that his father bought the chair when he was born.
[2] Told by Mr Bunjes, June 1992.

49 Poster 'Temperance Society of Dutch Rail and Tram Workers'

signed: Rietveld
lithograph
c. 1917-1920

The poster was printed by Zuidam Printers in Utrecht. A number of Rietveld's acquaintances worked for the railways, amongst them, H.G.J. Schelling, J.H. Maronier and S. van Ravesteyn.



Poster
lithograph
57.8 x 47cm
Barry Friedman, New York

1919

50 Conversion, interior design and furniture jewellery shop Goud en Zilversmid's Compagnie

Kalverstraat 107, Amsterdam

1921 and 1923
demolished

1921

The conversion consisted of more than just an alteration to the facade as in the case of Rietveld's commission for Begeer in 1919 (no. 43). In a letter of 18 March 1922 to Oud, Rietveld explained that the contract was no easy one: a long, narrow, crooked space on the inside and a small shopfront on the outside. What the client wanted was 'an eye-catching but tasteful shop that should be as spacious-looking as possible in order to stand out among the gaudy row of colourful and alluring shops'. Rietveld aimed at creating a unified design 'by using carpeting, etc., to link the different elements', by the positioning of the pieces of furniture (also designed by him) and by planes of colour on the walls and ceiling. On the outside the shopfront was given the required feeling of spaciousness by allowing the top part of the shop window to continue above the front door and by constructing the shop front as a plastic composition of various volumes and planes. What Rietveld did not have in terms of width he tried to compensate for with depth.
The facade was initially painted black and white. Two years later, on Rietveld's suggestion, the colours were changed: the window frames were repainted blue, yellow and red and the walls white and grey. This conversion earned Rietveld a place among modern architects, albeit still only a modest one. No sooner was the design completed than it was discussed in Dutch and foreign periodicals such as *De Stijl, Bouwkundig Weekblad, Schweizerische Bauzeitung* and *L'Architecture vivante*. At the client's request the pieces of furniture were made by J. and G. Gottschalck in Leipzig.

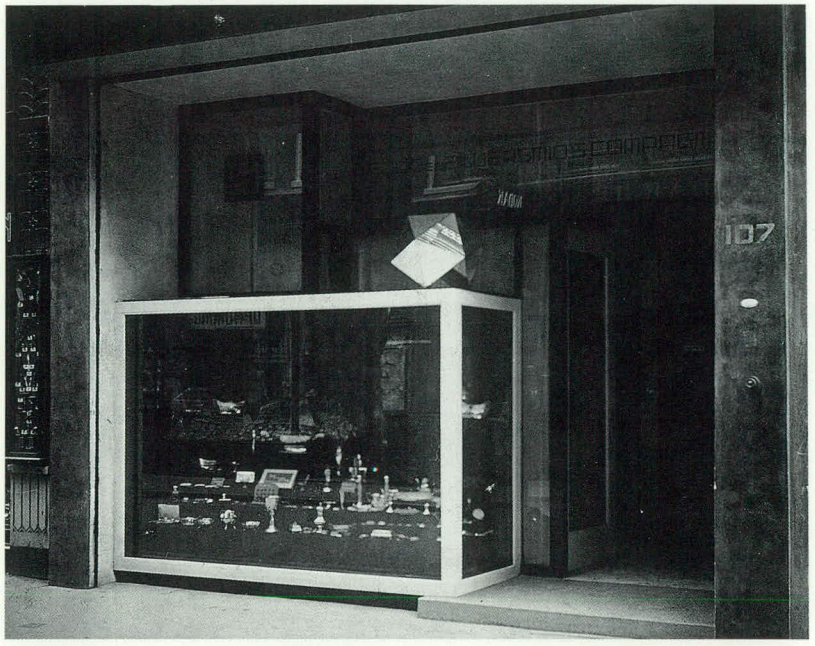


photo c. 1923

photo from *De Stijl* 5 (1922) 2, opposite p. 25

51 Interior T. Schröder-Schräder

Biltstraat 135, Utrecht

1921
no longer extant

During her marriage to the lawyer F. Schröder, Truus Schröder-Schräder lived in a large nineteenth-century house in Biltstraat.
In 1921, at the suggestion of Cornelis Begeer, she asked Rietveld to change the design of her room. The high space was made to look lower by covering the top part of the windows. The walls were painted in various tones of grey. Rietveld showed the room to a number of his colleagues, including Piet Elling and Bruno Taut.

Overy 1988, 44-47.

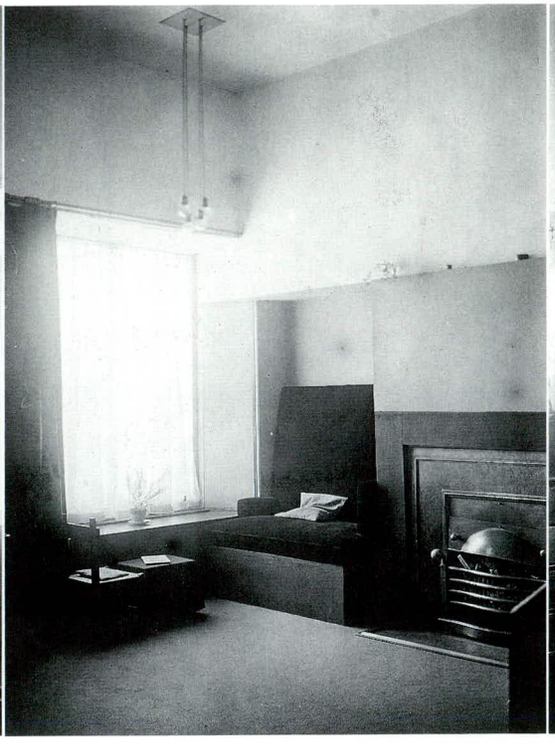
52 Sledge

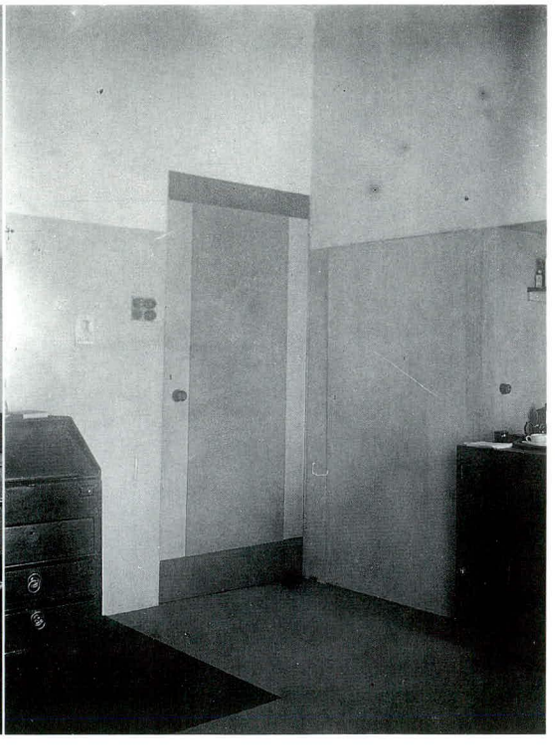
wood
1921

This sledge was shown at the Exhibition of Crafts that was held in the Buitensociëteit in Zwolle from 26 February to 12 March 1921, and we only know of it through a review in the magazine *Elseviers Geïllustreerd Maandschrift*. This contains a detailed description. 'More interesting as an example of the most modern work, in my view, is a sledge by P. Rietveld, that is influenced by the ideas of the De Stijl tendency. The whole sledge consists of square and right-angled planes, painted red, blue or black; only the front of both the runners is curved for functional reasons. The end grains of the wooden bars are painted white. The wood is not "joined" anywhere; instead it is nailed together everywhere, presumably to show the "naked truth", rather than making something look different from what it is by using ingenious furniture-makers' joints. A logical result of a

1921

photos c. 1921





theory that I do not necessarily accept without question, even though I appreciate its honesty.' This was the first time in a description of Rietveld's work that the colours were given special mention. Shortly after this Rietveld started using primary colours for interiors and furniture for adults.

Küper 1983, 17-19.

53 Child's chair

wood
c. 1921

The child's chair, the table (no. 54) and the washstand (no. 55) were made for the children of the Schelling family. The furniture has been lost.

photo c. 1921

54 Child's table

wood
c. 1921

55 Child's washstand

wood
c. 1921

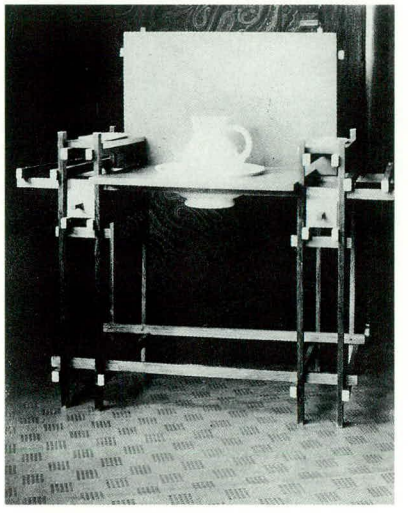


photo c. 1921

1921

56 Table with folding leaves

elm
67 x 61 x 80cm
c. 1915-1922
CMU

The three tables (nos 56-58) are from J.H. Maronier's estate. Maronier, an engineer employed by Dutch Rail, lived in Gerard Doustraat in Utrecht, not far from Rietveld's workshop. Like his close friend, the ophthalmologist Ten Doesschate, Maronier 'helped Rietveld out, who was very poor', as his son-in-law put it years later. His house in Gerard Doustraat was painted white and the doors were fitted with purple-red knobs with blue-green pinches made by Rietveld. Apart from these tables, Rietveld also made several other pieces of furniture for the Maronier family, including a small chest of drawers and a cabinet for drawing materials, both of which Mrs Maronier decorated with carving to her husband's design. These pieces are hard to date. Maronier's daughter, Mrs Nierstrasz-Maronier, recalls that the family became acquainted with Rietveld after the 'nice carpenter' had made her a pair of stilts. That was around 1922.[1] On the other hand, G. van de Groenekan claims that the tables were made before he joined Rietveld as his assistant in 1917. On these grounds the tables – until recently – were always dated around 1915. The design itself offers nothing special to go on in this respect.

1 Told by Mrs Nierstrasz-Maronier, 1992.

57 Drawing table

elm, oak
62 x 77 x 38cm
c. 1915-1922
CMU

1922

58 Tea table

oak, chipboard with asbestos
69 x 66 x 43cm
c. 1915-1922
CMU

The tea table was originally trimmed with a strip of corrugated iron.

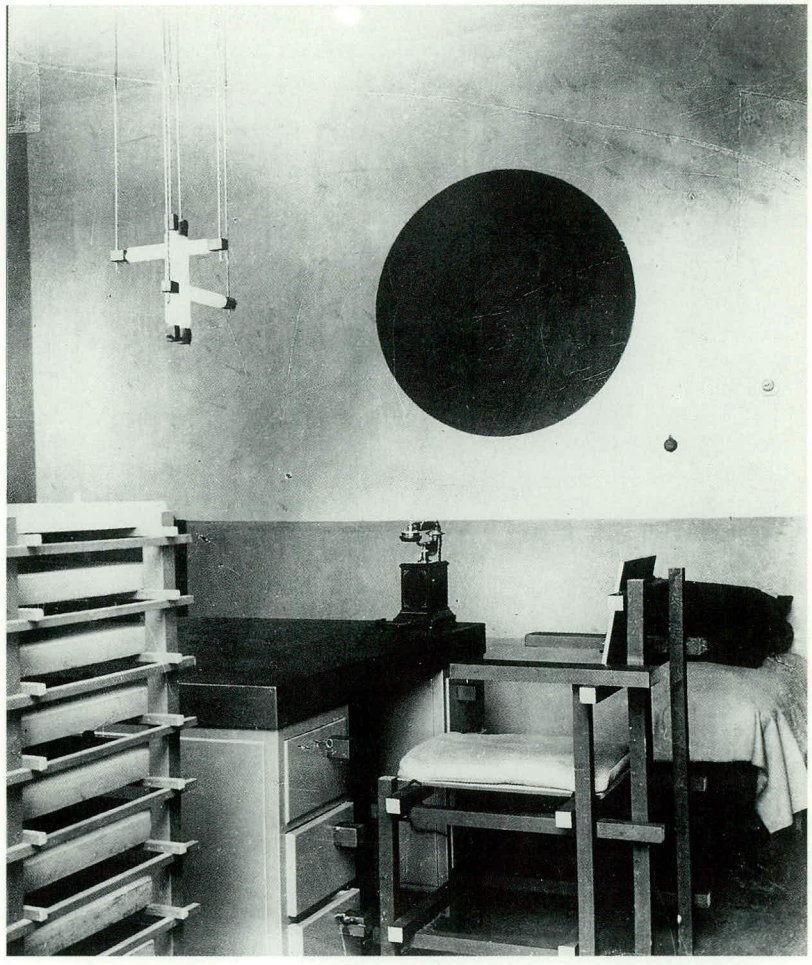
1922

59 Interior and furniture surgery Hartog
Emmaweg 1, Maarssen

1922
no longer extant

The Maarssen doctor, A.M. Hartog and Rietveld probably knew each other through the 'Voor de Kunst' society, that they were both members of. In 1922 Rietveld provided a new design for the doctor's surgery. The floor and ceiling have an L-shaped design of black and white planes. The walls are painted white and grey. The power points, switches and the right-angled area round the door-handle are highlighted with primary colours. The door is black and yellow, similar to the desk that Rietveld designed in the middle of the room (no. 60). Rietveld also designed the chest of drawers (no. 61) to the left of the desk. In the room he placed two differently coloured upright chairs (no. 36), one for the doctor and one for the patient, two slat armchairs (no. 35), a bookcase (no. 62) and some old pieces of furniture belonging to Hartog that were somewhat altered. Above the desk hung the lamp (no. 63). The most remarkable element in this design was the huge orange-red circle that Rietveld put on the spot where Hartog wanted to hang a painting. The room remained unchanged up until Hartog's death in 1939.

Surgery
photo c. 1922



De Stijl 6 (1923) 3/4, supplement.
Bless 1977.

60 Desk

deal, five-plywood
79.5 x 131 x 122cm
1922
Haags Gemeente-museum, The Hague

The desk is the only piece of furniture in A.M. Hartog's surgery (no. 59) that is still extant. In comparison with the other pieces of furniture it is strikingly solid-looking. The top is black and the drawers are yellow. The inventory card in the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague states that as late as 1971 Mrs Hoekstra-Hulker still possessed a bench from the surgery. Its present whereabouts however is unknown.

61 Chest of drawers

1922
wood

62 Bookcase

wood
1922

63 Hanging lamp

glass-tube lamps, wood, glass
1922

The hanging light has three glass-tube lamps with wooden blocks on either side which, by means of the electric wires, are suspended from a square cap. The lamp for A.M. Hartog had four glass-tube lamps (see no. 59). In photos of P. Elling's interior, dating from around 1925, there is a version with two lamps. In the version that hung in the upper floor of the Rietveld Schröder House (no. 84) the cap was initially omitted. The open structure and autonomy of the vertically and horizontally hanging lamps create a spatial composition that resembles that of the slat furniture. A precursor of this hanging lamp were the lamps that Rietveld used both in the interior of the Goud en Zilversmid's Compagnie premises (no. 50) and in Truus Schröder's room (no. 51). These consist of a number of lamps that are fixed to a square area on the ceiling and that hang at different heights. Rietveld's hanging lamp was probably the model for the lighting in the director's office designed by Walter Gropius in the Bauhaus in Weimar.[1]

[1] Mang 1978, 98, ill. 216.

64 Birth announcement card Anne Schelling

1922

Woodcut
ink op paper
6.1 x 9.9cm
private collection, Hoevelaken

65 Letterhead

c. 1922

The text reflects the De Stijl ideal of the integration of different artistic disciplines. The typographical design is particularly progressive for Rietveld and the asymmetrical composition indicates that it was made in the early 1920s.

Küper 1982, 282.

1922

UTRECHT
RIETVELD
OSTADELAAN
93
BEELDEND WERK IN STEEN - HOUT - METAAL

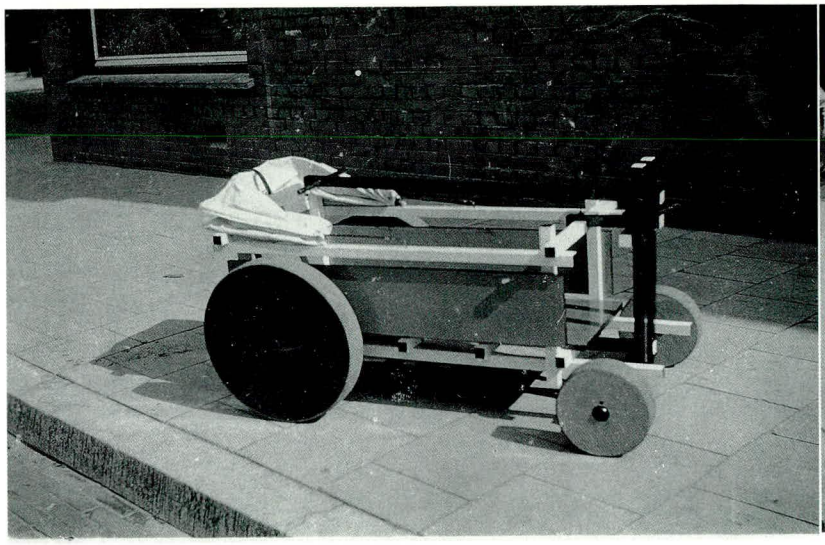
66 Hobble cart

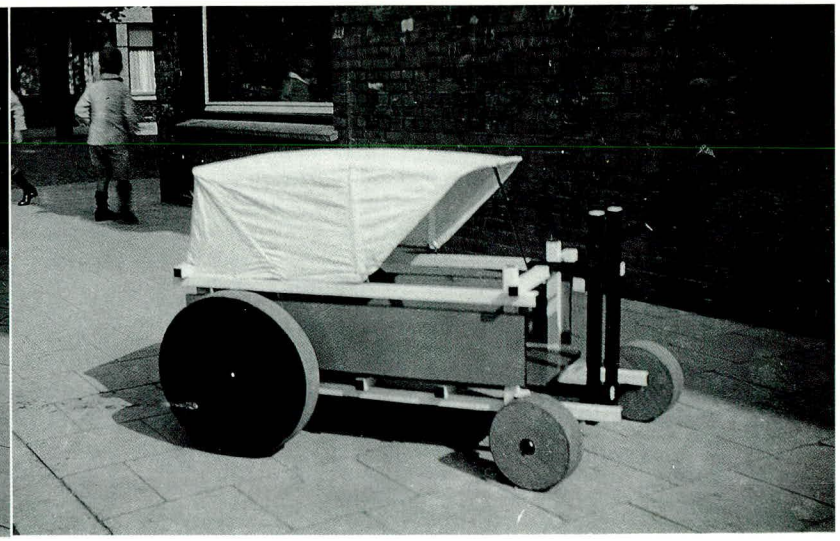
wood, upholstery
1922-1923

The same joinery techniques are used for this cart as for the slat furniture, suggesting that it may predate the wheelbarrow (no. 67), and even May 1923 – Walter Gropius wrote to J.J.P. Oud on 31 May: 'I'm extremely interested in Rietveld's toys as such; they don't qualify for the exhibition though, as we're only showing the architecture of non-Bauhaus exponents.' He was presumably referring to the hobble cart and sledge (no. 52). Van Doesburg expressed considerable annoyance in his letter of 10 August of that year at the idea of Rietveld's participation in the Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar, but in practice nothing ever came of it.
One cart was made with round rods.

Küper 1982, 278, 279, 283 and 284.

photos c. 1923



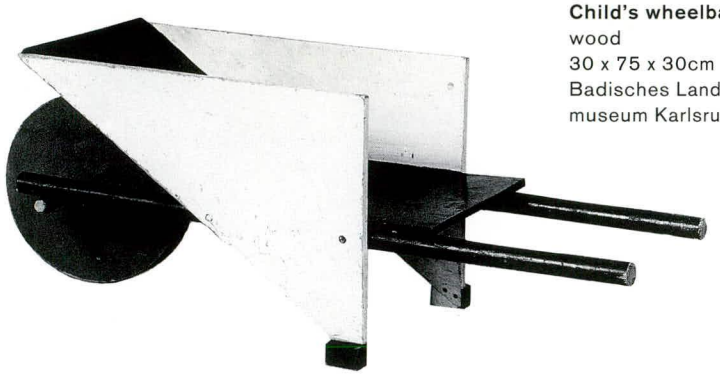


67 Child's wheelbarrow

wood
1923

A sketch of the wheelbarrow appears in a letter to J.J.P. Oud dated 5 October 1923. Probably the prototype was made for Oud's son Hans.

Küper 1982, 278.



Child's wheelbarrow
wood
30 x 75 x 30cm
Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe

68 Piano chair

wood, leather
1923

This chair was listed in the catalogue of the 1958 retrospective exhibition as 'black piano chair with leather'. Rietveld used round instead of square posts for a number of designs. The dowel joints of these are not as strong since the contact area where the horizontals and verticals meet is smaller.

exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 3, no. 23.

Piano chair
beech, leather
74.5 x 35.1 x 42cm
CMU

69 Child's highchair

beech, ebony, leather
92 x 30 x 38cm
1923
CMU

1923

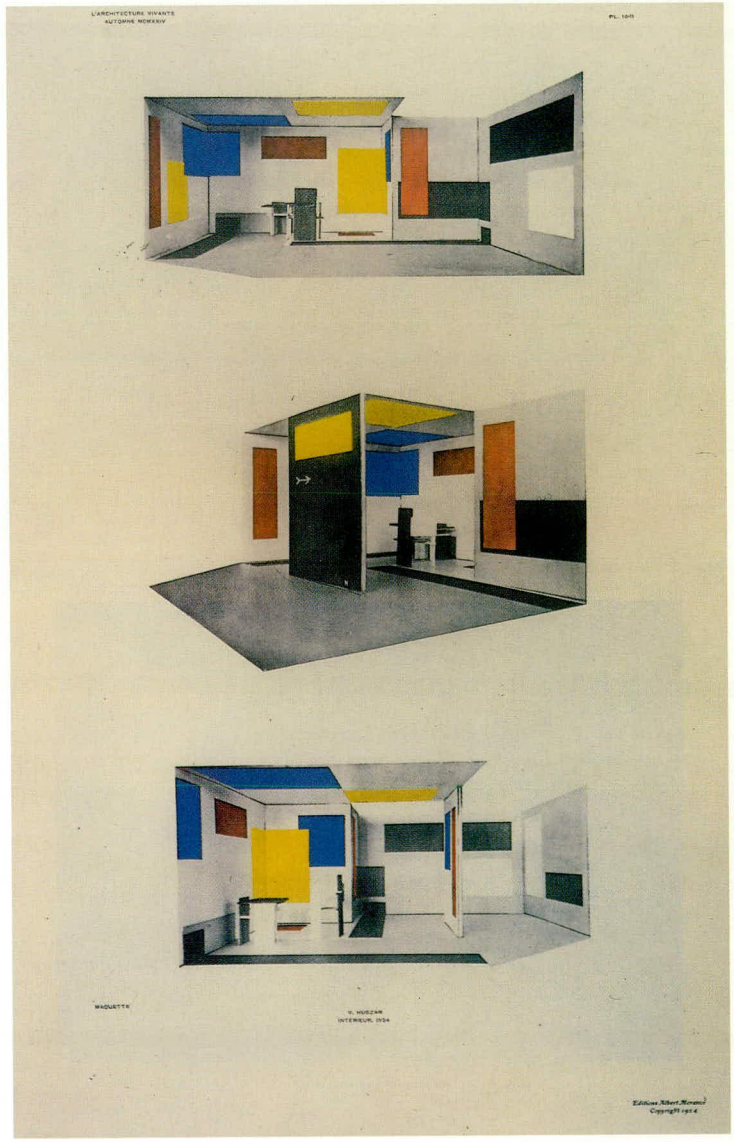
70 Interior design 'Colour-Space Composition' Berlin

1923
in collaboration with
V. Huszár

In 1923 Vilmos Huszár and Rietveld designed a Colour-Space Composition for the Juryfreie Kunstschau in Berlin. It is unclear whether the design was realized or whether the maquette was exhibited. An inscription in Huszár's handwriting under a colour transparency of the maquette reads: 'Colour-Space Composition for an exhibition. Realized in Berlin Oct. 1923. colour V. Huszár. form G. Rietveld.' Most writers except Brown are of the opinion that Rietveld only designed the furniture and that Huszár was responsible for the colour and spatial concept. Troy presents an extensive survey of the current views and suggests that if Rietveld had been involved with the architectural design the use of materials would have been better documented. Of the two asymmetrical pieces which Rietveld designed for this interior – a table and a chair – as far as is known only the chair (no. 71) was realized.

Ex 1982, 118, 121, 280, and 281.
Troy 1983, 129 ff.
exhib. cat. The Hague 1985, 75-78, figs 112-117.

photo from
L'Architecture Vivante,
autumn 1924



1923

71 Berlin chair

wood
1923

Around 1923 Rietveld introduced two new formal elements into his furniture designs – asymmetry and planar constructions. Both were the result of consistently elaborating an earlier brief to create an open spatial structure built up of uniform elements (see nos 34 and 35). The chair, which is listed as the 'Board Chair' in the catalogue of the 1958 retrospective, is constructed from four broad and three narrow boards placed at right angles to form the frame as well as the supports. The components are virtually of equal importance here, as opposed to Rietveld's slat furniture. The asymmetrical arrangement of the planes produces an object that is less obviously a chair and conveys a sense of space. What is more, asymmetrical designs generally allow greater freedom of composition. The architects associated with De Stijl maintained strong views on symmetry and asymmetry. Some considered symmetry to be a characteristic of traditional and monumental architecture. As early as 1918 Wils called asymmetry ultramodern[1] and in 1924, in an article on architecture, Van Doesburg wrote the following on the subject: '12. SYMMETRY AND REPETITION The new architecture has put an end to monotonous repetition and to the rigid uniformity of two halves, the mirror image, symmetry. [...] In place of symmetry the new architecture offers the balanced arrangement of unlike parts...'[2] Rietveld was one of the few to apply this principle in practice and to test it on his furniture designs. Clearly asymmetrical forms are rare in Rietveld's movable furniture designs and limited largely to the 1920s. However, asymmetrical arrangements of planes and volumes always constitute a key element in his architecture.

exhib. cat. Utrecht 1958, 3, no. 22.
Küper 1983, 21.

Berlin chair
five-plywood, beech
106.2 x 75.3 x 58.3cm
realization G. van de Groenekan c. 1980
CMU

[1] *De Stijl* 1 (1918) 12, 137-140.
[2] *De Stijl* 6 (1924) 6/7, 81.

1923

72 Divan table

wood
1923

Rietveld used colour to accentuate the autonomy of the component parts of this asymmetrical table. Not only does each element have its own form and colour, the end grains of the boards and the end of the leg board inset in the table top are painted in a contrasting colour. Huszár placed a divan table of a slightly different shape and colour in his refurbished interior for Til Brugman.

Küper 1983, 20 and 23.

73 Military chair

wood, plywood
1923

Through P. van der Pluym, the owner of the Wessels shop (no. 83), Rietveld was commissioned in 1923 with a series of chairs for the Catholic Military Home in Utrecht. The posts and rails of the chairs are half-lap-jointed and secured with large nuts and bolts. The short cantilevered back board is similarly fixed with bolts to the bevelled back posts. The seat is nailed. This variation on the slats construction method is stronger and more robust in appearance. Later the chair was frequently reproduced for private customers.

Küper 1983, 19.

74 Military stool

wood
1923

Rietveld also designed a stool and a table (no. 75) based on the military chair (no. 73).

Divan table
beech, plywood
59.5 x 50 x 50cm
particuliere collectie
Amsterdam

Military chair
deal, plywood
90 x 40 x 52cm
version 1925-1930
CMU

Military stool
oak
45 x 40 x 46cm
version 1925-1930
CMU

75 Military table

beech
1923

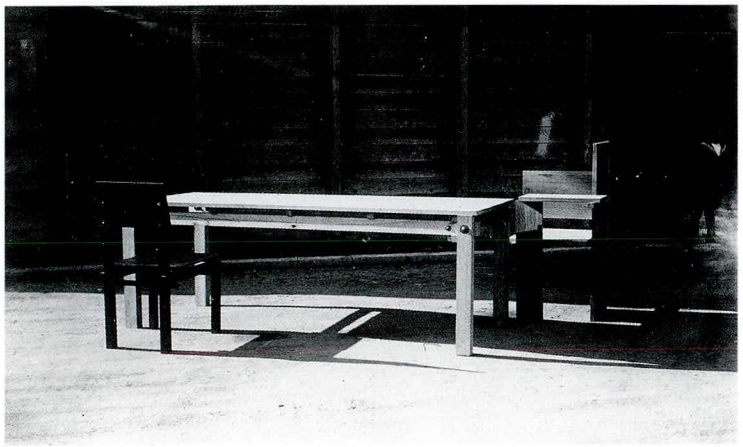


photo c. 1923
CMU specimen
beech
74.5 x 183.5 x 77cm

76 Show interior

c. 1923

The interior is only known from a photograph in the Rietveld Schröder Archive. The inscription on the back reads 'ideal home exhib.'. The interior features, apart from several well-known designs, a table with a top divided into squares and a child's highchair with oval components.

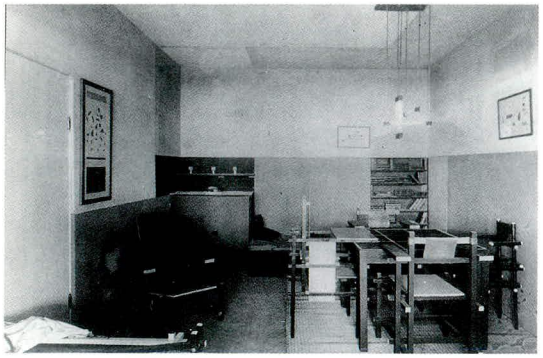
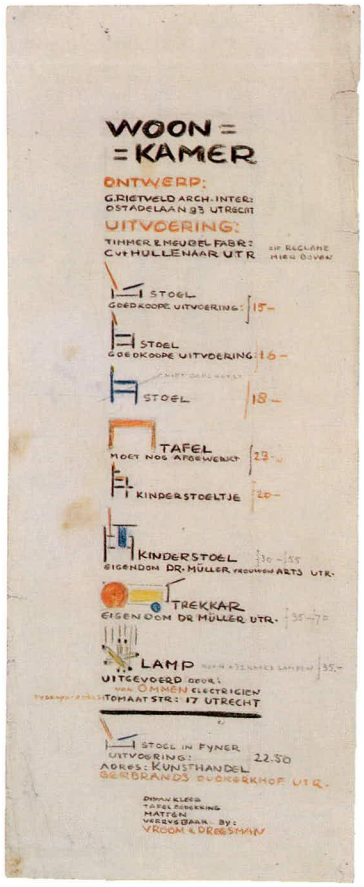


photo c. 1923

77 Price list living-room furniture

c. 1923

The price list, drawn in crayon, is the earliest evidence of the application of primary colours in Rietveld's furniture designs. Probably the price list was made to accompany the show interior with his furniture at the 'ideal home' exhibition (no. 76). Practically all the furniture on show at the exhibition is mentioned in the list. There are a number of striking similarities.
For instance, the hanging lamp has four glass-tube lamps instead of the usual three. The list indicates that Rietveld's designs were not all produced at his own workshop. Rietveld moved to Bachstraat on 5 May 1924. That same year his assistant G. van de Groenekan took over his workshop.



Price list
pencil, crayon on paper
64.8 x 25cm
RSA

1923

78 Asymmetrical cupboard

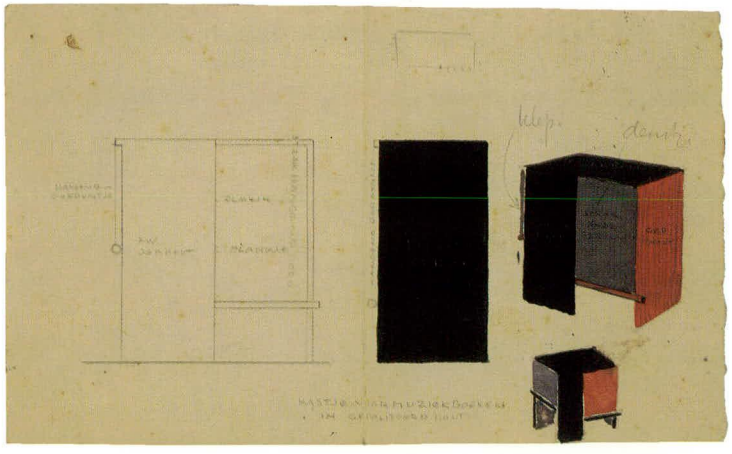
beech, three- and five-plywood
72 x 60 x 37.5cm
c. 1923
Bertus Mulder, Utrecht

Rietveld made this cupboard for his wife.

1923

79 Design cupboard for music books

wood
c. 1923



Design drawing
pencil, watercolour on paper
14 x 22cm
NAi

80 Furniture Nathans

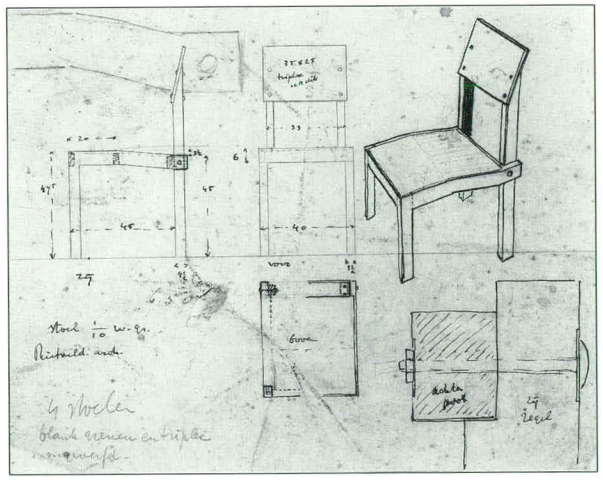
oak, upholstery
c. 1923
Limburg Antiquairs, Amsterdam

The furniture, consisting of two armchairs, an upright chair and a table, belonged to the Nathans family. They were good friends of Rietveld and his wife and they owned pieces of Rietveld furniture from various periods.[1] One design by Rietveld for their house in Wassenaar was not realized (no. 561). The chair displays similarities with the military chair (no. 73) and the chair with the curved seat (no. 98). However, the rails and posts are not extended beyond the joints. The armchair has a matching upright chair without arms. There is a drawing in the Rietveld Schröder Archive of an upright chair with a seat that dips back sharply, which is doubtless a third variant.

[1] Told by T. Noppen-Rietveld, 1992.

Armchair
84.5 x 59.3 x 60cm
table
70 x 84.5 x 123.5cm
upright chair
86.6 x 39.4 x 45cm

Design drawing chair with dipping seat
pencil, ink on paper
20.7 x 25.5 cm
RSA



81 Storage cupboard

beech, poplar, hardwood, plywood
104.5 x 103.5 x 50cm
c. 1923
SMA

82 Table

beech, plywood
50 x 50 x 50cm
c. 1923
SMA

83 Conversion leather shop E. Wessels en Zoon
Oudkerkhof 15, Utrecht

1924
clients E. Wessels en Zoon and NV Nationale Bankvereeniging, Utrecht
altered

When reviewing Rietveld's plans, the Building Department, whose task it was to advise the mayor and councillors was mainly concerned about the concrete beam that jutted out fifty centimetres over the pavement. The city archivist was even instructed to find out who officially owned the pavement. When it turned out to be part of the property, the council's main objection was withdrawn. They raised no obstacle to the decorated, nineteenth-century stone front being replaced by an enormous glazed facade set in bright blue casing. The window must have looked like a large aquarium: the glass tank was over two metres high and eight metres wide. With a strip of windows set back over the full breadth of the shop, the front seems to be separate from the upper storeys. Rietveld liked to control every aspect of the design himself. He always designed the logotype for the shops he converted, as he did here for the name E. WESSELS EN ZOON. On its completion, the conversion was showered with praise by the trade press. Professor Wattjes wrote in the September 1925 issue of *Het Bouwbedrijf*: 'The brief for the shop front on Oudkerkhof was unappealing inasmuch as a single front had to be created underneath two different, existing and rather ugly facades. The vital centre column supporting the dividing wall between the two properties has been considerably moved back in order to maximize the display area; a heavy, dark-coloured, protruding console focuses attention on the supporting column and prevents the cross beam from appearing weak.' In an article entitled 'The Building Board' in *Architectura* in 1925 the Utrecht architect and designer Kees Kuiler expressed his surprise over the fact that the front had never received an award; evidently they failed to notice the

photo c. 1924

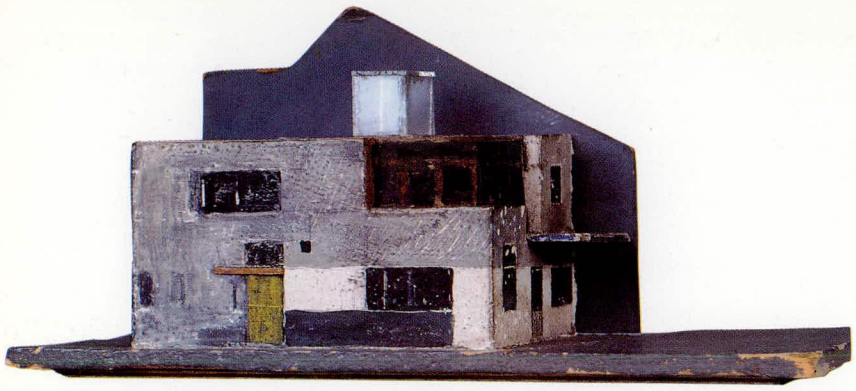
designer's 'inner passion' in the shop front (see no. 43). In 1950, when the architect Bruck applied for permission to renovate the shop, the Utrecht Planning Board recommended he get in touch with Rietveld. Interestingly, Rietveld was a member of the board at the time, although he was not present when Bruck's plans were actually reviewed.

84 Rietveld Schröder House
Prins Hendriklaan 50, Utrecht

1924
client
T. Schröder-Schrader
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schrader
restored

After the death of her husband in 1923 Truus Schröder decided to leave the big house on Biltstraat (see no. 51) and to live somewhere else in Utrecht with her three children. She asked Rietveld to design a dwelling. Schröder had a number of specific requirements. For example, she wanted the living area to be on the first floor. Rietveld made the design in close collaboration with Schröder, with her contribution probably being concentrated on the interior. She must have been an ideal client. She was able to define clearly her requirements but gave Rietveld carte blanche in realizing their ideas.

There are various preliminary studies in existence: a single maquette and a number of sketches. The studies show that Rietveld was looking for the possibility of giving



Maquette
(sketch model)
wood, cardboard, glass
10.5 x 21.5 x 9.7cm
CMU

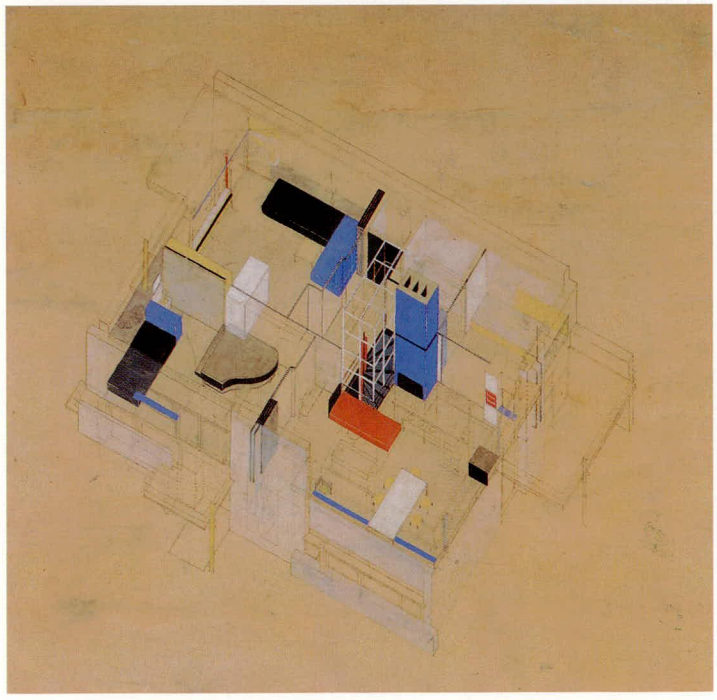
form in architecture to his ideas about space, as he had already succeeded in doing in his furniture (nos 35 and 71). From the maquette it is clear that Rietveld's starting point was a block form, with coloured surfaces and receding and projecting parts breaking up the massiveness of the volume. One of the sketches shows a comparably compact form. The closed character was broken by an extension on the first floor which Rietveld described as 'scaffolding with glass'.

The commission provided Rietveld the opportunity to give shape to his ideas about housing. He thought that traditional houses encouraged a passive attitude to life. Architects devoted too little thought to the specific requirement of housing. All too often they copied dwelling types without considering the function and use, so that housing had become automatism. Inhabiting a house must be a conscious act. This conviction was the fundamental principle of the Rietveld Schröder House. Whatever activity the inhabitant wants to engage in – taking a bath, sleeping, cooking – he must always think about it and perform some action, such as creating the bathroom by folding open a wall, making up the sofa bed, or folding out the table. The interior also reflects Rietveld's idea that the size of the rooms must be related to the time spent in them. In the daytime, bedrooms can be included in the living area. Rooms which are not much used are combined: the dining room with the kitchen, the corridor with the staircase. Just as Rietveld's Red Blue chair is a manifesto of active sitting ('sitting is a verb' is a famous remark of his) so the Rietveld Schröder House is a manifesto of enlightened and active living.

For Rietveld, architecture was a form of art whose most important purpose was to give visual form to space. His ambition to make space concrete was shared by his contemporaries, such as Theo van Doesburg, Cornelis van Eesteren and Le Corbusier. Le Corbusier's work from the early 1920s also reveals a preoccupation with space as the most essential element of architecture. But Le Corbusier appeared to be more interested in a processing of space based on the closed form, while Rietveld was looking for a possibility of defining the space without enclosing it. In this respect, Rietveld's work is nearer to the ideas of Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren. Rietveld was familiar with their architectural experiments from 1923. Together they had

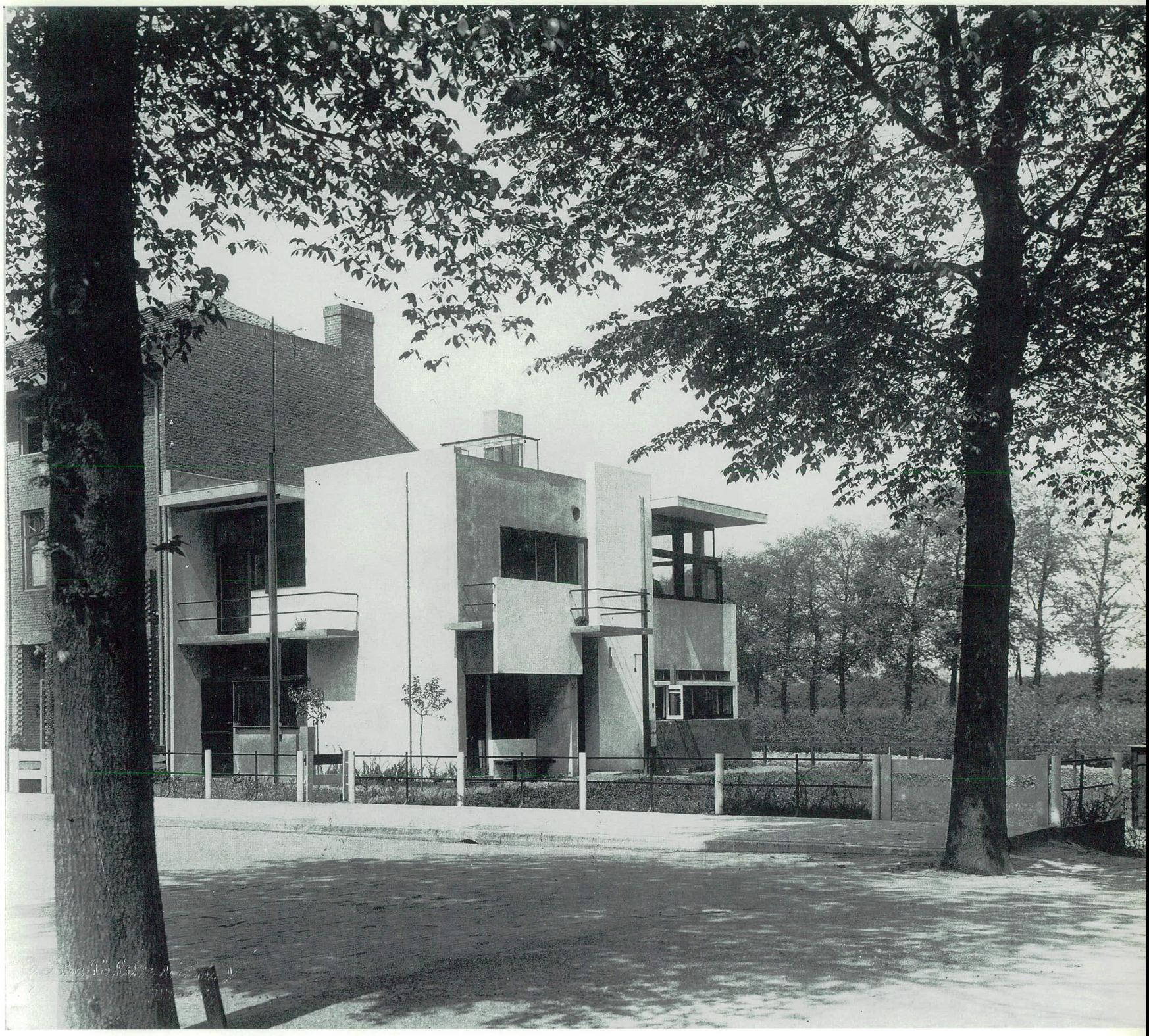
photo c. 1924

1924



Isometric projection
pencil, ink, watercolour
on collotype
83.5 x 86.8cm
RSA

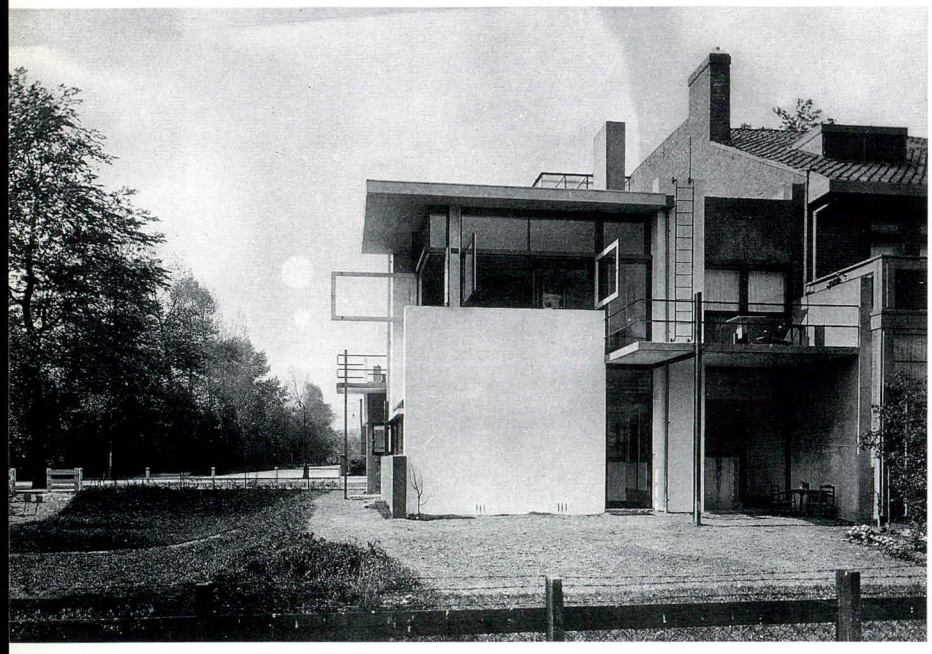
1924



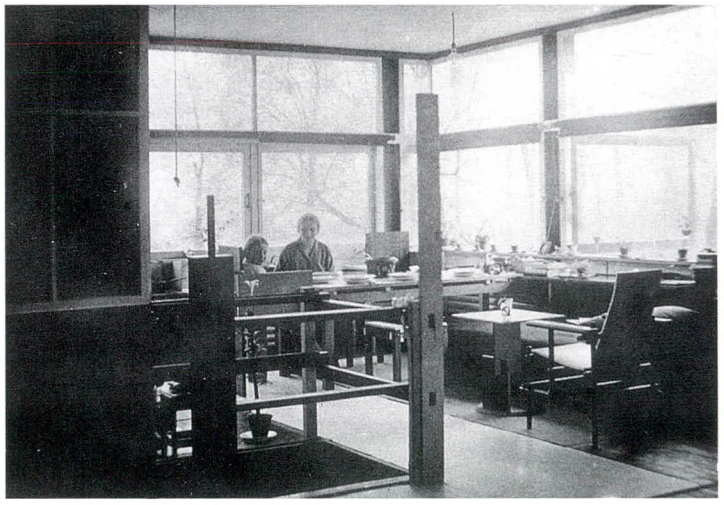
designed three dwellings for the De Stijl exhibition in Leonce Rosenberg's Galerie L'Effort Moderne in Paris, in which Rietveld also participated. Rietveld made the maquette of the Hotel Particulier, the house for Rosenberg. Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren tried to realize a permeation of space with a conglomeration of diverse block-shaped volumes, awnings and wall slabs. However, neither Le Corbusier nor Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren succeeded in realizing a dwelling with as subtle and harmonious a spatial effect as the Rietveld Schröder House. The interior of the house and the space around it are joined by flowing transitions. The best-known example is the missing bar in a corner window on the first floor. When closed the windows form a corner of 90 degrees, but when open this delineation disappears. If all the sliding partitions are folded away on the first floor and there is an unrestricted view through the windows on three sides, the living space seems much larger than the actual area of seven by ten metres. On the ground floor, which is divided into separate rooms, Rietveld linked the various spaces in an ingenious manner using overhead windows. Rietveld's means were colour and light and, in a more concrete sense, sliding partitions, overhead windows, differences in levels, furniture which was physically attached to the architecture or architectural elements which merge with tables, chairs and cupboards.

A visually dominant aspect of the house is the colour. There is no wood, stone or iron to be seen, only red, yellow, blue, white, black and grey lines and planes. The material is consistently denied. This principle is comparable to that which had already guided Rietveld in the painting of his furniture. The wood of the furniture

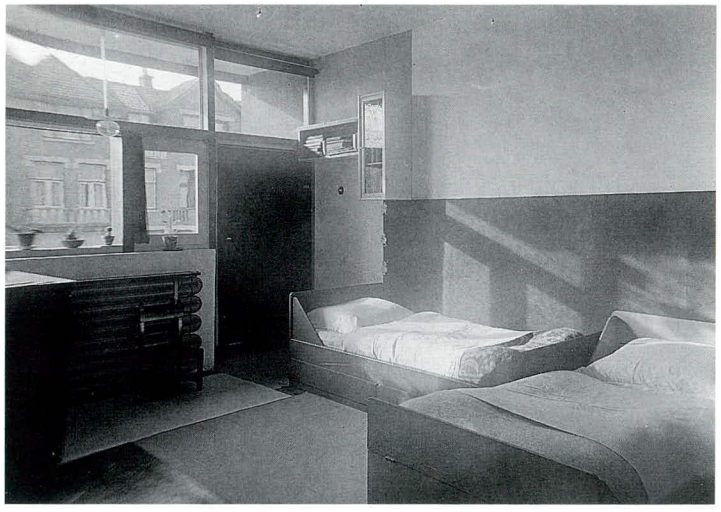
photo c. 1924



Living-cum-dining room with Truus Schröder and her daughter Hanneke
photo c. 1925



Bedsitter for the two daughters
photo c. 1925



1924

was concealed under a layer of paint or stain. The choice and position of the colours also served the same purpose in house and furniture. Each part had its own colour. In his choice of colour Rietveld was influenced by the painters of De Stijl. However, the way he applied colour in architecture deviates from that of Van Doesburg, Mondrian and Huszár. Overlapping colour planes or compositions which ignore the lines of the architecture are not to be found in Rietveld's work. For Rietveld, more than for the other De Stijl members, the choice of a particular colour and its position was determined by its absorbent or reflecting qualities. This makes of colour an instrument to influence the spatial effect. In the kitchen for example a white strip is applied to the wall at exactly the same height as the overhead windows. The subdued blue part of the ceiling in the hall seems to be continued in the adjacent study with the black ceiling, through the reflection in the overhead window between the two rooms.

1924

In 1924, for nine thousand guilders, the contractor A. de Koff built a house which was soon to become world-famous. It became a place of pilgrimage for lovers of modern architecture. A dwelling so unconventional and yet so appealing to the imagination, had never been seen before. Rietveld never tried to equal his first architectural creation. In 1924 he saw it as an experiment, just as the Red Blue chair (no. 35) and the Berlin chair (no. 71) were experiments. He learnt from it.

In 1932, in an interview with Ilse Bill, he said: 'My first building, a studio/dwelling in Utrecht, was absolutely wonderful, completely asymmetric, it was reminiscent of Japanese art. But fundamentally I was often led by the same ideas as those I still follow nowadays when working on a building.'[1] He soon abjured the excessive use of colour and in his later dwellings he gave the occupant more freedom, and rejected a layout designed as a totality.

[1] Ilse Bill, Lebensgestalter, ein Gespräch in der Wiener Werkbundsiedlung, periodical unknown, cutting RSA

photos 1987

85 Furniture Rietveld Schröder House

c. 1924-1930

With the Rietveld Schröder House, the fittings and furniture were part of the commission. Not everything was designed from scratch. Truus Schröder brought some furniture from her former house, which was altered and painted to fit in with the new environment, such as the baby grand, the bath and a desk. Already existing designs by Rietveld also found a place in the house: in the sitting area there were two Berlin chairs (no. 71) and a military table with chairs and stools (nos 73-75). A number of pieces of furniture were designed simultaneously with the house. Those are primarily the furniture which is connected to the architecture, for example the modular cupboard, a large cupboard with table and seat in the study, the beds and the crockery cupboards. In the course of the years the layout of the house has been changed several times. The furniture would then often be replaced by new Rietveld designs. When Truus Schröder died in 1985, the house contained some zigzag chairs (no. 189), the Amersfoort chair (no. 395) and the Steltman chair (no. 646).

86 Side table

steel plate, metal
44.7 x 85.3 x 14.5cm
1924
CMU

The table was on the upper floor of the Rietveld Schröder House, right beside the stove.

87 Modular cupboard

five- and three-plywood, deal, metal
185.4 x 114 x 78.5cm
1924
CMU

The cupboard consists of six chests and cupboards which are kept in place by horizontal and vertical slats and are fixed to the wall. In the top left cupboard there is a gramophone which must be pulled forward when in use. The three small chests above are separate from each other and can be removed with their contents, such as sewing or writing materials. The asymmetric form of the cupboard reinforces the autonomy of the separate elements and gives the piece a sculptural character. In 1963 Rietveld said of the sideboard from 1919 (no. 41): 'I would very much have liked to make this cupboard asymmetric, because I felt that even this symmetry was connected too much to the mass. And I would have preferred to place it freely in the space. But that was still too difficult then. I was happy enough that I could go so far and so I just made it the same on either side.'[1]

As the armchair and the sideboard belong together in terms of method, the Berlin chair (no. 71) and the modular cupboard also arise from the same principles. For a brief period, the asymmetric stacking of separate elements had a great influence on a number of foreign designers, for example, the work which Marcel Breuer made around 1925.[2]

[1] Filmed interview Piet van Moock 1963, in Hank Onrust, *De weelde van de soberheid* (The luxury of austerity), VPRO television 1992.
[2] Wilk 1981, 30, 32, 33, figs 15, 17-20.

88 Chest of drawers

oak, mahogany veneer, metal
80.7 x 159.1 x 52cm
1924-1930
CMU

The chest of drawers is made from an eighteenth-century commode in the possession of the Schröder family.

1924

89 Desk

oak, pine, five-plywood, metal
71 x 104.5 x 83.2cm
1924-1930
CMU

The desk is made from an old desk belonging to Truus Schröder's husband.

90 Folding table

oak, softwood
64.6 x 94 x 90cm
1924-1930
CMU

91 Extendable bench

steel plate, hardwood
79.8 x 124.5/241 x 49.7cm
c. 1928
CMU

The bench was designed for the upper floor of the Rietveld Schröder House and was placed beside the stairwell instead of the divan. The end can be extended to create extra seating beside the stove.

92 Conversion Huffet Pharmacy
Elandtstraat 46a,
The Hague

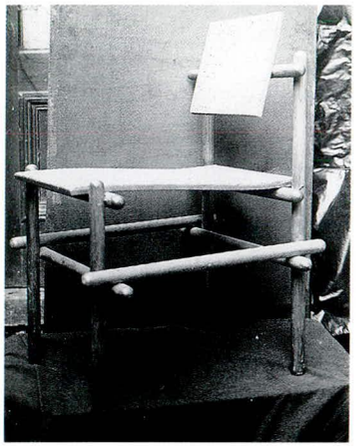
1924
demolished

photo c. 1924

93 Upright chair

wood
1924

The chair is only known from photos. Together with the Berlin chair (no. 71) and the modular cupboard (no. 87) it is pictured in A. H. Jansen, *Het industrieel uitgevoerd meubel*. In the caption, 1924 is given as the date for all three pieces of furniture.



Jansen 1925, 44.

photo c. 1924

Armchair
beech, canvas
95.5 x 71.5 x 61cm
CMU

1924

94 Armchair

wood
1924

After the Rietveld Schröder House, Rietveld designed various pieces of furniture which elaborate on earlier designs and at the same time show signs of the search for another direction. What is striking about this armchair are the round bars and in particular the back and seat cut in a lightly curved form. The chair was made a number of times and was to be found in the Rietveld Schröder House, in the interior of the Harrenstein-Schräder family (no. 107) and in the home of the Birza family (no. 126). Rietveld also exhibited the chair in February 1928 in the A.S.B. exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.[1] In a variant of the armchair the seat is straight and the middle cross rail is missing.[2]

[1] Van Tussenbroek 1928, 71.
[2] cat. auction Christie's Amsterdam 'Elvis', 6 November 1988, no. 483.

95 Bookcase with two drawers

softwood
90 x 150 x 45cm
1924
Auction Christie's Amsterdam. 'Raoul' II, 7 June 1988, no. 425.

The bookcase was made by Rietveld for D. Nijland's daughter on the occasion of her wedding in 1924.[1]

[1] Vöge 1992.

96 Layout child's room Muller
Catharijnesingel 70, Utrecht

c. 1924
client M.L.Muller
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schrader
demolished

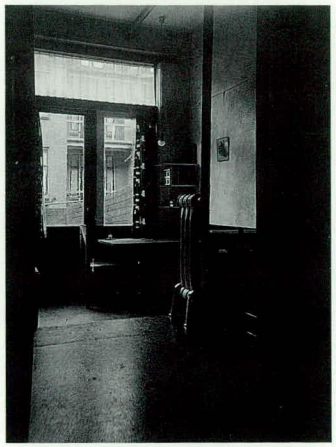
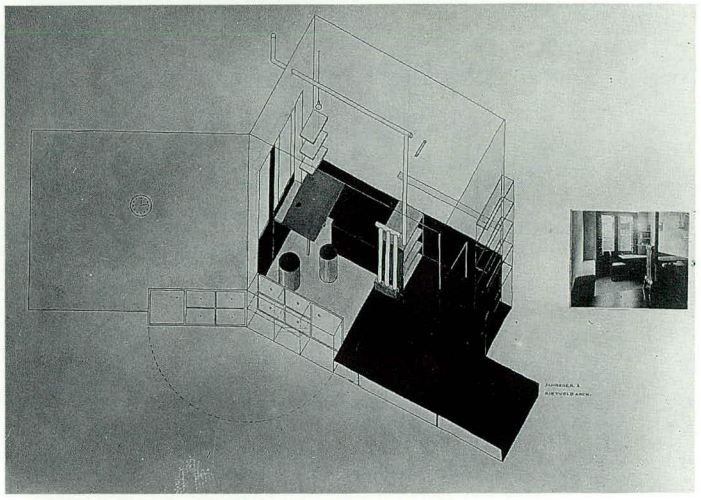


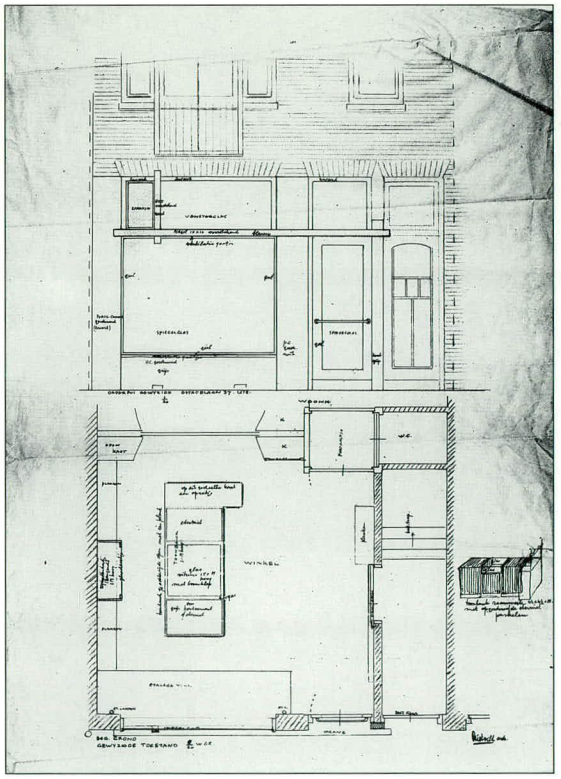
photo c. 1924

Collage of isometric projection and photo
photo RSA

room cupboards. He fixed shelves to one wall across the entire length, above which a glass cigar case was hung. He also made a counter, a wooden frame onto which asbestos cement slabs were screwed.
The sunken central section was covered with sheets of glass at the front, back and top. Rietveld added accents to the glass front.
The window, which was originally divided into three, was replaced by a large pane of plate glass. The glass was contained in a yellow frame and separated from the top window by a blue transom. The frame of this window was black and it was traversed by a red rail. The brick walls were plastered over with a layer of Portland cement and painted with a white, a grey and a black surface.



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
56.7 x 40cm
RSA



1924

97 Conversion tobacconist's
Adriaen van Ostadelaan 37, Utrecht

1924-1925
client
Mrs G. Gijsbertse-van Brakel
altered

In 1924, the widow Gijsbertse, who lived next-door to Rietveld's workshop on the Adriaen van Ostadelaan, asked him to convert a ground-floor flat on the same street into a tobacconist's. Rietveld retained the room-en-suite layout, as well as the built-in living-

98 Chair with curved seat

wood, five-plywood
1925

The frame of the chair has the same construction as the military chair (no. 73). The seat and back are made of curved plywood.

Chair with curved seat
deal, five-plywood
94 x 61.1 x 62.8cm
CMU

99 Child's chair

wood
1925

The child's chair and table (no. 100) and a hobble cart (no. 66) were made for the son of J.R. Hoogezand. The children's furniture, like the hobble cart, was probably made by the Middelbeek company, where Hoogezand was the manager.

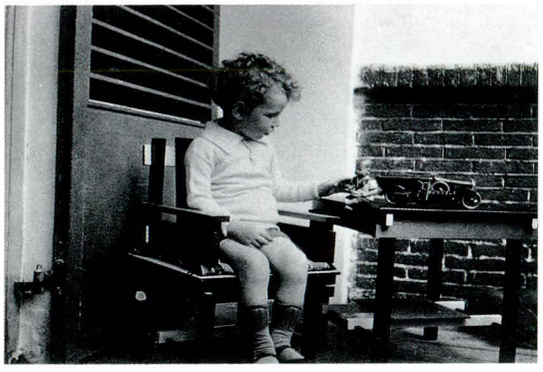


photo 8 July 1926

100 Child's table

wood
1925

101 Table lamp

iron, glass
1925

The lamp is composed of one long narrow tube, two short thick tubes, a fitting and a light bulb partially painted black.

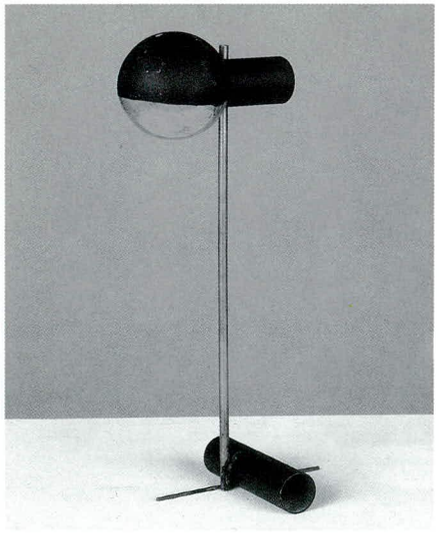
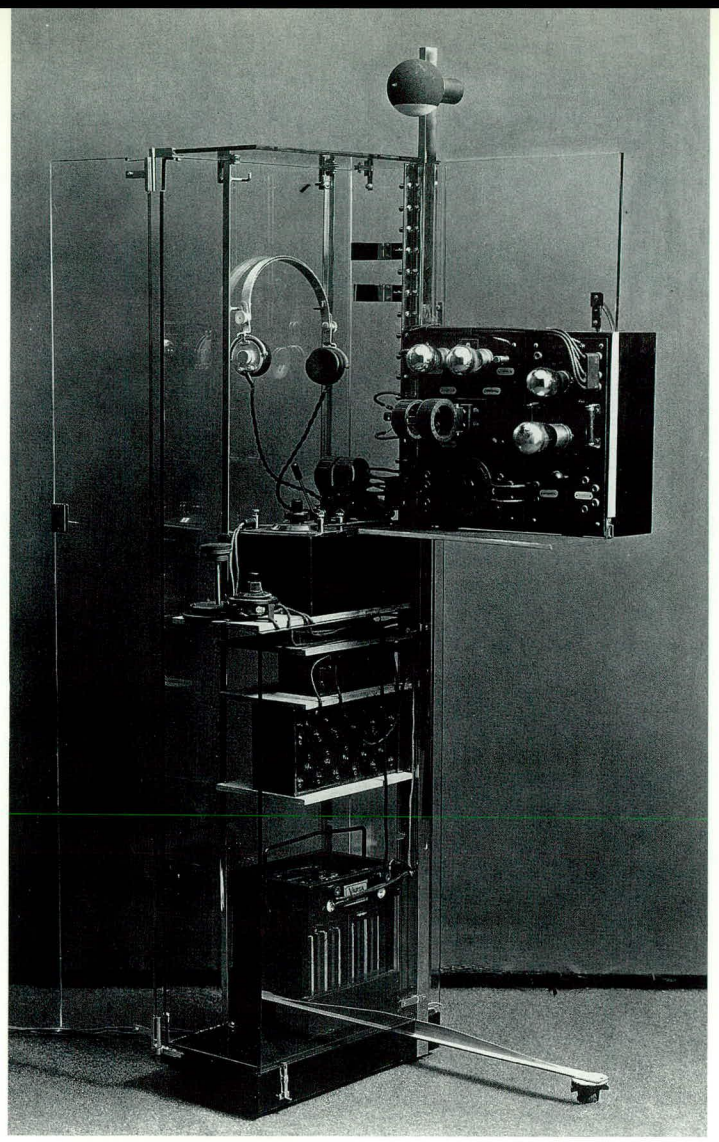


Table lamp
38 x 11.5 x 15.5cm
CMU

1925

1925



102 Radio cabinet

glass, wood, iron
1925
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

The radio is contained in a glass cabinet fitted with hinged doors and resting on three small wheels.
A variant of the table lamp (no. 101) is mounted on top of the cabinet.
M.R. Radermacher Schorer described the radio cabinet in the 26 March 1926 issue of *Radio Express* as follows: 'Last December, the architects Schröder and Rietveld of Utrecht constructed a glass cabinet for me, in which not only the radio set but also the two headsets and the reels were placed, and which, furthermore, in my opinion, is of high aesthetic value. As I have indicated above, the cabinet is of glass, therefore transparent, and the attachments which hold the glass plates together are of either nickel or iron heavily plated in nickel. The wood in the appliance has been made a dark black and the ebonite plates are coloured a vivid red. Let me say this directly, that the functioning of the apparatus was first-rate. (...) Neither the architects nor I, who commissioned this work, believe that this is *the* solution. We have noticed several flaws, and the costs are still too high. I thought it nonetheless not a bad idea to share these photographs with the Radio amateurs.' Rietveld's radio cabinet is a forerunner of our present-day music centre. The fact that it was made of glass underlines the appreciation of the aesthetics of the radio – and of appliances and machines in general – in the 1920s.

photo c. 1925

103 Cover November issue

1925

De Gemeenschap

Cover
printed
28.3 x 20.5cm
RSA

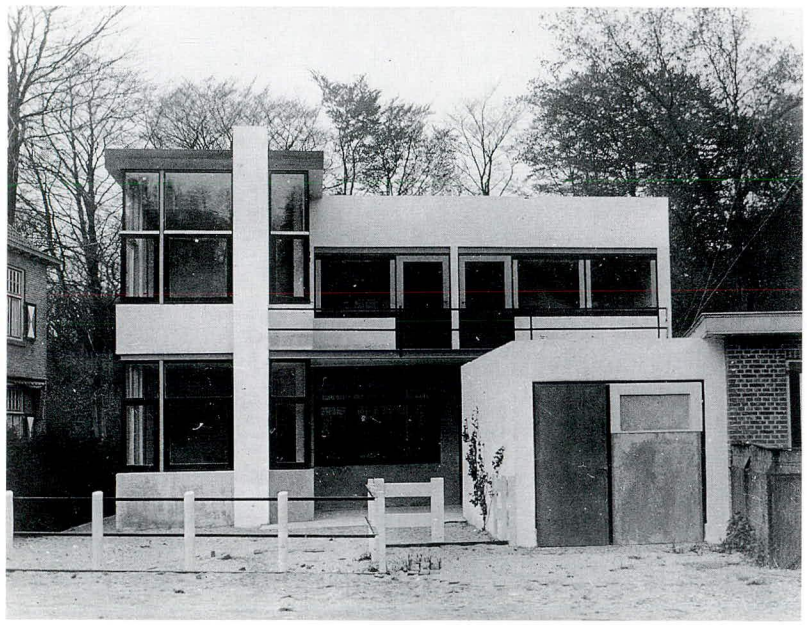
104 **Double dwelling Lommen** Klein Persijnlaan 39, Wassenaar

1925
client
Mrs. M.J.L. Lommen
hit by a V-2 bomb in 1944, and consequently demolished

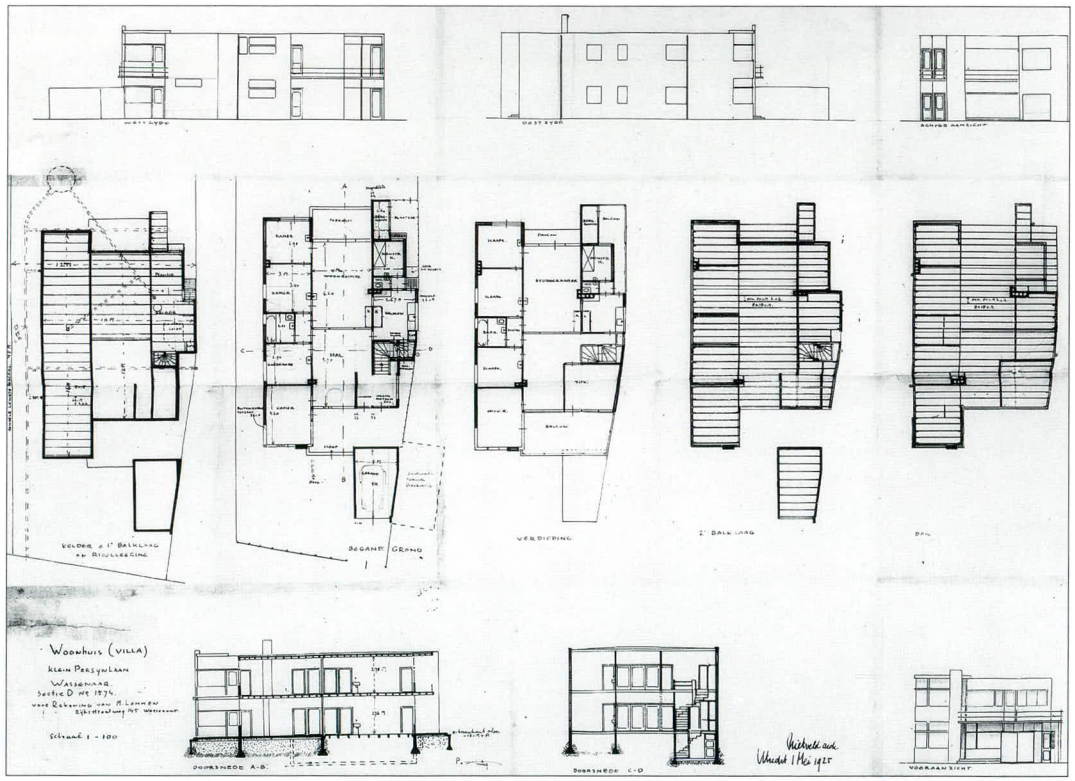
In June of 1925, Rietveld applied to the Wassenaar town council for a building permit for the construction of a villa in Klein Persijnlaan, commissioned by Marie Lommen, who, incidentally, never actually lived there herself. The report from an employee at the department of public works which accompanied the request mentions a 'home with a garage'. It in fact consisted of two homes: one on the ground floor and an identically laid-out home on the first floor. Obtaining a building permit was no problem, provided that Rietveld clearly indicated how the stress from the supports and seatings would be diverted 'so that the entire structure is supported in the sand layer, because that is our basis for building. We haven't yet found a way to suspend it in thin air,' wrote a civil servant at the Building and Housing Inspection Department.[1] On the drawings, Rietveld indicated white, light grey and dark grey as the colours for the outside walls, and black for the doors and window and door frames. A striking detail was the absence of posts in the corner windows on the side facing the street.

[1] This letter is undated and can be found in the Rietveld Archive, NAi.

photo c. 1925



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
64.6 x 76.5cm
NAi

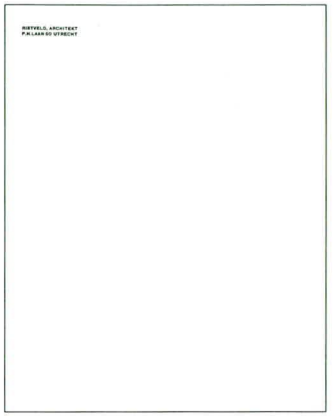


1925

105 Stationery

c. 1925

After the completion of the Rietveld Schröder House, Rietveld used the studio on the ground floor in which to work. In 1933, he moved his office to 55, Oudegracht.



RIETVELD, ARCHITEKT
P.H.LAAN 50 UTRECHT

1925

106 Modular cupboard

wood or plywood
c. 1925
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

This cupboard probably originated shortly after the completion of the Rietveld Schröder House. Rietveld designed it together with Truus Schröder. Three shelves and four partitions together form an open case which can be placed in different positions, allowing a bookcase of the desired form (tall, wide, short) to be created. Custom-made furniture, to be assembled from standard elements, was first introduced by Franz Schuster and Ferdinand Kramer around 1925 in Frankfurt. The idea stemmed from the need to design furniture which was both in keeping with the modernizations in public housing at the time and could be mass produced, thereby reducing costs.[1] Truus Schröder was very interested in these developments and wrote about them in the magazine *De Werkende Vrouw*.[2] There is a drawing in the Netherlands Architecture Institute with the stamped monogram by Rietveld, which reveals both the idea behind the design and Schröder's contributions. The caption reads: '10 modular bookcases 78 x 26 x 26, design by T. Schröder-Schräder with dovetail joints or made by cabinet manufacturer with corners fastened with wire attachments'.

[1] Mang 1978, 114-117.
[2] Schröder 1930.

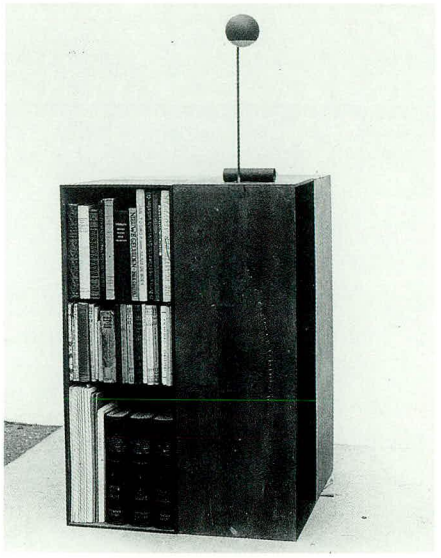
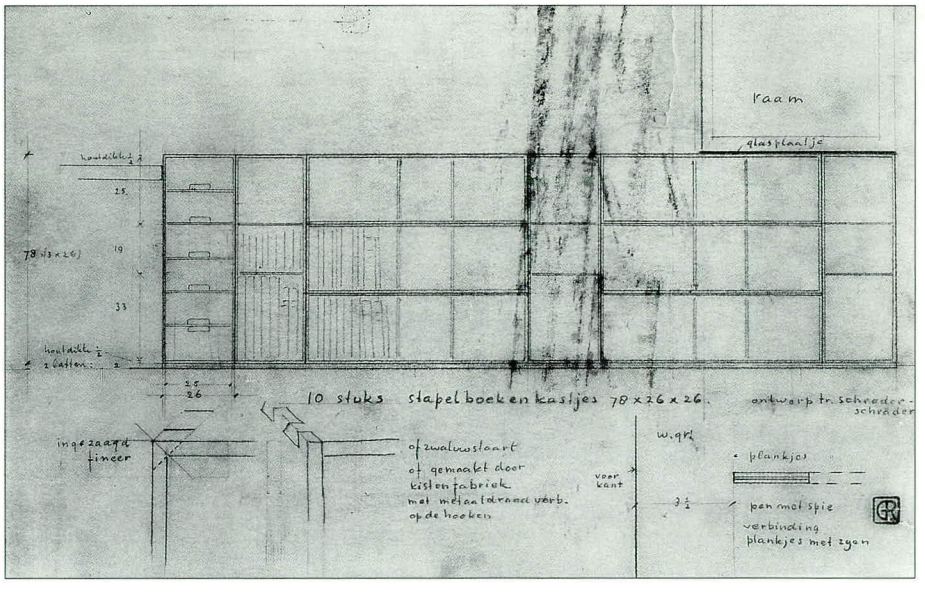
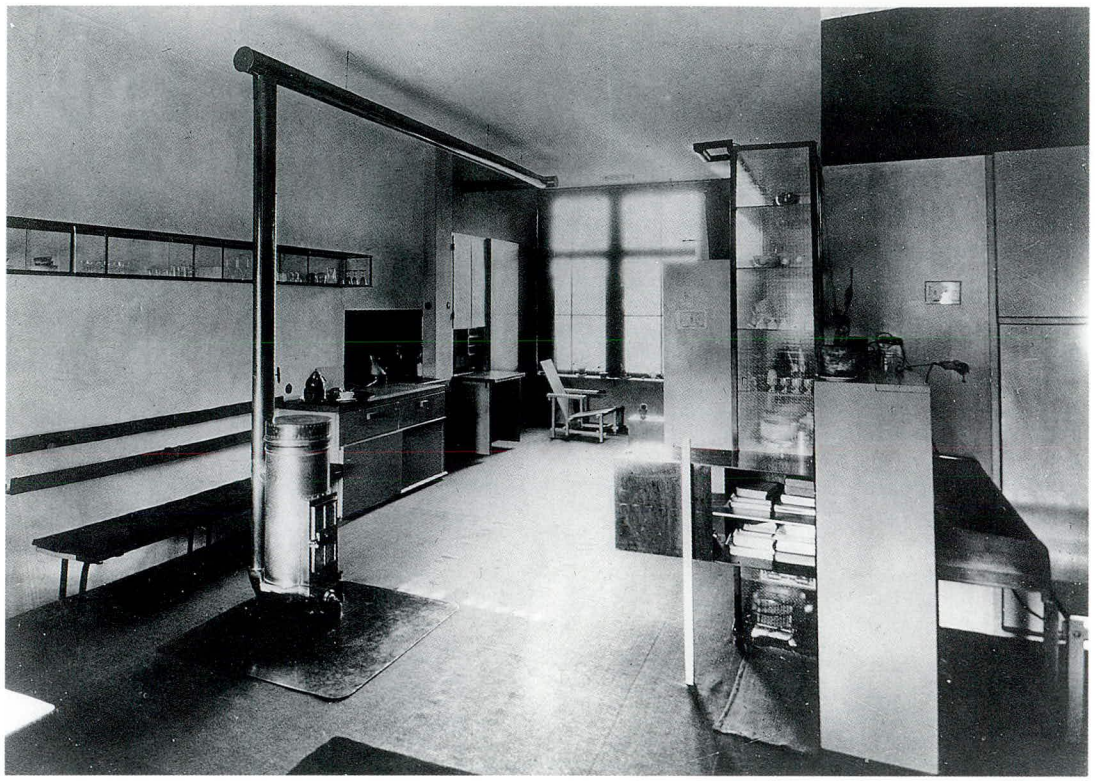


photo c. 1925

Drawing arrangement modular cupboards
pencil on transparent paper
22.5 x 35cm
NAi





Living room
photo c. 1926

107 Interior Harrenstein
Weteringschans 141, Amsterdam

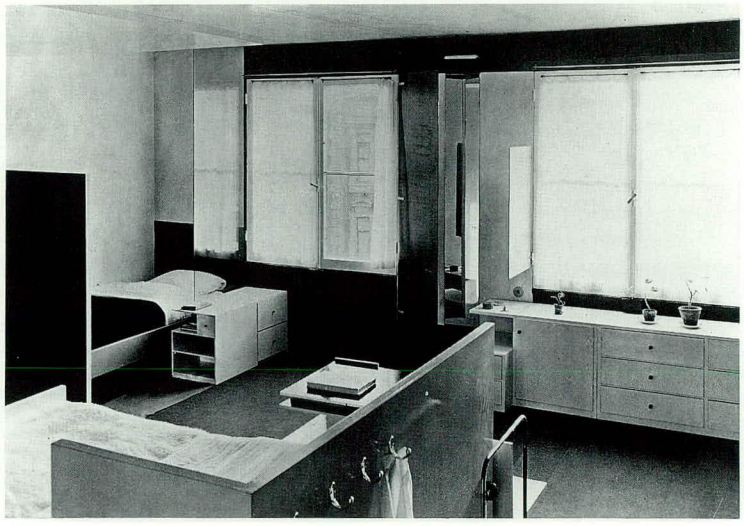
1926
client R.J. Harrenstein
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
demolished in 1971

In 1922, the paediatrician Dr R.J. Harrenstein went to live in a house on Weteringschans in Amsterdam which was partially rebuilt by P. Kramer. Harrenstein was married to An Schräder, the sister of Truus Schröder-Schräder. The couple had an extensive circle of friends and acquaintances who were artists, and bought work from such painters as Jacob Bendien, Charley Toorop, Kurt Schwitters and Thijs Rinsema. Jacob Bendien lived with them from 1922 until his death in 1933. In 1926, they asked Rietveld and Schröder to re-decorate the living room on the third floor and the bedroom on the fourth floor. In 1930, a second commission followed for the surgery, the waiting room and a guest room near the bedroom (no. 156).[1]

The conversion of the bedroom was the most radical. Horizontal and vertical panels of wood and glass were placed in the room. The standing partitions mark the places for the beds and screen the sleeping areas against drafts. The horizontal panel which was installed as a hanging ceiling offers a visual divide between the entrance and the sleeping area. The lamps between this panel and the ceiling provide indirect, uniform lighting of the room. All the furniture was designed especially for this room and is tailor-made for its place and function in the interior. The way in which the furniture constitutes an integral portion of the interior can be compared to the interior design of the Rietveld Schröder House (no. 84). The colour composition – white, black, yellow and red – also shows strong ties with Rietveld's work during the early 1920s. The living room bears more resemblance to the Rietveld Schröder House in terms of its conception rather than its actual

implementation. The room is a multi-functional space with a kitchenette, two beds, one of which has been placed behind a screen, a piano, and two tables with chairs. The most striking visual element is the horizontal flue which hangs unattached over a length of several metres. The rest of the interior bears all the traces of the stylistic transition which characterized Rietveld's work in those years. Besides furniture of painted wood and plywood, iron and glass were used for cabinets and foot rests. A place was found for the somewhat older, early twentieth-century furniture alongside the new designs by Rietveld. The combination of severity and nonchalant clutter in this soberly furnished interior gives a good idea of the type of people who appreciated Rietveld's work.
Both interiors were judged favourably by contemporaries – the bedroom especially enjoyed much publicity. The hygienic layout was particularly praised.[2] At the demolition of the

1926



Bedroom
photo c. 1926
SMA

interior in 1971, the room was bought in its entirety by the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

[1] Rolf 1971.
[2] Wattjes 1927.

Küper 1988, 147-155.

108 Showcase

glass, metal, wood
1926
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

Two glass cupboards from the United States were once on the first floor of the Rietveld Schröder House.
The model probably inspired Rietveld when designing the showcase.
One specimen was placed in the living room of the Harrenstein-Schräder family (no. 107). The measurements are based on multiples of thirty centimetres. These dimensions were often used by Rietveld in

Showcase
glass, metal, oak
30.3 x 90 x 29.9cm
CMU

modular furniture. The model was put into production by Metz & Co. and first appeared in the autumn 1932 brochure.

109 Utrecht student union anniversary medal

brass
1926

Medal
3.5 x 3.5cm
CMU

110 Utrecht student union anniversary pin

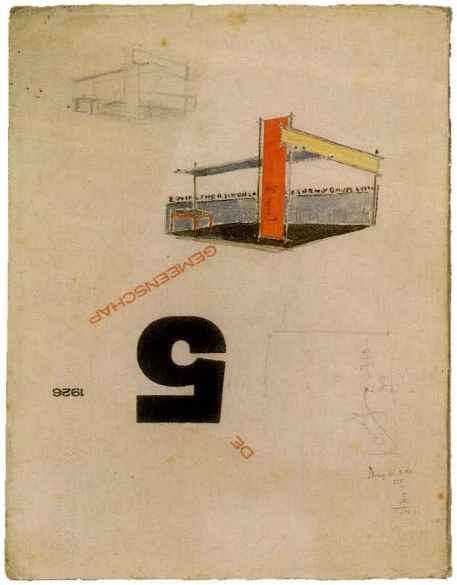
copper and enamelled brass
1926

Pin
1.3 x 1.3cm
CMU

111 Design exhibition stand 'Zwitsersch gasapparaten-fabriek Cornelis van Bavel

c. 1926
client Technical Bureau C.J. van Bavel

Rietveld designed an exhibition stand for his neighbour in the Bachstraat, where Rietveld lived with his family from 1924 onwards. The stand bears some resemblance to Frederick Kiesler's display system of 1924. In 1925, this system was featured with an explanation by Kiesler in the 10/11 issue of *De Stijl*.



Rough draft
pencil, ink, paint on cover
De Gemeenschap
28.4 x 20.5cm
RSA

112 Conversion dwelling Van der Vuurst de Vries
Julianalaan 10, Utrecht

1927
client H. van der Vuurst de Vries
altered

Garage conversion, including chauffeur's dwelling
Waldeck Pyrmontkade 20, Utrecht

1927-1928
client H. van der Vuurst de Vries
altered

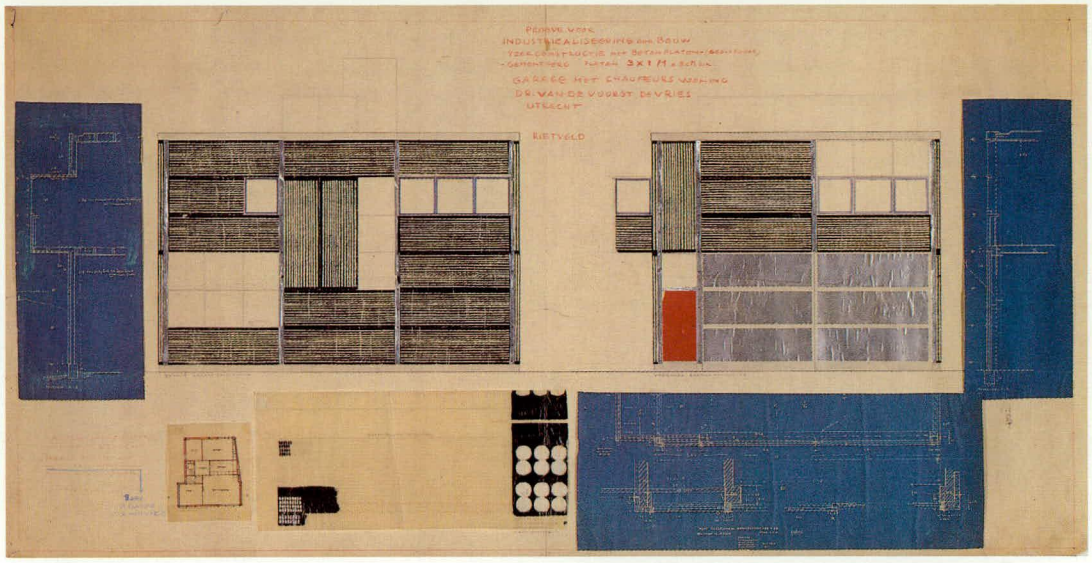
The work commissioned by Dr Van der Vuurst de Vries was twofold: the rebuilding of his home on Julianalaan, dating from 1917, and the expansion of the garage in the back garden. The garage was enlarged and a house was built above the extension for the doctor's private chauffeur.

Rietveld made major changes in the facade on Julianalaan. The windows were altered, the sloping roof was removed and the facade was extended straight up in brick covered in wooden panels. The lower part was covered with a rough plaster. The changes in the interior amounted to an expansion of the living room.

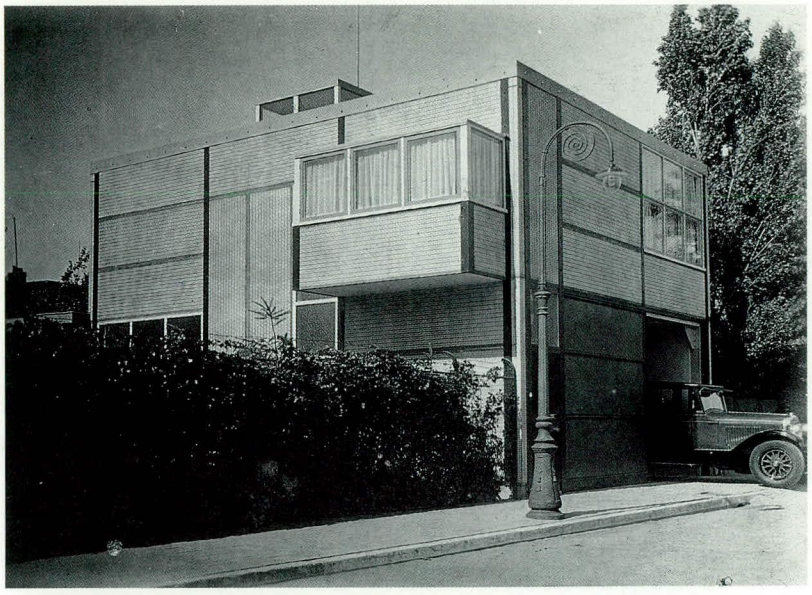
The garage behind the house was lengthened to the building line of Waldeck Pyrmontkade which lay behind the garage. Above this extension, Rietveld built the chauffeur's house. The addition was erected in a framework of iron posts and joists, which was filled in with masonry. The walls were covered with an enamelled

concrete plating eight centimetres thick. The dimensions of the garage and house are multiples of a metre. This is apparent from the measurements of the rooms and of the doors, which are all one metre wide. Outside, the metre pattern is evident in the three-by-one metre concrete plates and the windows which measure one metre square, the glass lantern above the kitchen and the portal measuring five by two by one metres. The Planning Board to which the whole plan was presented expressed concern only about whether the colours of the doctor's house would prove acceptable in the fashionable Julianalaan. Not a word was said about the startling design for the garage. Rietveld covered the enamelled plating with a dotted pattern – two horizontal rows of white dots repeated across the plates. From far away, the garage appeared grey, but from close by, the dots were clearly visible against the dark background. Rainwater was diverted from the asphalted roof to the top of the existing garage. From there, a drainpipe led to the sewer. This system did not function optimally; quite soon after the construction was completed, the roof had to be fitted with a corbelling; the rigid cubic form was lost. The walls were covered with a layer of gravel. Apparently, the water had been leaking in. In 1932, an advertisement was placed in the *Bouwkundig Weekblad* in which Van der Vuurst de Vries thanked the 'good' architects for their helpful suggestions on waterproofing the garage, which had meanwhile acquired the nickname 'the sieve'.

Despite the technical flaws, the garage deserves a place in the history of Dutch architecture. It is one of the first examples of the application of prefab elements in the construction of homes and a step in the direction of standardizing. 'A test-trial for the industrialization of the building trade,' explained Rietveld on an exhibition panel with drawings and a description of the house. This panel was probably part of the October 1929 architectural exhibition of the Utrechtsche Kunstkring. It was the first time that drawings and photographs of the project were exhibited.



Presentation sheet
collage, paper
76 x 143.2cm
NAi



Chauffeur's dwelling
photo c. 1928

1927

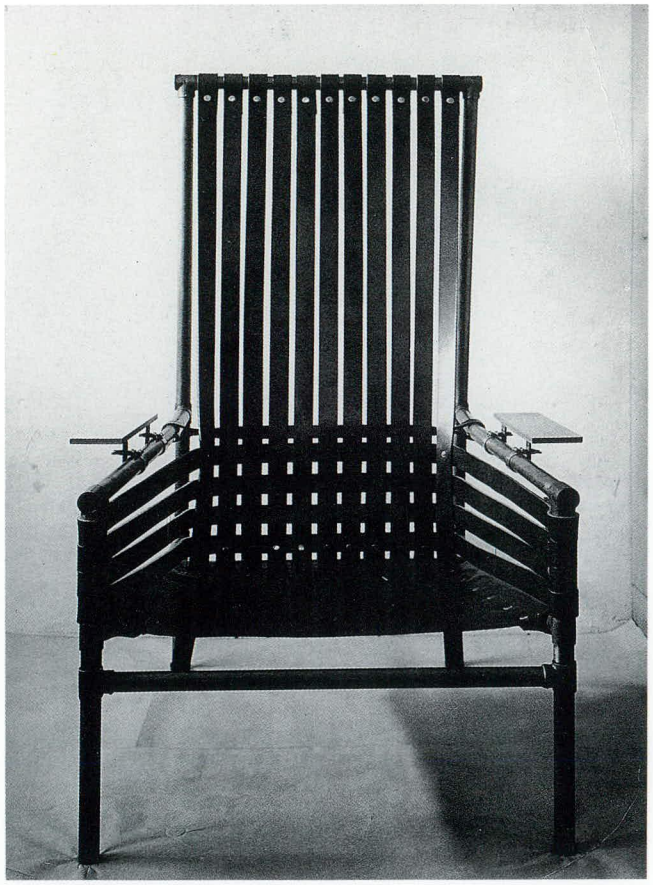
113 Armchair

leather, iron, wood
118 x 72 x 80cm
1927
Haags Gemeente-museum, The Hague

This huge chair for A.M. Hartog (see also no. 59) has an ingenious construction of interwoven leather straps and gas pipes. The iron pipes are connected to each other with T-fittings; the leather is attached to the frame with rivets. The chair is probably the first example of experimental tubular furniture designed by Rietveld. In the Netherlands, the technique of bending steel tubes was not mastered until 1928. Until then, one used T-fittings for the connections. Rietveld may have borrowed this construction method from Mart Stam, who was the first to build a chair without back legs using this method.[1]

[1] exhib. cat. Delft/ Haarlem 1975.

photo c. 1927



114 Design one-piece chair

1927

Rietveld's experiments in 1927 are of extraordinary significance. The idea was to create chairs which 'would pop out of the machine just like that' as Rietveld put it.[1] The ideal machine-produced chair had to be cut or punched from one sheet of material and then assembled with a minimum of labour. Virtually all of Rietveld's designs remained at the drawing table or scale model stage. One or more prototypes of some were made in plywood, fibreboard (no. 115) or aluminium (no. 334). Ultimately, the zigzag chair (no. 189) turned out to be viable, although not as it was originally intended; it was made from four pieces of wood. Two machine-made chairs by Rietveld appeared in the 1929 VANK yearbook: 'No. 138. One-piece plywood chair, without lathework. The pressed pattern is notched, the seat turned up and fastened with rivets.'[2] This design

[1] Filmed interview with Piet van Moock 1963, in Hank Onrust *De weelde van de soberheid*, VPRO Television 1992.
[2] Gouwe 1929, 172, 187, 188.

photo c. 1927

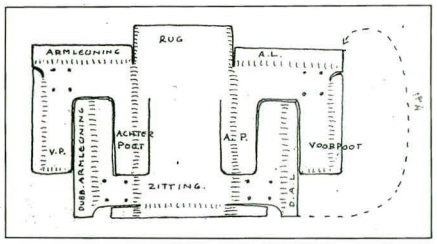
probably came no further than the model featured in the yearbook. The second one-piece chair is made of fibreboard (no. 115).

115 One-piece chair

fibreboard
1927

This chair is one of the experimental models that Rietveld made around 1927 in his pursuit of a chair which could be mass produced. It was featured along with another model (no. 114) in the 1929 VANK yearbook: 'No. 139. Fibreboard chair pressed from a single plate, without extra reinforcement. The notched fibreboard is soaked, bent, pressed into shape and dried.'[1] Drawings which explain how the form can be produced from one sheet of material are included with the description. Rietveld entered the chair, together with the tube-framed chair (no. 119) and an armchair with rounded bars (no. 94) in the A.S.B. (Architecture, Painting and Sculpture) Exhibition which was held in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in February 1928. Otto van Tussenbroek wrote a favourable review in the March edition of *Binnenhuis*: 'Later, Rietveld, whose unrelenting pursuit was directed towards creating designs which can be produced in large numbers (in series) with the aid of machines, made the same chair from rods. This latter model can be viewed, along with the other two chairs (about which much has been said) at the A.S.B. Exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. After wood, it was time to try tough fibreboard and flexible metal. Continually searching and testing, Rietveld finally succeeded in constructing a chair from a single sheet of fibreboard. Through cutting out and folding and fastening the surfaces with screw bolts and lock nuts, he managed to obtain a remarkably easily transported (let's not forget that the Dutch word for 'furniture', *meubel*, is cognate with the word 'mobile') and yet uncommonly strong final product. The same matt black material was applied to a chair made of bent steel tubing. A metal framework covered in a sheet of fibreboard – it couldn't be simpler!'[2] A place was made for the chair in the home of the Birza family (no. 126) and it was auctioned in 1986. The corners and legs had meanwhile been rounded off, possibly following the example of a second chair that has since been lost.[3]

[1] Gouwe 1929, 172, 188.
[2] Tussenbroek 1928, 71.
[3] Küper 1988, 192-198.



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
9 x 16.5cm
RSA

'Birza chair
fibreboard
62 x 55 x 71cm
SMA

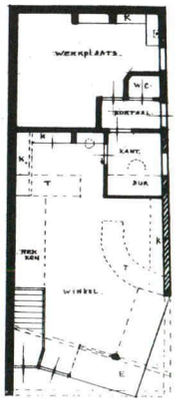
1927

116 Conversion shop and shoemaker's workshop Record

Lange Elizabethstraat 5, Utrecht

1927
client J. Hasselaar
no longer extant

By 1927 Rietveld had considerable experience in rebuilding shops and this one, Record, was a new challenge. The building was a corner site, a unique opportunity for Rietveld to unite the streetside facade and the shop window on the alley side into one large showcase. The two plate glass windows touching each other without a stanchion in between represented not only a technical and structural achievement, but an aesthetic one as well. Just as with the Goud en Zilversmid's Compagnie (no. 50) and Wessels (no. 83) the lower front was visually detached from the rest of the facade by the recessed window strip.



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
52.5 x 17cm
RSA

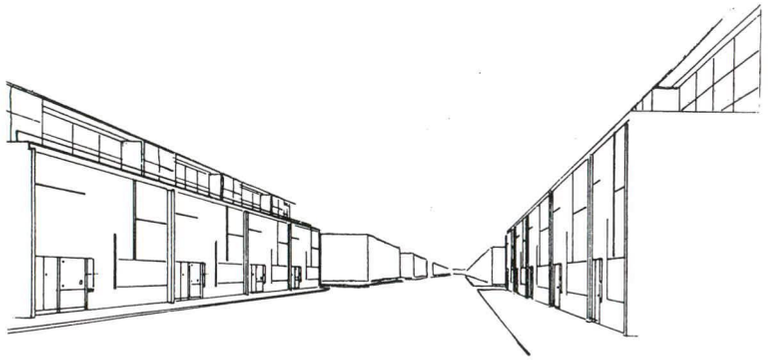
photo c. 1927

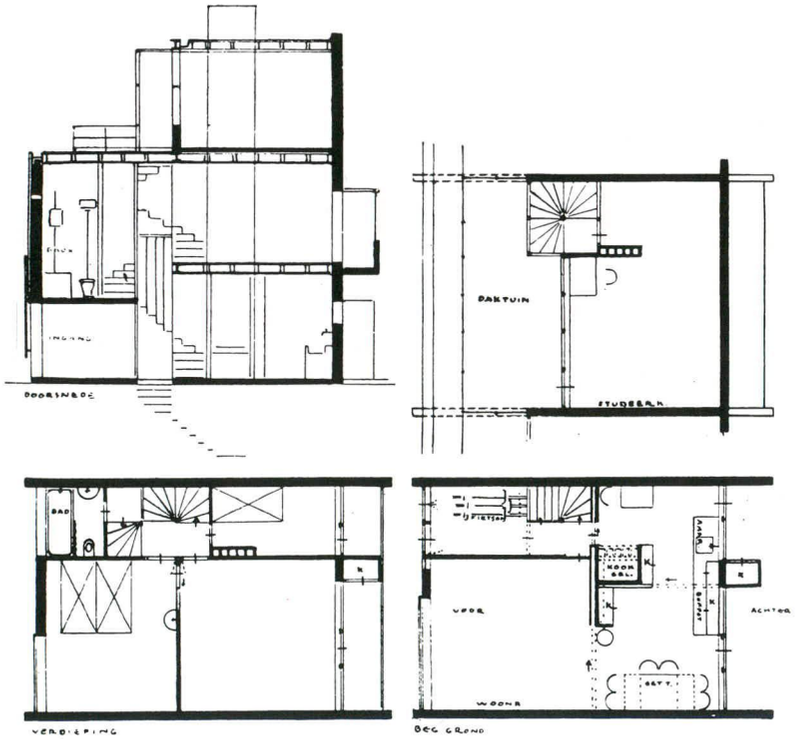
117 Design 'standard home'

1927
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
not realized

The design was first published in 1927 in the magazine *i10*. As a continuation of the Rietveld Schröder House, a private home, Rietveld also attempted to unite the different living functions in one open space in homes that were part of large-scale projects. This type of space can be transformed into a number of rooms through the use of partitions.

Illustration from *i10* 1 (1927) 3, 107

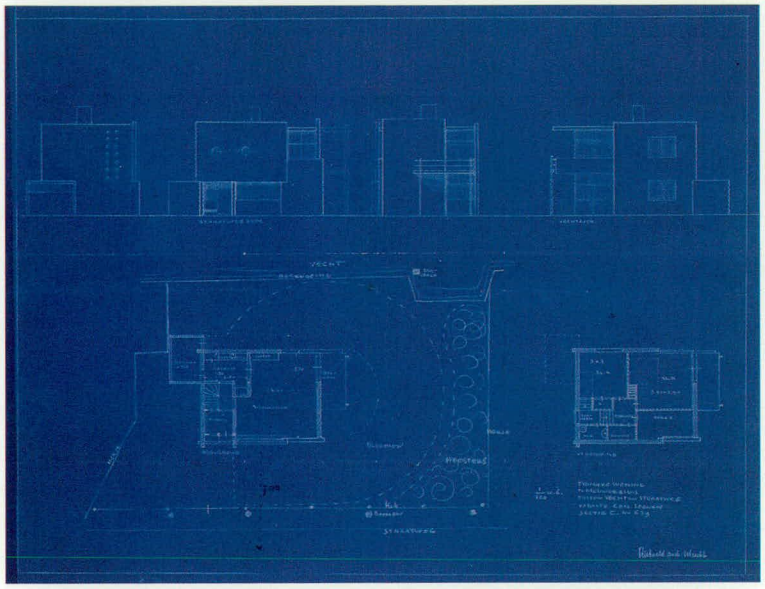




1927

118 Design dwelling Van der Veen
Straatweg, Nieuwersluis

1927
client
Mrs J.A. van der Veen
not realized



1927

Design drawing
blueprint
44.6 x 54.9cm
Loenen Municipal Archives

Tube-framed chair
wood, iron, fibreboard
96 x 79 x 87cm
CMU

119 Tube-framed chair

1927

Not only did Rietveld experiment with one-piece chairs, for which one sheet of material was formed into the desired shape, he also worked on designs in which the back and seat consisted of one plate bent into shape, while the legs were replaced by side pieces. The bent plate is fastened to these side pieces, thereby lending stability to the chair.
An original interpretation of this construction is the tube-framed chair. For this piece of furniture made from metal tubing, the strength and flexibility of the material is also utilized in making the supporting sides. The sides are light and strong and glide across the floor easily. The form derives logically from the material used and does not fall back on existing wooden chair designs as does much steel tubular furniture. The tube-framed chair, exhibited at such events as the 1928 A.S.B. Exhibition in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum[1] and 'Der Stuhl' in Stuttgart,[2] attracted national and international attention. From the many publications of that time, it appeared that Rietveld was the first to experiment with one-piece back and seat.[3] Rietveld used fibreboard and solid iron pipes which he doubled up slightly at the connections in the initial prototypes of the tube-framed chair. Early on in his experimenting, he replaced the solid metal rods with hollow tubing, the ends of which were welded together.
This version of the chair appeared in a few publications in 1928. At the time there were already several variations of this chair; for example, a version with a high back and a slanted seat, and one with a low back and a level seat. In the early 1930s, Rietveld imported a large number of bent plywood seats from Scandinavia. He used these not only for the tube-framed chair but in other designs as well (nos 220 and 336). A sketch in the Netherlands Architecture Institute shows a version of the tube-framed

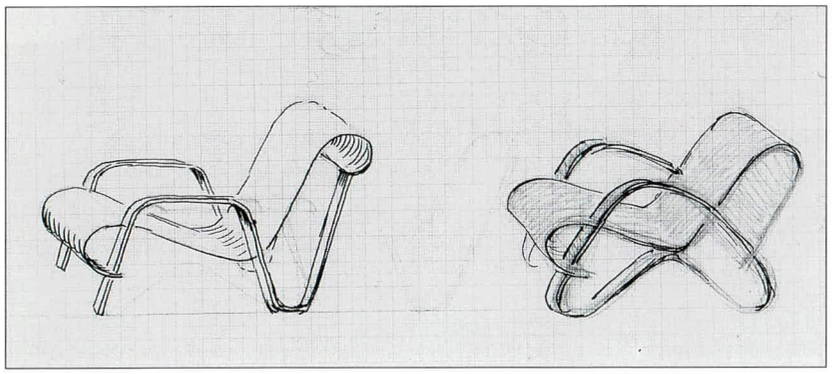
chair with legs made from bent slats. The resemblance to the work of Alvar Aalto is in this case most striking.

The tube-framed chair was one of the first of Rietveld's designs which were put into production by Metz & Co. The 1931 St Nicholas brochure already offered the upright version and the low armchair for sale costing Dfl.19.75 and 22.50. The polished plywood seat was available in several colours. The model home in the Erasmuslaan (no. 164) also contained a low version without arms. There is also a table which is intended to go with the chair. The table is from the estate of the sculptor J. Uiterwaal and was put up for auction in 1986. There is no reason to attribute this design to Rietveld.[4]

Rough draft
variation with bent slats
pencil, ink on paper
20.5 x 38.6cm
NAi

Tube-framed chair
metal tubing, five-plywood
59 x 39.2 x 61.4cm
CMU

[1] Van Tussenbroek 1928, 71.
[2] Büddeman 1928, 304-308.
[3] Schneck 1928, passim.
[4] Auction cat. Christie's Amsterdam 21 May 1987, no. 402.

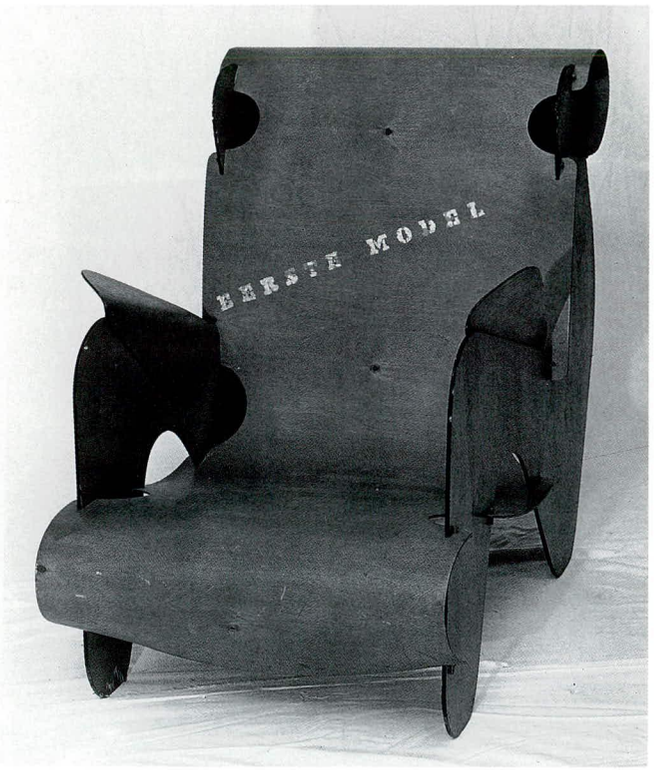


120 Armchair 'First Model'

The constructive principle of the tube-framed chair (no. 119) is clearly demonstrated in this bent plywood armchair. Rietveld applied this principle in a somewhat altered form in the armchair from the series 'Do-It-Yourself Furniture' (no. 350).

plywood
85 x 94 x 69cm
1927
SMA

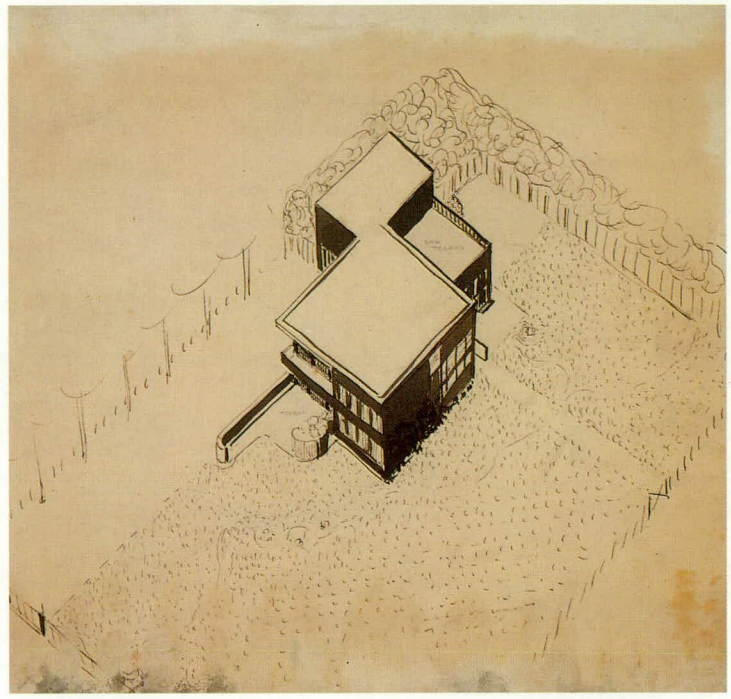
1927



1927

121 **Chair**

maple, plywood
76 x 34 x 44cm
1927
SMA



Design drawing
ink on paper
40 x 39cm
NAi

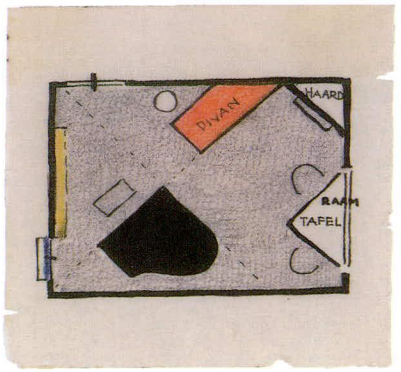
122 **Design dwelling**
Bergen

c. 1927

123 Interior music room
Mauritsstraat 78, Utrecht

c. 1927
client P. Ketting
no longer extant

In December 1926, the composer Piet Ketting moved from Heemstede to Utrecht to study composition under Willem Pijper. He probably came into contact with Rietveld through local artistic circles. Rietveld designed an interior for Ketting's music room. The sketches are undated, but were probably made in 1926 or 1927.



The determining feature of the interior was the grand piano which was placed at an angle in the room. Along the front of the piano a line was traced to a corner of the room. Perpendicular to this line is a second diagonal. The furniture, a table and a divan, were placed inside this pattern of lines. Both pieces of furniture were adapted for the sake of the composition. The table is triangular and the divan has a corner bevelled off. The design is exceptional, not only because the it was approached like a painting, but because of the diagonal composition of the interior. It is possible that Rietveld was inspired by Theo van Doesburg's article in *De Stijl*, in which he wrote about the longing for an enhancement of the concept of space with a new dimension and for 'enriching of the imaging-concept'. According to Van Doesburg this desire makes one receptive to a new 'polarity' – that is the diagonal in the composition. In 1926, in his article on this subject, Van Doesburg described the schematic representation of the 'contrast painting', the 'contra-composition' in which the diagonal line was placed against 'the natural and architectural structure' (horizontal and vertical).[1]

[1] T. van Doesburg, 'Painting. From Composition to contra-composition', in *De Stijl* 7 (1926) 73/74, 17-28. See also Küper 1988, 155-168.

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
8.2 x 8.2cm
RSA

photo c. 1927

Music stand
hardwood, softwood, plywood, metal
146 x 50 x 60cm
CMU

124 Music stand

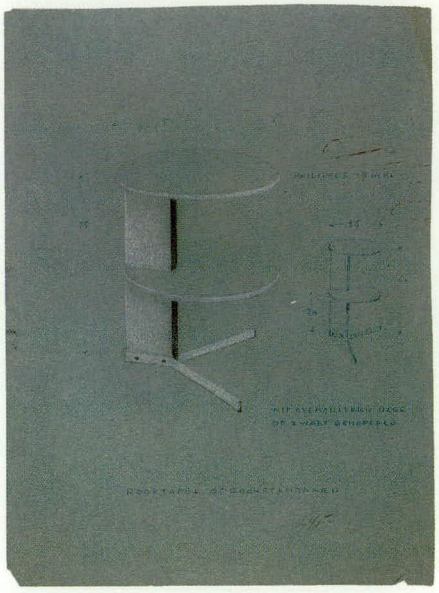
wood, metal
c. 1927

Rietveld also designed a music stand for Piet Ketting. The triangular shape of the foot correlated with the interior of the music room (no. 123). The stand was also executed for other clients.

1927

125 Design smoking table or smoking stand

Philipress, iron
c. 1927



Design drawing
pencil, paint on paper
24.7 x 17.8cm
RSA

photo c. 1928
Rietveld is visible in the mirror.

1927

126 Interior living room Birza Tesselschadestraat 4, Amsterdam

1927-1928
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
no longer extant

In this interior stood the fibreboard chair (no. 115), the armchair with the round bars (no. 94) and a round folding table. A low unit was fixed to one wall which acted as a working table. Against the wall facing the window stood a high cupboard unit, and along the third wall stood the stove for which Rietveld designed a fireguard. Legs were later added to the guard to improve ventilation. The wall units were painted black and beetroot red. The working top was finished in red leather, the drawers were painted grey inside. Later the family also bought zigzag chairs (no. 189), military chairs (no. 73), and military stools (no. 74). The stools could be pushed away under the hanging wall units.[1] The interior remained intact until the house was sold in the 1960s. The furniture was auctioned at Christie's in Amsterdam in 1986.

[1] Auction cat. 'Erato', Christie's Amsterdam 27 May 1986, nos 139-150.

photo c. 1928

127 **Conversion Zaudy Shop**
Brückstrasse, Wesel, Germany

1928
client Mrs Brandenstein-Zaudy
demolished

Following its conversion the Zaudy shop was soon nicknamed 'the House with the Nose' or 'Aquarium' on account of its pointed window.
The idea of placing the window at an angle to the building line, which Rietveld had previously used on a corner (no. 116) is applied here in a flat street facade. It was an extremely bold architectural solution, especially since the point rises the full height of the building.

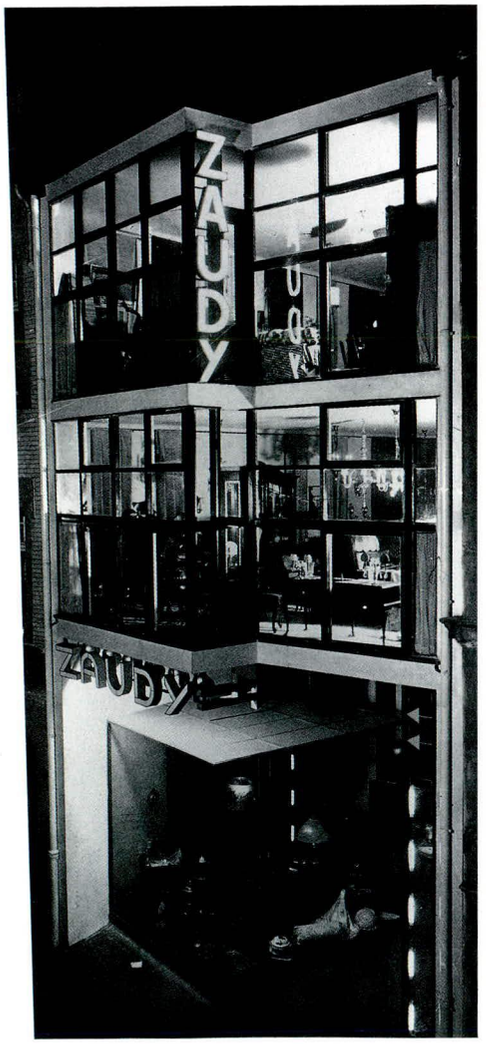


photo c. 1928

128 **Cover magazine**
Nieuw Rusland

1928

Rough draft
pencil, watercolour on paper
24 x 16.5cm
RSA

129 **Logo Genootschap Nederland-Nieuw Rusland**

1928

The design drawing is in the Rietveld Schröder Archive.

130 **Design conversion of dwelling**
Van Hogendorpstraat, Utrecht

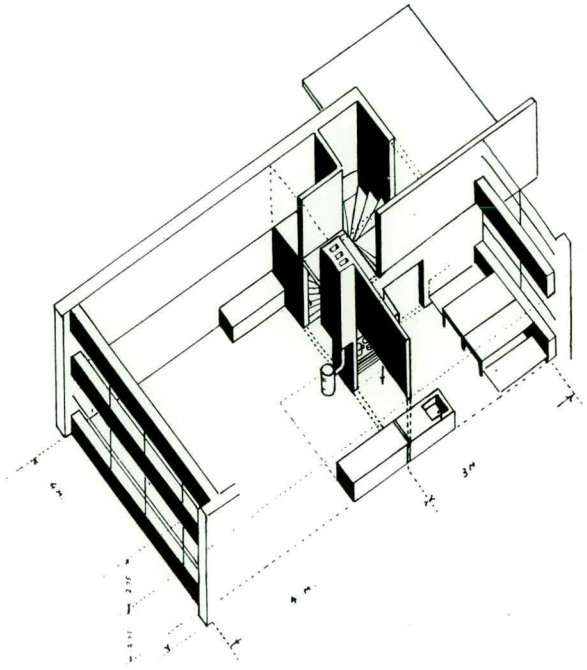
1928
client C.P.R. van Geuns

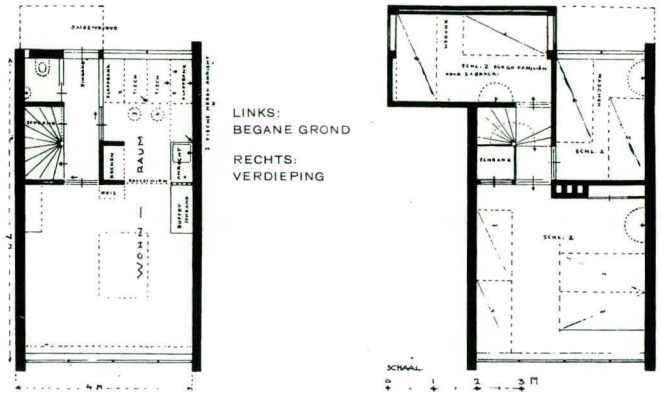
131 Design 23 small dwellings
Utrecht

1928
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
not realized

Like the 'standard dwelling' (no. 117), this design was published in the magazine *i10* in 1928. The dwellings had deliberately been kept small '1st so that good-quality materials can be used, 2nd to make life simpler,' as Rietveld explained in the accompanying text. Rietveld designed the 23 dwellings as an alternative to the existing housing, which he referred to as 'so-called slums'.

Illustration from *i10* 2 (1928) 17/18, 92





132 Design room interior
Koningslaan 1b, Utrecht

1928
client Mrs E.M. Fraenkel-Nieuwstraten
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

The furniture includes a fold-away bed, fold-away benches and a slide-away table. The colour scheme for the walls was to be 'light (e.g. yellow), dark wall, dark-blue door, pale grey/white'.

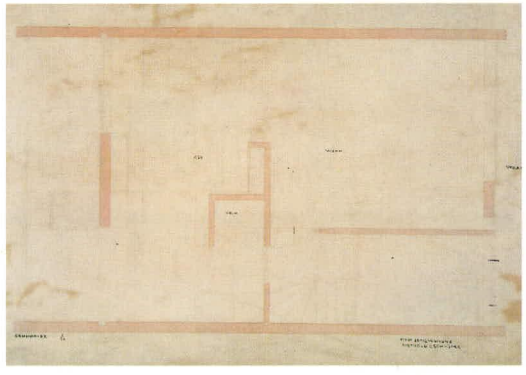
133 Design conversion of dwelling
Olympiaplein 59, Amsterdam

c. 1928

134 Design 'Stadtseriewohnung'

c. 1928
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
not realized

Rietveld most likely designed this 'urban terraced house' in preparation for the second Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) that was held in Frankfurt in 1929 and which took as its theme 'The Minimum Dwelling'.



Design drawing
pencil, pen, watercolour on paper
44.5 x 46.5cm
NAi

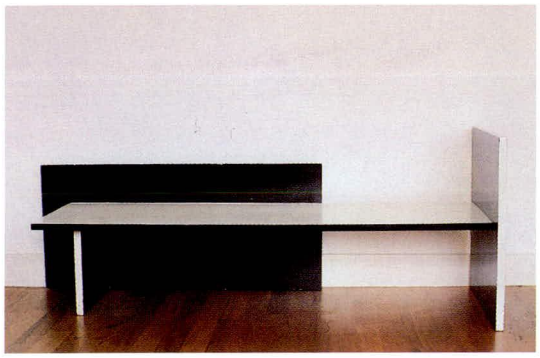
135 Design conversion of attic room
Prof. Tulpstraat 1,
Amsterdam

c. 1928
client Mrs Van Waasdijk

136 Asymmetrical bench

Rietveld made this bench for the Fraenkel family. The form is related to the Berlin chair (no. 71).

wood
59 x 146.4 x 56cm
1923-1929
private collection,
Amsterdam



137 Design conversion of attic room
Prins Hendriklaan 63,
Utrecht

1929
client Mrs E.M.
Fraenkel-Nieuwstraten

138 Furniture Kolthoff

1929

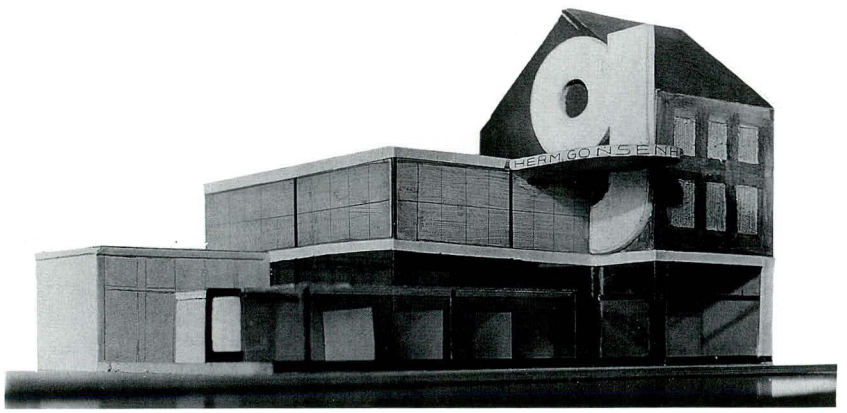
The furniture that Mr and Mrs Kolthoff were given as a wedding present comprised tube-framed chairs (no. 119), bookcases and a wall cupboard of reinforced glass. They were familiar with Rietveld's work through Professor Grewel, who also owned furniture made by him.

139 Conversion Gonsenheimer Shop
Kleve, Germany

1929
demolished

In 1929 Rietveld converted two shops in Kleve. As in the case of the shop in Wesel (no. 127), it is not clear what motivated the client to call in a Dutch architect for these two conversions.

Maquette
photo c. 1929



1928

140 Conversion Mildenberg Shop

Kleve, Germany

1929
demolished

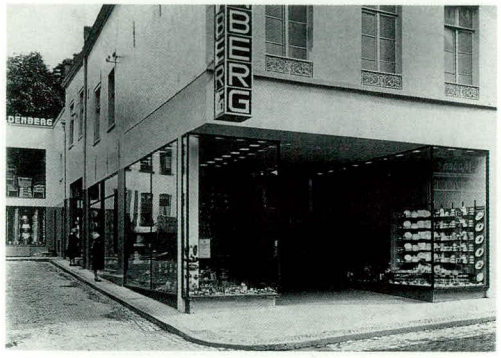


photo c. 1929

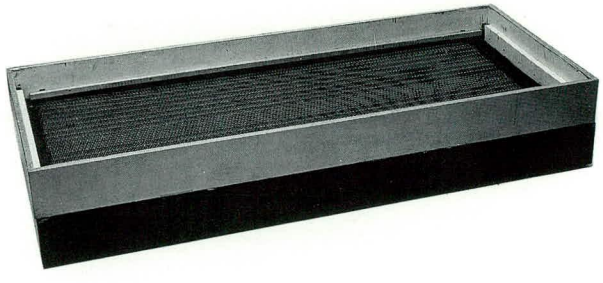
141 Cover Erts Letterkundige Almanak

1929

Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
24 x 17.8cm
RSA

142 Divan bed

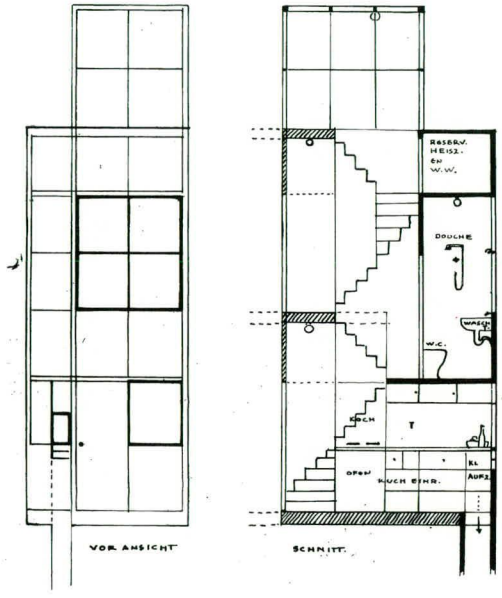
deal, metal
200.5 x 86.5 x 35cm
1929 SMA



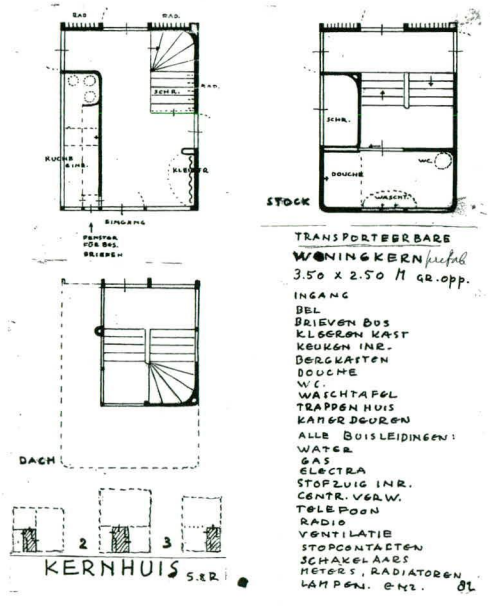
143 Design movable house core

1929
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
not realized

Rietveld's idea of a movable house core was launched at the travelling 'Neues Bauen' exhibition which visited Utrecht in October 1929. Due to the many problems posed by the production of a complete prefab dwelling (see no. 112) Rietveld decided to confine prefabrication to a unit which contained virtually all the essential amenities.



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
19 x 16.6cm
RSA



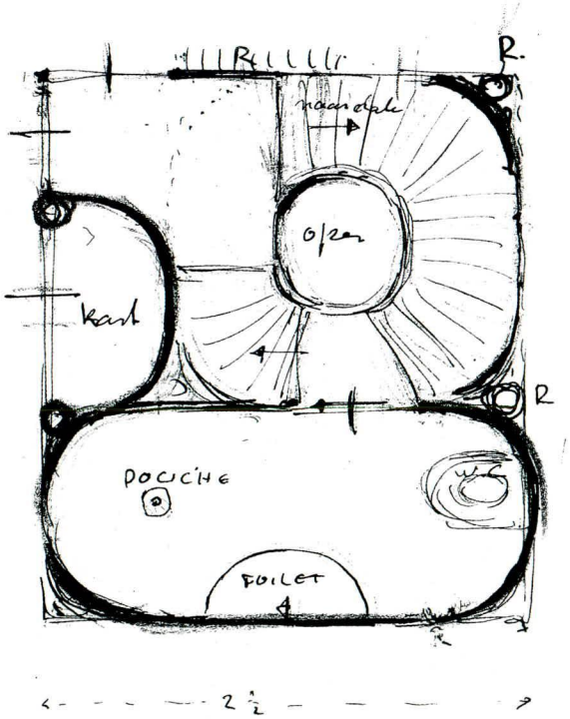
Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
22 x 17.1cm
RSA

144 Design house core

c. 1929
not realized

The sketches of the house core are thought to date from the same period as the drawing of the movable house core (no. 143).

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
26.3 x 21.5cm
RSA

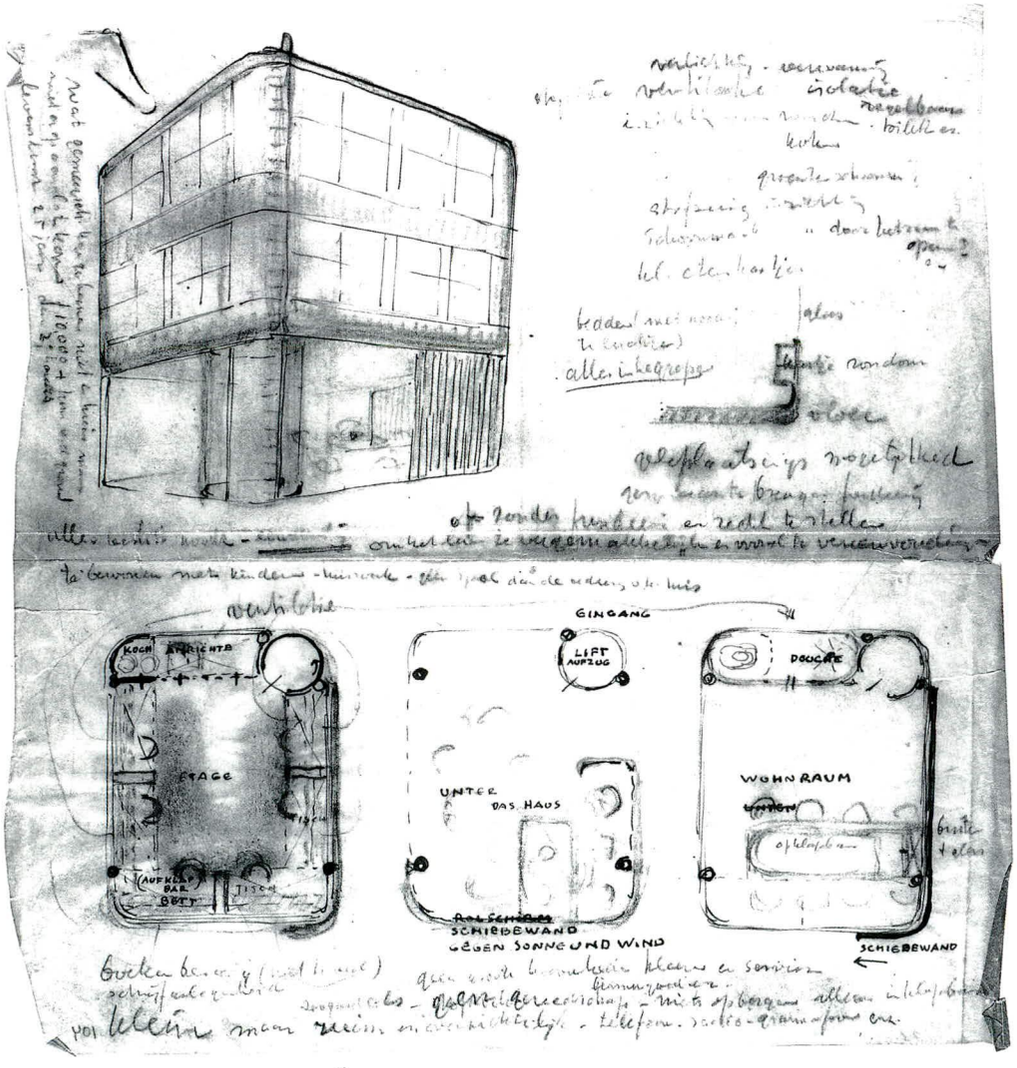


145 Design prefab dwelling

c. 1929
not realized

The undated sketches are for a dwelling with two storeys supported on five columns. The exterior walls are largely of glass and the ground floor can be completely opened on two sides by means of a sliding wall. A lift gives access to the upper floors. The oval-shaped sanitary component in the flats was also a feature of the house core (no. 144).

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
26.3 x 24.2cm
RSA



1929

1930

146 Armchair

metal, wood, plywood
c. 1928-1930

The design is a variant of the Red Blue chair (no. 35), executed here with a frame of bent metal tube. It was probably conceived in the same period as the steel tubular armchair which the firm Metz & Co. presented at the exhibition of the 'Union des Artistes Modernes' in the Pavillon de Marsan in Paris (no. 147).

Armchair
steel tubing, birch, plywood
83 x 59 x 87cm
CMU

147 Armchair

metal, wood
c. 1928-1930

This design has a structure similar to the high armchair with the round bars and curved back and seat (no. 94). Here, however, the angular frame is made of bent metal tube. The back is adjustable. The chair was presented by Metz & Co. at the exhibition of the 'Union des Artistes Modernes' in the Pavillon de Marsan in Paris in 1930 along with furniture by Penaat and rugs by Van der Leck. Probably only prototypes were made.[1]

[1] Niehaus 1930.

photo from **brochure** Metz & Co. with furniture by Rietveld and W. Penaat and carpets by B. van der Leck, c. 1930

148 Upright chair

metal, five-plywood
c. 1928-1930

The chair, which has an adjustable back, was on display in 1931 in the model home in the Erasmuslaan (no. 164) and is pictured in a brochure by Metz & Co. which is thought also to date from 1931.
In 1932 Metz supplied Rietveld with one desk chair for the interior of the Werkbundsiedlung dwellings in Vienna (no. 172).[1]

[1] Rietveld to Berkovich and Metz & Co. to Rietveld, 19 May 1932, RSA.

Upright chair
81 x 40.2 x 50cm
CMU

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, paint on cardboard
13.3 x 18cm
RSA

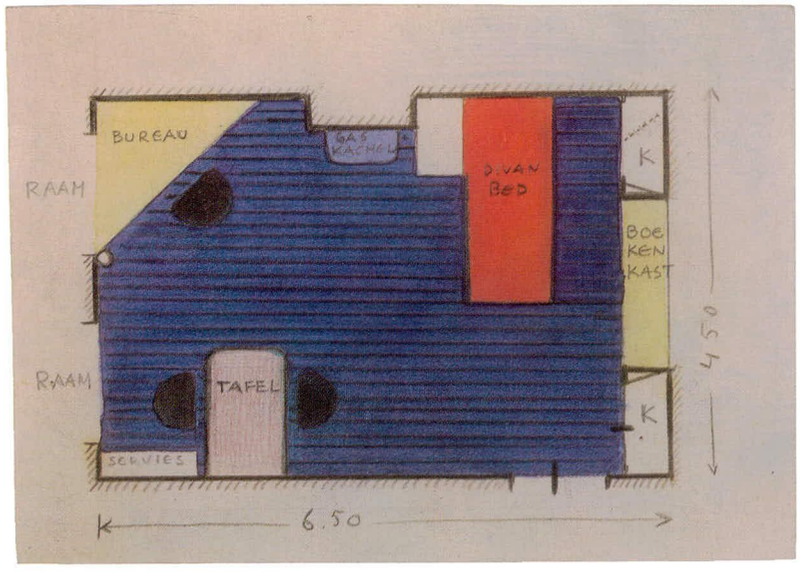
149 Conversion dwelling and interior
Oranjelaan 1/Eikenlaan 48, Hilversum

1929-1930
client Mrs L. van Leer

The conversion and refurnishing of Louise van Leer's house in Hilversum was a major undertaking which took several months to complete.
The living room and bedroom were furnished with existing Rietveld furniture as well as pieces Rietveld specially designed for these rooms. He also decided on the colours of the walls and chose the lamps, floor-coverings and curtaining. It is not clear which house was renovated. The correspondence with Mrs van Leer went via number 1, Oranjelaan, the address given in Rietveld's notes. According to the town's record office, however, she was registered at that time as living at Eikenlaan 48 in Hilversum.

150 Binnert Schröder's bedsitter
Rijswijkseplein, The Hague

1930
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder



1930

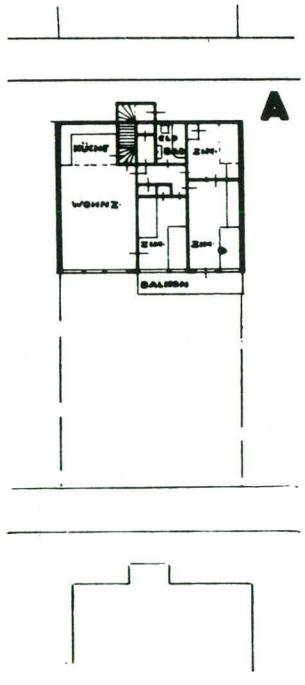
photo c. 1930

151 Interior Ten Doesschate
Catharijnesingel 53, Utrecht

1930
client
G. ten Doesschate

The ophthalmologist G. ten Doesschate and Rietveld met through the Maronier family. Over the years the Ten Doesschate family gave Rietveld various small and large assignments. In 1930 Rietveld decorated a large room at the front of the house. For this room he designed a table in the form of a question mark at which two people could work at the same time. The desk has iron legs, which are painted an aluminium colour. The table top is finished in green cork linoleum offset with a painted black wooden strip approximately two centimetres wide. Beneath it, suspended on iron rods, is a shelf in the same question-mark shape.

The interior no longer exists, but various pieces of furniture, including the desk, are still owned by the Ten Doesschate family.



152 Poster Lieder and duet evening Utrechtsche Kunstkring

1930

UTRECHTSCHE KUNSTKRING
LIEDEREN- EN DUETTEN-AVOND
SCHUBERT FRANCK DEBUSSY
JO VINCENT
SUZE LUGER
LOUIS VAN TULDER
BEGELEIDING DOOR
HELENA VAN LUNTEREN-HANSEN
ZATERDAG
JAN 1930
TIVOLI - 8 UUR
TOEGANG VOOR NIET-LEDEN F 1.50
PLAATSBESPR. VOOR NIET-LEDEN
ZATERDAG 11 JAN. VAN 10-3 IN TIVOLI

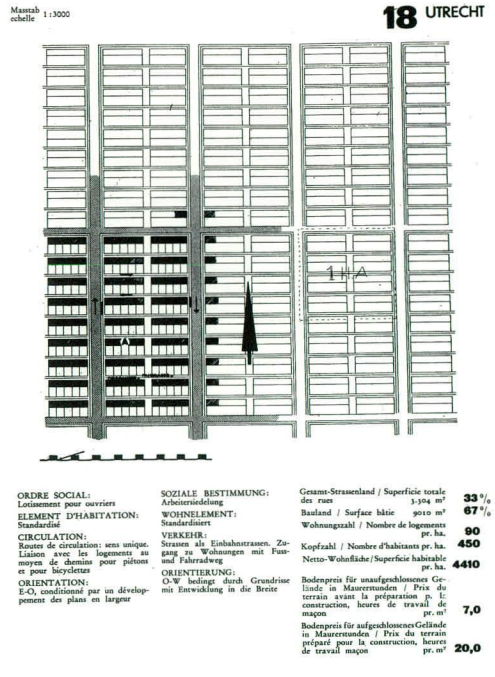
Poster
printed
52.2 x 60cm
RSA

153 Design workers garden suburb CIAM Contribution
Rationelle Bebauungsweisen

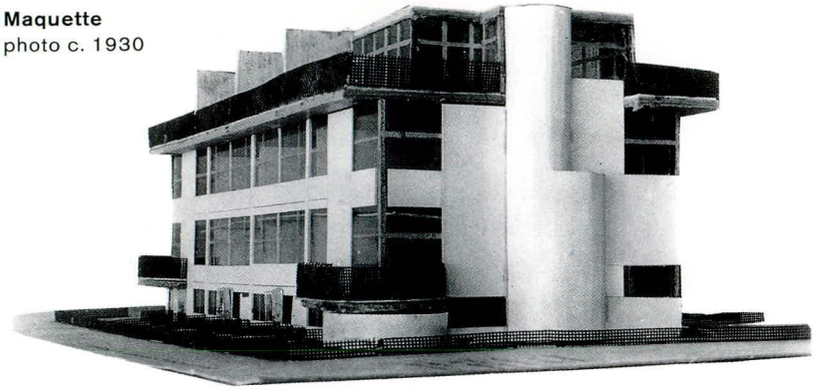
1930
not realized

This design is known only from the publication *Rationelle Bebauungsweisen*, compiled by S. Giedion, Frankfurt am Main, 1931.

Two pages from Giedion 1931



Maquette
photo c. 1930



154 Design seven dwellings
Erasmuslaan, Utrecht

1930
client
T. Schröder-Schräder
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
not realized

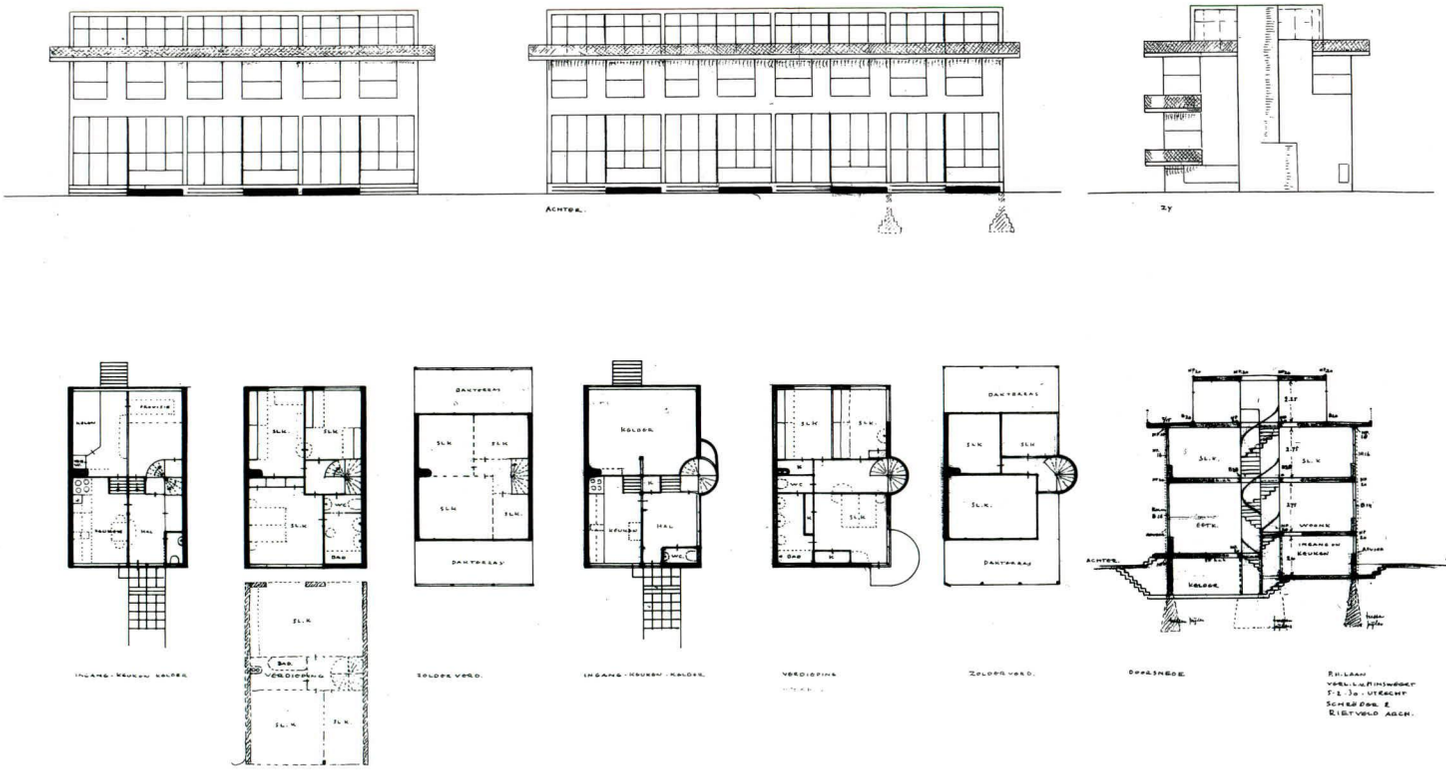
In 1930 the Utrecht Council sold a plot of land opposite the Rietveld Schröder House to Truus Schröder-Schräder. Together with her Rietveld designed seven dwellings – a block of three and a block of four. They are identical but for one major difference: the row of four has a spiral staircase part of which can be seen jutting out of the side elevation.

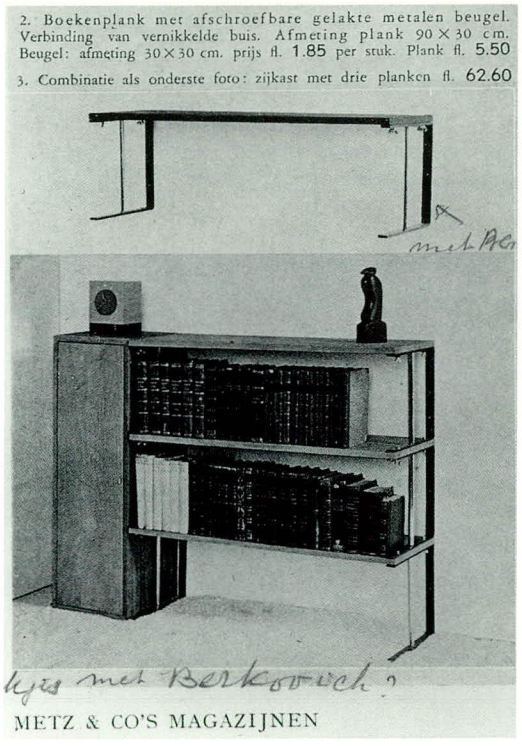
Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
52.7 x 72.7cm
NAi

155 Modular or board furniture

wood, metal
1930
client Metz & Co.

In 1930 Rietveld created a series of modular furniture. The original idea of modular furniture came from Germany and was introduced onto the Dutch market by Willem Penaat, who designed 'coordinating furniture' in 1928 for Metz & Co. It is feasible that Penaat asked Rietveld to design a simple system of modular furniture for Metz based on the modular cupboards (no. 106) and showcase (no. 108) which Rietveld and Schröder had conceived around 1926 and which had been used in the Harrenstein interior, among others. The Netherlands Architecture Institute has a pen drawing of the whole series consisting of a bracket, a shelf, four cupboards, two revolving mirrors, a table top, a frame for a standing mirror and a bed. There are several drawings of these and other matching objects in the Rietveld Schröder



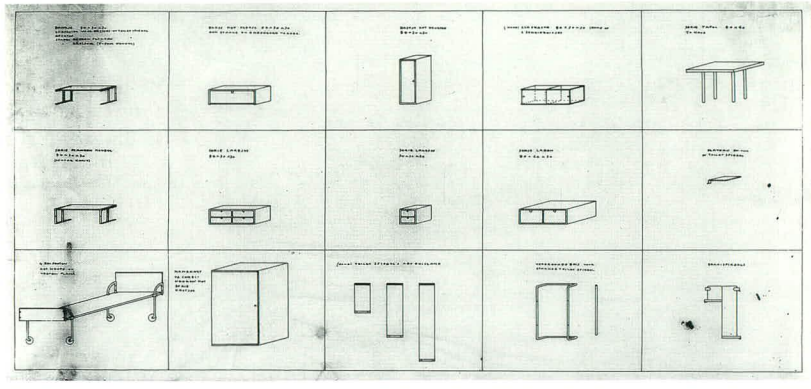


Page from **brochure**
Metz & Co 1931

1930

Archive. One drawing is signed 'Rietveld. arch. Utr. 1930'. The following pieces of furniture or components are mentioned in the inscriptions: 'shelf unit, open bookcase (single stacked), tea-table (single), sideboard (double or single), bench, base closed cupboards, drawers glass cupboards, dressing table, superstructure'. Metz & Co.'s 1931 St Nicholas brochure reproduces photos of a separate book shelf, a cupboard and writing table. A month before, in October 1931, these items had been on show to the public in the model living room furnished by Rietveld and Schröder in one of the Erasmuslaan dwellings (no. 164). On display were large bookcases and a wall unit assembled from modular units. The system is of an imposing simplicity. The modules are executed in metal, wood and plywood, which can be sprayed. The standard module measures 30 x 30 x 30 centimetres. According to a review in the daily *De Telegraaf* of 27 October 1931, Rietveld chose the measurements to go with the architecture: 'This living space is to my mind one of the loveliest Rietveld has designed. The room is finely proportioned and the light incidence is such that it enhances every form. Rietveld achieves this through the masterly interplay of measurements, which are standardized: everything is measured in whole metres except for the furniture, which is designed in units of 90cm or multiples thereof (to leave space between the permanent walls etc. and the edges of the furniture).'

The significance of this design within Rietveld's oeuvre is greater than its simple appearance would lead one to suspect. For the first time the emphasis clearly lies on functionality and the technical aspects of production. In contrast with earlier furniture designs, which were one-off pieces that could be adapted for serial production, his modular furniture was conceived as a mass product from the start. Even in the complex wall-unit configuration, the



Presentation drawing
ink on transparent paper
40 x 86cm
NAi

Cupboard
oak, metal
76.5 x 210 x 38.5cm
private collection,
Wassenaar

design retains its uncluttered character and clear-cut lines. The key to its aesthetic appeal lies in the thoughtful, sympathetic proportions. The power of this principle was not fully recognized until after the Second World War, when it led to a regular boom in modular furniture.

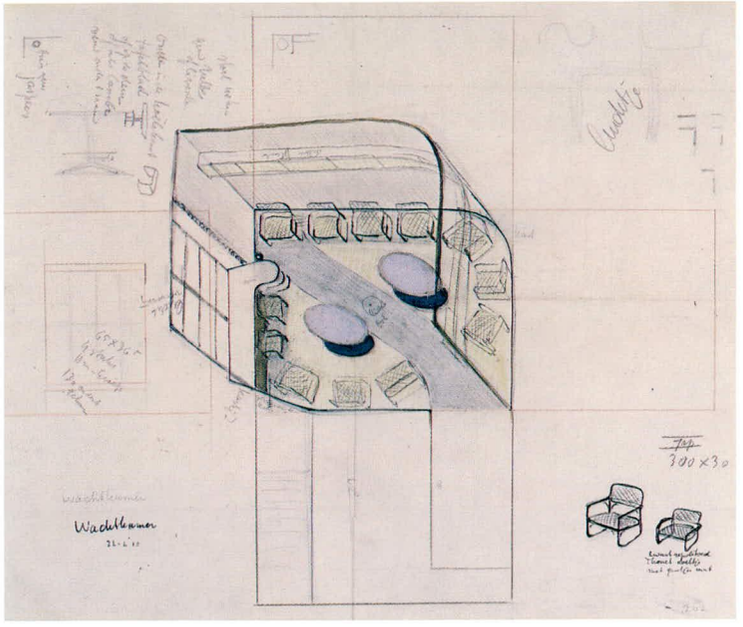
156 Waiting room, surgery and guest room Harrenstein

Weteringschans 141, Amsterdam

1930
client R.J. Harrenstein
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

The conversion of the waiting room, surgery and guest room is only known from drawings in the Rietveld Schröder Archive. These do not suggest that the rooms underwent drastic alteration. Rietveld placed Thonet chairs in the waiting room.

Design drawing waiting room
pencil, crayon, ink, watercolour on transparent paper
44.5 x 52cm
RSA



157 Stool

hardwood, pine, plywood, leather
34 x 47 x 47cm
c. 1930
SMA

The stool and waste-paper bin (no. 158) were part of the inventory of the Harrenstein-Schräder family.

158 Waste-paper bin

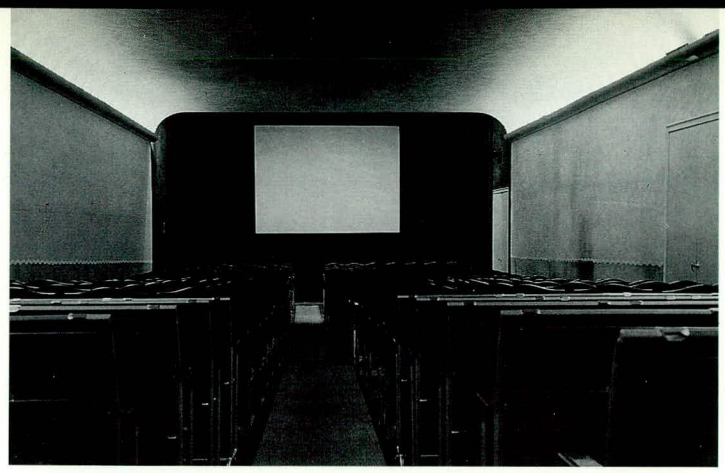
leather
50 x 40 x 40cm
c. 1930
SMA

159 Nest of tables

metal, plywood
47 x 35.5 x 47.5cm
44.5 x 35.2 x 42.8cm
42 x 35 x 38cm
c. 1930
private collection, Houten

The nest of tables which Rietveld made for Ten Doesschate is almost identical to Marcel Breuer's design of 1925-1926.[1]

[1] Wilk 1981, 44.



160 **Interior Vreeburg Cinema** Utrecht

c. 1930
client J. Nijland
no longer extant

photo c. 1930

When the cinema auditorium needed refurbishing, Nijland asked Rietveld, who was on the board of the Utrecht section of the Filmliga, to redesign it. The entrance, which was not then on Vredenburg but in a side street, Rietveld painted silver, giving rise to the street's nickname 'silver alley'.

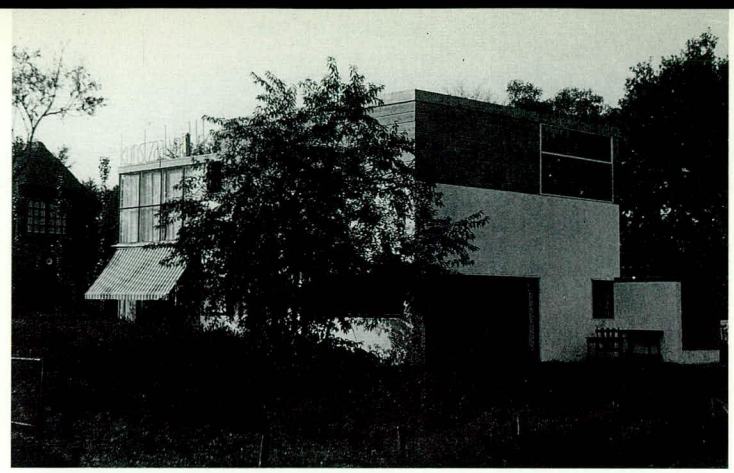


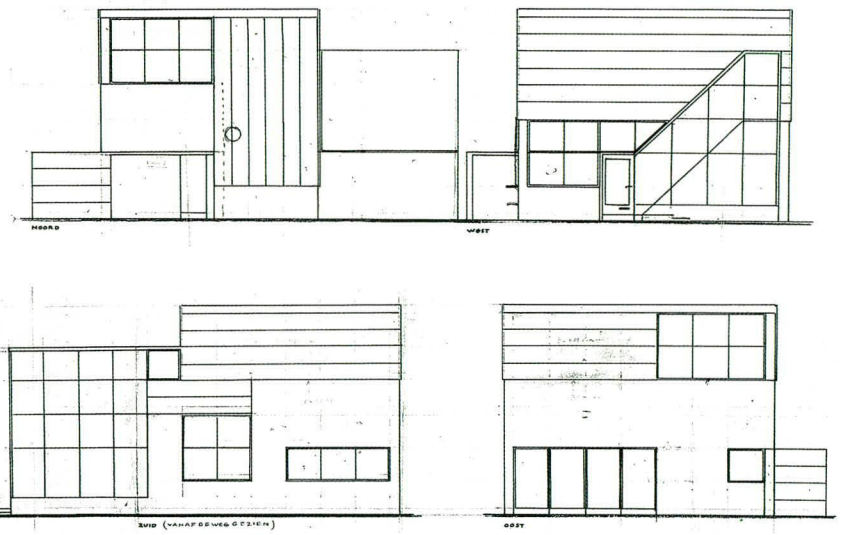
photo c. 1931

1930

161 **Dwelling with art gallery and studio Van Urk** Zwaluwenweg 4, Blaricum

1928-1931
client K. van Urk
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
altered

The Blaricum Planning Committee originally rejected Rietveld's design for the painter Kees van Urk.
Their principal objection was that the design was not adapted to the undulating site. The house was eventually built, partly thanks to the architect W.M. Dudok, who as associate member of the planning committee was involved with the last application.
One of the first sketches shows a cubic design based on a module built up of one-metre squares.
The dwelling was planned on the ground floor. A covered outside staircase leads to the studio on the first floor. The sketch indicates that the front facade upwards of two metres was meant to be clad in corrugated iron. In the final design, which was ultimately realized, a room has been added next to the staircase to accommodate the art gallery. The slanting roof of the gallery echoes the line of the stairs. The outside ground floor walls of the house are constructed in a soft-burnt grey brick and subsequently plastered. The inside wall rises to the roof. Battens are fixed to the sides of this half-brick wall and wooden panelling screwed on top. The cavity in between was originally filled in with mull for insulation.
The doors and jambs have no moulding or covering strips so that they are flush with the surface of the facade. These finishing details consistently hallmark Rietveld's architecture right through to his final works.



Design drawings
pencil, ink on transparent paper
25.6 x 49.1cm
26.1 x 48.9cm
RSA

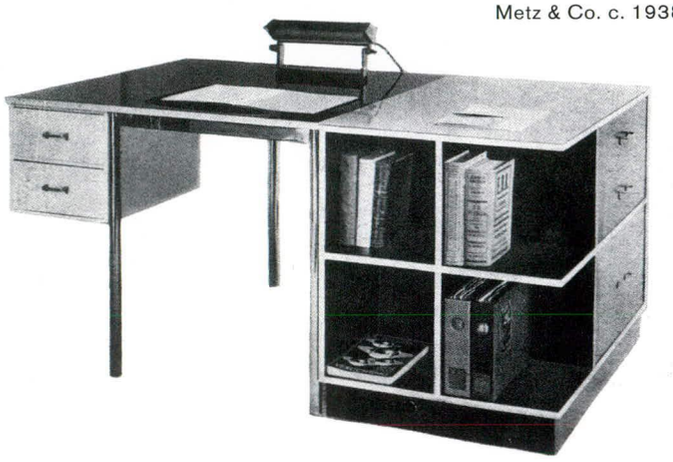


photo from **brochure**
Metz & Co. c. 1938

162 Desk

wood, metal, five-plywood
1931
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

CMU specimen
70 x 150 x 90cm

The desk was produced by Metz & Co. The price was high compared to other pieces of Rietveld furniture: Dfl.169, in a brochure from c. 1938.[1] A closely related desk (no. 290) was made for Professor G.E. Uhlenbeck. Evidently Metz & Co. did not own the sole rights to the Rietveld designs in its collection. Pieces were also produced in limited numbers by other people, including G. van de Groenekan.

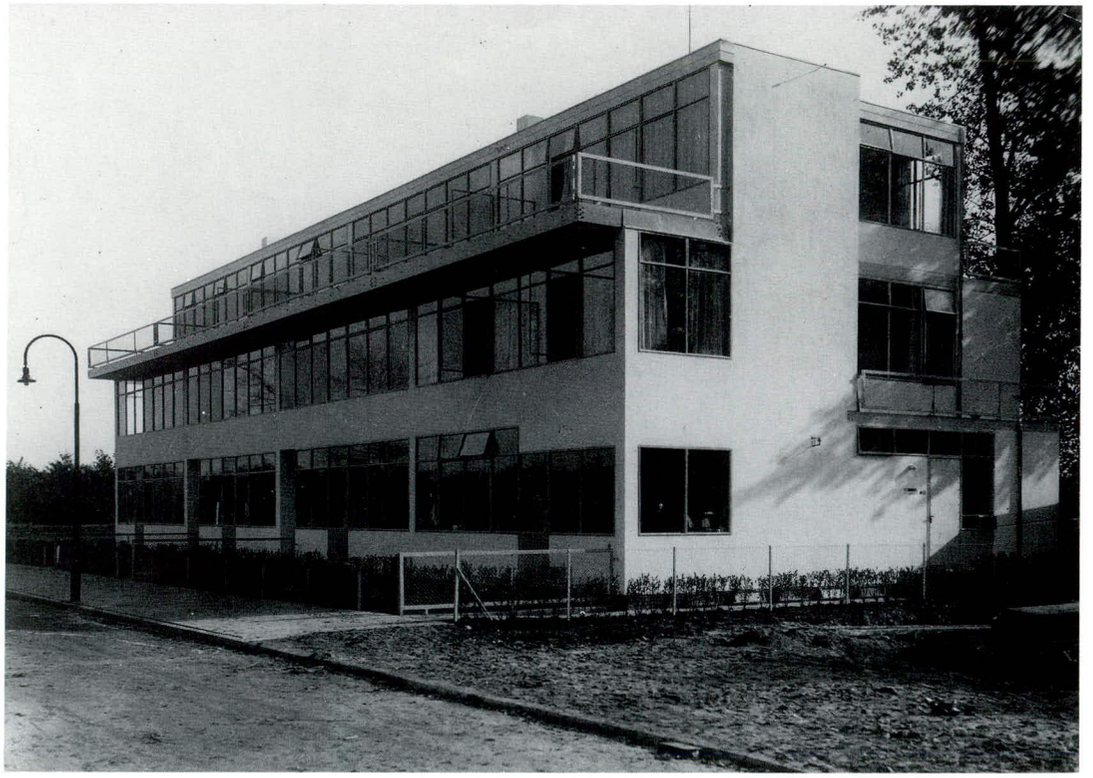
[1] Metz & Co. brochure 'bureaux', c. 1938, RSA.

163 Row of four dwellings
Erasmuslaan 5-11, Utrecht

1931
client T. Schröder-Schräder, and subsequently Bredero's Bouwbedrijf Utrecht
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
altered

A design for seven dwellings on Erasmuslaan (no. 154) which Rietveld and Schröder made for the property opposite the Rietveld Schröder House, was never realized. In 1931 Rietveld made a new design, this time for a row of four dwellings. Bredero's Bouwbedrijf took over the property and design from the owner, Truus Schröder-Schräder. A building permit was easily obtained and in October of that year the dwellings were officially delivered to the public with the opening of a model dwelling (also see no. 164). With their long horizontal expanse of glass, narrow steel window frames, white plastered walls and flat roofs the dwellings were immediately declared to be the outstanding illustration of the *Nieuwe Bouwen* in the Netherlands.

photo c. 1931



1931

164 Model interior design Erasmuslaan

1931
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
realized in collaboration with Metz & Co.

From 4 to 25 October 1931 Rietveld and Schröder organized an exhibition in one of the four dwellings on the Erasmuslaan (no. 163). The aim of the exhibition was to display the houses and the furniture, which Metz planned to produce if there was sufficient demand. In the *Utrechtsch Provinciaal en Stedelijk Dagblad* of 5 October 1931 the interior is praised: 'With so much light, which falls in these houses, it is almost a matter of course that the walls, mostly sanded, have been left white; otherwise they would absorb too much light. Delicate nuances of green, mauve and grey accentuate the different rooms and create charming patterns. How far we are here from the passion for primary colours, which raged not more than five years ago. At that time no paintings were allowed against the black and white walls; now they thankfully purchase of new furniture is not imperative, but... The exhibition, which is being held in these dwellings, shows which furniture is best suited to these rooms: metal tables and chairs, ingenious modular cupboards, book shelves, modern lamp ornaments, a matt nickel electric fireplace, white Moroccan rugs, rubber coated tabletops etcetera.'

This is only one of many reviews the dwellings received. In all the reviews more attention is paid to the architecture than to the furniture. However, the interior design was of great importance. This is Rietveld's first important interior design, since the commission by Harrenstein five years earlier (no. 107). He was able to show a number of recent experiments. In addition these were Rietveld's first furniture designs which would actually be produced in series, should there be sufficient demand. The living room was furnished with a desk (no. 162), three variations of the tube-framed chair (no. 119), an

photo 1931

1931

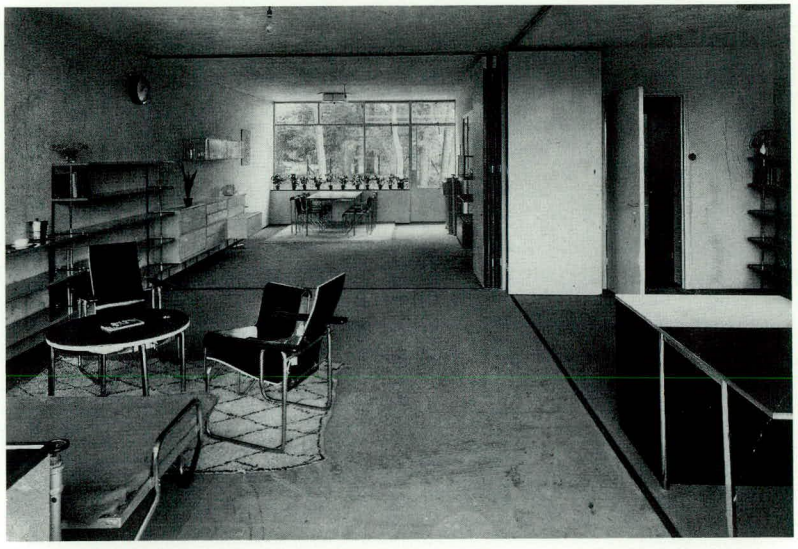


photo 1931

upright tubular chair (no. 148), the armchair with a frame of bent tubing (no. 146), a wall unit and book cupboards from the modular furniture (no. 155), the hanging showcase (no. 108), a round and a straight-sided table. The carpet, the stove and the lamps were probably not of Rietveld's design. The tables and the armchair were not taken into production and the modular furniture only partially.

hang there once again and one can observe how the work of Van der Zweep, Willink and Bendien show to advantage here. Whoever wants to inhabit this house in the right way, will preferably select a furniture according to this aesthetic design. Naturally the

165 Invitation exhibition Erasmuslaan

paper
5.4 x 19.4cm
1931

Rietveld designed an invitation card with envelope for the model interior design on Erasmuslaan (no. 164).

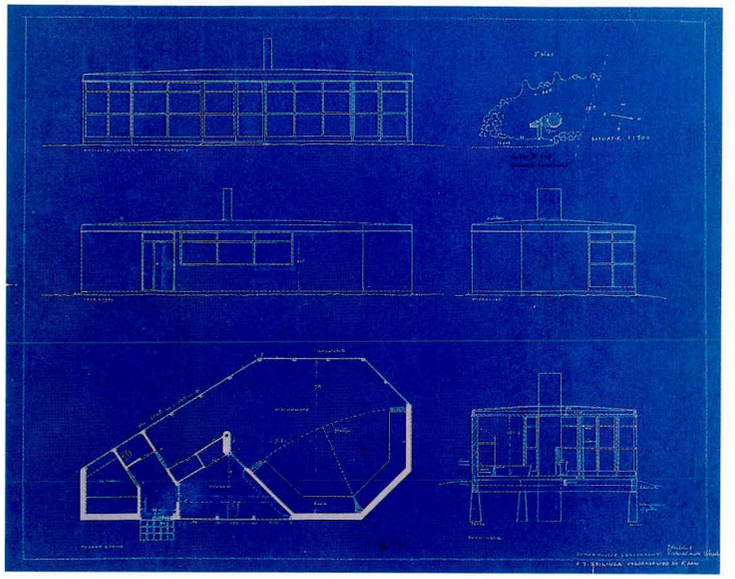
166 Child's bed

five-plywood, metal, canvas
76 x 103 x 53.5cm
1931
SMA

167 Design small summerhouse Derde Loosdrechtse Plas, Loosdrecht

1931
client F.J. Zeilinga
not realized

When Rietveld applied for a building permit for a small summerhouse on an island in the Loosdrecht Lakes he encountered problems with the local planning board. In particular the remarks concerned the fact that the materials (white cement stone and rubberoid) would become 'dirty'. Rietveld made a new design, for a smaller house, which was rejected due to the flat roof. Only a slanted roof could supply 'unity', was the opinion.



Design drawing
blueprint
52.5 x 64cm
Loosdrecht Municipal Archives

In addition 'the variation in slanted roofs' counteracted monotony.
To convince the planning board that a slanted roof on such a small house would introduce an imbalance, Rietveld sent them a drawing of the house with a slanted thatched roof. To his surprise the board reacted positively: they would grant permission for this design. 'On both practical as well as aesthetic grounds I cannot execute this; as representative of Le Congrès International d'Architecture Niveau, I have a name to lose', was Rietveld's reaction.[1] As a last alternative he designed a detachable and removable house. This too was apparently never realized.

[1] Quoted from a letter dated 11 April 1931 which is to be found in the Hilversum District Archives. Our thanks to Mr F. Brand of the Loosdrecht Historical Association, who brought the letter to our attention. The plans and related correspondence are kept in the Loosdrecht Municipal Archives.

168 Renovation Birza Pharmacy
Bilderdijkstraat 194, Amsterdam

1931
client W. Birza
demolished

photo c. 1931

1931

169 Interior Charley Toorop
Bergen

1931

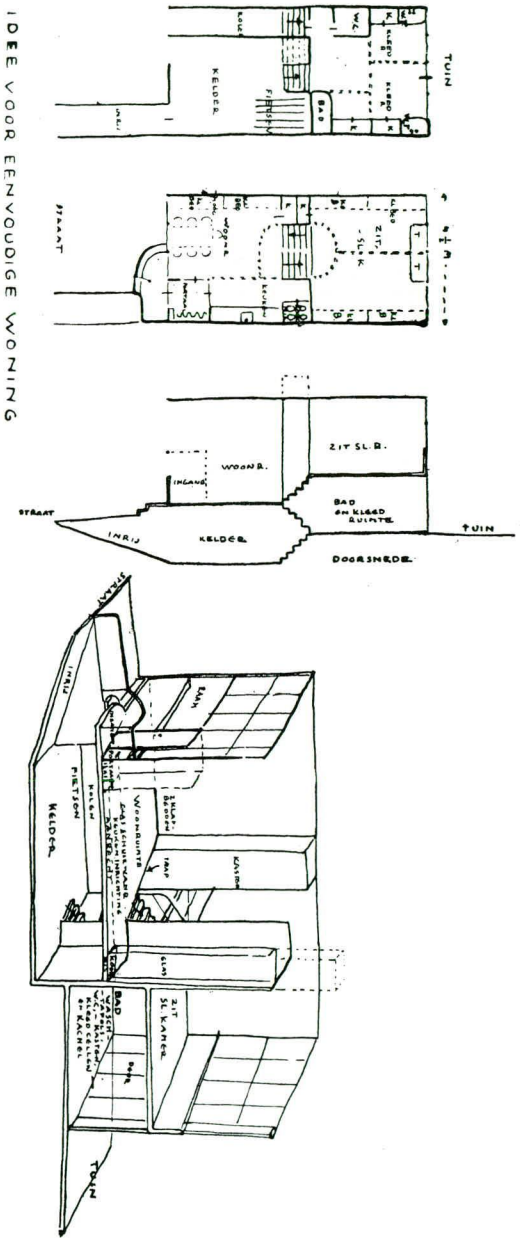
photo c. 1931

170 Design 'idea for a simple dwelling'

1931
not realized

The only known version of this design is from the 1931 'periodical in letter form'. This 'periodical' was started by Rietveld and published in 1931 and 1932. Besides the announcement and the trial issue, another five numbers were published.

IDEE VOOR EENVOUDIGE WONING

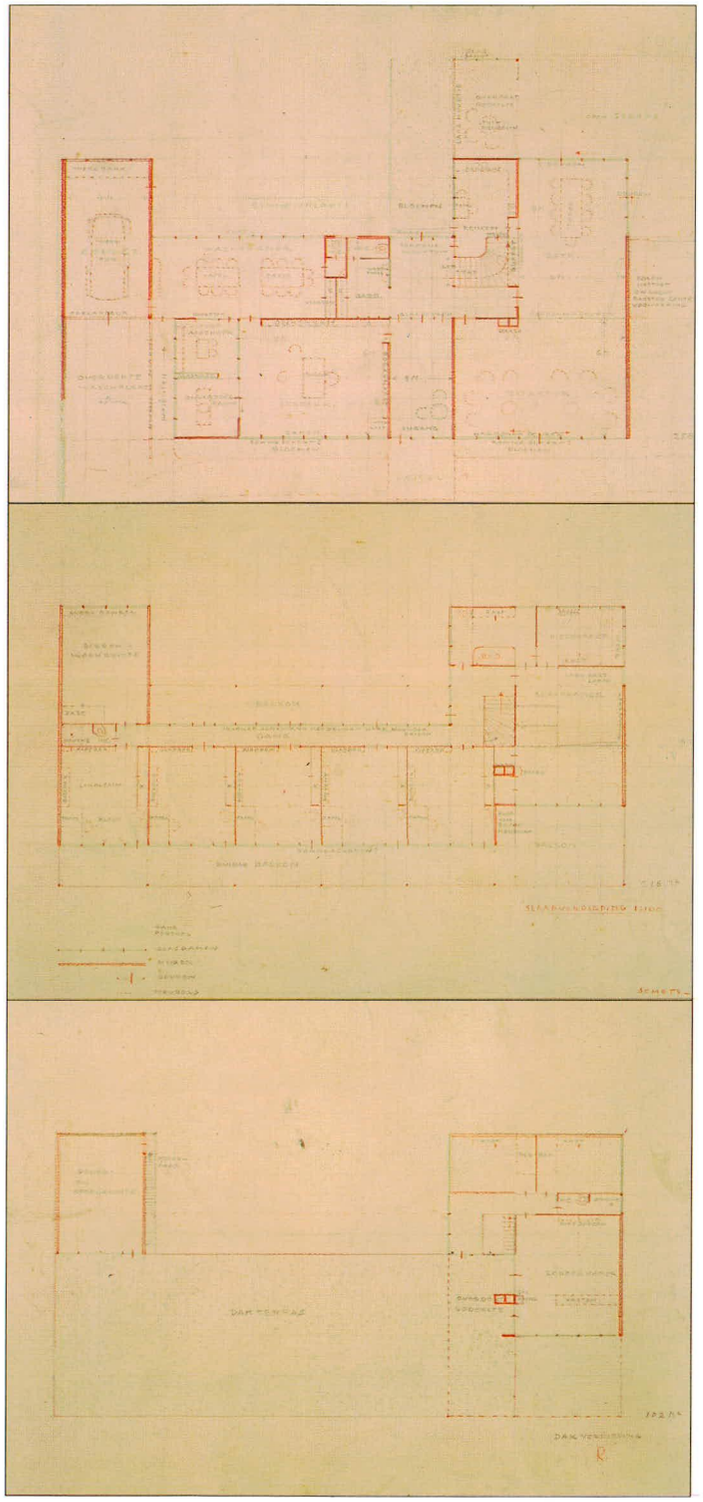


Alles wat in architectuur meer is dan juist toereikend; elk deel dat belangrijk gemaakt wordt, hetzij uit misplaatste vakkennis, hetzij uit onkunde, belemmert een ander deel. Weinigen overzien, dat alles wat imponeert, door b.v. afmeting, schoonheid of constructie, de in welstand verkeerende en het moeilijkst te overwinnen belemmeringen zijn.

Rietveld.

171 Design 'doctor's house'

c. 1931



Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
46 x 51cm
33,5 x 45,5cm
39 x 45cm
NAi

172 Row of four dwellings for the Wiener Werkbundsiedlung
Woinovichgasse 14-20, Vienna

1929-1932
restored

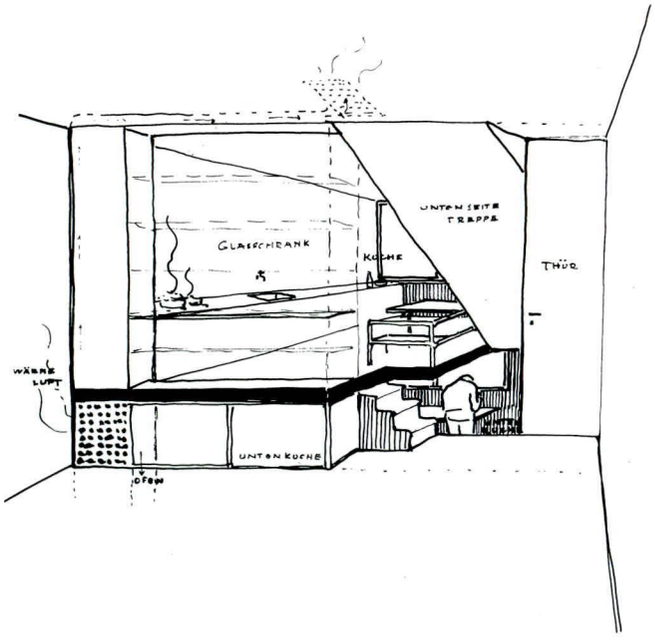
In December 1929 Rietveld was invited to work on the 'Mustersiedlung' of the *Wiener Werkbund*, a projected district with dwellings designed by various architects. Within a month Rietveld had sent in his first design. The plans for the Siedlung were repeatedly altered in 1930 and 1931, with the result that Rietveld also had to adapt his designs. Eventually a row of four dwellings was built, according to his design. When he heard that his plan to install sliding walls on the ground floor would not be realized, he decided to vary the configuration of the four dwellings. In this way the variations in floor plan would still be apparent. One of the dwellings was furnished with furniture from Metz & Co., designed by Rietveld: three varieties of the tube-framed chair, one upright chair and various pieces of board furniture.[1] The Siedlung was opened in 1932 and Rietveld attended the opening.

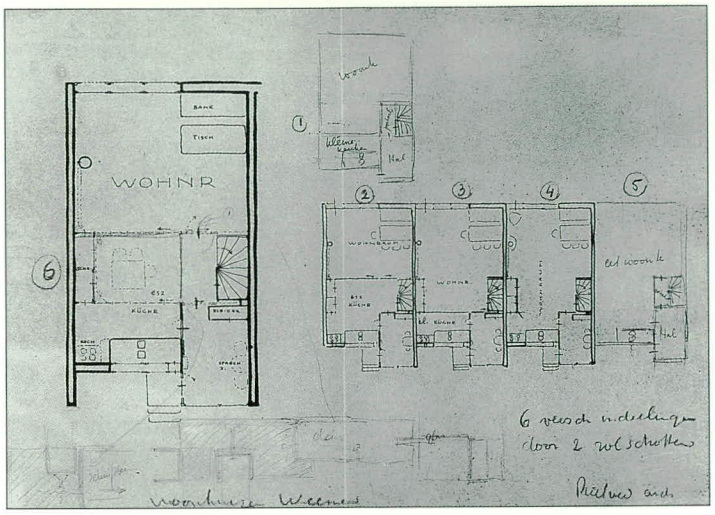
Rough draft
ink on transparent paper
22 x 23.4cm
c. 1930
RSA

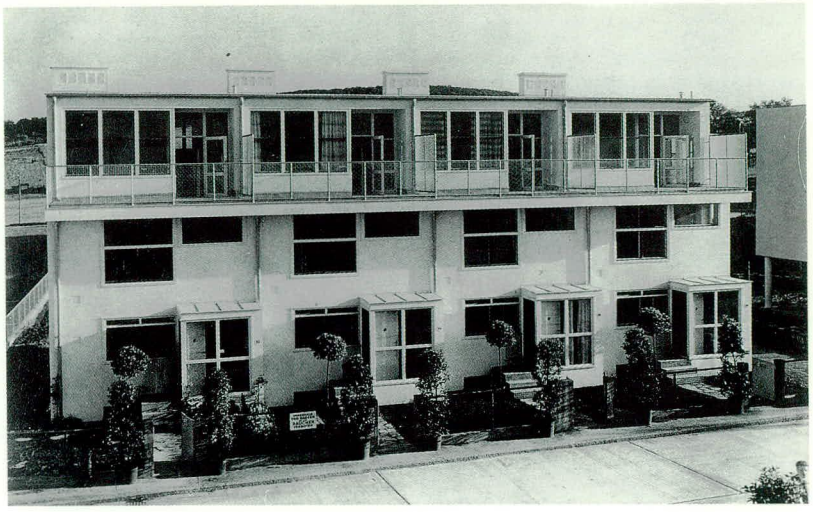
Design drawing
pencil, crayon on collotype
29.8 x 42.1cm
RSA

photo c. 1932

[1] Letters dated 19 May 1932, RSA.





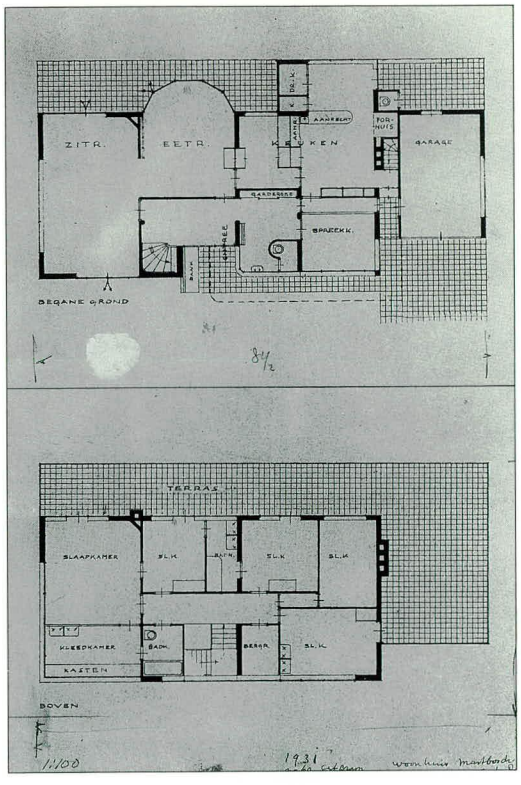


173 **Dwelling Klep**
Montenspark 8, Breda

1931-1932
client A.M.F. Klep
altered

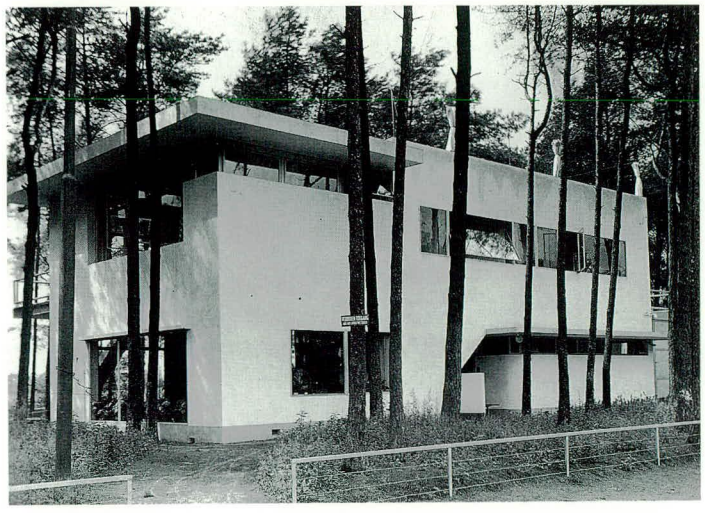
1932

In a short unpublished text kept in the Rietveld Schröder Archive concerning the dwelling for A.M.F. Klep, Rietveld writes that this house should be considered 'as a place for the daily recuperation of a young, sporting industrial'. Also in the first two publications concerning the house, both in *De 8 en Opbouw*, by Rietveld and J.B. van Loghem, an extraordinary emphasis was placed on the influence of the dwelling upon the emotional and psychological well-being of the inhabitants. According to the articles, specifications which did not emanate a zest for living were adapted by Rietveld to create an environment in which the inhabitants would regain their relish for life.



Design drawing
pencil on collotype
40.7 x 28.5cm
RSA

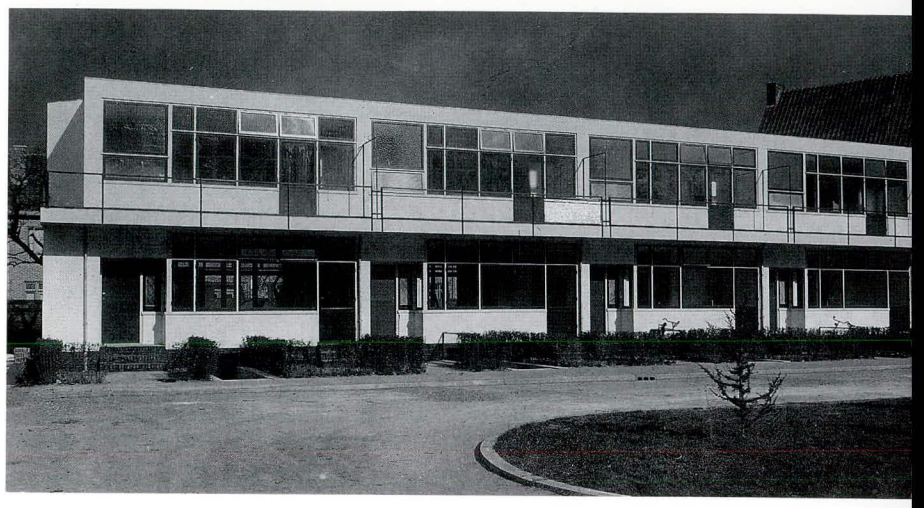
photo c. 1932



174 Side table

five-plywood, metal
1930-1932

Side table
54.3 x 54.9 x 55cm
CMU



175 Row of four dwellings
Robert Schumannstraat 13-19, Utrecht

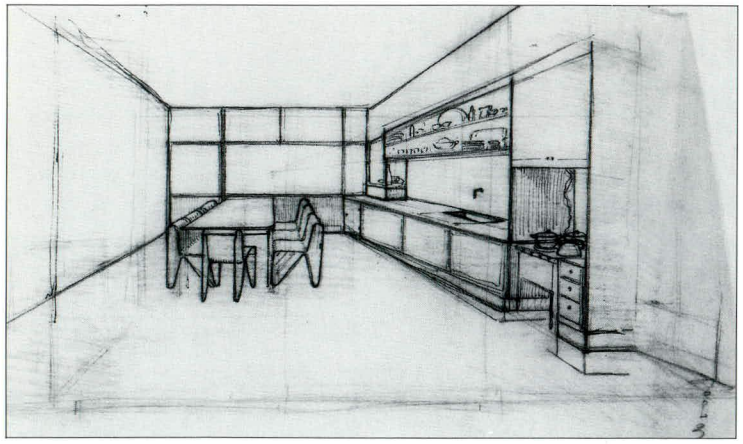
1931-1932
client
Bredero's Bouwbedrijf
renovated

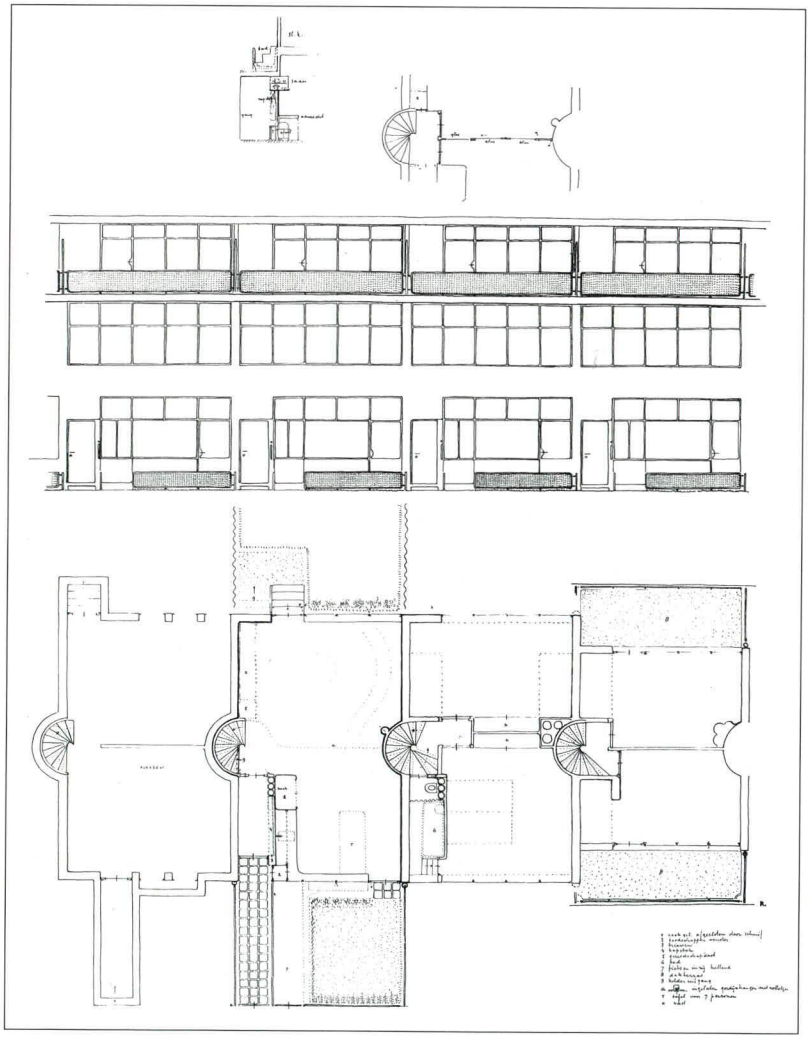
The construction application for the dwellings is dated March 1931. Although permission was granted quite swiftly, it was some time before the actual construction was initiated. In September new floor plans were submitted on which the open kitchen, designed at the front of the house, was altered to become a separate kitchen at the back. The partially external stairway was a detail which Rietveld copied from a 1930 design which was never realized (no. 154).

Rough draft,
not realized
pencil, ink on transparent paper
29.5 x 49cm
NAi

photo c. 1932

Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
68.8 x 52.5cm
NAi





1932

176 Music school with two dwellings

H. van Lijndenlaan 6, Zeist

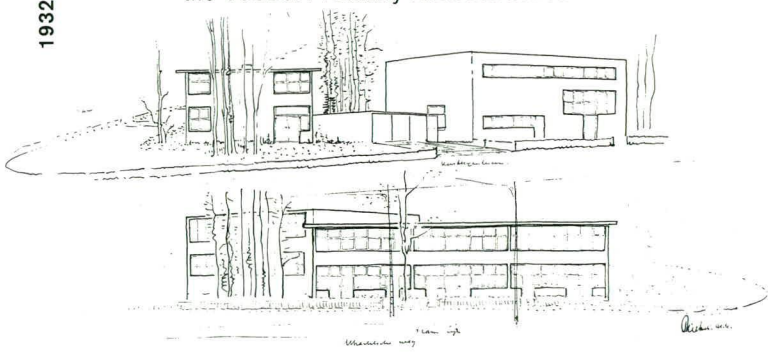
1931-1932
clients G. ten Doesschate and F. van de Meyden
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
altered

1932

Change of address card and Invitation open day Music school

Rietveld made various designs for the music school with dwellings before he reached an agreement with his clients. He gave colour to the interior along the same lines as the Rietveld Schröder House. The entrance hall was painted in blue and bright red. The smooth plywood doors in the building received different colour combinations, for example white with a red stripe from skirting to keyhole, or lemon yellow with a black door-post. The music school was seldom depicted and fell into obscurity after the 1930s. Probably Rietveld himself had a hand in this. He preferred to leave the design unpublished. He explained this to interior and furniture designer Ida Falkenberg-Liefrinck: 'I no longer have floor plans of the music school, firstly because they are unimportant, secondly because the fellow was so rude, that I never want to have anything to do with him again and would prefer to forget the whole thing.'[1] Who Rietveld meant in referring to 'the fellow' is unclear; probably one of the directors of the music school, who bombarded Rietveld with a litany of complaints after the building was delivered.

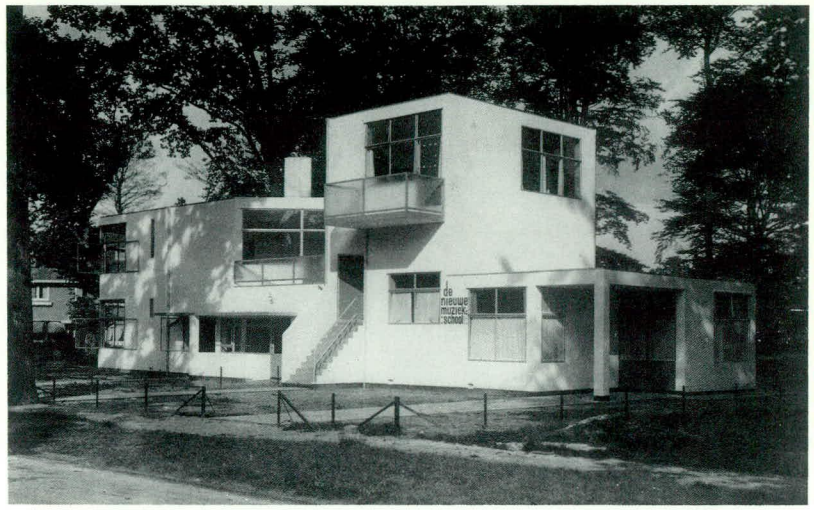
1932



Rough draft,
not realized
crayon on collotype
37.8 x 62.8cm
NAi

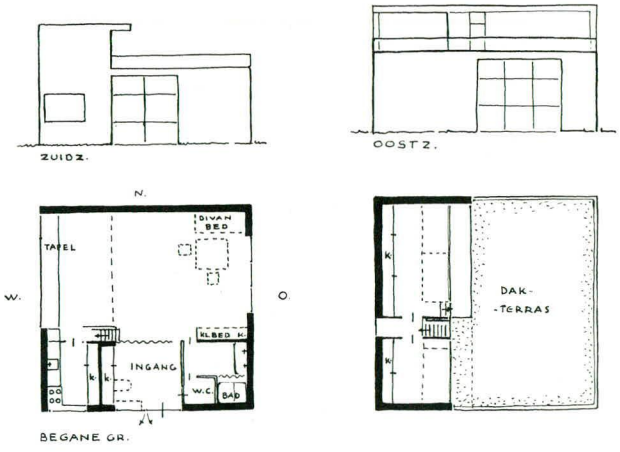
photo c. 1932

[1] The letter is dated 27 February 1934 and is kept in the Merkelbach Archive, NAi.



177 Design simple dwelling with five beds

1932
not realized



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
21.5 x 16.5cm
RSA

Rietveld sent the design to B. Merkelbach for *De 8 en Opbouw* in October 1932. It was illustrated and explained in the first issue of 1933. The publication elicited a reaction from J. van den Broek.[1] He believed that Rietveld's concept of a primitive and simple form of housing affected the functional value of the dwelling in this case.

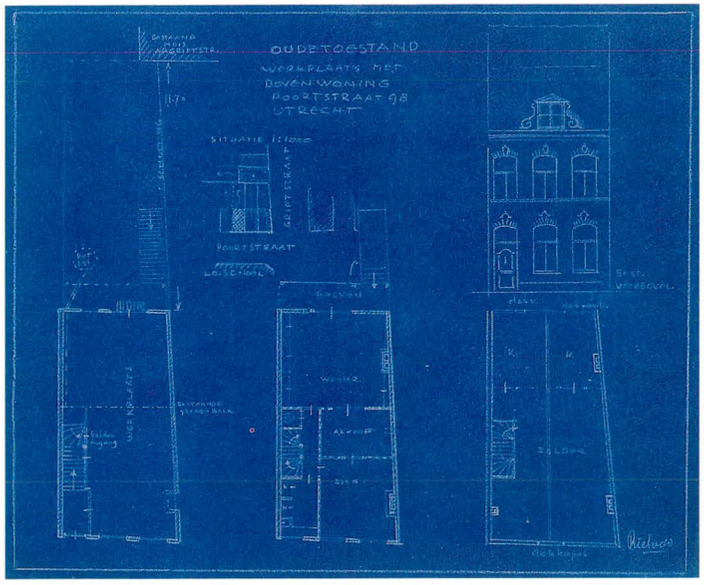
[1] Van den Broek 1933.

178 Conversion dwelling
Poortstraat 98, Utrecht

1932
client J.C. Rietveld
altered

In 1932 Rietveld's father commissioned the alteration of the workshop – where Rietveld had learned the carpenter's trade from him in his youth – to living quarters. Rietveld's sister lived upstairs and the lower area was rented out.

Design drawing
blueprint
28 x 31cm
Utrecht Municipal Archives



179 Interior surgery
Stationsstraat 15, Utrecht

1932
client G.H. Bertrand

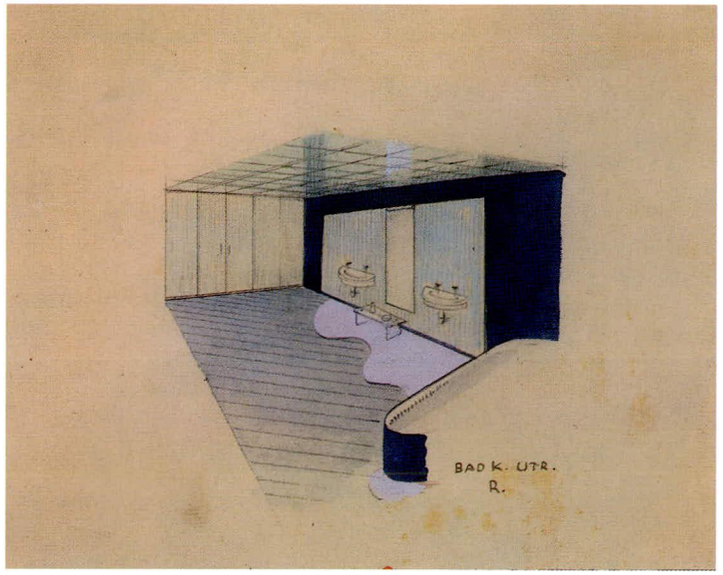
The commission for the interior of Dr Bertrand's surgery is only known from the invoice which is kept in the Rietveld Schröder Archive.

180 Design conversion of dwelling
Drift 15, Utrecht

1932
client L. Brom

The conversion included a bedroom, bathroom and guest room.
The bathroom has a ceiling of glass panels, similar to those Rietveld used in a dwelling on the Erasmuslaan (no. 163) and in the interior for G. Verrijn Stuart (no. 284).

Presentation drawing
pencil, ink, paint on paper
16.6 x 21.2cm
RSA



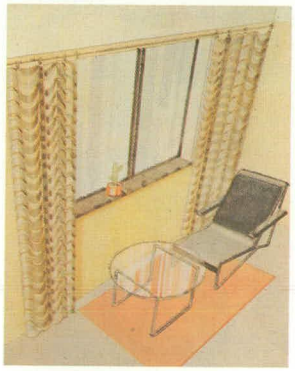
Rietveld designed a small table with glass top and legs of chromed tubing, and a combined wardrobe and linen cupboard for the bathroom.

1932

181 Small table

glass, metal
1932

The table is illustrated in a brochure of Metz & Co. from 1932. It was probably only made to order.
The table can also be seen in the designs for the Tintorettostraat interior (no. 260); there however a different Metz table was chosen in the end.



Page from **catalogue**
Metz & Co. 1932

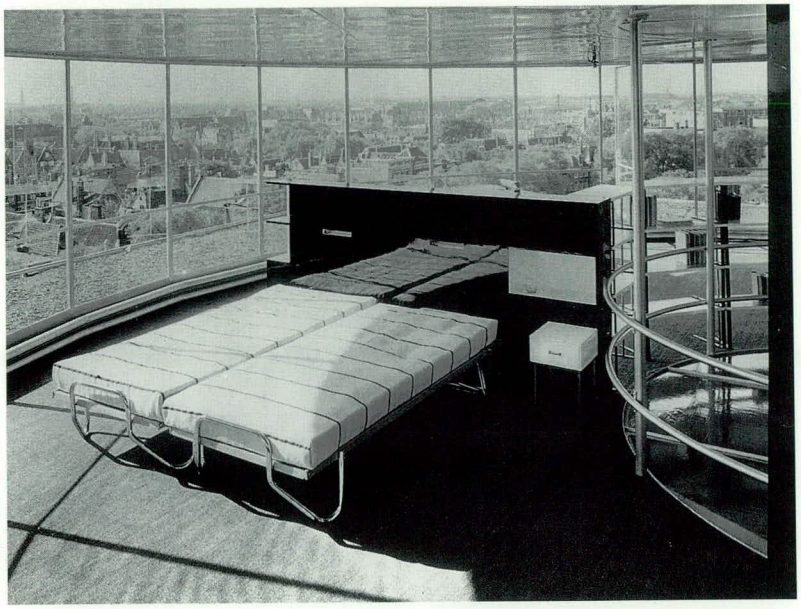
1932

182 Daybed

metal
1932

The daybed was designed for Metz & Co. and was included in their autumn brochure for 1932. It was also on show at the furniture exhibition 'Op het dak' held in 1933 (see no. 192).

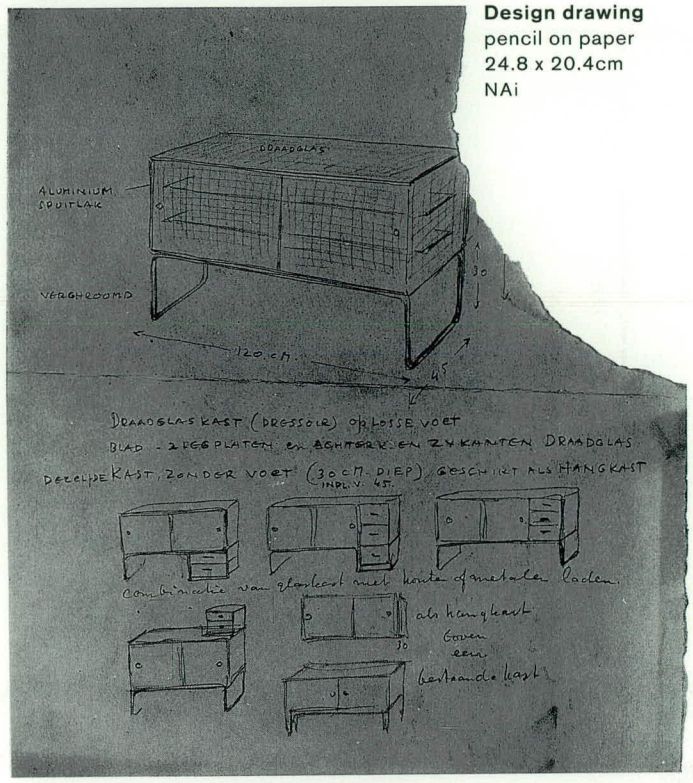
Furniture presentation
'Op het dak' in the Metz & Co. cupola, Amsterdam 1933



183 Sideboard

wired glass, metal, wood
1932

The sideboard was designed for Metz & Co. and was probably first on view in Metz's furniture presentation 'Op het dak' (see no. 192). The sideboard had a movable chromium-plated base and had either metal or wooden drawers. It has a basic measurement of 30cm, which meant that it matched Metz & Co.'s other pieces of modular furniture (no. 155).



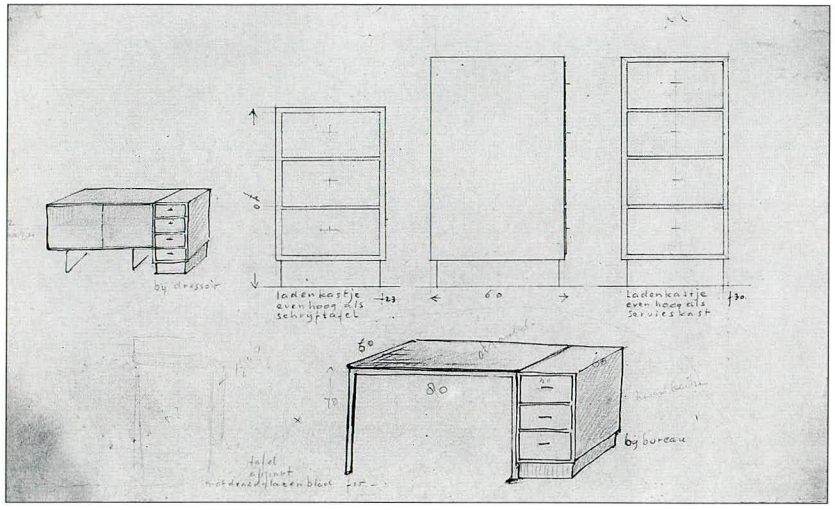
Design drawing
pencil on paper
24.8 x 20.4cm
NAi

wired glass, metal, wood
90 x 120 x 42cm
private collection, Amsterdam

184 Chest of drawers

wood
1932

The chest of drawers was intended to combine with other pieces of furniture from Metz & Co.



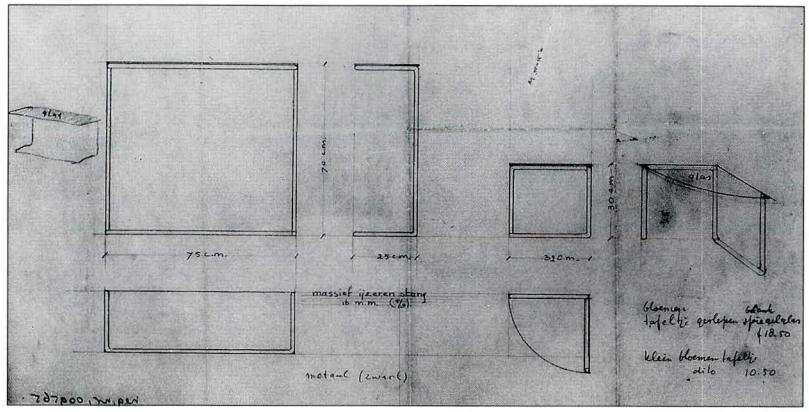
Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
21 x 31cm
NAi

185 Conversion 'Kunstliefde' Utrecht

1932

186 Design flower table

metal, glass
c. 1932



Design drawing
pencil on paper
17 x 32.2cm
NAi

187 Design page layout *Vrije Bladen*

ink on paper
22 x 14cm
c. 1932
RSA

188 Ex libris Marian Schröder

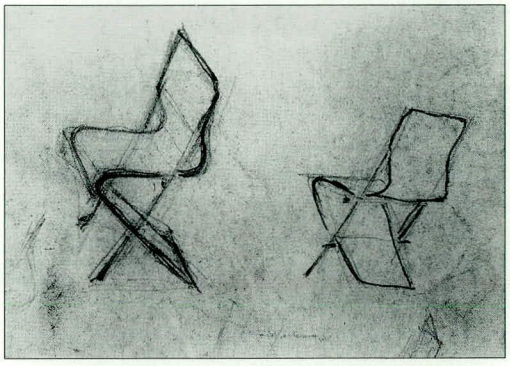
printed
4 x 9.2cm
c. 1932

1932

189 Zigzag chair

1932-1933

The zigzag chair did not represent the same kind of breakthrough in the history of twentieth-century design as did the Red Blue chair (no. 35). Within Rietveld's oeuvre, however, this design is the purest example of the synthesis between form, function and construction that was his aim. The zigzag shape does not contain space but dissects it with its four



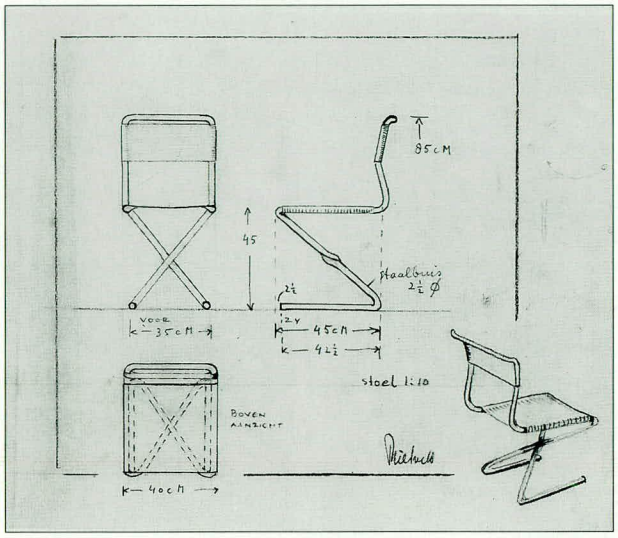
Rough draft
pencil on paper
detail
NAi

1933

planes: back, seat, leg and base. Each of the planes is essential to the construction. Rietveld said about this chair that '...it is, as it were, a tiny partition in space that leaves the space untouched. It is not a chair but a designer's joke. I always called it the zigzag'.[1]

A number of features that Rietveld had tried out in earlier designs converge in the zigzag chair. The shape derives from the chair without back legs that was a remarkable phenomenon in the development of tubular furniture. The German designer, Bodo Rasch, was the first to make a fairly old-fashioned wooden chair that was based on a Z shape. That was in 1926. In 1932 Rietveld designed a model for Metz & Co., with a tubular metal frame; a number of prototypes were shown in 1933 at the 'Op het dak' exhibition in the cupola of Metz & Co. in Amsterdam (see no. 192). The structure turned out to be inadequate. Where the legs crossed the weld was not sufficiently strong. Because of this, the model had no successors.

A study of interiors in *De 8 en Opbouw* in January 1933 shows that Rietveld regarded the zigzag chair as a variation on the one-piece chairs (see no. 114). The chairs that are sketched in the drawing appear to



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
26 x 27cm
NAi

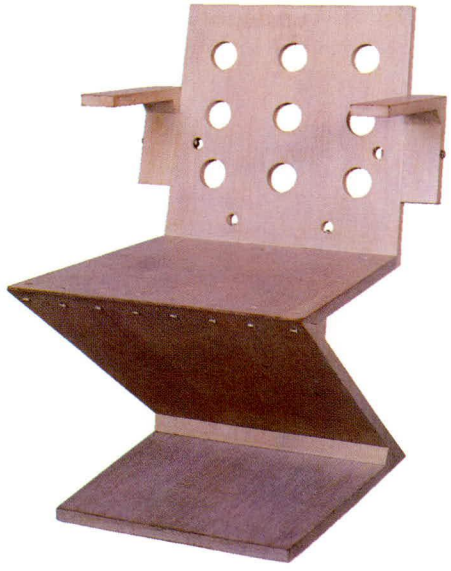
have been made out of a single piece that was then bent. Another drawing in the Netherlands Architecture Institute with the caption 'steel plate' confirms this. As far as we know, zigzag chairs made of steel plate were never produced. One of the earliest, possibly the first, prototype of the zigzag chair was made of fibreboard that was fastened with screws to an iron band. A second prototype that must have been made more or less at the same time consisted of four pieces of plywood that are fixed to a frame of sawn-out iron. In a review by Mart Stam about the exhibition of chairs in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1934-1935) both production possibilities were mentioned in one breath: 'He [Rietveld] is thinking of metal, of vulcanized fibreboard. He knows that the old way of working is no good any more; he knows that what he needs to do is to find new materials with another and more simple form of assembly'.[2]

The versions that were closest to Rietveld's original idea were the zigzag chairs made of curved five-plywood. They were made by Metz & Co. and were illustrated in a brochure for 1938. In the end the design with four pieces of wood turned out to be the most efficient. In a 1:1 scale drawing, a description of the production method is noted: 'Chair made of one inch deal cupboard planks from Bruynzeel of Zaandam, 183 x 40 x 2 of good quality and well dovetailed and glued with heated-up joiner's glue'. It was in this form that the zigzag chair was made by both Metz & Co. and Van de Groenekan. In the course of time some alterations were made. The slanting ends of the base plank, for instance, were no longer completely blocked in. In some versions the joint of the back and seat was reinforced with long screws and bolts.

There were also several variations in the way the chair was finished. For instance, for the Rietveld Schröder House four chairs were made of wood that were coated with white pipe clay. The result was a handsome pastel white that shows up the grain of the wood. This coating, however, is a problem with upkeep, because after it has been scrubbed a couple of times the colour fades and the pipe clay has to be added all over again. In the end a layer of transparent varnish was used for these chairs. The chair was often painted all over. In that case the edges of the wood were usually painted in a different colour, preferably white. One of the more striking variations of the zigzag chair is the version made for Professor Weve in 1934, which is covered with green morocco (no. 221).

During the 1930s and 40s Rietveld devised a number of variations on the zigzag chair. As it turned out, the design could tolerate small additions (for instance, arm rests and round holes in the back) as well as variations in size and construction. Virtually all the variations were

Zigzag chair with armrests
oak
87 x 56.4 x 58.6cm
c. 1942
CMU



Zigzag chair with holes and short armrests
oak
70 x 50.2 x 54.6cm
c. 1938
CMU

Zigzag chair
five-plywood
79.5 x 40 x 36cm
c. 1938
Auction Christie's
Amsterdam 1988, no. 407

actually produced by Metz & Co. Only a few times a design was produced for a private client. 'Is the base stable enough for a child who likes to wriggle about a lot? Wouldn't Jimmy slide off it too easily?' wrote Han Schröder, who worked with Rietveld for a while, commenting on a sketch for a zigzag child's chair. The version that is now in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum is safe and steady enough, while the one in the Netherlands Architecture Institute has such a narrow seat that a child could hardly move about in it at all (no. 352).

Rietveld designed a long wooden table to go with the zigzag chair. The table – also produced by Metz & Co. – had a base made of two sawn U-shaped wooden supports. Another model, made of Slovenian oak with a base of metal tubing, is only known from drawings. Rietveld also often combined the zigzag chairs with simple wooden tables in the same style as his crate furniture (no. 208).

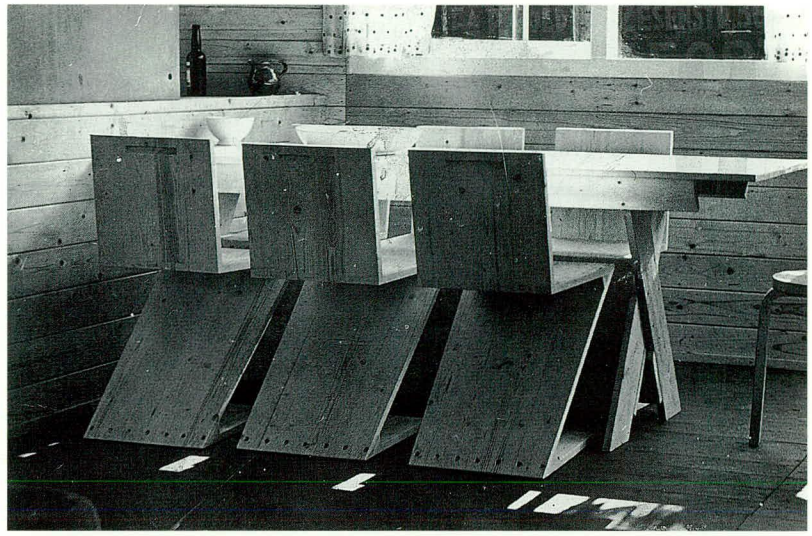
[1] Filmed interview with Piet van Moock, in Hank Onrust, *De weelde van de soberheid*, VPRO television programme, 1992.
[2] [Stam] 1935, 5.

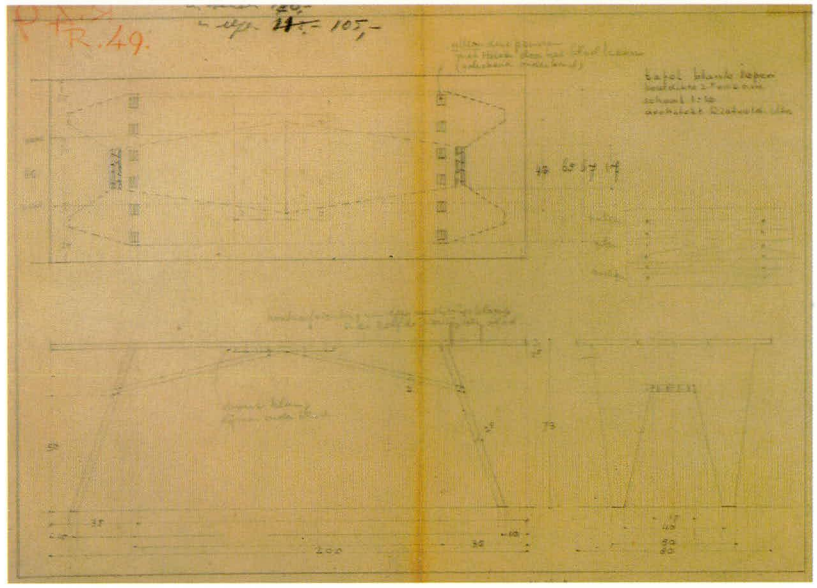
Küper 1987, passim

1933

Zigzag child's chair
oak
86 x 42.5 x 44cm
1940
SMA

Interior wooden summerhouse (no. 259)
photo 1937



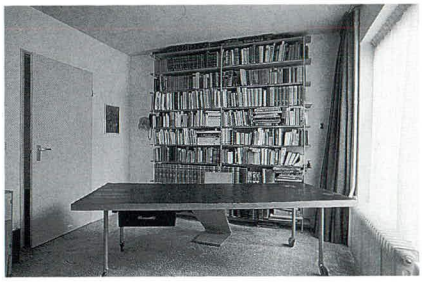


Design drawing table
pencil on transparent paper
27 x 38cm
c. 1935
RSA

190 Desk J. ten Doesschate

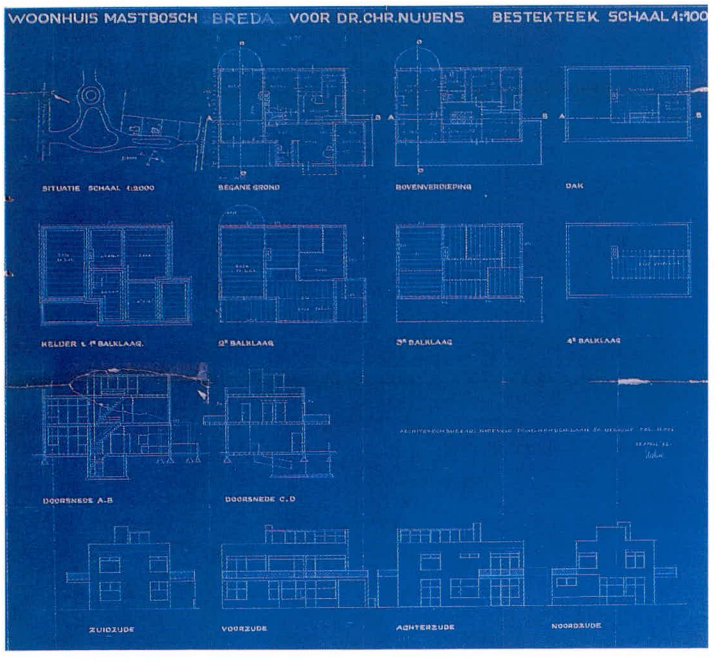
wood, linoleum, metal
66 x 88.5 x 198.5cm
1932-1933
private collection, Zeist

The desk was made for Ten Doesschate jun. when he moved into the house in the garden behind his parents' house at 53, Catharijnesingel, Utrecht (no. 151). Next to the desk there was a long chest that served as a bed at night. The chest is now lost.



191 Dwelling Nuyens
Montenspark 6, Breda

1932-1933
client C. Nuyens
altered

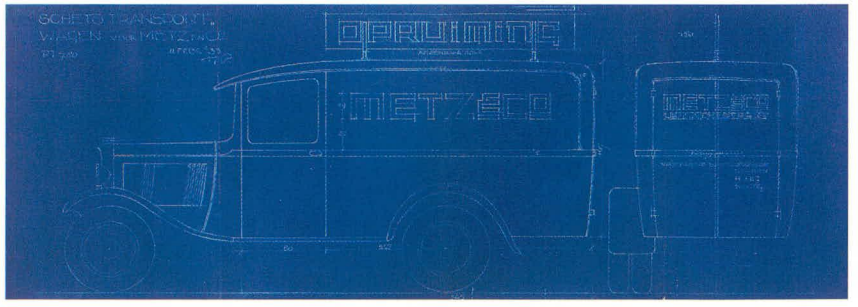


192 Cupola Metz & Co.
Keizersgracht 455, Amsterdam

1933
client Metz & Co.
altered

'In order to display the steel furniture in suitably spacious surroundings Rietveld made use of the area that was available on the roof; the result is an impressive space high above Amsterdam designed and realized by Rietveld'. With these words Metz & Co. announced Rietveld's extension to their store in their sales catalogue for autumn 1933. Rietveld's design for a glass drum with a metal frame was unmistakably inspired by the circular reception area in the Van Nelle factory (1926-1930) in Rotterdam by J.A. Brinkman and L.C. van der Vlugt. Rietveld made his speech to open the exhibition 'Op het dak' (On the roof) by means of a gramophone record. The exhibition was held to mark the completion of the cupola. It included bedroom, living room and dining room areas, all containing Rietveld's most recent furniture for Metz & Co.

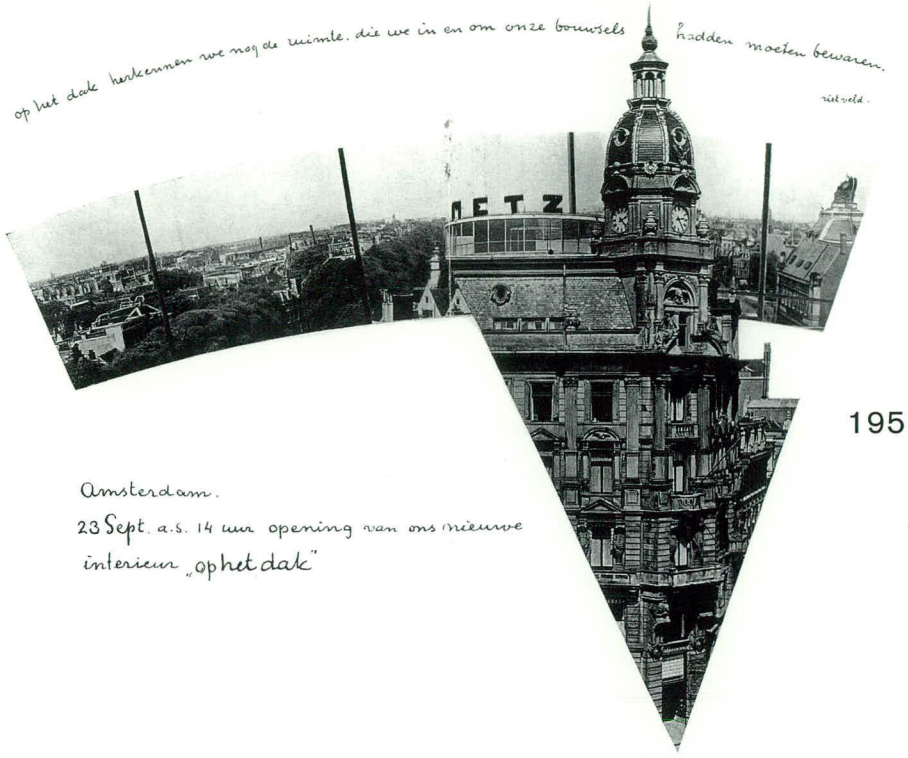
Design drawing
blueprint
29 x 81cm
NAi



193 Design lettering on Metz & Co. delivery van

1933

Design drawing
blueprint
71.2 x 72.2cm
1932
Breda Municipal Archives



1933

Invitation for opening
cupola
printed
23.5 x 24cm
RSA

194 Conversion dwelling
Celebesstraat 83,
The Hague

1933
client A. Polak

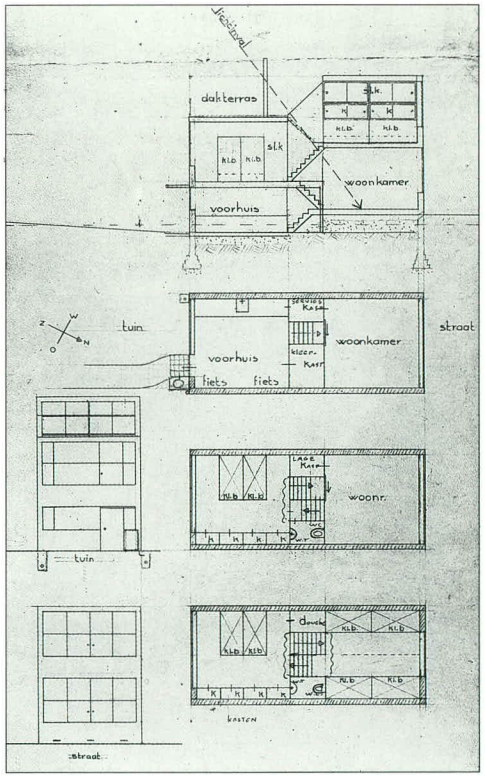
Interior
photo c. 1933

195 Design small practical dwelling

1933

The design was published for the first time in the context of an article by H. Buys in no. 13 of *Het Bouwbedrijf* in 1933. It is a variation on his 'idea for a simple dwelling' (no. 170) that he had designed two years previously.

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
37.9 x 22.4cm
RSA



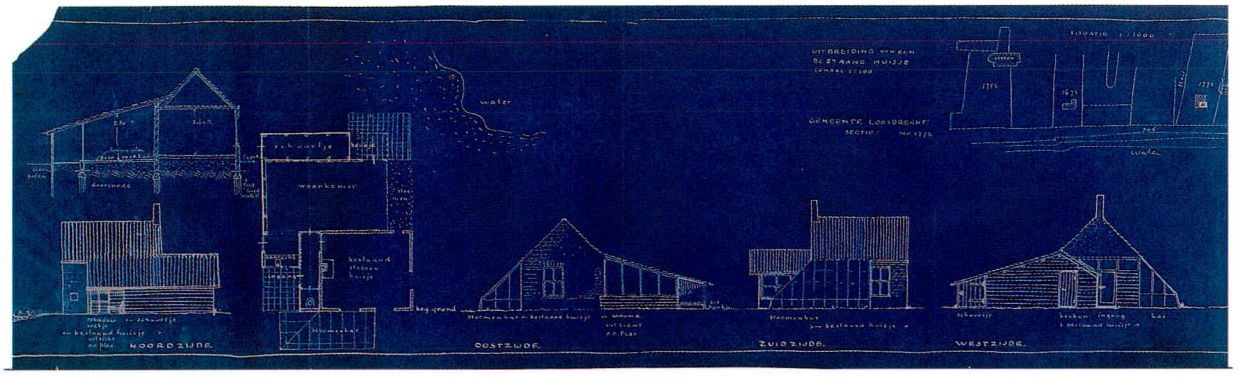
196 Design conversion of dwelling
Section D No. 1772, Loosdrecht

1933
client E. Leyden

The painter Ernst Leyden asked Rietveld to renovate his house.
The request for a building permit was turned down by the Loosdrecht town council, because 'it is not sufficiently certain that the house will be renovated in the way shown in the drawing or that it will remain in that form, especially since the room will only be 2 metres wide after the conversion, which is too small for it to be regarded as a room'.[1] After this design was turned down, Leyden asked the architect F.A. Eschauzier to make a design for the conversion and also for the building of two live-in studios. Eschauzier's design was accepted.

[1] Decree of the Mayor and Council of Loosdrecht, 18 September 1933, Loosdrecht Municipal Archives.

Design drawing
blueprint
21 x 67.5cm
RSA



197 Design form for Dr. A.C. Pliester milk inspection office

pencil, ink on paper
25.8 x 20.8cm
1933
RSA

198 Design logo for AMCB milkman's carts

pencil, crayon on paper
21.7 x 13.7cm
1933
RSA

199 Letterhead

1933

In 1933 Rietveld moved his office to 55, Oudegracht in Utrecht. He made a new heading for the occasion.

RIETVELD
ARCHITEKT
OUDEGR.55
UTRECHT
TEL.17038
POSTGIRO
NR.164496

200 Design conversion of dwelling
Willem III-laan 4, Wassenaar

c. 1933
client Hekking

1933

201 Camp bed

Rietveld hoped that this design would be produced by the Rotterdam factory for metal furniture, D3. All that is known of it is this prototype and a drawing in the Netherlands Architecture Institute.

metal, canvas
71.5 x 53.5 x 152.5cm
c. 1933
CMU

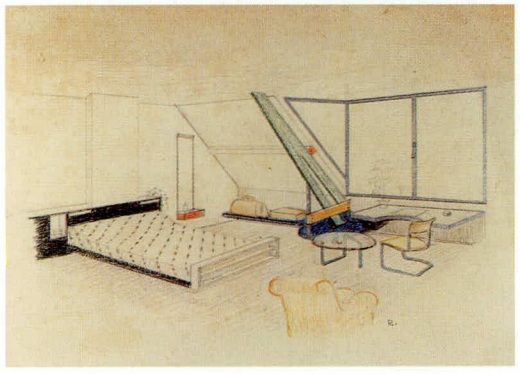
1933

202 Conversion attic room Maliebaan 58, Utrecht

Rietveld converted the attic into a guest room with adjoining bathroom. The dormer window also had glass along the sides. The bedsteads included lighting, a bedside table and a bookcase. Under the roof timbers was a bench and storage space for suitcases.[1]

c. 1933
client A.D. Hamburger
no longer extant

[1] See also Küper 1988

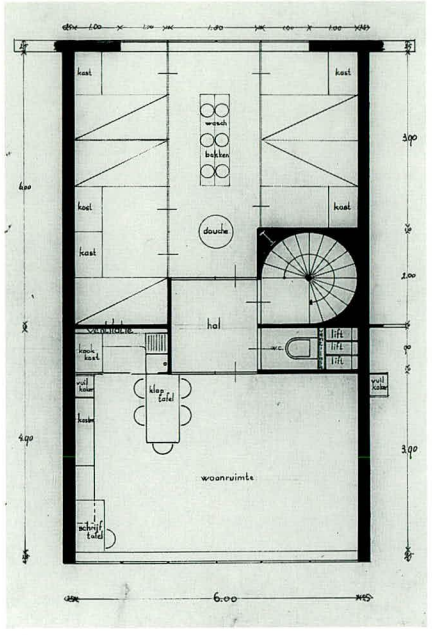


Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
17.8 x 21.8cm
RSA

203 Design worker's dwelling entry for 'Inexpensive Houses for Workers' competition Amsterdam

In 1933 the city of Amsterdam organized a competition for inexpensive workers' houses. Rietveld contributed a design for flats with alternately three and four stories. He tried to make the limited floor area of the dwellings look as large as possible by not splitting the space up into small rooms. There was only one living area with a little corner for the kitchen and one sleeping area, the beds being separated by two-metre high partitions. There exists a variation of the floor plan. In its mainly negative verdict the jury described the design as 'factory architecture'.

c. 1933
not realized

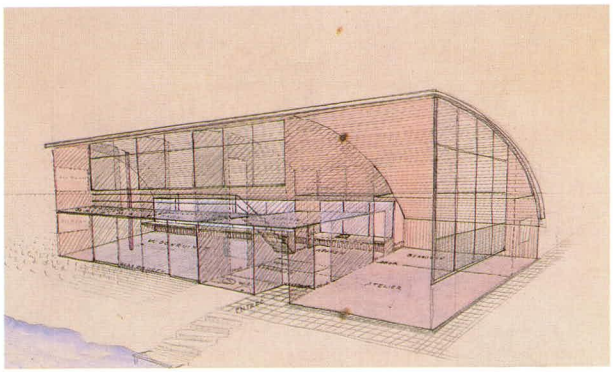


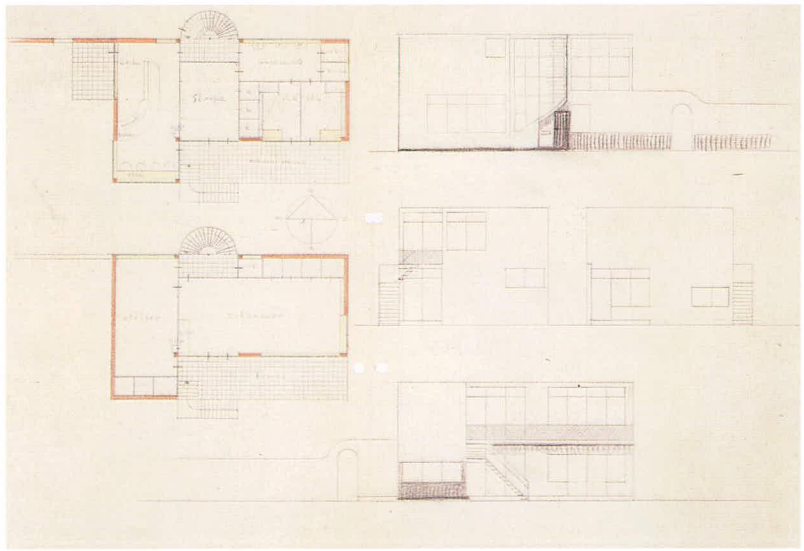
Design drawing
variation floor plan
ink on transparent paper
28.3 x 18cm
RSA

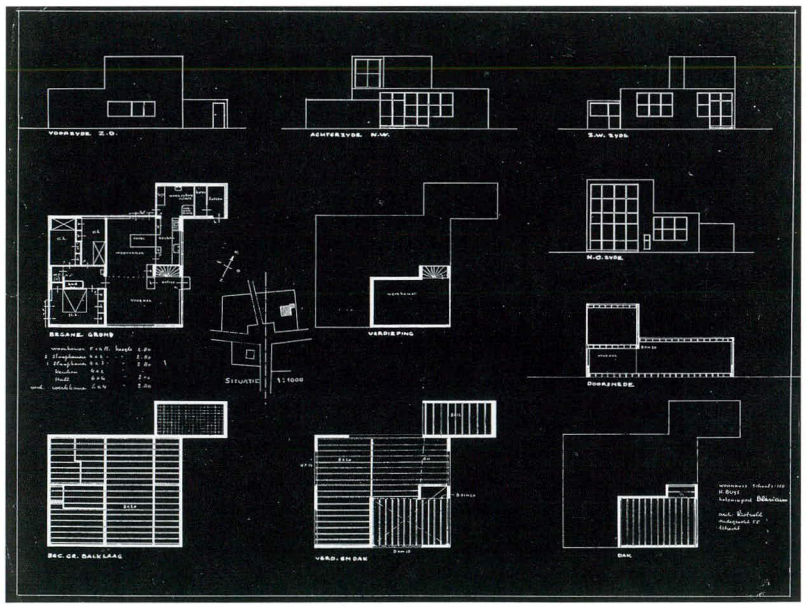
204 Designs dwelling Buys
Laren and Blaricum

1933-1934
client H. Buys
not realized

In 1933 the critic H. Buys asked Rietveld to design a house that was to be built in Laren. Rietveld's first two proposals were rejected by the local planning board because they did not match the countrified style of architecture of this village in the Gooi region. This verdict signalled the beginning of a crusade by the architects of the *Nieuwe Bouwen* against the planning authorities. A debate began in *De 8 en Opbouw* and in *Bouwkundig Weekblad*; all the articles supported Rietveld. Quoting Le Corbusier's slogan of 'Les yeux qui ne voient pas', Buys denounced the behaviour of the planning authorities. They constituted an obstacle to the advance of modern architecture.[1] As the proceedings continued, however, some architects, including J. van den Broek and J.J.P. Oud, took the position that the confrontation could only harm the *Nieuwe Bouwen* movement. They argued that the point at issue was the criticism of Rietveld's designs. In their view this criticism was justified. The planning board did not budge an inch. Buys's attempt to have his future house built in the neighbouring village of Blaricum, was equally unsuccessful. Rietveld made at least five designs for Buys's house. These are all very different, possibly because every plan he proposed was rejected. For instance, he made proposals for a house with a curved roof, a cube-shaped building and a house with a circular ground plan. In no case did he make any effort to design a type of house that would stylistically be in keeping with the architecture of the Gooi. In 1935 Buys told Rietveld in a letter that he was prepared to appeal against the decision. He had decided to do this because A. Hildebrand (no. 229) had previously done so success-







Design drawing
pencil, ink, watercolour on paper
37.2 x 54.8cm
RSA

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
34.5 x 44.5cm
NAi

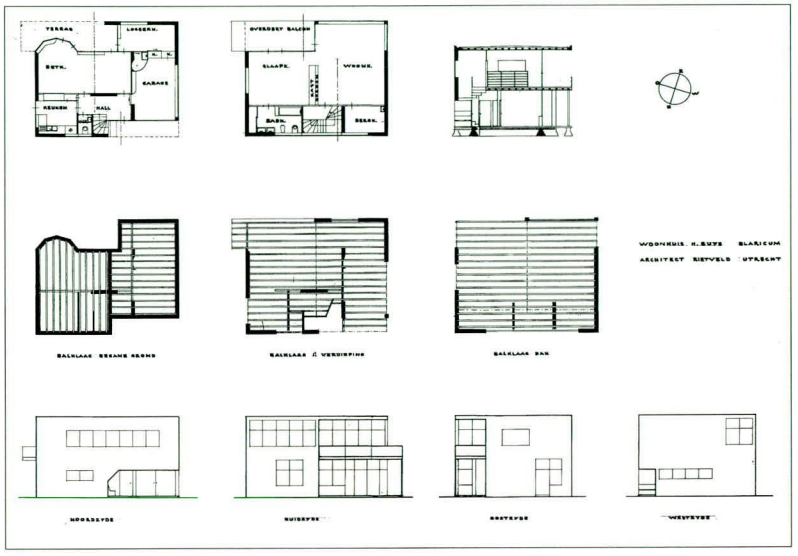
Design drawing
blueprint
51.4 x 65cm
RSA

[1] Buys 1933, 227; see also Küper 1988, 77-93.

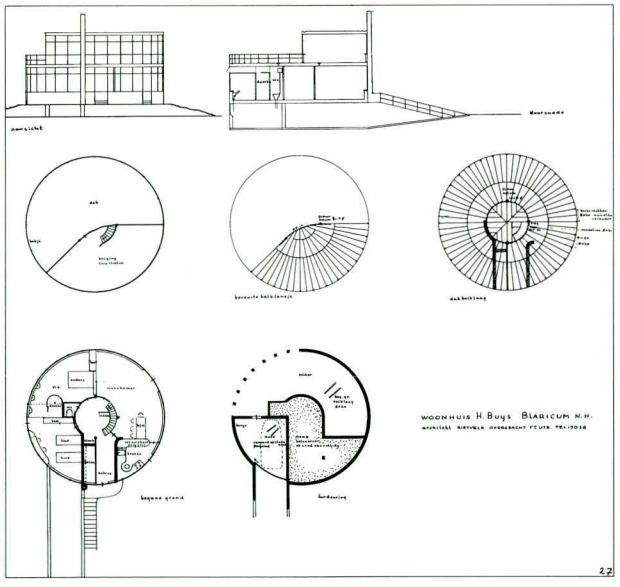
1934

fully and also because he knew that the 'P. family', by which he presumably meant Prins (see no. 239) still intended to push through with their building plan.[2]

[2] The letter dates from 6 February 1935, RSA.



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
54 x 66.5cm
RSA



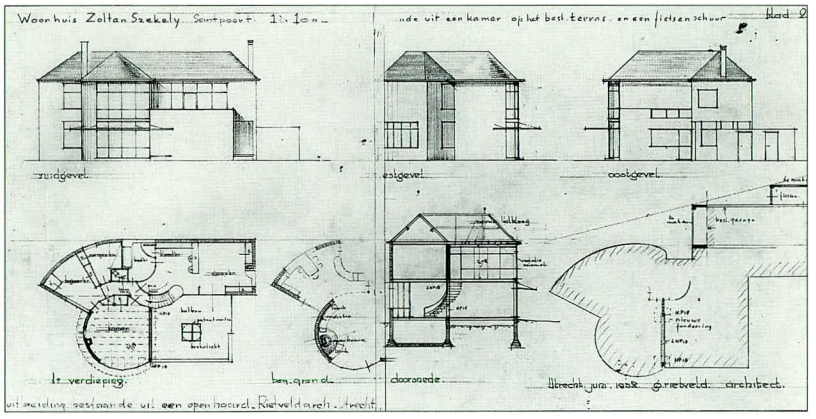
Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
49.8 x 52.1cm
RSA

205 Dwelling Székely
Johannes Verhulstweg 70, Santpoort

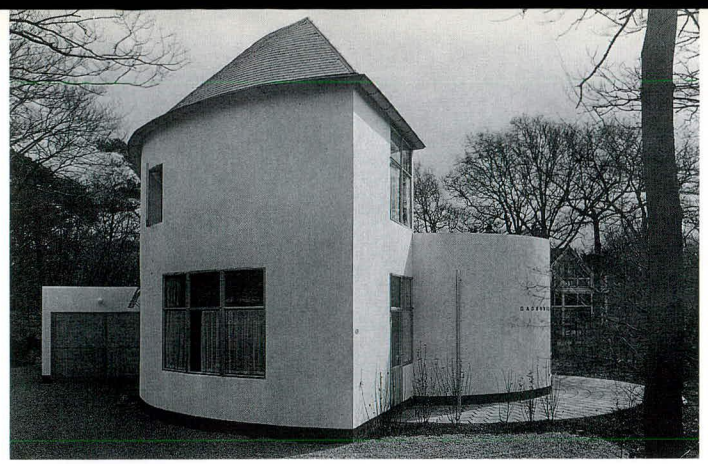
1933-1934
client Z. Székely
altered

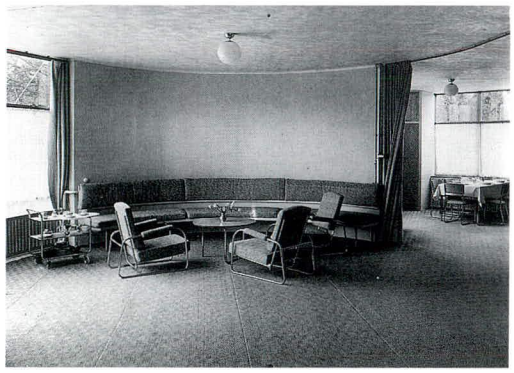
Rietveld designed the house for the violinist, Zóltan Székely, who was Hungarian by birth. The house was named Rhapsody after a composition dedicated to Székely by Béla Bartók. The ground plan is based on two curved forms that interlock in an ingenious way. In earlier designs Rietveld had somewhat cautiously included curved lines that have such a dynamic effect on space (nos 175 and 180); here, however, he used them to the full. Székely wanted somewhere for house concerts. Rietveld designed a music room and a drawing room that could be combined to form a single room. He had a hoisting device installed in the attic that could lower to the hall the twenty odd chairs that were stored there. Székely, who travelled a lot, could also use this device to lower his luggage from his dressing room on the first floor.
In 1938, four years after the contract was completed, Rietveld renovated the house. The large balcony on the first storey was partially closed off in order to build an extra bedroom. At the same time the folding screen that separated the music room from the drawing room was replaced by a glass wall in a steel frame. The glass partition could be hoisted through the

Design drawing
conversion
pencil, crayon, ink on
transparent paper
54.3 x 90.5cm
1938
NAi



1934





photos c. 1934

ceiling, ending up against the wall of the new bedroom.

Early in the 1930s J.J.P. Oud had expressed his doubts to Rietveld about the direction his work was taking. He went to Santpoort to look at Székely's house. Rietveld had, in his view, 'almost' rehabilitated himself as an architect. 'You have situated the house in a way that is very beautiful and what for me personally is so impressive is that you are becoming so much more architectural . As you know, I have always thought that your discoveries were quite delightful, but I sometimes had difficulty with them because they looked so like a model or else they were more like sculpture than architecture. This is almost entirely absent here and you have worked like a genuine architect. We were enchanted by the beautiful house that has so much light and by the simple way that you have now begun to do things. (...) The Metz building in The Hague [no. 206] and this house have restored my faith in you (I don't mean this in such a schoolmasterly way as it sounds, but I did think it was a shame that you had become so slovenly). I am truly delighted that you can make things like this and send you my heartfelt congratulations on this work'.[1]

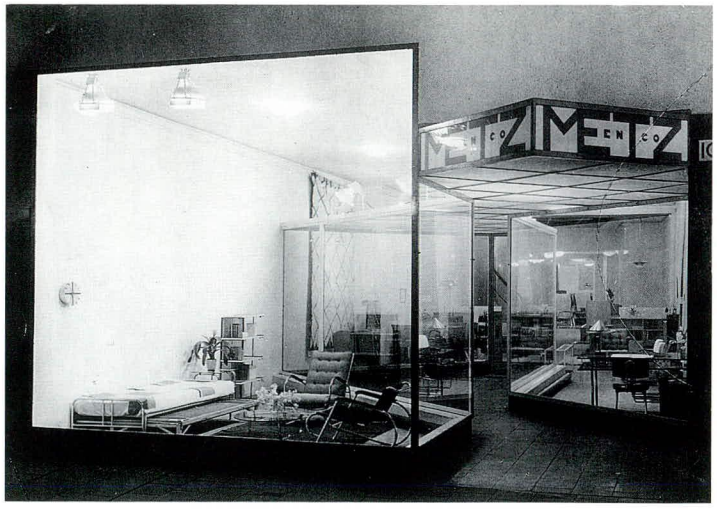
[1] Oud's letter to Rietveld is dated 29 January 1935, RSA.

206 **Shop conversion Metz & Co.**
Hoogstraat 10, The Hague

1934
in collaboration with W. Penaat and B. van der Leck

On 10 November 1934 J.J.P. Oud gave a speech at the opening of the renovated store of Metz & Co. in The Hague. Oud stressed the fact that the conversion was the result of a partnership between Rietveld, W. Penaat and B. van der Leck. Rietveld's share consisted in the architectural alterations, for instance to the facade, the entrance with its display windows and the staircase inside the building. The contribution of Penaat and Van der Leck was confined to the interior, the latter being mainly responsible for advising on the colours to be used.

photo c. 1934



207 Conversion bathroom-cum-dressing room
Emmalaan 4B, Utrecht

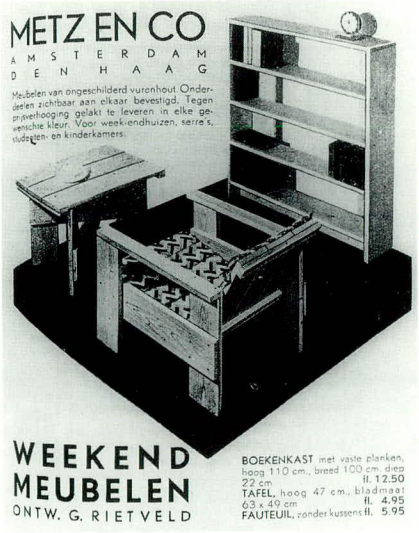
1934
client Mrs D. van Ravesteyn-Hintzen

208 Crate furniture

1934

The first pieces of crate furniture date from 1934. These are an armchair, a low table and bookcase made of deal boards measuring 14.5 centimetres across and varying in length from 45, 60, 90 to 105 centimetres. These are joined together with tongue-and-groove screws. The chair also has six smaller boards which are necessary for the construction. The furniture was delivered as a do-it-yourself kit and had to be assembled by the customer. The assortment of crate furniture was later further expanded with a crate desk, another low table and an upright chair. Rietveld originally produced the crate furniture himself, as can be seen from the drawings in the Rietveld Schröder Archive under the heading: 'order from H. Schröder Prins Hendriklaan 64 bis'. In 1935, in the April issue of *De 8 en Opbouw* the first advertisement appeared from Metz & Co.: 'weekend furniture' designed by G. Rietveld. In an issue of the *Bouwkundig Weekblad* of October 1935 there followed a crushing piece by Jan de Meijer, entitled 'Professional decay'. In a following issue Rietveld gave a clear commentary on this. He defended the construction as 'a free carpentry method(...)which goes straight to the point', is strong and 'innocent of the knitted brows of our craftsmen'. The equal width of the wood and the open joints make a tranquil impression, in his opinion. He preferred the furniture to be unpainted, but if people wanted to add a layer of paint all the same, then 'each plank is separately painted, without any filling, and then screwed together; so joints or screws are not hidden away'. In 1935 Rietveld apparently no longer felt the need to hide the material of his designs under a layer of paint. In his architecture too the natural structure of the material became an important element of the aesthetic aspect (see for example nos 222 and 325).

The lack of any social motivation in Rietveld's arguments is striking. Various authors have related the crate furniture to the economic crisis of the



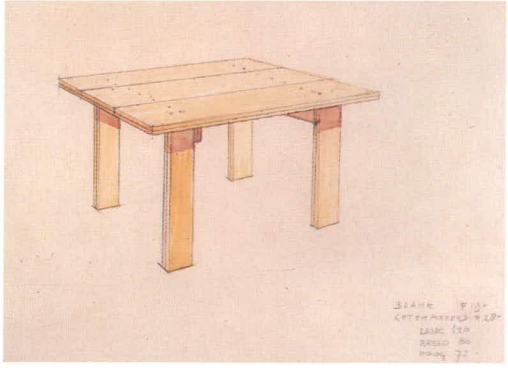
Advertisement
Metz & Co.
in *De 8 en Opbouw* 6 (1935) 8

Crate chair
deal
77.3 x 57 x 55cm
CMU

Crate desk
wood
70 x 100 x 59.5cm
CMU

1930s and Rietveld's aim of putting furniture on the market at an affordable price. Although Rietveld did indeed have this ideal and tried to realize it, he was probably too realistic to use it in his own defence. However, the crate furniture was relatively cheap. In a brochure of Metz & Co. exclusively for desks, located in the Rietveld Schröder Archive, the price of a crate desk is Dfl. 16 and the desk he designed together with Truus Schröder is Dfl. 169 (no. 162).

After 1935 Rietveld designed an enormous amount of furniture made of deal planks, which looks more or less the same as the crate furniture. They are mainly tables and simple chairs. Often the zigzag furniture, the crate furniture and these variations were combined together. In a model layout of the Ekawo apartments (see no. 275) for example, there were crate-like armchairs, a stool designed by Truus Schröder, and a table by Rietveld or Schröder.



Design drawing table
pencil, watercolour on cardboard
19 x 24.9cm
c. 1935
RSA

209 **Design conversion J. Hoeyenbos Printers**
Kromme Nieuwe Gracht 11, Utrecht

1934
client J. Hoeyenbos

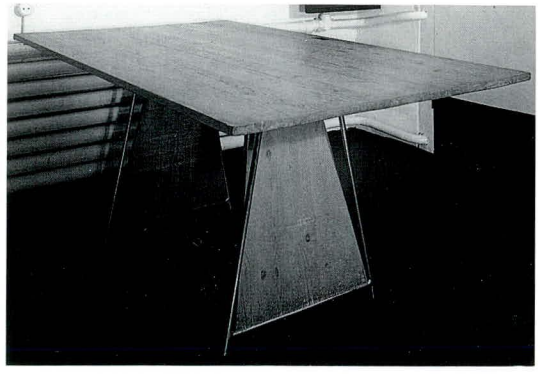
210 **Design logo J. Hoeyenbos Printers**

pencil on paper
19.3 x 12.5cm
c. 1934
RSA

211 **Table**

deal, metal
68.5 x 149.5 x 88.3cm
c. 1934
CMU

The table was made for the kitchen of the Rietveld Schröder House.
The tubular chrome frame is a later addition, probably to raise the table.

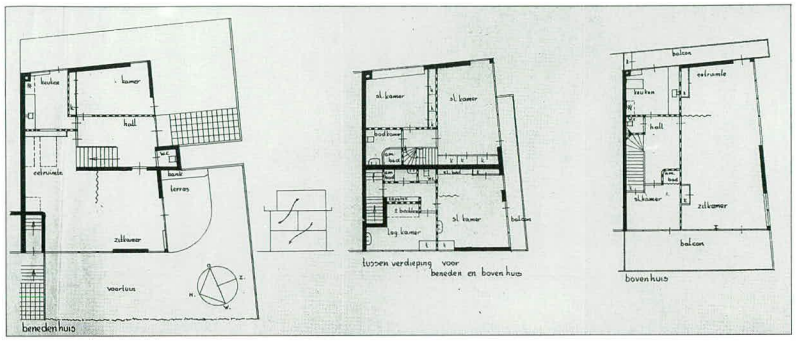


212 **Four dwellings**
Prins Hendriklaan 64, and Erasmuslaan 1-3, Utrecht

1930-1935
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
altered

In the reviews of the four dwellings on Erasmuslaan (no. 163) an adjacent building was already mentioned. Truus Schröder-Schräder and Rietveld intended to put a block of flats beside the dwellings. They made various designs for these and asked for building permission for some of them. In 1933 a four-storey block was refused permission because, stated the building inspectorate, the communal entrance was considered insufficient for the six dwellings, to which they added, 'apart from possible objections to the appearance'. Furthermore, no building higher than two storeys could be built on the site. In April 1935 permission was given to build three upper dwellings and two lower dwellings. The first floor was shared by lower and upper dwellings. The apartments on the ground floor have the bedrooms on the first floor at the back and the upper flats have the bedrooms at the front. Although no changes to this plan were found which can be definitely dated to a later period, two rather than three upper dwellings were eventually built.

Design drawing
collotype
22.5 x 48.5cm
RSA



1935

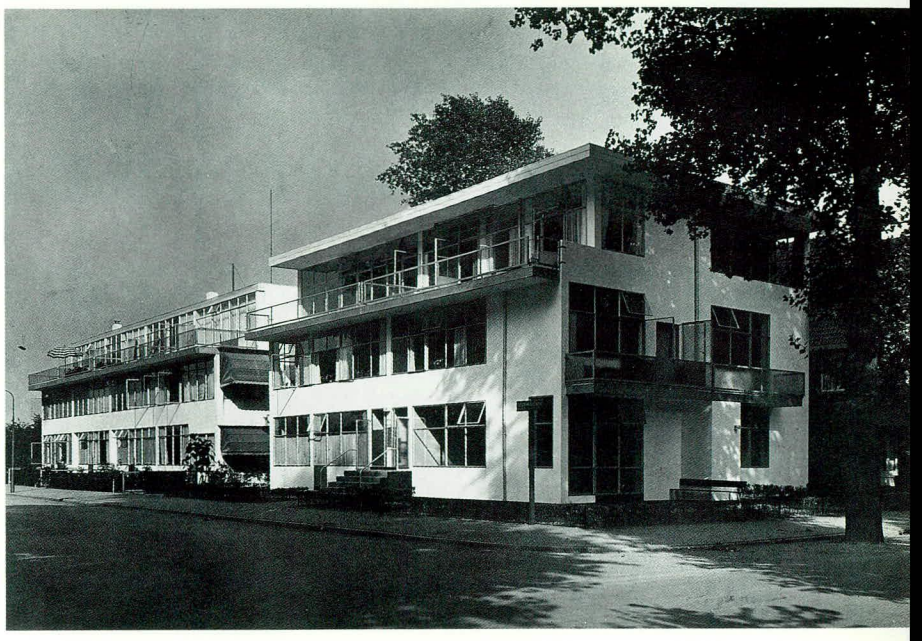
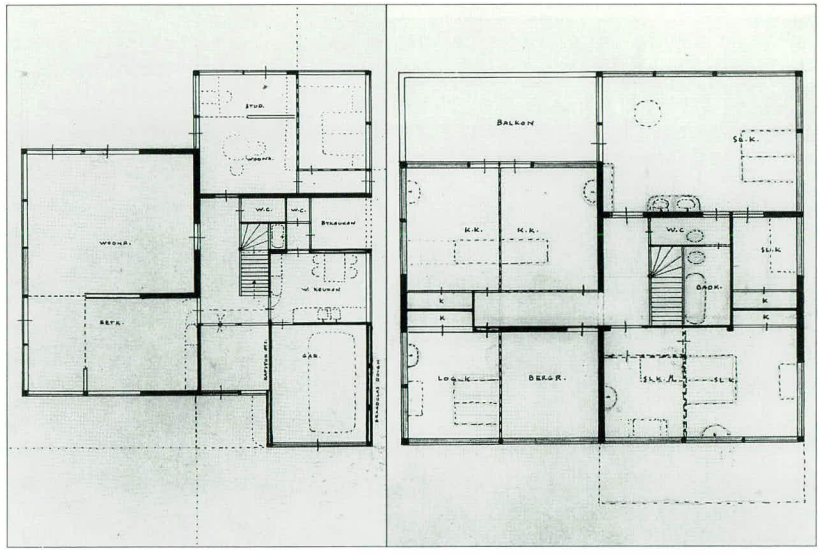


photo c. 1935

213 **Design dwelling De Lange**
Bergen, North Holland

c. 1930-1935

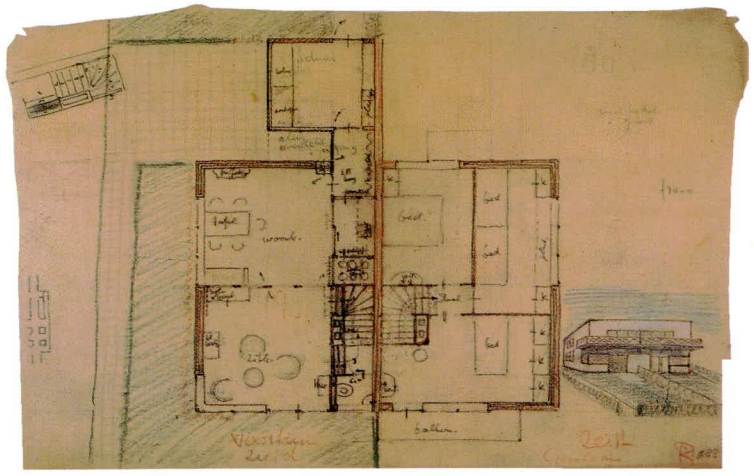


Design drawing
ground floor
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
30.7 x 28.7cm
RSA

Design drawing upper storey
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
20.4 x 26.6cm
RSA

214 Design four dwellings
Gerolaan, Zeist

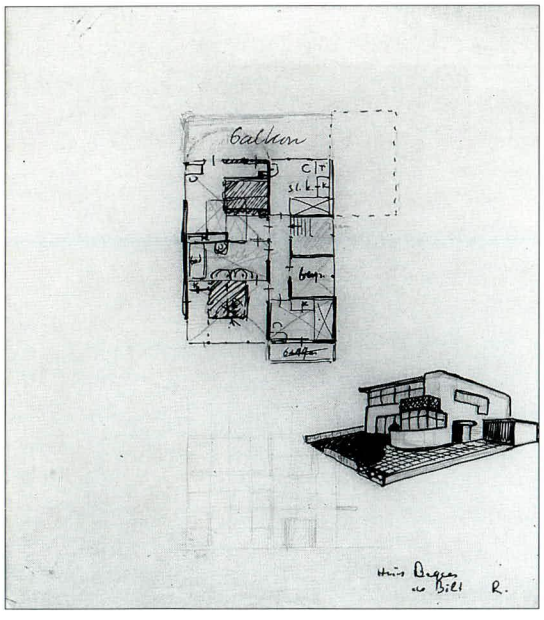
c. 1930-1935
client Bredero's Bouwbedrijf
not realized



Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
31.3 x 46.8cm
RSA

215 Design dwelling Begeer
De Bilt

c. 1930-1935



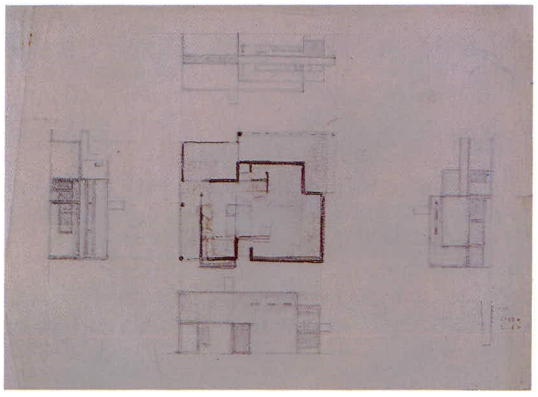
Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
26.3 x 21.4cm
RSA

216
Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
20.4 x 27.7cm
RSA

217
Design drawing
collotype
23 x 27cm
RSA

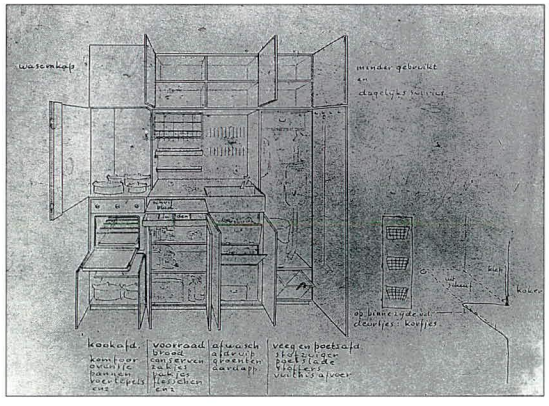
216 Design dwelling Posthumus

c. 1930-1935



217 Layout kitchen

c. 1930-1935



218 Round table

wood
1930-1935

On the working plan of the table the top is covered with a sheet of glass which is laid on a piece of felt or flannel. The bottom of the glass is painted white.

Round table
deal
45 x diam. 70cm
SMA

1935

219 Low chair

deal, plywood
71 x 39.5 x 51.5cm
1930-1935
SMA

variant with a slanting seat and matching table (no. 218).
In the 1940s Rietveld made various pieces of furniture with the boards

rounded off at the ends (see for example nos 324, 344).

Small low chair
58 x 39.5 x 58.5cm
Eva Besnyö, Amsterdam

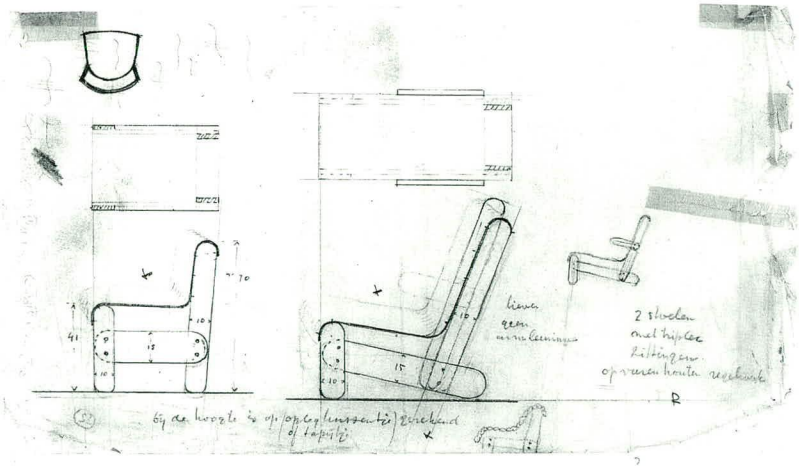
1935

220 Small low chair

deal, plywood
c. 1933-1935

Only a few chairs were made to this design, the first model probably dates from the beginning of the 1930s. There are plans in the Rietveld Schröder Archive of this model and a

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
20.3 x 35.5cm
RSA

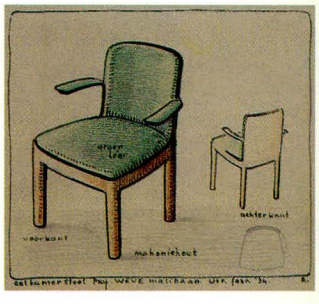


221 Furniture Weve

1934-1935

In the Netherlands Architecture Institute there are various signed and dated sketches with furniture designs for H.J.M. Weve, who was Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Utrecht and was a good friend of the ophthalmologist G. ten Doesschate. The first series of designs dates from 1934 and shows dining room chairs. Rietveld sketched a zigzag chair upholstered in green morocco, a wooden chair with armrests and a chair of curved bronze tubing, both also covered in green leather. Sketches for a couch, an upright chair and an occasional chair date from 1935. They were supposed to be made of black or coloured French-polished walnut and upholstered in moquette. An undated sketch for a windbreak of glass and metal was probably intended for a terrace.

Design drawing dining room chair
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
16.5 x 16cm
NAi

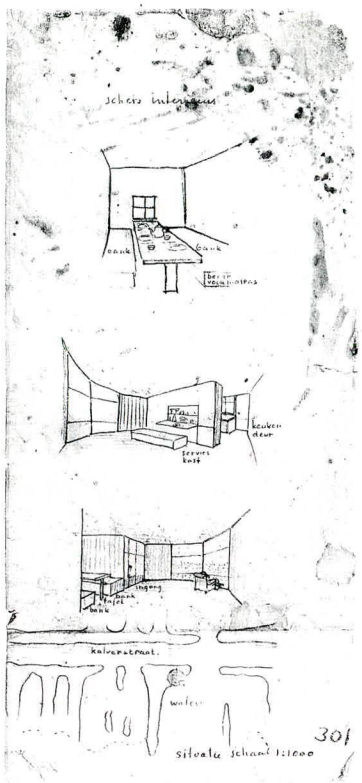


222 Summerhouse Van Ravesteyn-Hintzen
Section F No. 1635, Breukelen St. Pieters

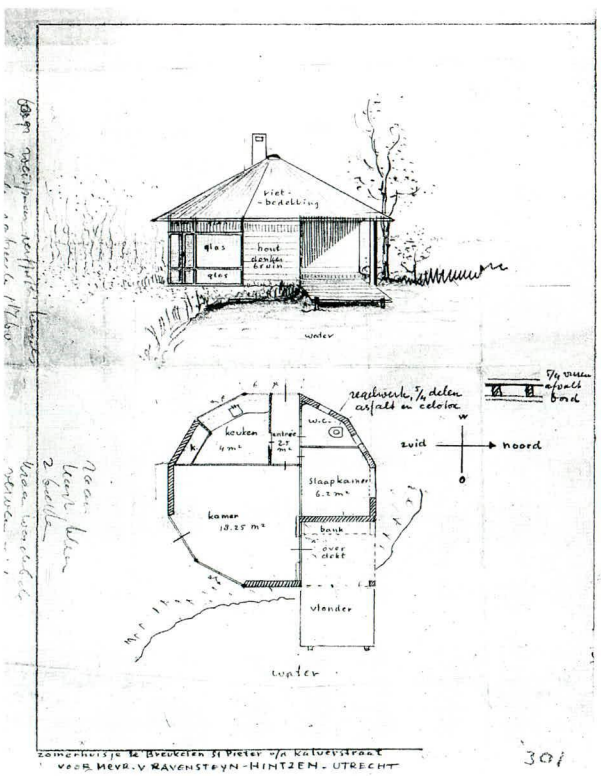
1934-1935
client Mrs D. van Ravesteyn-Hintzen
altered

Dora van Ravesteyn-Hintzen was the ex-wife of architect Sybold van Ravesteyn who was a friend of Rietveld's. She called on Rietveld for a conversion of her dwelling (nr. 207), the building of a summer home on the Loosdrecht lakes and later also for the design of her house (nr. 478). A not-executed design shows a simple summerhouse which was supposed to be built partially above the water. The dwelling has two floors and a gently sloping roof. The rectangular floor plan is based on a metre grid. On the ground floor there is a living room with a semi-open kitchen and on the first floor, accessible by an external staircase, are two bedrooms. The summerhouse which was built is of a comparable simplicity, but smaller. It is a wooden house with thatched roof and has a dodecagonal floor plan, just like the Gaarenstroom summerhouse (nr. 223).

Interior
photo 1989



Rough draft interior
pencil on transparent paper
31.5 x 13.9cm
RSA



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
22.3 x 31.2cm
RSA

223 Summerhouse Gaarenstroom
Liempdseweg 24, Boxtel

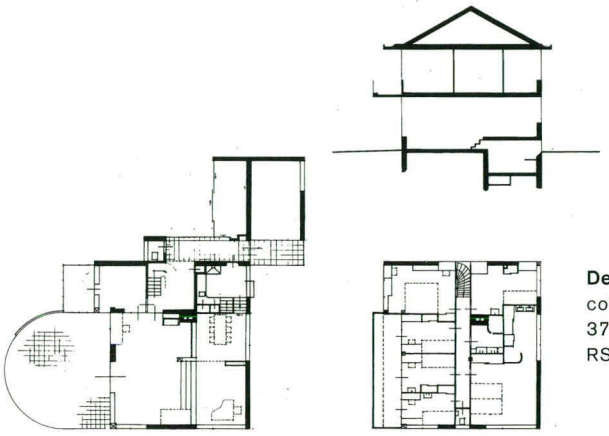
1934-1935
client
J.H. Gaarenstroom
burnt down in 1992

1935

224 Dwelling Hillebrandt
Van Soutelandelaan 42, The Hague

1934-1935
client G.M. Hillebrandt
altered

The Mees family, who had a house designed by Rietveld (see no. 246) advised their friends, the Hillebrandt family, who also wanted to have a house built, to ask Rietveld. Although the Mees commission was given earlier, the Hillebrandt house was the first to be completed. It is a white-



Design drawing
collotype
37.4 x 43.8cm
RSA

1935

plastered house with steel window frames and a gently sloping gable roof; the latter feature was on the insistence of the planning board of The Hague. Because the Hillebrandts made a lot of music, they wanted a living room which could be used for giving concerts at home. Rietveld made a difference in levels in the room so that a sort of platform was created. The daylight entered through a stained-glass window made to a drawing by Hillebrandt's small daughter. On the first floor, a long corridor runs precisely along the longitudinal axis. There are six bedrooms, a bathroom and a dressing room. A journalist from *Het Landhuis* visited the house in 1936 and described its quality in a poetic fashion: 'During our visit we are constantly confronted by surprising aspects, arrangements of spatial effect, contrasts of light and shadow, material and colour combinations,

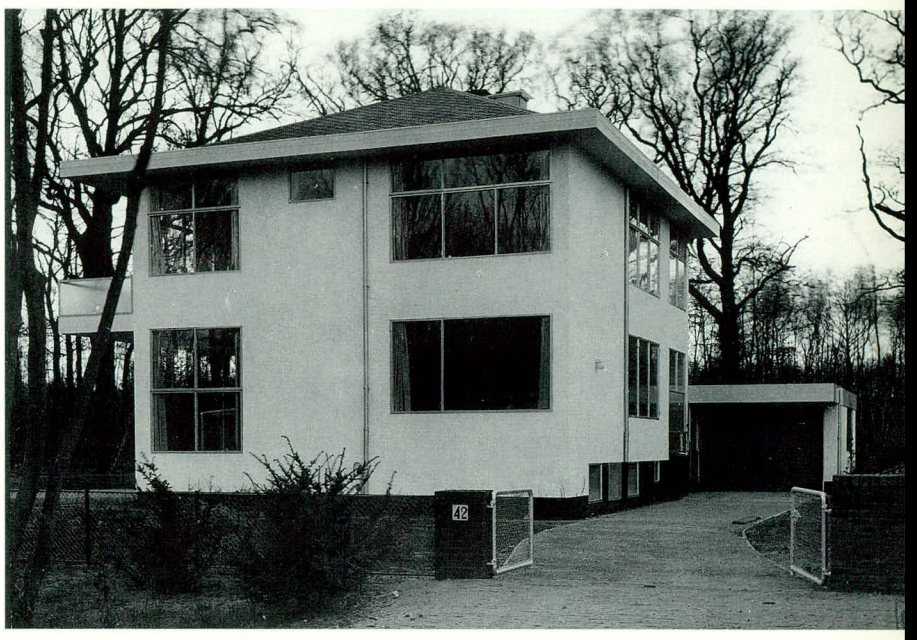


photo c. 1935

which all unite in harmony to provide an individual atmosphere and tone.'

225 Furniture Hillebrandt

1935

Rietveld designed a number of built-in cupboards for the house, with Bruyn-zeel cupboard shelves, including a crockery cupboard, a music cupboard and a bookcase. Hillebrandt also possessed separate furniture designed by Rietveld, including the table with an S-shaped leg (no. 235), the U-shaped stool (no. 227) and a laundry box.

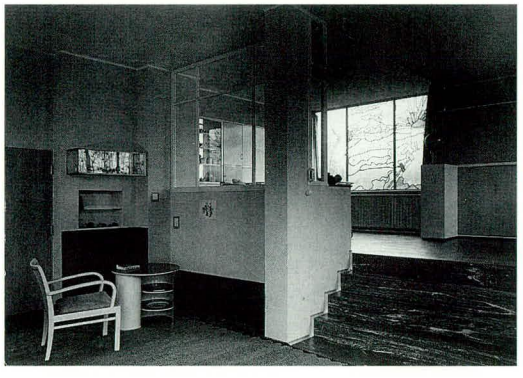
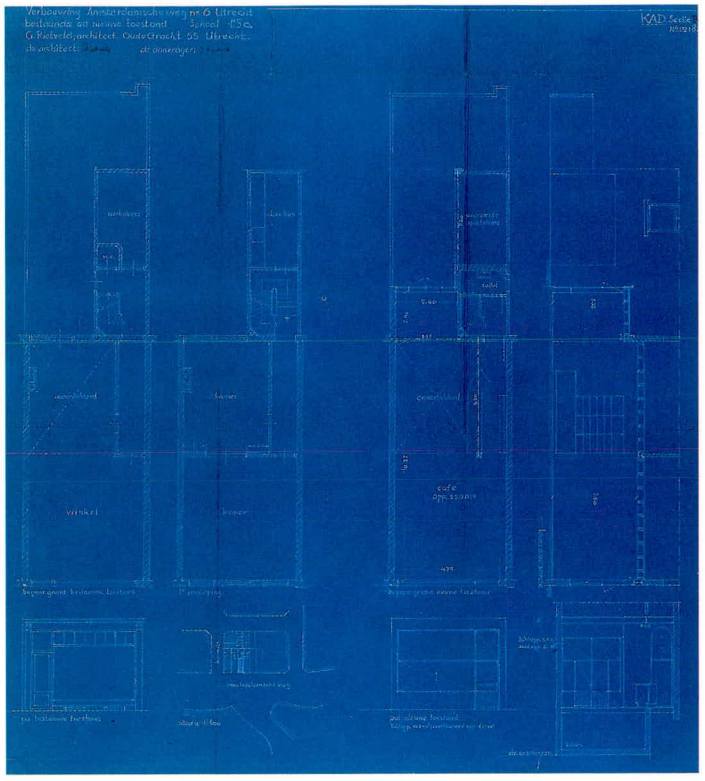


photo c. 1935

226 **Design conversion of cafe** Amsterdamsestraatweg 6, Utrecht

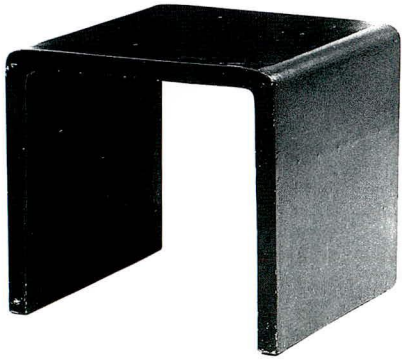
1935
client J. Nijland
not realized



Design drawing
blueprint
66.8 x 59.2cm
Utrecht Municipal Archives

227 **Stool**

wood
1935



Stool from Hillebrandt dwelling (no. 224)
elm
39.9 x 39.6 x 39.8cm
Auction Christie's Amsterdam 1987, no. 395

The U-shaped stool was often used by Rietveld in bedroom or dining room interiors (see no. 225). In the Rietveld Schröder Archive there is a blueprint of a toilet mirror with drawer (no. 264) and a stool with the numbers R 29 and R 30 of Metz & Co. on it. According to the label the stool is 'entirely upholstered in suede'.

228 **Gravestone Johannes Hoeyenbos**

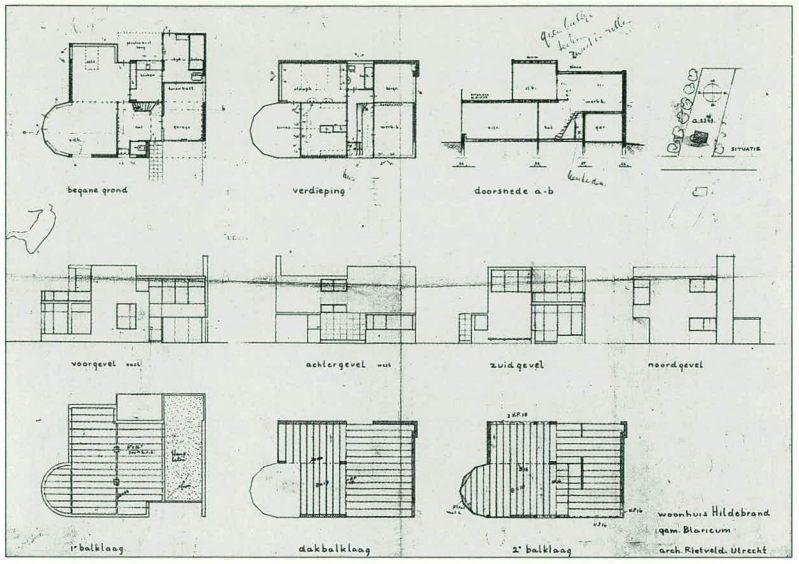
marble
1935
Algemene Begraafplaats Brandenburg, De Bilt

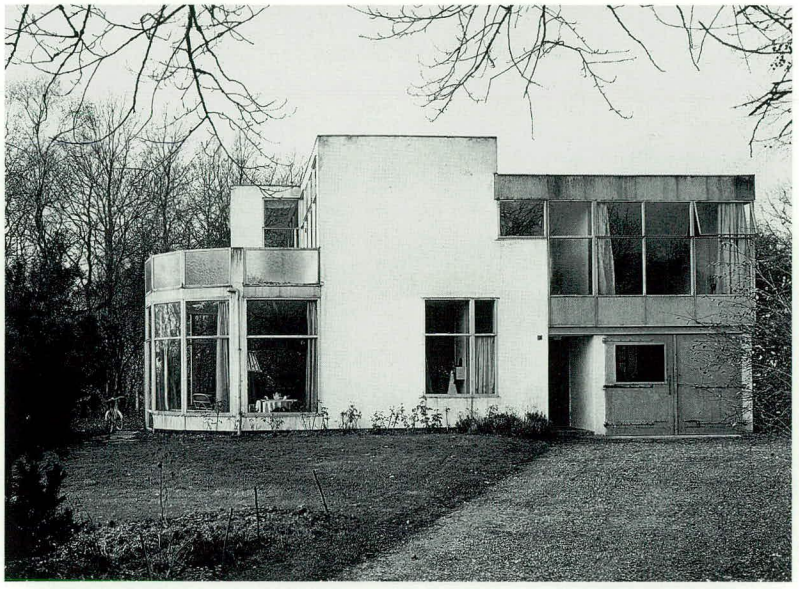
1935

229 **Dwelling Hildebrand** Bloemlandscheweg 3, Blaricum

1935
client A.D. Hildebrand

Rietveld regularly fell foul of the planning boards when he wanted to build in the Gooi district. The designs which he had made for H. Buys were systematically rejected in Laren and Blaricum (see no. 204). It is therefore surprising that the writer A.D. Hildebrand succeeded in getting Rietveld's unconventional design built. A letter dated 29 January 1935 from Buys to Rietveld gives the impression that Hildebrand was not immediately given permission, but only after the writer had applied to the Municipal Council. The Hildebrand house displays the characteristics of Rietveld dwellings from the 1930s, such as the floor plan based on a square with circular and rectangular annexes, large glass surfaces contained in steel frames and white plastered brick walls. Characteristic of the interior are the





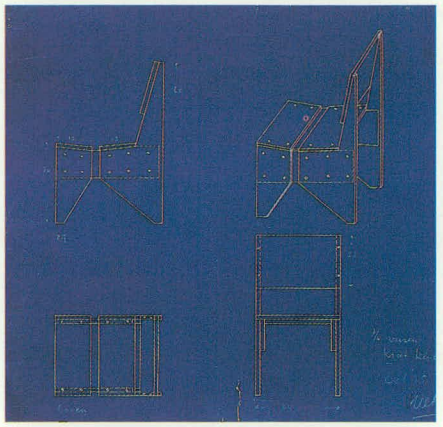
open hall and the dining-cum-sitting room which can be split in two with a folding wall, curtain or another partition. In the Hildebrand house this partition wall consisted of sheets of plywood which could be folded up like a harmonica.

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
46.5 x 63.5cm
RSA

photo c. 1935

230 Child's chair and table

wood
1935



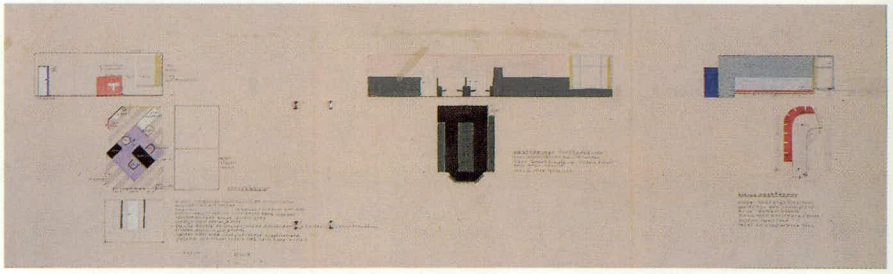
Design drawing
blueprint
33 x 38cm
NAi

231 Layout and furniture surgery and waiting rooms De Jong

Rijksstraatweg 35, Haarlem

1935
interior no longer extant

The furnishing was done by Metz & Co., who illustrated the interior in the brochure with tubular furniture from 1936.



Design drawing waiting room National Health patients
pencil, watercolour on cardboard
23.5 x 57.5cm
NAi

Seat waiting room
wood, metal
78 x 152.5 x 46cm
private collection, Geleen

232 Conversion dwelling 'Vijverhof'

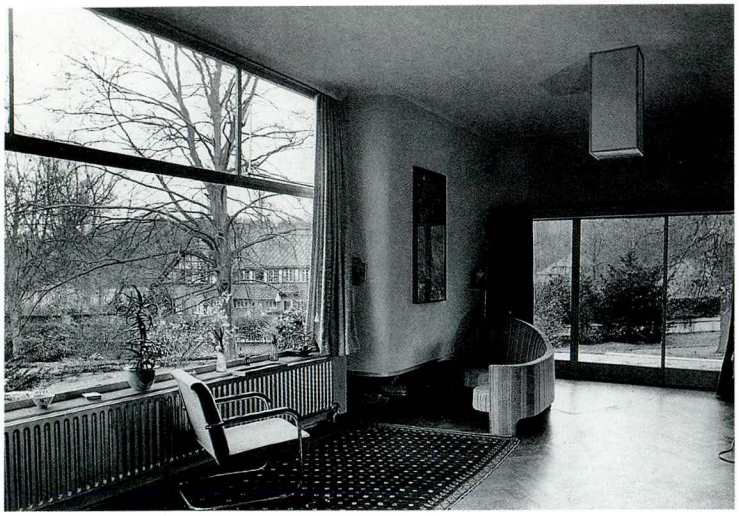
Midden Duin and Daalscheweg 27, Bloemendaal

1935
client Mrs A.H. Hondius-Crone

Couch

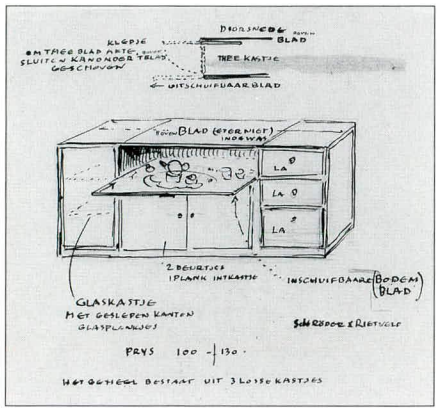
The conversion included library, living room, entrance and studio.
Some designs by Rietveld were also placed in the dwelling, such as a rectangular glass lamp (nr. 243) on the ceiling. An open fireplace was built in the living room. This was quite low and in order to be able to sit properly beside it Rietveld designed a couch especially for this spot, one or two years later.

photos c. 1937



233 Design sideboard

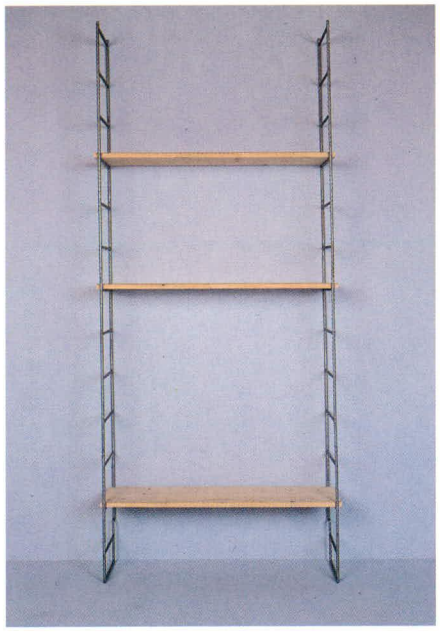
c. 1935
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder



Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
26 x 21.3cm
NAi

234 Bookcase

reinforcing bars, wood
c. 1935



Bookcase
reinforcing bars, wood
220 x 27.5cm
CMU

1935

235 Table with S-shaped leg

c. 1935

The curved lines of the design go well with the round forms in Rietveld's architecture of the 1930s. There are various design drawings on which the different materials are named from which the table could be made, including a model with glass top, an iron leg and wooden boards and a version in birch and alder plywood. An elongated version is also sketched on one of the drawings, which has a rectangular top with rounded corners.

236 Table with circular leg

c. 1935

The table is on the list of furniture for Wilma (no. 255) and according to the information has a glass top. In the Netherlands Architecture Institute there is a design sketch of a comparable table with a somewhat different leg, made for the Hypothecair Crediet Bank (no. 293).

left **table with S-shaped leg**
plywood
60.2 x diam. 70.4cm
right **table with circular leg**
plywood
70 x diam. 50.2cm
Auction Christie's Amsterdam, nos 396, 397

237 Table with leaves

mahogany, iron
69 x 160 x 49cm
c. 1935
Bertus Mulder, Utrecht

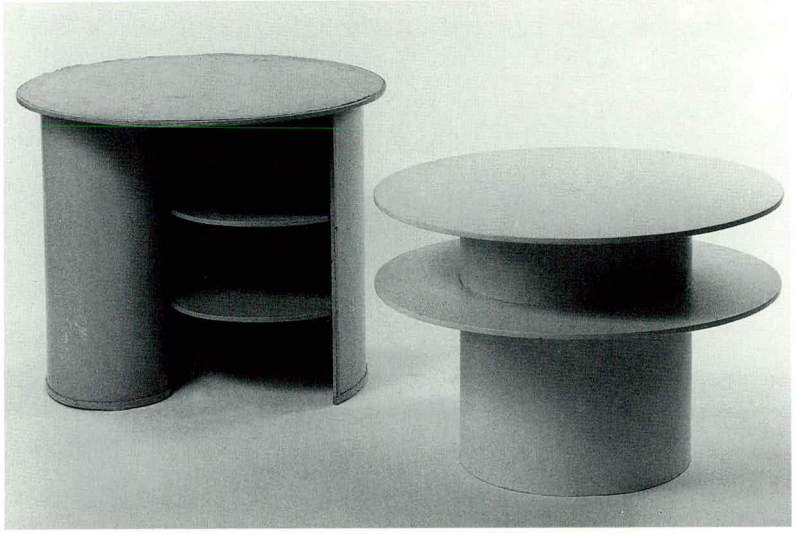
The support of this table is similar to the chairs which Mies van der Rohe designed for the Barcelona pavilion in 1929.

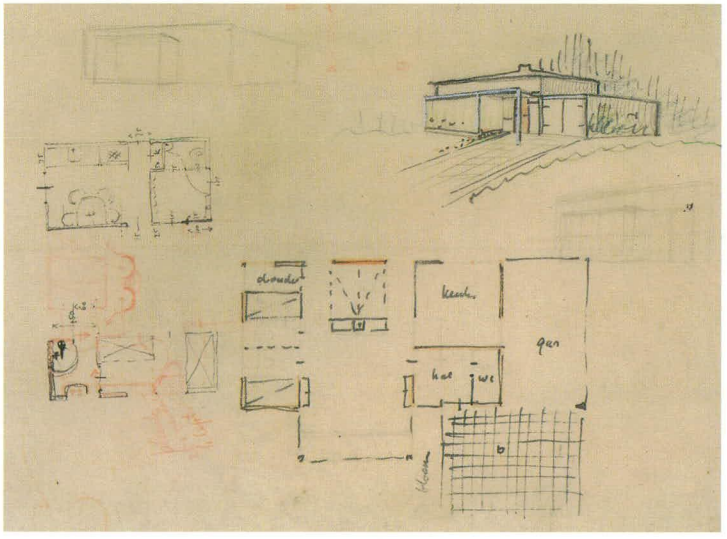
238 Design dwelling Hildebrand Wissel

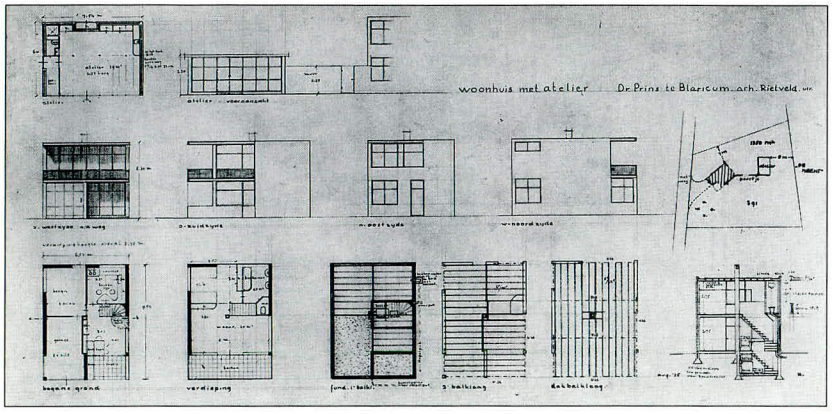
c. 1935
client probably A.D. Hildebrand

This design is possibly an alternative plan for the house built in Blaricum for A.D. Hildebrand (no. 229).

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
25.1 x 26.9cm
RSA







239 Design dwelling Prins Blaricum

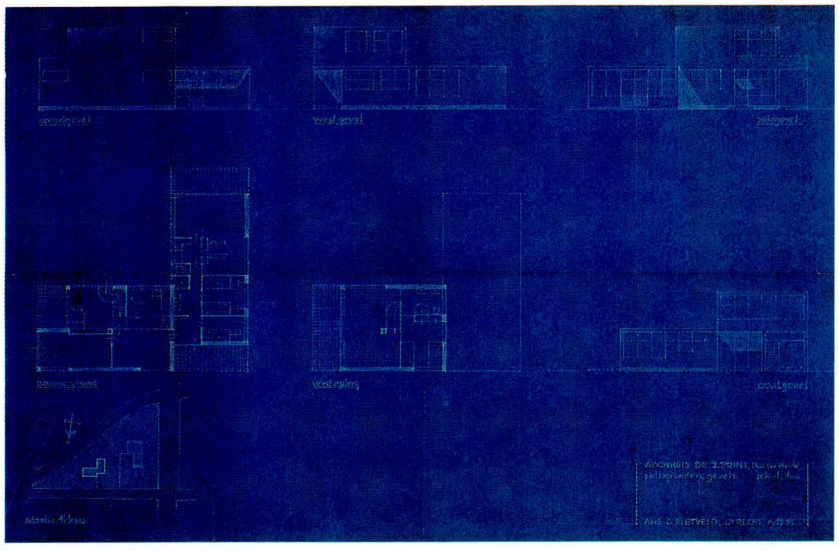
c. 1935

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
38.4 x 67.1cm
NAi

240 Design dwelling Prins Huis ter Heide

c. 1935

Design drawing
blueprint
41.1 x 59cm
RSA



241 Designs wall cupboards with drop-leaf

wood
c. 1935

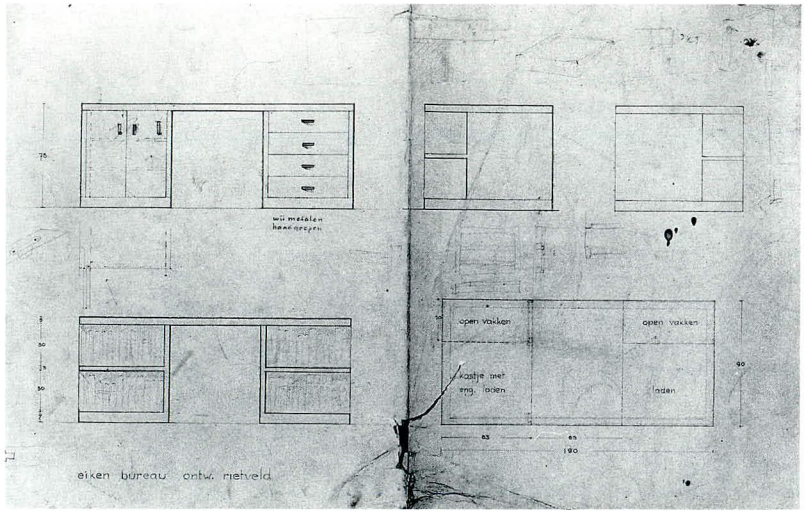
Rietveld designed various wall cupboards, with the leaf serving when opened as table or writing top. This type of cupboard fits in well with his efficient and space-saving furniture designs.

242 Designs desks

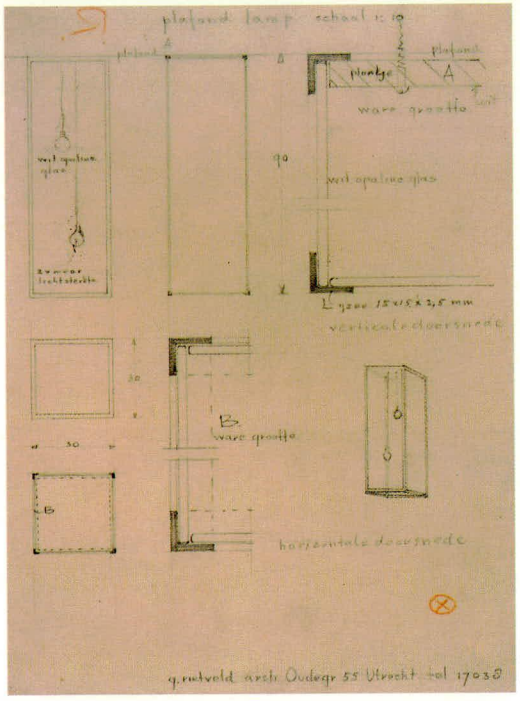
c. 1935

There are various design drawings for oak desks which are similar to the desk which Rietveld designed with Truus Schröder (no. 162) and the crate desk (no. 208), but which tend to be somewhat more traditional in form. All these desks and work tables were probably made for private clients.

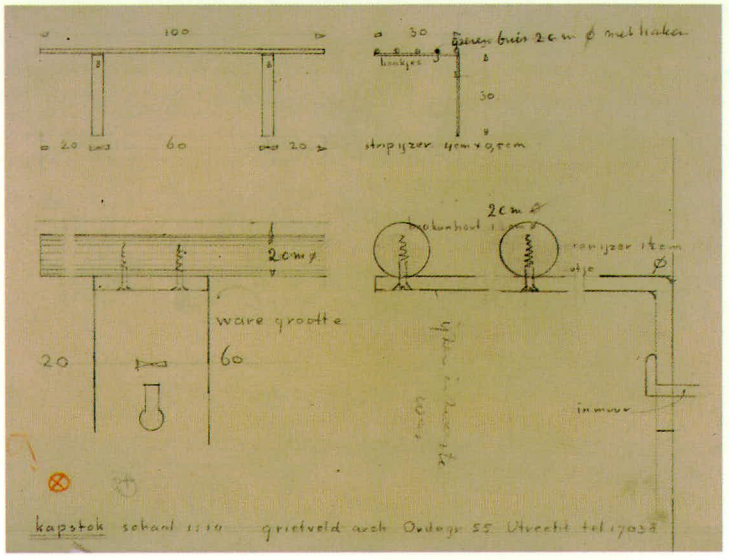
Design drawing
pencil, crayon on cardboard
38 x 60cm
NAi



1935



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
26.6 x 20.9cm
De Leeuw/Metz Archive



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
26.4 x 20.2cm
RSA

1935

243 Ceiling lamp

opaline glass, wood, iron
c. 1935

The oldest photo showing the lamp, which also hung in Rietveld's own house on Vredenburg, is of the interior of the Hondius family (no. 232).

244 Design hat stand

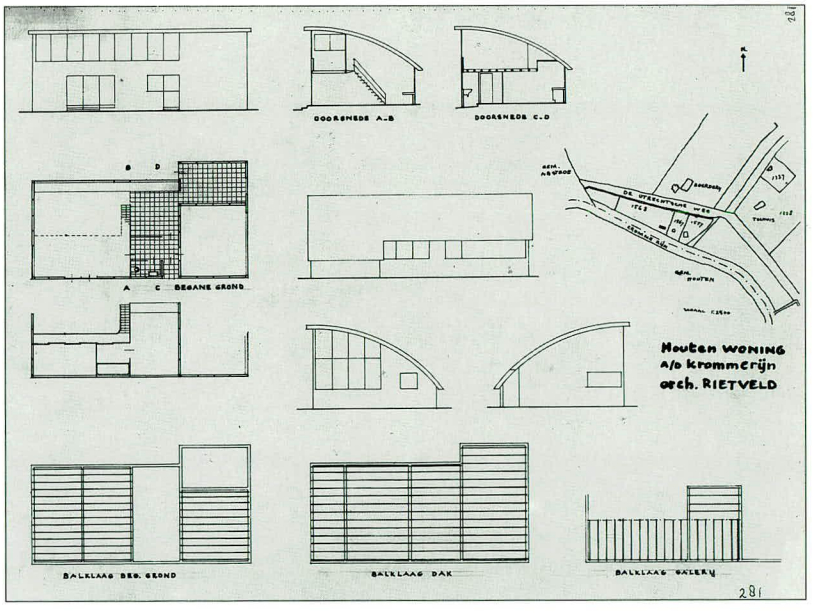
c. 1935

The working drawing of the hat stand is almost identical in layout to that of the ceiling lamp (no. 243). Perhaps both drawings were made for the same end. The hat stand could be made from iron or beech wood.

245 Design wooden dwelling on the river Kromme Rijn

c. 1935

Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
38.4 x 39.4cm
RSA

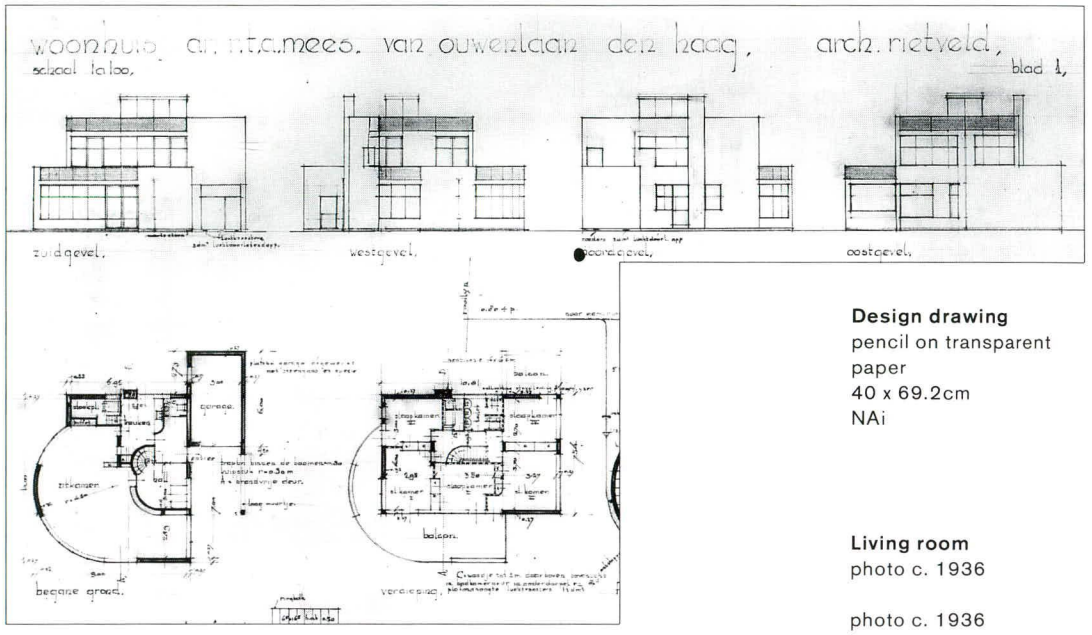


246 **Dwelling Mees**
Van Ouwenlaan 42, The Hague

1934-1936
client R.T.A. Mees
altered

The Mees family probably got to know Rietveld through Metz & Co., a shop they regularly patronized.[1] The cooperation between client and architect was excellent; eventually Rietveld even helped the family to move house. It did take some effort to get approval for the design. Rietveld wrote to Mees not to give up hope. 'But that is just the way it always is, and is perhaps why so few good and above all pleasing houses are built, houses which radiate a joy in life. There is almost no one whose optimism lasts to the end of the building process and yet this is necessary for all.'[2]
The result was worth the trouble. Just like the Hildebrand house (no. 229) this building had a partially circular floor plan. As the house was on a street corner, the form was particularly appropriate. Rietveld was intensively concerned with the interior also. The floor of the hall had blue magnesite, a jointless covering with concave skirting-board which is very easy to clean. The stairs was an open, metal ship's stairs, a type used by Rietveld more than once. The house was furnished with Rietveld furniture and furniture which the family already possessed. In some cases these were adapted by Rietveld; for example, he removed the moulding from the furniture designed by Paul Bromberg.

[1] Told by Mrs D. Mees-Mees 1992.
[2] Letter, 7 April 1935, Rietveld Archive, NAi



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
40 x 69.2cm
NAi

Living room
photo c. 1936

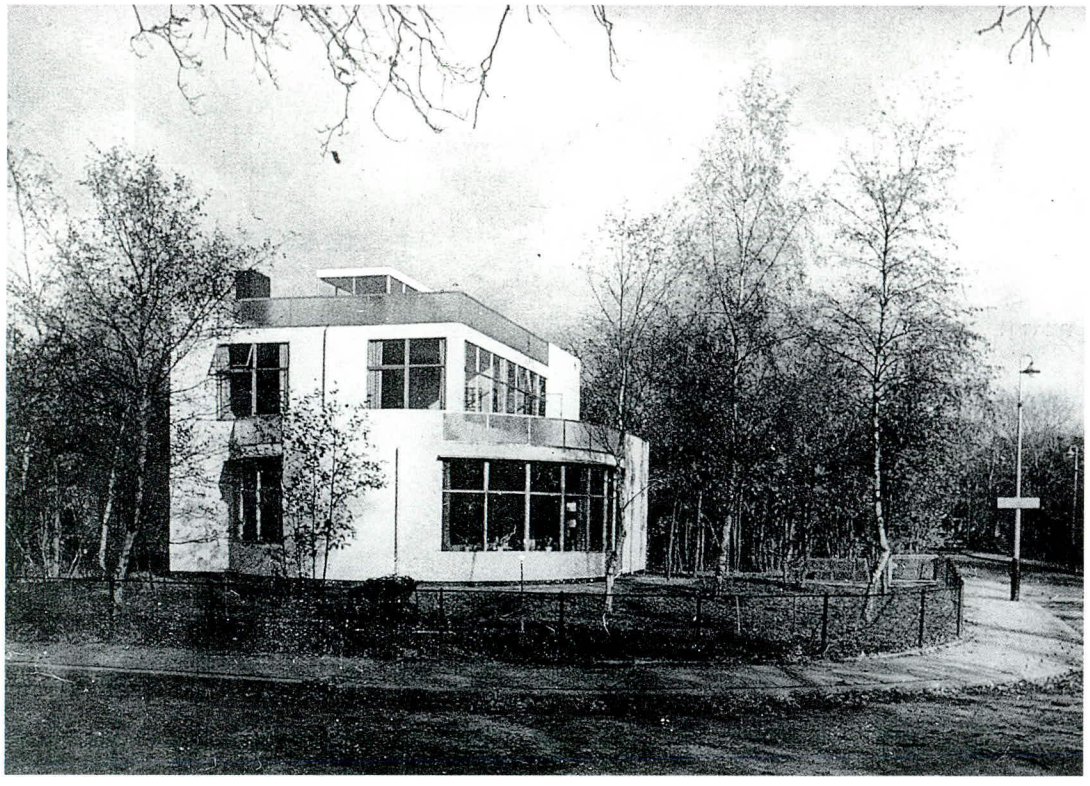


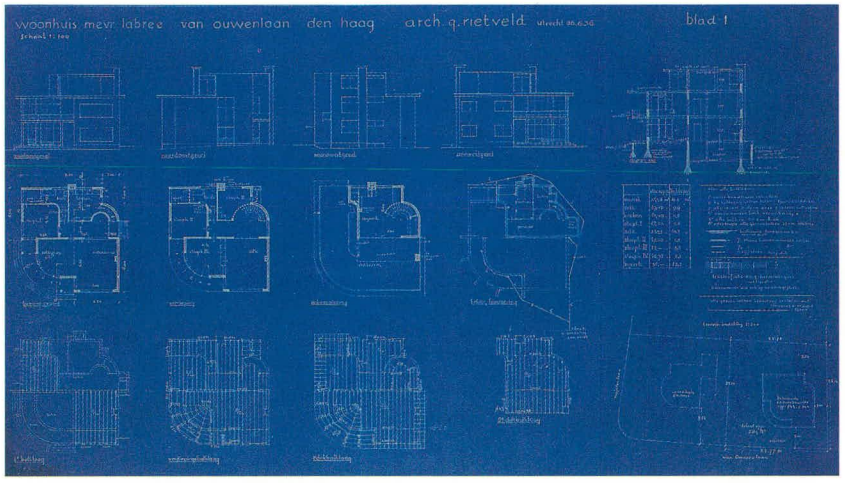
photo c. 1936

1936

247 Design dwelling Labree
Van Ouwenlaan 44,
The Hague

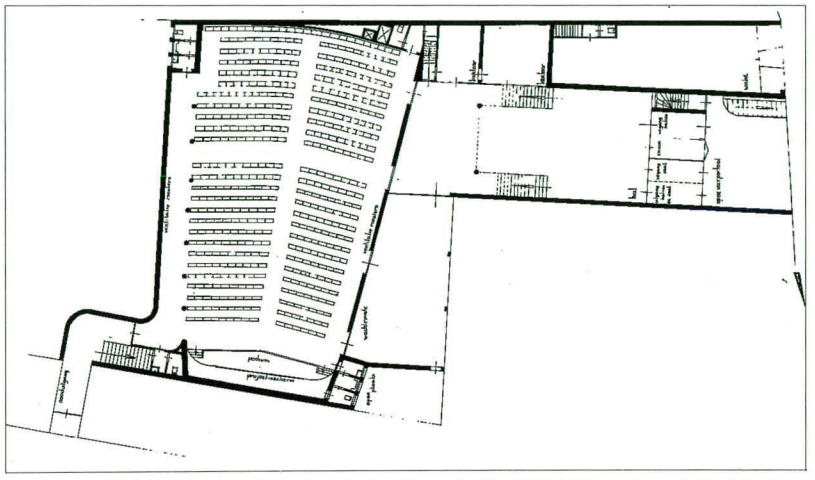
1934-1936
client Mrs Labree-Appun
not realized

Rietveld made various designs for a dwelling, commissioned by the widow Labree-Appun. The house was supposed to be built on the plot adjoining that of R. Mees (no. 246). For unknown reasons the building did not take place. Ultimately the house for P. Wijburg was built here (no. 296).



Design drawing
blueprint
60.6 x 103.2cm
1936
NAi

The Vredenburg became an attractive square after Rietveld had converted the Vreeburg cinema. In order to achieve a better relation between the street wall and the large square, the building was raised a floor. Unity in the facade with the cinema entrance, the upper dwellings and the new floor was achieved by facing the facade with opaline glass behind which shallow light boxes were fitted. Only the windows remained unobstructed. In the daytime, it was a glass facade and at night the light boxes were on, so that the text BIOSCOOP VREEBURG, also designed by Rietveld and placed on the glass, were visible. The interior space was defined by a play of lines



Design drawing cinema
collotype
33.9 x 55cm
RSA

248 Conversion Vreeburg Cinema with two apartments above
Vredenburg 8, Utrecht

1934-1936
client J. Nijland
in collaboration with H. Brusse, T. Schröder-Schräder, B. Schröder, N. van Zwaanenburgh
no longer extant

Invitation and programme for opening

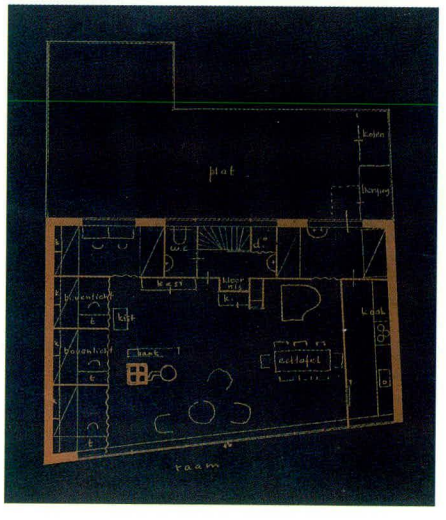
1936

Lettering facade

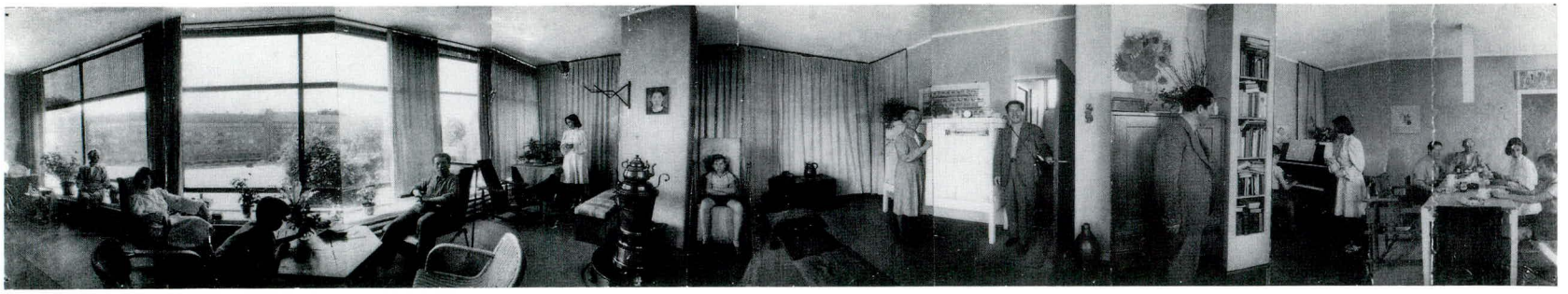
1936

Cinema seat

iron, upholstery
1936



Design drawing
apartment
blueprint
22.2 x 21.3cm
RSA



Dwelling Rietveld
photomontage c. 1947

and colours. From the hall, two stairs led to the balcony and the foyer respectively. In the theatre itself, which had already been renovated once by Rietveld (no. 160), the floor sloped upwards from the middle, both back and forward. The rear wall was curved concavely, and one of the side walls was interrupted below and was supported there by seven slender, circular columns. The ceiling was sanded with fine sand so that like the balcony balustrades it was pale green in colour. There was green moquette on the aisle. The seats, upholstered in light purple, were made by Metz & Co. after a design by Rietveld. To improve the acoustics Rietveld had pressed Genemuiden mats into the wet plaster of the walls. According to J. Nijland jun., Rietveld had his children play their recorders in the theatre in order to determine the quality of the acoustics. The Genemuiden mats formed a decorative pattern and like the walls were painted pink. The pink ran into grey which became increasingly dark towards the screen.
The screen was included in the architecture. There were figures on either side of it, made by applying white scratches in the grey paint.
This artistic contribution was by the Utrecht painter Lambert Simon.

Not only was the cinema unusual as architectural design, it was an extremely advanced whole in other respects too. The ventilation and heating worked on a system which sucked up air, which was heated in the basement and then blown pressurized into the theatre. The air could leave the theatre through perforations in the ceiling. For projecting the films the latest equipment from Siemens was used.

Rietveld and his family moved into the top floor. The apartment reflected his idea about the ideal living space. Behind an eleven-metres-long glass wall the family lived in a single space with niches in which the children slept, behind a curtain. Only the parental bedroom and the kitchen were separated from this space.
The municipality, however, did not give Rietveld permission to live in the open floor and therefore he registered

Programme
opening cinema printed
21.6 x 13.5cm
1936
RSA

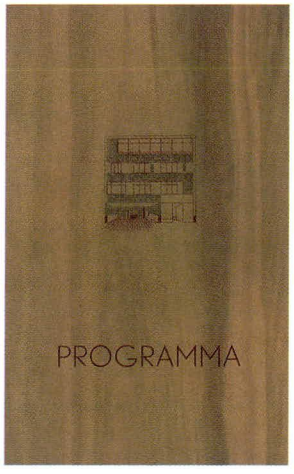
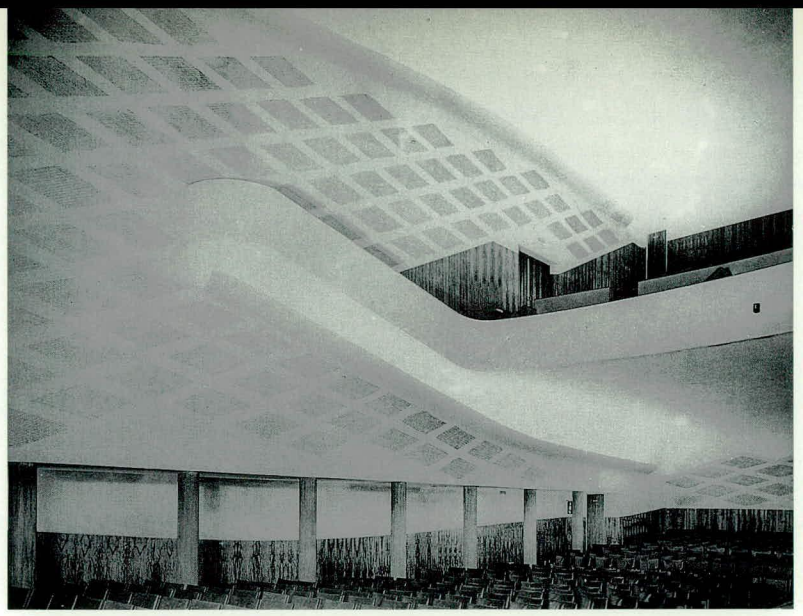


photo c. 1936

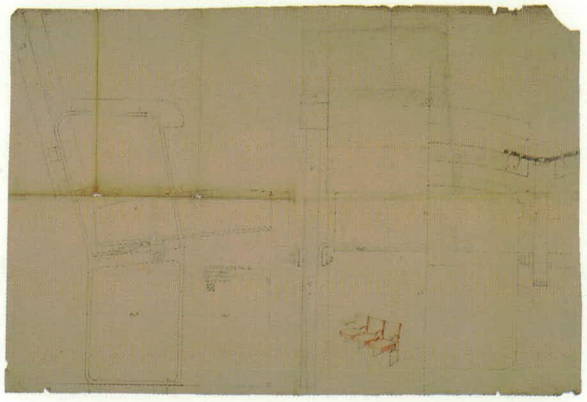
1936



in February 1937 under the address of his architectural office at 55, Oudegracht in Utrecht. According to J. Nijland jun. Rietveld never sent a bill for the conversion, but never paid rent either.

Theatre
photo c. 1936

1936

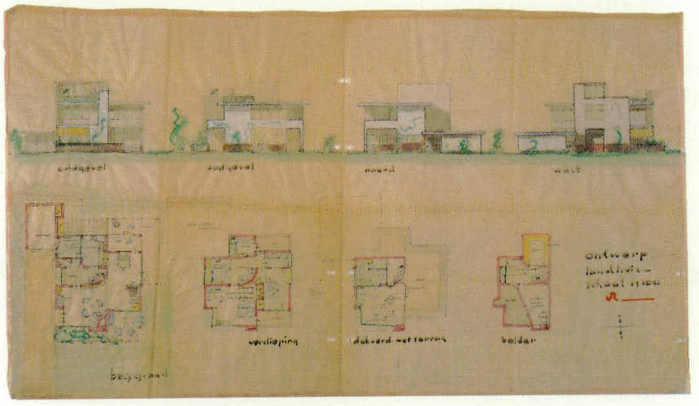


Design drawing cinema seat
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
85 x 123.5cm
1936
De Leeuw/Metz Archive

249 Dwelling Smedes
Van Weerden Poelman-laan 1, Den Dolder

1935-1936
client J.J.A. Smedes

J. Smedes was a relative of Rietveld's wife. The house which Rietveld designed for him is comparable to that of Hillebrandt (no. 224). Inside, every inch of space has been utilized in every possible way. The radiator, for example, is placed vertically against the wall in the hall because of lack of space. There was a wire glass serving wall between kitchen and living room and the linen cupboards reach from floor to ceiling and have sliding doors instead of hinged ones. The whole looks extremely modern. When in 1952 Mrs Smedes, after having lived in the house for fifteen years, was interviewed by the journal *De vrouw en haar huis*, she remarked: 'that is what is striking about everything in this house: things look so strange at first sight that you could get the impression that it would eventually become unpleasant, but that is not at all the case. The longer you live with them, the more familiar they become and the more they come to be a part of you.' In 1958 Rietveld converted the dwelling at the request of the new owner, T. Schmidt.
A two-storey piece was added on the garden side. In 1961 Rietveld made another design for a conversion, which was not carried out.

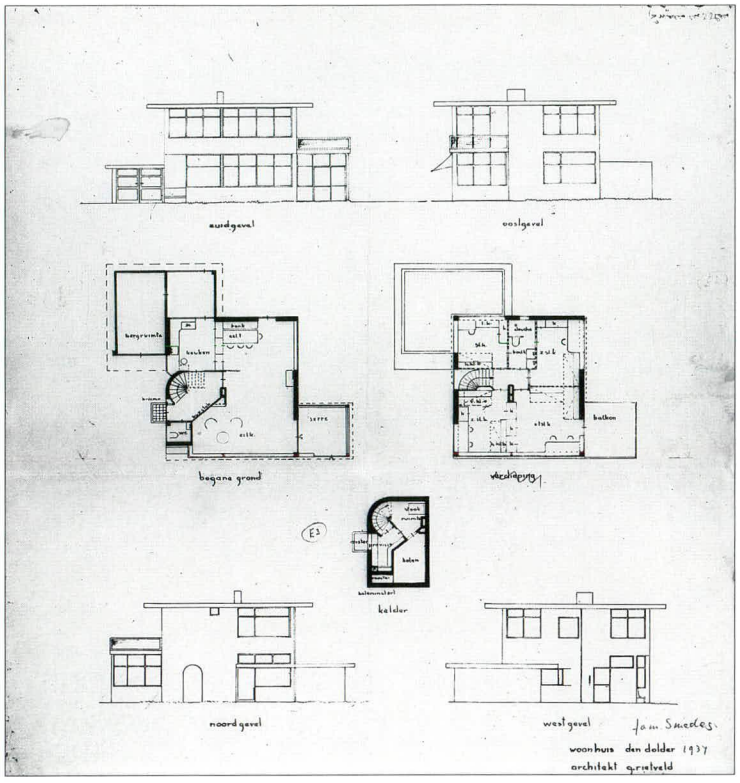


Rough draft,
not realized
ink, coloured ink on transparent paper
47.5 x 77.8cm
NAi

250 Furniture Smedes

1936

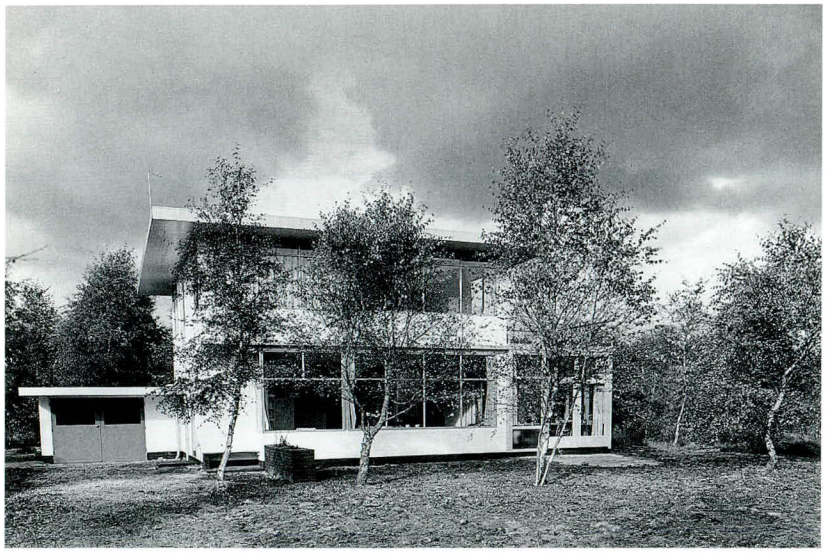
Rietveld designed some of the furniture for the Smedes house, including two desks, bookcases, a sideboard and a record-case. The two small desks, which linked up in height with the windowsills, increasing the work surface, consisted of a top, a standing shelf and a set of drawers. A bookcase with sliding doors and a bookcase fixed to the wall above a folding bed also took up as little space as possible. The furniture was painted in bright colours: yellow, red, black and grey. The Smedes heirs also possess a number of pieces of furniture designed by Rietveld which were not made especially for the house, including a rectangular table of aluminium and fibreboard, an octagonal mirror and a triangular mirror with an aluminium frame.



Design drawing
collotype
48.1 x 42.7cm
RSA

1936

photo c. 1936



Living room
photo c. 1936

251 **Design summerhouse Repelaer**
Wolfskuil 15, Ommen

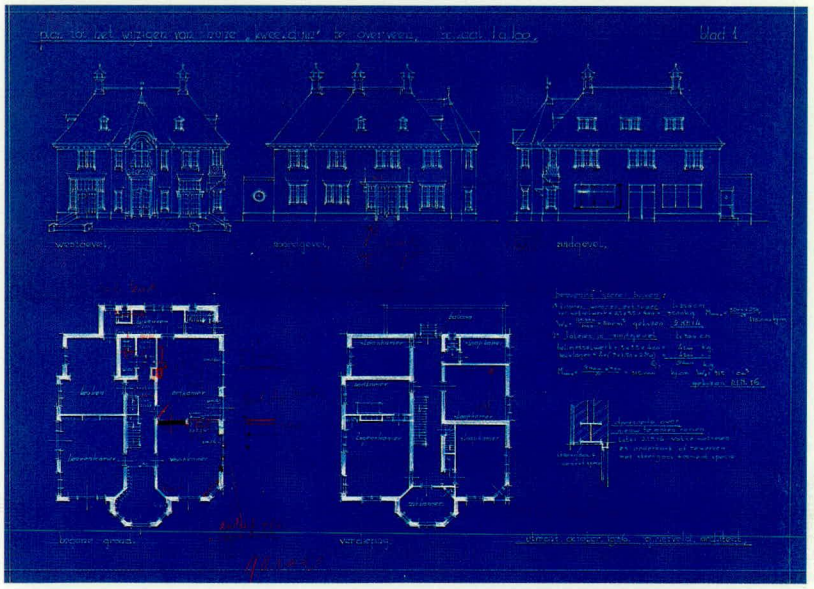
1936

252 **Conversion Cornelis Begeer Jeweller's**
Oudkerkhof 27, Utrecht

1936
client C.L.J. Begeer
no longer extant

253 **Conversion 'Kweekduin' house**
Acacialaan 10, Bloemendaal

1936
client S. Posthuma



Design drawing
crayon on blueprint
47.4 x 63cm
RSA

254 **Design conversion of dwelling Volmer**
Wolphaartsdijk

1936
client G. Volmer

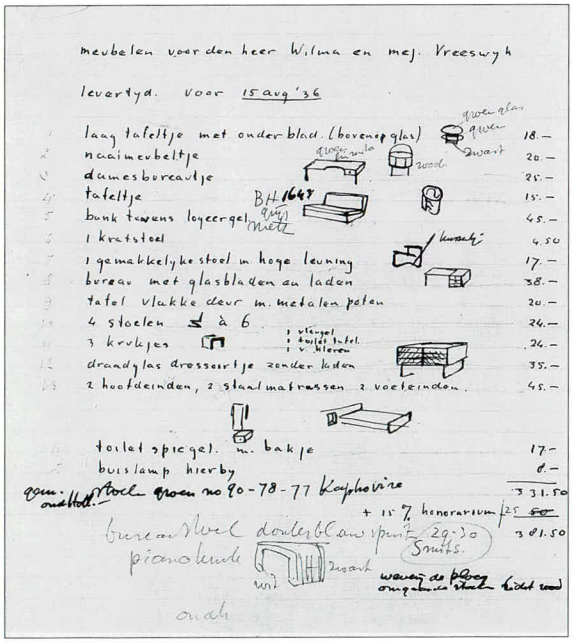
In 1936 the Utrecht doctor, G. Volmer, bought a house in Wolphaartsdijk in Zealand. He asked Rietveld to make a design for the conversion. The house was to include a surgery, a laboratory and a dispensing chemist's.

255 Furniture Wilma

1936

This list of pieces of furniture is probably connected to a contract for designing the interior of a house. Most of the furniture Rietveld chose was produced by Metz & Co. A table for eight, a table made out of a door and with iron legs, and a small table with two round top pieces on two crossed boards were possibly specially made for Mr Wilma and Ms Vreeswijk. Rietveld probably designed many interiors in the 1930s.

Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
25.5 x 21cm
NAi

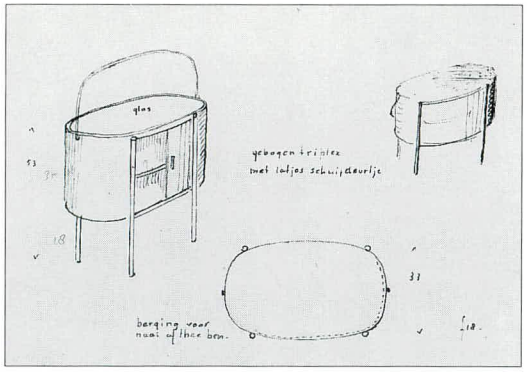


256 Needlework cabinet

metal
c. 1936

Among the pieces of furniture designed by Rietveld that were included in Metz's brochure for 1938 is a needlework cabinet with shutters of chromium plate. The shape is identical with the piece of furniture for sewing equipment included in the list of furniture for Wilma (no. 255).

Design drawing
ink on paper
21.3 x 31cm
NAi



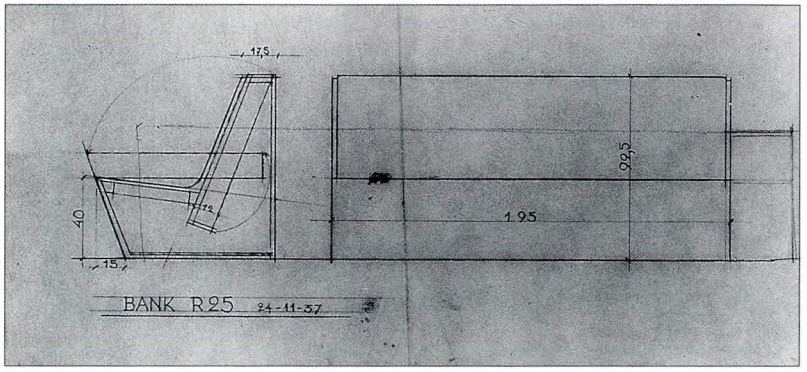
257 Divan bed

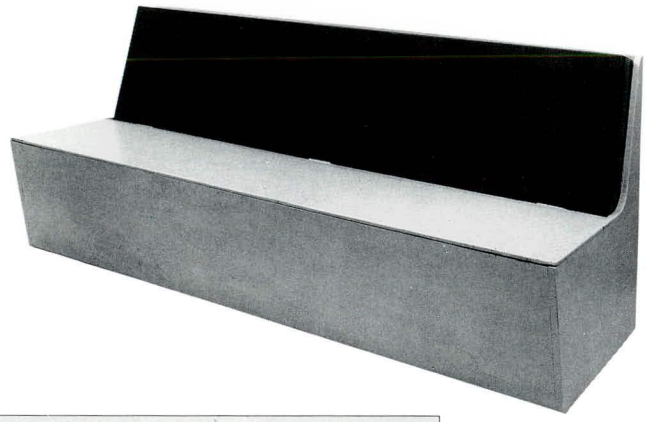
wood
c. 1936

Rietveld often included divan beds in his designs for house interiors. Usually they formed a definite part of the interior, as in Van Ravensteyn-Hintzen's summerhouse (no. 222). Metz & Co. sold the divan as a separate piece of furniture. A version in white oak is illustrated in the brochure accompanying their furniture display in 1938 (no. 279).

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
28.2 x 39.4cm
RSA

Divan bed
deal
82 x 186.5 x 71cm
CMU





1936

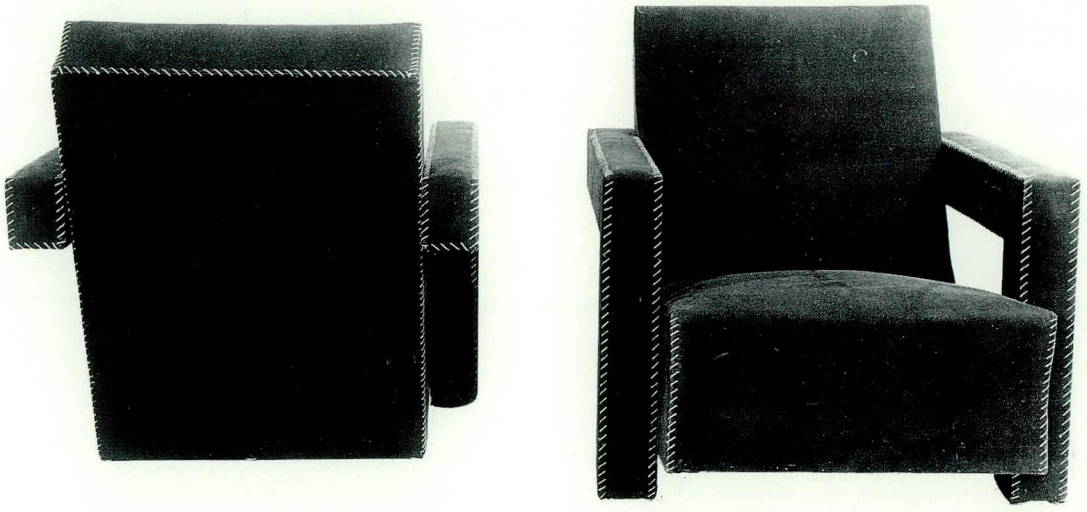


photo c. 1937

1937

258 Armchair

wood, upholstery
1936-1937

This armchair was Rietveld's first design for a piece of upholstered furniture. He probably made the chair because there was a demand for easy chairs from his private customers as well as those of Metz & Co. The back and seat of the armchair are at right angles and the connecting part rests on the ground. The arms and front legs are also joined at right angles. The front part of the seat juts out 10cm beyond the front legs which means that the seat and back slope slightly backwards. The chair is covered with dark brown sailcloth, that is sewn at the seams with a decorative fisherman's bend, but could also be supplied with a different fabric. The chair was shown by Metz & Co. for the first time in their 1937 brochure under the number R 31 and it was on view in the model interior, 'De nieuwe woning', in The Hague in the same year (no. 267). A three-person sofa was also supplied that was based on this model. The chair was produced by Metz again after the war. In a Metz brochure of 1963 an armchair, a sofa for two and one for three people upholstered with a woollen fabric were on sale.[1] Metz never put the round version, now made by Cassina, into production.

[1] De Leeuw/Metz Archive.

259 Wooden summerhouse (twelve-sided)

1937
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
demolished

Design wooden summerhouse (octagonal)

1937
not realized

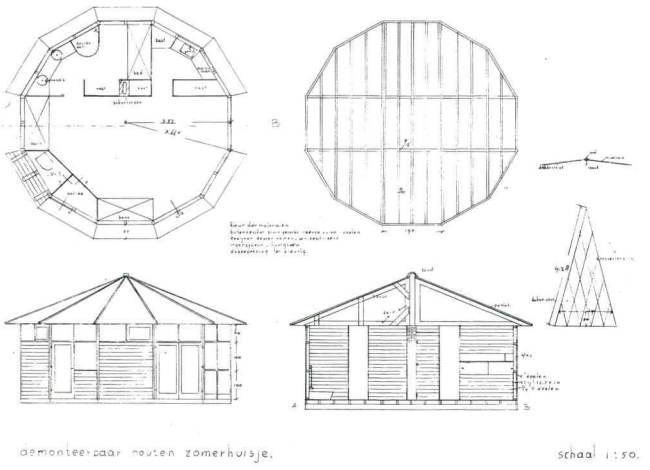
Design wooden summerhouse (pointed roof)

1937
not realized

Logo, brochure and publicity board for wooden summerhouses

1937

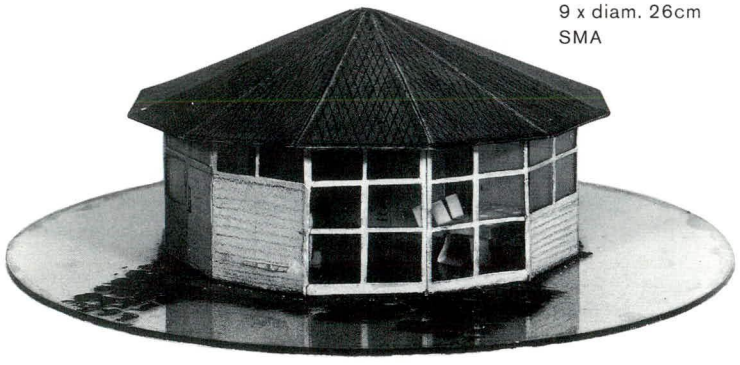
Publicity board
paint on plywood
14.5 x 7.1cm
RSA



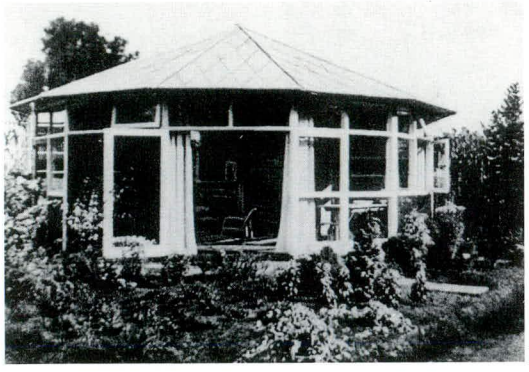
The summerhouses that Rietveld designed for D. van Ravensteyn-Hintzen and J. Gaarenstroom in 1934-1935 (nos 222 and 223) must have given him the idea of making a design for wooden summerhouses that, like his crate furniture (no. 208), could be delivered as a readymade article. In 1937 together with T. Schröder he launched the 'Houten Zomer Huis', or HZH , project. It was an original initiative. The project was carefully prepared. There were publicity handouts in the form of wooden boards and information leaflets. In 1937 there was a display model at the Utrecht autumn fair. For a thousand guilders, 'including assembly and finishing' one could be the lucky owner of a summerhouse. An extra service offered was assistance in applying for a building permit. The summerhouse was available in a standard model with a 12-sided base and a diameter of 7.40m. A house with an octagonal base and a diameter of five metres could also be supplied on demand. The twelve-sided house consisted of a living room, a bedroom with a shower and a kitchen; there was space for six people to sleep. The many-sided floor plan with windows all the way round enabled Rietveld to create an attractive space in a relatively small surface area. According to Truus Schröder's son, Binnert Schröder, there was plenty of interest in the summerhouses. However, because they were semi-permanent, the building regulations prevented them from being built anywhere.

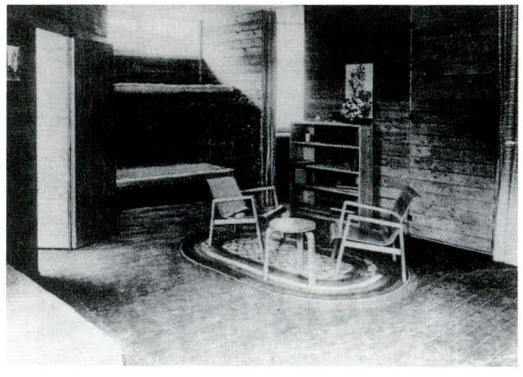
Design drawing
pencil on paper
36 x 48.7cm
RSA

Maquette
paper, glass, cardboard
9 x diam. 26cm
SMA



photos c. 1937





1937

260 Interior V.d. Reiss
Tintorettostraat 9,
Amsterdam

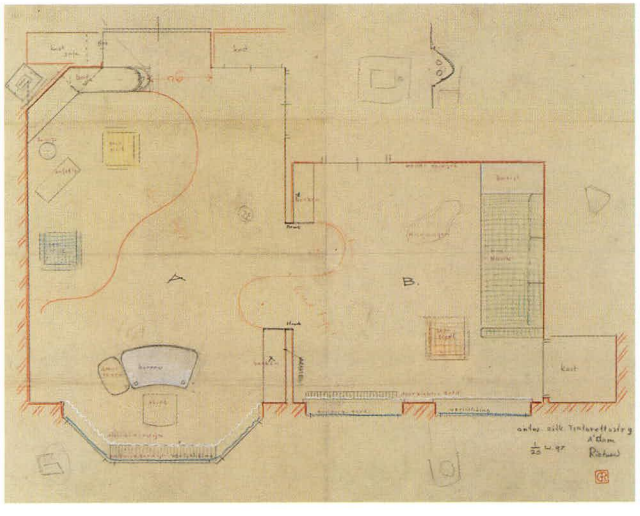
1937

Rietveld designed the interior for the hall and living room of 9, Tintorettostraat in Amsterdam. It was realized by Metz & Co. A ground plan shows how the space was to be distributed; it also lists the elements that went to make up the interior. The proposal was realized with only one difference: the serving trolley was replaced with a round table by Franz Singer. Rietveld designed a three-person sofa, a cupboard and a desk with drawers especially for this room. He chose two colours for the floor covering that interlocked in an S-shape that was set off with strips of aluminium. A small detail like this is a good example of Rietveld's virtuosity and shows clearly just how unorthodox his handling of space was. The two parts of the room were visually linked to each other in a way that was exceptionally elegant. The colour scheme is predominantly grey with blue and red accents. The daybed is coloured crab pink and pale moss-green.

photos c. 1937

1937

Design drawing living room
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
38.6 x 47.4cm
De Leeuw/Metz Archive



261 Low table

glass, metal
1937

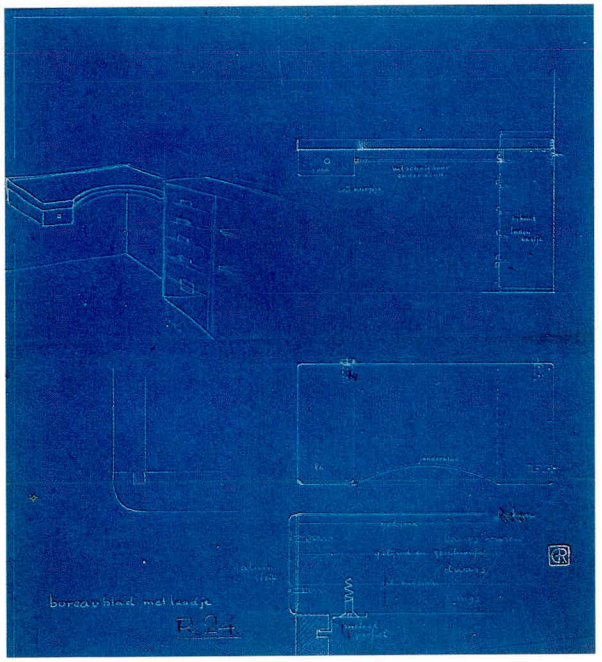
The table can be seen in the same drawing as the upholstered armchair (no. 258). They were exhibited together in the living room area of the bedroom-cum-living room of the show interior, 'De nieuwe woning', in The Hague in 1937 (no. 267). On the design drawing Rietveld prescribes that the rough iron legs should be finished with black wax.

262 Desk with drawer

wood, metal
1937

The desk consists of a top without legs that is fitted to the wall; it has one drawer. The blueprint bears the Metz number R 24 (see also no. 267).

Design drawing
blueprint
32 x 28.2cm
RSA



263 Cupboard, bed and reading lamp

wood
1937

In the blueprint in the Rietveld Schröder Archive, Metz's numbers R 27 and R 28 are noted in pencil (see also no. 267).

264 Toilet mirror with drawer

glass, wood, metal
1937

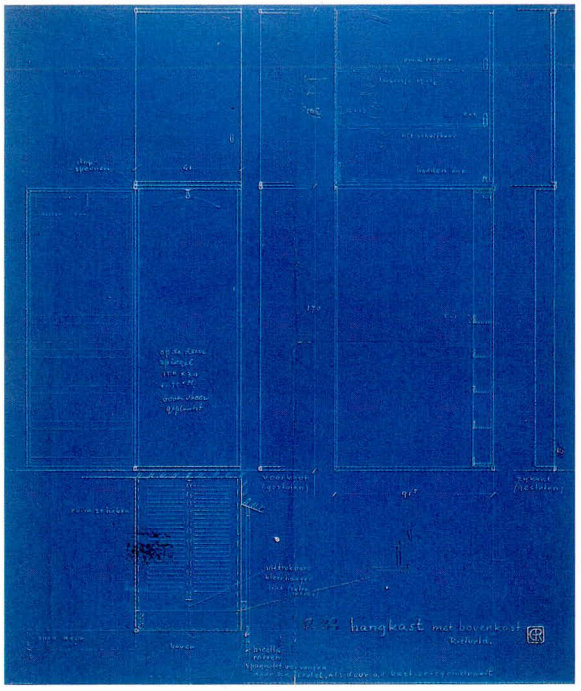
In the blueprint in the Rietveld Schröder Archive, Metz's number R 30 is noted in pencil (see also no. 267).

265 Wardrobe with top compartment

wood
1937

In the blueprint in the Rietveld Schröder Archive, Metz's number R 33 is noted (see also no. 267).

Design drawing
blueprint
41 x 33.5cm
RSA

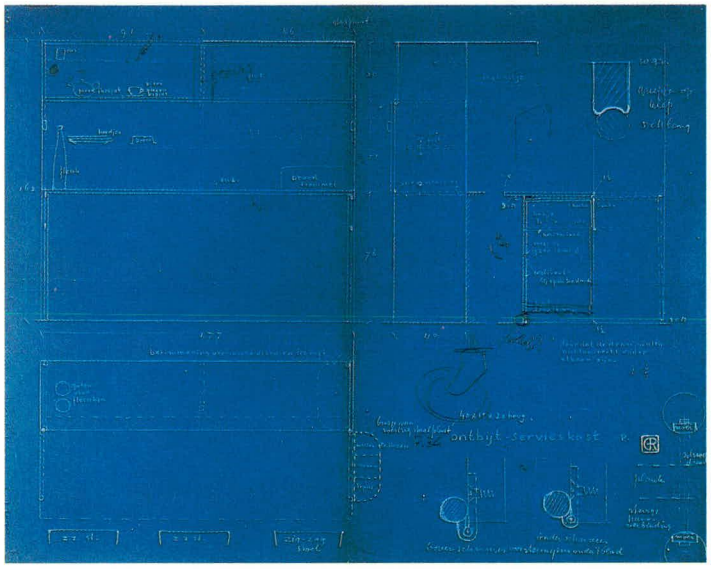


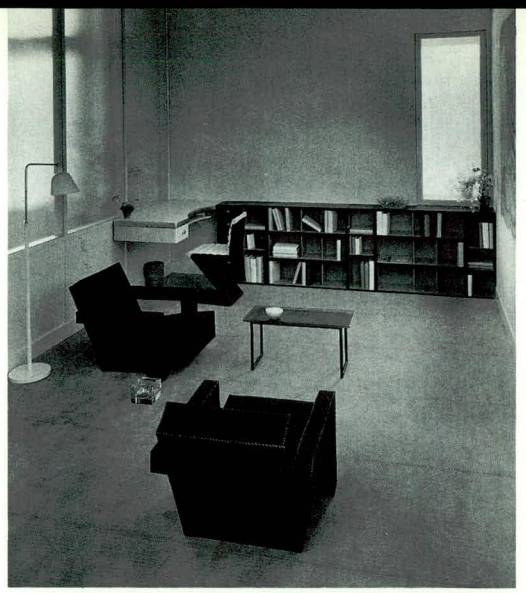
266 Breakfast crockery cupboard

wood, glass, metal
1937

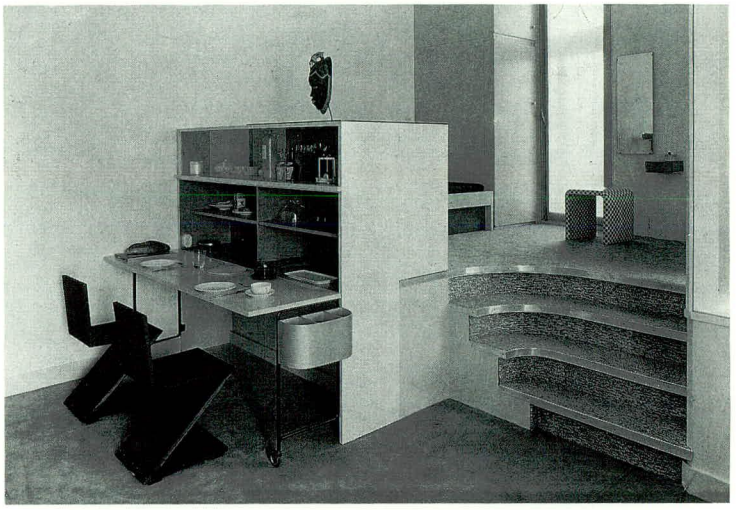
There is also a design for a somewhat simpler version of this cupboard (see also no. 267).

Design drawing
blueprint
32.5 x 40.2cm
De Leeuw/Metz Archive





photos 1937

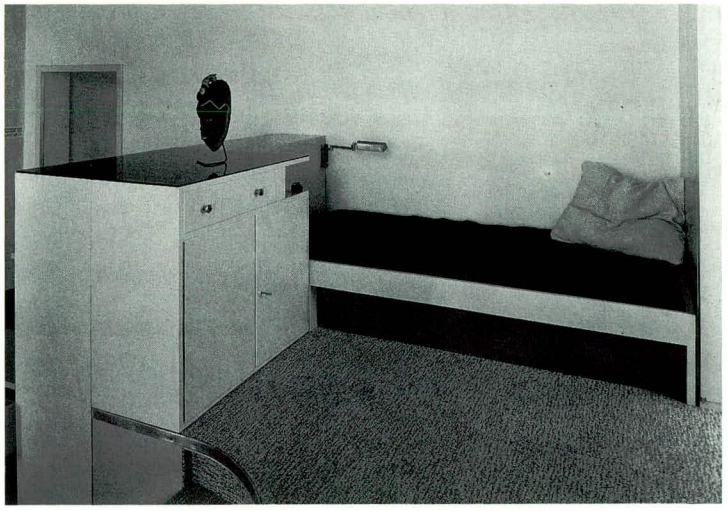


1937

267 Bedroom-cum-living room 'De nieuwe woning' Metz & Co., The Hague

For this interior Rietveld used a number of older designs (nos 189, 227) but also some that were probably exhibited for the first time on this occasion (nos 262-266).

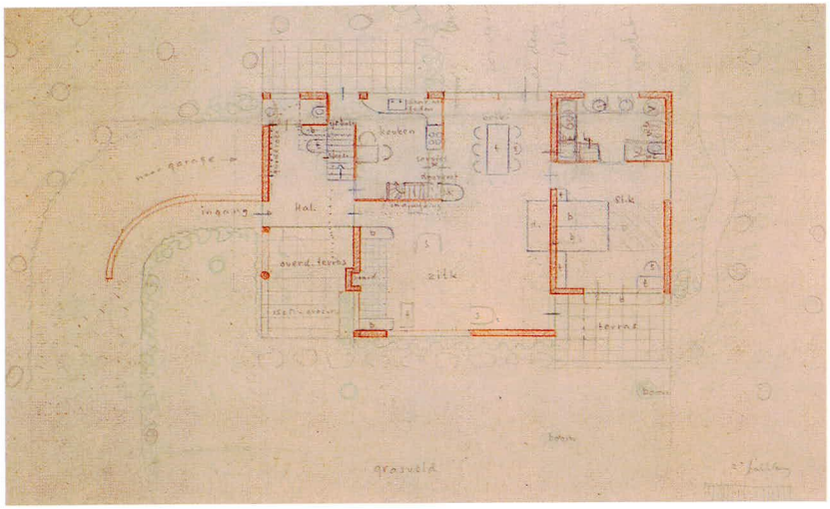
1937
client Metz & Co.



268 Design dwelling Van Beek

1937

Only the floor plans of this design are extant. One can see from them that it was to have been a bungalow with underground garage. On the drawing is written 'sketch v. Beek'.

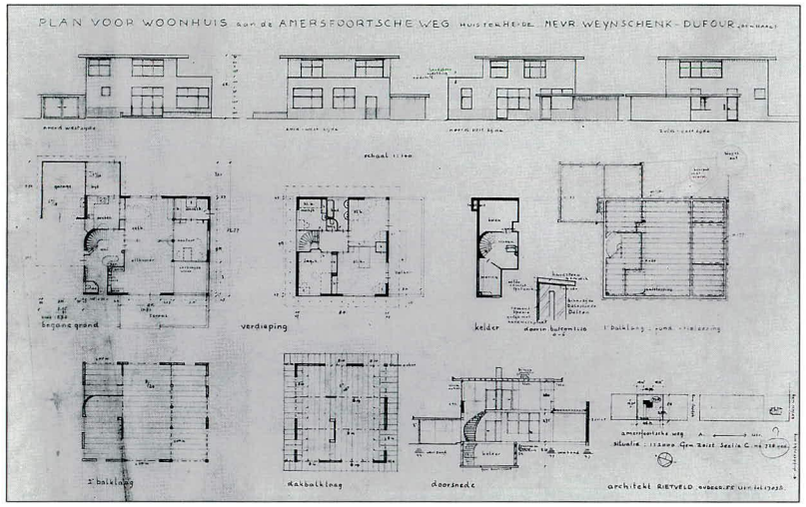


Design drawing
crayon on paper
42 x 33cm
NAi

269 Design dwelling Mrs Weynschenk-Dufour Amersfoortseweg, Huis ter Heide

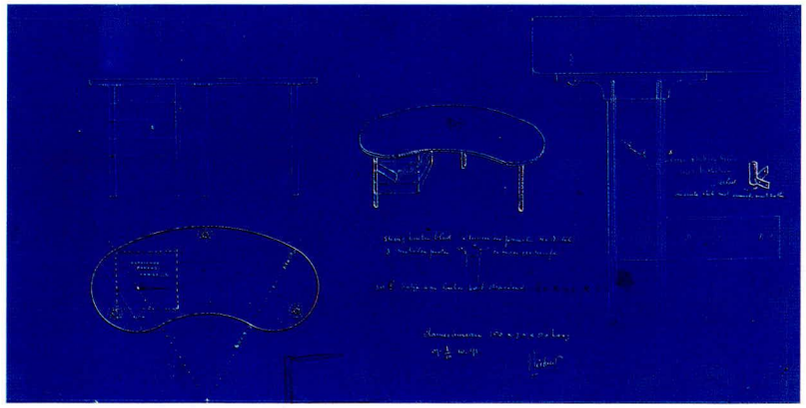
1937

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
52 x 77.5cm
NAi



270 Design lady's desk

wood, metal
c. 1937



Design drawing
crayon on blueprint
30 x 55cm
RSA

1937

271 Bed on castors

metal, elm, rubber
16.6 x 192.1 x 69.8cm
c. 1937
CMU

The bed is from the Rietveld Schröder House.

272 Bed

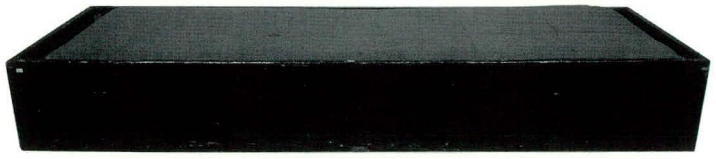
metal, chipboard, wood
44.5 x 193 x 80cm
c. 1937
CMU

The bed is from the Rietveld Schröder House.

273 Bed frame with springs and bedstead

deal, metal, plywood
30.6 x 199.5 x 69.3cm
c. 1937
CMU

The bed is from the Rietveld Schröder House.

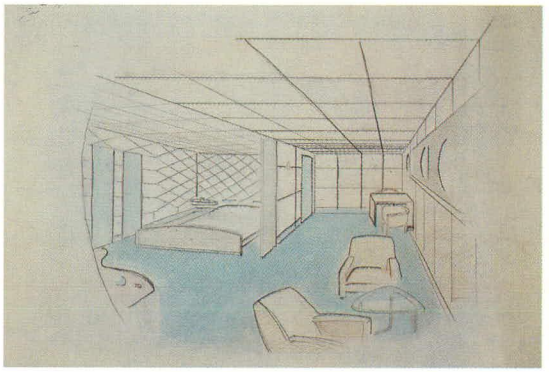


1937

274 Interior and furniture luxury cabin on the 'Nieuw Amsterdam', Holland America Line

1936-1938
client
NV Nederlandsch-Amerikaansche Stoomvaart-maatschappij

Various architects, including Rietveld and J.J.P. Oud, were asked to participate in designing interiors for the luxury passenger ship, the 'Nieuw Amsterdam'. The Rotterdam architect's firm of Brinkman and Van der



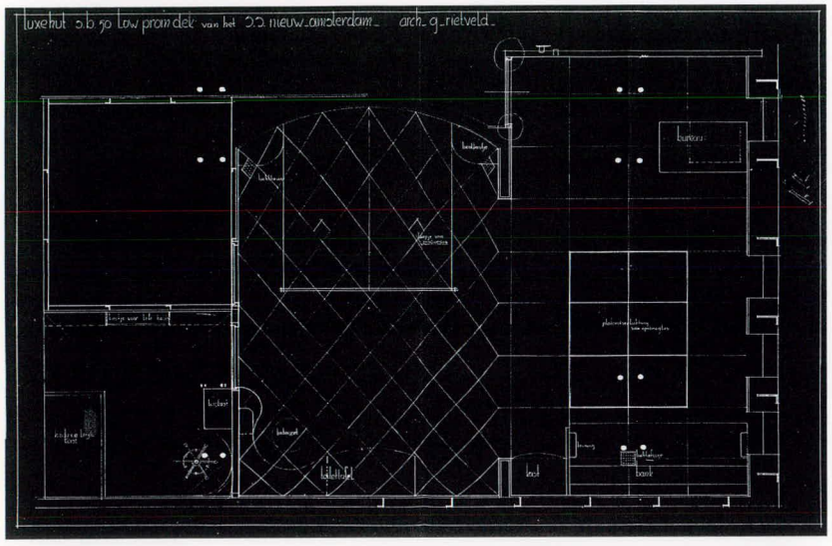
Presentation drawing
pencil, watercolour on paper
40 x 51cm
NAi

Vlugt was responsible for coordinating the project. The furniture that Rietveld designed included, amongst other pieces: a double bed, a sofa bed, two upright chairs, two armchairs, a dressing table, a small table and a hat stand. The upright chair that has legs of curved tubular steel is more or less the same model as a chair by J.J.P. Oud from 1934. The furniture was produced by the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Meubelfabrieken H.P. Mutters & Zoon in The Hague. Rietveld chose white leather to cover the walls. He wanted the Utrecht painter, Pyke Koch, to make paintings on the white leather above the beds and the dressing table. Two colour samples and various instructions for the colour of the interiors have been preserved. The furniture is blue, blue-grey, purple and pink, the floor covering green, black, white and grey and the curtains are pale green. Rietveld estimated the total costs at Dfl. 4760. His own fee was Dfl. 350. The photographer, Eva Besnyö,

recalls that the white padded leather, fixed with copper nails, was intended to make the whole interior look even more expensive and luxurious.
The cabin was fairly soon demolished. Rietveld himself was not very satisfied with the result.[1]

[1] Told by Eva Besnyö, 1992 and correspondence RSA.

Design drawing
blueprint
62 x 89cm
NAi



275 Conversion fifteen flats and a caretaker's flat, Ekawo

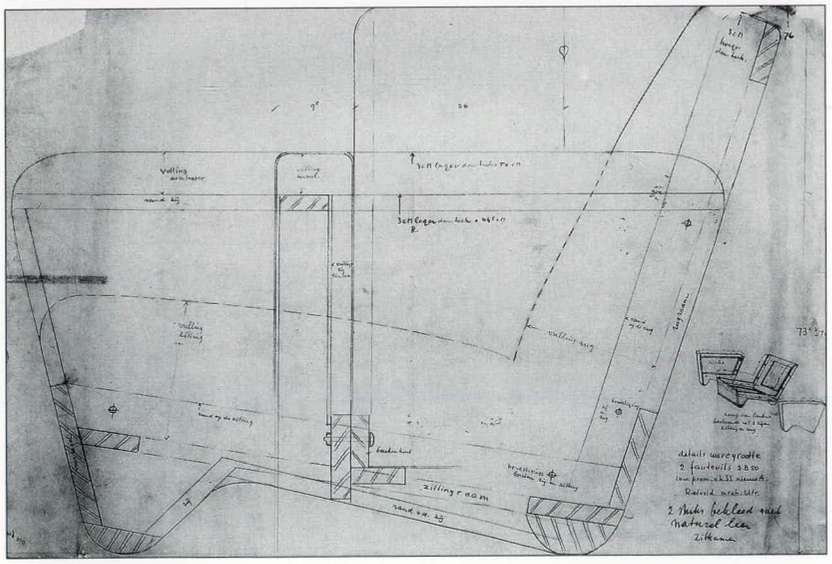
Kenaupark 4, Haarlem

1937-1938
client Stichting voor Vrouwen door Vrouwen
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder
altered

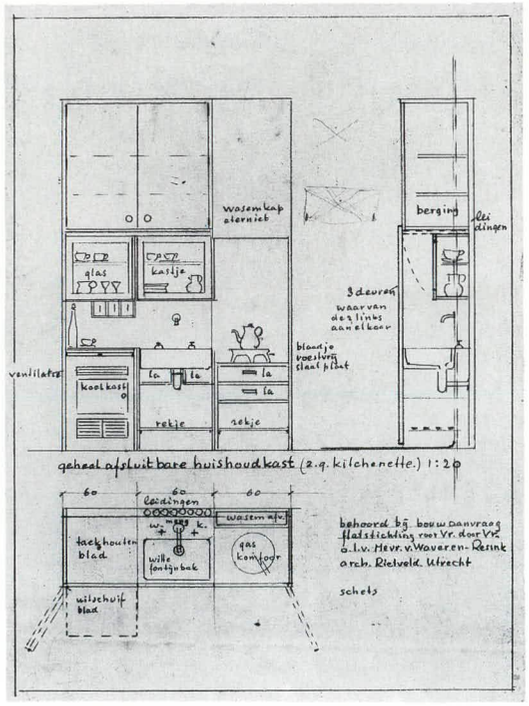
In 1937 Mrs E.J. van Waveren-Resink initiated in Haarlem the 'Flatstichting voor Vrouwen door Vrouwen (Foundation for flats for women and by women) in imitation of the Women's Pioneer Housing Ltd. The foundation bought a stately villa in Haarlem and invited Rietveld to convert the premises into twelve one-room flats, three two-room flats and a caretaker's flat. Rietveld left the outside and layout of the building intact.
He provided the flats, intended for single working women, with all kinds of amenities and space-saving facilities, such as a refrigerator, a kitchenette and a closet by the front door that communicated with the outside so that one could receive groceries or leave rubbish. A sliding wall could be

Door with ironing board
deal, plywood, fabric
200 x 73.5 x 17cm
CMU

1938



Design drawing
armchair
pencil on transparent paper
76 x 104.5cm
NAi



Design drawing
cupboard
pencil on paper
21.8 x 30.2cm
RSA

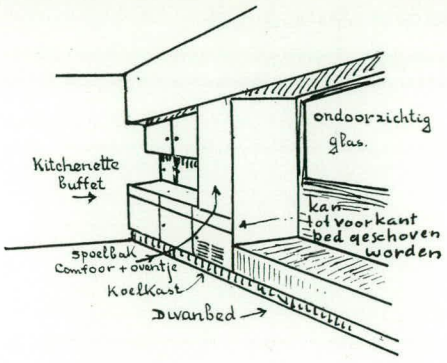


Illustration from Van Oven 1938, 112

moved to either side of the bed, so that it could be used as a sofa during the day and was separated from the living room at night. An important point, Rietveld emphasized, was the absence of the 'housekeeping factor'.[1] Housekeeping should be reduced to a minimum.

[1] G. Rietveld, lecture (no title) RSA 118; see also Küper 1988, 108-125.

276 Conversion dentist's practice Schutte
Bloemendaalseweg 111, Bloemendaal

1937-1938
client G.F.M. Schutte

The dentist Schutte was an enthusiastic client who was closely involved in the work that he ordered. During the design process he maintained a constant correspondence with Rietveld. From it we can see that Schutte knew exactly what he wanted while leaving it to Rietveld to put his ideas into practice. 'I'm more at home with teeth. With your fertile imagination, you should be able to figure something out from my scribblings', he wrote to Rietveld on 4 October 1937.[1]

[1] This letter is in the Rietveld Archive, NAi.

1938

Interior
photo c. 1938

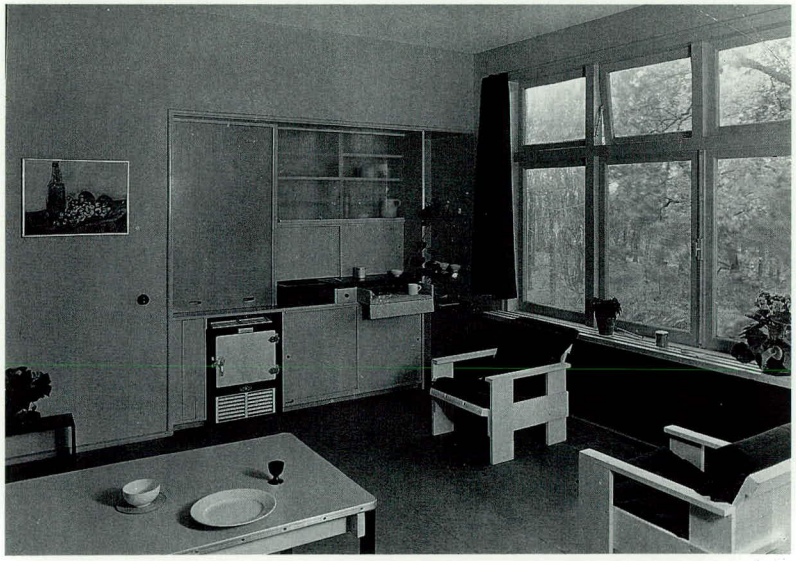
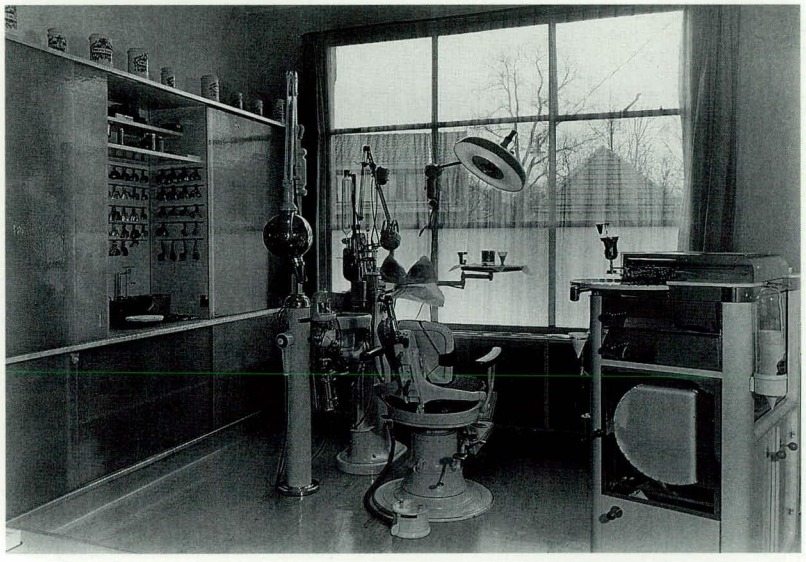
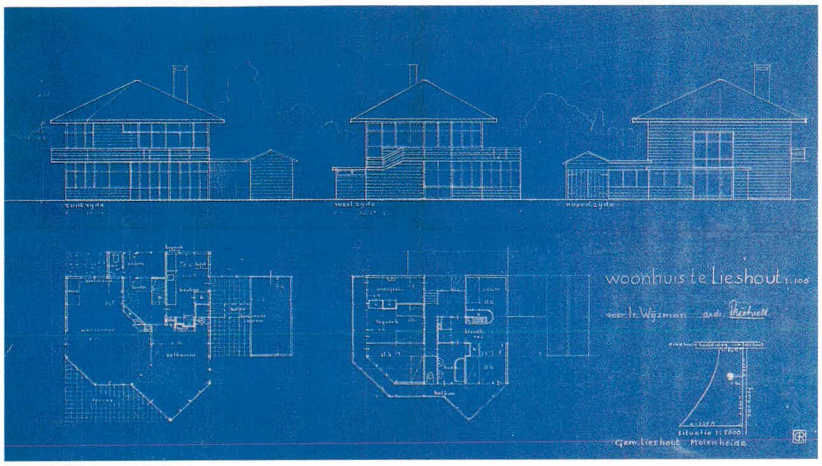


photo c. 1938

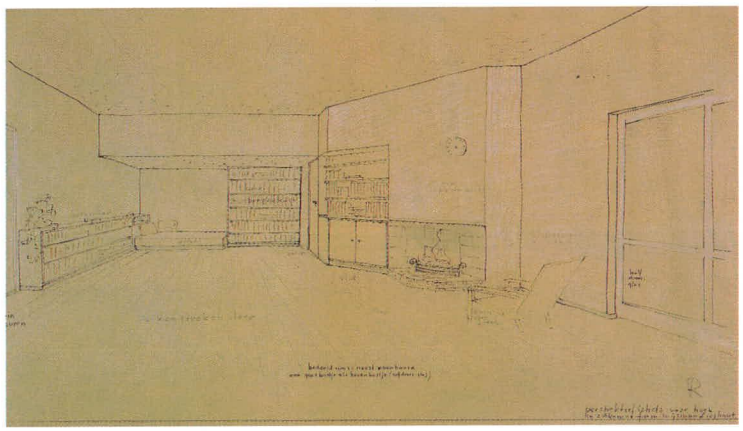




278 **Conversion store Metz & Co.**
Keizersgracht 449,
Amsterdam

1938
altered

photo c. 1960



1938

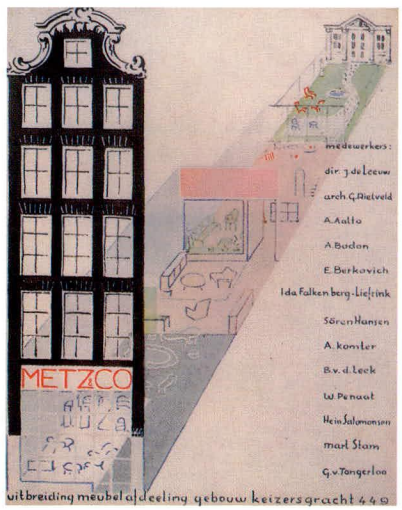
277 **Dwelling Wijsman**
Roeklaan 2, Lieshout

1937-1938
client J. Wijsman
altered

Design drawing
blueprint
36.6 x 59.6cm
RSA

Design drawing living room
pencil, crayon on paper
50.5 x 66cm
NAi

photo c. 1938



Announcement
printed
28.6 x 21.6cm
RSA

279 Interior exhibition 'Het nieuwe meubel' Metz & Co.

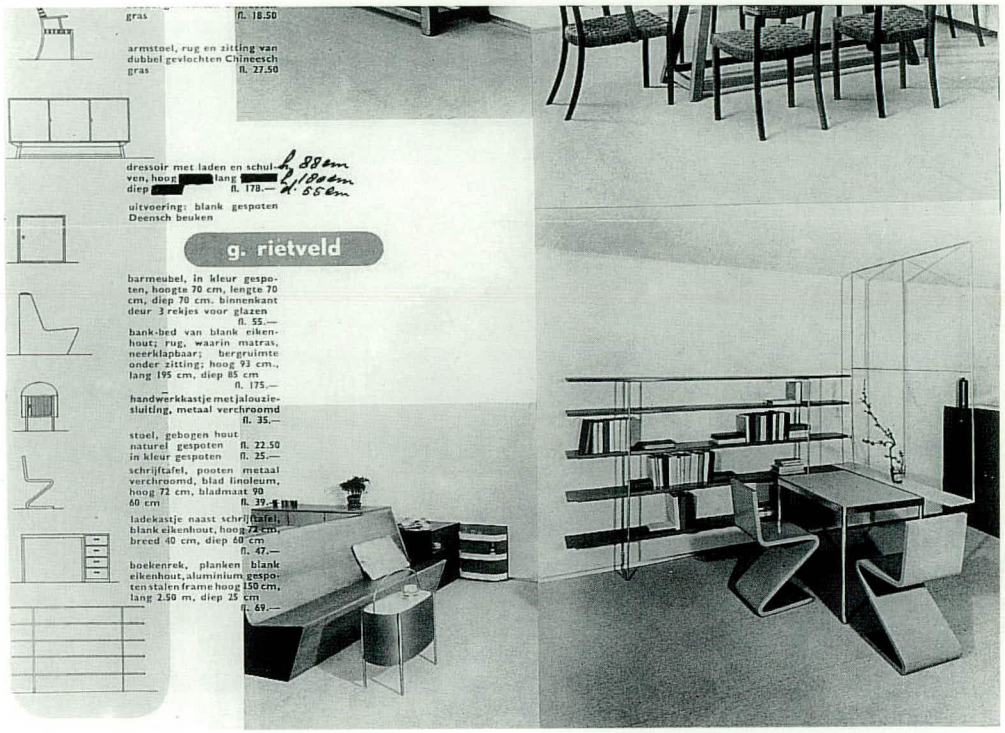
1938

Announcement exhibition

Invitation to exhibition

In 1938 Metz organized an exhibition of furniture in their renovated premises on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam. Mart Stam, Ida Falkenberg-Liefrinck, A. Bodon, A. Komter and Rietveld all took part. There were various types of room on display, all of them illustrated in a special brochure. Rietveld devised a living-cum-dining room, mainly with pieces of his furniture he had already designed.

From **brochure**
Metz & Co. 1938



280 Bar

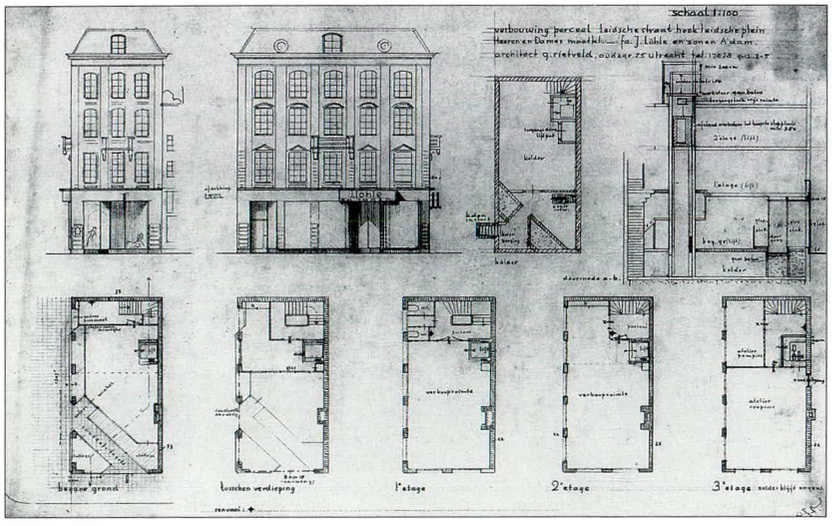
1938

'A bar coloured with spray paint, 70cm high, 70cm long and 70cm deep, with 3 shelves on the inside of the door for glasses' was announced in Metz's brochure for 1938.

Facade Leidseplein 2, Amsterdam

281 Conversion shop Löhle
Leidseplein 2, Amsterdam

client J. Löhle
no longer extant

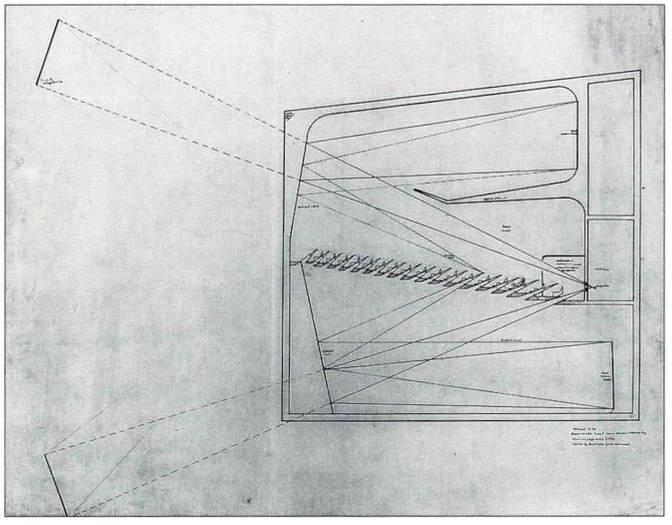


Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
40.8 x 60.2cm
RSA

282 Design stereoscopic cinema

1938
not realized

Rietveld spent years trying to devise a system for viewing a film in three dimensions. He thought he could achieve it with two projections simultaneously, one for the left eye and one for the right. The problem was that one eye would have to see its own projection to the exclusion of the projection for the other eye. Rietveld tried to find a spatial solution for this problem. His stereoscopic cinema had two projection areas on top of each other. One eye would see one projection and the other would see the other, through a viewer. The plan remained a complicated affair involving all kinds of aids such as mirrors, coloured glasses and prisms.

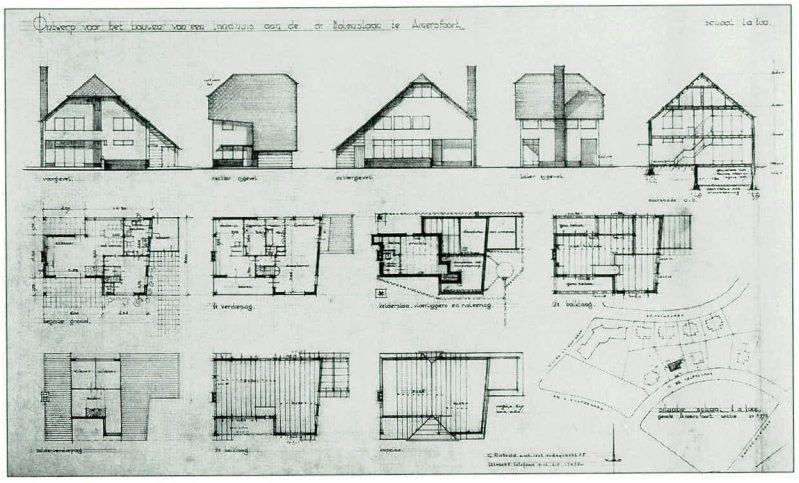


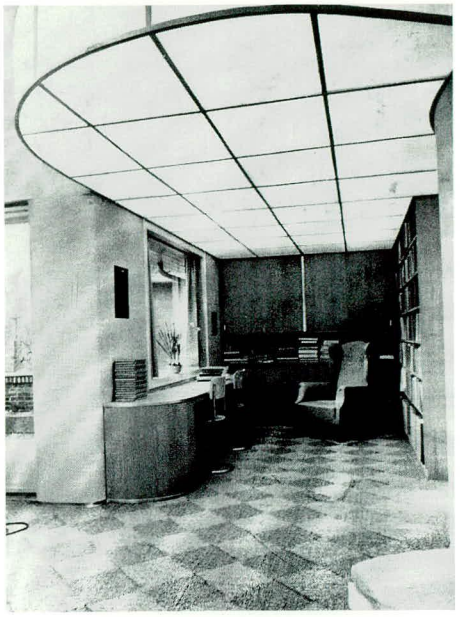
In the USA pavilion at the World Fair in Brussels in 1958 Rietveld saw a spectacular film show with more than one projection being screened simultaneously on the walls of a many-sided auditorium. The film looked as though it was taking place spatially while in fact a flat picture was projected on each wall. Rietveld was enthusiastic about the Americans' simple solution to the problem.

Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
79.5 x 96cm
NAi

283 **Design dwelling Hölscher**
Nolenslaan, Amersfoort

1938
client J.H. Hölscher





Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
54 x 86.5cm
NAi

1938

284 **Conversion dwelling Verrijn Stuart**
Emmalaan 6, Utrecht

1938
client
G.M. Verrijn Stuart
no longer extant

Rietveld designed a garage and the layout for a study and a bathroom for G. Verrijn Stuart, director of the Amsterdamsche Bank. On the first floor he converted the former bathroom into an L-shaped study with a ceiling that was partially made of glass, this part being lower than the rest of the ceiling. He had the bathroom included as part of the bedroom.

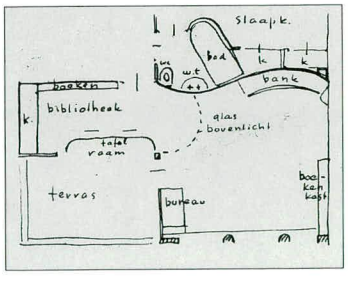


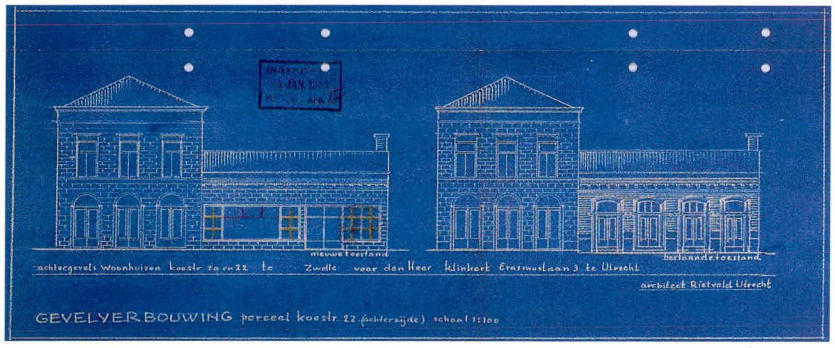
Illustration and photos from unknown publication
c. 1938
BNA Archive NAi

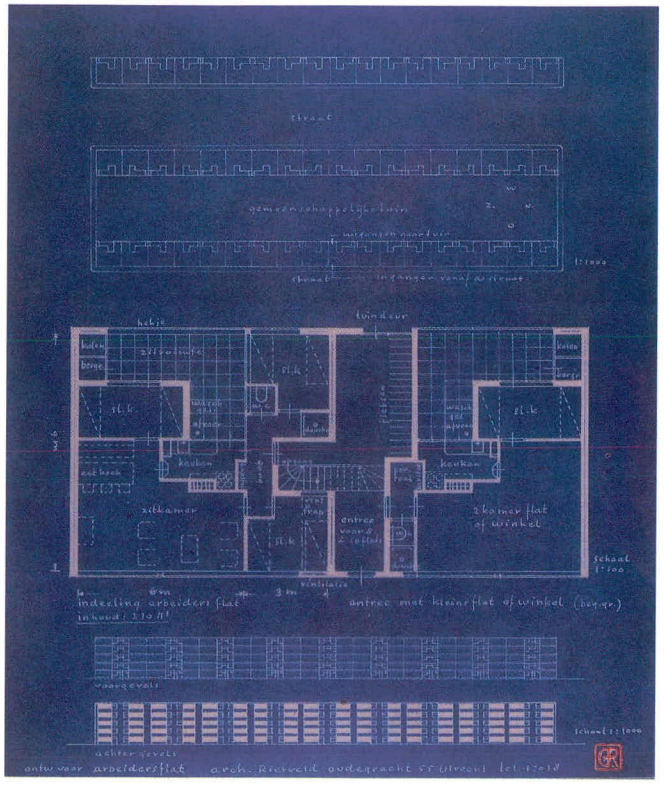
285 Design conversion of dwellings and surgery Klinkert
Koestraat 20-22, Zwolle

1938
client H. Klinkert

For Dr H. Klinkert, who lived in one of the dwellings built by Rietveld on the Erasmuslaan in Utrecht (no. 212), Rietveld made a design for the conversion of two houses to a single dwelling with surgery.

Design drawing
blueprint
25 x 51cm
NAi





286 Design workers' houses

1938
not realized

Design worker's flat

1938
not realized

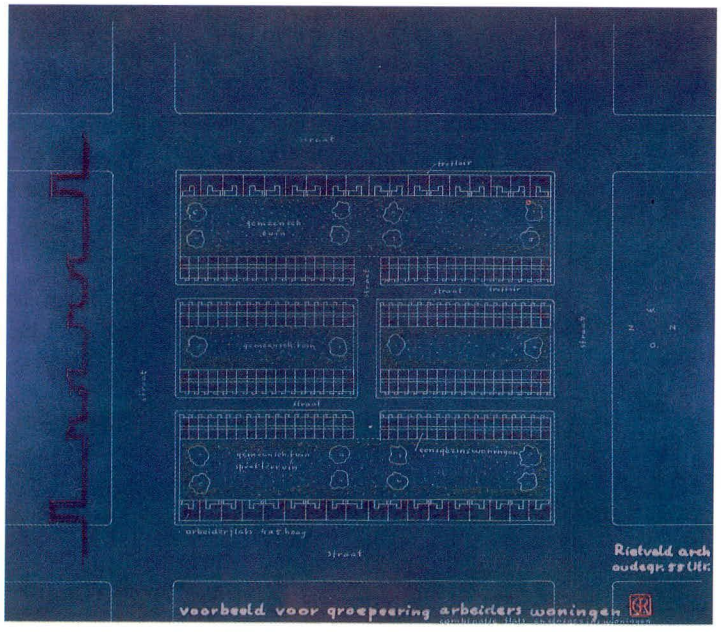
Example design of group of workers' dwellings

1938
not realized

Rietveld designed this plan for a neighbourhood with alternate blocks of flats and family dwellings as a study, with the idea of making a contribution to solving the problems of unemployment and the housing shortage. He made a proposal to the Breda city council to allow workers to work on building the houses while keeping their unemployment benefit. The response to his proposal was negative. In the family dwelling we see for the first time a hexagonal central facilities core. The staircase that

Design drawing
worker's flat
blueprint
29.3 x 24cm
RSA

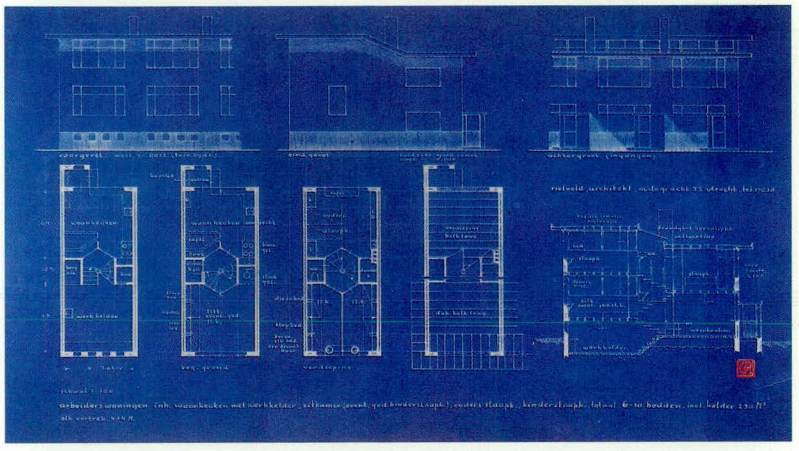
Design drawing group of workers' dwellings
blueprint
29 x 32.5cm
RSA



1938

connects the split-level storeys is situated in it. The cupboard, lavatory and shower are on two sides of the core. In fact the design is based on earlier ideas, for instance, the idea of a prefab housing unit and Rietveld's housing studies of around 1930 (nos 143 and 170). The principle of the centrally situated hexagonal core with a staircase combined with split-level storeys recurs frequently in Rietveld's later designs (see nos 326 and 378).

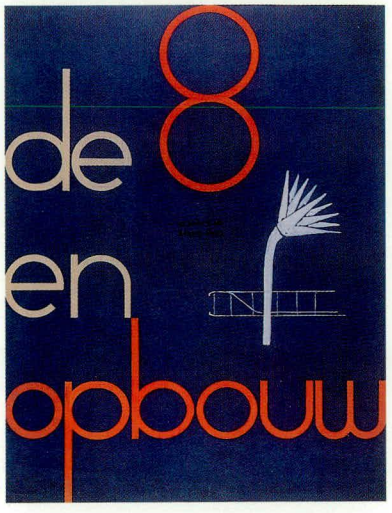
Design drawing
workers' dwellings
blueprint
27.2 x 46.3cm
RSA



1938

287 Cover design
De 8 en Opbouw

1938



Design drawing
ink, paint on blueprint
28.4 x 21.2cm
RSA

288 Conversion studio Koch
Oudegracht 341, Utrecht

c. 1938
client P. Koch

Rietveld converted artist Pyke Koch's studio in the attic of 341, Oudegracht. He installed a window with a steel frame and a number of cupboards.

289 Design conversion office and director's dwelling Water Board Zwolle

1935-1939
client J.C. Keller

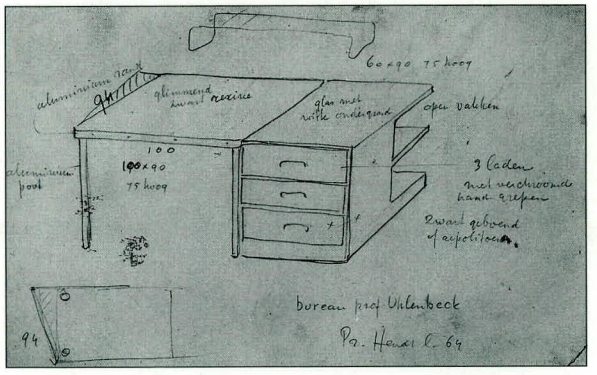
290 Desk Uhlenbeck

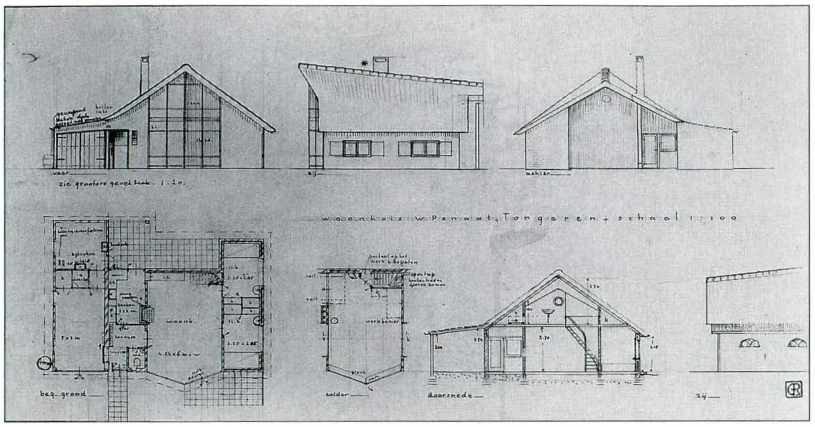
aluminium, glass, wood, rexine
1935-1939

Professor G.E. Uhlenbeck lived in one of the houses designed by Rietveld on the corner of the Prins Hendriklaan (no. 212) from mid-1935 until mid-1939. His desk is a variation of the one Rietveld and Schröder had designed and which Metz & Co. had taken into production (no. 162). The family still has the section with the drawers.[1]

[1] Vöge 1992.

Design drawing
pencil on paper
15 x 23.3cm
NAi





Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
27.8 x 50cm
NAi

291 **Dwelling Penaat**
Stenen Komweg 7, Epe

1937-1939
client W. Penaat
burnt down in 1949

Furniture designer Willem Penaat was head of the furniture department at Metz and Co. from 1924. Rietveld was often in contact with him (see also nos 155, 206). Penaat owned a tract of heathland in Gelderland, where he and his sister wanted to have a house built. The house was made of whitewashed brick and had a thatched roof. At first sight it does not seem to fit into Rietveld's oeuvre. However, the high, blunt-cornered glass facade on the south side, the open stairway in the living room, and the movable storage facility on rails under the slanted eaves, are all unmistakable examples of Rietveld's concern for light, openness and the optimal utilization of space.

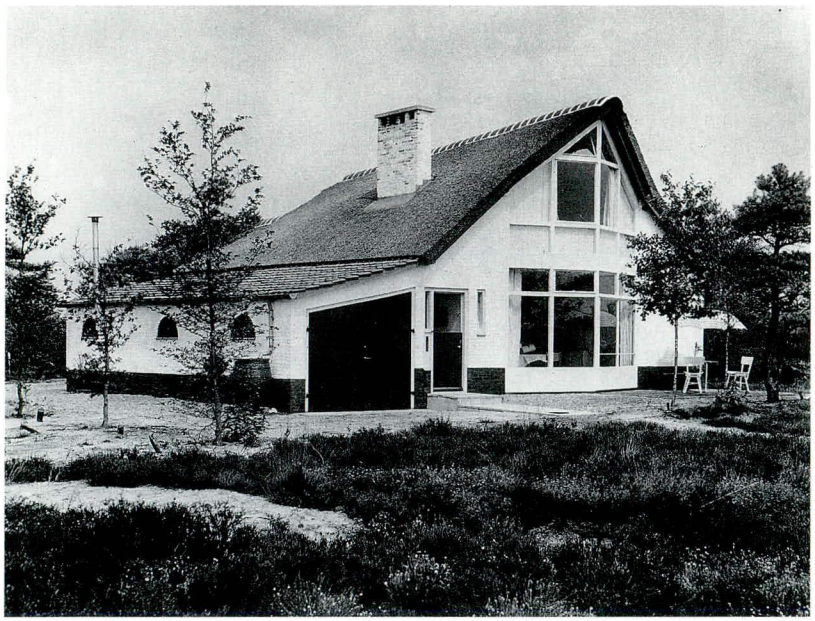
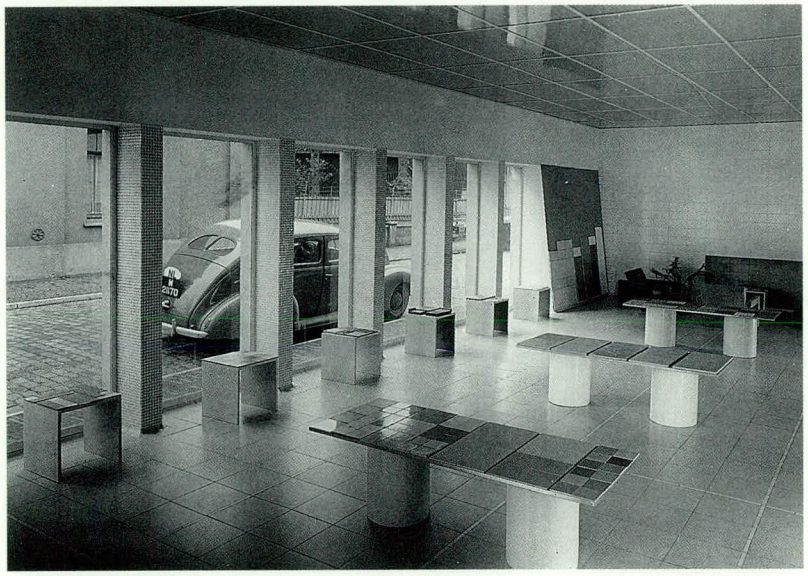
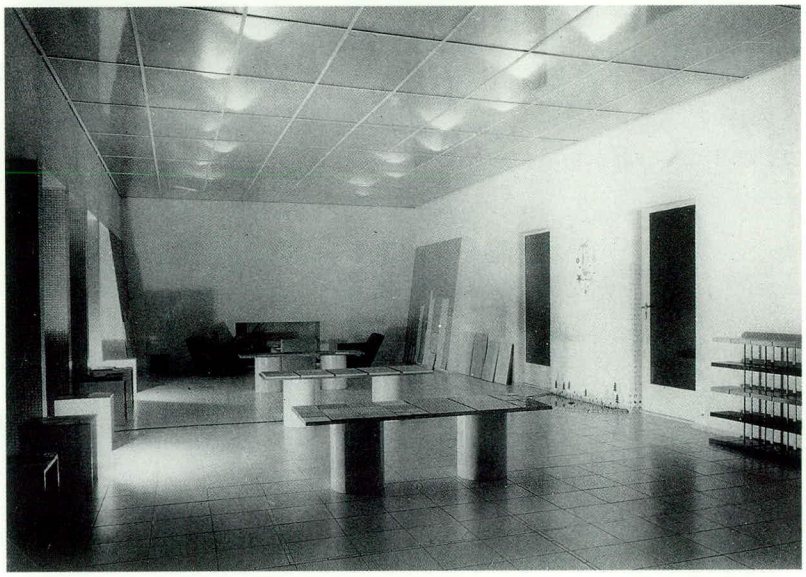


photo c. 1939

292 **Showroom Driessen's tile shop** Arnhem

1939
demolished





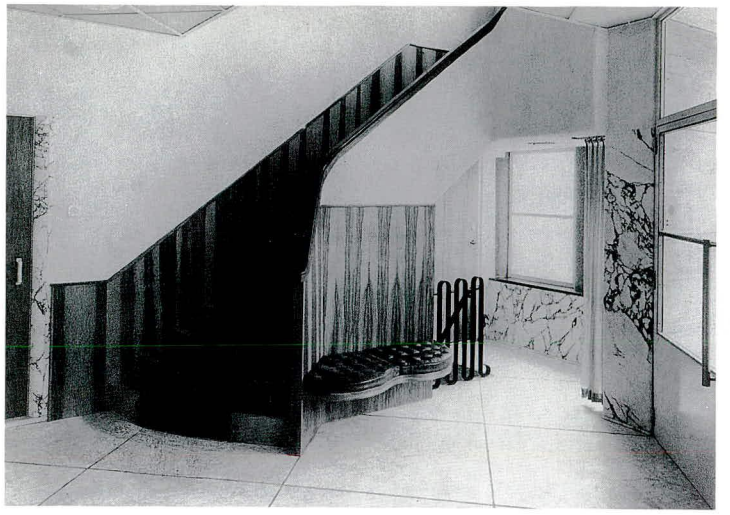
photos c. 1939

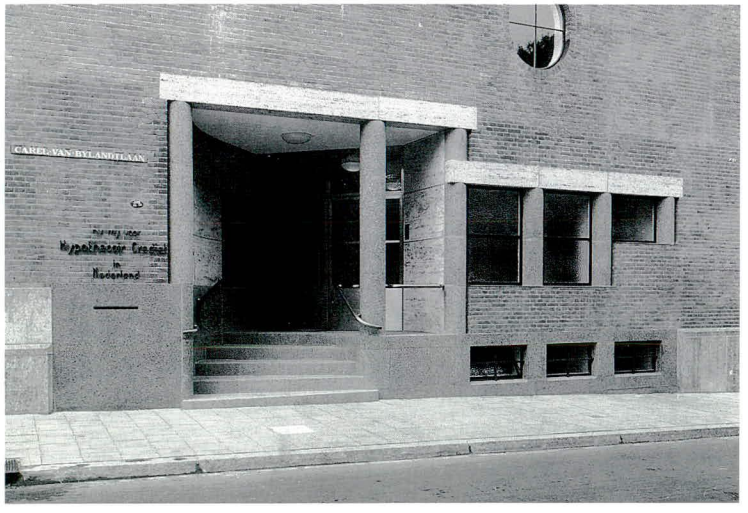
293 **Conversion and furnishing Hypothecair Crediet Bank**
Carel van Bijlandtlaan 2, The Hague

1939
client NV Maatschappij voor Hypothecair Crediet in Nederland

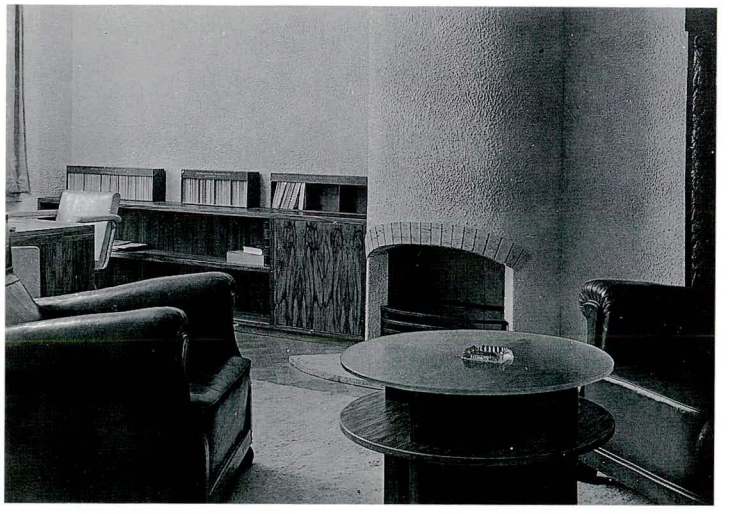
In September 1941 Rietveld wrote to the editors of *De 8 en Opbouw*, who had asked him for illustrations, that the conversion mainly concerned the entrance hall and the staircase; 'and further just some renovation and furnishing'. Rietveld concluded: 'The interiors don't seem important enough for *de 8*'.

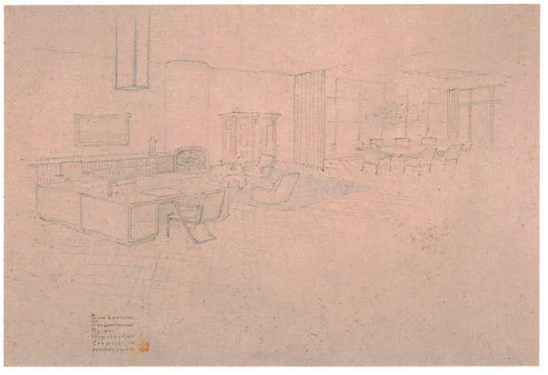
[1] To Ida Falkenberg-Liefrinck, editor of *De 8 en Opbouw*, Merkelbach Archive, NAi.





Entrance
photo c. 1939





Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
51 x 74cm
NAi

Hall
photo c. 1939

Boardroom
photos c. 1939

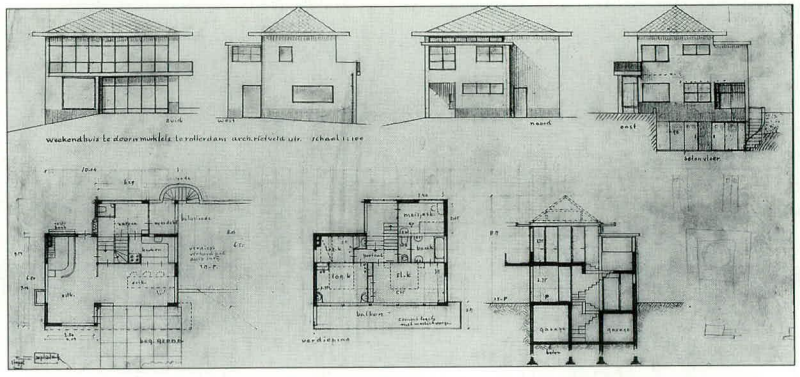
294 **Summerhouse Lels**
Maarsbergseweg 3, Doorn

1939
client M. Lels

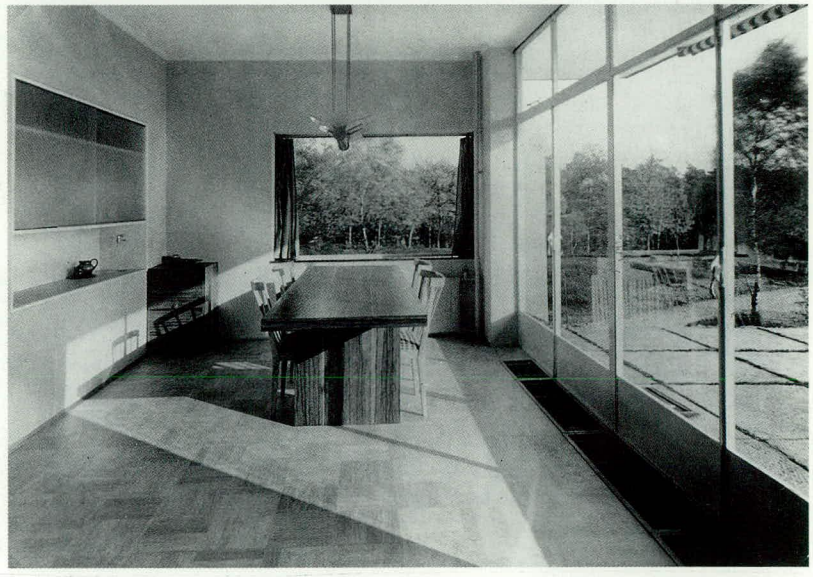
'This house was built in the summer', wrote Rietveld in a commentary published in *De 8 en Opbouw* in July 1940. This information probably seemed important to him since the setting of the house is reminiscent of holidays, blue skies and purple heath. The building stands in a wood on an open tract of heathland. 'On the floor', explained Rietveld, 'sitting by the sunken fireplace, one still has a panoramic view over the trees on the Amerongscheweg. Broad balconies and eaves shelter the sleeping and living areas when the sun is high.'

photo c. 1939

1939



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
61 x 43cm
NAi



Living room
photo c. 1939

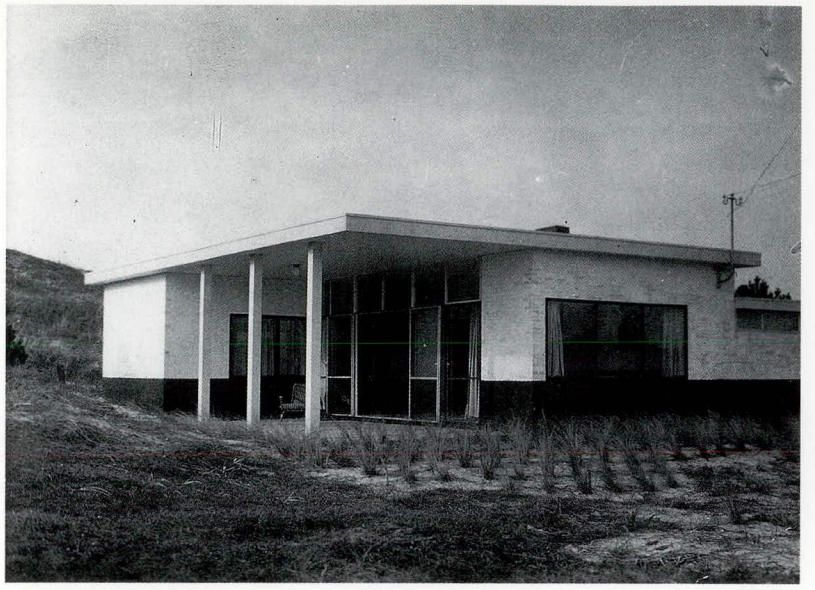
295 Summerhouse Brandt Corstius

Korfwater 9, Petten

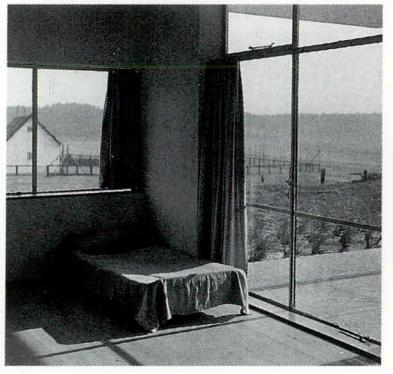
1939
client
J.C. Brandt Corstius
renovated

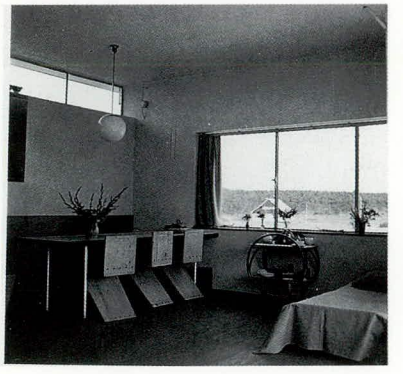
Initially the architect Arthur Staal was asked to design the summerhouse. Building permission had already been obtained in 1939. However, as Brandt Corstius wrote in a letter to Rietveld dated 26 February 1939, Staal was in Egypt.[1] Rietveld made a design which was executed that same year. The total costs amounted to three thousand guilders. This summerhouse is his first bungalow. The outer walls are whitewashed and the chimney and skirting are tarred black. The shed is built at a slightly lower level against the house and windows are placed between the roof of the shed and that of the house; they allow for a greater incidence of light in the interior. Rietveld later repeatedly used this construction (see for example nos 478, 518). The openness which he tried to capture in his designs was realized in an exceptional way in this summerhouse. The flat roof overhangs an area, part of which is an outdoor terrace. Intentionally, not one of the three columns which support the roof above the terrace has been placed on a corner, which would have been the most obvious place. The omission of a point marking the corners creates an optimal sense of space. Rietveld had applied this principle previously in the corner window on the upper storey of the Rietveld Schröder House (no. 84).

[1] Rietveld Archive, NAi

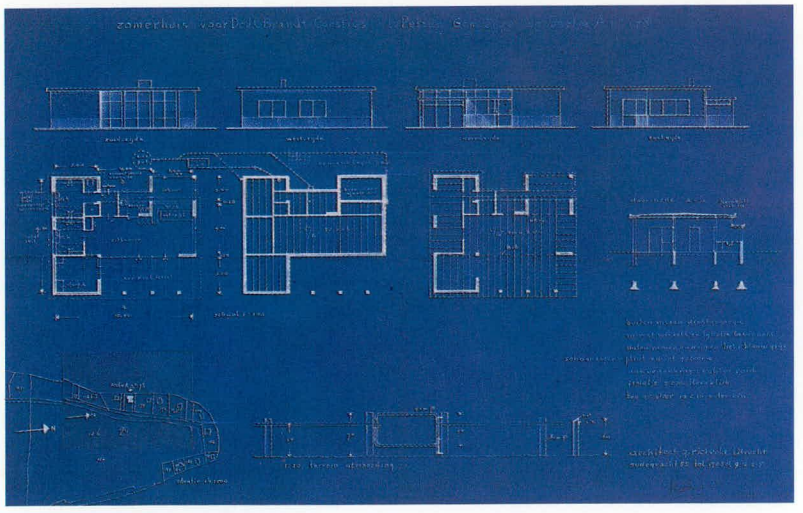


photos c. 1939





Design drawing
blueprint
40.8 x 59.1cm
RSA



1939

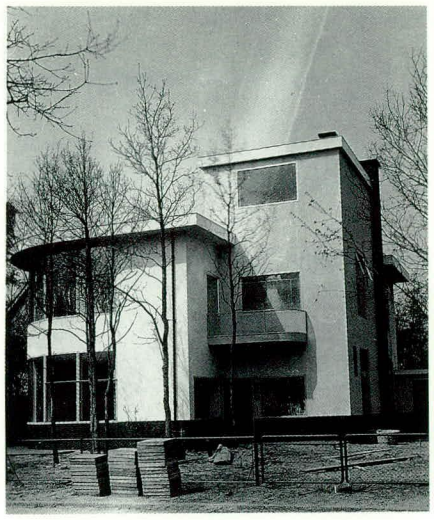
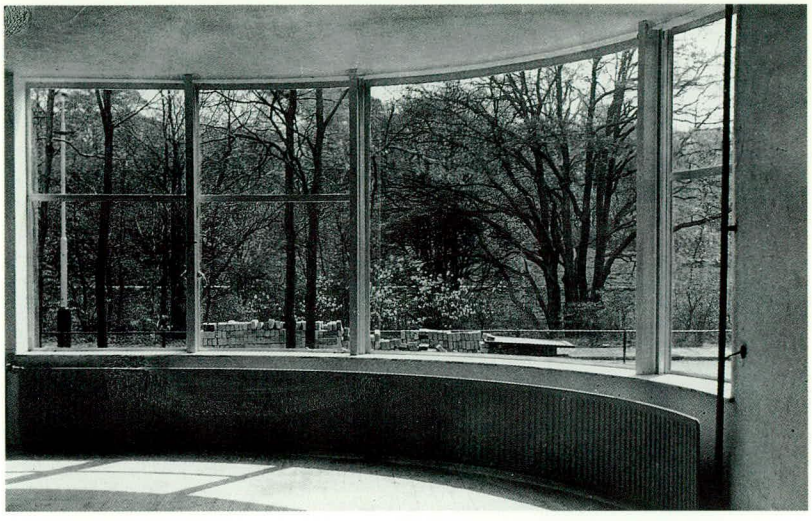


photo c. 1939

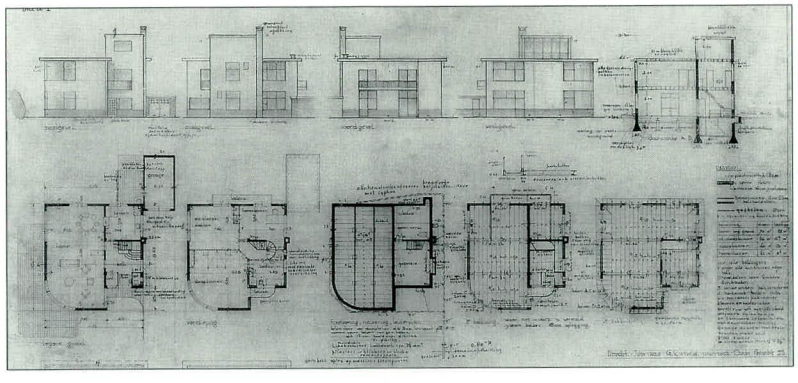


296 Dwelling Wijburg
Van Ouwenlaan 44,
The Hague

1939
client P. Wijburg
altered

Initially Rietveld had designed a dwelling for Labree-Appun (no. 247) on this property, which, for unknown reasons, was never built. P. Wijburg bought the property from the owner and neighbour R. Mees. In some respects the house resembles the dwelling which J.B. van Loghem had built in the vicinity of the Van Ouwenlaan in 1938. The house makes a fairly heavy impression. The circular annexe has two floors, which makes it visually less balanced than the low annexes of the dwellings for Hildebrand and Mees (nos 229 and 246). The steel I-beams in the living room are striking, as are the doors on the upper storey which follow the curved line of the architecture.

Living room
photo c. 1939

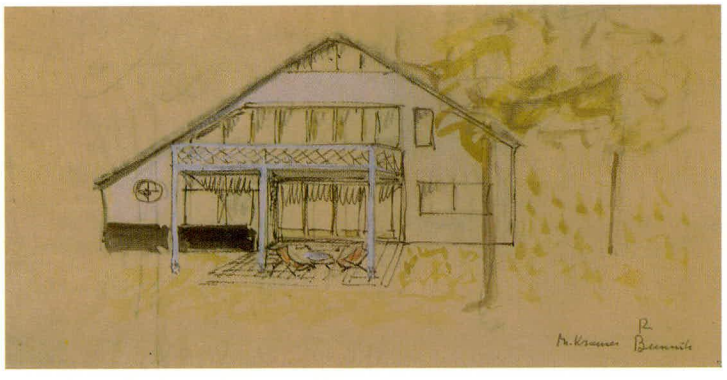


Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
64.8 x 89.4cm
NAi

297 Design dwelling Kramer
Houten

c. 1939
client G. Kramer
not realized

The house was commissioned by G. ten Doesschate's daughter and son-in-law.



Rough draft
pencil, ink, watercolour on transparent paper
15.1 x 31.2cm
RSA

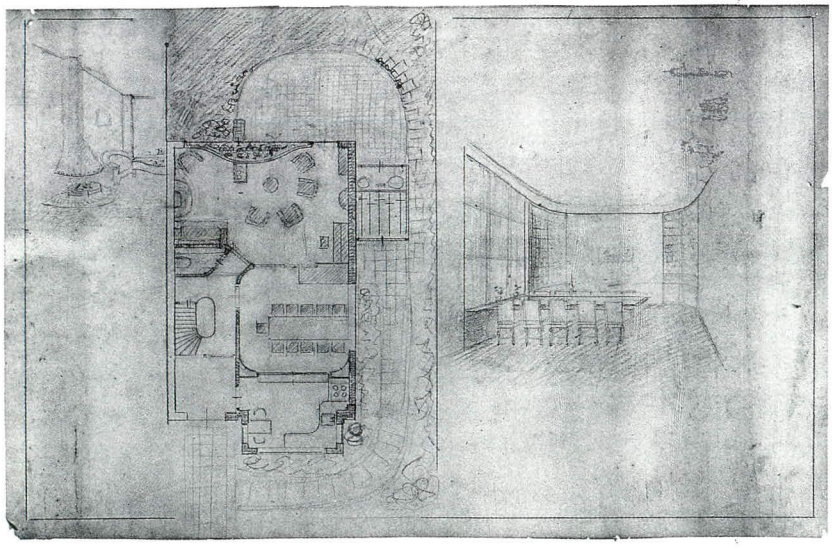
298 Desk, chair and lamp

c. 1939

photo from Boerhave Beekman 1939

299 Floor plan

c. 1930-1940



Design drawing
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
13 x 62cm
RSA

300 Table

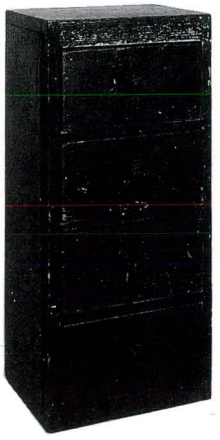
The table is from the Rietveld Schröder House.

deal, plywood
74.7 x 89 x 92.8cm
c. 1930-1940
CMU

301 Small chest of drawers

wood, plywood
c. 1930-1940

The inventory of the Rietveld Schröder House includes two simple chests of drawers.

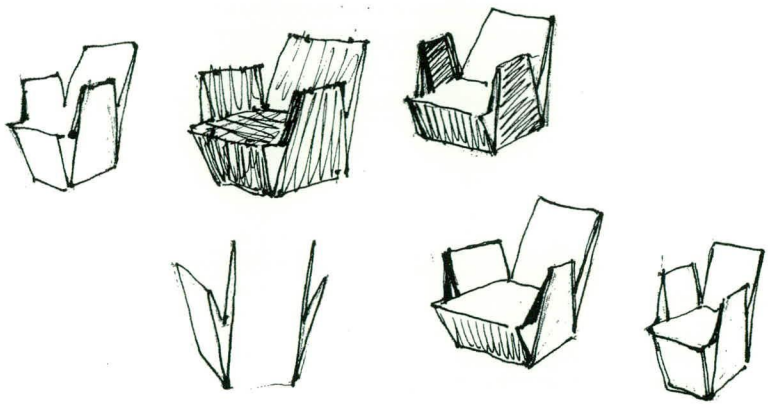


Chest of drawers
deal, five-plywood
77 x 35 x 25.7cm
CMU

302 Folded furniture

c. 1930-1940

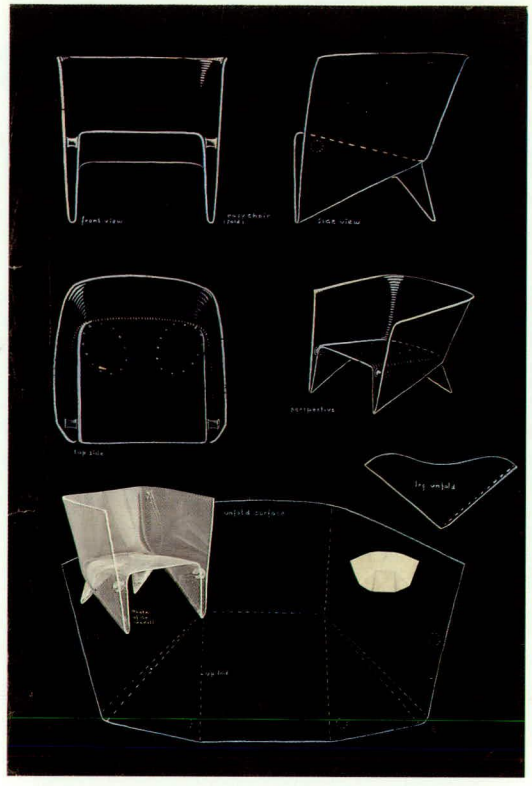
In the Netherlands Architecture Institute and the Rietveld Schröder Archive there are numerous sketches, drawings and models of furniture which may be manufactured by punching them from a single piece of material and bending into shape. Rietveld's first experiments with this method of production stem from the second half of the 1920s. Various designs, such as the zigzag chair (no. 189) and the Birza chair (no. 115) find their origins in this method. The sketches show that Rietveld not only envisioned chairs, but also beds and tables. The material used is not of great importance. There are models and prototypes made of plexiglass and aluminium, and the drawings suggest that Rietveld may have considered wicker. This idea is related to the endeavour of the CIAM to make use of industrial methods of production in the new architecture and



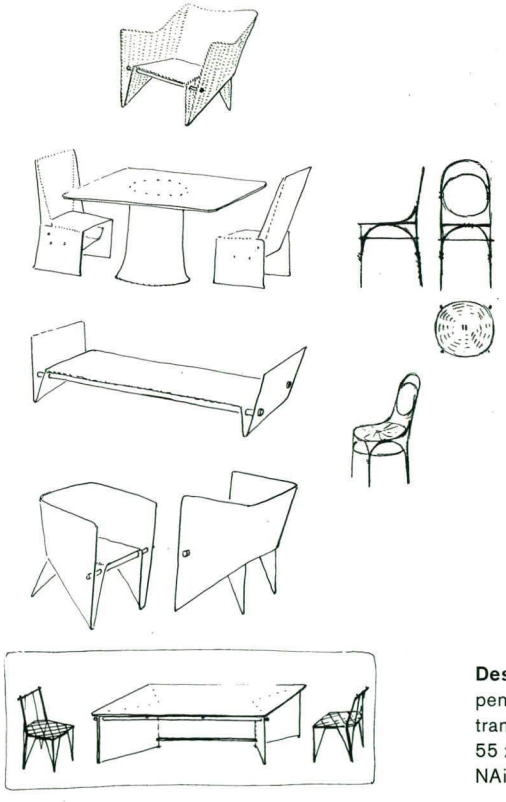
industrial design. In Rietveld's architectural work this endeavour finds expression in the 'core dwellings' (no. 143). In both areas Rietveld was only partially successful in realizing his ideals.

Rough draft
pencil, ink on paper
15 x 24.9cm
NAi

Design drawing
collage, white ink on black paper
77 x 52cm
NAi



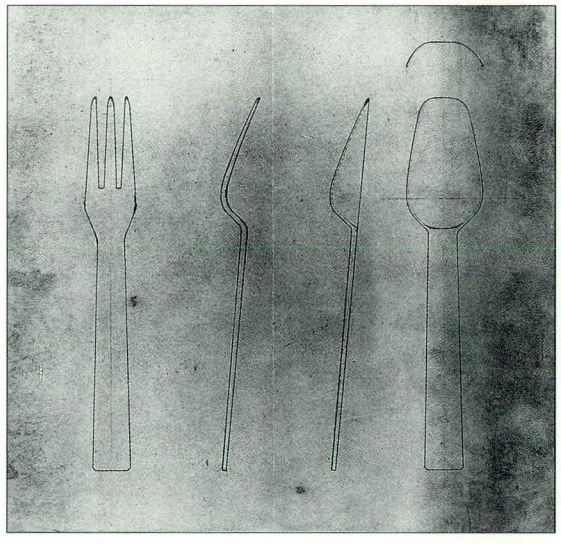
1940



Design drawing
pencil, pen on transparent paper
55 x 35.5cm
NAi

303 Design fork and spoon

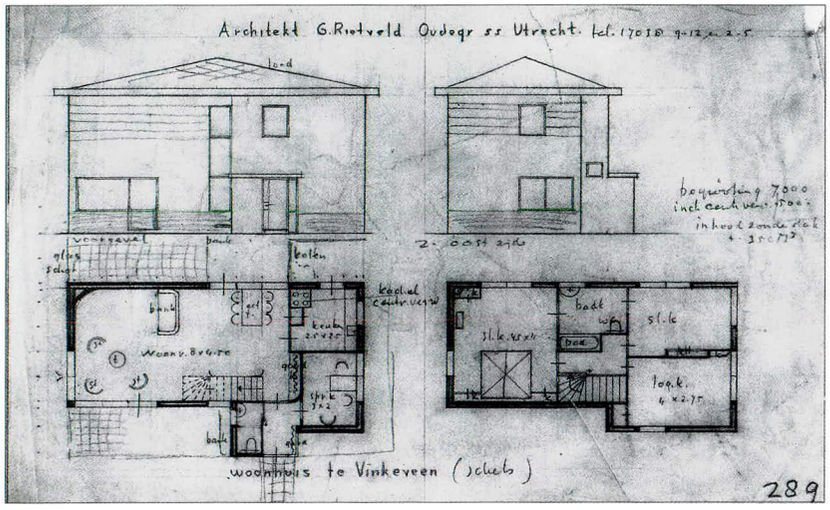
c. 1933-1940



Design drawing
collotype
31 x 32.5cm
RSA

304 **Design dwelling**
Vinkeveen

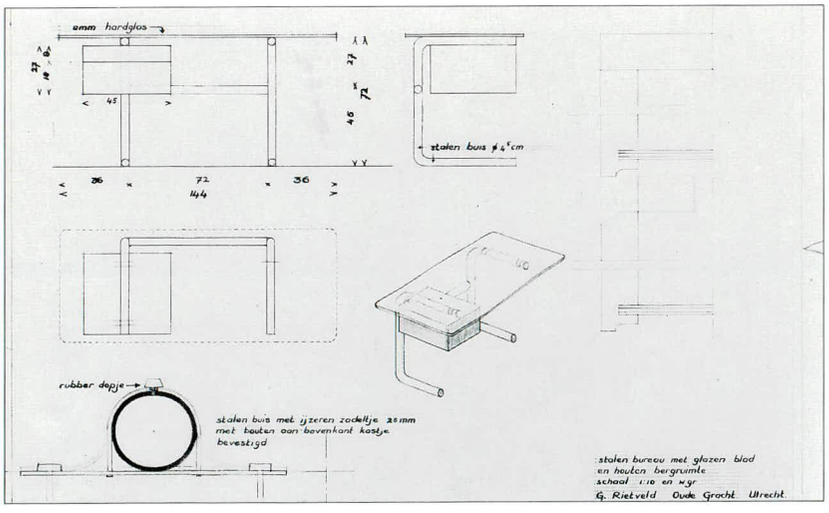
c. 1935-1940



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
21.5 x 32cm
RSA

305 **Design desk**

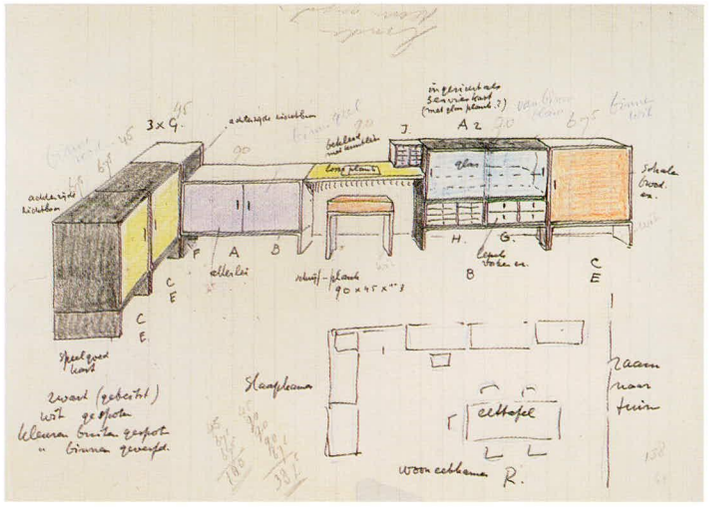
metal, glass, wood
c. 1935-1940



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
36 x 46cm
NAi

306 **Design wall unit**

c. 1935-1940



Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
20.4 x 27.5cm
De Leeuw/Metz Archive

307 **Bookcase**

pine, plywood
189 x 200 x 35cm
c. 1935-1940
CMU

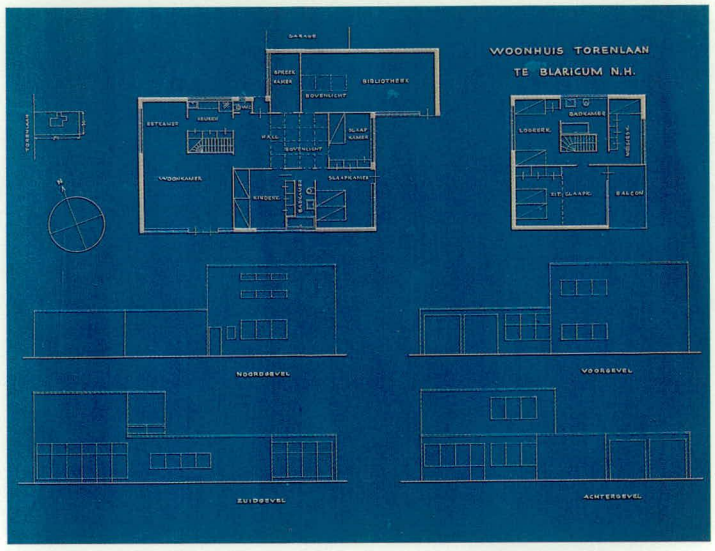
1940

1940

308 Design dwelling Van Rees

c. 1935-1940

Torenlaan, Blaricum



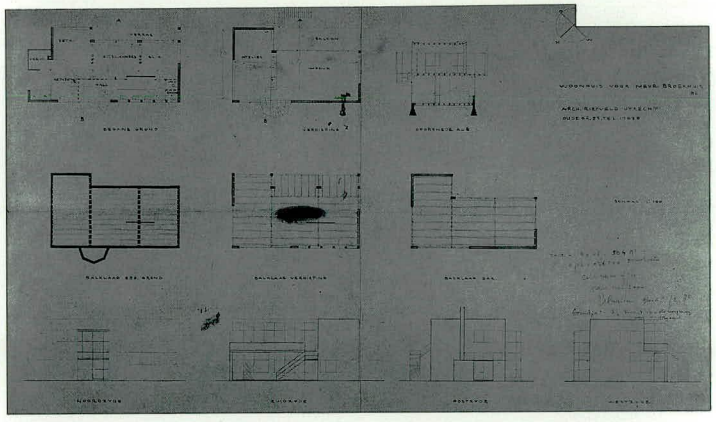
Design drawing
blueprint
40.5 x 60cm
NAi

309 Design dwelling Broekhuis

c. 1935-1940

Blaricum

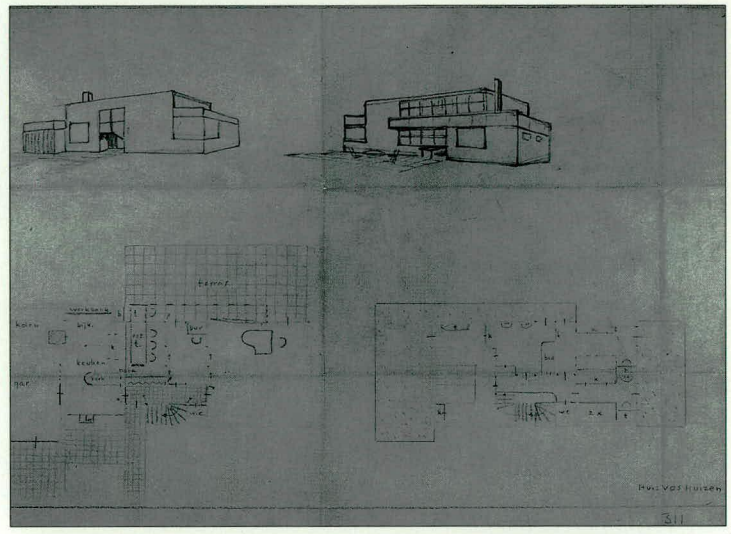
Design drawing
collotype
44 x 69.2cm
RSA



310 Design dwelling Vos

c. 1935-1940

Huizen



Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
27.4 x 41cm‘ RSA

311 Bench with mattress

oak, metal, cane
37.7 x 122.5 x 40.3cm
c. 1935-1940
CMU

The bench is from the Rietveld Schröder House.

313 Seat

oak
32 x 120 x 37cm
c. 1930-1940
B. Mulder, Utrecht

The seat comes from Rietveld's flat above the cinema on Vredenburg (no. 248).

312 Garden bench

deal, metal
71.5 x 89.7 x 60.7cm
c. 1935-1940
CMU

The bench comes from the Rietveld Schröder House. There are several drawings in the Netherlands Architecture Institute of an almost identical garden bench, which seats three people, and a matching chair. One drawing is signed and dated: R '40. The given dimensions are: width 180cm, height 80cm, front of seat 37cm, wood thickness 3cm, copper screws. The directions for materials and assembly read: 'paint wood, then assemble' – using the same method which Rietveld envisioned for the crate furniture (no. 208).

314 Table and garden bench

deal
table 65 x 75 x 175cm
bench 78 x 200 x 55cm
1936-1940
private collection, Teteringen

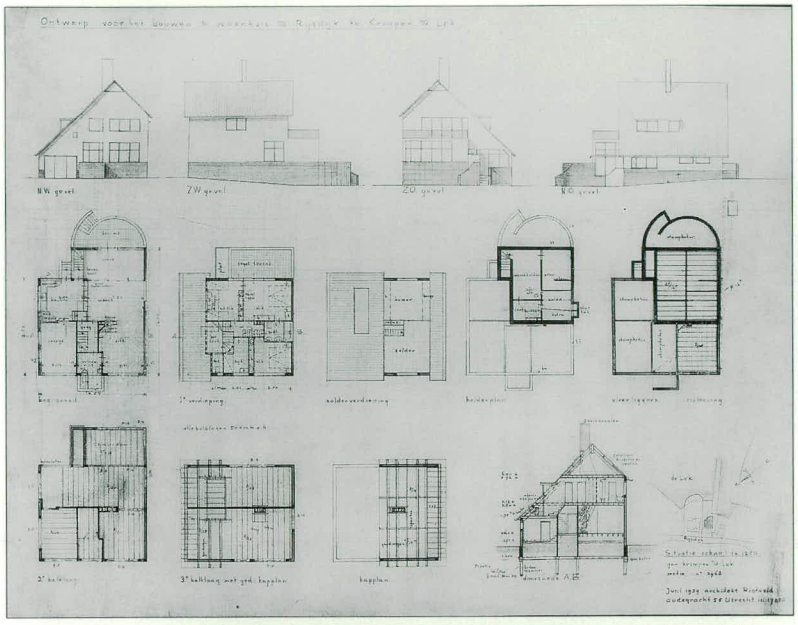
The garden furniture was probably made shortly after 1936 for the Hillebrandt family (see no. 224). Originally the legs of the white table and bench were painted black to a height of 10 centimetres, so as not to show the dirt.[1] The bench is similar to drawings in the Netherlands Architecture Institute, as is the garden bench from the Rietveld Schröder House (no. 312). However, the dimensions are different from those given there, and the bench has not been assembled with copper screws, but has been nailed together.

[1] Told by M. van Dantzig-Mees, 1992.

1940

315 **Dwelling Pot**
Rijsdijk 22,
Krimpen aan de Lek

1939-1940
client C. Pot
altered



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
61.8 x 78cm
NAi

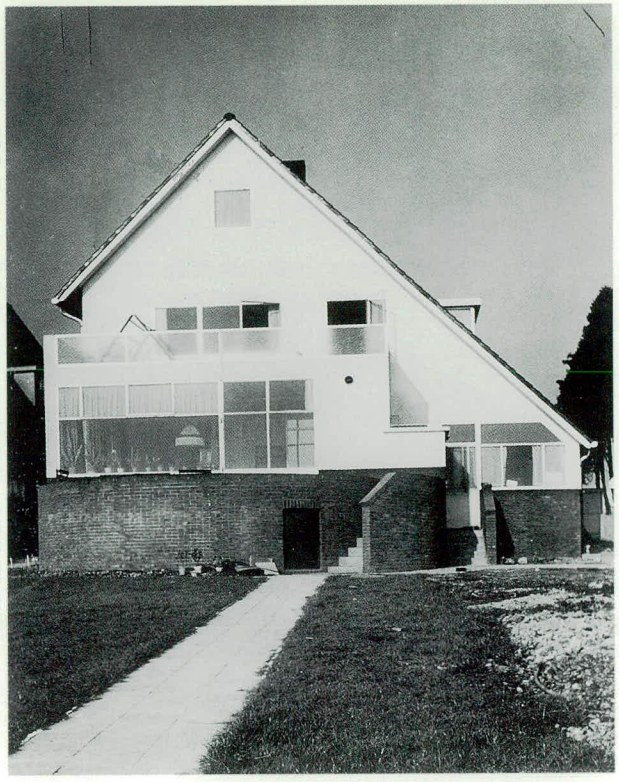
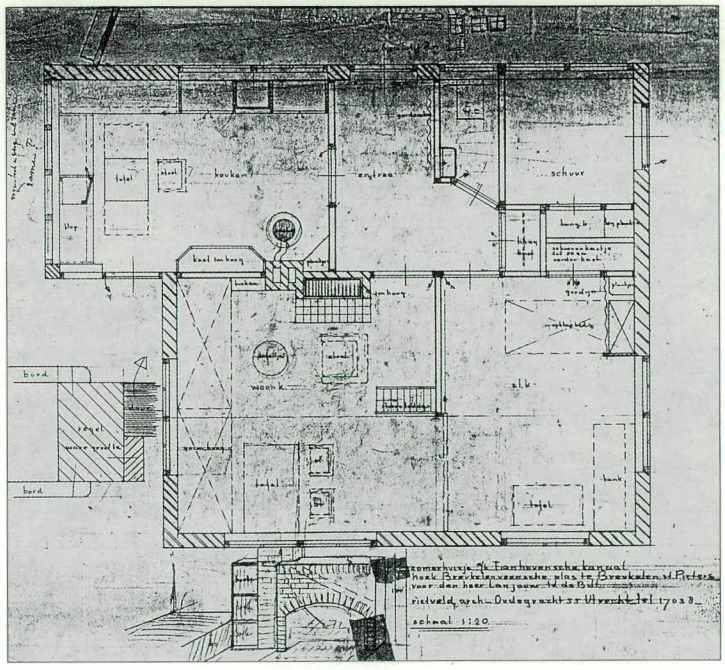


photo c. 1940

316 **Summerhouse Lanjouw**
Section I No. 280,
Loosdrecht

1940
client J. Lanjouw
altered

photo c. 1980



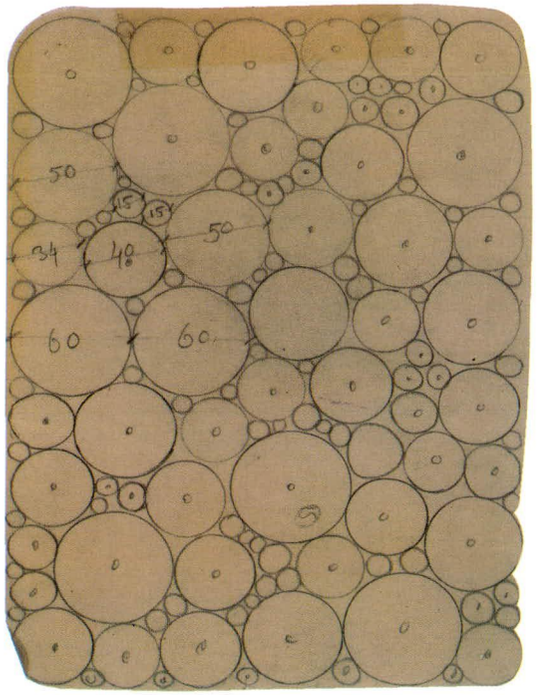
Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
50.7 x 54.2cm
NAi

317 Floor covering of Genemuiden mats

c. 1938-1940

Rietveld used this floor covering, which is composed of small, round Genemuiden mats, for the window display at Metz & Co. in 1940 (no. 318). In the Rietveld Schröder Archive there are various drawings in which this principle is implemented. Visually the design bears a resemblance to the floor of the summerhouse for Verrijn Stuart (no. 325), where Rietveld had laid discs of oak in grano.

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
18 x 12.7cm
RSA

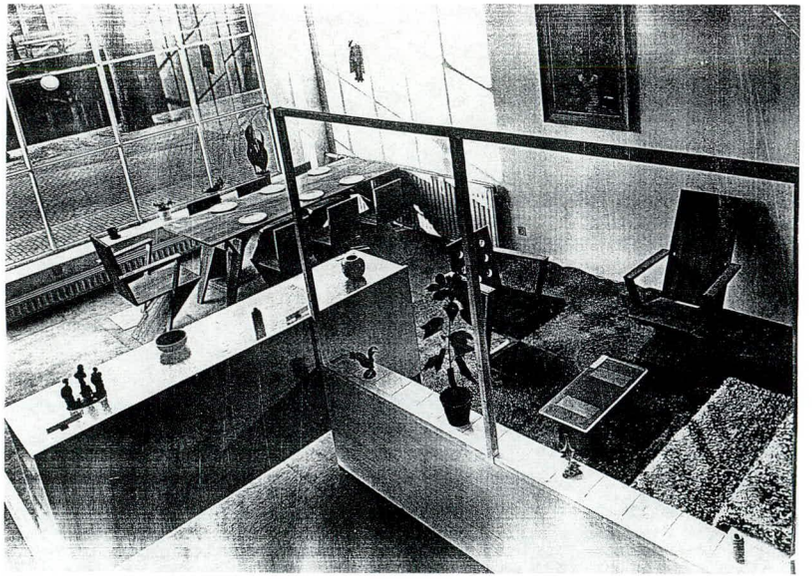


318 Display shop-window Metz & Co. Keizersgracht 449, Amsterdam

1940

In 1940 Rietveld made one window-dressing for Metz & Co. at 449, Keizersgracht. He used furniture he had designed during the previous years. Among the items were several varieties of the zigzag armchair, the zigzag table and a low table with a glass top (nos 189, 261, 317). As floor covering he used round Genemuiden mats. The design was reviewed by A. Bodon in *De 8 en Opbouw* of 14 December 1940.

photo 1940



1940

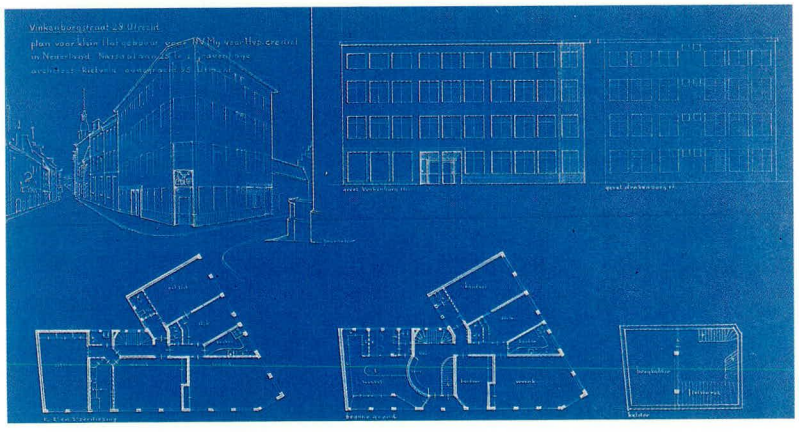
319 Design block of flats
Vinkenburgstraat 26 and 28, Utrecht

1940
client NV Maatschappij voor Hypothecair Crediet in Nederland, The Hague
not realized

The Association for Mortgage Credit was owner of the building on the corner of Vinkenburgstraat and Drakenburgsteeg in Utrecht. They wanted Rietveld to take charge of its restoration. Rietveld saw little benefit in this and called the conversion 'a waste of money'.[1] He suggested that the building, which he described as being 'verging on the uninhabitable' be converted to one with three floors. On each of the upper floors two dwellings would be created. On the ground floor there would be an entrance hall, a bicycle shed, a shop and a lawyer's or architect's office. Or, as Rietveld proposed, a small cafeteria instead of the office.

[1] The letter is dated 27 November 1940, RSA.

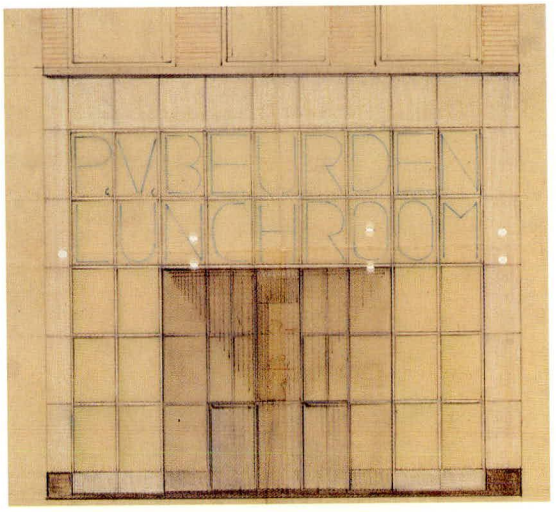
Design drawing
blueprint
39.2 x 68.1cm
RSA



320 Design conversion lunchroom and ice-cream factory Van Beurden
Vredenburg 7, Utrecht

1940
client P. van Beurden

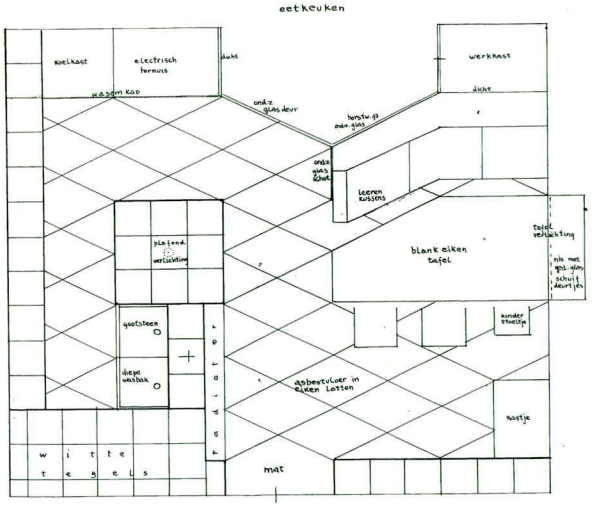
Design drawing
crayon on transparent paper
32 x 35cm
NAi



321 Kitchen-cum-dining room exhibition 'In Holland staat een huis'
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

1940

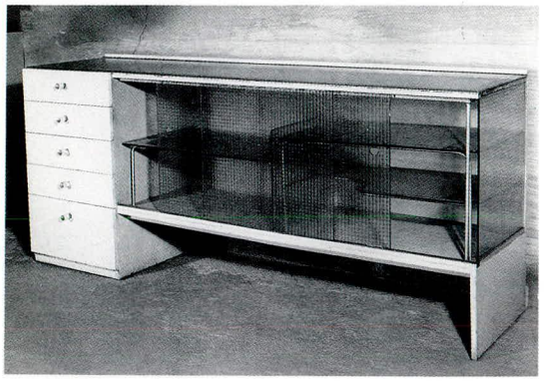
Design drawing
ink on paper
24.5 x 28cm
RSA



322 Sideboard

wired glass, metal, wood
c. 1940

SMA specimen
93 x 200 x 51.5cm



The sideboard is related to the model (no. 183) which formed part of the series of furniture exhibited in the cupola of Metz & Co. in 1933. However, this one is larger and has a fixed drawer unit.

323 Table

oak, metal
68 x 149.5 x 93.5cm
c. 1940
CMU

324 Table

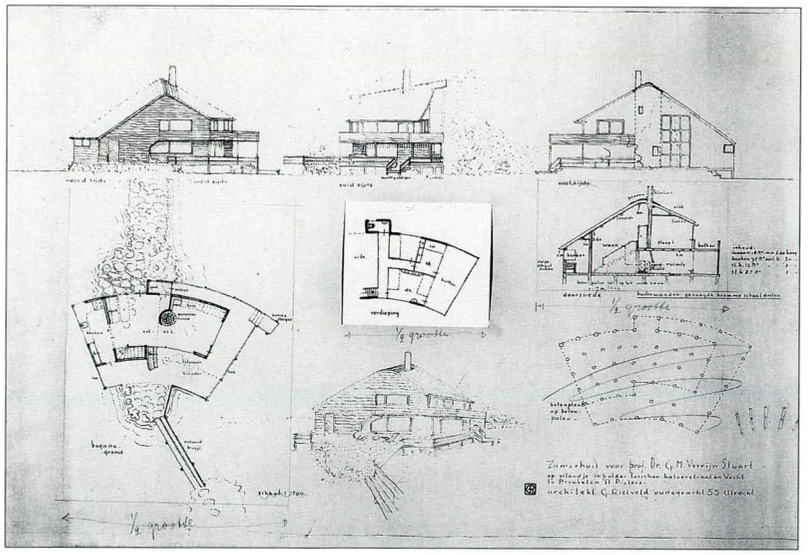
deal, five-plywood
46.5 x diam. 90cm
c. 1940
private collection, Rijnsburg

325 Summerhouse Verrijn Stuart
Section F No. 1701, Breukelen St. Pieters

1940-1941
client G.M. Verrijn Stuart
altered

G.M. Verrijn Stuart was the director of the Amsterdamsche Bank. On the application form for a building permit for a summer-and-weekend house Rietveld filled in under 'occupants': 'man and wife, son and daughter, for recuperation from hectic city life'. Rietveld initially made a design for a summerhouse with large terraces, which could not be executed due to the wood shortage. The summerhouse that was built contains a number of elements from previous designs, such as the curved lines in the floor plan and the glass wall which continues to the upper floors. The house partially extends out over the water, which was Rietveld's initial intention for the summerhouse for D. van Ravesteyn-Hintzen (no. 222). Rietveld's hand is especially apparent in this unusual design through the sense of space

Design drawing
ink on paper, collotype
50.5 x 71.4cm
NAi



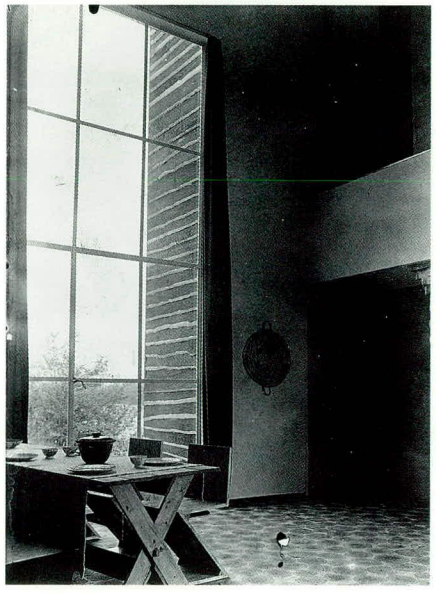
inside and the ingenuity of the interior finishing. The floor in the sitting room area consisted of thin oak discs laid in blue grano. The kitchen, dining room and sitting room are one single area, which may be divided by a sliding partition. The living space

1940

extends to the coping and the roof slopes down towards the kitchen. The bedrooms are situated on a mezzanine floor. 'Life is multi-dimensional. We do not live horizontally or vertically, but also pass along the diagonals and curves which cannot be determined mathematically', wrote J. Bakema in his review of the house in *De 8 en Opbouw* in 1941.

photo c. 1940

1941



Living room
photo c. 1941

326 Preliminary design workers' residential district, Tolsteeg

1941
not realized

Laan van Soestbergen, Utrecht

Design for workers' dwellings with a width of four, five and six metres

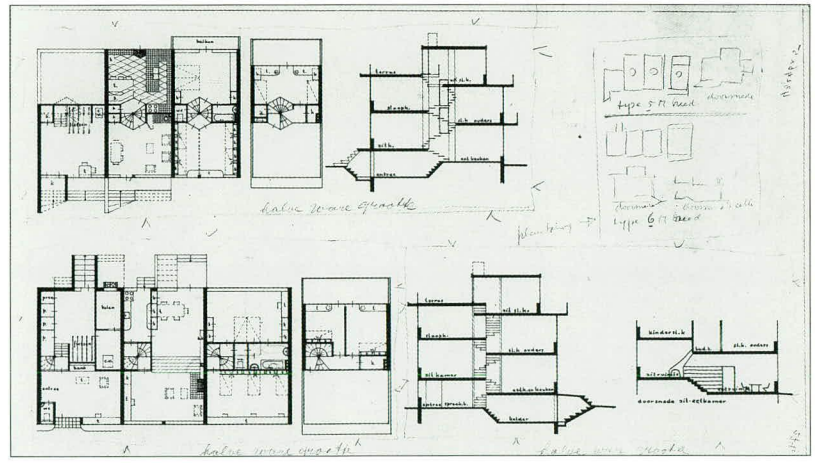
1941
not realized

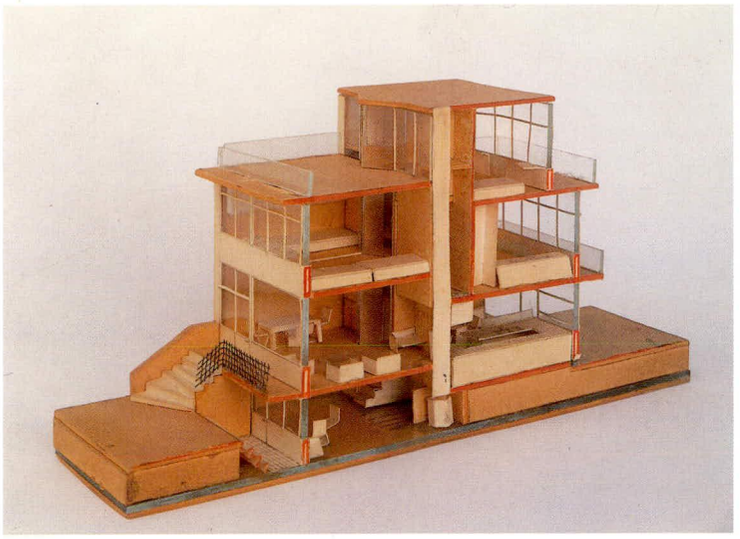
Design for block of flats with five storeys and flat with a width of seven metres

1941
not realized

In connection with the development plans of the city of Utrecht, Rietveld made a study of the planned district of Tolsteeg, in 1941. He envisioned family dwellings with a width of four, five and six metres and flats with a width of seven metres. The dwellings of four and five metre width are based on a design for workers' dwellings stemming from 1938 (no. 286). A striking element is the hexagonal glass core, containing a stairway which gives access to various rooms. A toilet, bathroom and cupboards have been situated on either side of the stairway. In articles in the

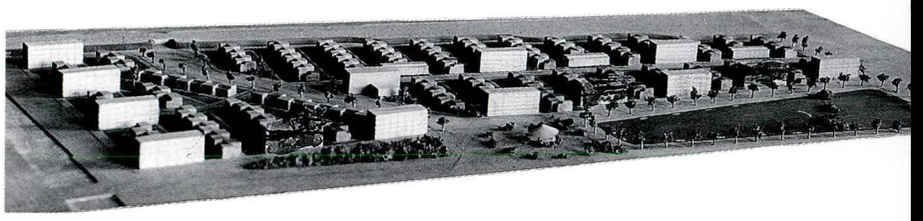
Design drawing five and six metre type dwelling
pencil, ink on transparent paper
35.9 x 60.4cm
RSA





Bouwkundig Weekblad and *De 8 en Opbouw*, Rietveld explained the advantages of what he termed 'the new working-class dwelling': multi-functional, optimal use of space, and economical.

Maquette five metre type
paper, glass
10.7 x 5.1 x 20cm
CMU



Maquette workers residential district
photo c. 1941

1941

327 Low table with round top

The table is from the legacy of C. Moolenbeek. Moolenbeek was the contractor who built a large number of Rietveld's houses. There is a miniature of this model in the Jesse doll's house (no. 417).

oak
46.1 x diam. 65.5cm
1941
Auction 'Raoul' II
Christie's Amsterdam
7 June 1988, no. 397

328 Small low table with round top

The table is from the legacy of C. Moolenbeek, as is the higher model (no. 327).

oak
40 x diam. 42cm
1941
Auction 'Raoul' II
Christie's Amsterdam
7 June 1988, no. 398

329 Interior design and furniture J. ten Doesschate

1941

Dr. H.T. 's Jacobslaan 53, Utrecht

Rietveld advised Mr and Mrs Ten Doesschate on the interior design and furnishing of their house. He chose for dark brown floor covering and light yellow curtains. For the bedroom he designed a headboard for the double bed. It is made of plywood and wood painted white, with two built-in lamps, and two terracotta coloured compartments on either side. There are two matching cupboards of white with turquoise.

330 Vignette Bergoss

c. 1941

331 Design middle-class dwelling

1941
not realized

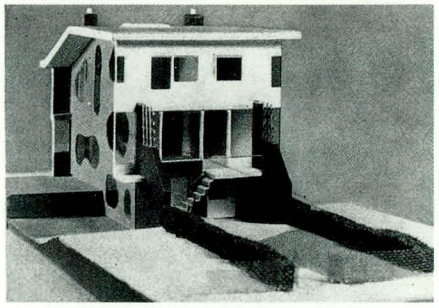
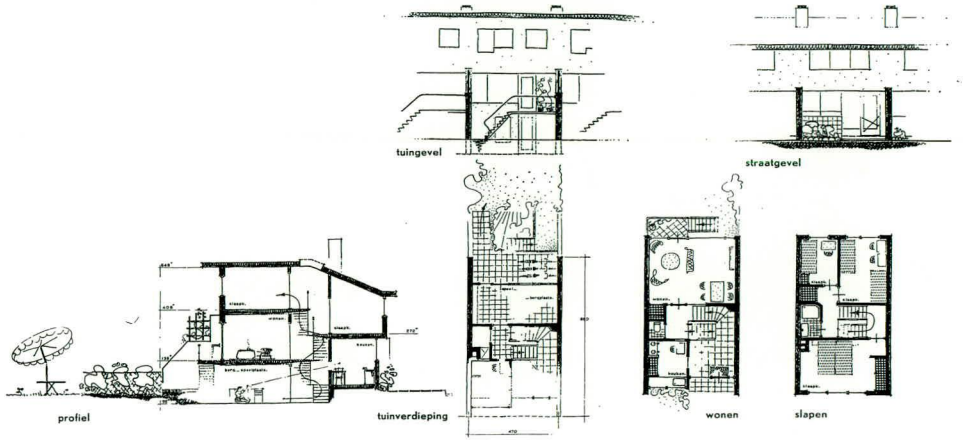


Illustration from Van Tijen et.al. 1941

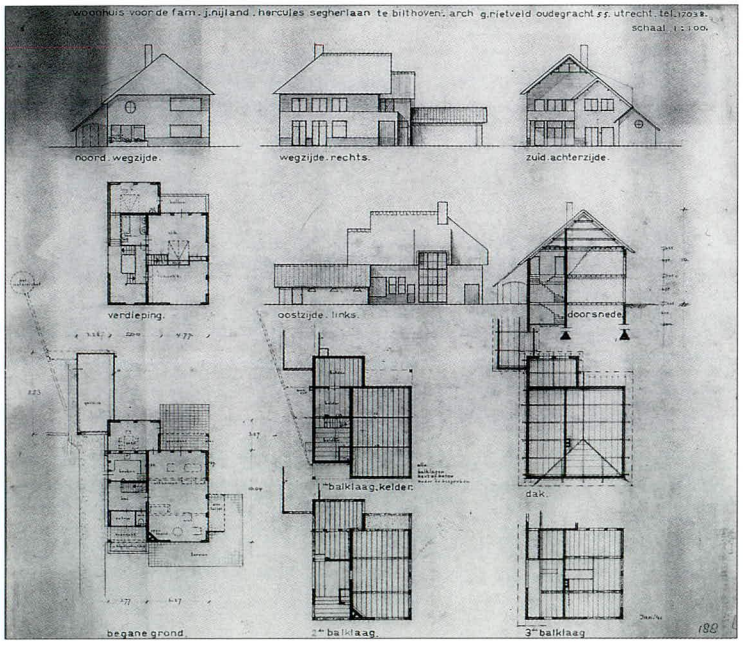


This design is only known from a publication by W. van Tijen et al., *Woonmogelijkheden in het nieuwe Rotterdam*, Rotterdam 1941, 78-79. 'This type of house', explains Van Tijen, offers 'exciting perspectives for those who on the one hand desire simplicity in their lifestyle, and on the other hand don't want to be exactly like all their neighbours'.

332 **Dwelling Nijland**
Hercules Segherslaan 18, Bilthoven

1940-1942
client J. Nijland jun.
altered

In 1940 the first application was made for a building permit for a dwelling for J. Nijland jun., son of the Utrecht cinema owner J. Nijland. The house was a wedding present from his parents. Rietveld's first design shows a block-shaped dwelling with a flat roof. A year later Rietveld informed the municipality that he had made a new design. It was a dwelling with a thatched roof and red tiles, and roughly plastered walls alternated with white, green and black glazed brickwork. The only remaining aspect of the initial design was the enormous glass wall which extended across the upper floor. Having seen the maquette of the house the municipality of Bilthoven was convinced. However, it still took several months before a permit was issued. The availability of building materials posed a problem. Due to the war, permission for the use of certain materials had to be granted by the General Deputy for the Reconstruction. Wood, iron tubing, reinforcing bars and steel were rationed. The glazed bricks, which Rietveld used here for the first time, were used in the plinth on the front side of the house and incorporated in the facade of the back wall. After the war Rietveld regularly made use of combinations of glazed bricks and stones of various types and colours (see for example nos 548, 568 and 587). Rietveld designed several pieces of furniture for the interior, among others the crockery cupboards which stood in the dining room. In 1960 he made a plan for an extension to the house. The building permit was not issued because the flat roof of the extension deviated from the thatched roof of the house. A second design, which was submitted several months later, was also rejected.



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
72.3 x 75.3cm
RSA

photo c. 1942

1942

333 **Competition design for a crematorium motto 'We Mortals'**

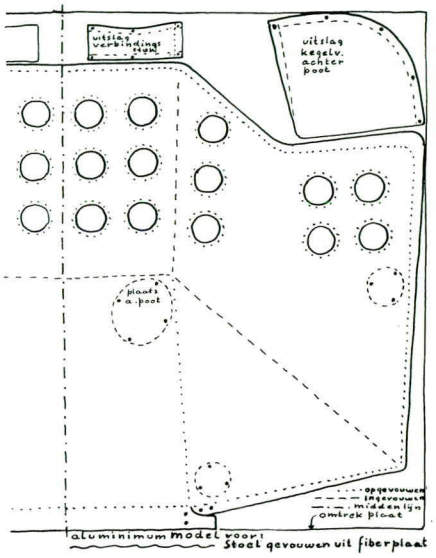
1941-1942
not realized

334 Armchair

aluminium
1942

In 1942 Rietveld made two full-scale prototypes of the armchair from the folding furniture series (no. 302). One of these was manufactured by G. van de Groenekan and the other by Rietveld's son Wim.[1] On an architects drawing kept in the Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rietveld has written: 'aluminium model for: chair folded out of fibre plate'. Aluminium is a more suitable material for making prototypes than fibre or plywood. The round holes enhance the sturdiness of the material. The qualities and possibilities of this design, which Rietveld presented at the exhibition of the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs in 1948, were fully recognized by the press. M.G. Schenk made an excellent summary in *De Groene* of 16 March 1949: 'For a generation Rietveld has been the man of ideas upon which he, but especially others, elaborate and thereby generate functional articles. The chairs which Rietveld designed after this war are as unsuitable for immediate use as the first steel furniture manufactured after the previous war. And yet, we now all accept the steel furniture as normal. Rietveld seems obsessed with the necessity to manufacture a great amount of furniture in a very short time. One tenth of the Dutch people have been robbed of everything: how can we help these hundreds of thousands as swiftly as possible? It was for this reason that he pondered for so long, until he devised an armchair which, like furniture from the cardboard toy box, can be punched from a single sheet. The aluminium model which he made still has all the characteristics of an experiment; only an eccentric would place this armchair in his lounge. That doesn't matter: the idea has taken shape, now the ideal form will develop, even though it may take many more beads of perspiration. That the stranger will no longer recognize Rietveld's aluminium chair in this ideal shape, is of no importance.' However, the Dutch furniture industry was unable to take up Rietveld's ideas and transform them into an ideal shape. The production of Rietveld's postwar furniture designs was limited

[1] Told by G. van de Groenekan, 1992.



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
30.5 x 24.5cm
NAi

Armchair
70 x 72 x 50cm
SMA

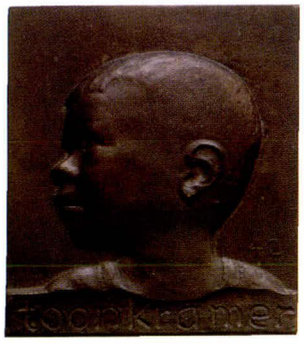
1942

in general to the personal manufacture of prototypes and one-off pieces.

335 Plaque showing Toon Kramer

bronze
24 x 19.7 x 3.6cm
1942
private collection, Amsterdam

Toon Kramer was the grandson of G. ten Doesschate (see no. 151).



336 Armchair

wood, plywood
1942

The chair has the same back and seat as the tube-framed chair (no. 119) and the same sides as the chair for the Amsterdamsche Bank (no. 345). There are drawings for this chair in the Rietveld Schröder Archive, with the Metz number R 58.

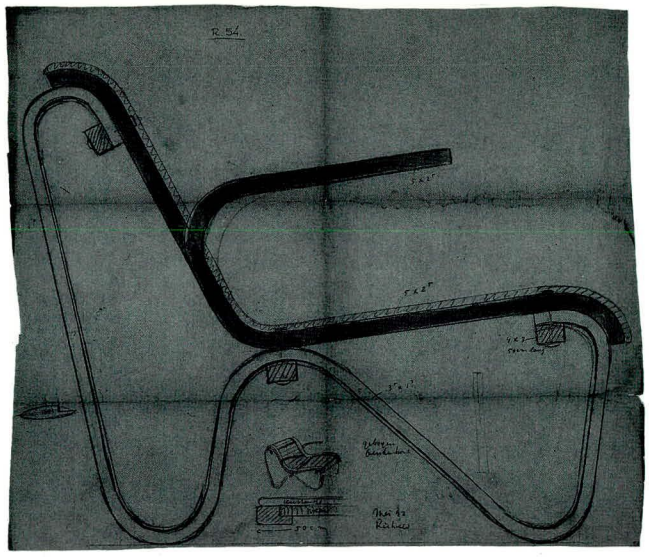
Armchair
oak, plywood
76.5 x 52.5 x 54cm
SMA

1942

337 Design chair

beech
1942

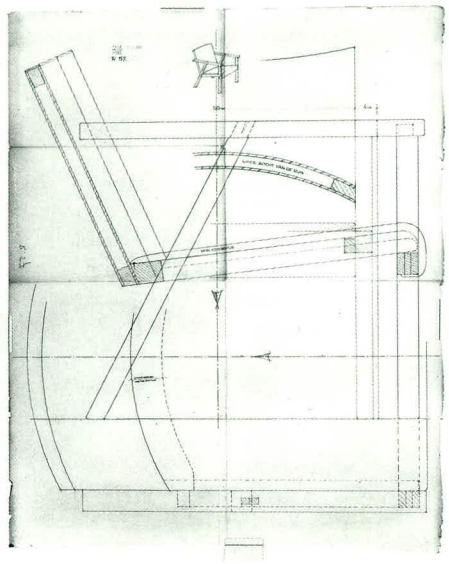
There are a number of drawings for Metz dating from 1942, with chair designs which are often based on earlier models or combine aspects of different models. In general the drawings have received a Metz number and a dating stamp. Probably more of these designs were realized than those which have so far been traced. The frame of this model was later adapted for a set of garden furniture (no. 369).



Design drawing
pencil, crayon, charcoal, watercolour on paper
78.8 x 90cm
RSA

338 Design armchair

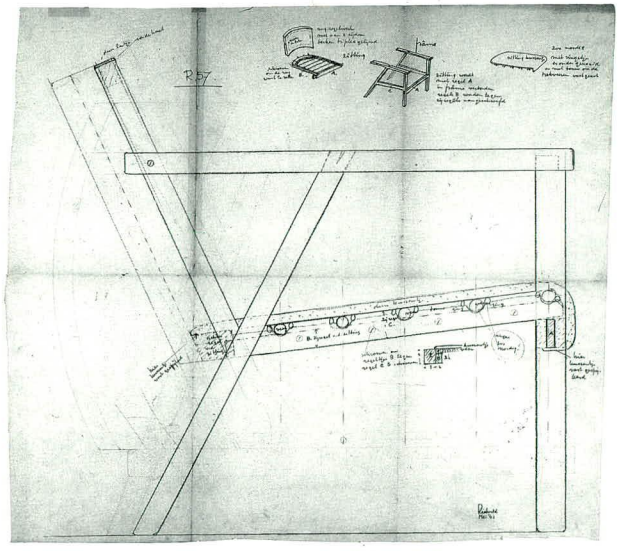
wood, upholstery
1942



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
100 x 78cm
1942
De Leeuw/Metz Archive

339 Design armchair

beech, plywood, upholstery
1942



Design drawing
crayon on paper
77.5 x 83cm
NAi

340 Chair

wood, plywood
1942

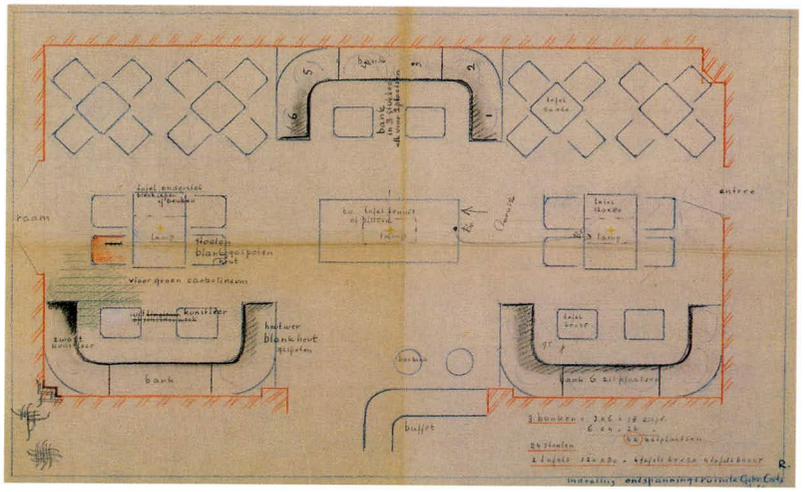
The chair was manufactured by G. van de Groenekan for Marian Schröder, Truus Schröder's daughter. Rietveld made drawings of this chair with a high and a low back, for Metz & Co. The chair is sprung, and upholstered with a cushion. The Metz number is R 56. The same model with a wooden back was given another number, R 57.

Chair
elm, beech plywood
102 x 57.3 x 71.6cm
CMU

341 Interior leisure room, Gebr. Cats

1942

The furniture for the room was supplied by Metz and consisted of three couches, twenty-four chairs, two large tables, four medium-sized tables and four small tables.
The couches were upholstered with black imitation leather, the tables with white imitation leather. The legs of the chairs and tables were of natural sprayed elmwood. The small table and the couch were given the numbers R 59 and R 60 respectively.



Design drawing
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
39.5 x 61.5cm
De Leeuw/Metz Archive

1942

342 Letterhead Rietveld

ca. 1942

RIETVELD
ARCHITECT
OUDEGRACHT 55
UTRECHT C.
TELF. 17038
POSTGIRO
NR. 164496

343 Sewing cabinet

oak
24.8 x 34.2 x 63.5cm
c. 1942
B. Friedman, New York

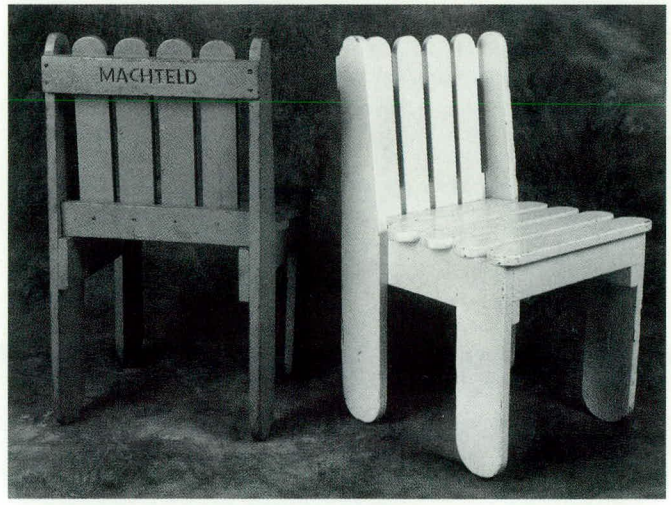
The cabinet was made for the Moolenbeek family by G. van de Groenekan.

1942

344 Chairs for Nico Jesse's children

deal
c. 1942
68 x 37 x 37cm
B. Friedman, New York

Two of the three chairs were auctioned at Sotheby's Amsterdam in 1988.



345 Chairs and benches for the Amsterdamsche Bank

oak
1942-1943

Moolenbeek & Partners supplied the chairs which Rietveld designed for the branches of the Amsterdamsche Bank in The Hague and Amsterdam. The company probably also supplied the sixteen four-seater benches, of which a drawing is kept in the Netherlands Architecture Institute. In later versions the slats are thinner, because wood had become scarce.[1] A number of versions of this chair are known to exist, including a child's size. Rietveld also introduced this model at Metz & Co. The working plan has the number R 61 and is signed and dated, 'Rietveld sept 42'.

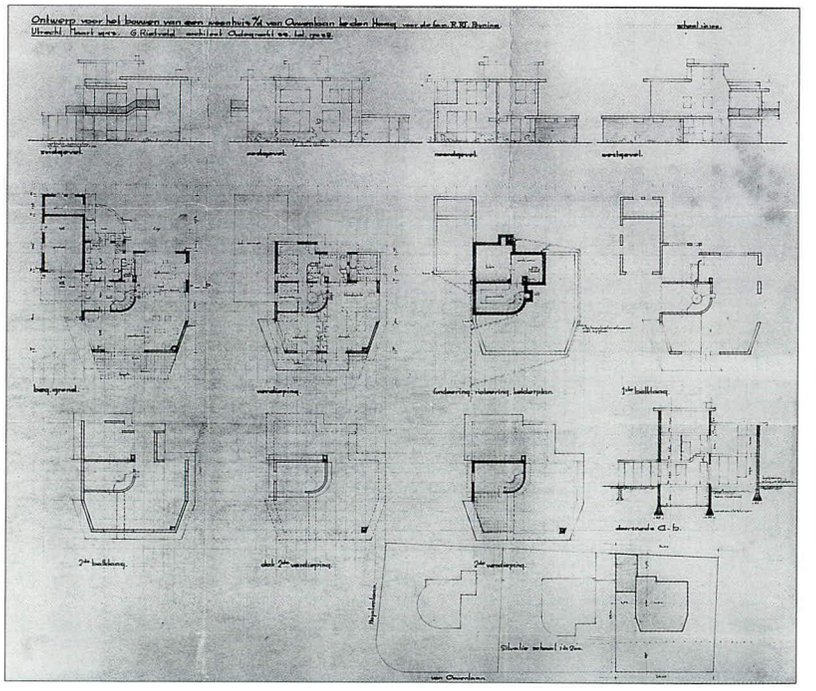
[1] Auction cat. 'Raoul' II Christie's Amsterdam, 7 June 1988, nos 402 and 403.

Chair
oak
76.5 x 52.5 x 54cm
SMA

346 Design dwelling Buning Van Ouwenlaan, The Hague

1943
client R.R.T. Buning
not realized

Design drawing
collotype
72.1 x 81.7cm
RSA



1943

347 Design dwellings for Study Group Architectural Maintenance of Postwar Housing

1943
not realized

was assigned a different site. Rietveld was asked to design middle- and working-class dwellings for a district in Gorinchem. He noted on his design that the possibility of a 'completely manufactured core made in the factory' should be considered. In this he returned to a concept stemming from 1929 (no. 143). Rietveld sketched a suggested assembly system, which he called the 'assembly system in a nutshell'. It was based on the principle of stacked units or plates, with openings. The plates were placed upon one another and adjusted with steel pins which had been hammered into the openings. After the pins were removed, the openings were filled with concrete. The pattern of the prefab plates dictated the rhythm and patterns of the inner and outer walls. However, Rietveld did not only use the facade to determine the view of the street and surroundings, he placed the dwellings in parallel strips. By curving the alignment slightly he created a street setting which looks as if it arises from a romantic, nineteenth-century idea of city planning.

348 Child's bed

wood, plywood
74.5 x 120 x 59.3cm
1940-1944
NAi

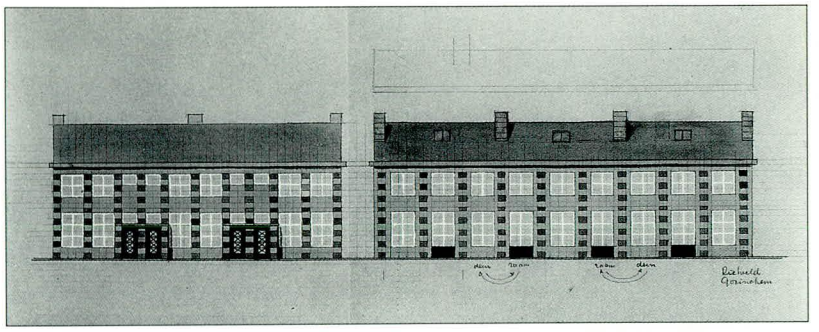
349 Design assembly system dwelling
Gorinchem

1943-1944
client Bredero's Bouwbedrijf
not realized

Design district development
Gorinchem

c. 1943
not realized

In 1943 Rietveld was invited by Bredero's Bouwbedrijf to collaborate on a prefabrication project with seven other architects. The company wanted to realize the results of the study after the war and had taken a number of options on building sites in several towns. Each collaborating architect



Design drawing
assembly system dwellings
pencil, watercolour on paper
22.5 x 47.5cm
NAi

350 Design brochure 'Do-It-Yourself Furniture'

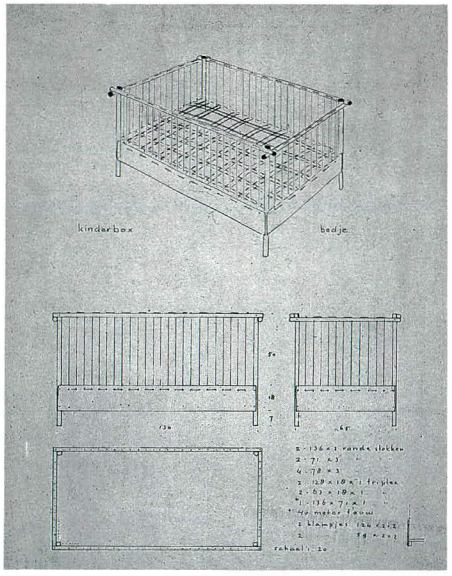
1943-1944
client Committee for Family and Household Advice

In the Rietveld Schröder Archive and the Netherlands Architecture Institute there are in total fifteen watercolours forming the basis of the brochure 'Do-It-Yourself Furniture'. It was to be published by the Committee for Family and Household Advice. The committee had previously published 'Make Groats taste Good', 'Nappy problems', 'Starters and Afters' and 'Spring Cleaning', amongst others.[1]

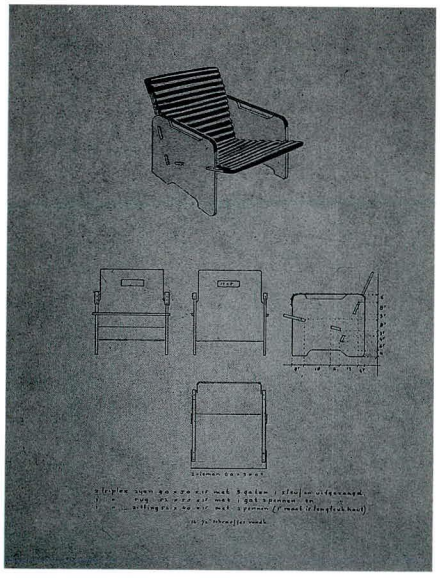
Design cover
pencil, ink, paint on paper
20.7 x 28.8cm
RSA

The above brochure was probably never published. The drawings, with the exception of the cover, are numbered, and depict: the cover of the brochure; table (1); military chair (2); armchair [probably 3]; child's playpen/bed (4); wall cupboard (5); book rack and bookcase (6); standard lamp and hanging lamp (7); chest of drawers with leaf (8); table with S-shaped leg (9); child's table and chair (10); child's wheelbarrow (11); sewing-box (12); convertible divan (13); garden bench (14). Designs nos 3, 4, 5 and 12 form part of this series for the first time, but are probably not new and are based on earlier designs, as are the others. The cover of the brochure is signed by Truus Schröder-Schräder. Possibly it was her idea to present a number of Rietveld's furniture designs in a series of this sort.

[1] Copies of these brochures are in the International Information Centre and the Archives of the Women's Movement, Amsterdam.

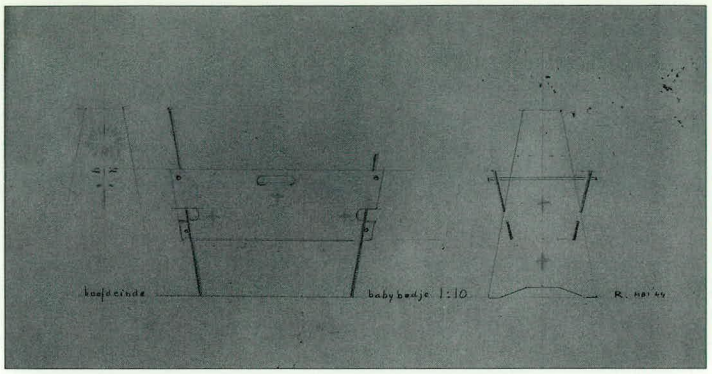


Drawing child's bed
ink, watercolour on paper
60 x 40cm
NAi



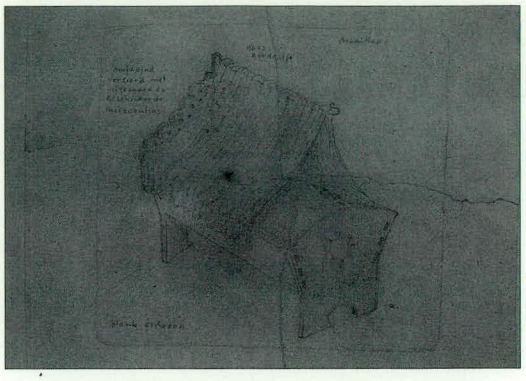
Drawing chair
ink, watercolour on paper
60 x 40cm
NAi

1943



351 Design baby bed

1944



Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
24 x 30cm
RSA

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
25.5 x 20.7cm
RSA

353 Design cradle

1940-1945

352 Zigzag child's chair Jesse

wood, five-plywood
1944

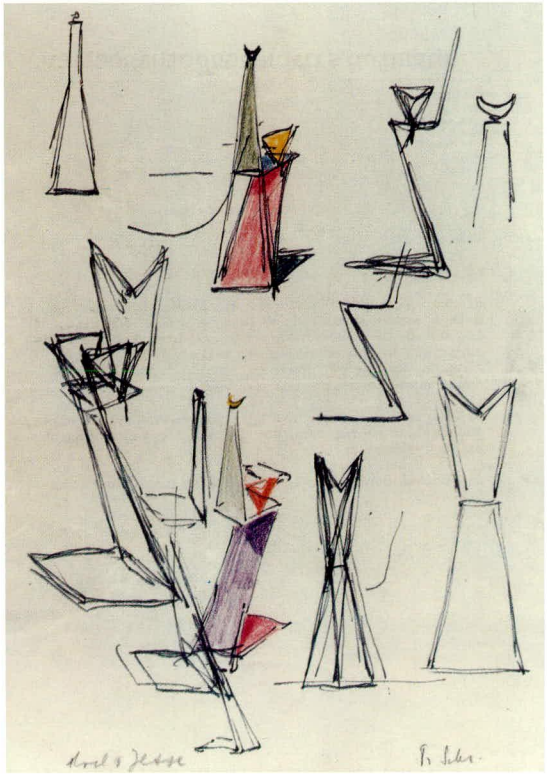
In the Rietveld Schröder Archives there are sketches of this chair and a photo of a chair which is almost identical to this model.

Küper 1988, 199-203.

1944

Zigzag child's chair Jesse
wood, five-plywood
133 x 60.5 x 60.5cm
NAi

Rough draft variation
crayon, ink on paper
20.5 x 15.7cm
1950
RSA



354 Upright plank chair

deal
83.5 x 44.5 x 48.5cm
c. 1940-1945
M. Sanders, Amsterdam

355 Garden table

deal
43 x diam. 73.5cm
c. 1940-1945
M. Sanders, Amsterdam

356 Low plank chair

deal
55 x 54.5 x 64cm
c. 1940-1945
M. Sanders, Amsterdam

357 Stool

deal
39.5 x diam. 30cm
c. 1940-1945
M. Sanders, Amsterdam

1945

358 Design typography for exhibition 'Kunst in het harnas'

pencil on paper
31 x 24cm
1945
RSA

359 Tea trolley

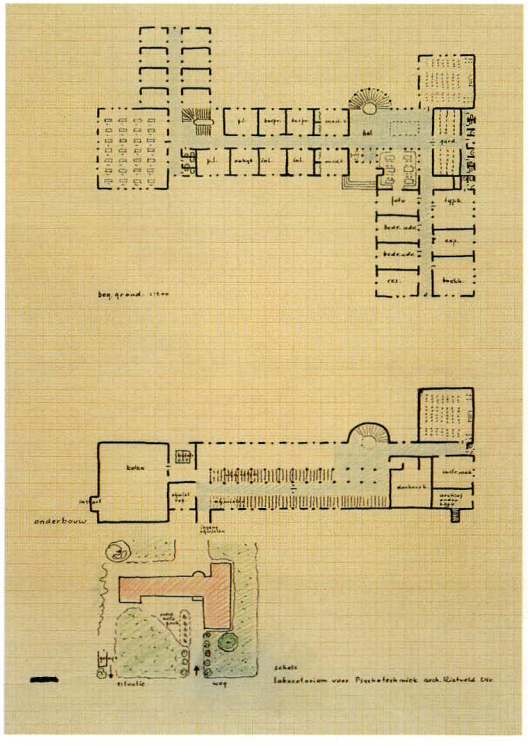
beech, plywood, softwood
64 x 82 x 47.5cm
1945
CMU

360 Design Psychotechnical Laboratory
Utrecht

1945
client Nederlandse Stichting voor Psychotechniek
not realized

This was one of Rietveld's first commissions for a large building. In 1927 he had made a competition design for the League of Nations Palace, as he wrote in a letter to J.J.P. Oud dated 27 September of that year, and according to the catalogue, he presented a design for a 'fortoliet' factory at the A.S.B exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1928. The designs are known only from these references.

Before Rietveld started on the plan for the new laboratory, the members of staff were asked to state on paper their preferences regarding their prospective working space. However, it is not known to what extent this affected the plans. Rietveld made a design for a laboratory building with three floors and a surface area of 2800 square metres.



Design drawing
ink on paper
58.5 x 42cm
NAi

361 **Decoration for newspaper** *De Waarheid*

1945

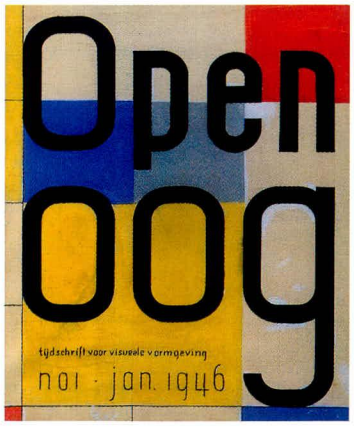
362 **Earrings**

The jewellery was designed by Rietveld for Truus Schröder.

gilded silver
4.4 x 1.8cm
c. 1945
CMU

363 **Cover** *Open Oog*

c. 1945

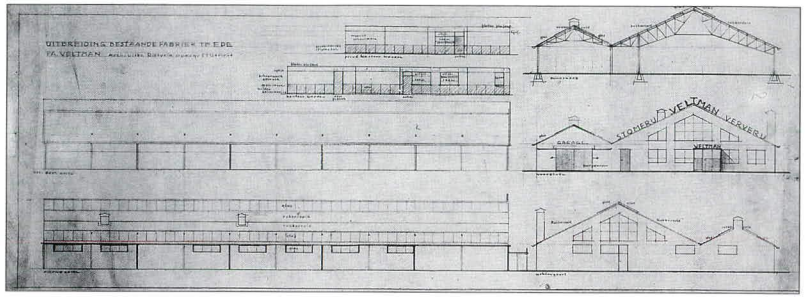


Design drawing
pencil, ink, paint on paper
24.6 x 19cm
RSA

364 **Design extension Veltman Laundry** Ede

c. 1945

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
35 x 90cm
NAi



365 **Conversion shop Dauphine** Leidsestraat 26, Amsterdam

1940-1946
no longer extant

The old shop front was replaced with a new one, which had granite breastwork; the window frames and the door were made of bronze. The bronze shop front had already been designed in 1940 and had been ready for installment for a number of years. The floor, laid in a checked pattern of black and white stone, began outside and extended into the shop without a threshold.

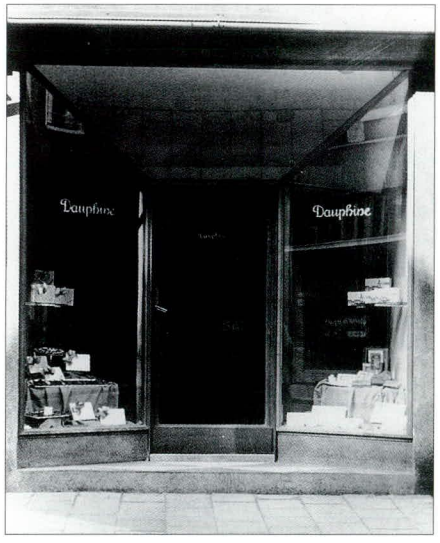
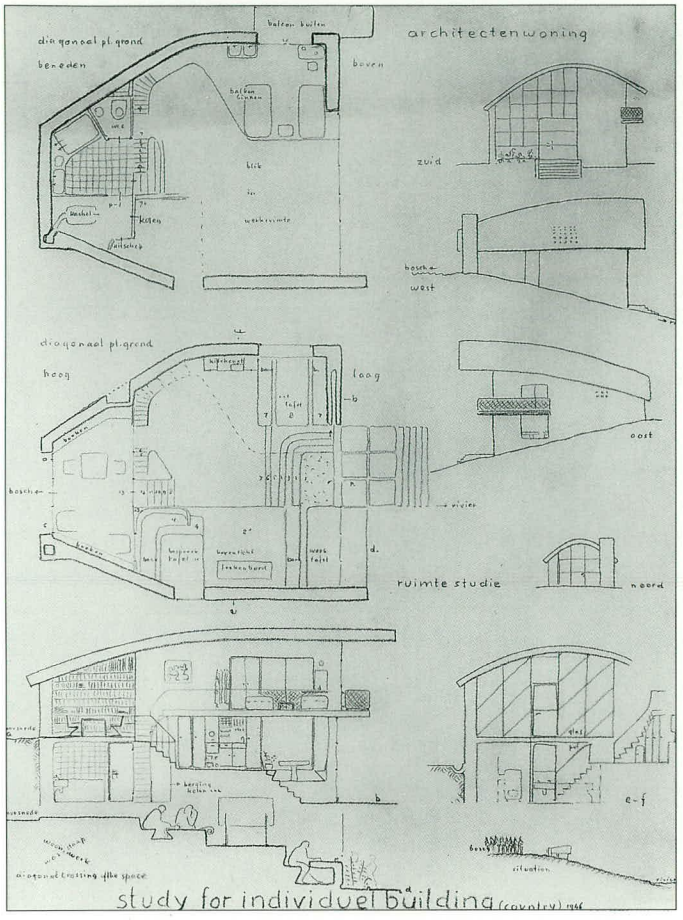


photo c. 1946

366 Design dwelling for architect

1946
not realized



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
67.8 x 49cm
NAi

Maquette
clay, glass, cardboard
7.5 x 10 x 17cm
CMU

The 'dwelling for architect' or 'study for individual building' is probably an idealized dwelling which Rietveld had designed for himself. The preference for a large open living and working area, as found in both the Rietveld Schröder House and in Rietveld's own dwelling on Vredenburg (nos 84 and 248) was also the point of departure here. From a stylistic point of view the design resembles other dwellings built in the 1940s, such as the summerhouse for Verrijn Stuart (no. 325) and the dwelling for Van Ommeren (393).

367 Design exhibition 'Weerbare Democratie' New Church, Amsterdam

1946

368 Design exhibition 'Art Décoratif Néerlandais' Liège / Ghent

1946

369 Garden furniture

beech, upholstery
1946

The garden furniture, consisting of a bench and two armchairs, was bought from Metz & Co. by the first owner in 1946. The chair has the same frame as the 1942 chair design for Metz (no. 337). The bench was not put on the market and was specially produced. The wood was originally given a coat of varnish. The loose cushions have been lost. One armchair is in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht. The Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam has the bench and the other armchair.

370 Interior Hondius-Crone
Oranje Nassaulaan 10, Amsterdam

1946 and 1948
client
Mrs A.H. Hondius-Crone

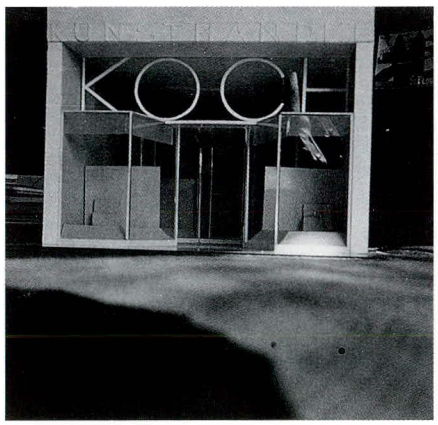
In 1946 Mrs Hondius-Crone had her house in Amsterdam renovated. She engaged Rietveld as adviser. He gave directions for the interior design and colour advice. Because more than one family lived in this dwelling after the war, Rietveld built a kitchenette in an alcove on the stairway in 1948.

371 Poster exhibition 'Vooruitzichten'

c. 1946

372 Design Art Dealer's Koch
Noordblaak 23, Rotterdam

c. 1946
client
G.H.R.E. Hartmann
not realized

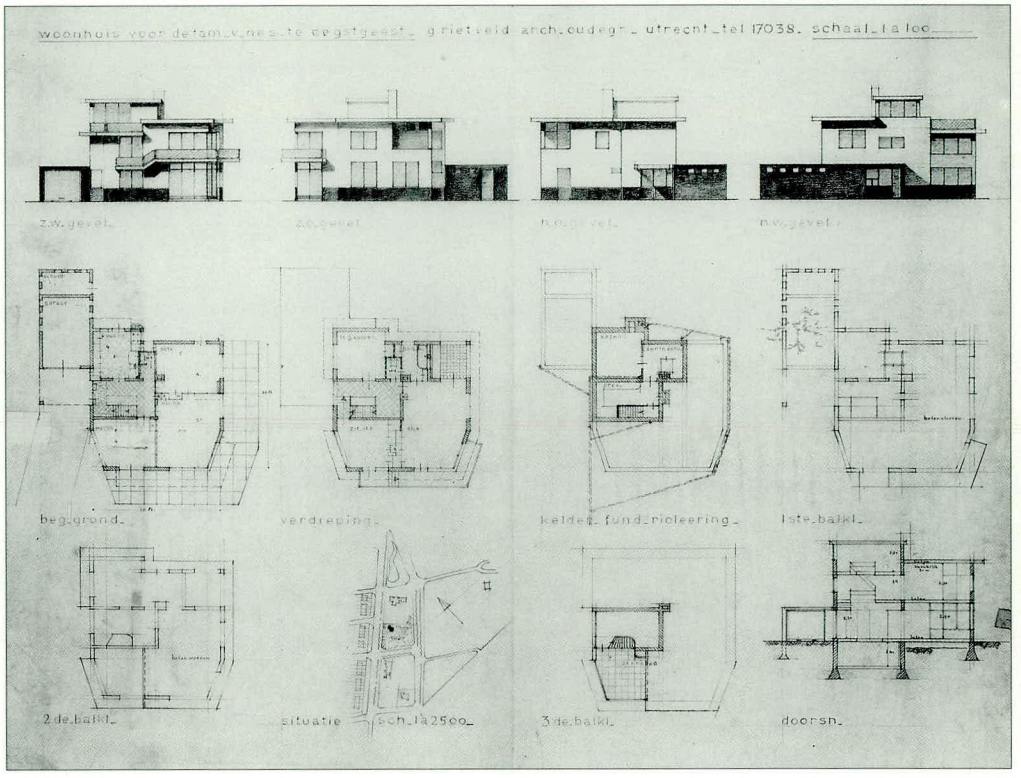


Maquette
photo c. 1946

373 **Design dwelling Van Nes** 1946-1947
Oegstgeest

Rietveld submitted various designs, but was unable to reach an agreement with the City and Landscape Institute for South Holland who rejected the plans on aesthetic grounds.

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
66 x 82cm
NAi



1947

374 **Design exhibition 'L'art décoratif hollandais'** 1947
Orfèvrerie Christofle, Paris

375 **Design exhibition 'Centenary Holland'**
Holland, Michigan

1947
client Dutch Economic Information Service

Living room Redelé
with sculpture by
Jan Bons
photo c. 1947

376 Conversion living room/ study

Singel 76, Dordrecht

1947
client J.M. Redelé

377 Design average dwelling with four variations

1947
client Utrecht Public Health Service
not realized

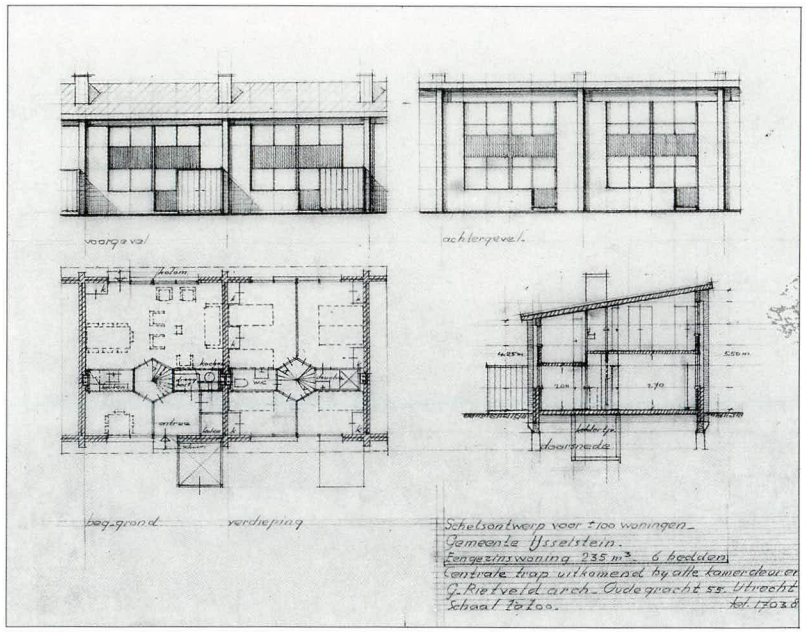
378 Design dwellings and district development

IJsselstein

1947

The hundred dwellings which Rietveld designed for district development in IJsselstein were based on his 1938 design for a worker's dwelling and his 1941 design for the new working-class dwelling (nos 286 and 326). He produced three different designs for the development of the district. One possibility was building in strips, the second was a variation of the first, with broken strips, and in the third design the rows of dwellings – with space in between – would be constructed at right angles to one another.

Design drawing
dwellings
pencil on transparent paper
38 x 47.5cm
NAi



1947

379 Letterhead Rietveld

c. 1947

G.RIETVELD
ARCHITECT
OUDEGR:55
UTRECHT
TEL:17038

380 Letterhead Truus Schröder-Schräder

c. 1947

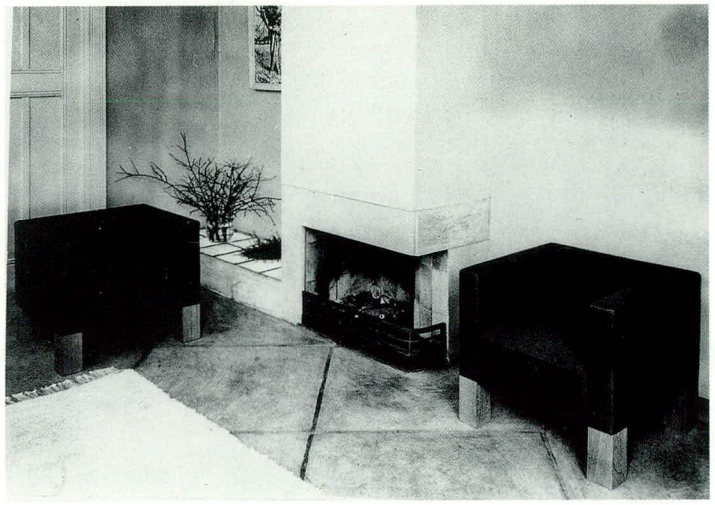
TR:SCHRÖDER
INTERIEUR
ONTWERPSTER
P.HENDRIKL.50
UTRECHT 11783
GIRONR:8856

1947

381 Living room interior
Arnhem

c. 1947
client Mrs Breebaart
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

photo c. 1947

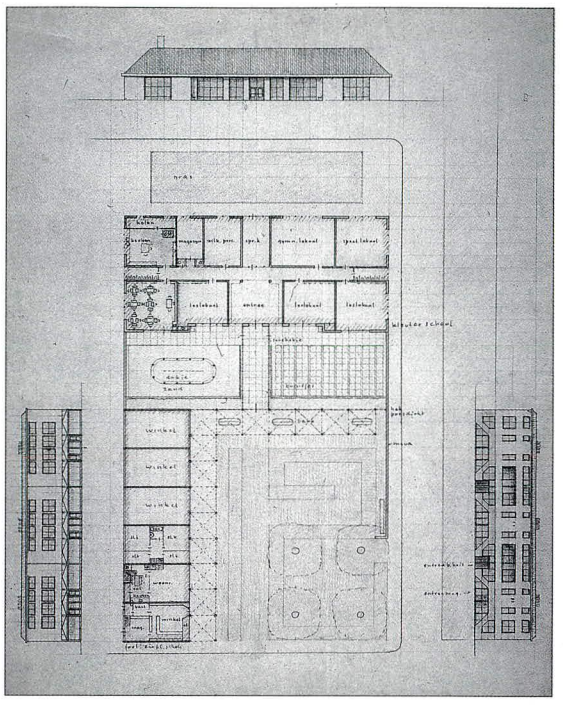


382 Design district development, middle-class dwellings, nursery school, and shops with upstairs dwellings
Zuidwijk, Rotterdam

1943-1948
in collaboration with
W. van Tijen and
H.A. Maaskant
not realized

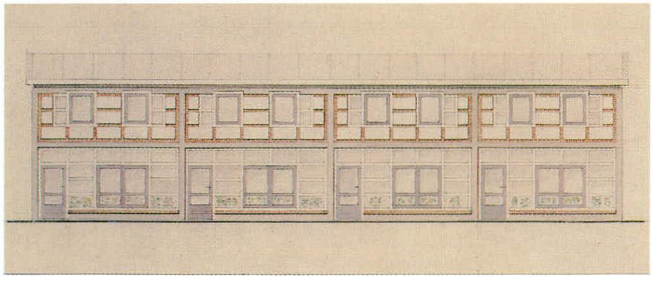
In 1941 Van Tijen had made a report on a garden city for a public housing company in Rotterdam. The report resulted in a commission to design the district Zuidwijk in Rotterdam. To implement the plan, Van Tijen approached other architects, including Rietveld. The latter produced various designs, of which the district with middle-class dwellings was the most detailed. An alteration in the building plans thwarted the realization of his designs. In one of the studies for the street plan, he attempted to achieve an unconstrained organization of the district in which the winding streets determine the space, as was the case in his designs for Gorinchem (no. 349). The basic shape in this design is a circle, rather than a strip.

Design drawing
nursery school and shops
pencil, crayon, watercolour on paper
48 x 62.5cm
NAi



Design drawing district development
pencil, crayon, ink, watercolour, cardboard on paper
58.6 x 93cm
RSA

Design drawing
middle-class dwellings
pencil, crayon, watercolour on paper
38 x 66cm
NAi



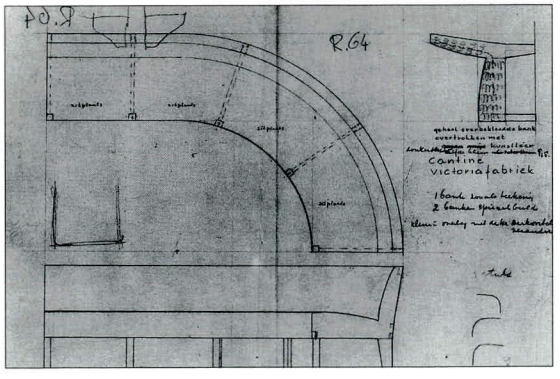
1948

383 Design conversion and furniture NV Biscuit & Chocoladefabriek Victoria, and office Redelé
Dordrecht

1947-1948
co-designer
T. Schröder-Schräder

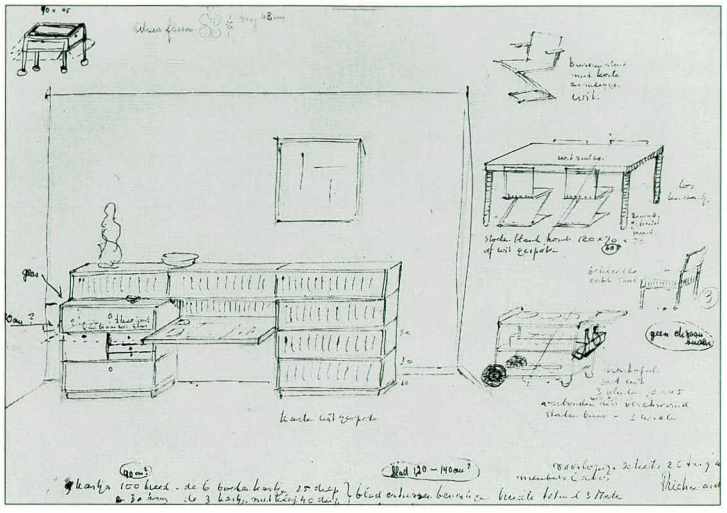
The couches and upholstered partitions designed for the interior have the Metz numbers R 64 and R 65 respectively.

Design drawing couch
pencil on transparent paper
35.5 x 44cm
RSA



384 Design wall cupboard and other furniture

c. 1938-1948

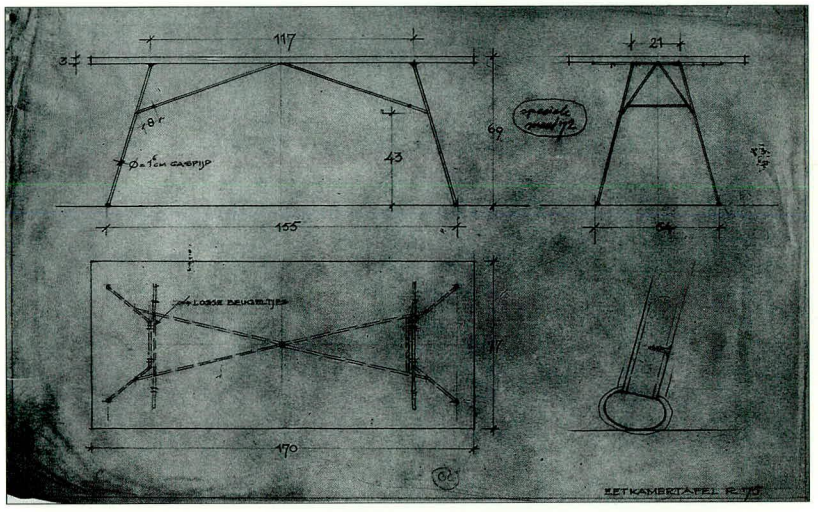


Design drawing
ink on paper
30 x 42cm
NAi

385 Design dining room table

The model has a high Metz number, R 75, but its design is related to the furniture from the second half of the 1930s.

wood, metal
c. 1935-1948

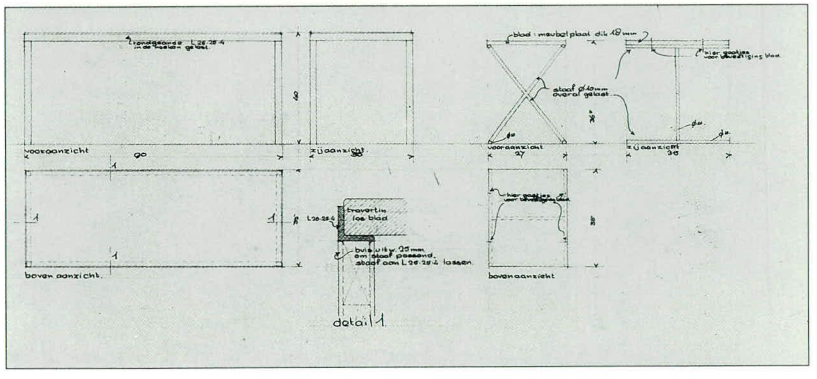


Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
24 x 36cm
De Leeuw/Metz Archive

1948

386 Design table with three side tables

metal, travertine, blockboard
c. 1948



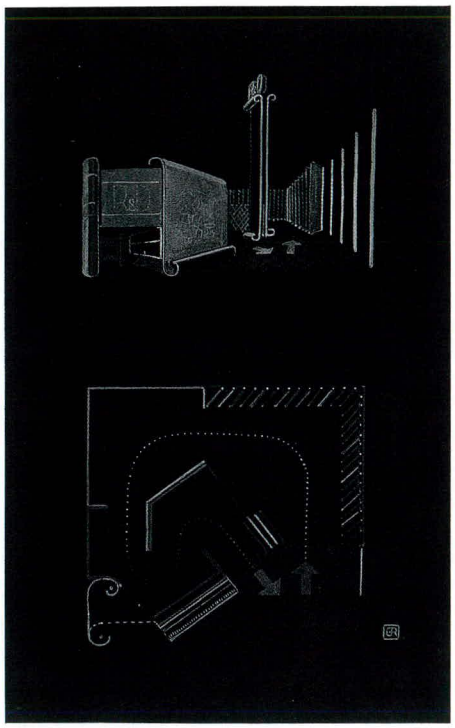
Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
36 x 64.5cm
NAi

387 **Design conversion Cinema Vreeburg**
Vredenburg 8, Utrecht

c. 1948
client J. Nijland
not realized

388 **Stands Bond voor Kunst in Industrie, Gebonden Kunsten Federatie, Rath en Doodeheefver 'International Demonstration of Crafts and Trades'**
Houtrusthallen, The Hague

1948



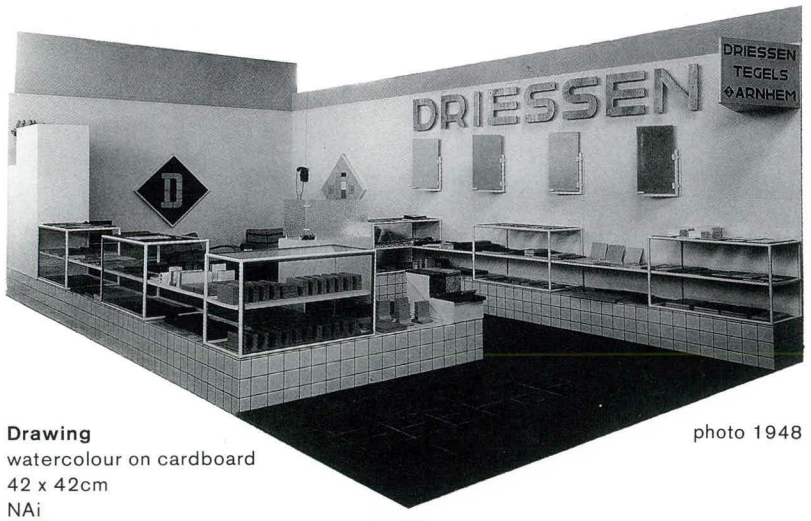
Drawing stand
Rath en Doodeheefver
pencil, watercolour on cardboard
55 x 46.5cm
NAi

389 **Dutch Stand**
Annual Trade Fair, Brussels

1948
client Dutch Economic Information Service

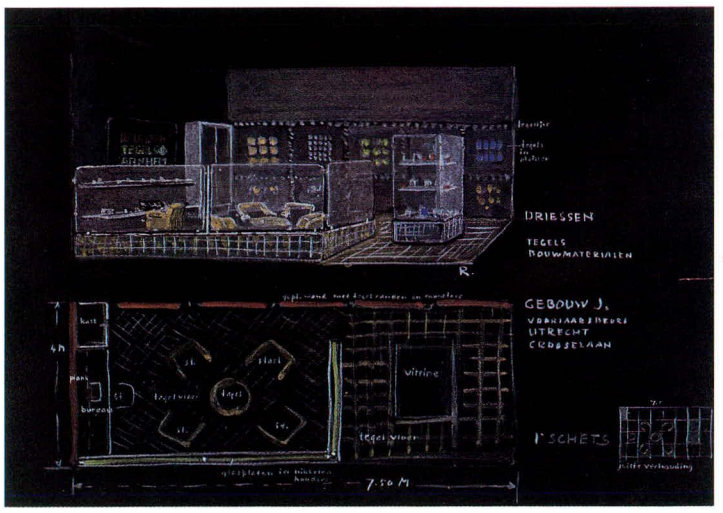
390 **Stand Driessen's Tegelhandel**
Annual Trade Fair, Utrecht

1948



Drawing
watercolour on cardboard
42 x 42cm
NAi

photo 1948



1948

391 Designs urban development plan
Nagele, Northeast Polder

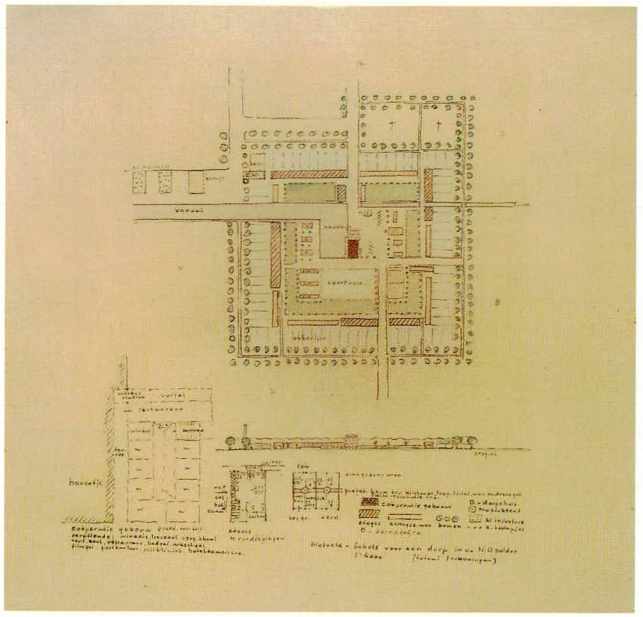
c. 1948
in collaboration with
A. Bodon, J. Bijhouwer, C. de Vries, P. Elling, M. Kamerling, J. Kloos, B. Merkelbach, J. Niegeman, M. Ruys, H. Salomonson, M. Stam, W. van Bodegraven, C. van Eesteren, A. van Eyck and W. van Gelderen

Sixty family dwellings
Nagele

1953-1955
in collaboration with
J. Rietveld
altered

In 1948, the urban development plan for Nagele was selected as the subject of a study by several members of the Amsterdam architects' group 'De 8'. The informal nature of the study was soon to change, when the board of directors of the Northeast Polder Works presented the group with the commission for the implementation of the design. Several members of the Rotterdam group 'Opbouw' joined them. Fixed givens to consider were: Nagele as a town for farm labourers and as service centre for the surrounding area; the number of schools, churches and dwellings required; and the development of a plan for roads and canals. Guidelines developed by 'De 8' were: a town set in a characteristic landscape, high trees and shrubs to balance the flatness of the polder, an open space on a human scale, as much green as possible in the town and surroundings; preferably woodland or windbreaks.

There are a number of sketches and drawings by Rietveld, probably dating from the beginning of 1948, when the project was in an early phase. His contribution to the urban development plan as it was realized was mainly of an inspirational nature. Rietveld drew some ten solutions, four of which give a clear illustration of the possibilities. In one of the sketches he gave the town an irregular structure, whereby he expressed his ideas regarding how residential areas



Rough draft urban development plan
ink, watercolour on paper
30 x 29.8cm
RSA

Rough draft urban development plan
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
57.3 x 32.1cm
NAi

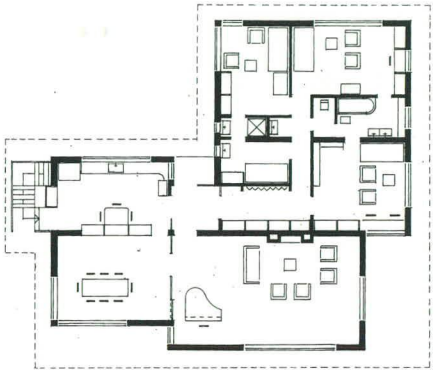
invade the communal life of the village. Initially he approached the project from a socially involved point of view: it was to give shape to the relationship that exists between the individual and the community.
The structure of this relationship is illustrated in a slightly different way in a drawing marked '2nd sketch'.
The town consists of several green fields, around which the dwellings have been grouped. The clusters are ordered according to social class. In this drawing the communal element was incorporated architecturally, rather than in terms of urban development. Rietveld included a number of communal buildings: a bandstand, a community centre, and a building for clubs and one for committee meetings. A more detailed drawing has the same facilities, but they have been situated elsewhere: in the south-east, rather than around the harbour in the northwest. Once again there is a strict arrangement according to class. In this instance the town seems to have been drawn with a ruler.
Rietveld investigated the advantages of a geometric arrangement in which repetition determined the structure. The basis is formed by squares measuring one hundred by one hundred metres, including the rows of trees and the streets which fringed each square. On this hectare there are two rows of four dwellings with a north-south orientation, and four rows of dwellings in twos with an east-west orientation. Each house has its own back garden and shed. Rietveld had drawn fifteen squares, which amounted to a total of 240 dwellings. However, as Rietveld noted, this was merely a basic form, upon which could and should be elaborated.
The dwellings were low-rise buildings, only the community centre was to be high-rise. He presented a more detailed illustration of this building, in a fourth sketch. The building has eight floors. Residents can make use of its facilities: shops, halls for reading, meetings, films and exhibitions, a restaurant, bathing and washing facilities, a post office, an outpatient's clinic, as well as hotel rooms, etcetera.
The building would determine the silhouette of the town, as Rietveld illustrated on a profile sketch.
The urban development plan on this sketch shows a great deviation from the quasi nonchalant way in which the dwellings were scattered in and around the green areas on the second sketch. Although it has a distinctly geometric nature, the arrangement is of a completely different societal order. In this case the town is seen as a sort of fortress. A square frame of alternating high-rise buildings (four floors) and rows of family dwellings surround the centre where the communal facilities are situated: sports fields, schools, churches and shops lie 'within the walls'.
Rietveld had little to do with the work on Nagele after the initial phase.
The construction of the town was based on a design by Mart Kamerling and its development was not completed until the end of the 1950s.

1948

392 **Dwelling Smit**
Puntweg 8, Kinderdijk

1946-1949
client L.C. Smit
altered

A number of studies of varying detail were made prior to the design for the dwelling. One of these depicted a dwelling with two floors with a mezzanine on the front side, harbouring a bedroom and a room with cupboards. Striking features of the house are the rounded corners resembling one of Rietveld's earlier designs for a prefab-

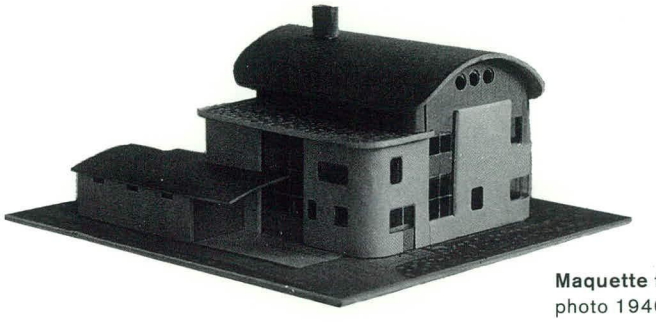


Design drawing
collotype
23.9 x 28cm
RSA

dwelling (no. 145) and the curved roof. The design which was realized in no way resembles the preliminary studies – with the exception of one detail. Two 'portholes' which were a prominent part of earlier designs are a distinctive element of the bungalow which was finally built.
The way the dwelling has been situated provides a view of the water from the large, low window in the living room. 'When we have been out', wrote Mrs Smit in a letter to Rietveld dated 2 January 1952, 'we are always delighted on our return by the atmosphere in the house. I cannot say exactly what contributes to this pleasant mood. It certainly has something to do with the pleasing proportions, the colours and the way the light falls.'[1]

[1] RSA

photo c. 1949



Maquette first design
photo 1946

1949

393 **Dwelling with surgery Van Ommeren**
Rijksstraatweg 158, Elst

1947-1949
client
S.M. van Ommeren
with J. Rietveld

Dr Van Ommeren and his wife knew Rietveld through the Ten Doesschate family who recommended Van Ommeren to contract Rietveld for the construction of his dwelling. Rietveld's fourth design was realized. One design shows a house which may be made into a double dwelling by adding a partition. The design executed borrows the completely symmetrical arrangement of the floor plan from this preparatory study. The situation of the building site between the Rijksstraatweg thoroughfare and a tributary of the Rhine has been optimally exploited. The kitchen, hall and waiting room have been situated at the front of the house, with a long corridor on the upper floor.

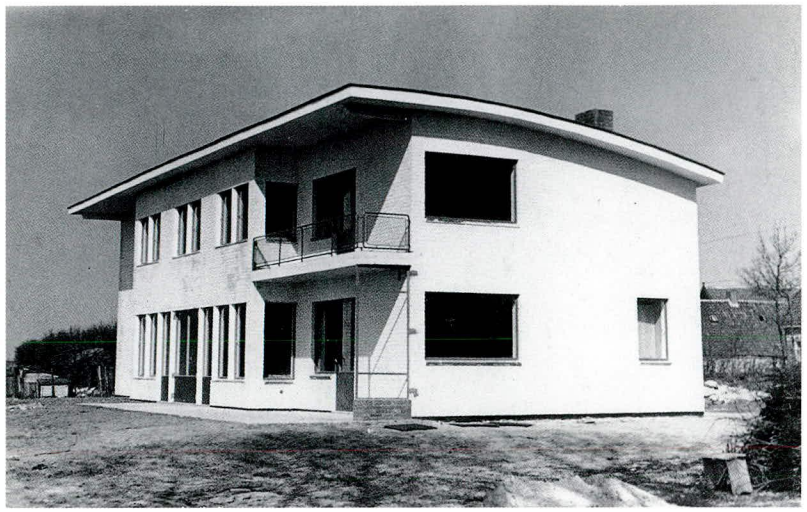
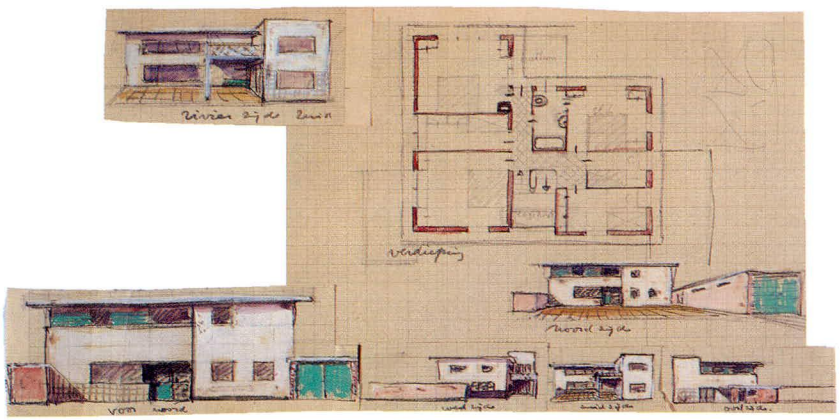
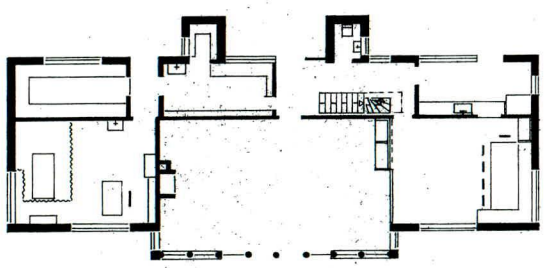


photo c. 1949

The wide living room and the bedrooms are placed at the back of the house, facing the river.
The dwelling is very similar to one of the 1934 designs for H. Buys (no. 204).



Rough draft,
not realized
pencil, watercolour on paper
22 x 41.5cm
NAi

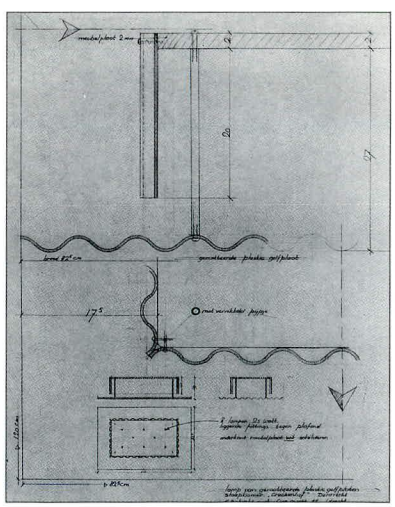


Design drawing
photocopy of collotype
19.5 x 29.5cm
RSA

394 **Design interior country house 'Crabbenhof'**
Dordrecht

1948-1949
client Ch. Redelé

For the bedroom, Rietveld designed ceiling lighting made of matt synthetic corrugated sheets.



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
71 x 58cm
NAi

1949

395 Amersfoort chair

metal, wood, upholstery
1949

The chair was designed by Rietveld for the exhibition 'Schoonheid in huis en hof' held in Amersfoort in 1950. The frame is of steel tubing strung with plaited steel wire. The cushions, measuring 45 by 45 centimetres, are standard jeep cushions. Their size determined the dimensions of the chair.[1] In the newspaper *De Groene Amsterdammer* of 29 July 1950, J.J. Vriend wrote a distinctly laudatory review: 'Rietveld's most recent chair, which will soon be on the market, was also on show, and may be described as an absolute stroke of genius. His armchair, folded from aluminium plate, has never appealed to me, partly because of its excessive technical expression. However, this new chair has a delicacy of form and material use which affords real pleasure. The seat and back, consisting of thick pieces of foam rubber in natural tones harmonize superbly with the white spray-painting of the metal.' E. Berkovich was less enthusiastic and accused Rietveld of plagiarism. Rietveld's reply was characteristic of his personality and beliefs. He openly admitted that the design was 'far from original' but he did this without conceding plagiarism. Rietveld put the accusation in perspective by remarking that this scarcely original chair was 'the first from my hand (including no doubt several recollected versions) concerning the use of which people in certain circles are more or less in agreement.'[2]

In spite of the recognition Rietveld received for his design, he had some trouble finding a manufacturer who would take it into production. In a letter to H. de Leeuw, director of Metz, dated 22 December 1953, Rietveld asked for permission to offer the chair to the department store De Bijenkorf. He wanted to use it there in a furniture arrangement which was to serve as an example for the interiors of the flats he was working on in Utrecht (no. 512).[3] However, De Bijenkorf was not interested. Eventually the company Nemefa manufactured several hundred of these chairs in 1954. These are a little larger than the five prototypes, which were made by a smith.

[1] Told by H. Schröder, 1992.
[2] Rietveld 1950.
[3] De Leeuw/Metz Archive.

Amersfoort chair
metal, wood, upholstery
69 x 53.7 x 68.5cm
CMU

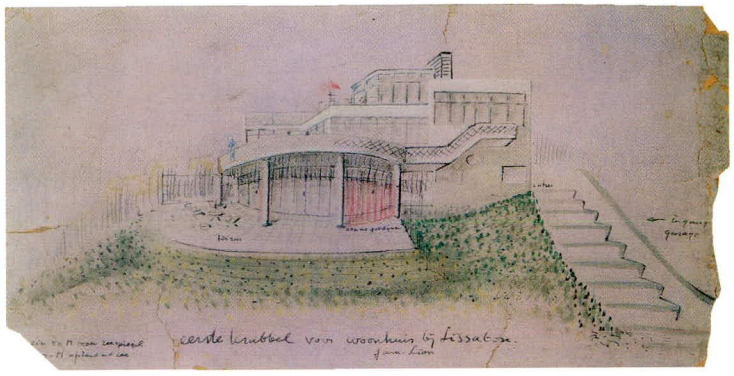
1949

396 Design conversion country house 'Dordtwijck' Dubbeldam

1949
clients Leemhuis and Gratama

397 Design dwelling Lion
Lisbon

c. 1945-1950

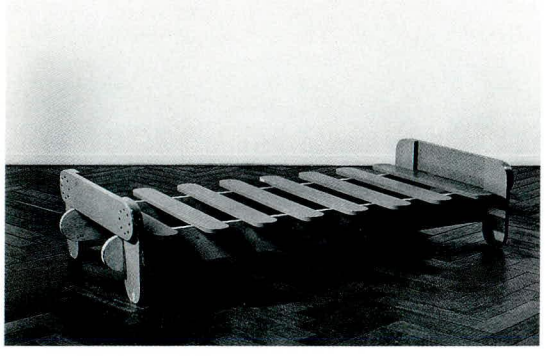


Rough draft
pencil, watercolour on cardboard
20.7 x 38.9cm
RSA

398 Child's bed

pine
39 x 168.5 x 69.5cm
c. 1945-1950
M. Sanders, Amsterdam

According to the present owner the bed was made for the Jesse family. On page 57 of the April 1954 issue of *Goed Wonen* there is an illustration of a children's room in an old village house converted by Jan Rietveld, with 'a cheerfully coloured bed, designed by G. Rietveld'. This bed is not the same, but bears a striking resemblance to this specimen. Perhaps it was intended for one of the other Jesse children.



399 Danish chair

five-plywood
c. 1946-1950

Danish chair
five-plywood
61.5 x 61.5 x 59cm
CMU

The chair is made of six pieces of bent plywood of varying thickness. The curvature of the back of the chair varies. The back depicted in Brown has an added support.[1] In some examples the position of the back has been improved with a small wooden block.[2] The Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum has a smaller version made of fibreboard. Rietveld made a prototype of iron; according to G. van de Groenekan, this iron chair was used to shape the plywood. The chair was made for the entrance hall of the Tomado factories in Dordrecht[3] and is listed as dating from 1950. However, in an article by M.G. Schenk in the paper *De Groene Amsterdammer* of 16 March 1946, a chair consisting of three pieces of plywood is mentioned. This reference can only have been to the Danish chair: 'This also applies to the three plywood boards, which he bent and shaped for so long, until a light armchair developed, which can be manufactured with a minimum of cost and labour, as soon as the materials

become available once more.'
The dating of the design thus lies closer to the pressed chairs of Charles and Ray Eames, which had a great influence on the development of laminated wooden furniture in the Netherlands.[4] The chair was referred to as the 'Danish chair' after Rietveld had presented it at an exhibition in Denmark in 1952. The commentary in a Danish trade journal was not enthusiastic: '[The chair] has good proportions, but is a little primitive and heavy. (...) Rietveld and Berkovich are excellent craftsmen, but their chairs lack the warmth and friendliness of Holland and the Dutch. I had hoped to find some of the old charm of the Dutch East Indies.'[5]

[1] Brown 1958, 182, cat. no. 110.
[2] Auction cat. Christie's Amsterdam 'Raoul' II, 7 June 1988, 75.
[3] Told by H. Schröder, 1992.
[4] Vöge 1986, 28-30.
[5] Kjær 1952.

1950

400 Ex libris Florence Maly

c. 1946-1950

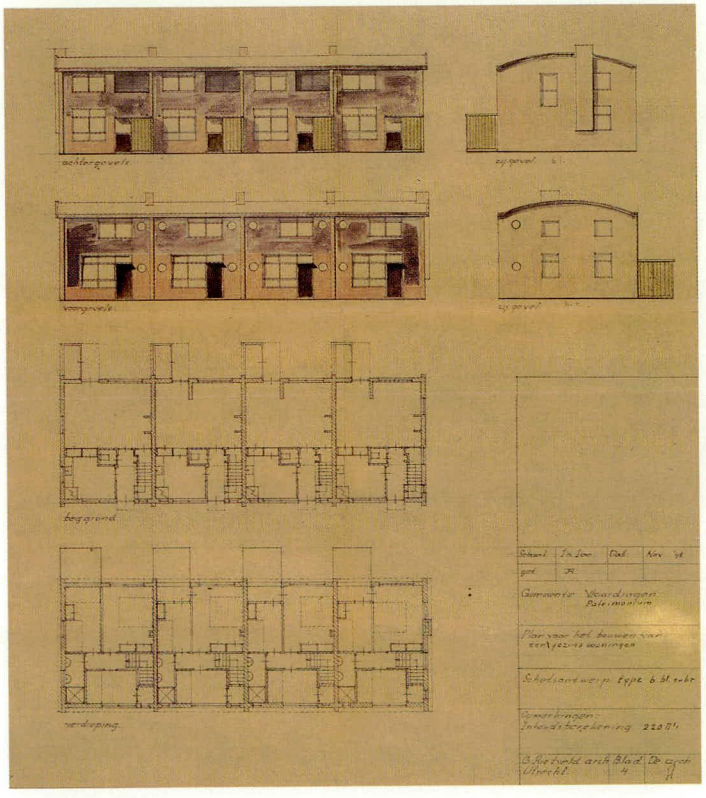
401 Design family dwellings Vlaardingen

1948-1950
client Association for the Improvement of Public Housing 'Patrimonium's Woningen'
with J. Rietveld
not realized

For the design of a small garden suburb with 105 dwellings and nine shop dwellings, to be constructed in the western part of Vlaardingen, the public housing association Patrimonium's Woningen engaged Rietveld as architect. He developed three types of dwellings: all three were family dwellings with unconventional floor plans and a curved roof. The roof did not jut out and therefore functioned like a plane, as do the front and back facades. Due to lack of finances the plan was not realized. Rietveld had personal doubts about the set-up of the plan. 'I am at a loss with this assignment', he wrote on 13 May 1950 from New York, where he was staying at that time, 'especially now that I am so far from home and I see the American buildings, it seems wrong to build three different types in such a confined space.'[1]

[1] Letter to 'Patrimonium's Woningen', Rietveld Archive NAi.

Design drawing
watercolour on collotype
48 x 42cm
NAi



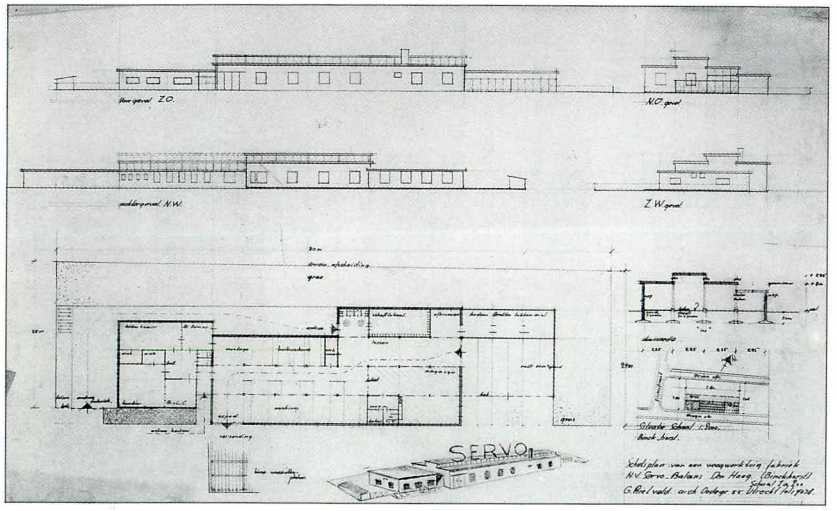
402 Design factory Servo Balans
The Hague

1949-1950
not realized

Rietveld was unable to cope with the commission for the factory for weighing apparatus at that time. His lack of experience with large buildings and the fact that he was often abroad around 1950, were more than he could handle. After a year of work the client transferred the commission to Luthman Architects 'with a bleeding heart' as he wrote to Rietveld on 28 April 1950.[1]

[1] Rietveld Archive NAi.

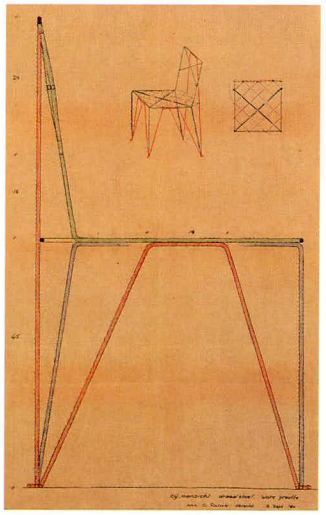
Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
41 x 62cm
NAi



403 Wire chair

steel wire
1950

The constituents of the design are: the steel wire of the interior of the back and legs, the steel wire for the seat and the exterior of the back, two pieces of steel wire placed diagonally to form the edges of the legs and a piece of steel wire for the plaited seat. The iron plate and the coupling units of the back enhance the utility, but are not strictly necessary.
There are several full-scale working drawings in the Netherlands Architecture Institute of a slightly different model with a matching taboret.
The drawings are dated 3 September 1950. A single prototype of the design was manufactured, which the Rietveld family had for a long time.
The chair stems from Rietveld's experiments with chairs from a single piece of material. These developed among other things into the design for the Birza chair (no. 115) and the aluminium chair (no. 334).
How closely this chair of bent steel wire resembles these experiments is apparent in a drawing of various pieces of 'folded furniture' (no. 302). One of these is a chair made of steel wire which shows a marked similarity to the wire chair.



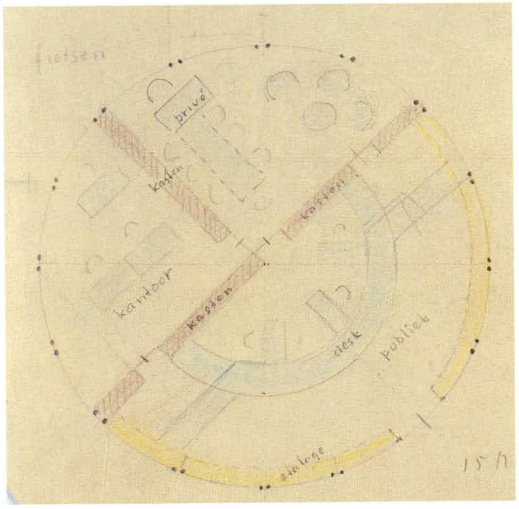
Design drawing
crayon on collotype
94.5 x 58cm
NAi

Wire chair
steel wire
86 x 40 x 46cm
Auction Christie's Amsterdam 'Raoul' II, 7 June 1988, no. 400

1949

404 **Design conversion office Utrecht Night-time Security** 1950
Zadelstraat, Utrecht

405 **Design movable Tourist Information Office** Utrecht 1950



Rough draft
pencil, crayon on paper
16.5 x 43cm
NAi

406 **Design conversion workshop for the NV Grafische Kunstinrichting** 1950
Oudegracht 307, Utrecht

407 **Stand Holland Fair** 1950
Philadelphia

408 **Stand 'Hoe verpakt America?'** 1950
Annual Trade Fair, Utrecht

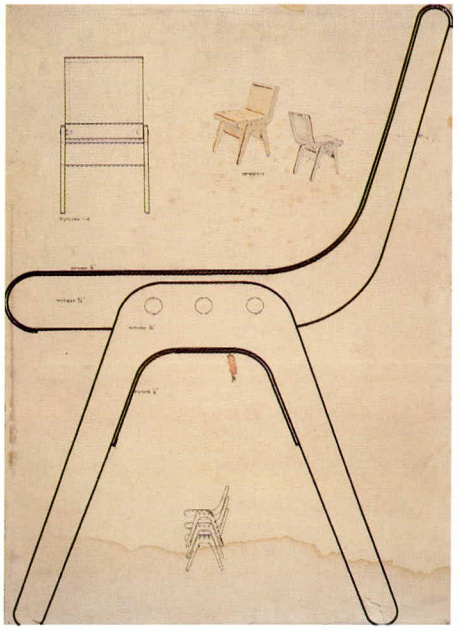
photo 1950

1950

409 **Design chair**

three- and five-plywood
c. 1950

The drawing is one of four presentation drawings with English captions. The other three models are varieties of the zigzag chair. A chair frame of sawed plywood was developed by various designers around 1950. The chair was probably manufactured but its present whereabouts is unknown.

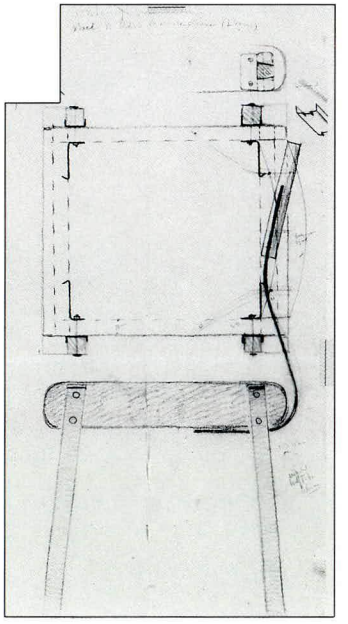


Design drawing
ink, watercolour on paper
75.5 x 50.5cm
NAi

410 **Design chair** **New Church** Amsterdam

c. 1950

The drawing is made on paper with the stamp Servo-Balans. The design for this chair, about which nothing else is known, probably dates from the same period as the design for the Hague factory (no. 402).

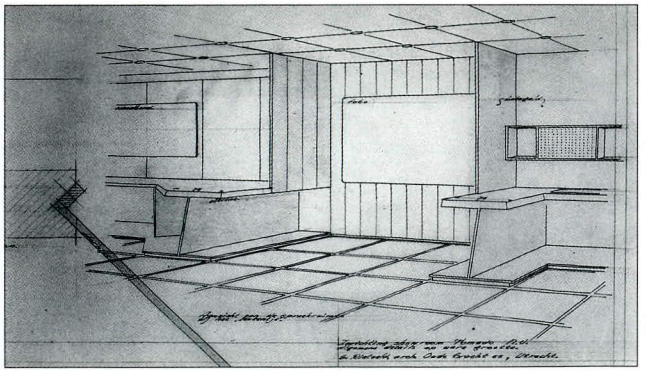


Design drawing
crayon on transparent paper
118 x 62cm
NAi

411 **Design showroom NV** **Tomado** Dordrecht

c. 1950

It is impossible to determine whether the undated drawings in the Netherlands Architecture Institute show a temporary stand or a permanent display hall.



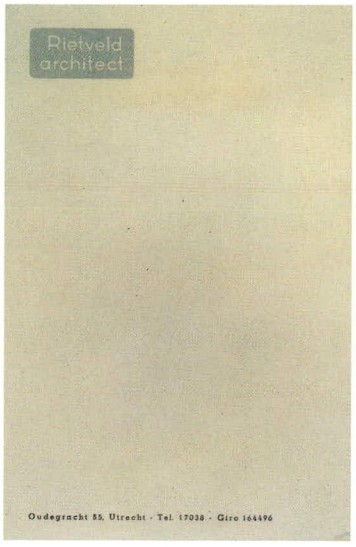
Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
66 x 98cm
NAi

412 **Conversion and furnishing Humanist Bureau for Life and Family Problems**
Boothstraat 13, Utrecht

c. 1950
client Humanistisch Verbond Utrecht
no longer extant

413 **Letterhead Rietveld**

c. 1950



414 **Table with glass top**

wood, metal, glass
66.8 x 75 x 100.2cm
c. 1950
CMU

415 **Dressing table**

North American softwood, hardwood, plywood, metal
95.5 x 119.5 x 57cm
c. 1950
SMA

416 Tile table

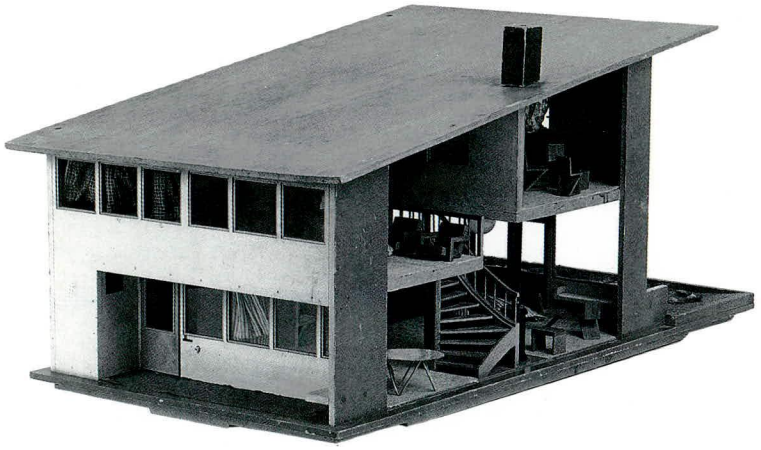
metal, five-plywood, birch, tiles, plaster
46.5 x 61.7 x 46.5cm
c. 1950
CMU

417 Doll's house Jesse

wood
54 x 105 x 49cm
c. 1940-1951
auction cat. 'Raoul' II Christie's Amsterdam, 7 June 1988, no. 396

The doll's house was made for the Jesse family by a carpenter, under Rietveld's instruction or with the use of his drawings, in 1951. The colours were selected by the parents.
The garden was designed by the children.[1]

[1] Told by the former owner.

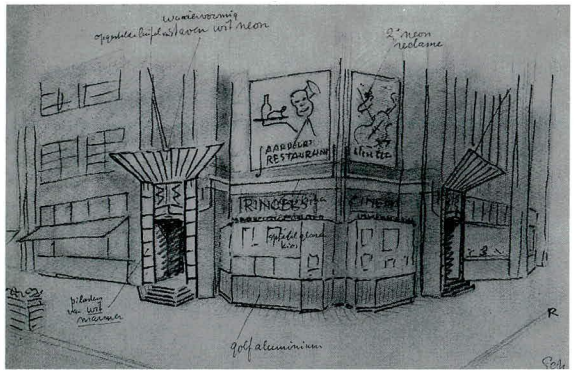


418 Design conversion and furniture restaurant Royal Trade Fair
Vredenburg, Utrecht

1949-1951
client Koninklijke Jaarbeurs

The furniture includes an upright chair and a stool for the quick-lunch counter. It is apparent, from drawings in the Rietveld Schröder Archive and the Netherlands Architecture Institute, that the chair was also on the public market. The materials include: olive wood and ash, plywood with ash veneer and artificial leather. The stool has a bent-tube frame.

Rough draft restaurant
pencil, watercolour on cardboard
50 x 65cm
NAi



Rough draft entrance restaurant
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
32.3 x 50.8cm
RSA

1950

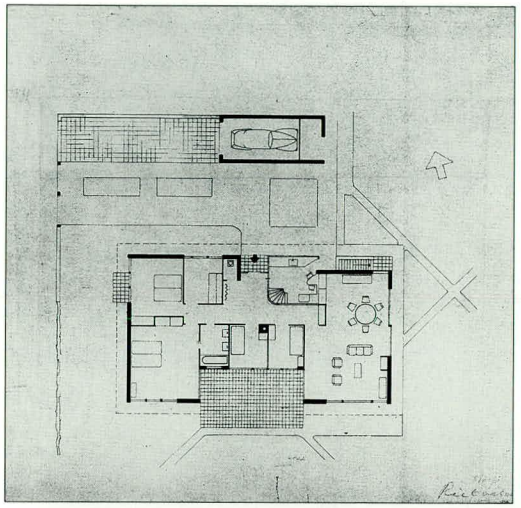
419 **Dwelling Stoop**
Beekhuizenseweg 44, Velp

1950-1951
client G.J. Stoop
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

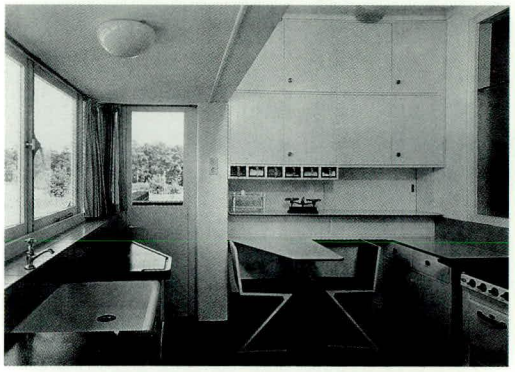
1951

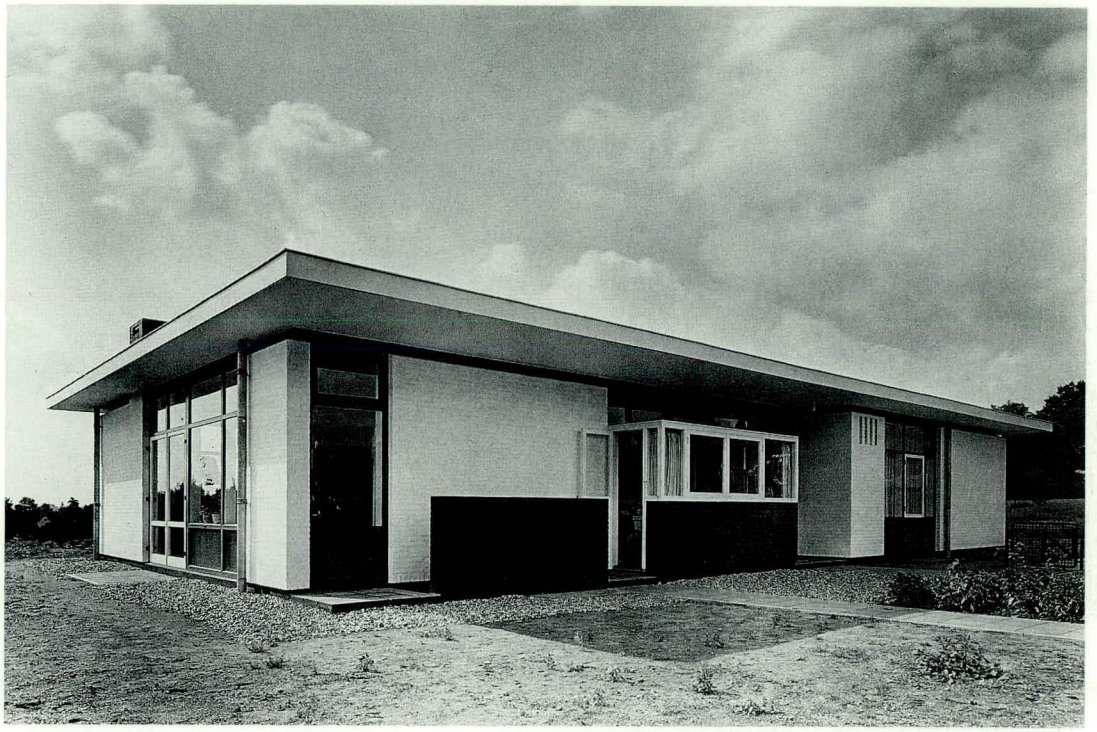
The parents of Nel Stoop, who worked at Rietveld's bureau, asked Rietveld to design a dwelling. Rietveld made a maquette which met with almost immediate approval - little had to be altered. The bungalow was built on a plot of land in the country, in the municipality of Velp. The facade on the street side is fascinating. A white wall with a width of seven metres forms the counterpart to a large window measuring three by three metres. Between the outer wall and the flat, corbelled roof a black ring beam has been mounted, which as it were lifts the roof free of the walls. In spite of the fact that the street wall has the large window, it is fairly closed in comparison with the other sides of the house. Most of the windows are situated in these walls. All window frames, with the exception of the kitchen window, extend from the floor to the ceiling. The lowest part, the breastwork, is of wired glass behind which, as seen from outside, coloured panels have been installed. Rietveld later often used this detail, and the ring beam, in other dwellings (nos 519 and 587).

Rietveld also designed a sofa-bed for Stoop, which was to be made of beech, according to a caption on the drawing. There are two different sketches. He offered both models to the furniture factory 't Spectrum in 1954 (no. 469).



Design drawing
photocopy of collotype
34.7 x 41.2cm
RSA





Kitchen
photo c. 1951

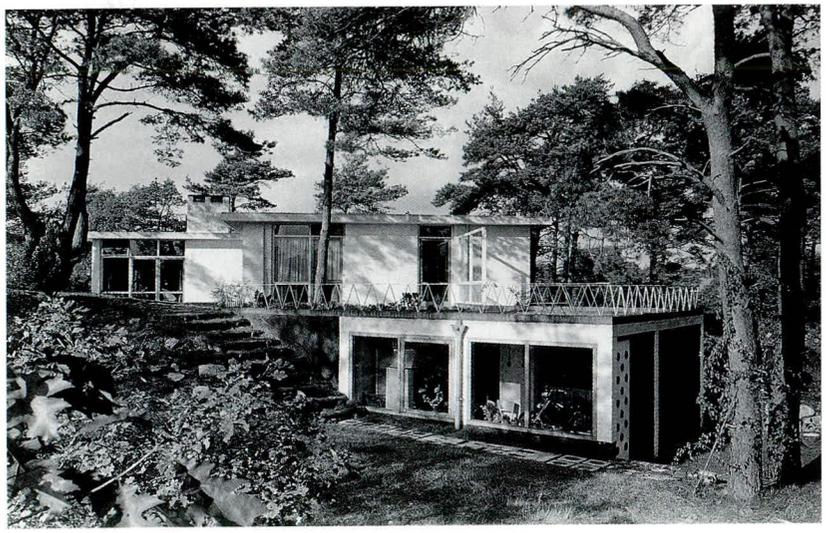
photo c. 1951

420 Dwelling Copier
Reelaan 11, Bosch en Duin

1950-1951
client A.D. Copier
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

Rietveld designed this house for the glass artist Andries Copier. A Rietveld dwelling was apparently popular amongst designers, for W. Penaat, M. Visser, A. Cordemeyer, J. Koning and E. Berkovich all contracted Rietveld to build houses for them (nos 291, 500, 518, 666 and 652). Rietveld suggested to B. Max that he build a bungalow on the adjacent property. He drew a situation sketch for both houses, but was unable to convince Max, who had found a better building site in Amersfoort (no. 435).

photo c. 1951

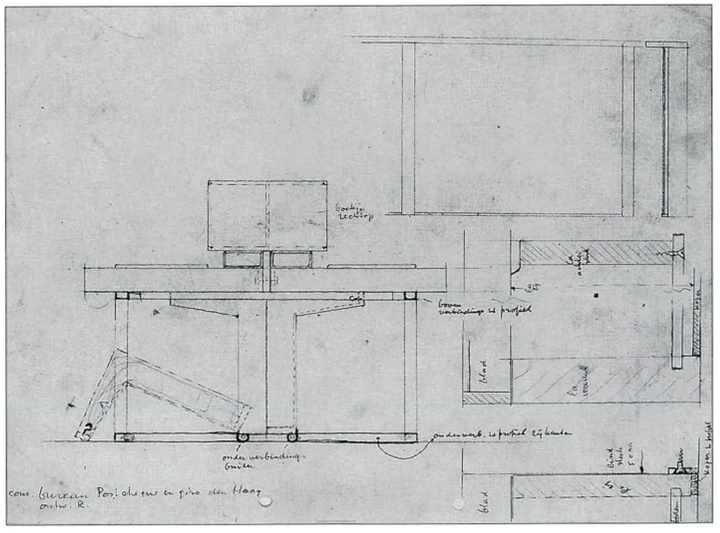


421 Design workbench and chair, Department 'Rekening-Courant van de Postcheque- en Girodienst'
The Hague

steel, plywood, wood
1951

The workbench consists of a top with a storage space for clothing and cupboards beneath it. In the price estimate, dated 5 October 1951, Rietveld has noted that the first model will cost Dfl. 500 and that the price per table will be around Dfl. 200 to 250, depending on the number ordered. The matching chair would cost Dfl. 100 or 45. In a letter from the PTT (Dutch Post and Telecommunications) dated 1 July 1953, Rietveld is informed that the new design is being considered and that his account for the first design will be paid. The design was never realized.

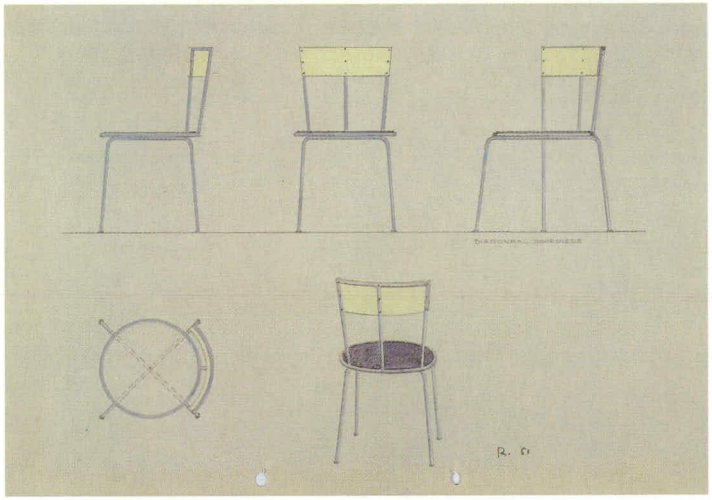
Design drawing
workbench
pencil on paper
22.2 x 30.8cm
NAi



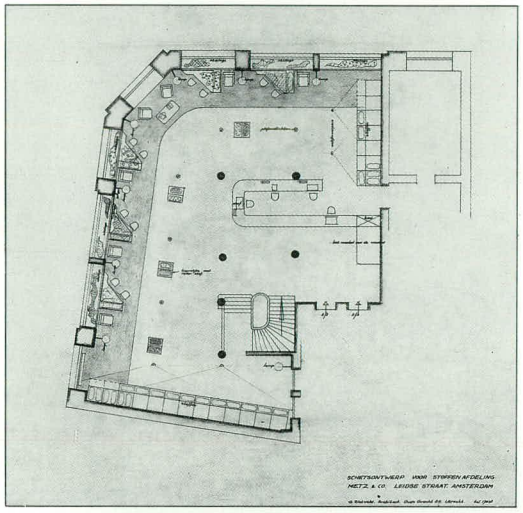
1951

423 **Interior and furniture textiles department Metz & Co.** 1951
Keizersgracht 449,
Amsterdam

Design drawing chair
pencil, ink on paper
22.5 x 30.9cm
NAi



1951

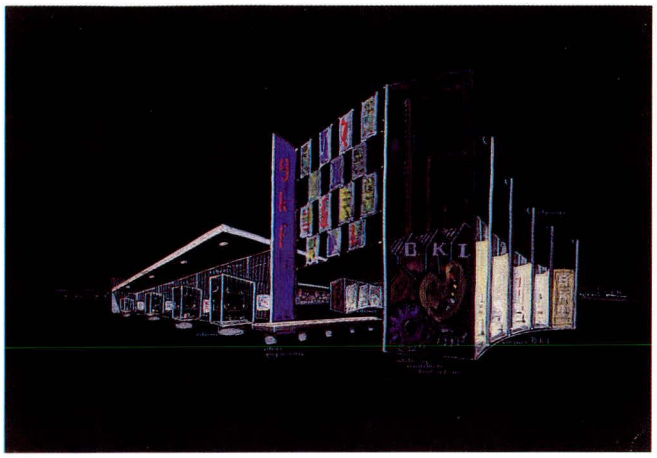


Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
62 x 59.5cm
NAi

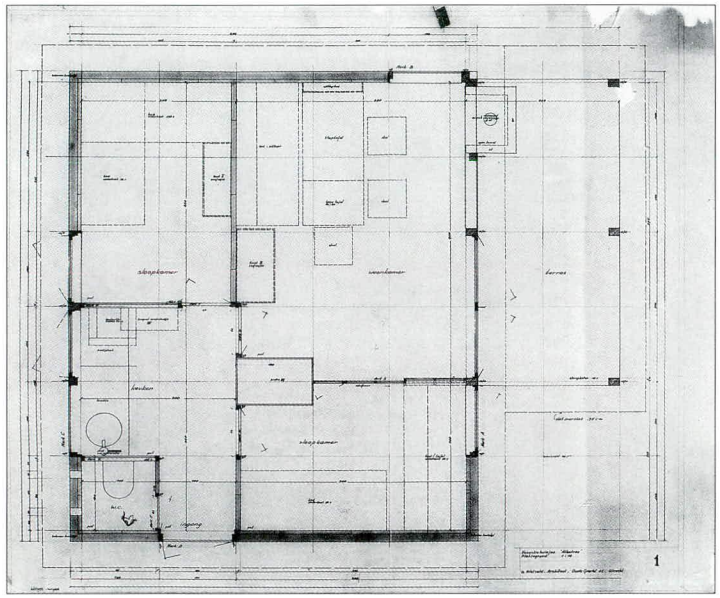
photo c. 1951

422 **Design 'Holland Fair' Gimbel Brothers**
Philadelphia

1951
client Dutch Economic
Information Service



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
81.3 x 92.7cm
NAi



1951

424 Stand Gebonden Kunsten Federatie

Autumn Trade Fair, Utrecht

1951

Rough draft
pencil, watercolour on cardboard
55 x 46.5cm
NAi

425 Six summerhouses

Camping Hessenheem
Potdijk 8, Markelo/Eerbeek

1951
clients
Superfosfaatfabriek
Albatros and De Vries
Robbé
altered and one restored

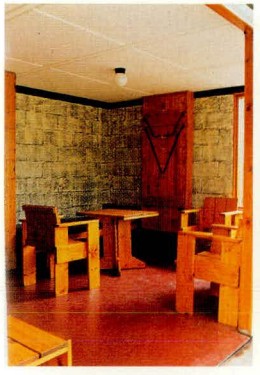
The bungalows cover an area of thirty square metres and are suitable for six people. The houses are only 2.25 metres high. The outer walls are built of gravel-concrete blocks and the inner cavity walls are built of cinder-concrete blocks. The inner walls were originally given a coat of pale yellow emulsion paint. The ceilings were white and the doors and moving parts of the window frames were painted red. The other woodwork and the deal furniture were oiled. The awning over the terrace was raised and the underside was painted white, to obtain a maximum of light.

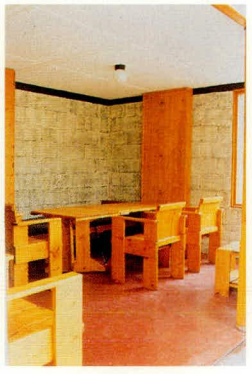
photo c. 1951

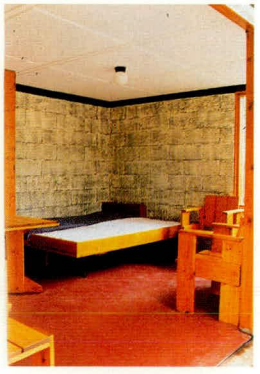
426 Furniture for holiday homes of the Albatros and De Vries Robbé companies

wood
1951
private collection, Markelo

For the interior of the bungalows Rietveld designed several ingenious pieces of furniture. The folding bed-cum-table in the living room and the beds suspended on steel chains leave the floor free and allow for greater utilization of the space. In the







middle of the house a wooden column cupboard of thin slats has been installed, which opens onto three rooms: the living room, the bedroom and the kitchen. This is not only handy in use, but also affords a variety of views of the different rooms, thereby making the space less confined and avoiding the obligatory solution of an open kitchen. Even with minimal cubic content Rietveld is able to create a maximum amount of space, using original solutions.

1951

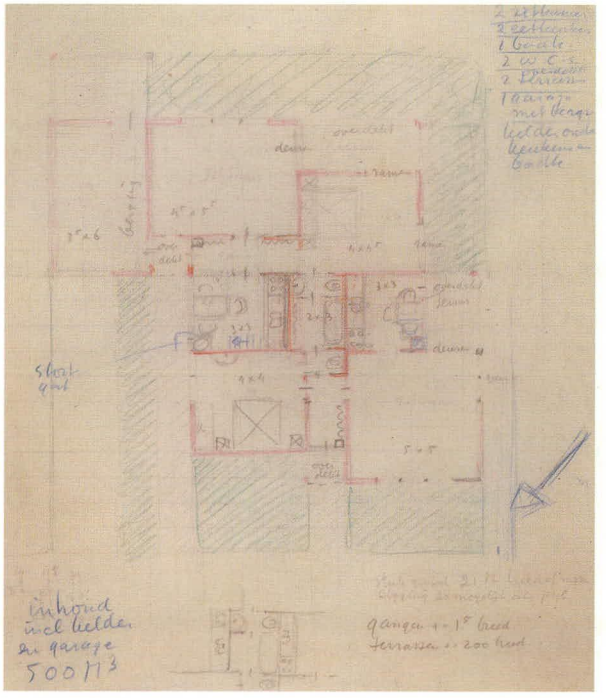
427 Design conversion dwelling Kist
Amsterdam

1951

428 Design double dwelling Troost
Gorinchem

1951

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
25.6 x 21 cm
RSA



429 **Design conversion Driessen's Bouwstoffen en Tegelhandel**
Mariaplaats 51, Utrecht

1951
client Driessen's Bouwstoffen en Tegelhandel

430 **Design exhibition 'Kunst en Kitsch'**
Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague

1951

431 **Design exhibition 'De Stijl 1917-1928'**
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

1951

Rietveld was engaged for the design of the De Stijl exhibitions which were held in Amsterdam in 1951 and in Venice and New York in 1952 (nos 443 and 444). In fact the design was based upon the presentation of the De Stijl image after the war.

photo 1951

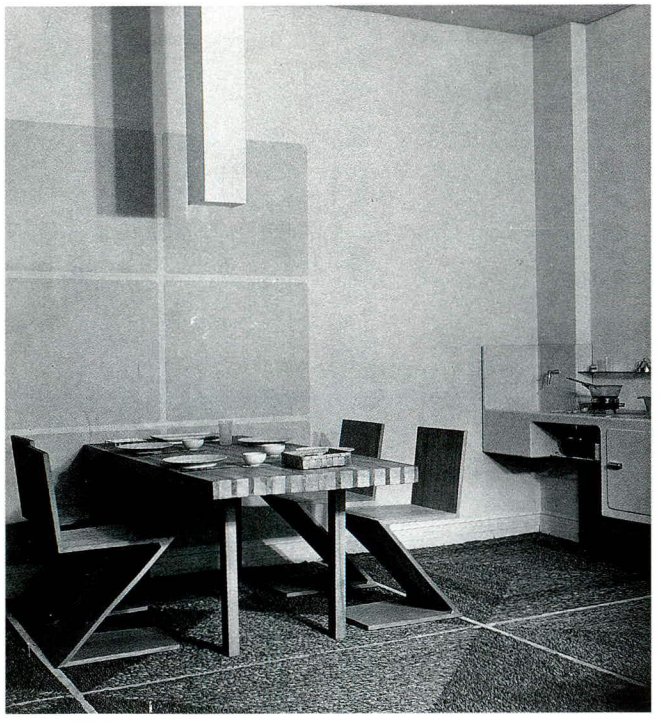
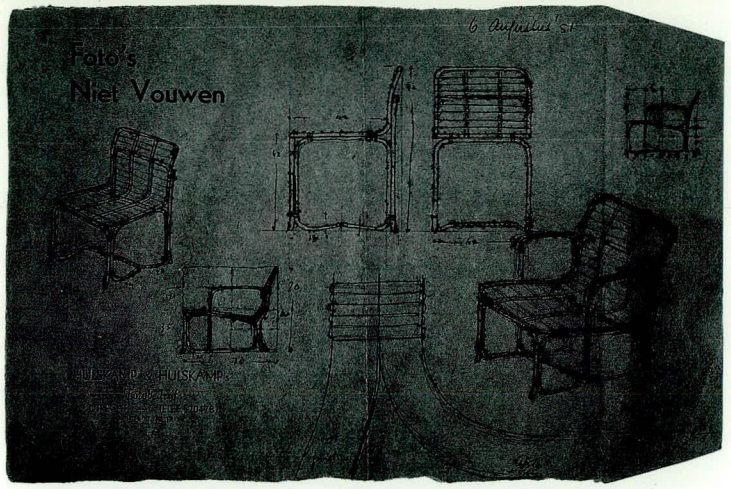
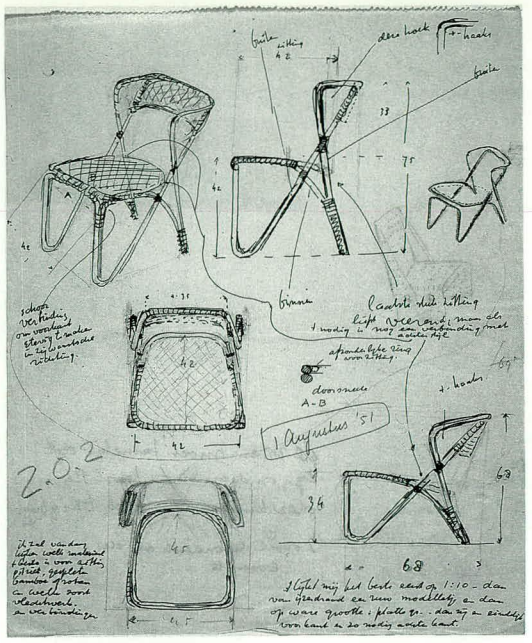


photo 1951



Rough draft
ink on paper
20.5 x 30.5cm
NAi



Rough draft
ink on paper
26 x 21cm
NAi

432 Armchair

cane
c. 1951

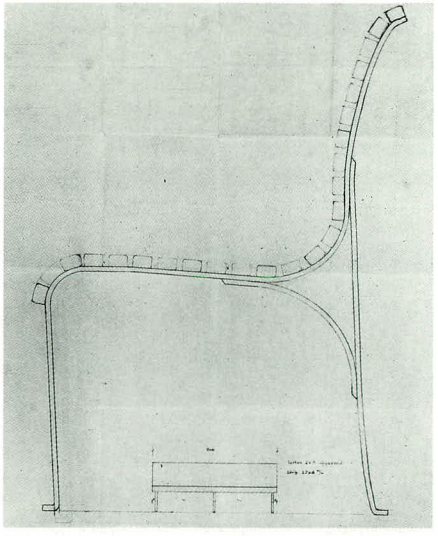
In the Netherlands Architecture Institute there are various sketches for cane chairs. Two prototypes of this design were made for Metz & Co. There was insufficient demand for the model and it was not taken into production.

Armchair
70.5 x 58 x 68.5cm
CMU

1951

433 Design garden bench

c. 1951



Design drawing
collotype
91 x 74cm
NAi

1952

434 Home for handicapped children Mgr. Verriet Institute

Salsbachweg 20,
Willemstad, Curaçao

1949-1952
client Wit Gele Kruis
in collaboration with
H.J. Nolte
altered

With the building of the Verriet Institute Rietveld realized his concept of open architecture, in a way which was comparable to the Sonsbeekpavilion (no. 481). The greater part of the building consists of a floor and a roof, supported by small, round columns. On the garden side the building has panels, rather than walls, which do not quite reach the roof, leaving an open area at the top. The floor plan is based on a check pattern, which is picked up in the floor. The columns stand at the intersection of lines, at an even distance from one another. Due to financial shortage, only part of the building could be realized. The courtyard garden was therefore scrapped.

Maquette
4.5 x 100 x 121cm
CMU

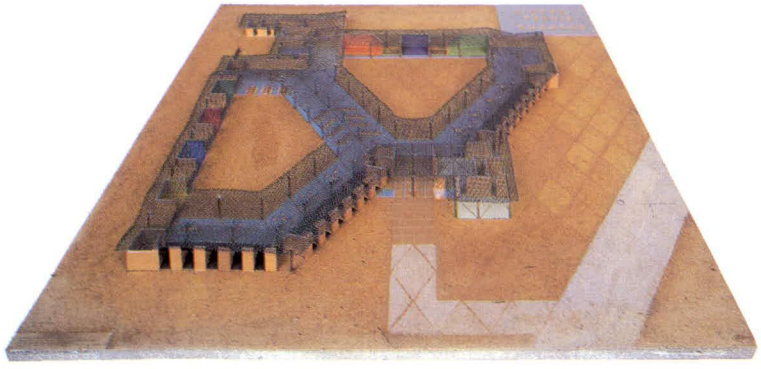
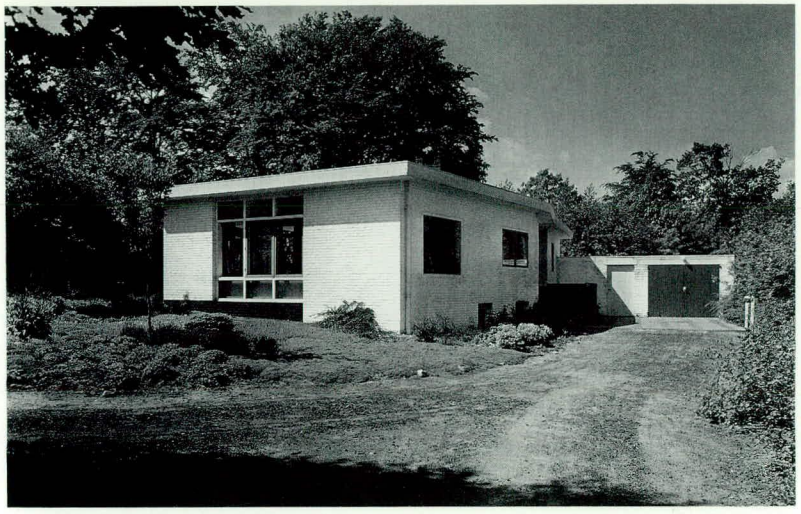


photo c. 1952



435 Dwelling Max
Oranjelaan 38, Amersfoort

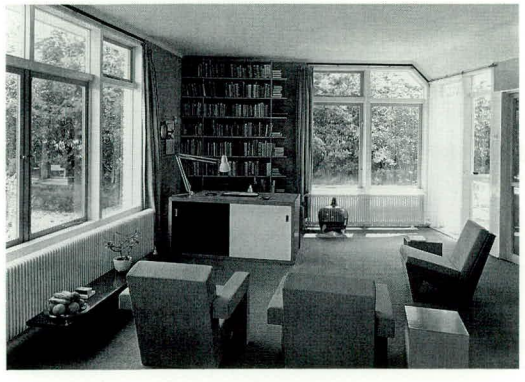
1950-1952
client B.J. Max
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

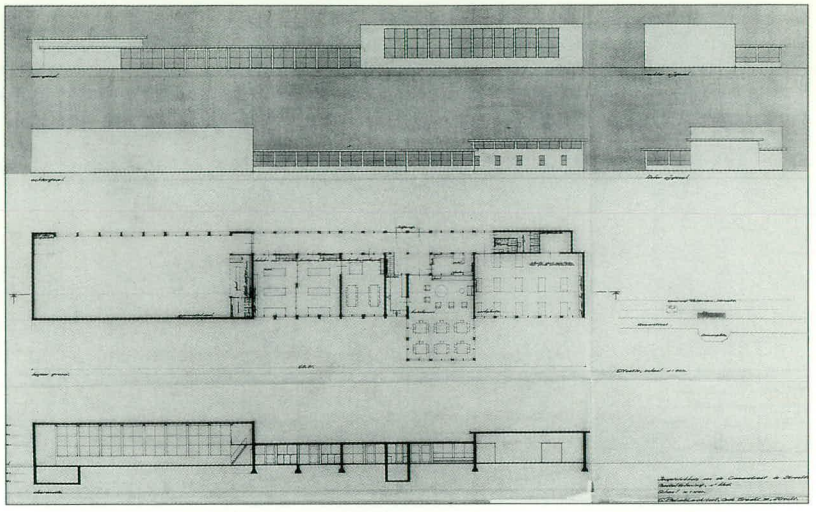
Furniture Max

Various built-in and free-standing cupboards and other furniture formed part of the design for the dwelling. There are working drawings in the Netherlands Architecture Institute for: wardrobes, wall units, a dressing table with an adjustable mirror, an iron hat stand, armchairs and a sofa with an adjustable back and folding armrests. Shortly after the house was completed Mr and Mrs Max ordered additional furniture from Rietveld (nos 441, 461 and 462). The interior was depicted in the December 1955 issue of the magazine *Goed Wonen* and described as 'a typical example of a pure, uncompromising Rietveld interior .'

photo c. 1952

Living room
photo c. 1952





436 Design youth clubhouse
Schimmelplein, Utrecht

1951-1952
client Stichting Utrechtse Jeugdactie

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
65 x 103cm
NAi

437 Armchair for furniture factory De Toekomst

oak
1952

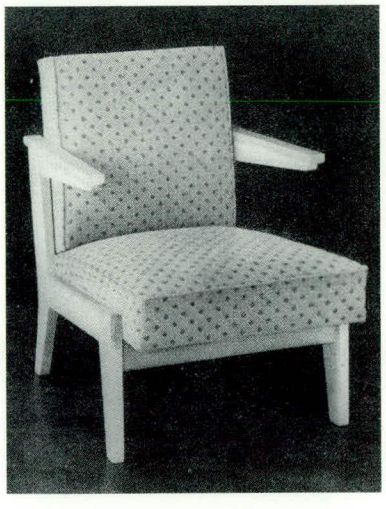
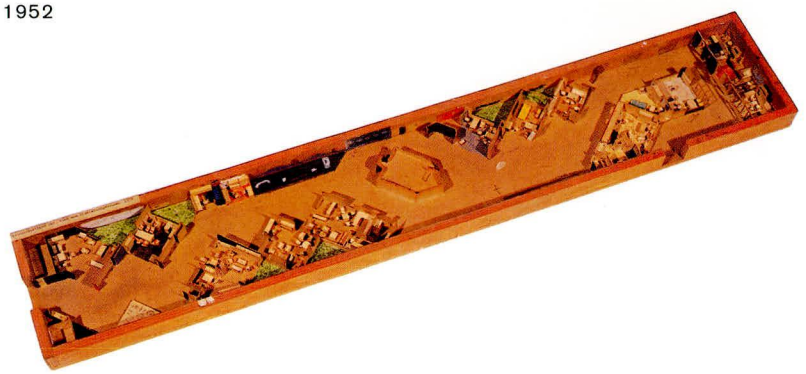


photo from *Goed Wonen* 5 (1952) 5, 70

438 **Design exhibition 'Woning en Kleding voor Ons'** Agricultural Trade Fair, Utrecht

1952



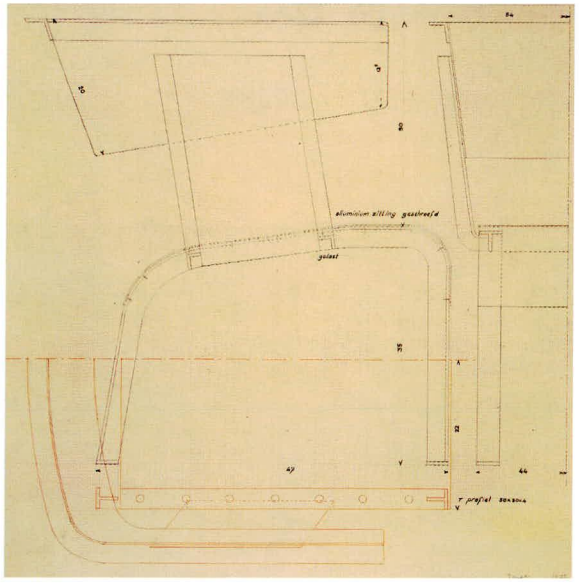
Maquette
cardboard, paper, five-plywood
4 x 16.4 x 92.3cm
NAi

439 **Design chair**

1952

The design more or less resembles the Danish chair (no. 399), but was to be made from aluminium.
Perhaps Rietveld, having furnished the entrance hall at Tomado with Danish chairs, was trying to design a version which Tomado could take into production.

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
91.5 x 81cm
NAi

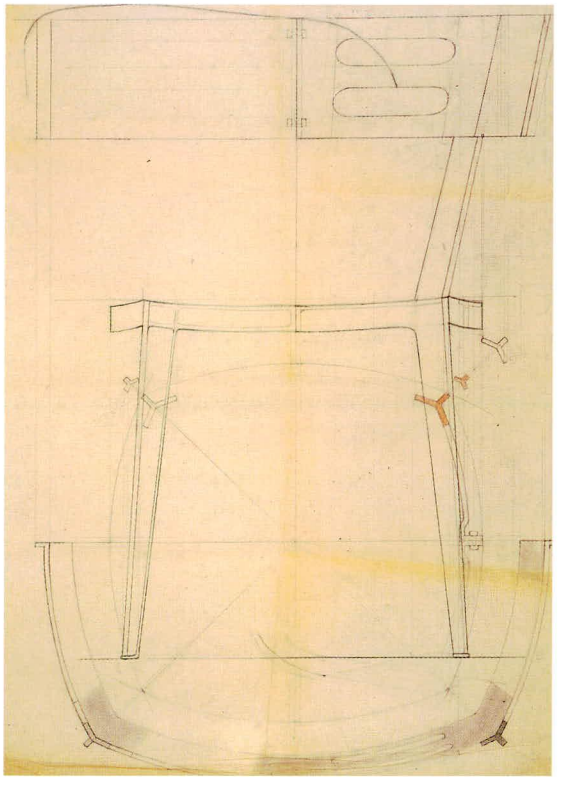


440 **Design chair**

1952

This design probably has the same background as no. 439. The chair was to be realized in cast aluminium.
As far as is known, neither design was realized.

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
101 x 73cm
NAi



1952

441 Table

wood, metal, linoleum
70 x 160 x 180cm
1952
CMU

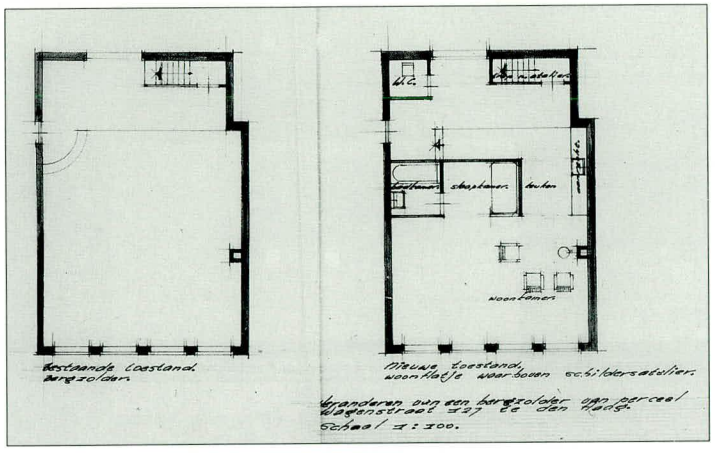
This table was made for Mr and Mrs Max (see no. 435).

1952

442 Design conversion apartment with painter's studio
Wagenstraat 127,
The Hague

1952
client E.L.G. den Doorn de Jong

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
28 x 35.5cm
NAi



443 Design exhibition 'De Stijl 1917-1928'
Greek Pavilion, Venice Biennale

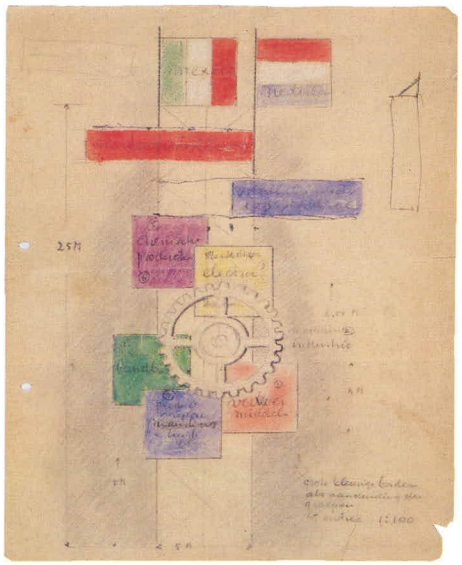
1952

444 Design exhibition 'De Stijl 1917-1928'
Museum of Modern Art, New York

1952

445 Exhibition 'Así es Olanda'
Mexico City

1952
client Dutch Economic Information Service
in collaboration with
J. Bons, W. Rietveld, H. Schröder



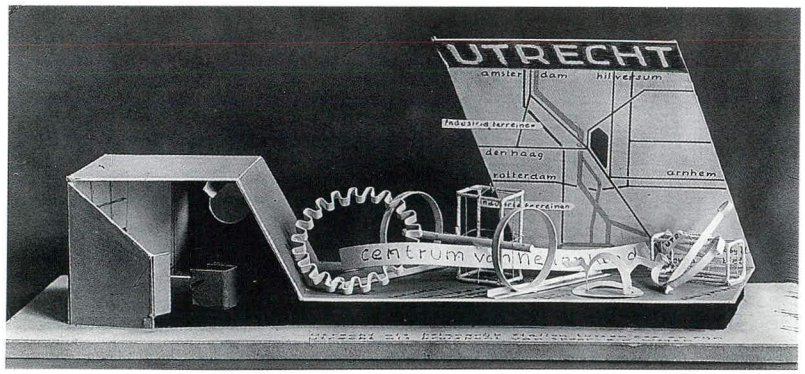
Rough draft
crayon, watercolour on paper
32 x 24cm
NAi

photo 1952

446 Stand Utrecht at 'De Rijn in de Rai', exhibition commemorating the opening of the Amsterdam-Rhine canal
RAI Amsterdam

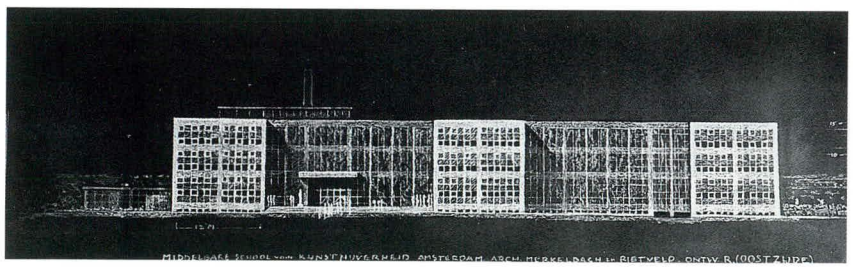
1952

Maquette
photo 1952



447 Design Institute for Applied Arts Education
Wibautstraat, Amsterdam

1952
in collaboration with
B. Merkelbach
not realized
(see no. 672)



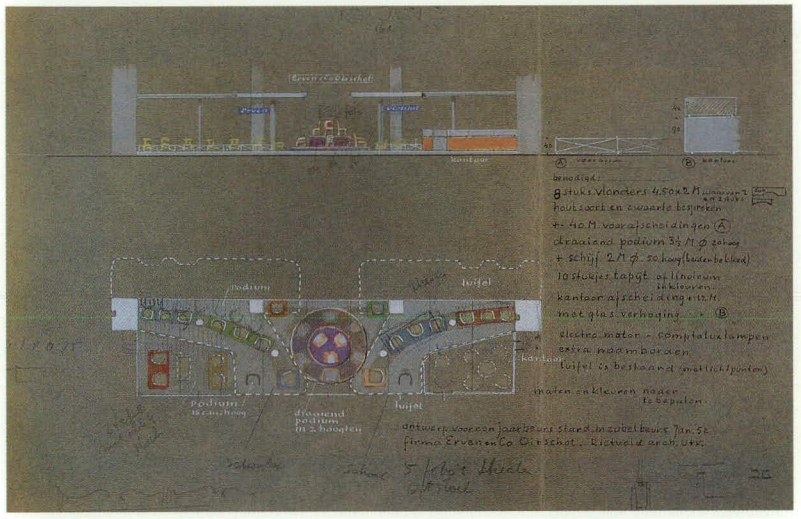
Design drawing
photo c. 1952

1952

448 **Stand Erven & Co.**
Annual Trade Fair, Utrecht

c. 1952

Rough draft
pencil, ink, watercolour
on cardboard
30 x 40cm
RSA



449 **Stand Dairy Products**
Annual Trade Fair, Utrecht

c. 1952

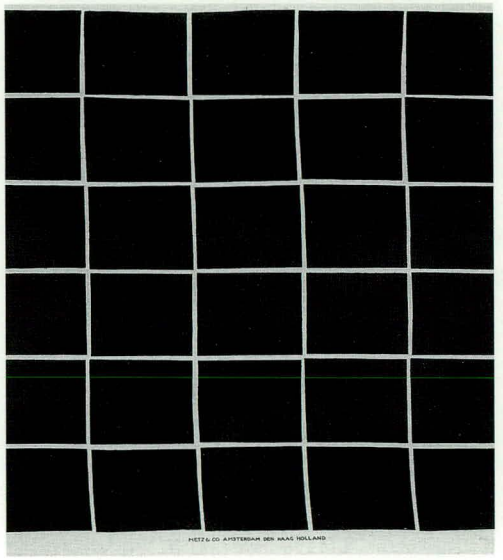
450 **Logo Annual Trade Fair**

c. 1952

451 **Curtain fabric**

linen
c. 1952
SMA

Rietveld probably designed the fabric after the opening of the textiles department, which he converted at the Amsterdam branch of Metz & Co (no. 423). The company took the fabric into production.



1952

452 **Dwelling Klaassen**
Taveernelaan 9,
Bosch en Duin

1951-1953
client W. Klaassen
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

Design drawing
collotype
26.4 x 42.3cm
RSA

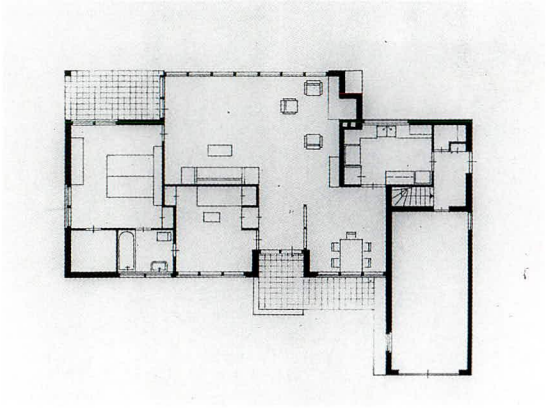


photo c. 1953

453 **Dwelling Groenendijk**
Biltse weg 2, Bosch en Duin

1952-1953
client W. Groenendijk
with J.B. van Grunsven
burnt down in 1983

Rough draft
pencil on transparent
paper
21.9 x 29.5cm
RSA

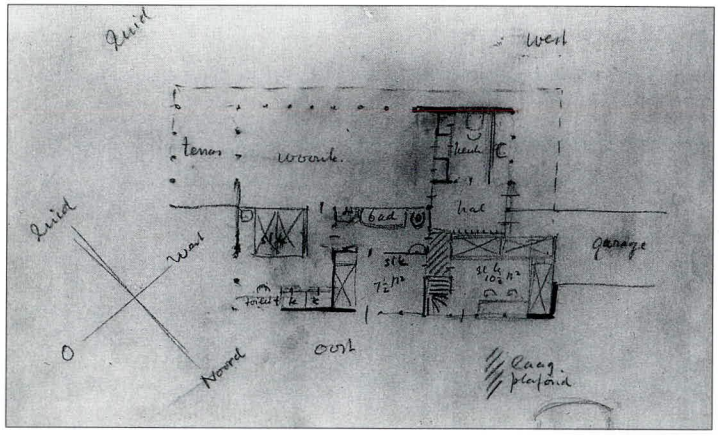


photo c. 1953

1953

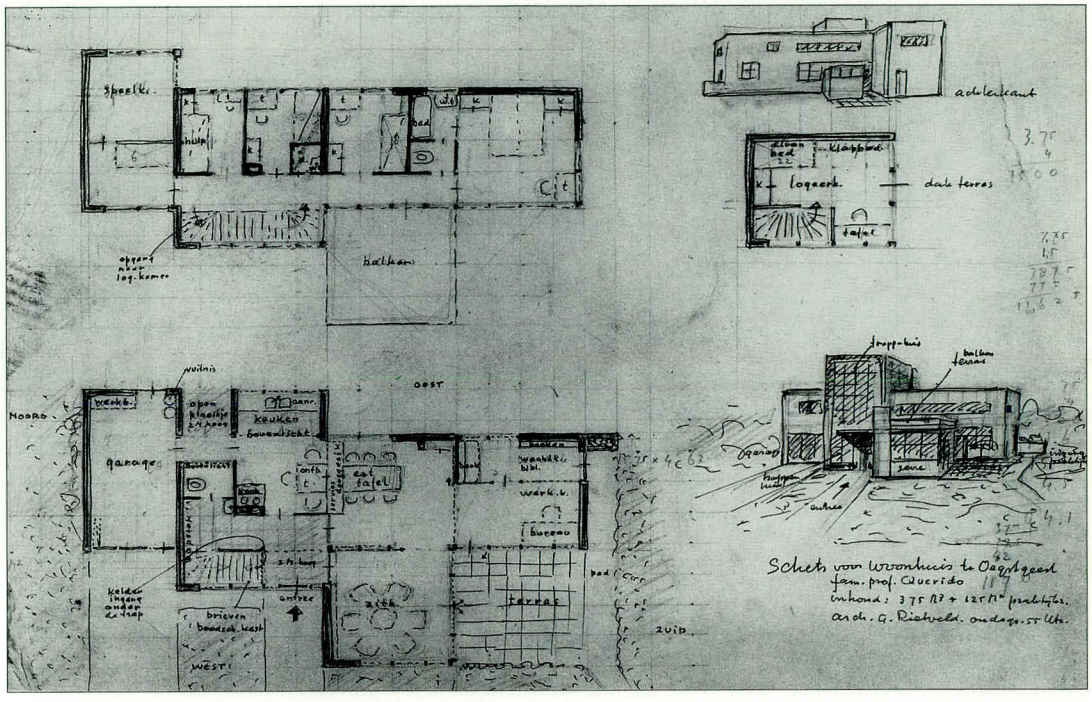
454 **Design dwelling Querido**
Oegstgeest

1952-1953
client A. Querido
not realized

In December 1952 Rietveld received a letter from Professor Querido, requesting him to design a small villa, which could be built on limited means (about 30,000 guilders). Rietveld had been recommended by the designer Elmar Berkovich. One of Querido's requests was for a workplace for his wife: 'Perhaps you know her as Heleen Pimentel, an actress with the Haagse Comedie'.[1] In addition he asked for floor plans and photos of villas built by Rietveld. On the writing paper Rietveld noted: 'fl[oor] pl[an] Klaassen and Copier' (nos 452 and 420). Within a month Querido had received his sketch. He and his wife were 'very pleasantly surprised'. In suspense he awaited 'that which the architect Salomonson would lay before us,' as he wrote to Rietveld. Apparently the architect Hein Salomonson had been approached for the same job.

[1] Rietveld Archive NAi.

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on cardboard
23.3 x 33.7cm
RSA



1953

455 **Old people's home**
Santa Rosa 52, Curaçao

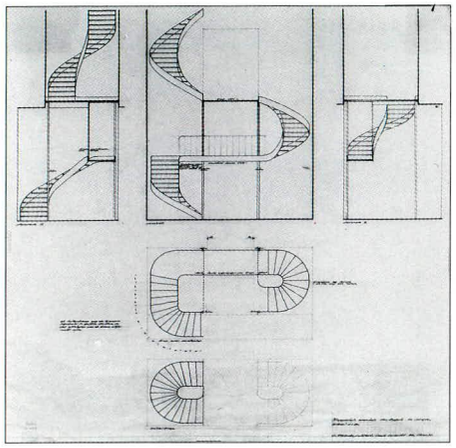
1952-1953
client Wit Gele Kruis
in collaboration with
Bohema company
altered

In the Netherlands Rietveld drew a number of rough sketches for the home. These were developed further by the engineers of the Bohema company in Curaçao. The company was also contracted for the construction.

456 **Conversion dwelling**
Pater Euwensweg 34,
Willemstad, Curaçao

1953
client C. Engels

The conversion included the installation of a new metal stairway, which had been manufactured in the Netherlands and then shipped to Curaçao.

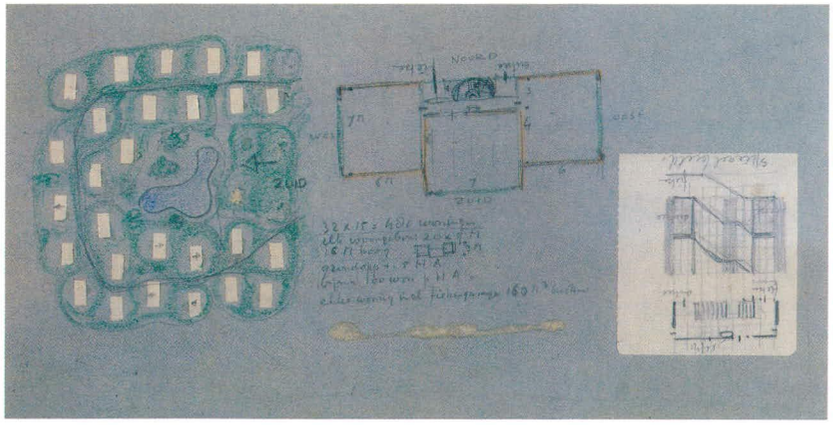


Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
88.5 x 81cm
NAi

457 **Design flats Huis van Vlaardingen**
Den Dolder

1953

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
19.9 x 31.7cm
RSA



458 **Design for measurements and colours of the facades of flats, designed by W. van Tijen and H.A. Maaskant**
Geuzenveld, Amsterdam

1953
not realized

'For two weeks your suggestions regarding the facades for Geuzenveld have been staring me in the face in my office and I look at them, consciously or unconsciously, every day (...) Your solution with the more effective window arrangement is, in fact, more functional than ours. (...) It's been an eye-opener for me that, in spite of all the above, I am unwilling to relinquish the personal aspects of my work. Had I been younger, I would probably have tried it, as I have tried so many things and was not disappointed if something only partially succeeded. At the moment and with this work I don't dare to any more.' The quotation is from a long and very personal letter from W. van Tijen, dated 21 October 1953.[1] In it he explains to Rietveld why he was unable to make use of his colour design for the Geuzenveld flats.

[1] RSA.

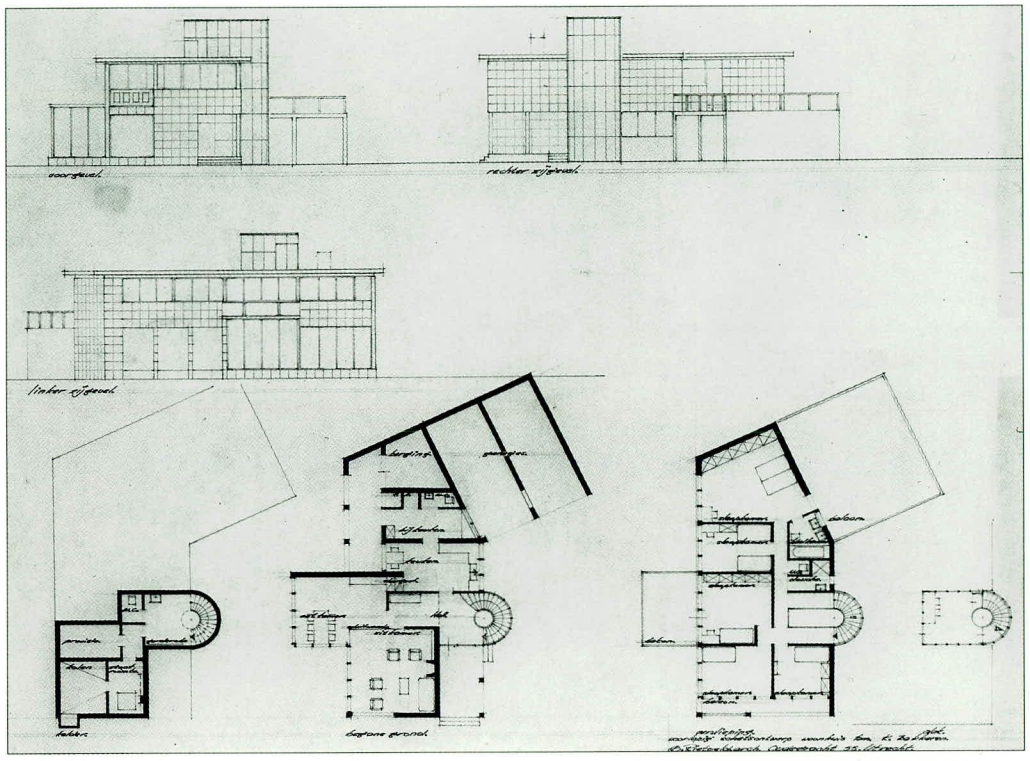
459 Design dwelling Bakkeren
Zeist

1953
client K. Bakkeren
not realized

The first sketch which Rietveld sent to Bakkeren could 'arouse no enthusiasm', he wrote to Rietveld. 'My wife and I', he continued, 'do not find the arrangement ideal and the layout is also not to our liking'.[1] He asked if the account could be sent to his firm. Rietveld asked for the sum of 200 guilders which for him was an exceptionally high price for a single sketch.

[1] Rietveld Archive NAi.

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
50 x 65.5cm
RSA



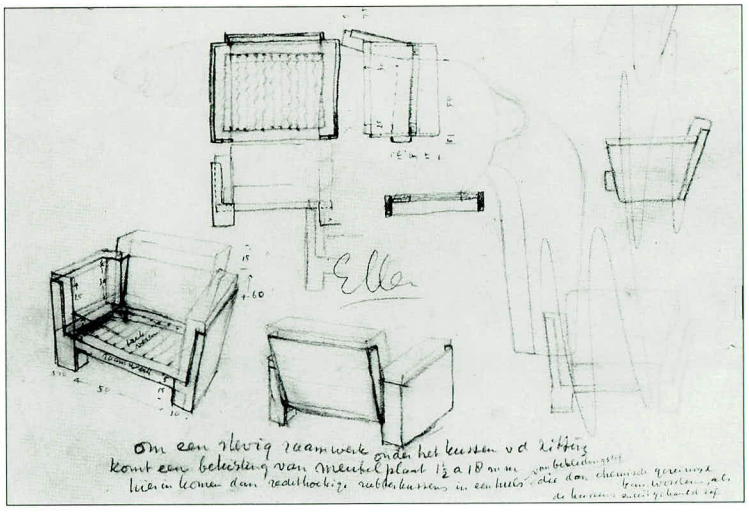
1953

460 Design armchair

wood, upholstery
1953

According to the caption on this drawing the chair was designed for Gispen.

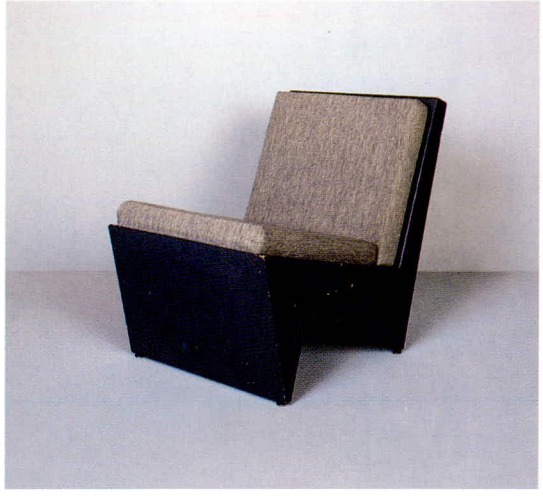
Rough draft
pencil on transparent paper
28.5 x 33cm
NAi



461 Knitting chair

wood, three- and five-plywood, upholstery
66.5 x 50 x 74cm
1953
CMU

The basic shape of this chair for Mrs Max (see no. 435) was later used by Rietveld for the 'swan' (no. 559), the chair which was made by Artifort for the 1958 World Fair in Brussels. The measurements which Rietveld used in this design are clearly legible on the working drawing. The height and depth are both 68 centimetres. The height of the seat is half of this, that is, 34 centimetres. The other measurements determining the shape of the wooden frame are based on a grid of five centimetres. Many of Rietveld's designs are based on similar measurements. In the manufactured examples, which have slightly different measurements, one can sense rather than measure this grid. Nevertheless, it gave rise to a certain severity in Rietveld's work, in comparison with that of his contemporaries.



462 Nest of four side tables

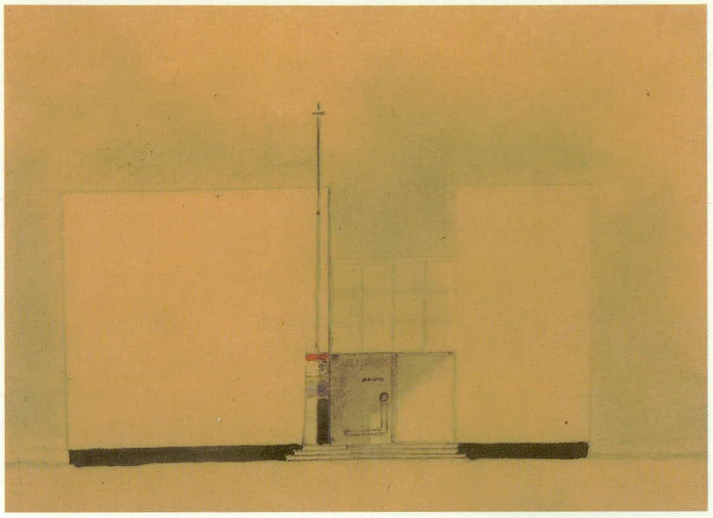
wood
42 x 35 x 40cm
38.5 x 31.5 x 37cm
35 x 28 x 35.5cm
31.5 x 24.5 x 33.5cm
1953
CMU

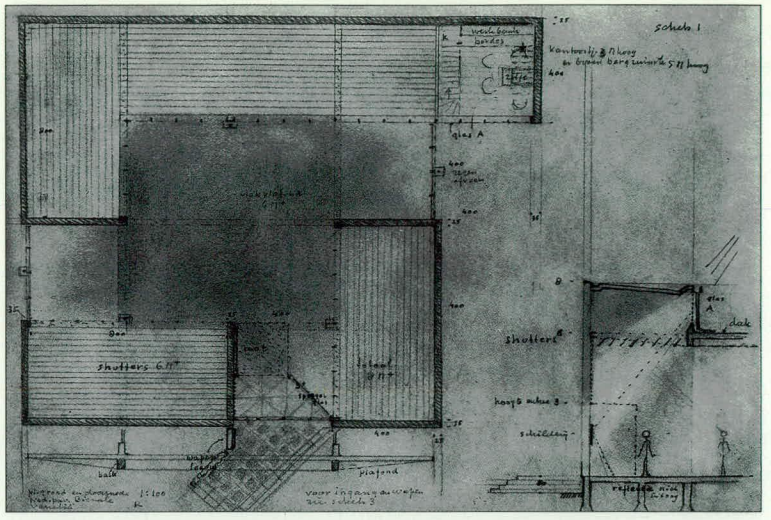
The tables, which could also be used as bookcases, were made for Mr and Mrs Max (see no. 435).

463 Dutch Pavilion
Venice Biennale

1953-1954
client Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences
with J.B. van Grunsven and H. Schröder
restored

The pavilion measures sixteen by sixteen metres. The most important aspect of the design was the incidence of light. Due to the situation of the building on the street, windows on the north side were not really desirable. Skylights did not seem an appropriate solution for a pavilion which would be empty for long periods of time, because they are vulnerable and require regular maintenance. Rietveld designed an exhibition area that consists of three building volumes, one with an L-shaped and two with a rectangular floor plan. These have been placed within the sixteen by sixteen metre square. A lower central area connects the three sections. The light falls on the walls through the vertical windows above the lower area and may be adjusted by using shutters. The design is as ingenious as it is simple. The building plan which Rietveld wrote amounted to two sheets of A4 paper.





Rough draft
pencil, watercolour
on transparent paper
20.8 x 29.8cm
RSA

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
20.8 x 29.7cm
RSA

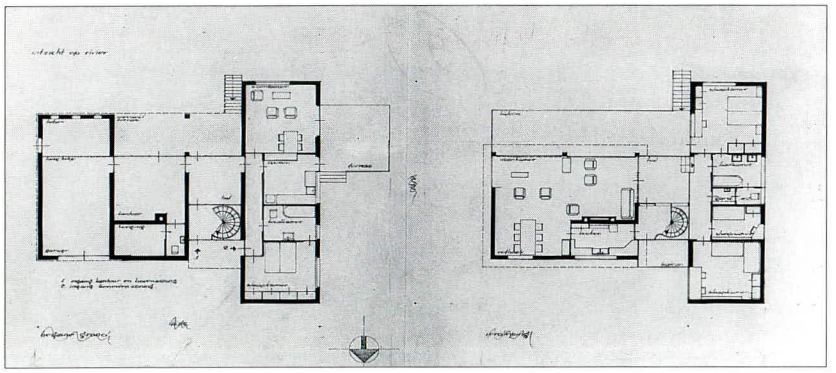
1953

photo c. 1954

464 **Double dwelling Driessen** Hulkesteinseweg 21, Arnhem

1953-1954
clients W. Driessen and De Vries
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

In this double dwelling for the Driessen family a clear division is apparent. However, this division doesn't coincide with the partition between the two dwellings.
The building consists of two cubic contents, the one lower than the other, which lie at right angles to one another. Between these there is a glass connecting area: the hall with a spiral stairway. An office and a garage are situated on the ground floor of the lower part; one of the two dwellings is situated on the ground floor of the higher part. The second dwelling extends over both parts; the living room and kitchen are placed above the garage and the office.
The bedroom wing in the higher part can be reached via three steps in the hall on the upper floor.



Design drawing
collotype
34.1 x 54cm
RSA

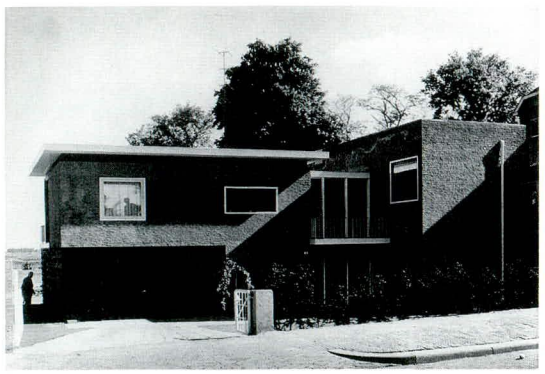


photo c. 1954

465 **Idea for living De Bijenkorf** Amsterdam

1953-1954
in collaboration with Constant

The 'idea for living' concerned the furnishings of an imagined dwelling with a surface area of 48 square metres, intended for a family with two children. The assignment was just up Rietveld's street. Even with these minimal dimensions, he managed to create an optimal spaciousness by combining the living activities of sleeping, relaxing, cooking and eating. The model interior formed part of a furniture exhibition with the theme 'The 1954 Colour Plan', held at the department store De Bijenkorf in Amsterdam. However, according to a journalist for the magazine *Goed Wonen*, the colours, decided upon by the artist Constant, were a 'sad failure': 'intrusive' blue, 'screaming' orange and 'dismal' black which stood in sombre contrast to Rietveld's 'cheerful freshness'.[1]

[1] B.E. 1954, 63.

The stools to go with the table are a variation on the model with rounded corners, from 1935 (no. 227).

photo 1954

1954

466 Child's bed

plywood, broomsticks
1954

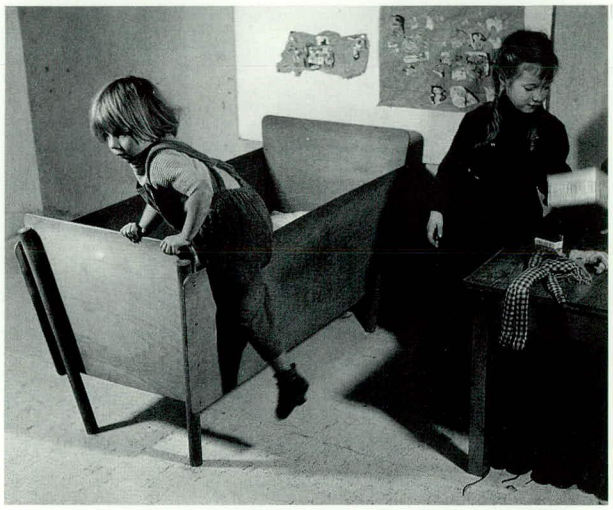


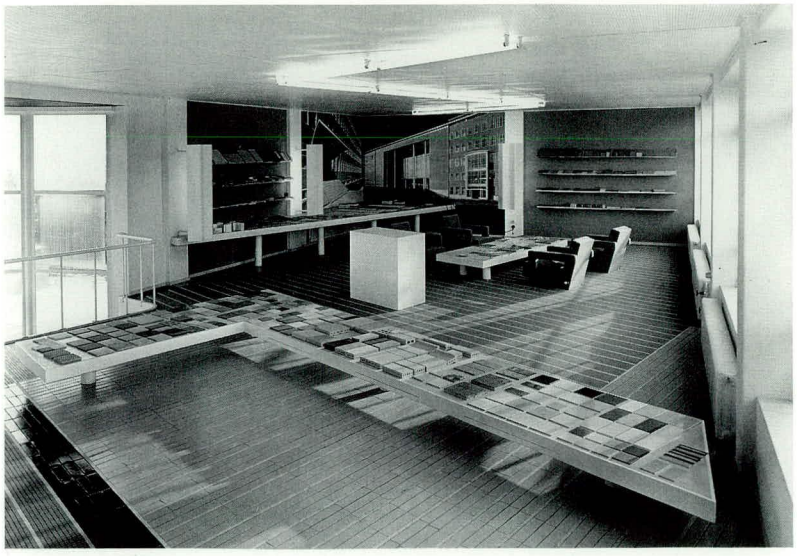
photo 1954

1954

467 Showroom Driessen's Tile Shop
Van Oldenbarneveldt-straat 85a, Arnhem

1954
client Driessen's Bouwstoffen en Tegelhandel

photo c. 1954



468 Conversion dwelling
Bussumerweg 41, Blaricum

1954
client H. de Leeuw
altered

The greater part of the conversion entailed an extension of the living room, which was subsequently furnished according to Rietveld's design. By offering the assignment to Rietveld, H. de Leeuw, director of Metz & Co., manoeuvred him into a difficult position. The architect F. Hausbrand had built the dwelling for himself in 1936. Although it is not a rule, it is generally considered good practice to consult the original architect before starting a conversion. However, De Leeuw had immediately engaged Rietveld; not surprisingly this met with Hausbrand's displeasure. He agreed that Rietveld should receive the assignment and helped him obtain a building permit. Hausbrand filed the application, but at the same time officially informed De Leeuw in a letter dated 22 July 1954 that he accepted no responsibility for the changes carried out.[1]

[1] Rietveld Archive NAi

469 Divan-bed

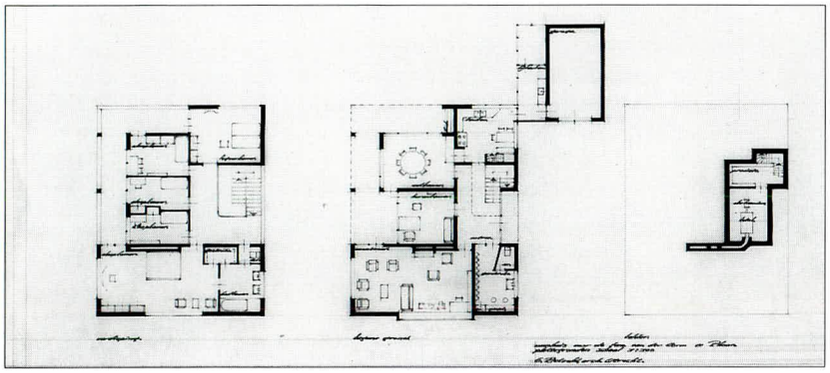
beech
29 x 237 x 70cm
1954
private collection, Amsterdam

In 1954 Rietveld offered two types of divan-bed to the furniture factory 't Spectrum in Bergeyk. He had designed them earlier for a private client (no. 419). Two prototypes were made: one is in private hands, the whereabouts of the second is unknown. Neither of the designs was placed in production.[1]

[1] Told by L. Blijenburg, 1992.

470 Design dwelling Van der Vorm
Rhoon

1954



471 Earrings

The earrings, which belonged to Truus Schröder, differ slightly and might therefore be from different pairs. Rietveld made several pieces of jewellery for her (see also nos 362, 472, 473).

brass, lacquer
1.6 x 1.7 x 1.3cm
c. 1950-1955
CMU

472 Necklace

silver, turquoise
stone 3.5 x.1.7 x 1cm
c. 1950-1955
CMU

470
Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
34.5 x 65.5cm
NAi

473 Necklace

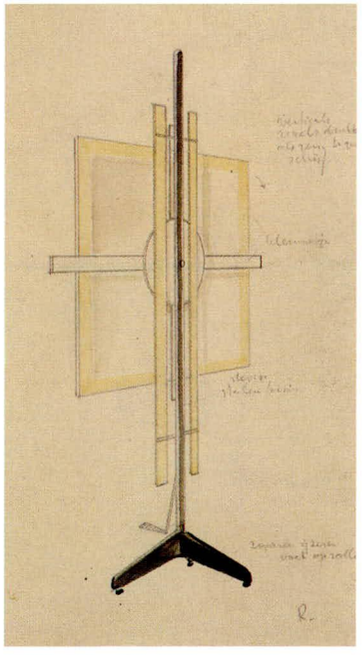
silver, lapis lazuli, rose quartz, colourless quartz
stone 5.2 x 5.8 x 1cm
c. 1950-1955
CMU

474 Design interior Boardroom Haags Gemeentemuseum
The Hague

c. 1950-1955

475 Design painter's easel

metal, wood
c. 1950-1955

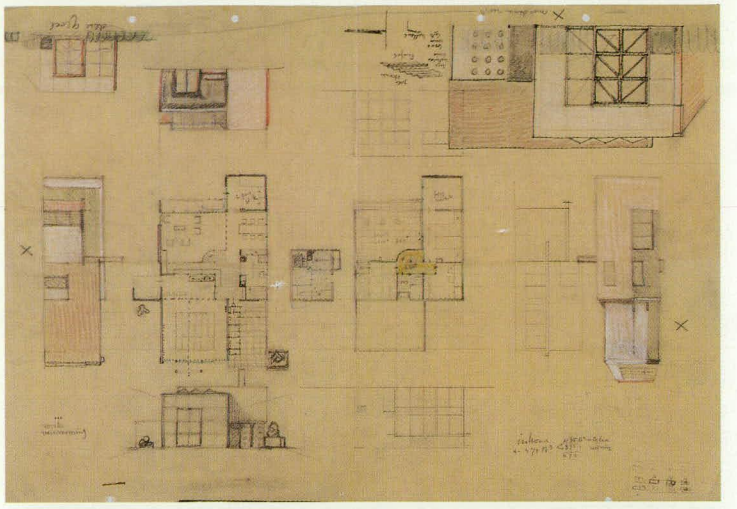


Design drawing
pencil, watercolour on paper
24 x 11.5cm
NAi

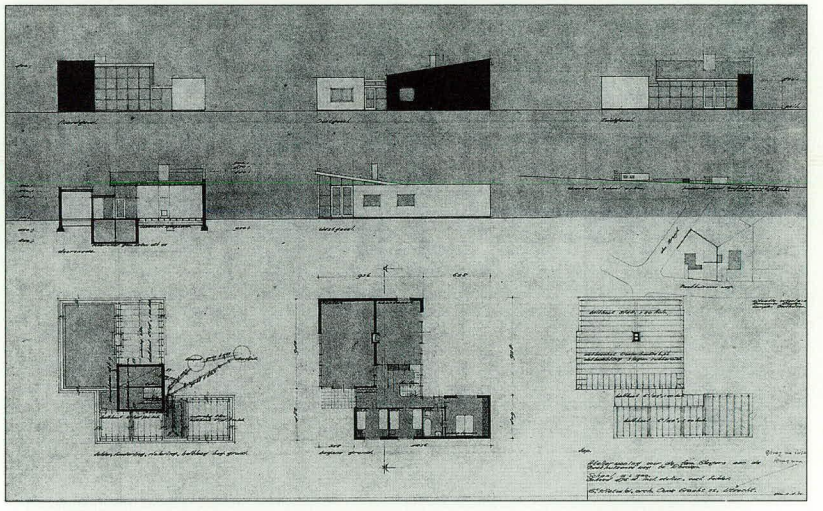
476 Dwelling Slegers
Den Bruyl 35, Velp

1952-1955
client P.A.M. Slegers
with J.B. van Grunsven

In 1952 Waalre lost the opportunity of having a splendid Rietveld studio-dwelling within their boundaries. Initially Slegers wanted to build in Aalst (Municipality of Waalre). The Planning Board's advice was negative. That the design was good was not disputed. 'Although the Board does not personally admire the architectural persuasion which the designer holds, the aesthetic consequences of this persuasion have been drawn so logically that we cannot object to the design as it stands. However, we have serious objections against the construction of this house on the terrain indicated on the drawing, because the envisioned building clashes with the surroundings', wrote the town clerk to Rietveld on 10 March 1952. Rietveld had, incidentally, signed the construction application 'Rietveld. arch. member Utrecht planning board'.[1]
Slegers subsequently decided to build in Velp. Rietveld made a new design based on a metre grid. The grid has been so clearly incorporated that it determines the unity of the total design. The north-east facade consists of a four metre high frame with a lattice of four squares each measuring one square metre, fitted with glass. The dividing walls are partially of glass.



Rough draft
not realized
pencil, crayon on transparent paper
39.5 x 56.5cm
NAi



Design drawing
collotype
48.6 x 87.7cm
RSA

[1] Both documents can be found in the Rietveld Archive NAi.

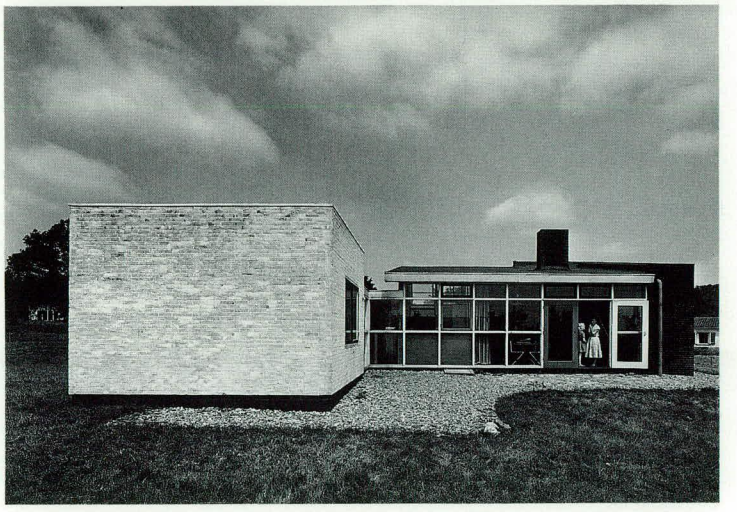
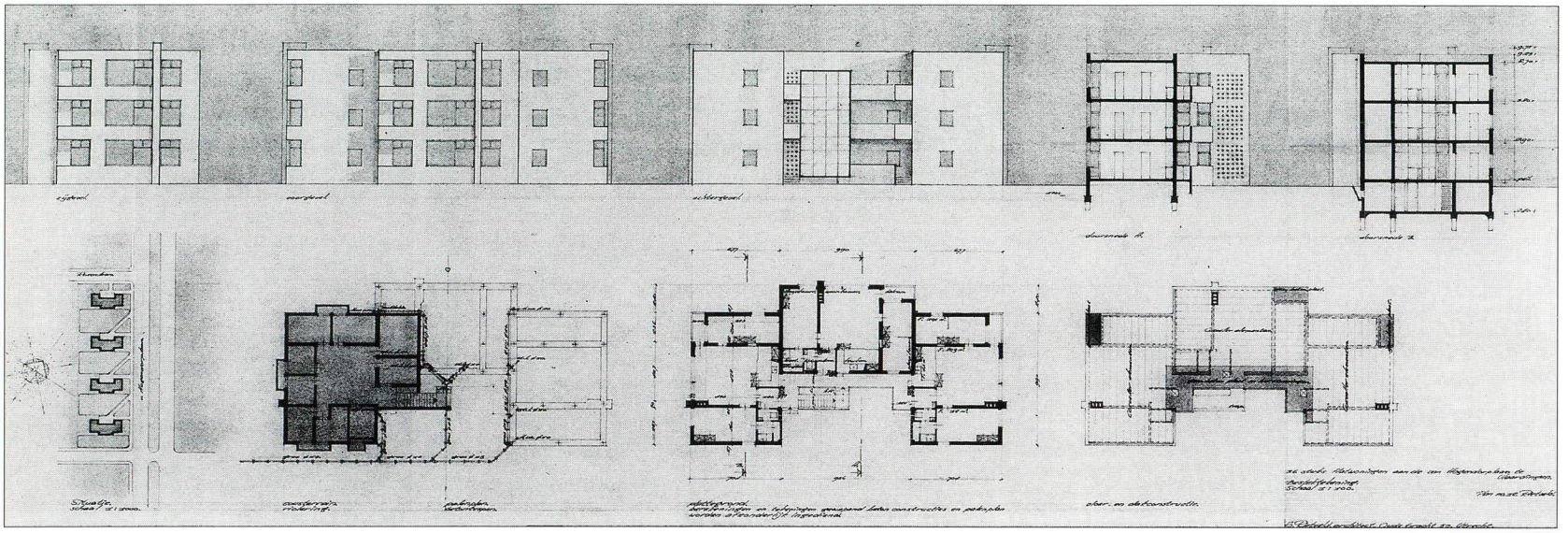


photo c. 1955

1955

Design drawing
collotype
42 x 115cm
NAi



477 Design 36 flats Babberspolder
Van Hogendorplaan, Vlaardingen

1952-1955
client Association for the Improvement of Public Housing 'Patrimonium's Woningen'
not realized

Patrimonium's Woningen was one of the public housing associations which had been contracted to build in the Vlaardingen development area of Babberspolder. Rietveld had been engaged by the association previously (no. 401). In this instance they engaged Rietveld to design 36 council houses. He designed flats for the site on Van Hogendorplaan: four buildings, each with three storeys and three dwellings per floor. The town council objected to his first design from 1952: the bedrooms were too small and there was no separate kitchen. Rietveld suggested that the architect E.F. Groosman be approached to assist with the design. This was possibly in the hope that the collaboration with a Rotterdam architect might have a favourable influence on the construction application. However, in 1955 he was informed by the municipality of Vlaardingen that there was no money available to carry out the building plan.

478 Dwelling Van Ravesteyn-Hintzen
Hoefloo 18, Laren

1953-1955
client Mrs D. van Ravesteyn-Hintzen
altered

photo c.1955

479 **Pedestal for Foucault's Pendulum**
public hall United Nations Building, New York

steel, marble, enamel
1953-1955
client The Kingdom of The Netherlands

Foucault's pendulum, which demonstrates that the earth rotates around its axis, was a gift to the United Nations from the Dutch Government. Rietveld designed a pedestal of perforated stainless steel which was mounted on a plateau of green marble. The circular weight of the pendulum is gilded and the marking of the degrees on the ring is done in red, white and dark blue enamel. For the inscription Rietveld selected a quotation from Queen Juliana, which he took from a book entitled *Koninklijke Woorden* (Royal Utterances): 'It is a privilege to live this day and tomorrow'.[1] It was the only sentence he could find which bore any relation to the 'rotation of the earth' (day and night) and which had an 'optimistic tone'. The pendulum was placed in the public hall of the United Nations building and given a festive inauguration on 7 December 1955.[2]

[1] Wereldbibliotheek publication, 1950.
[2] Frank 1992.

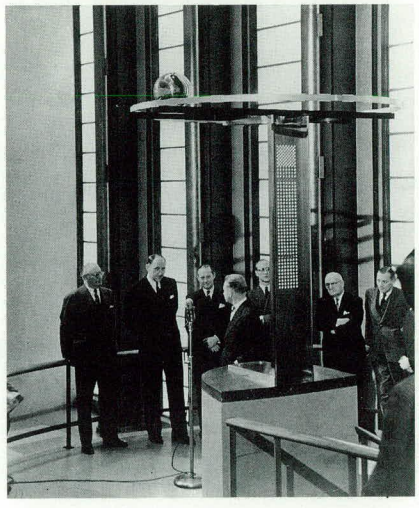
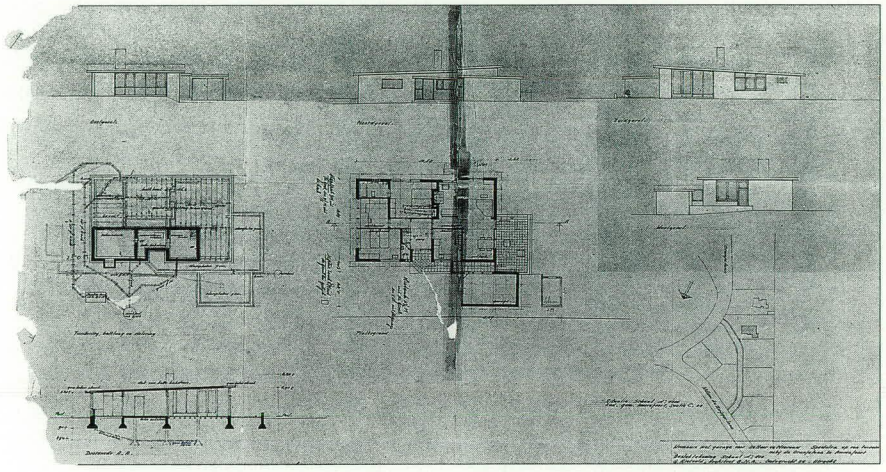


photo 1955

480 **Dwelling Spoelstra**
Juliana van Stolberglaan 2, Amersfoort

1954-1955
client D.B. Spoelstra and subsequently J.W. van der Lely



Design drawing
ink on collotype
84 x 48.5cm
private collection, Amersfoort

1953

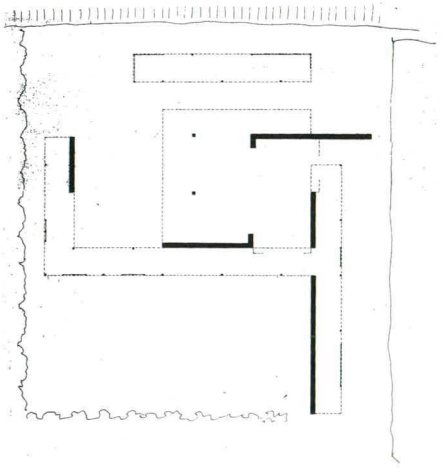
481 Exhibition pavilion for sculpture
Park Sonsbeek, Arnhem

Design kiosk
Park Sonsbeek, Arnhem

1955
client Stichting Sonsbeek
demolished, reconstructed in 1965
in the grounds of Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo

The pavilion was designed as a temporary exhibition space for sculpture, for an exhibition in Park Sonsbeek near Arnhem in 1955. In this design Rietveld was able to give form to his concept of pure architecture; it is made as pure spacial delimitation. He designed the building during a train journey, as he described in an article in the newspaper *Nieuwe Vlaardingsche Courant* of 19 October 1960. The pavilion has several galleries, which are three metres wide and are partially open and partially closed, and a central area measuring twelve by twelve metres. Various sorts of concrete blocks were used for its construction. The pavilion was broken down after the exhibition.

There were a number of initiatives for reconstruction. The first, in 1960, came from engineer W.A. den Bakker, director of the Eerste Nederlandse Coöperatieve Kunstmestfabriek. He wanted to reconstruct the pavilion in Vlaardingen, but this plan floundered on financial grounds. The board of directors of the De Ploeg textiles factory in Bergeyk considered placing the pavilion on their own grounds, but desisted when, almost simultaneously, a number of architects led by W. van Tijen and S.J. van den Embden suggested the reconstruction in the park of the Kröller-Müller Museum. Rietveld had selected this place prior to his death. 'It was the combined wish of many of his colleagues and friends to honour in this way the man who demonstrated with his building how architecture can have an enlightening, purifying and cheering effect upon our lives' is the inscription in gold upon a stone of the pavilion, which was reconstructed in 1965. It was the first time in architectural history that Dutch architects resurrected the building of a colleague.



Design drawing
collotype
50 x 41.4cm
RSA

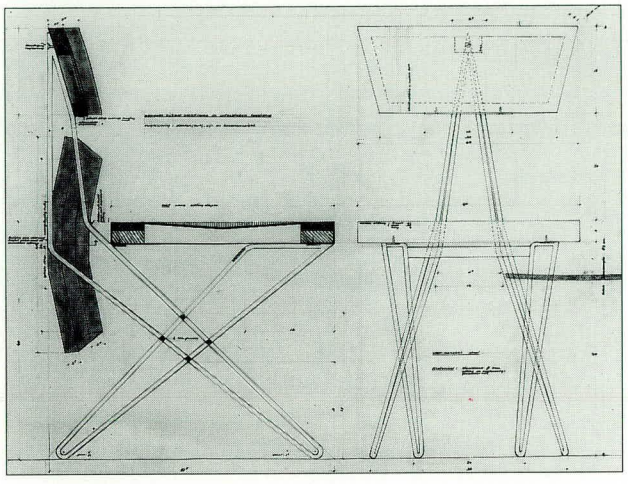
photo c. 1955

1955

482 Dining-room chair Van Daalen

Rietveld built a house for the Van Daalen family in Bergeyk (no. 537). Only the frame of the dining-room chair was ever made.

metal, wicker
79 x 32 x 51cm
1955
private collection, Amsterdam



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
94 x 115cm
NAi

483 Interior Institute for Industrial Design
Herengracht 247, Amsterdam

1955
no longer extant

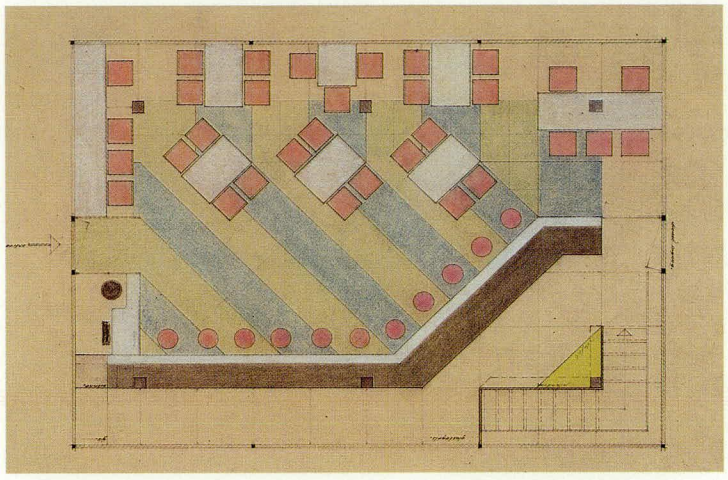
484 Design Cinema Joy and Cinema
Vredenburg, Utrecht

1955
not realized

485 Design espresso bar
Stationsplein, Rotterdam

1955
client F. Engels
not realized

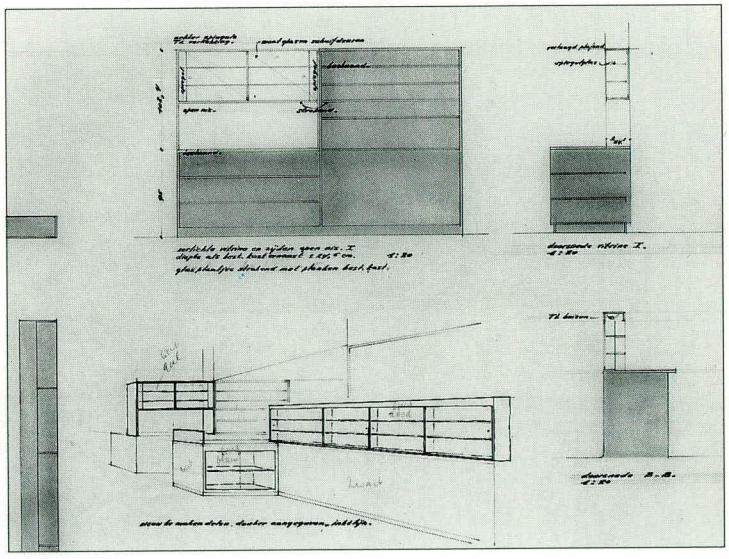
Design drawing
crayon on collotype
50 x 63cm
NAi



486 Interior Birza Pharmacy
Bilderdijkstraat 194, Amsterdam

1955
client W. Birza
no longer extant

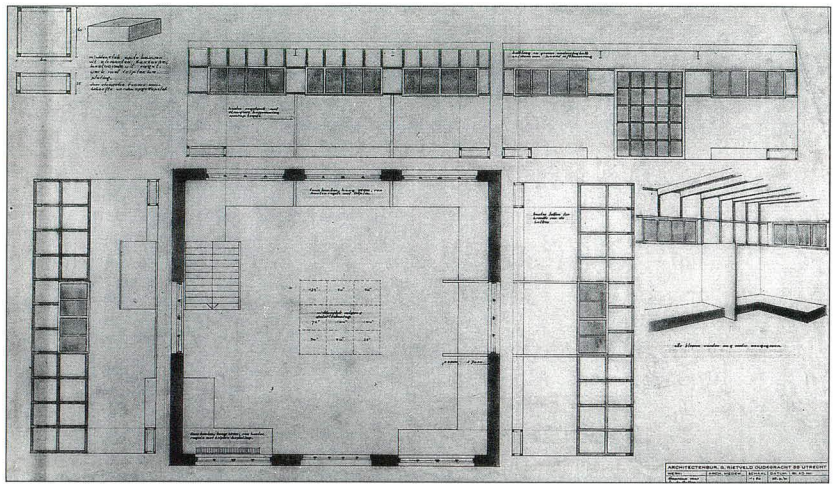
Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
55 x 98cm NAi



487 Design showroom De Gooyer
Zeist

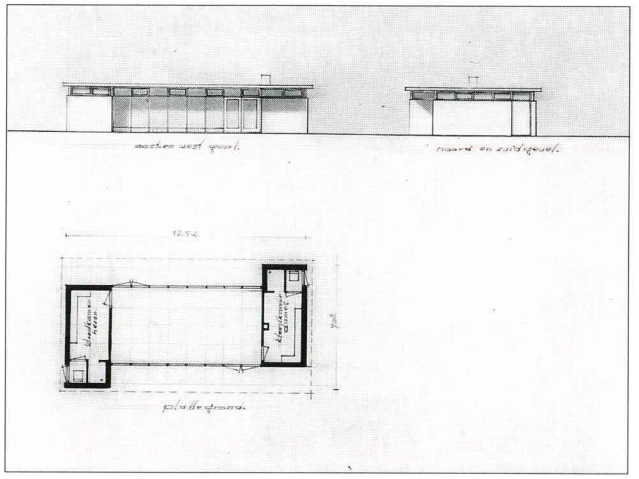
1955

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
69 x 98cm
NAi



488 Design clubhouse 'Gispen'

1955



489 National pavilion exhibition 'E-55'
Ahoy Halls, Rotterdam

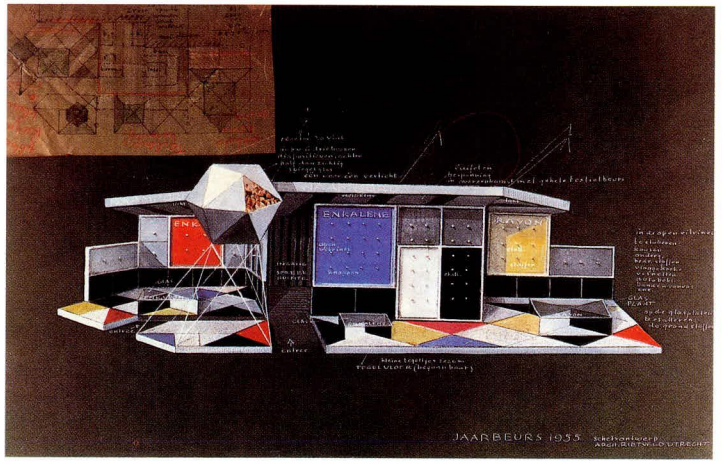
1955
in collaboration with
twelve visual artists

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
50 x 74cm
NAi

490 Design Trade Fair stand Enka

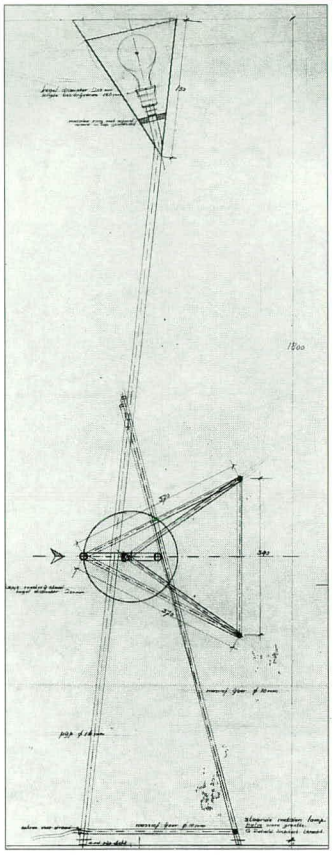
1955

Design drawing
crayon, ink on transparent paper and pencil, ink, paint on paper
27.3 x 42.5cm
RSA



491 Design standard lamp

metal
c. 1955



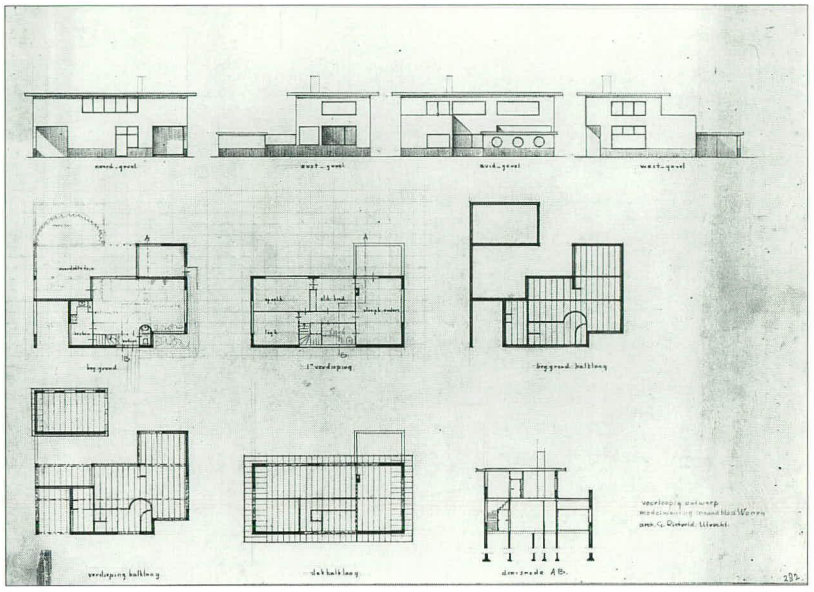
Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
42.5 x 108cm
NAi

492 Table

metal, five-plywood, Formica
73 x 86.6 x 86.6cm
c. 1955
CMU

493 Design model dwelling 'Goed Wonen'

c. 1955



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
59.4 x 75cm
RSA

494 Temporary bicycle shed Central Station, Utrecht

1953-1956
demolished in 1971

photo c. 1956

1955

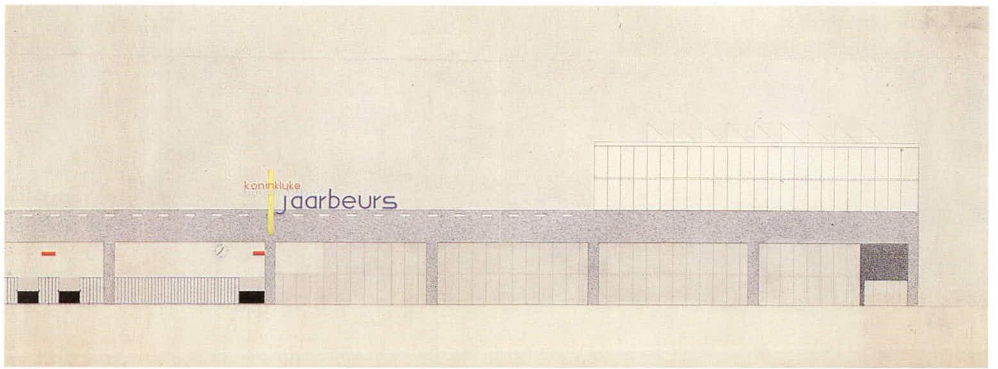
495 Julianahal Royal Trade Fair
Graadt van Roggenweg, Utrecht

1953-1956
client Koninklijke Jaarbeurs
in collaboration with group '53 consisting of J.A. van den Berg, A.J. ter Braak, J.B. van Grunsven, W. Prey, and NV Adviesbureau Dulling
altered

Rietveld envisioned the new hall in the Trade Fair at right angles to the Margriethal. The basic measurement for the design was a metre, in clusters of twelve by twelve. The facilities in the hall, such as the display cases, the hexagonal kiosk and the press-room, are also based on this grid. The complex has an L-shaped floor plan. Even at the main entrance the supporting structure of concrete beams is visible. This entrance is situated under a plateau, which is at a height of 6.50 metres and may be used as a terrace with outdoor stands. This was linked to a covered hall, which was partitioned from the terrace by a glass wall. The upper level was accessible via two inside stairways, an outside stairway and a sloping passage. A second hall is situated on the ground floor. Between the ceiling and the floor, which are suspended from the columns, there is an area 1.60 metres high in which all facilities for the upper and lower floors have been installed. Electricity, water, gas and sewerage can be invisibly channelled to any part of the building via points of connection installed at regular intervals. Those walls which are not made of glass, are composed of layers of aluminium, glass fibre and steel plate. The other building materials, mostly concrete and steel, have been left largely unpainted. Only the doors were painted a bright orange-red.

Design drawing
pencil, paint on paper
69.5 x 149cm
NAi

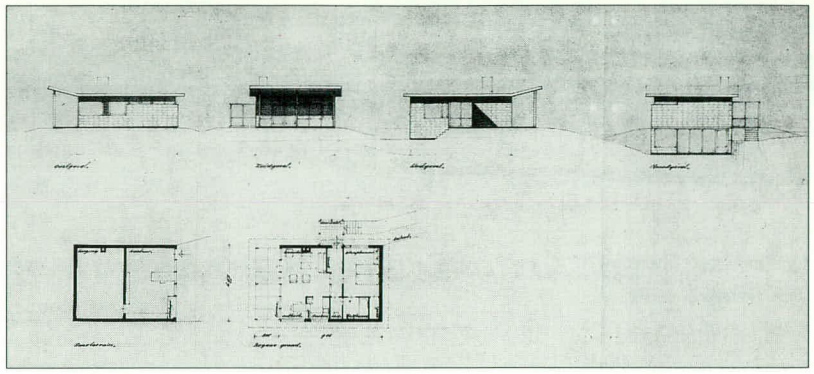
photo c. 1956



1956

496 **Design dwelling with exhibition space**
Breloftpark 24, Noordwijk

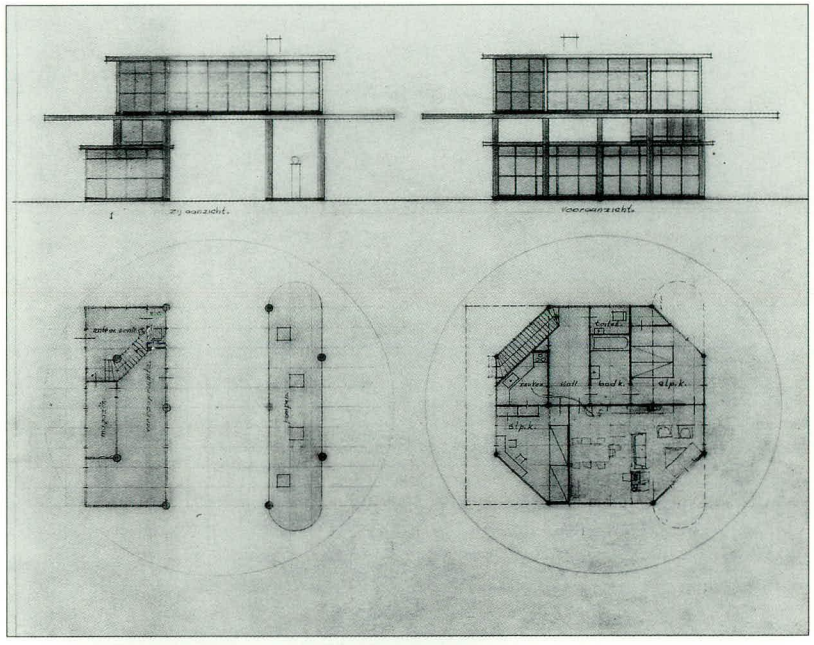
1955-1956
client Mrs A. Reinhold-Bouvy
not realized



Design drawing
collotype
38.5 x 77cm
NAi

497 **Design service-station with dwelling**
Dantelaan 80, Utrecht

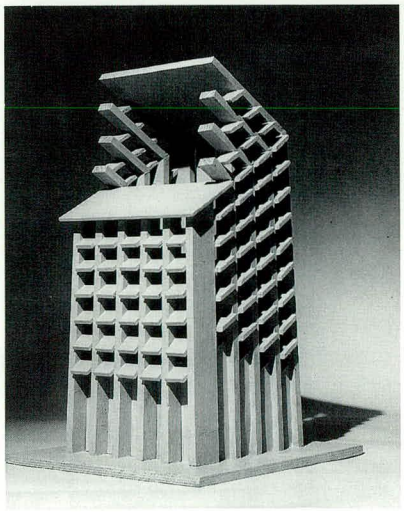
1955-1956
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV Utrecht
not realized



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
57.5 x 67cm
NAi

498 **Design clock tower**
Washington DC

1955-1956
not realized



Maquette
photo c. 1956

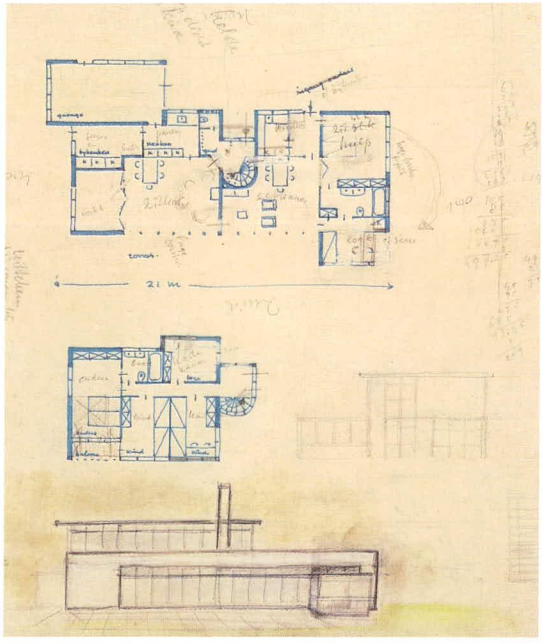
499 **Double dwelling Smedes**
Hullenbergweg 10,
Bennekom

1955-1956
client J.J.A.Smedes
with H. Schröder
altered

Furniture Smedes

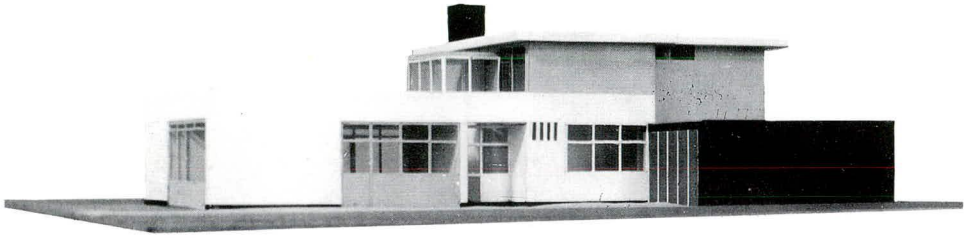
1955-1956

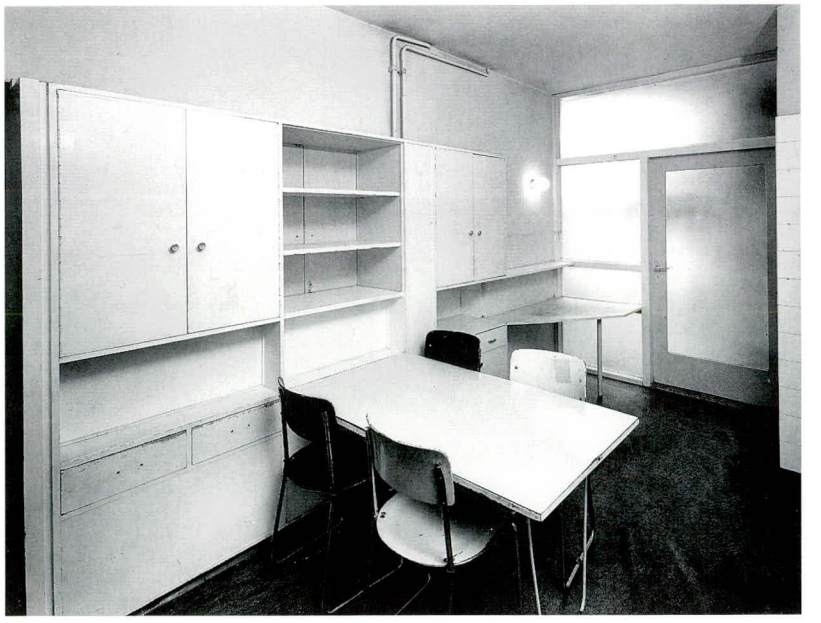
After the expansion of the Soesterberg airfield, located near his house (no. 249), Smedes wanted to move and asked Rietveld to make a design for a double dwelling on a plot of land in Bennekom. Apart from Smedes and his wife, their daughter and her family were to live there too. The building of a double dwelling was not permitted on the villa site in Bennekom. Nor was it permitted to have two dwellings on the piece of land. Rietveld designed a double dwelling but made two versions of the design; one for the client and one for the municipal authorities of Ede, who had to give planning permission. It became a double dwelling with one dwelling section built against the back of the other one. Only the rear part, where the daughter lived with her family, has a first floor. The kitchen of the house at the front was indicated on the plan for the municipality as 'pantry'. There was also supposedly a servant's room, a music room and a playroom. The dwellings were connected by an inner door.



Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
50 x 39cm
NAi

Maquette
photo c. 1956





Kitchen dwelling
Smedes's daughter
photo 1991

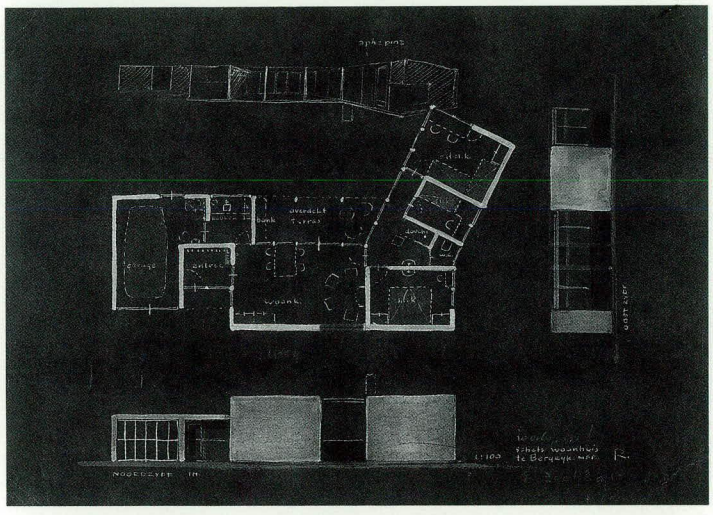
1956

500 Dwelling Visser
Eikendreef 2, Bergeyk

1955-1956
client M. Visser
with H. Schröder
altered, converted in 1968 and 1974 by
A. van Eyck

1956

Rietveld designed a dwelling for the furniture designer Martin Visser, which was built on a plot of wooded land in Bergeyk. Using a limited building budget he made a small bungalow with a compact floor plan. In order to make maximum use of the space, the living room also functioned as the passage to the bedrooms. Rietveld also used this solution a few years later in a double dwelling in Baambrugge (no. 538). Another principle he introduced with this dwelling which he was to make repeated use of later, is the elongated sleeping wing placed at an angle to the living area (see also nos 516, 537 and 632). The bedrooms are beside each other, on a long corridor on the garden side. The corridor is separated from the exterior by a glass wall extending from floor to roof. Just like the dwelling for G. Stoop (no. 419) the exterior of Visser's bungalow is quite closed at the front and the house opens out extravagantly to the garden.
The interior was finished in soft colours: light blue, lilac and yellow. The furniture designer left the planning of furniture to go with the house, such as the fitted cupboards and a table, to Rietveld.



Design drawing
pencil, white lead on cardboard
25 x 32.2cm
RSA

Martin Visser is a great enthusiast and collector of art. When he had his house built he already had a large collection of paintings and graphic work. However, the dwelling offered few possibilities for showing the work. Two years after the building of the house, Aldo van Eyck commented on this: 'in Bergeyk the will to purity finally defeated purity. No painting can or may be hung there... Here the architecture presumes something which is beyond its competence, or denies its existence: the significance of pictorial expression.'[1]

Van Eyck was given the opportunity to do something about it. In 1968 Martin Visser asked him to design an extension to the house. Van Eyck designed a circular annexe built onto the sleeping wing. Six years later there was a second extension.
The truncated corner between the bedrooms wing and the living area was filled in.

[1] Van Eyck 1958.

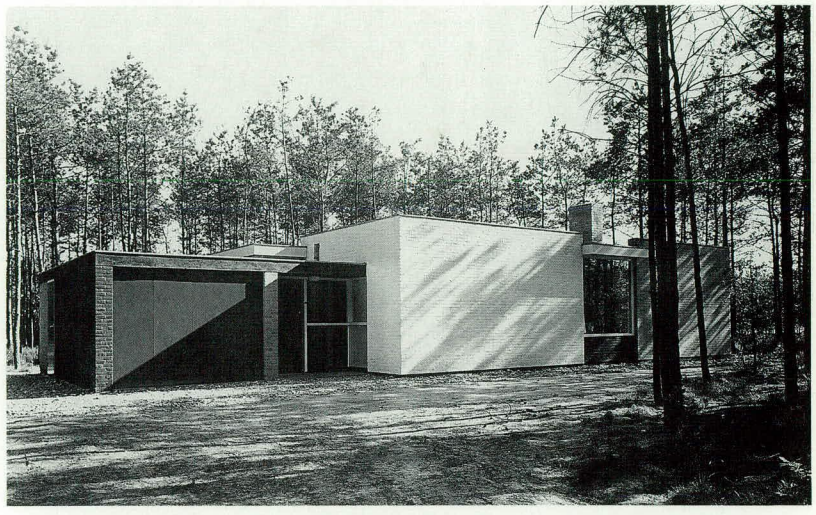
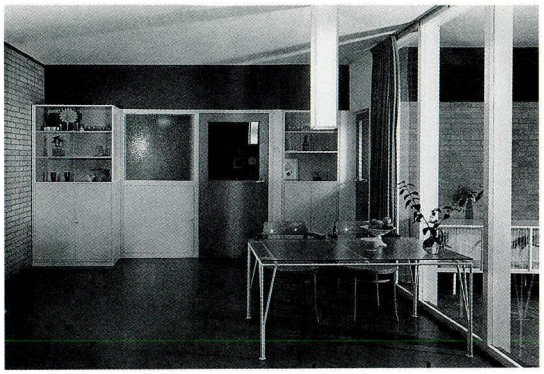


photo c. 1956



Living room
photo c. 1956

501 Furniture Visser

1955

For Martin Visser's dwelling (no. 500) Rietveld designed, apart from some built-in cupboards, a table with a frame of enamelled iron and glass top. The lamp, based on another design (no. 243), and the table have been lost.

502 Furniture De Wilde
Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

1956

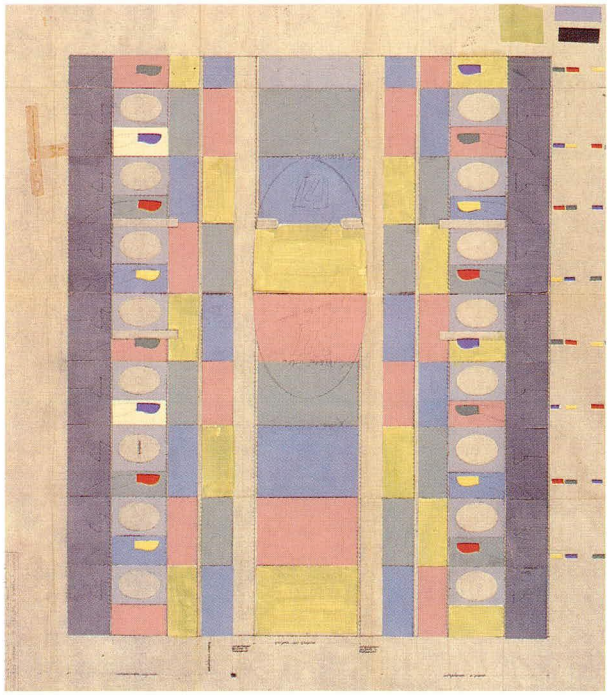
E.L.L. de Wilde, director of the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven from 1946 to 1964, asked Rietveld to design a table, a cupboard and some chairs for his workroom. Eventually the table was given away, and the current whereabouts of the cupboard is unknown.

Chair
wood, five-plywood, upholstery
83 x 50 x 56cm
1956
Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

503 Design F 29 interior

1955-1956
client NV Fokker Koninklijke Nederlandse Vliegtuigenfabriek
not realized

Rietveld was twice commissioned to design the interior of an aircraft: in 1955 for the aircraft manufacturer Fokker and in 1957 for KLM airlines (no. 547). Rietveld received the Fokker commission through the Institute for Industrial Design, according to a letter dated 10 February 1955 in the Netherlands Architecture Institute. The contact with KLM was perhaps a consequence of this commission. In both cases it was chiefly a question of the colour scheme of the walls and furniture and the choice of covers for the seats. We learn from the abundant documentation which has been preserved that Rietveld devoted a lot of attention to the presentation of the designs.



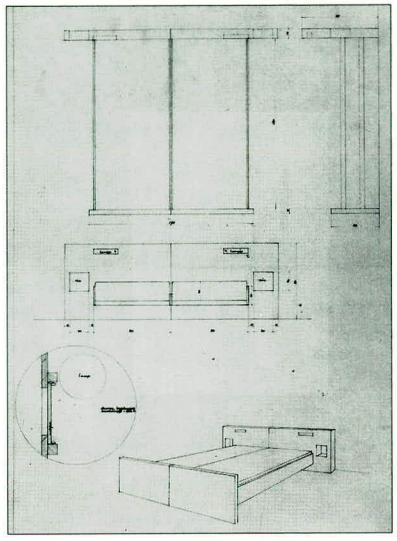
Design drawing ceiling and two walls F 29
collage, coloured paper on collotype
81 x 94.2cm
1956
NAi

1956

504 Design bed and dressing table Nijland

1956

The bedstead is almost identical to the bed head made for Ten Doesschate (no. 329).



Design drawing
twin beds
pencil, ink on transparent paper
68 x 44.5cm
NAi

505 Design conversion of dwelling and garage Hercules Segherslaan, Bilthoven

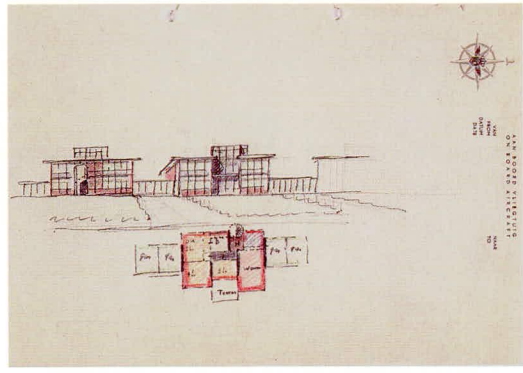
1956
client J. Lanjouw

506 Conversion potter's studio Lange Nieuwstraat 64, Utrecht

1956
client H. Wagner
no longer extant

507 Design five dwellings Groenekanseweg, De Bilt

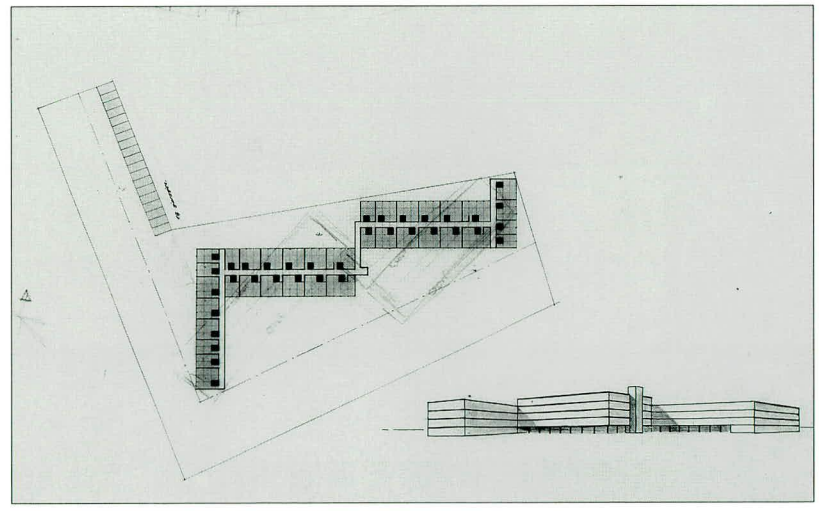
1956
client NV Bouw- en Aannemings-maatschappij Bakhuizen
not realized



Rough draft
pencil, crayon, ink on airmail paper
17.5 x 26cm
NAi

508 Design block of flats for the elderly Bennekom

1956
client NV Bouw- en Aannemingsmaatschappij Bakhuizen



508
Design drawing
ink, pencil on transparent paper
50 x 66.5cm
NAi

509 **Design bathroom and kitchen unit**

1956

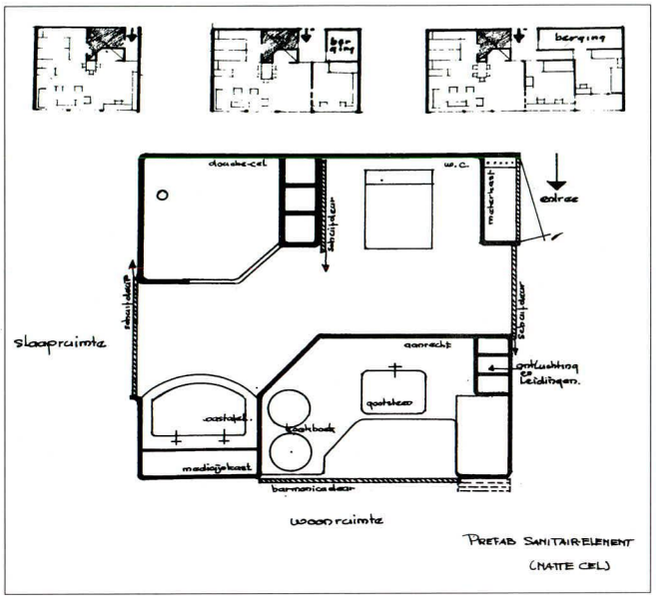


photo of **design drawing**, c. 1956

In the 1950s and 60s Rietveld systematically incorporated the ideas of the prefab bathroom and kitchen unit into his designs. For example, in a design for a block of flats for the elderly (no. 508) and also in the model layout for the exhibitions 'Woning en Kleding voor Ons (no. 438) and 'Kunst en Kitsch' (no. 430). In 1958 Rietveld had a unit, for the most part in plastic, made for the World Exhibition in Brussels (no. 544).

510 **Design dwelling** Breitnerlaan 9, Utrecht

1956
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV Utrecht
not realized

511 **Design double dwelling** Breitnerlaan 11, Utrecht

1956
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV Utrecht
with H. Schröder
not realized

512 Design family dwellings and flats
Hoograven, Utrecht

Design sketch for neighbourhood layout 'Tolsteeg'

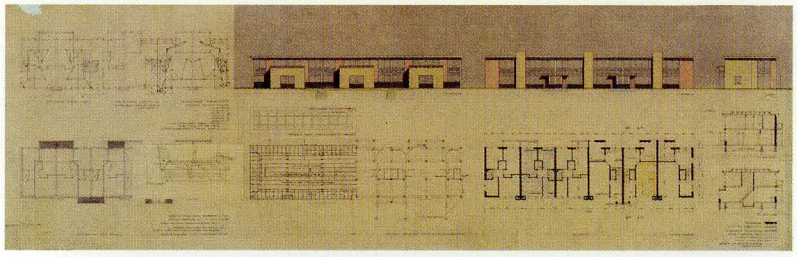
Design 'climbing sculpture' for the Hoograven district

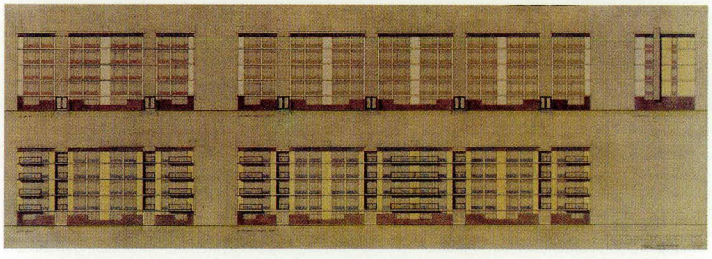
1954-1957
clients
Woningbouwvereniging Hoograven en Utrechtse Woningstichting
with J.B. van Grunsven and H. Schröder
altered

The commission to design family dwellings and flats was originally intended to go to J.J.P. Oud and Rietveld together. However, Oud soon withdrew due to lack of time. Rietveld designed various types of dwellings: family dwellings, two-over-one dwellings (with and without lower floor) and three, four and five roomed flats. As these dwellings were to be built with government subsidies, the architect was bound by a large number of regulations. In the context of these, and with limited financial means, it required an exceptional degree of ingenuity to build dwellings which are not just shelter for a family but which have an architectural and aesthetic surplus value and in which it is pleasant to live. The practical floor plans of the dwellings are divided up in an extremely well-thought-out manner. Various rooms could be combined and there were other such Rietveld tricks. The two-over-one dwellings had a cupboard wall between kitchen and living room, the flats on the other hand had a sliding glass wall. The central heating pipes were square and ran as a plinth along the wall. The dwellings contained no space-devouring elements like chimney-pieces. Rietveld also devoted some care to the exterior of the blocks and the layout of the neighbourhood. The brickwork is in different colours of brick, so that planes are created which counteract the heavy volumes of the blocks. Rietveld was closely involved in the project from beginning to end. He visited the residents after they had spent a few months in their new homes and was available at the residents' evenings which were organized by the housing corporations. After the building of 388 dwellings in Hoograven, in 1956 there came another commission from the same two housing corporations, to build 194 dwellings in the neighbourhood of Tolsteeg (no. 540), to the north of Hoograven. With the exception of some small alterations, the same types of dwellings were built here.

photo c. 1957

1957





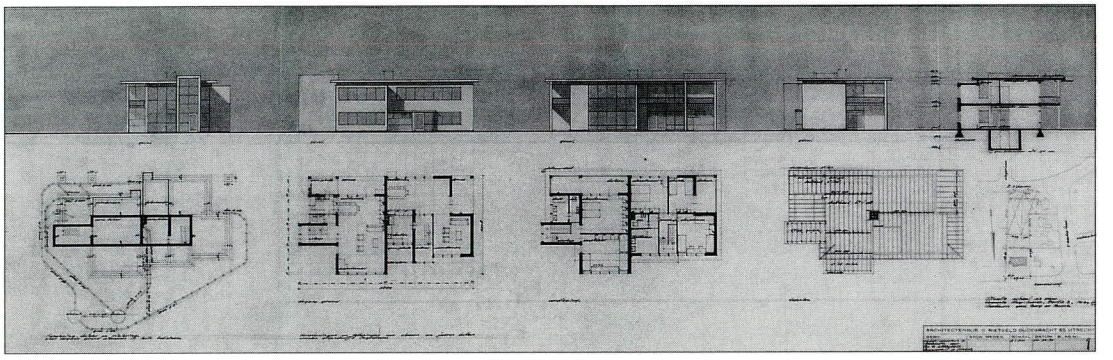
Design drawing
family dwellings
crayon on collotype
44.5 x 139cm
NAi

Design drawing flats
crayon on collotype
44.5 x 126cm
NAi

513 **Design family dwellings in Apeldoorn extension plan**
Tweede Berkenlaan, Apeldoorn

1955-1957
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf N.V. Utrecht
not realized

For the Apeldoorn extension plan Rietveld, commissioned by Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV, designed a number of different dwellings. In some types he incorporated his beloved motif of split level floors. It is not known why the plan was not realized.



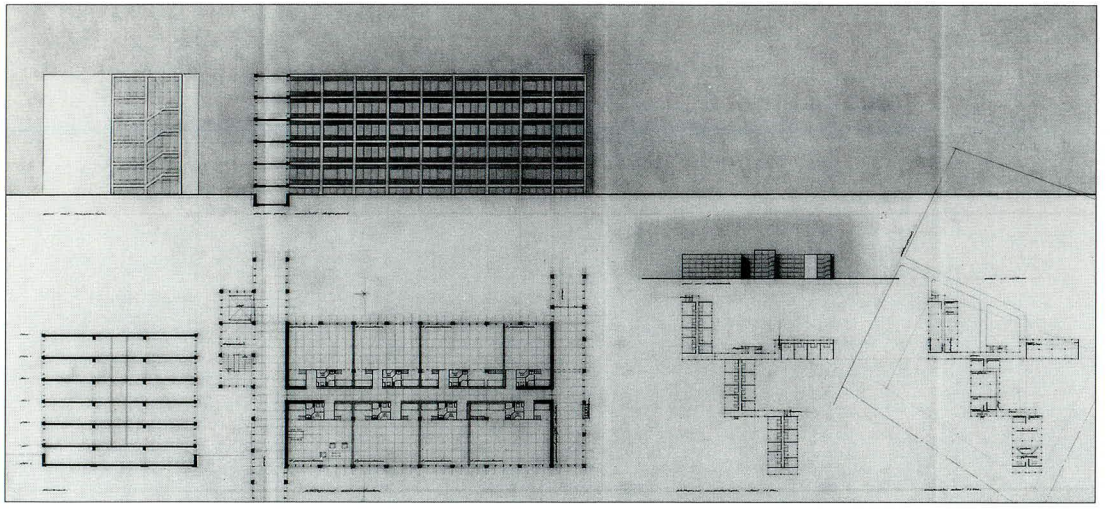
Design drawing double dwelling
pencil, ink on transparent paper
57.5 x 138cm
NAi

514 **Design flats**
Akkerstraat, Driebergen

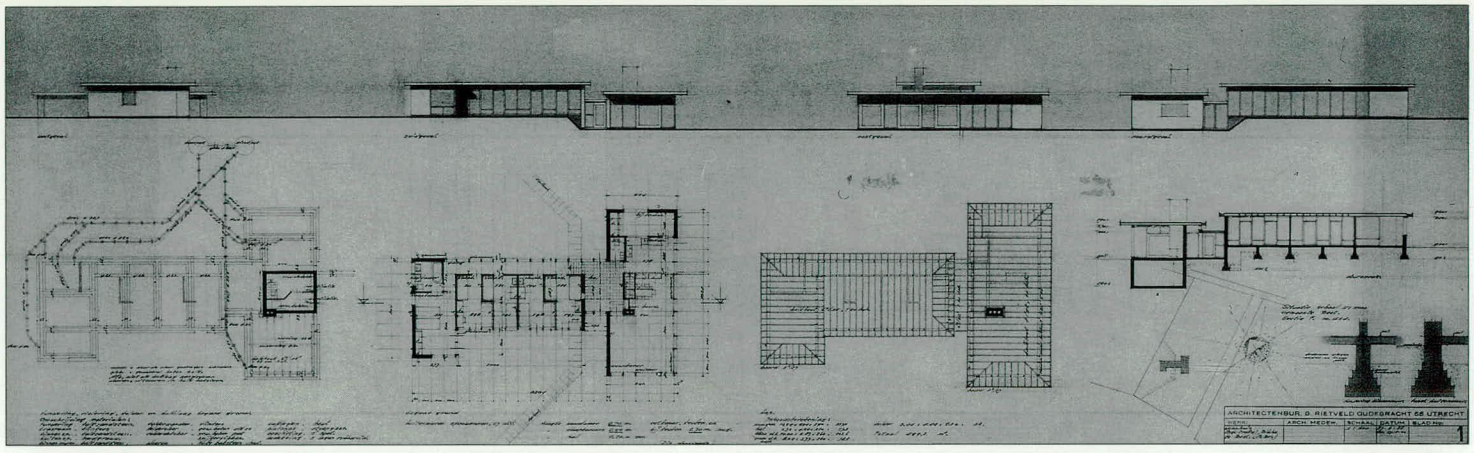
1956-1957
client NV Bouw- en Aannemingsmaatschappij Bakhuizen

515 **Conversion Erasmushuis**
Oudegracht 151, Utrecht

1956-1957
client Humanistisch Verbond Utrecht



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
86 x 153.5cm
NAi



516 Dwelling Bláha
A.P. Nosseklaan 5, Best

1956-1957
client O.F. Bláha
with J.B. van Grunsven

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
50 x 137cm
RSA

Furniture Bláha

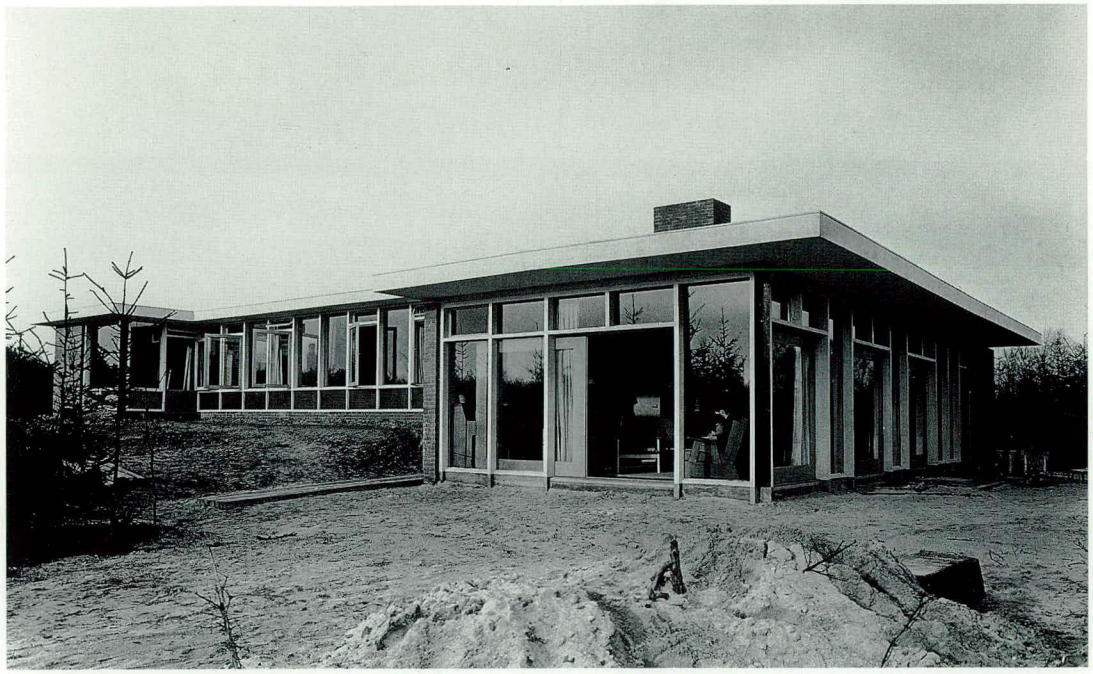
1957

1957

Bláha was one of the few private clients who had not come in contact with Rietveld through friends or family. He had read about his work in an issue of the Dutch Rail magazine *Tussen de rails*. After having visited Rietveld in Utrecht, Bláha invited him to come and look at a plot of land in Best. Rietveld made a maquette.
The Bláha family was surprised by the quantity of glass Rietveld proposed. In a letter dated 7 June 1956 the client asked Rietveld whether everything which was glass in the maquette would also be so in reality: 'what is window and what is wall?'[1]
The bungalow is of a type that Rietveld built more often in the 1950s and 60s, with a living section and a separate sleeping wing (see nos 500, 537 and 632).

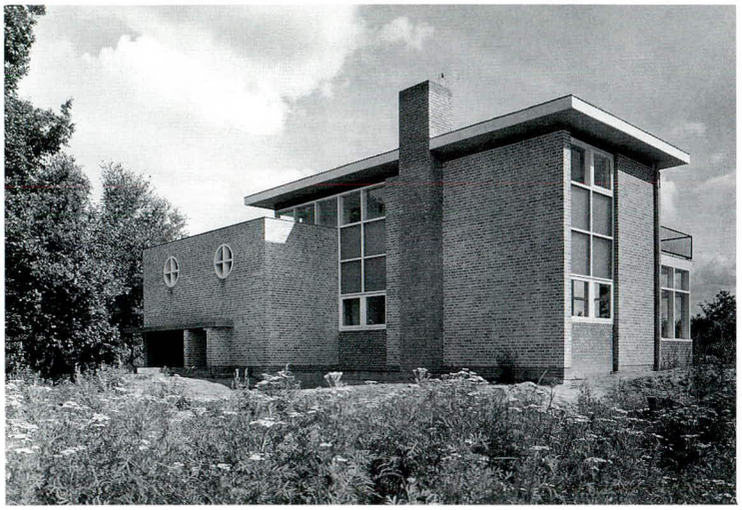
[1] Rietveld Archive NAi.

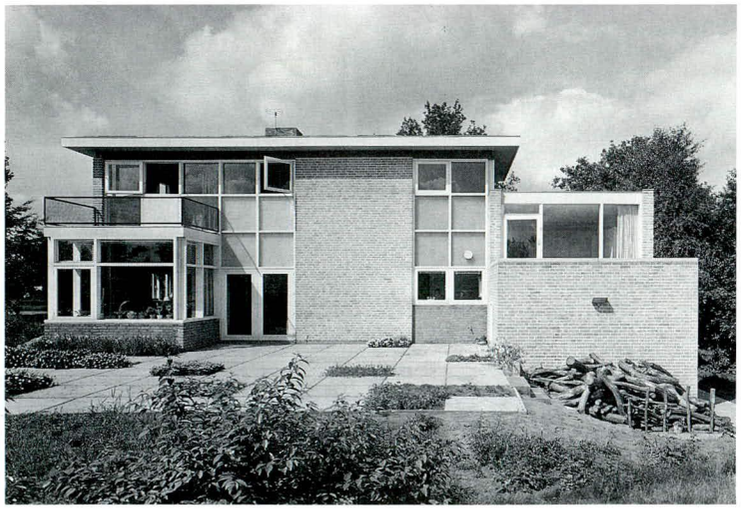
photo c. 1957



517 **Dwelling Jansen**
Blokvenlaan 22, Waalre

1956-1957
client J. Jansen
with J. B. van Grunsven
altered





photos c. 1957

518 **Dwelling Cordemeyer**
Montanalaan 8, Apeldoorn

1956-1957
client A.R. Cordemeyer
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

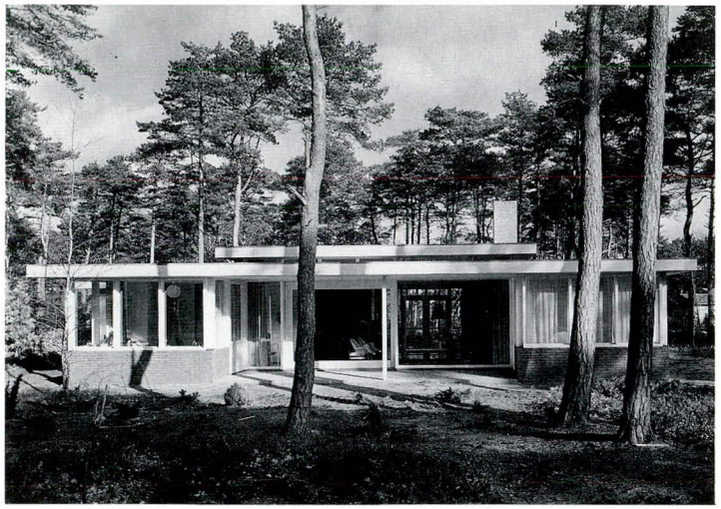


photo c. 1957

Living room
photo c. 1957

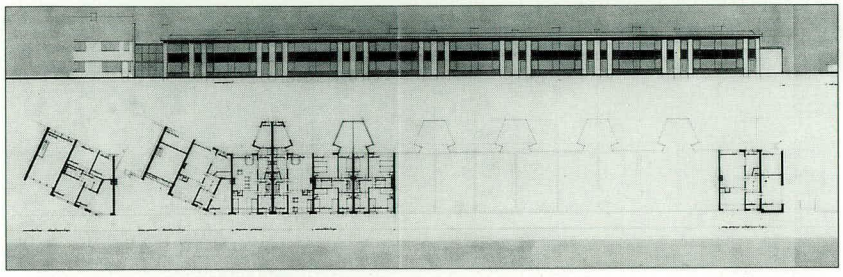
1957

519 Sixteen family dwellings
Van Meelstraat 1-35,
Utrecht

1956-1957
client Cooperatieve Vereniging Politie Bond Utrecht
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

In January 1957 planning permission was requested for the row of sixteen dwellings. It took six months before this was given. The planning board, of which Rietveld was also a member at that time, preferred the dwellings to have a sloping roof instead of the flat one shown on the design. Furthermore, the architect had not taken the existing surrounding buildings much into account. What is striking about this design is the pentagonal storage space built next to the kitchen.
This has been kept low so that a window could be fitted high up in the kitchen, which was the only source of daylight in this room. Rietveld also designed the kitchen: white glazed fire clay basins in a black granite draining board. Under the draining board shelves made of slats were fitted, and above it were cupboards with wired glass sliding doors.
The exterior of the family dwellings was carefully detailed by Rietveld. The walls were of yellow brick and asbestos cement slabs; chimney and plinth were of purple clinkers.
The window frames formed a vertical strip from the plinth to the edge of the roof. The upper parts of the windows were of rippled glass which on Rietveld's express instructions were placed in such a way that the stripes ran in the horizontal direction. The breastwork of the windows on the first floor consisted of wired glass. Sheets of a single colour were fixed to these on the interior. Rietveld very often used such a construction, in both his private dwellings and housing projects (nos 419, 587).

Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
86 x 153.5cm
NAi



1957

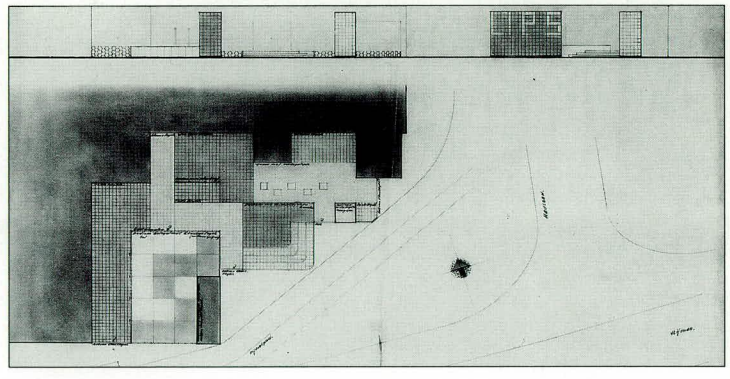
520 Design showroom Betonbedrijf Lips
Drunen

1956-1957
client M. Lips
not realized

Rietveld was asked to design an open-air showroom for the products of the concrete factory. According to a memo by Lips, an earlier design by their own architect had been rejected by the Drunen planning board, who also commented that if the client 'were to ask architect Rietveld, there would be a fine project which would certainly meet with their approval'.
Rietveld's design is a three-dimensional presentation of tiles, bricks and blocks. At first sight the sketch is reminiscent of the Sonsbeek pavilion (no. 481). The design, which was to be built on the municipal boundary of Drunen, was finally rejected by the planning board with the argument that the showroom of concrete products 'will deface the entrance to Drunen'.[1]

[1] Quotes from documentation in the Rietveld Archive, NAi.

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
50.5 x 77cm
NAi



521 **Family dwellings, garages and a transformer station**
Saffierlaan and Topaaslaan, Utrecht

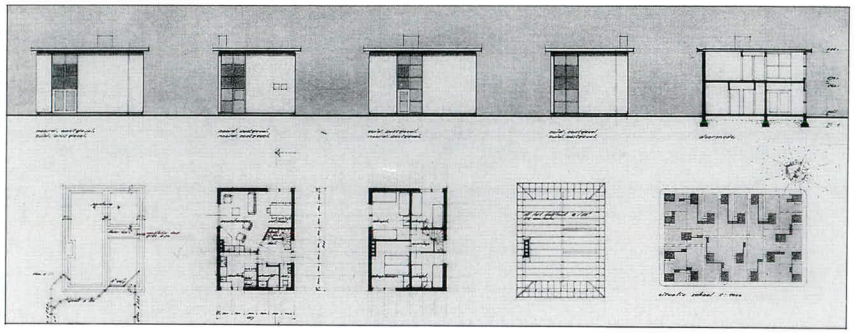
1956-1957
client Bouwbedrijf Barreveld & Rijksen NV Utrecht
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

The dwellings which Rietveld designed for the builders Barreveld & Rijksen NV and Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV (see no. 581) are identical apart from a few details. They are blocks of six dwellings. The end dwellings have the front door in the side wall. The entrances to the dwellings in between are arranged in pairs in protruding porches. The layout of the dwellings was such that they could easily be altered, depending on the composition of the family.
For example, the rear room could be used as either bedroom or dining room. In the latter case it was possible to convert the cupboard space between room and kitchen into a direct passage and the wall between the dining room and living room could be removed without much difficulty.

photo 1992

522 **Design 32 family dwellings**
Bergeyk

1956-1957
not realized



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
50 x 77cm
NAi

1957

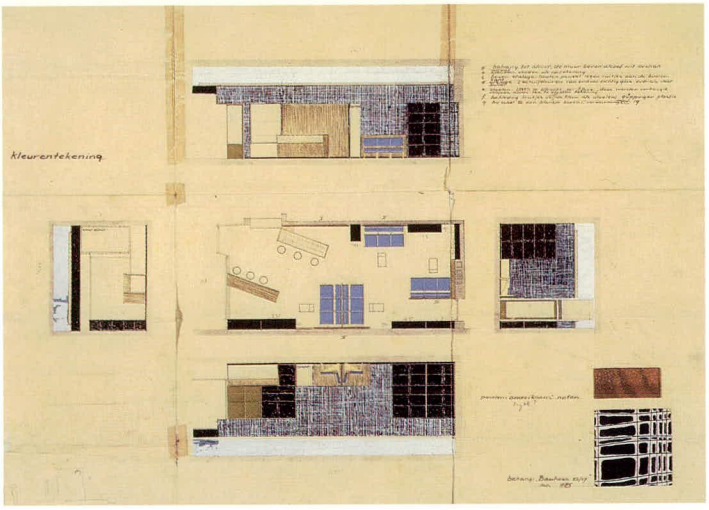
523 **Design dwelling Blijenburg**
Bergeyk

1956-1957
client P. Blijenburg
not realized

524 **Conversions Ket Shoe Shop**
Nieuwestad 57, Leeuwarden

1956-1957 and 1959-1960
client J. Ket

Rietveld changed the interior of the shop from a messy pile of shoe boxes into a showroom with illuminated display cases. The walls were clad nearly to the top with a wall covering of rough fabric consisting of white threads against a black background. The lighting consisted of joined strips fitted onto the division between wall covering and plasterwork. The chairs and seats for fitting were made by the UMS (Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel



en Meubelfabriek) after a design by Rietveld.

In 1959 Rietveld was asked to make a design for an extension. This was done in 1960, despite difficulties with the Planning Board about the upper part of the shopfront.

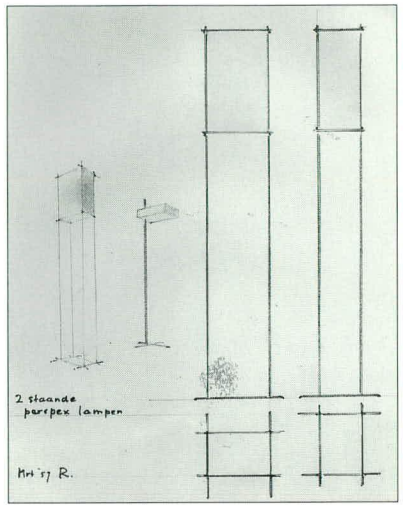
Design drawing
pencil, ink, watercolour, wallpaper, wood on collotype
46 x 63.5cm
NAi

1957

525 Design standard lamp

Perspex
1957

The sketches for a standard lamp in Perspex show a square and a funnel-shaped variant.



Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
27 x 21cm
NAi

526 Layout Dutch Section
Milan Triennial

1957

photo c. 1960

photo from **brochure**
Krommenie 1957

527 Design dwelling Van Leyden
Loosdrecht

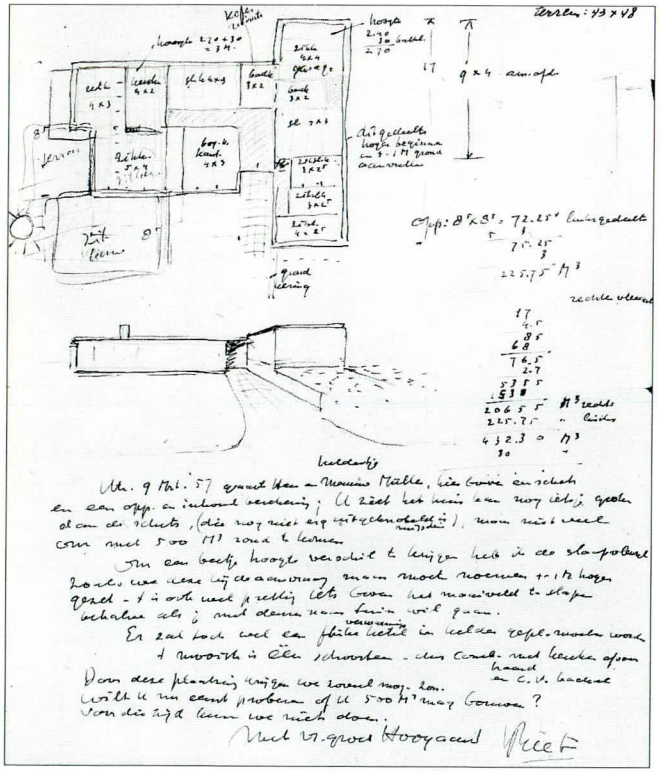
1957
client E. van Leyden

528 Design dwelling Müller

1957

To the best of our knowledge the short letter with sketch shown here is all that has been preserved with regard to this commission.

Letter with rough draft
crayon, ink on paper
27 x 21cm
NAi



529 Design conversion of undertaker's
Utrecht

1957

530 Design renovation of chauffeur's dwelling with garage
Waldeck Pyrmontkade 20, Utrecht

1957
not realized

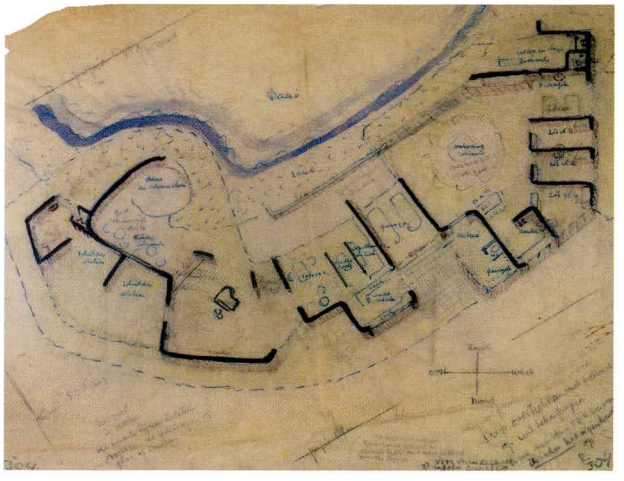
It is not clear why this drawing was made – possibly for the renovation of the chauffeur's house (no. 112).

531 Design dream house Engels
Curaçao

1957

For the *liber amicorum* of Chris Engels, Rietveld made a sketch of what he thought was the ideal house for the doctor.

Rough draft
pencil, ink, biro, watercolour on transparent paper
33 x 41.6cm
RSA



1957

532 'Mondial' chair

steel, aluminium
1957
in collaboration with
W. Rietveld

This industrially produced design was the result of a collaboration with his son Wim Rietveld, who worked for NV Gispen Stalen Meubelen in Culemborg. They developed the stacking modular chair 'Mondial' for the World Exhibition of 1958 in Brussels. Prototypes of the model were made with and without armrests. Ultimately, against the wishes of Wim Rietveld, the seat was produced by Gispen with a polyester back and seat.[1]

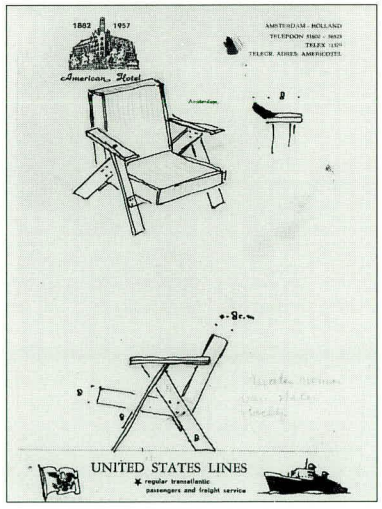
[1] Exhib. cat. Amersfoort 1991, 30-31.

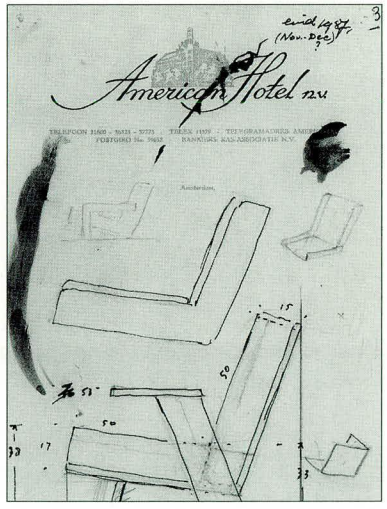
1957

533 Design armchairs

1957

There are two sketches in the Netherlands Architecture Institute for armchairs with a back and seat of oblong upholstered blocks on a frame of wooden boards.





'Mondial chair'
steel, aluminium, fibreboard, polyester
75 x 49 x 42cm
CMU

Rough draft
ink on paper
21.5 x 13.5cm
NAi

Rough draft
ink on paper
21.5 x 13.5cm
NAi

534 Offices Schrale Beton
Willemsvaart 21, Zwolle

1957
with J.C. Meulenbelt

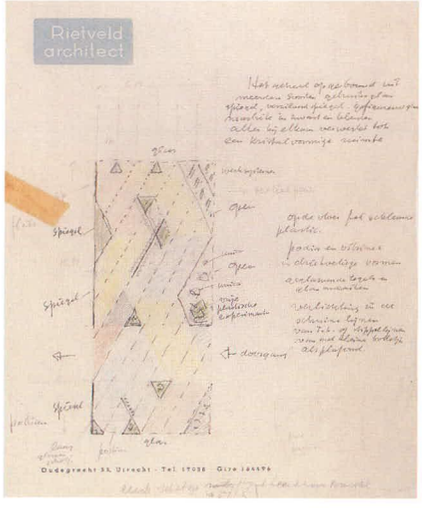
Furniture Schrale Beton

Logo Schrale Beton

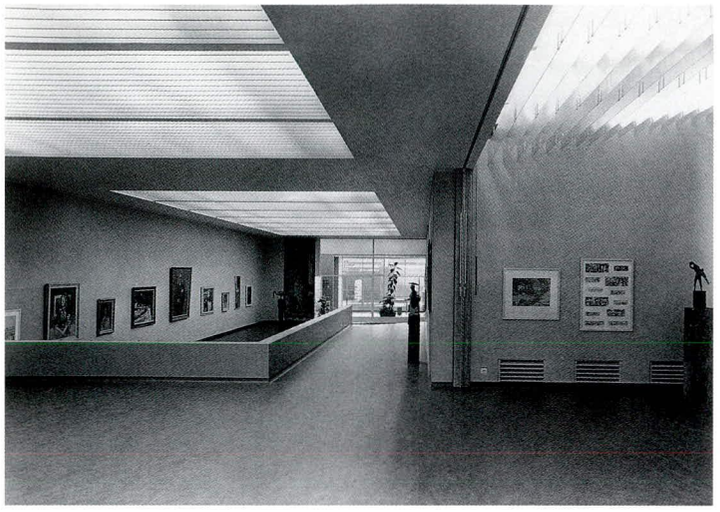
Rietveld also designed some furniture for the offices of Schrale Beton, including the couch in the hall, for which he made various sketches.

535 Stand for Leerdam
Brussels

c. 1957



Rough draft
pencil, crayon, ink on writing paper
27.7 x 21.8cm
RSA



536 Conversion exhibition hall and auditorium Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten
Stadhouderskade 86, Amsterdam

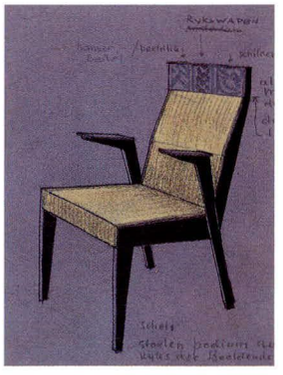
1954-1958
client Government Buildings Department
altered

Design seat Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten

wood, upholstery
1957

After the Sonsbeek and the Biennale pavilions (nos 481 and 463), the conversion was Rietveld's third exhibition space. One of the important problems was the lighting of the space. Under a partly glass roof Rietveld fitted wired glass vanes, and between them hung strip-lighting. The fluorescent light was filtered through the glass. It was a solution whereby the daylight and artificial light came from the same direction.

Design drawing chair
pencil, crayon on paper
18.5 x 16cm
NAi



534
photo c. 1957

536
Exhibition hall
photo c. 1958

537 Dwelling Van Daalen
Fazantlaan 14, Bergeyk

1956-1958
client R.D. van Daalen
with J.B. van Grunsven and H. Schröder

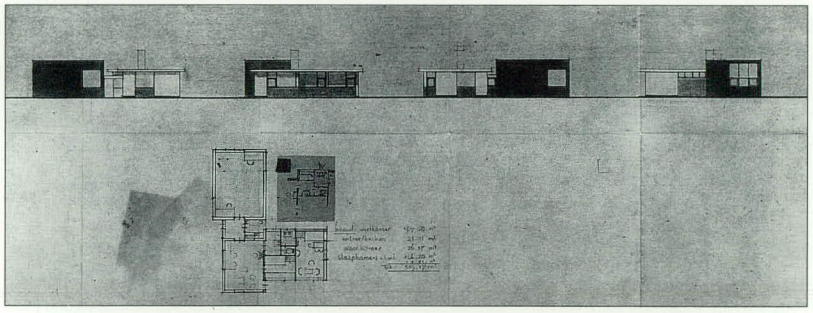
R.D. van Daalen was co-director of De Ploeg (see no. 541) and had known Rietveld a long time. Before Rietveld designed the dwelling for Van Daalen, he stayed a night with the family in order to get to know them. The wishes of the client were, summed up briefly, to have the possibility of sun in the house every moment of the day, and for each child to have its own bedroom with a door to the outside. The living room is facing southeast. The wing with the bedrooms is at right angles to the section containing living room, playroom, study and kitchen. All the bedrooms have their own outside door. The house which was built deviates little from Rietveld's initial sketch.

537
photo c. 1958

538 Dwellings Scholten/ Strumphler
Kleiweg 32a and 32b, Baambrugge

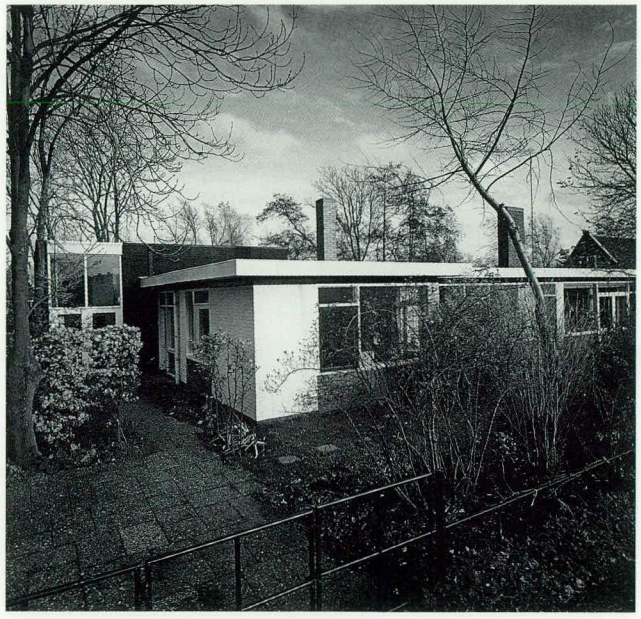
1956-1958
clients H.J. Scholten and C.W.N. Strumphler
with H. Boswijk
altered, the Scholten house converted in 1973 by B. Premsela

For the textile artists Herman and Desirée Scholten, Rietveld designed a dwelling with studio. During the design phase they decided, for financial reasons, to build a double dwelling. Through a newspaper advertisement the Scholtens sought someone to join them in the building project. C. Strumphler and his wife responded. It is hardly visible on the exterior of the linked bungalow that it is a double dwelling. The Scholten dwelling, like the Strumphler dwelling, has a particularly compact layout. There is no hallway; the living room and bathroom functioned as passage to the bedrooms. In 1973 the



Design drawing
ink on collotype and ink on transparent paper
57.3 x 62.2cm
private collection, Baambrugge

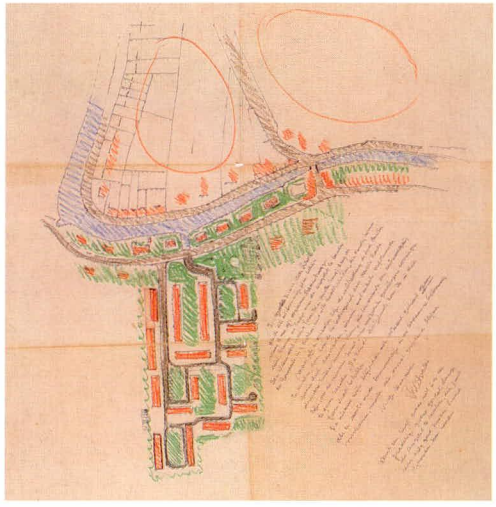
photo c. 1973



1958

Scholten house was converted by Benno Premsela. Both the studio and dwelling were extended.

In 1963 Scholten called on Rietveld again. When in that year the town council decided to drastically build up Baambrugge, Scholten decided to object to the Provincial Government in Utrecht. However, he wanted to be well prepared and asked Rietveld to make an alternative extension plan for the town council, which Rietveld did, but it was not implemented.



Rough draft extension plan Baambrugge
ink, pastel on transparent paper
57.3 x 62.2cm
c. 1963
private collection, Baambrugge

539 Forty flats
Toermalijnlaan, Utrecht

1956-1958
client Bouwbedrijf Barreveld & Rijksen NV, Utrecht
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

Until now, it has been assumed that Rietveld's contribution to the Utrecht extension plans was confined to the dwellings which he designed for the housing corporations Hoograven and the Utrechtse Woningstichting. However, it would appear that many more family dwellings and flats were built on the basis of his design in the neighbourhood of Tolsteeg (see also nos 521, 540 and 581). On Toermalijnlaan in Utrecht two blocks of flats designed by Rietveld were built opposite each other. One block was commissioned by Bouwbedrijf Barreveld & Rijksen NV; a year later came the commission from Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV (no. 562). Each block contains forty flats spread over four storeys. The dwellings strongly resemble, both in layout and appearance, the flats which Rietveld had built in Hoograven and the flats he was working on at that time in Tolsteeg (nos 512 and 540).

540 Family dwellings and flats
Tolsteeg, Utrecht

1956-1958
clients
Woningbouwvereniging Hoograven and Utrechtse Woningstichting
with J.B. van Grunsven and H. Schröder
altered

541 De Ploeg
Riethovensedijk 20, Bergeyk

1956-1958
client Weverij De Ploeg NV
in collaboration with engineering bureau G. Beltman

The commission to design a factory with an agreeable, pleasant atmosphere for the employees, taking into account the fine surrounding landscape, must have appealed to Rietveld. Before sketching his first design, he made a study trip of two weeks through Italy and Switzerland

photo 1988

1958

with the management of De Ploeg and the engineer G. Beltman. They visited spinning mills, weaving mills and various public buildings in order to get an impression of modern (factory) construction. The materials and construction of the building were carefully chosen on the basis of the most recent technological advances. For example, a shell roof was chosen, which has the advantage of being able to cover a large space with relatively few bearing points (columns). Furthermore, an arched shell roof is very strong even with a limited thickness. For the large glass surfaces double glazing was installed.
The floors were covered with the jointless Plasnalo, a plastic material which Rietveld had also used in the Julianahal of the Utrecht Trade Fair (no. 495). The weaving mill scored a technical first with its drainage from the paint tanks in a closed system of stainless steel pipes.

photo 1988

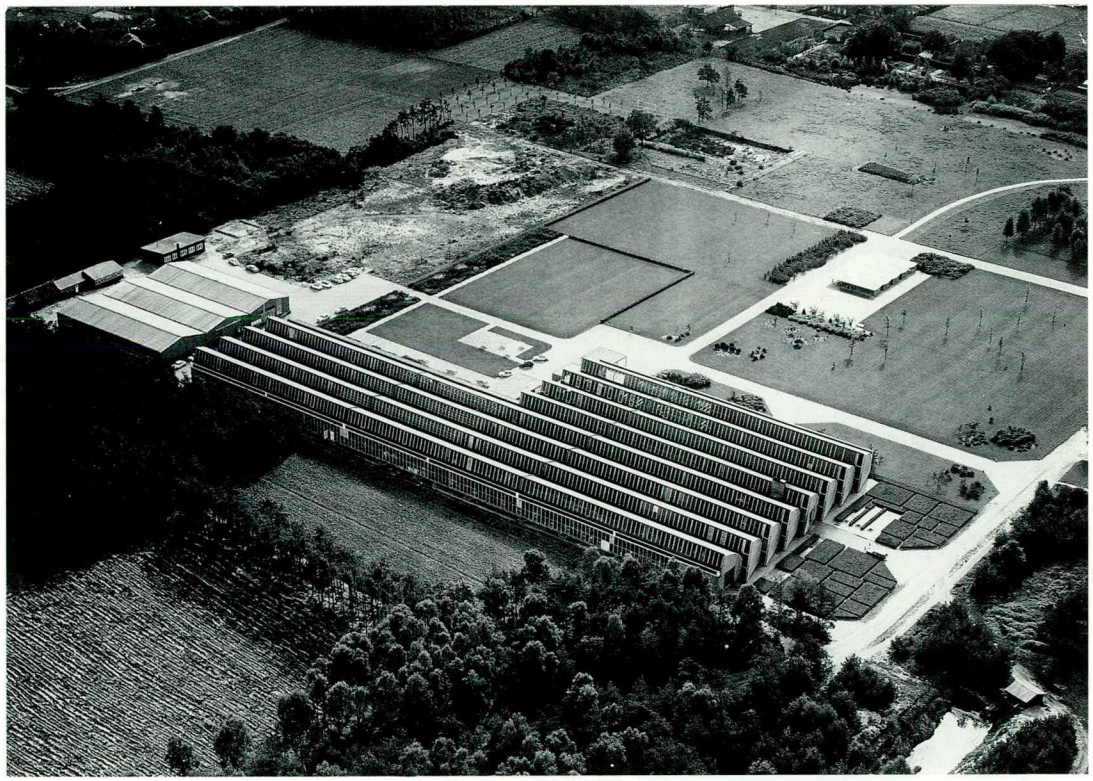


photo c. 1958

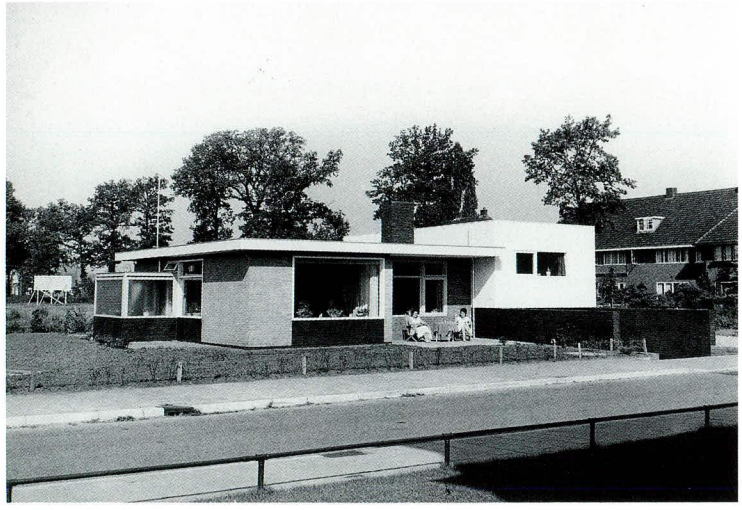
A. Scheffer. In 1959 they both built bungalows designed by Rietveld (see nos 564 and 565). These differ from the bungalow which Rietveld had built for Bolte.

542 Dwelling Bolte
Groenekanseweg 33, De Bilt

1957-1958
client J. Bolte
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

The Bakhuizen contractors asked Rietveld to design two types of bungalow, five of which originally, and later four, were to be built on Groenekanseweg in De Bilt (see no. 507). Planning permission was given in July 1958 for the four dwellings. However, the buildings were never built according to the Bakhuizen scheme. J. Bolte, a civil engineer, had in the meantime bought a part of the land and had a bungalow built there for himself after a design by Rietveld. In December 1958 the builders informed the municipality that they had sold two other building sites, one to G. van Laar and the other to

photo c. 1958



543 Layout press room Unesco
Paris

1957-1958
client The Kingdom of the Netherlands
demolished in 1982

The Dutch government commissioned Rietveld to fit out the press room of the new Unesco building which was opened in Paris on 3 November 1958. In the irregularly shaped space Rietveld laid a linoleum floor with a pattern of coloured fields. The pattern was based on a square of 241.5 x 241.5 centimetres and had lines which ran from the corners to the centre of the opposite sides. Rietveld also had the pattern continued under and on the table tops. This gave the space a clear structure. In order to include the walls in this structure Rietveld finished them in the same material as the chairs: suide. In the narrow part he placed a mirror wall, which suggested a rectangular space. Through these devices Rietveld succeeded in creating tranquillity in the irregular space. For furniture Rietveld designed a big table, a table with a light box in which was fixed a map of the world, typing tables, small tables, a wall cupboard, two bookcases with sliding doors and cupboards for documents. Sketches in the Netherland Architecture Institute show that Rietveld also made a design for an armchair on a revolving base. Ultimately, however, the armchairs he had designed for the World Exhibition of 1958 in Brussels were placed in the room, with the legs of one of the models raised five centimetres (no. 560). For the

typing tables Rietveld selected upright chairs by F. Kramer and J. Penraat. Some of the furniture is now part of the collection of the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts in The Hague.

photo from **brochure** Krommenie 1958

Rietveld 1959.
Küper 1988, 169-180.

544 Design Dutch Pavilion at the World Exhibition
Brussels

1957-1958
not realized

Stand Dutch Textiles Section

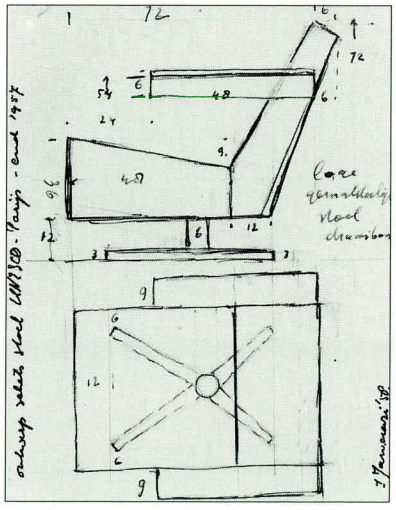
1958
in collaboration with
J. Bons

Design Philips Exhibition Pavilion

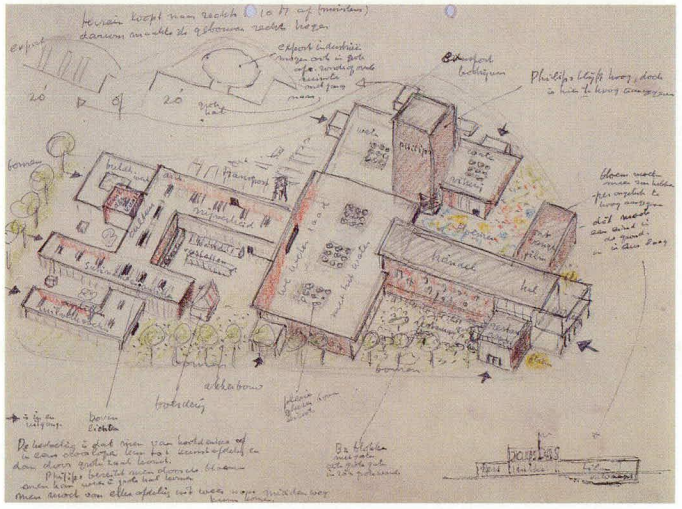
1957-1958
not realized

The national pavilion at the World Exhibition of 1958 in Brussels was designed by the engineer J.W.C. Boks. Rietveld was also asked to make a preliminary design but Boks's plan was ultimately chosen. It was elaborated under the supervision of J.J.P. Oud and in collaboration with Prof J.H. van den Broek, J.B. Bakema and Rietveld.

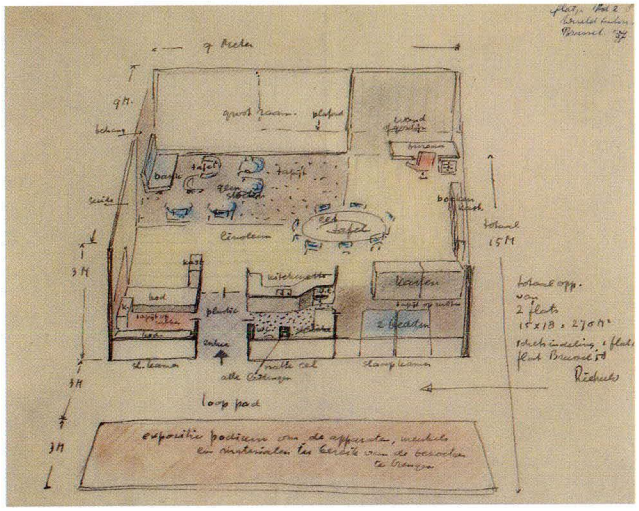
Various other architects and artists were involved in the design of the different sections of the Dutch complex, such as Jan Rietveld, Henk Vriend, Carel Blazer and Karel Appel. Together with Jan Bons, Rietveld was responsible for the textiles section. However, he was not involved in the project as collaborating architect only. Furniture by him was on show in the various sections, some of



Rough draft chair
pencil, ink on paper
16 x 11,5cm
NAi

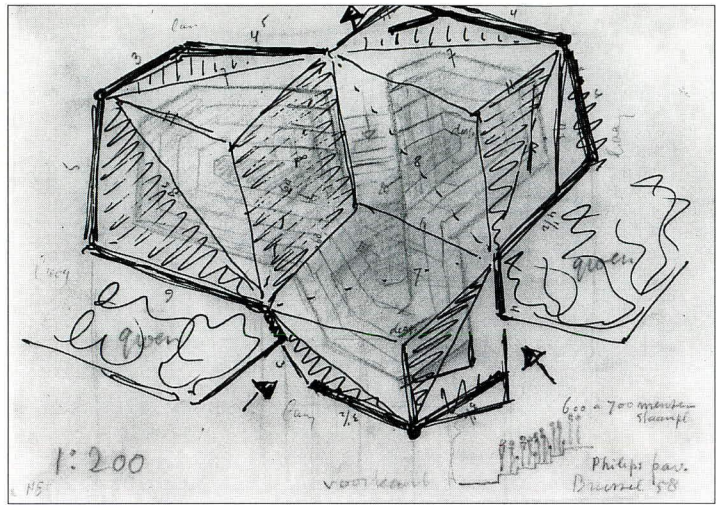


Rough draft Dutch pavilion
crayon, ink on paper
21 x 27cm
NAi

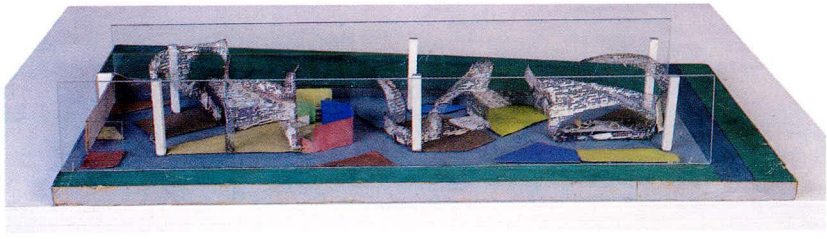


which was designed especially for the exhibition. There was also a model interior to be seen, the 'ideal flat', in which his furniture was placed (nos 559, 560) as well as a mainly plastic prefab unit, containing a kitchen, bathroom and toilet (see no. 509).

Design drawing
'ideal flat'
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
26 x 31cm
NAi



Rough draft Philips pavilion
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
16 x 21.5cm
RSA



The design of the Philips pavilion, which despite being a separate building also belonged to the Dutch entry, was assigned by the Philips engineer L.C. Kalff to Le Corbusier. In 1956 Rietveld was approached to collaborate with Le Corbusier. He would be responsible for the design of the exterior. He made some sketches, but they turned out to be superfluous. Le Corbusier refused to consider sharing the Philips pavilion with another. He is reputed to have said: 'Rietveld, I make an inside, it has not got an outside... it is just like a gullet, they go in and they go out.'[1]

Maquette stand Dutch textiles section
wood, paper, wire gauze, cardboard
9.5 x 59 x 27.5cm
Jan Bons, Amsterdam

545 Desk

The desk was designed for the information stand of the Netherlands' textiles section at the 1958 World Fair in Brussels.

deal, five-plywood, linoleum
72 x 200 x 86.5cm
1958
private collection, Alsemberg (Belgium)

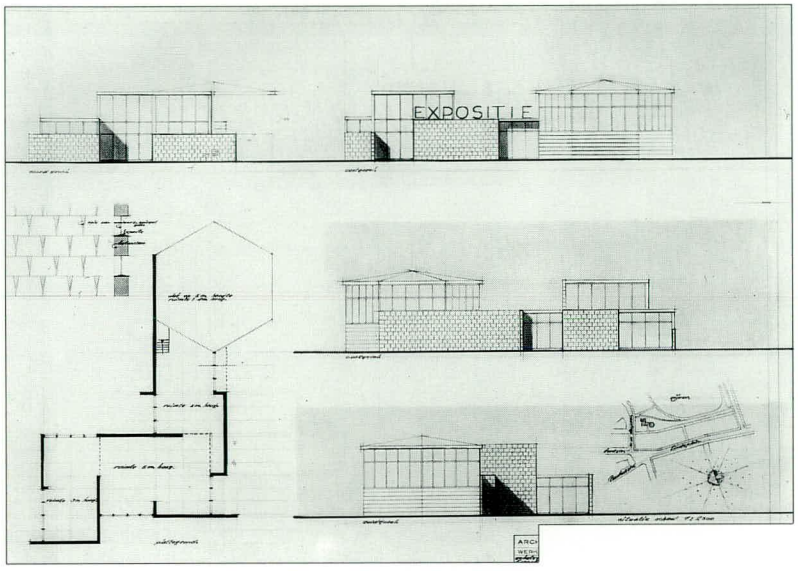
[1] Bibeb 1958.

1958

546 Design exhibition building, public reading room, library and conference room
J.R. de Kampstraat, Brunssum

1957-1958
in collaboration with J. Drummen
not realized

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
50 x 68cm
NAi



547 Design furnishing and colour scheme for DC-7C, DC-8 and Lockheed Electra

1957-1958
client Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij NV
not realized

In 1957 Rietveld was commissioned to design a furnishing and colour scheme for a DC-8 and a Lockheed Electra plane. Two other interior designers were given the same assignment. In October of that year Rietveld was told that 'too little time is available to develop these trial samples so that for purposes of this project we shall have to rely largely on the work of American designers'. In the same letter Rietveld was invited to renovate the interior of the series of Douglas DC-7 planes.[1] In the end none of the designs were executed. They are important examples in Rietveld's oeuvre of his power to use colour to manipulate the form of a given space.

[1] Rietveld Archive NAi.

Rough draft aircraft interior
pencil, paint on paper
35 x 43.5cm
NAi

1958

548 Dwelling Van den Doel
Monnickendammerrijweg 31c,
Ilpendam

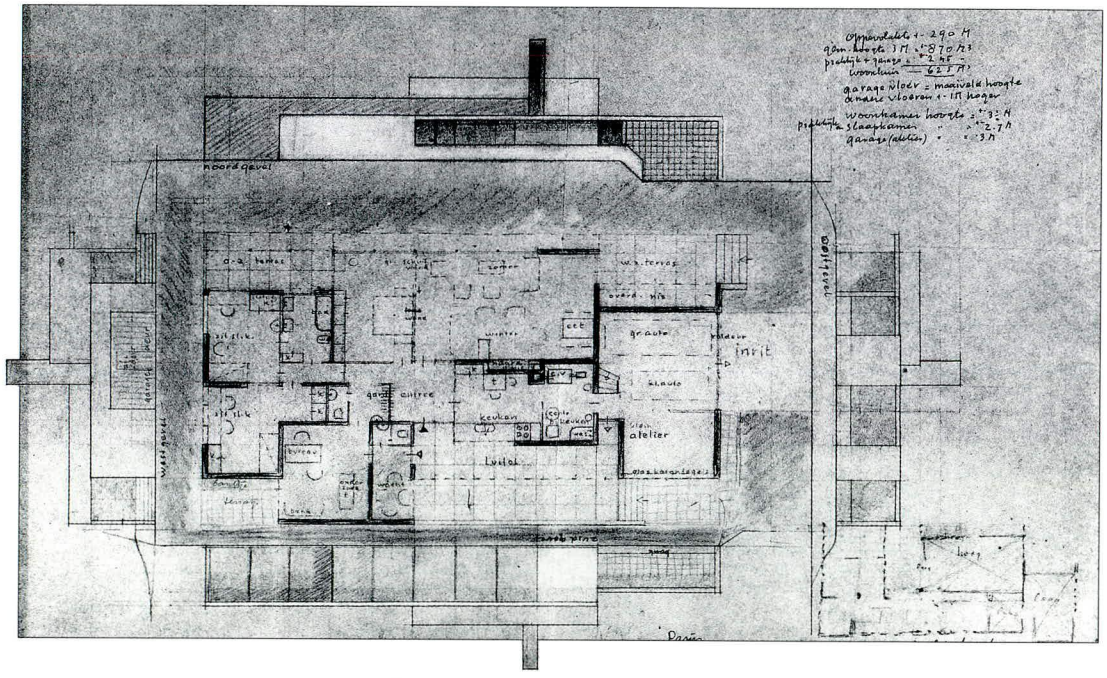
1957-1958
client H. van den Doel

1961
client H. van den Doel
not realized

Design garden house for dwelling Van den Doel

The house which Rietveld designed for the doctor H. van den Doel is one of the high points in his architectural oeuvre. This had not been part of the commission, and that was exactly why, according to Rietveld, it could become so outstanding. 'I have built a house on a plot of polder land, it is a good house, open to the sun and inviting on the road side where the kitchen is. So much real praise and highfalutin language have been devoted to it in the press that I could never have built such a house if my client had demanded this result of me when he gave me the commission. I would have got all het up instead of in a happy-go-lucky way doing what seemed right for the site,' he wrote around 1960 in a draft text for a book on architecture. In a text published in *Bouwkundig Weekblad* in 1960, he was equally pointed and succinct: 'As there are no distracting covering details, all the formal elements interact with the overall architecture; this is the result of years of experimenting.' The harmonious and seemingly simple composition of the house in Ilpendam is best likened to the Rietveld Schröder House (no. 84). In Ilpendam he made use of cubic volumes instead of planes and lines and the colours were inspired by the materials: white, black, blue and green-grey glazed bricks combined with concrete blocks. The concrete blocks were used to construct two low walls placed at right angles to the house and forming as it were an extension of the house and linking it up with its surroundings – with the garden, fields and polder. The north-east elevation is virtually closed; the house opens up to the south where a large glazed wall offers a view over water and meadows. The arrangement of the house, with its drawn-out floor plan, is reflected in the different building volumes. The 3.80 metre-high living room with sleeping corner is located in the black stone block. Bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom are in a lower-lying part of the building. All the rooms are reached via the hall. In Mrs Van den Doel's studio area, Rietveld has rather uncharacteristically made use of glass blocks.

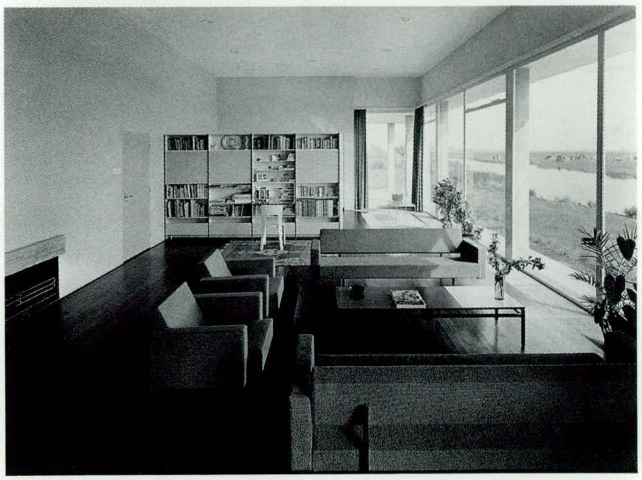
Design drawing
collotype
47 x 55cm
private collection,
L'Estang



1958

1958

photo c. 1958



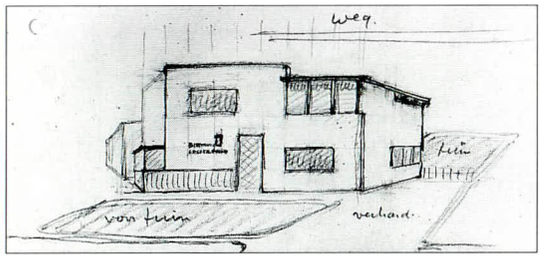
Living room
photo c. 1958

549 **Conversion dwelling Moolenbeek**
Utrechtseweg 326, De Bilt

1958
client C. Moolenbeek

550 **Design dwelling and workshop Rietveld**
Koppeldijk, Abcoude

1958
client E. Rietveld



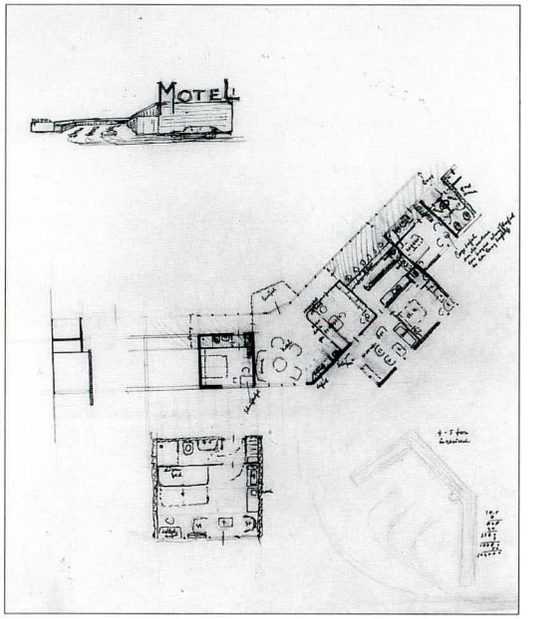
Rough draft
pencil, crayon, ink on paper
24.4 x 21cm
NAi

551 **Conversion dwelling Ten Doesschate**
Lindelaan, Zeist

1958
client J. ten Doesschate

552 **Design motel**
Utrecht

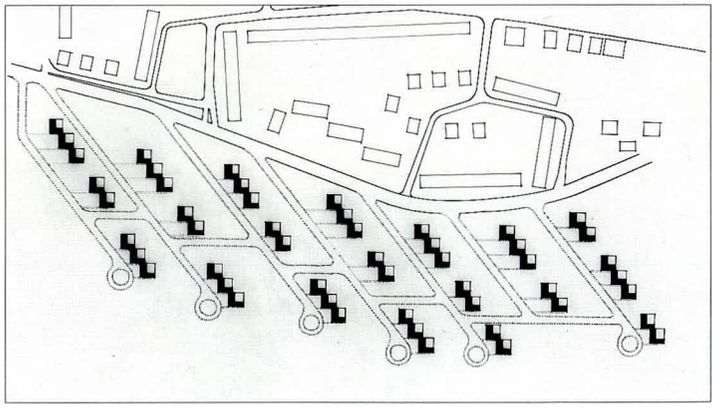
1958
not realized



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
57.2 x 50.4cm
NAi

553 **Design extension plan**
Wijchen

1958
not realized



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
44 x 51cm
NAi

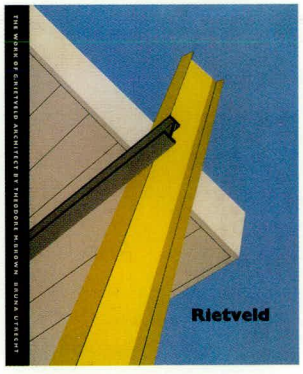
554 **Exhibition poster**
100 Years Ophthalmology

1958

Poster
printed
41.5 x 32.2cm
RSA

555 **Cover thesis Th.M. Brown**

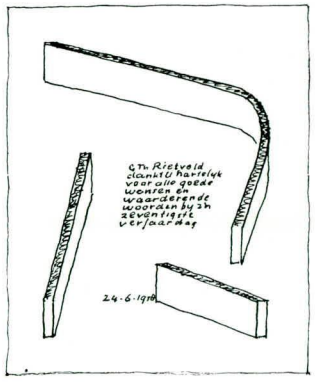
1958



Cover
printed
26 x 21cm
RSA

556 **Thank-you card Rietveld's 70th birthday**

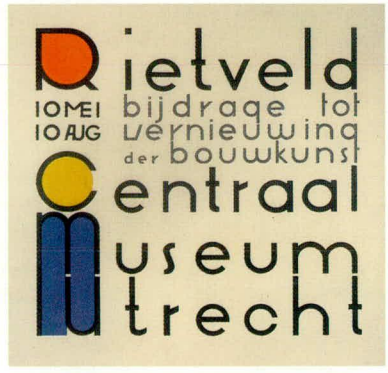
1958



Thank-you card
printed
13.5 x 10.5cm
RSA

557 **Exhibition poster 'Rietveld. Bijdrage tot vernieuwing der bouwkunst'**

1958



Poster
printed
28 x 28cm
RSA

Invitation to exhibition

printed
1958
RSA

558 **Design exhibition 'Rietveld. Bijdrage tot vernieuwing der bouwkunst'**
Centraal Museum
Agnietenstraat 1, Utrecht

1958

1958

559 'Swan' chair, Artifort No. 142

wood, upholstery
1958

Rietveld designed two armchairs for the 'ideal flat' as part of the Netherlands' presentation at the 1958 World Fair in Brussels (no. 544, see also no. 543). Both were produced by the Maastricht firm Artifort and featured briefly in their collection. They had little success with the public. Heavy, entirely upholstered furniture did not become fashionable until several years later. The 'Swan' model is related in form to the knitting chair Rietveld made for Mrs Max in 1953 (no. 461) but differs in the construction method and size of the wooden frame. For practical reasons the front slightly recedes; the chair had no legs so that leg room had to be created in some other way, resulting in the rather bulky form. It is as if Rietveld did not quite know what to do with such voluminous forms, particularly since he rejected the traditional solution of an upholstered back and seat on a thin wooden or metal frame. This heavy chair is hard to reconcile with Rietveld's other work, but its idiosyncratic form stands out from its many dull contemporary counterparts.

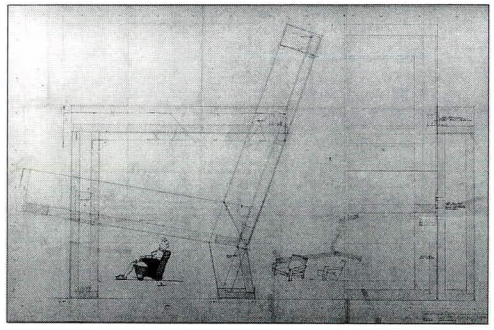
'Swan' chair no. 142
CMU specimen
wood, upholstery
77 x 63 x 90cm
photo c. 1958

560 Artifort chair No. 143

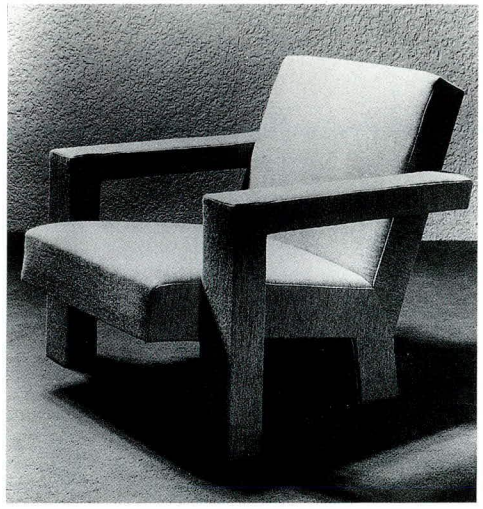
wood, upholstery
1958

One of the two chairs which Rietveld designed for the 1958 World Exhibition in Brussels (no. 544) is directly derived from the 1937 armchair (no. 258). Rietveld makes this connection plain in a sketch on a working drawing in the Artifort Archive. A four-seater variant of this model was produced for the Brussels Expo. Rietveld installed the Artifort chairs, among others, in the Press Room of the Unesco Building (no. 543). For this location he made the legs five centimetres longer. The 1:1 working drawings for Artifort are filed together with a drawing of the Danish chair (no. 399). Possibly Rietveld hoped to be able to sell this design from 1946-1950 to Artifort as well. By all accounts it would seem he was unsuccessful.

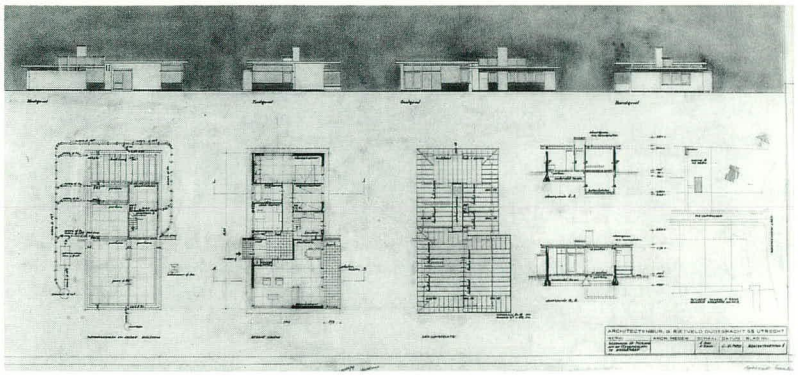
Design drawing
pencil, ink on collotype
88.3 x 138cm
Artifort Archives,
Maastricht



1958



Chair no. 143
CMU specimen
wood, upholstery
74 x 71 x 78cm
photo c. 1958



561 **Design dwelling Nathans**
Wassenaar

1954-1959
client S. Nathans
not realized

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
50.5 x 94cm
NAi

photo 1992

1959

562 **Forty flats**
Toermalijnlaan, Utrecht

A similar apartment building was constructed opposite the block built for the contractors Barreveld & Rijksen NV (no. 539). Here the basement area is entirely used for garages in contrast with the building opposite where the lower level also accommodates bedrooms.

1957-1959
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV, Utrecht
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

563 **52 family dwellings**
Erasmusweg, Jan van Hooftstraat and Van Goghstraat, Reeuwijk

For the Reeuwijk Council Rietveld designed family dwellings, 52 of which were grouped in six blocks. What is special about the houses is that they were placed alternately with the backs and fronts facing. In fact they have no back or front elevation as such. The floor plans are organized in such a way that a hall is superfluous.

1957-1959
client Reeuwijk Town Council
with J.C. Meulenbelt
altered

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
39 x 69cm
NAi

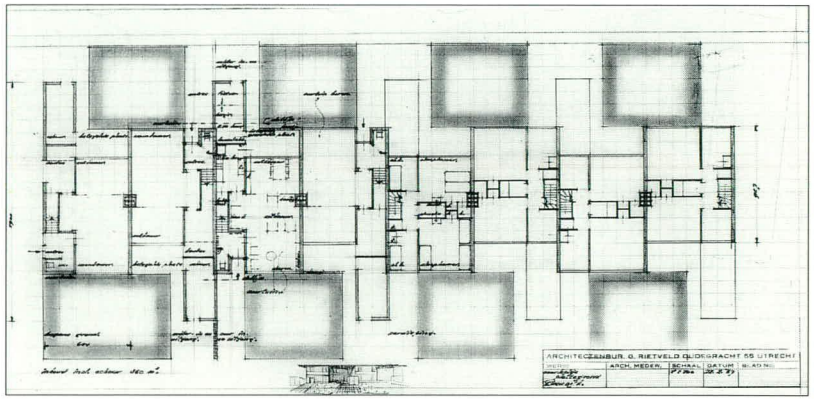
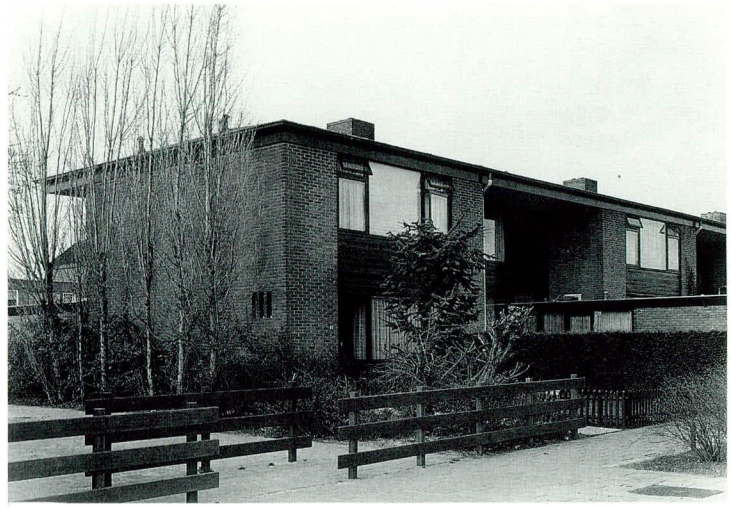


photo 1992



564 **Dwelling Van Laar**
Groenekanseweg 37, De Bilt

1958-1959
client G. van Laar
altered
(see no. 542)

photo 1992

565 **Dwelling Scheffer**
Groenekanseweg 39, De Bilt

1958-1959
client A. Scheffer
altered
(see no. 542)

566 **Garden benches NV Calvé Factory**
Delft

iron, teak
69 x 210 x 55cm
1958-1959
NV Calvé Fabrieken
Delft

Rietveld received the commission for the garden benches via the Art and Business Foundation in Amsterdam. The benches were intended for a garden designed by M. Ruys and were presented by the staff on the occasion of an anniversary of the plant. Rietveld drew three models.
The bench with the back support was realized and is still in use.[1]

[1] Vöge 1992, no. 362.

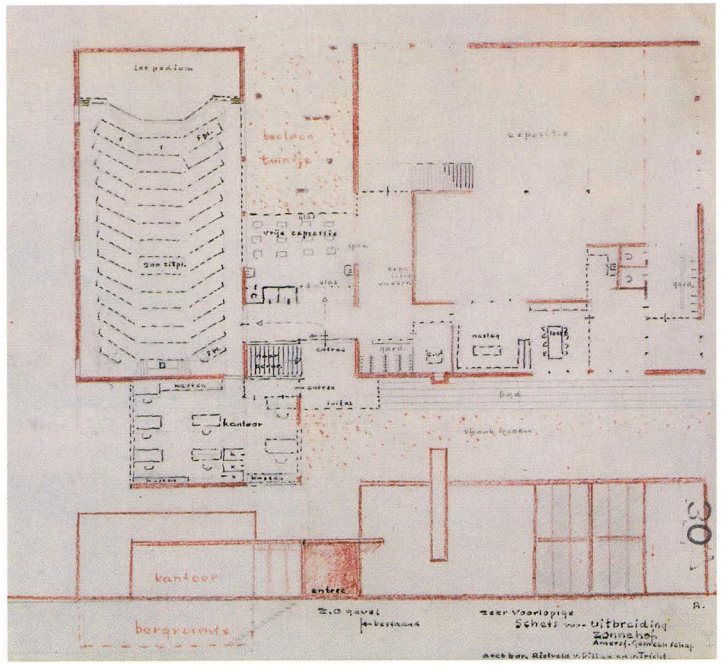
567 **Museum De Zonnehof**
Zonnehof 8, Amersfoort

1958-1959
client Amersfoort Council

The design is based on modules of three by three metres, also the height. The building has a square floor plan. The facades consist of alternating planes of glass and white and blue glazed brickwork. The cavity walls inside are built of calcium-silicate brick. The upper storey takes the form of an open gallery. The roof cladding partly consists of glazed panels which are screened on the inside with a system similar to venetian-blinds giving good top light for displaying sculpture.

In 1963 Rietveld drafted a sketch for an extension to the museum but this was not carried out.

Design drawing
extension De Zonnehof
pencil, ink on transparent paper
39 x 41cm
1963
NAi



1959

1959

photo c. 1959

Interior
photo c. 1959

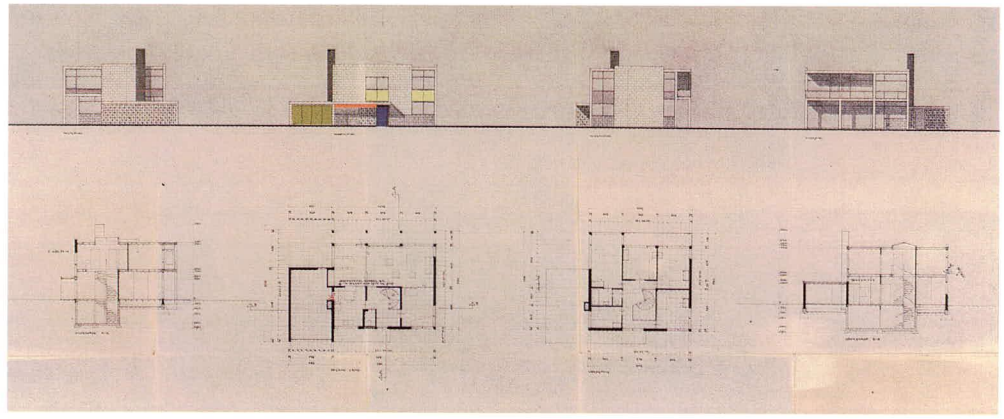
568 **Dwelling Theissing**
Breitnerlaan 11, Utrecht

1958-1959
client E.M. Theissing
with J. van Dillen
altered

The design for a semi-detached house on this site was rejected by the Utrecht Council on the grounds that it failed to comply with the extension plan (no. 511). Two years later a new plan was submitted for a detached house for E. Theissing, who was employed by Bredero's Bouwbedrijf. One of the most salient features of Rietveld's first dwelling in Utrecht, the Rietveld Schröder House (no. 84), was the flexible arrangement of the floor plan. For this last dwelling of his in Utrecht he still worked to the same principle. By removing the sliding partitions, the study, living and dining rooms could be opened up to form a single space. In his first dwelling the separate components (planes and lines) were accentuated with colour. In the Theissing dwelling, Rietveld used material to express this. Different types of building blocks from Bredero's Bouwbedrijf were used to construct the house. Rietveld saw great economic and aesthetic advantages to large-format B-2 concrete blocks over traditional brick, and felt the blocks were labour-saving when used on a large scale. In 1959 Rietveld still displayed the ingenuity he had shown as early as 1924 in devising unconventional solutions. Here he employs the concrete blocks in an unusual and playful manner. For one wall of the house, the blocks are laid on their sides and the openings filled in with glass.

Design drawing
pieces of coloured cardboard on collotype
66 x 99.5cm
RSA

photo c. 1959



1959

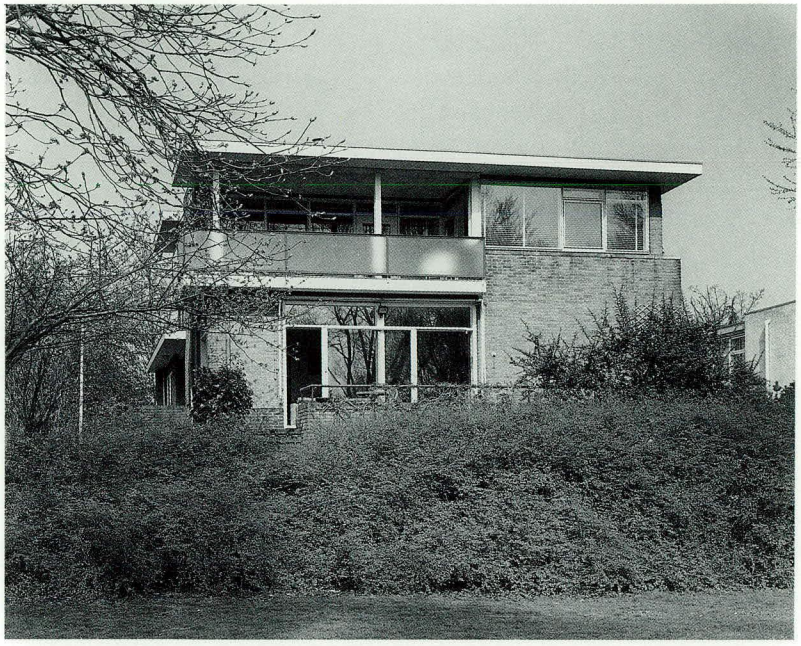
1959

569 Dwelling Muus
Breitnerlaan 9, Utrecht

1958-1959
clients Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV, Utrecht, and H. Muus
with J.C. Meulenbelt and H. Schröder
altered

An application for building permission for this property (no. 510) was first filed in 1956. The plans were for a house and doctor's surgery for an anonymous future owner and occupant. The name of the occupant H. Muus was not disclosed until the second application was made in January 1959, when he was erroneously referred to as Mr Muur. The organization of the dwelling is similar to that of the Theissing house (no. 568) built in the same period.

photo 1992



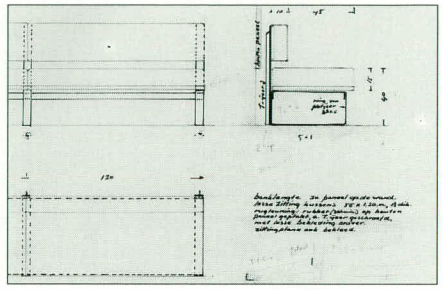
570 New Year's card

paint on paper
9 x 9cm
1959
RSA

571 Design seat Vreeburg Cinema

iron, blockboard, upholstery
1959

The seat was designed when the cinema interior was renovated.

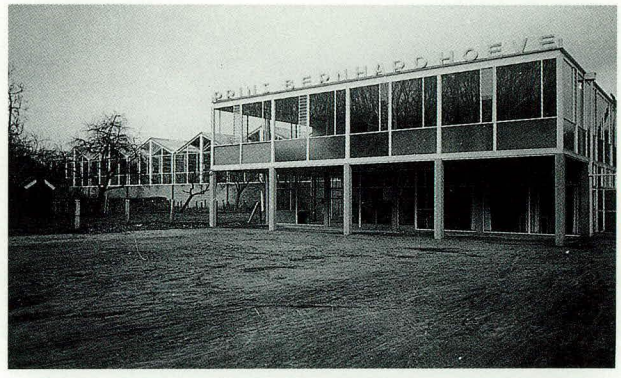


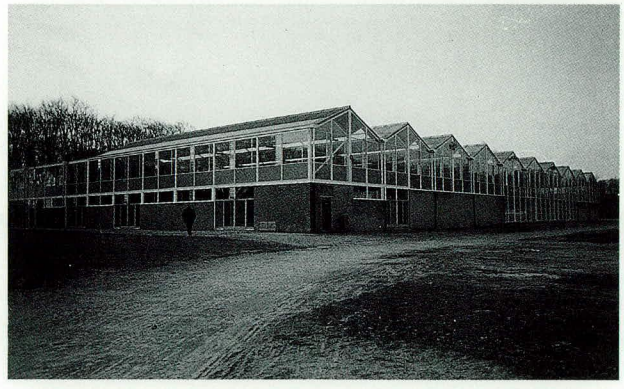
Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
57.2 x 50.4cm
NAi

572 Prins Bernhardhal
Landbouwbeurs, Zuid-Laren

1959
demolished

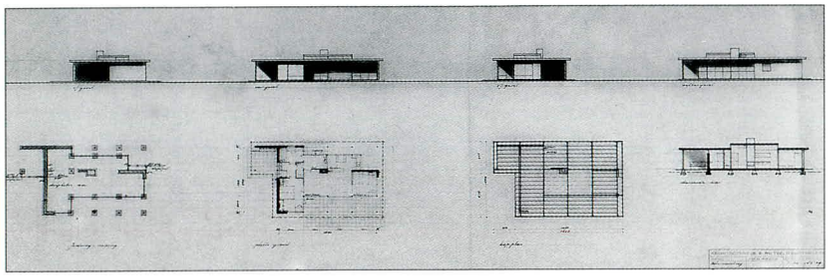
photos c. 1959





573 **Design bungalows, children's playroom, and library**
Schiermonnikoog

1959
in collaboration with
Ooms & Kuyper
Architects
not realized

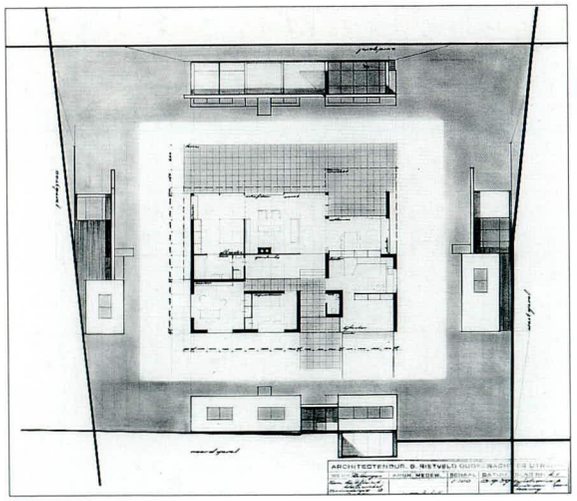


Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
57 x 117cm
NAi

574 **Design dwelling Kalbfleisch**
Monnikensteeg 2, Arnhem

1959

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
52 x 74cm
NAi



575 **Design exhibition stand Veilig Verkeer Nederland**
Utrecht Trade Fair

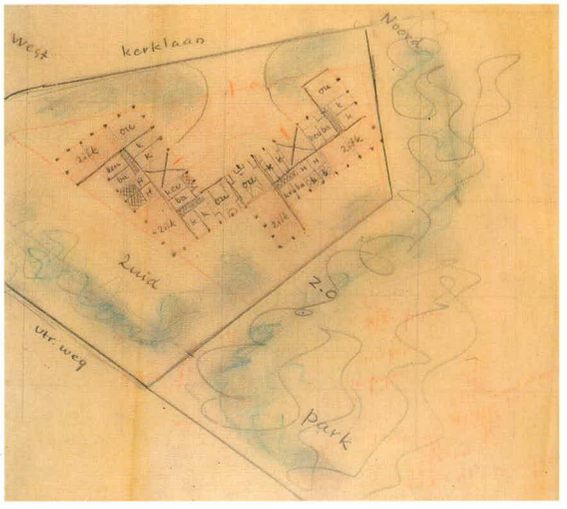
c. 1950-1960

Rough draft
pencil, ink on paper
60 x 32cm
RSA

576 **Design twelve flats**
Corner Kerklaan/
Utrechtseweg, De Bilt

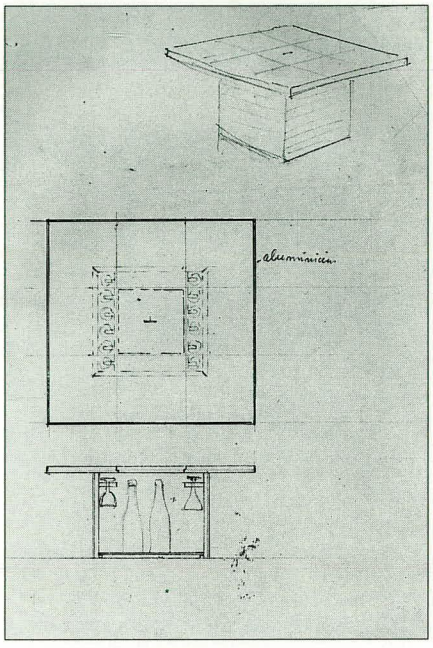
1955-1960

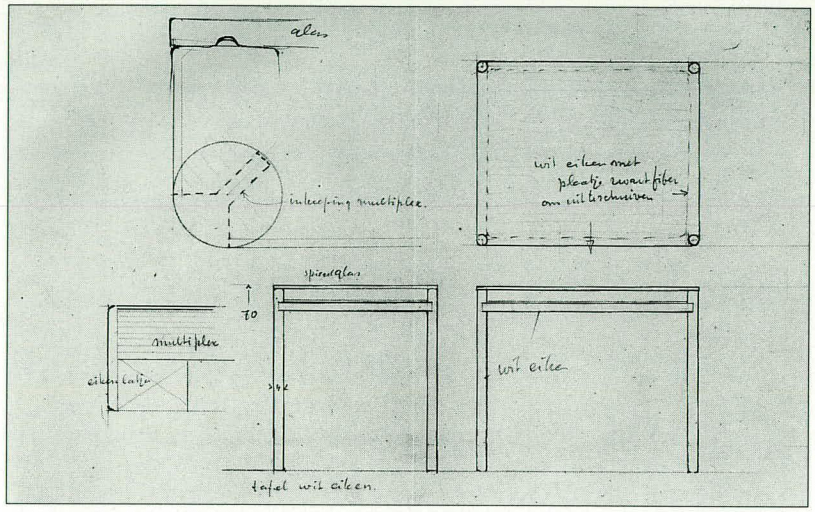
Rough draft
pencil, crayon on
transparent paper
31 x 31.8cm
RSA

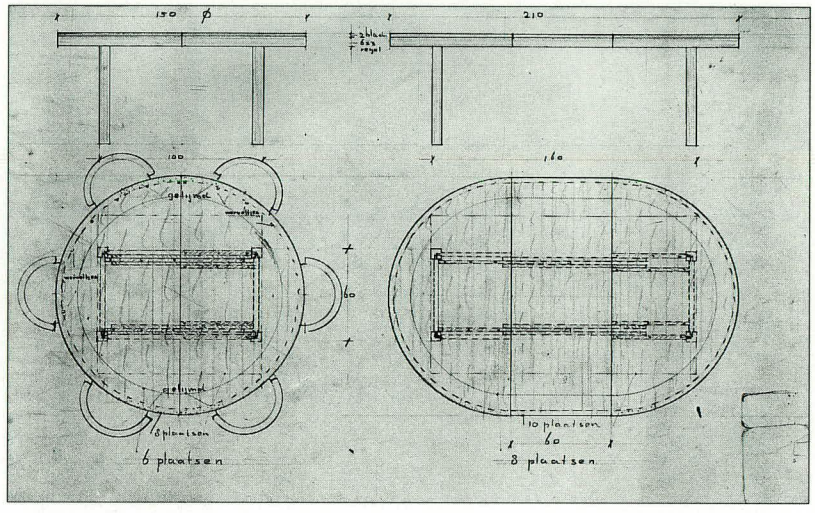


577 Designs tables

c. 1930-1960







Design drawing
bar table
pencil on paper
50 x 23.8cm
NAi

Design drawing
small table
pencil on paper
21.5 x 27.4cm
NAi

Design drawing
extension table
pencil, crayon on paper
32.5 x 52cm
NAi

In the Rietveld Schröder Archive and the Netherlands Architecture Institute there are numerous designs for tables. The form is generally so elementary that they have to be dated according to other characteristics of the drawing: the paper, stamps and handwriting. Undoubtedly, many of these designs were realized for private clients, but they are now untraceable.

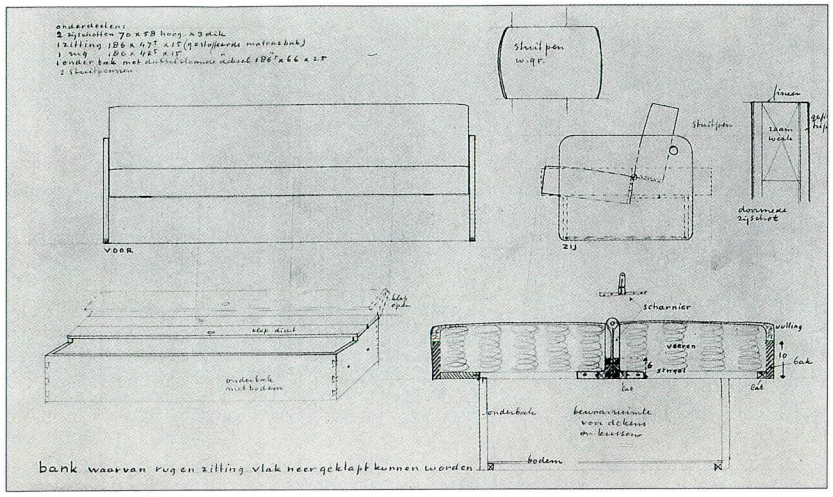
1930

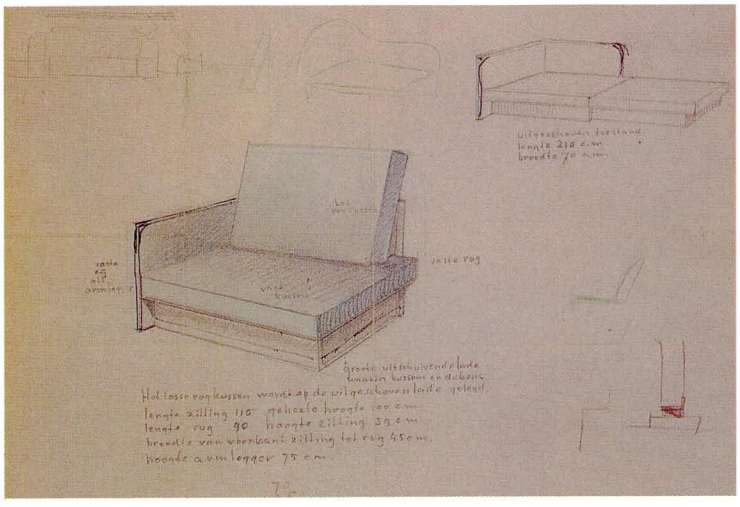
578 Design logo UKR

pencil, paint on paper
20 x 20cm
c. 1950-1960
RSA

579 Letterhead Truus Schräder-Schröder

c. 1955-1960

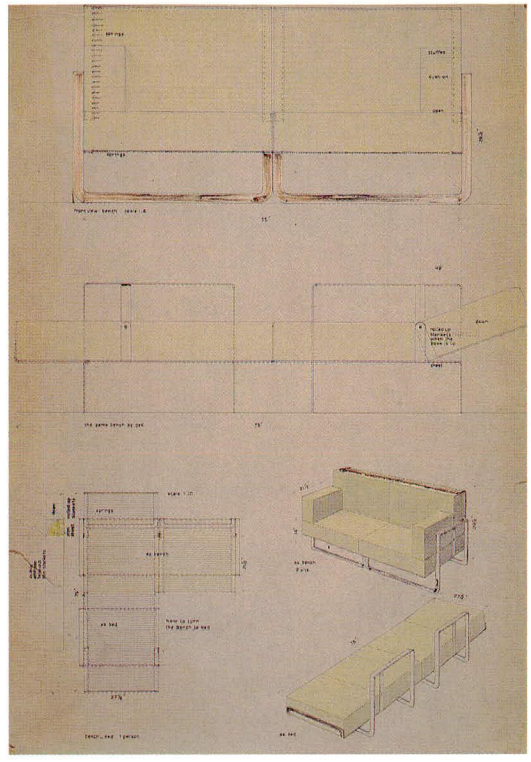




580 Designs sofas and sofa-beds

c. 1930-1960

In the Rietveld Schröder Archive and the Netherlands Architecture Institute there are numerous designs for sofas, which usually could also be converted into a bed. It is difficult to date these pieces of furniture, which are generally upholstered and have rectangular cushions. Using characteristics of the drawing, the paper, stamps and handwriting, a period may sometimes be ascertained. Undoubtedly, many of these designs were realized for private clients, but they are now untraceable.



Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
32 x 49.7cm
NAi

Design drawing
pencil, crayon on paper
32.5 x 36cm
NAi

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink, watercolour on paper
76.5 x 52cm
NAi

581 64 family dwellings and garage block

Turkooislaan, Opaalweg, Robijnlaan, Saffierlaan and Kornalijnlaan, Utrecht

1957-1960
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV, Utrecht
with J.B. van Grunsven
altered

582 92 family dwellings

Groen van Prinstererlaan, Kamerlingh Onnesstraat, Boerhaavestraat, Jan van Hooftstraat and Van Goghstraat, Reeuwijk

1958-1960
client NV Coördinatiebouw/NV Bouw- en Aannemingsmaatschappij Bakhuizen, Hilversum
altered

The dwellings are located in the same neighbourhood as the 'alternate back and front' dwellings (no. 563) which Rietveld had built shortly before in Reeuwijk and are of the same type as the dwellings in the Utrecht neighbourhood of Transwijk (no. 587).

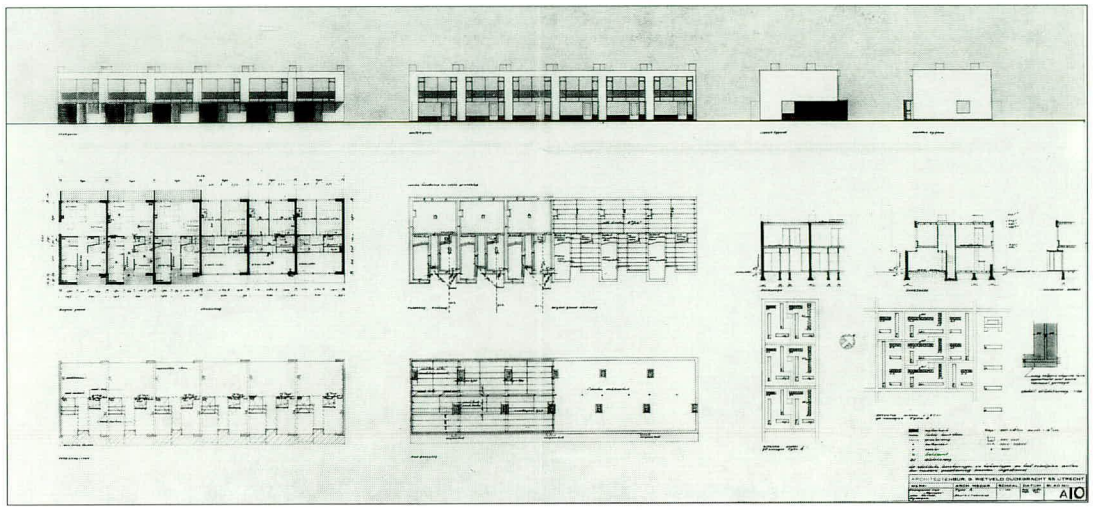
583 Design extension plan Hatert neighbourhood
Nijmegen

1958-1960
client Nijmegen Council
in collaboration with G. Holt, W. Verschoor and A. Bodon
not realized

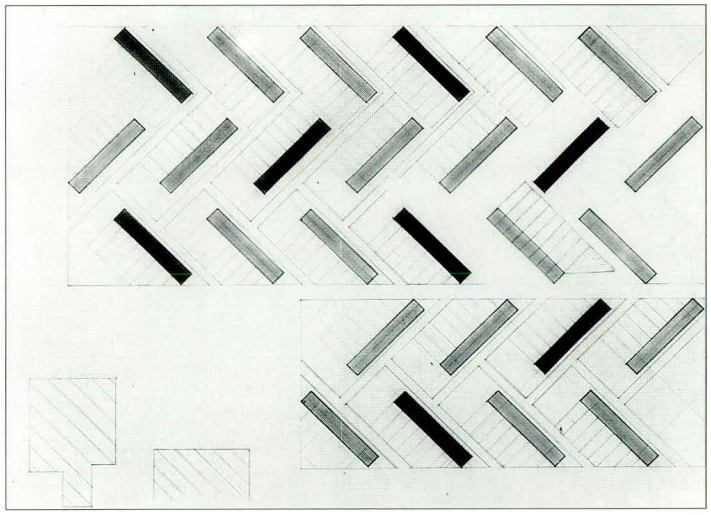
Design family dwellings Hatert neighbourhood

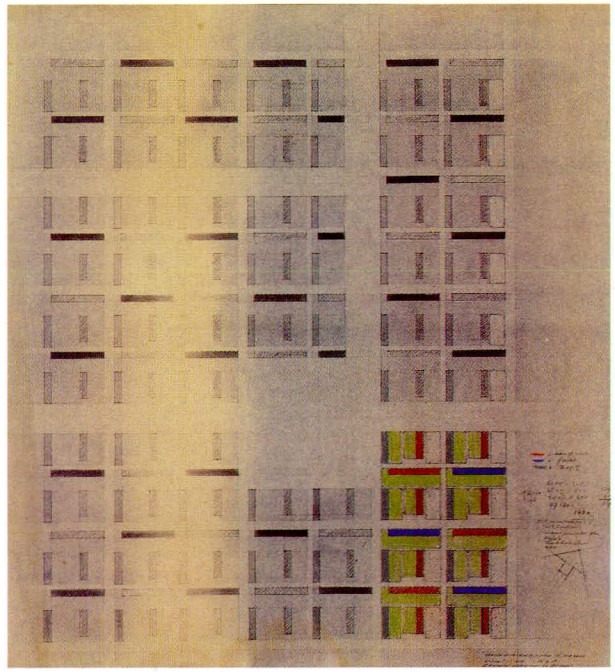
1958-1961
client
Woningbouwvereniging Nijmegen
in collaboration with
G. Holt
not realized

The plan was to construct approximately 3300 dwellings and various public buildings in Hatert on an area covering 126 hectares. Different types of subsidized private housing and social housing, family dwellings as well as flats, were to be built, including the type of dwelling that Rietveld had constructed in Reeuwijk (no. 582). As usual, Rietveld made various studies for the urban development plan of the area. When, several years later, still no agreement had been reached between the architects and the client on the urban development plan, Rietveld withdrew from the project.



1960





Design drawing family dwellings
ink on transparent paper
67 x 125cm
1961
NAi

Design drawing
extension plan
pencil, ink on transparent paper
57.5 x 80cm
NAi

Design drawing
extension plan
crayon on collotype
84 x 73.5cm
1958
NAi

584 **Dwelling Koot**
Ruychrocklaan 244,
The Hague

1958-1960
client B. Koot
with J.B. Grunsven

room and kitchen is glazed from floor to ceiling with matt and clear glass. Using only light and proportions, Rietveld succeeds in creating an ingenious architectural solution. Dora Mees designed the kitchen in Van Dantzig's house.

Rough draft
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
24.6 x 33.8cm
NAi

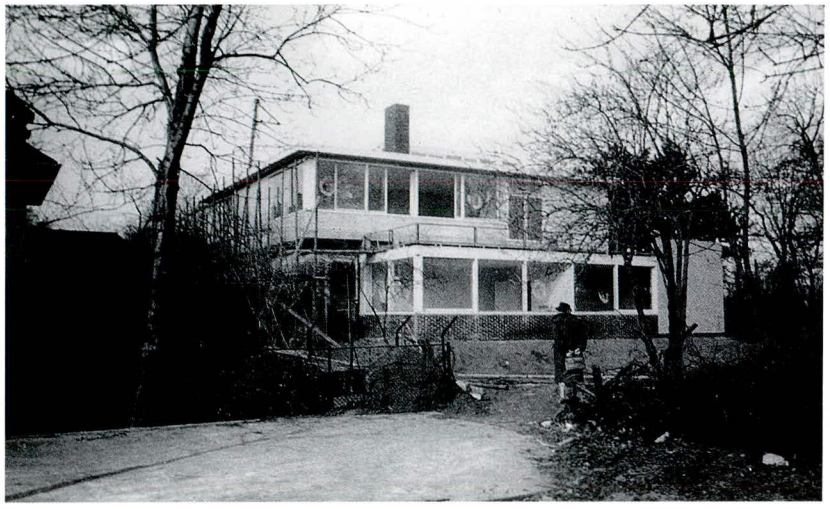
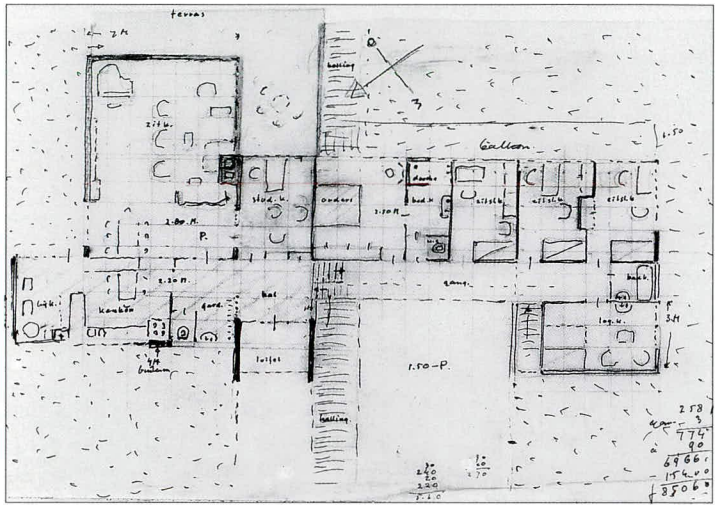


photo c. 1960



1960

585 **Dwelling Van Dantzig**
Harddraverslaan 60,
Santpoort

1959-1960
client H.M. van Dantzig
with J.C. Meulenbelt

Mrs Van Dantzig is a daughter of Mr and Mrs Mees (see no. 246). Her sister, Dora Mees, had worked for Rietveld for a short time in the late 1930s. Consequently it was not strange that the Van Dantzigs chose Rietveld as their architect. Rietveld's design for the Van Dantzig dwelling fully exploits the building site's differences in level. The dwelling has two floors at the site's lowest point while the living room, which has no upper storey, is situated at a higher level. In the hall Rietveld demonstrates his ability to translate ideas into architecture. The hall and adjoining outside entrance passage are linked by a low tunnel-like porch, half of which projects into the hall, the other half into the outdoor passage. The corner of the hall with the doors to the living

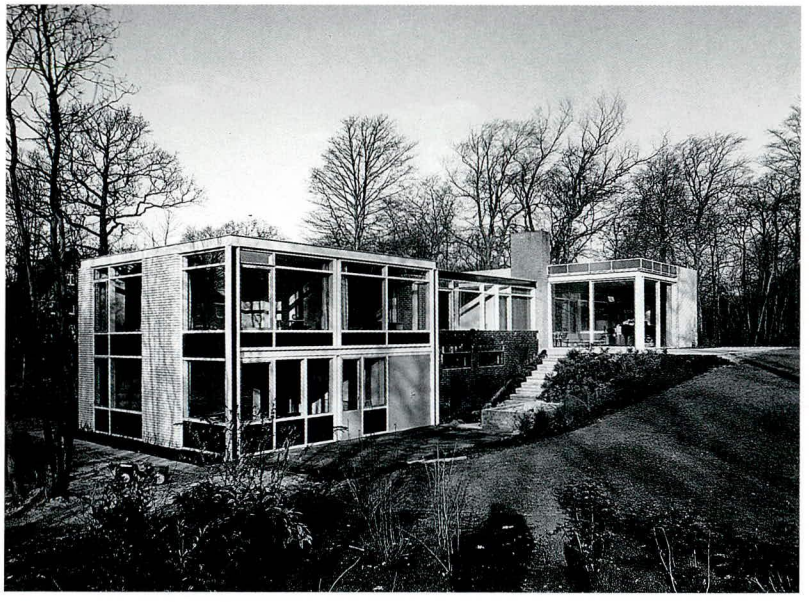
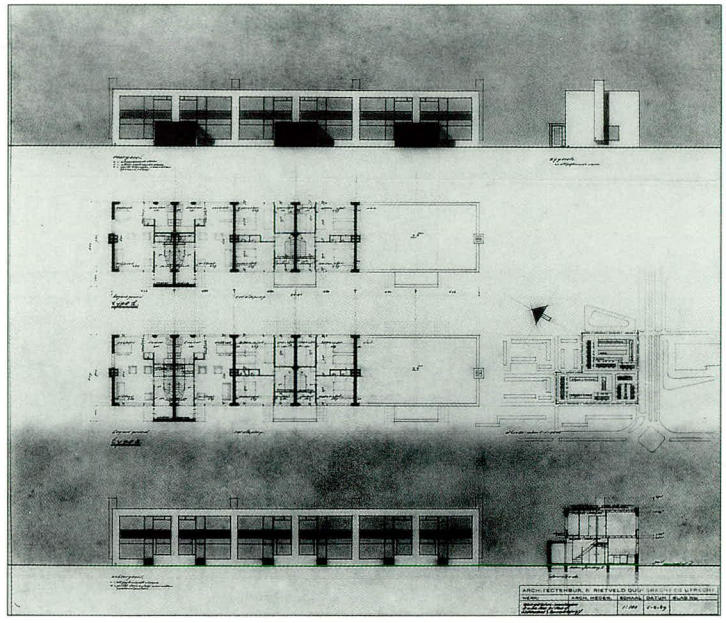


photo c. 1960

586 **Dwelling Freeman**
Bachlaan 7, Voorschoten

1959-1960
client R.R. Freeman
with J.C. Meulenbelt
altered

photo c. 1992



587 **Family dwellings, flats and two doctor's houses Transwijk neighbourhood**
Struyckenlaan, Eysingalaan, Vollenhovenlaan, Koningin Wilhelminalaan, De Louterlaan and Asserlaan, Utrecht

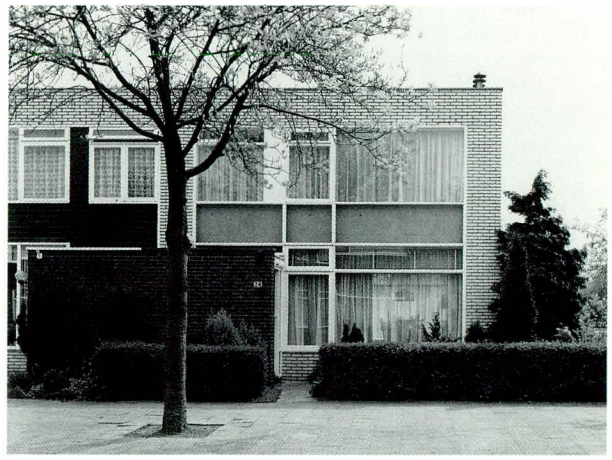
1959-1960
client Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV, Utrecht
altered

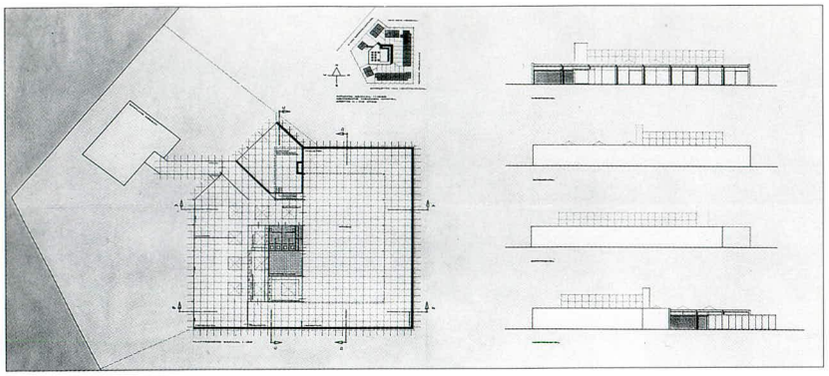
1960

The same type of dwellings were constructed at much the same time in the Transwijk neighbourhood of Utrecht, and in Reeuwijk (no. 582). Red and purple brick was used to vary the colour of the facades in Reeuwijk; white, black and blue glazed brick in Utrecht. The latter scheme conformed with Rietveld's original concept. Besides the family dwellings, the flats in Transwijk were also built in this brick. The flats are more luxurious than those Rietveld had built in the Hoograven and Tolsteeg neighbourhoods (nos 512 and 540). They were advertised as luxury flats in a brochure issued by Wildschut's Bouwbedrijf NV, 'one of the most beautiful creations of their sort, by one of our greatest builders, the architect and artist G. Rietveld'. The flats were accordingly provided with luxury facilities, including a sun terrace, internal telephone, service lift, fluorescent switches, and 'movable partitions'. Despite the pride with which Wildschut promoted their dwellings, the facilities had already been incorporated by Rietveld in his dwellings thirty years earlier (see nos 84 and 163).

Design drawing family dwellings
pencil, ink on transparent paper
71 x 101cm
1959
NAi

Flats and family dwellings
photos 1992





588 Design film studio NV Anglo-Dutch Group
W. van Borsselenweg, Nieuwer-Amstel

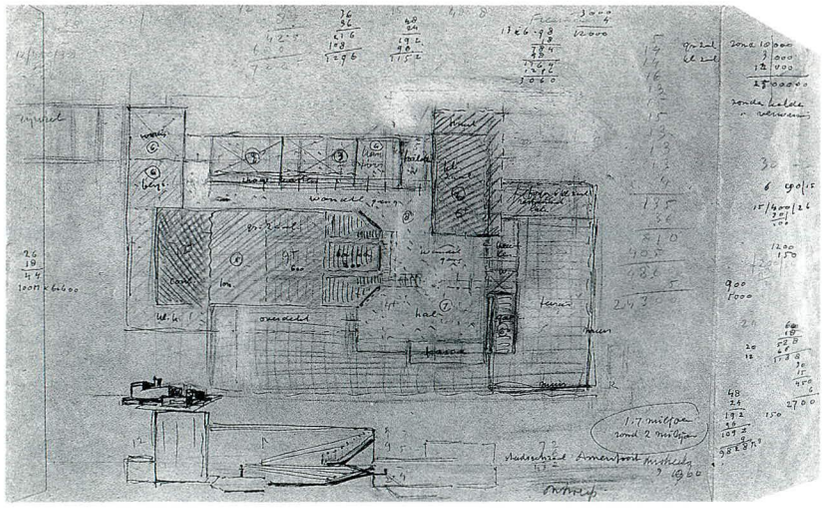
1959-1960
co-designer J. van Tricht

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
67 x 128cm
NAi

589 Design municipal auditorium
Amersfoort

1959-1960
co-designer J. van Tricht
not realized

Rough draft
pencil, ink on paper
23 x 31cm
RSA

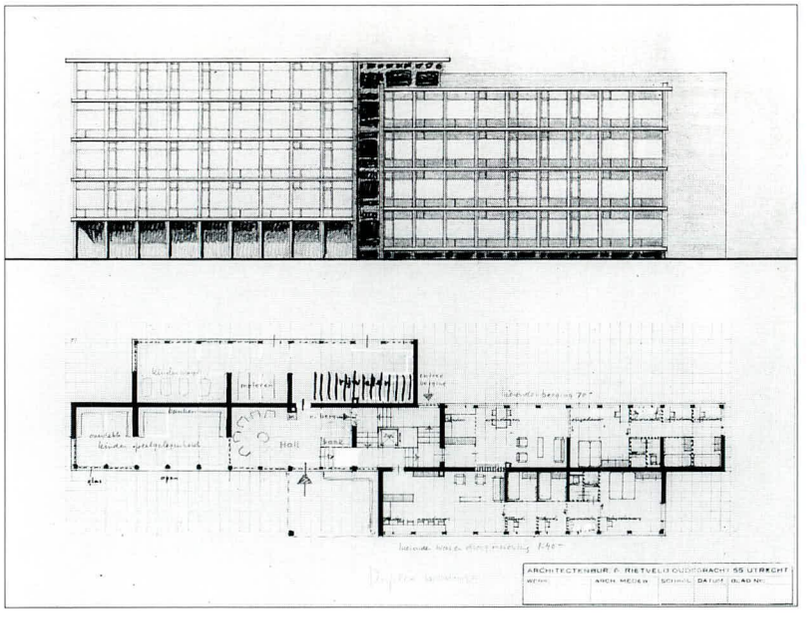


590 Design six dwellings and 'duplex' flats
Monnikensteeg, Arnhem

1959-1960
client Rietbergen Company

The Public Works department of the Arnhem Town Council objected to the six bungalows because Rietveld's plan extended beyond the building strip, and the entrances to two of the houses were situated on a green strip owned by the council, which was against the law. An unusual design that was possibly made for the Rietbergen company, shows an apartment building consisting of four vertical building volumes, the floors of which are staggered in relation to those of the adjoining volume. The staircase, which spirals through the building, successively links up the individual dwellings. The flats have an elongated floor plan. The idea of these so-called 'duplex' dwellings was to convert two adjacent flats into one – once the housing shortage had eased – by knocking down the dividing wall and adding steps to accommodate the difference in level.

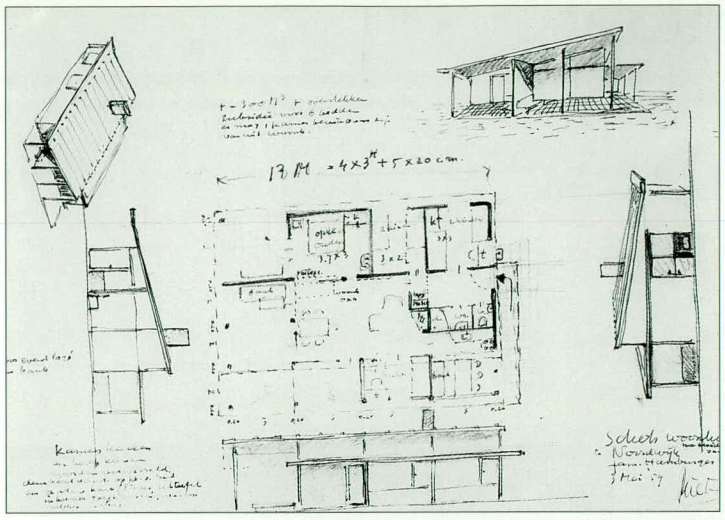
Design drawing duplex flats
pencil, crayon, paint, chalk on collotype
47.5 x 58cm
NAi



591 Summerhouse Hamburger
Ligusterweg 8, Noordwijk

1959-1960
client J.A. Hamburger
with J.C. Meulenbelt

Rietveld had originally made a design for a summerhouse with a flat roof of the type planned for Schiermonnikoog (no. 573). On this occasion, however, he abandoned the design in favour of a bungalow with a pent roof and a large porch. Windows have been let in between the ridge and the lower-lying porch. The roof is made of zinc at the request of his client who had a zinc plating works. The two bedrooms at the front are situated on a slightly lower level than the rest of the house, allowing space for a storage room between the bedroom ceiling and the pent roof. A wall of upturned large-format B-2 concrete blocks built at right angles to the house screens off the sun terrace outside the living room from the back garden. In 1963 Rietveld designed a scullery extension for the house, but this was not realized.



Rough draft
pencil, ink on transparent paper
27 x 39.5cm
NAi

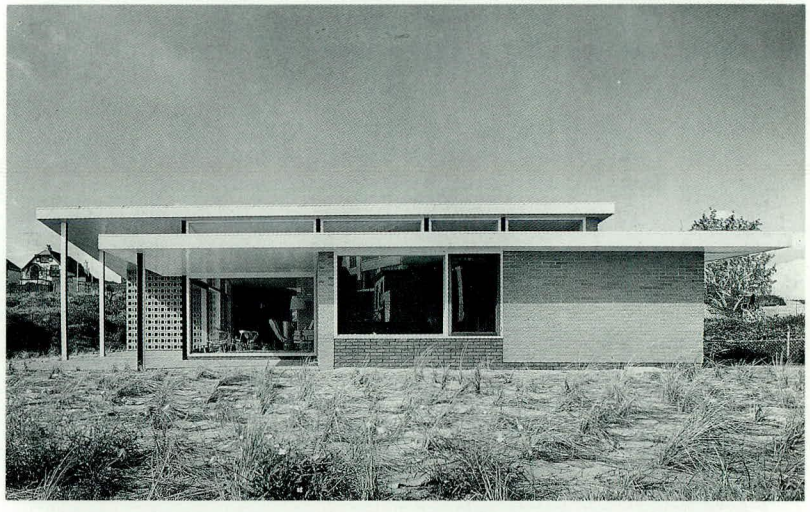


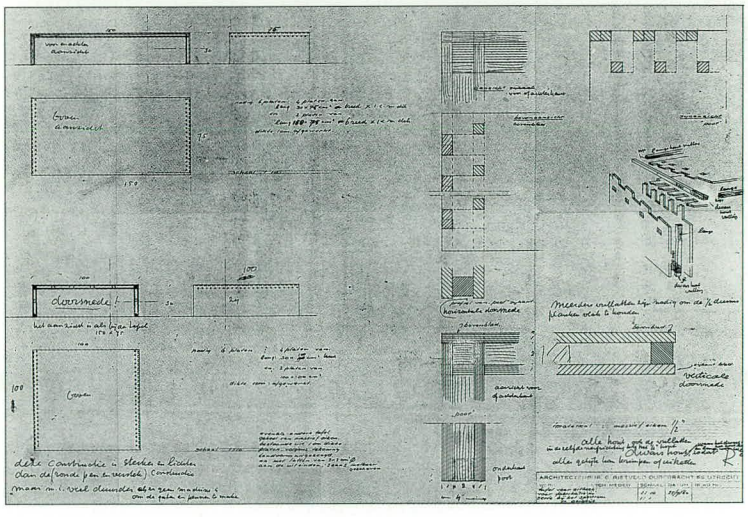
photo c. 1960

1960

592 Design table

oak
1960

Rietveld made this design for the furniture factory 't Spectrum. The table was not produced.

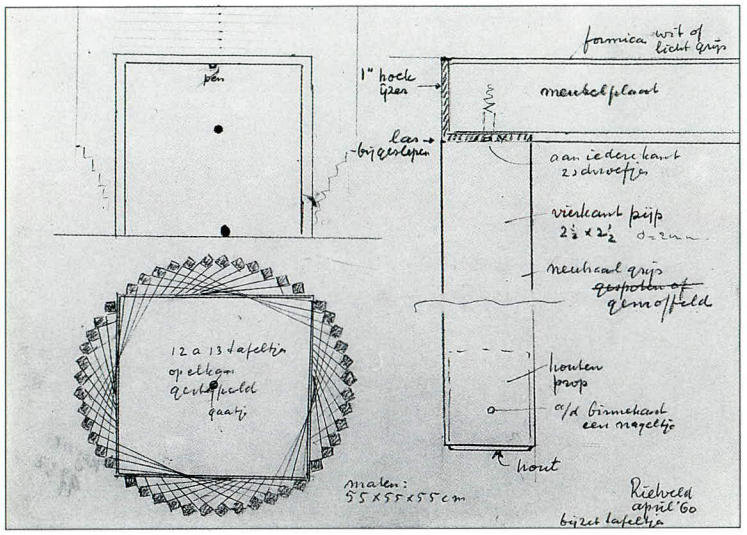


Design drawing
collotype
51.8 x 72.5cm
RSA

593 Design side tables

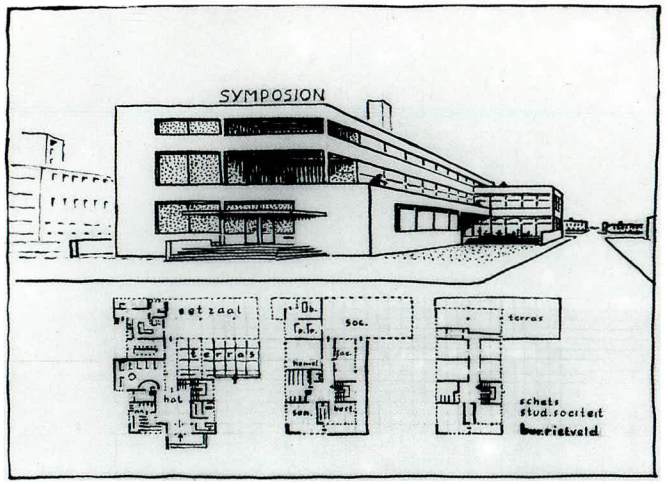
metal, blockboard, Formica
1960

Design drawing
pencil on paper
58 x 49.5cm
NAi



594 Design student fraternity building Unitas
Notenboomlaan, Utrecht

1960
client
Studentenvereniging Unitas
not realized



Rough draft
pencil, ink on transparent paper
52 x 62cm
NAi

595 Design conversion dwelling Ten Doesschate
Catharijnesingel 53, Utrecht

1960
client G. ten Doesschate

596 Design library extension
Meppel

1960

597 Interior Kloosterman
Stadionflat, Utrecht

1960

1960

598 **Design exhibition 'De Stijl 1917-1930'**
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome

1960

Exhibition poster

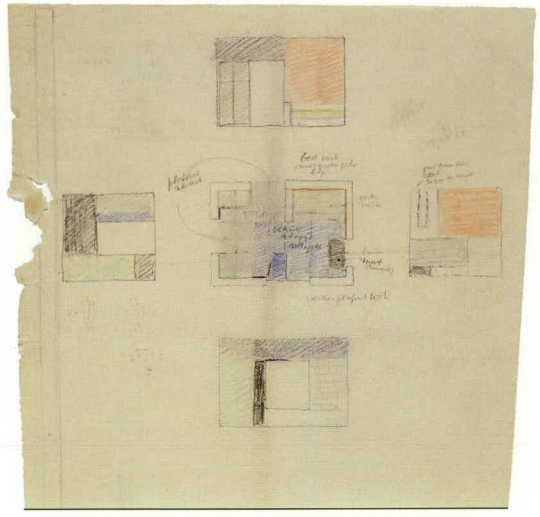
Design drawing
paint on paper
72 x 72cm
RSA

599 **Design New Year's card**

pencil, ink on paper
9 x 12cm
1960
RSA

600 **Design interior girl's room**
Pater Euwensweg 34, Willemstad, Curaçao

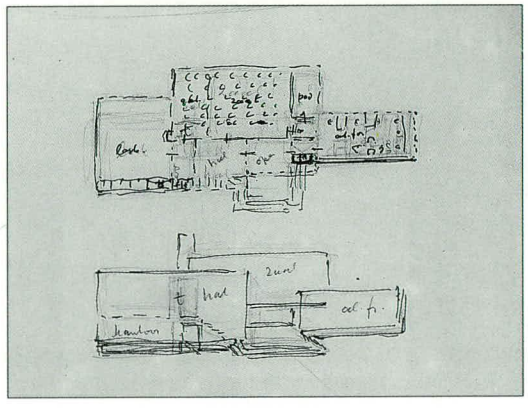
1960
client C. Engels
not realized



Design drawing
crayon on transparent paper
52 x 37.5cm
NAi

601 **Design French Cultural Centre**
Rotterdam

c. 1960
not realized



Design drawing
pencil, ink on paper
20.5 x 27cm
NAi

1960

602 Design chair

c. 1950-1960

On the reverse of a blueprint for Max's house (no. 435) Rietveld drew various designs for chairs. This model resembles the Breuer chair that Rietveld placed in the interior at Tintorettostraat (no. 260).

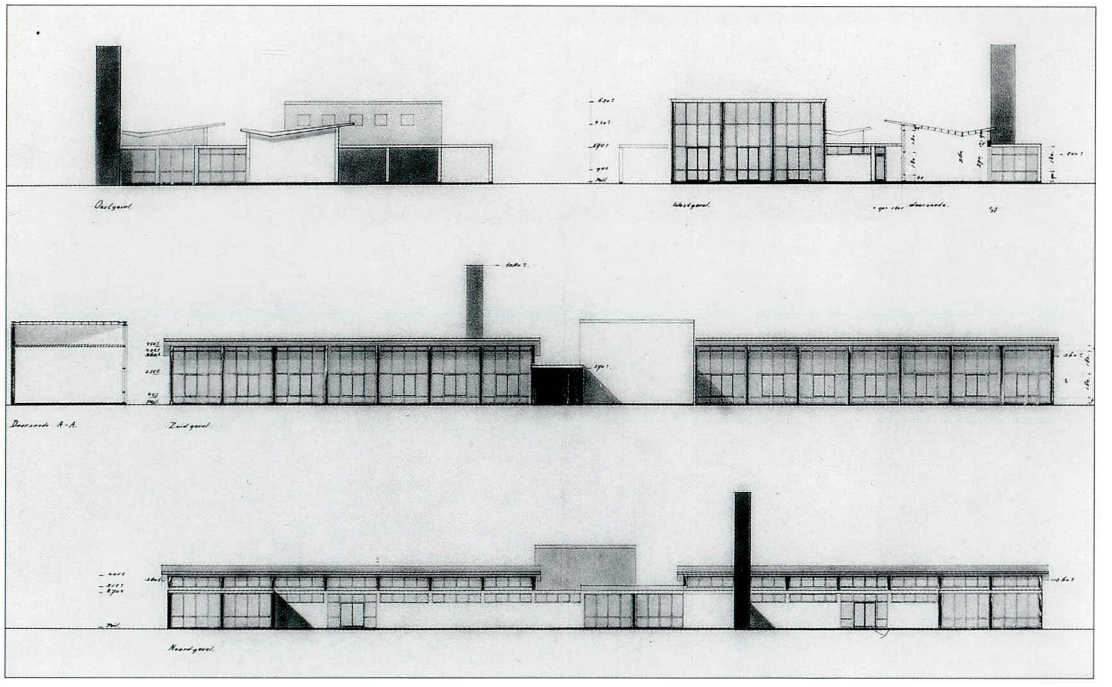
Rough draft, detail
crayon, ink on paper
61 x 85cm
NAi

603 Design cinema
Vredenburg, Utrecht

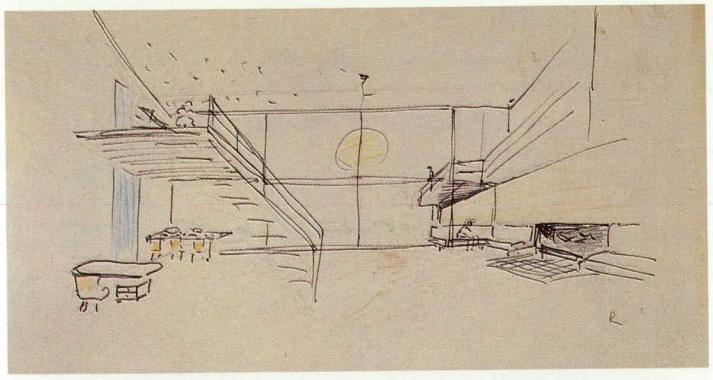
1950-1961

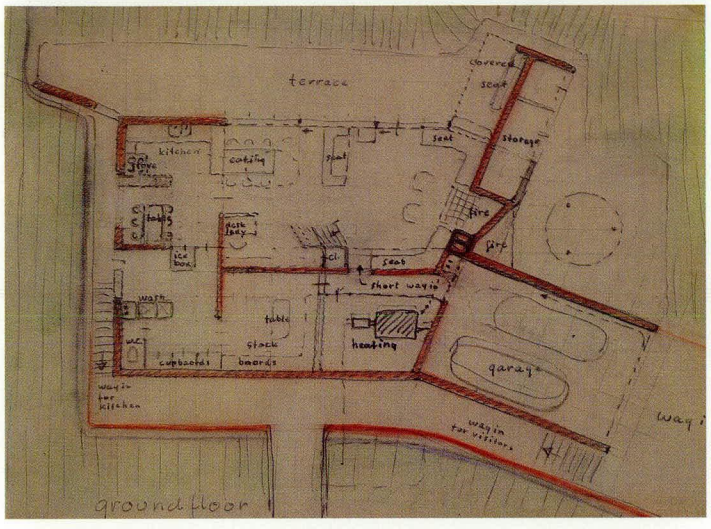
604 Design school for children with learning disabilities
's-Hertogenbosch

1956-1961
in collaboration with
H. and P. de Graaf



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
62.5 x 99.5cm
1956
NAi





1961

605 Dwelling Parkhurst
Becker Road, Oberlin, Ohio

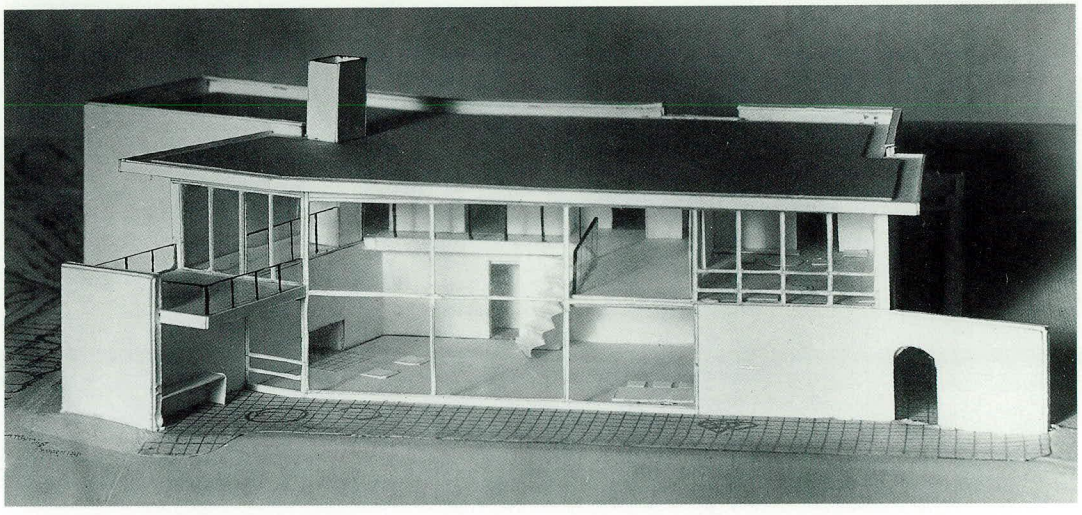
Professor Charles Parkhurst was attached to the Art History Department of the University of Utrecht as a visiting lecturer in 1956 and 1957. Via Theodore M. Brown, another American, who was working on a thesis about Rietveld at the time (see no. 555), he came into contact with the architect. Parkhurst asked Rietveld to design a dwelling for him, which he wanted to have built in Oberlin in the United States. The design was realized after it had been adapted by a local architect.

1957-1961
client C. Parkhurst
design adapted and realized by the architect Vishnapuu

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
19 x 27cm
NAi

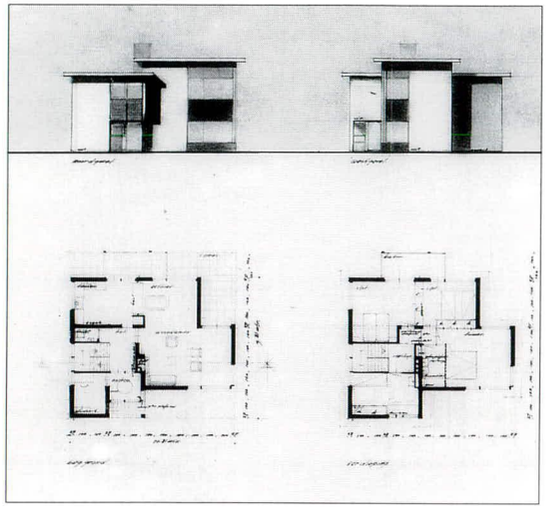
Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
22.5 x 29cm
NAi

Maquette
paper, glass
11.8 x 41 x 34.5cm
CMU



606 **Dwelling Karssiens/Mulder**
Hofdijck 40, Oegstgeest

1958-1961
clients A.H. Karssiens and subsequently Mulder
with J.C. Meulenbelt
altered



Design drawing, detail
pencil, ink on transparent paper
56.5 x 106.5cm
NAi

607 **Four dwellings**
Hertog van Gelrestraat 26-29, Rozendaal

1958-1961
client NV Bouw- en Aannemingsbedrijf Bakhuizen
with J.C. Meulenbelt
altered

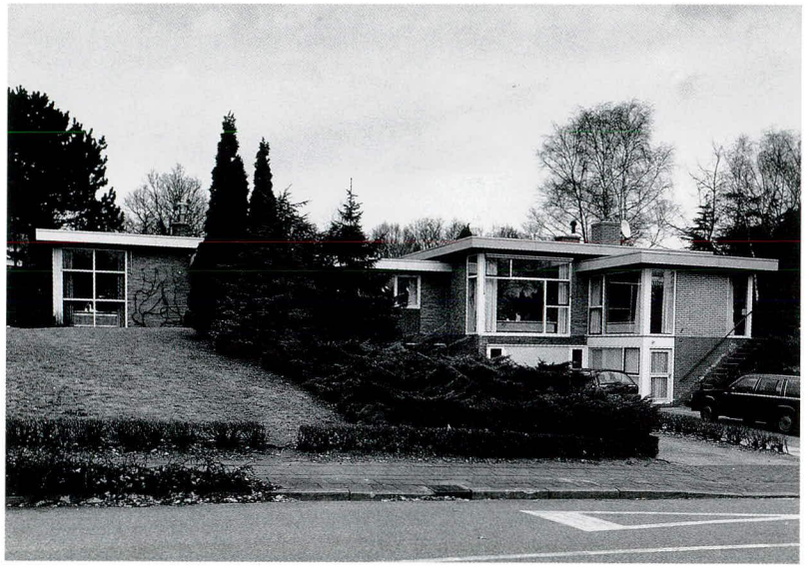
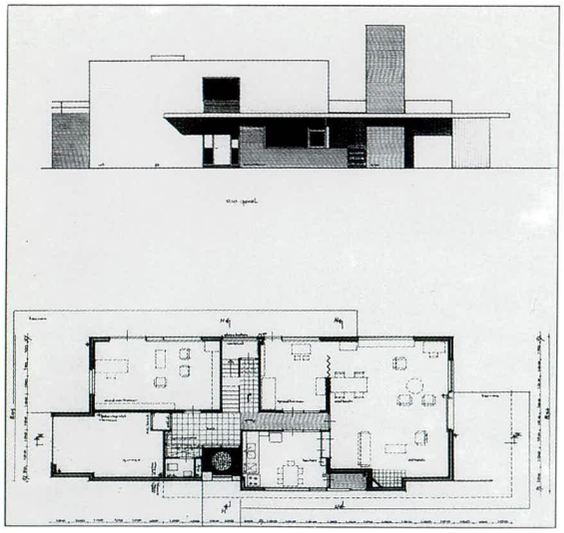


photo 1991

608 **Dwelling Erdman**
Kievietslaan 34, Wassenaar

1959-1961
client P. Erdman
co-designer J. van Dillen
altered, converted in 1966 by Hein Salomonson



Design drawing, detail
ink on transparent paper
84.5 x 115cm
NAi

photo 1992

1961

609 **Dwelling Schmidt**
Wagnerlaan 21, Bilthoven

1960-1961
client G. Schmidt
co-designer J. van Dillen

611 **Summerhouse Kramer**
Mr. P.C. Hennequinlaan 12, Cadzand

1960-1961
client G. Kramer
co-designer J. van Dillen
altered

1961

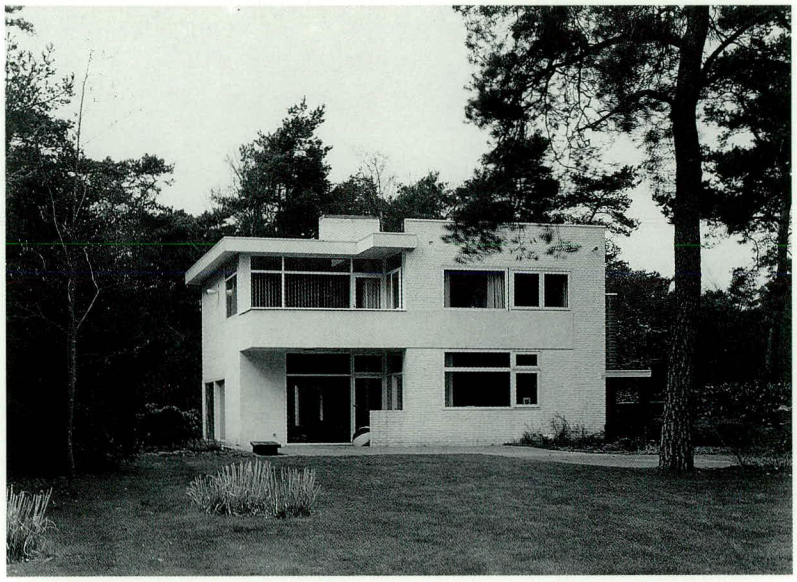


photo 1992

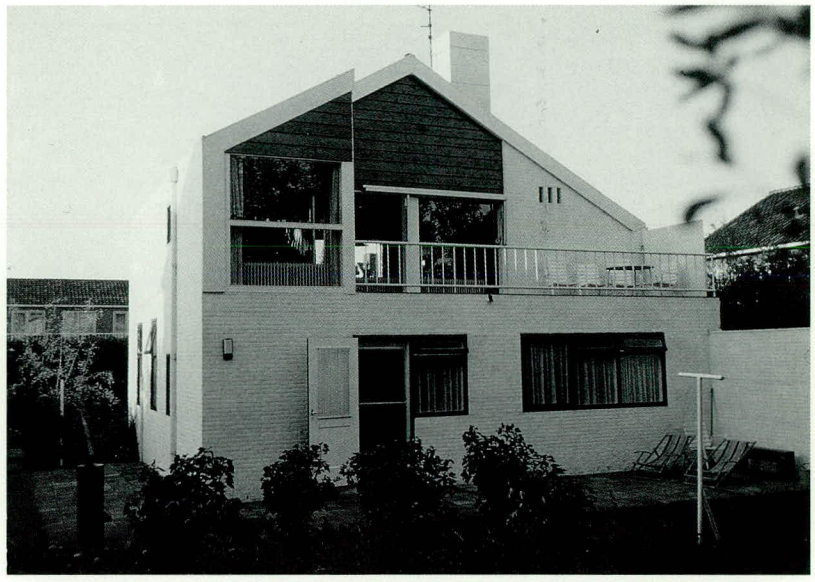


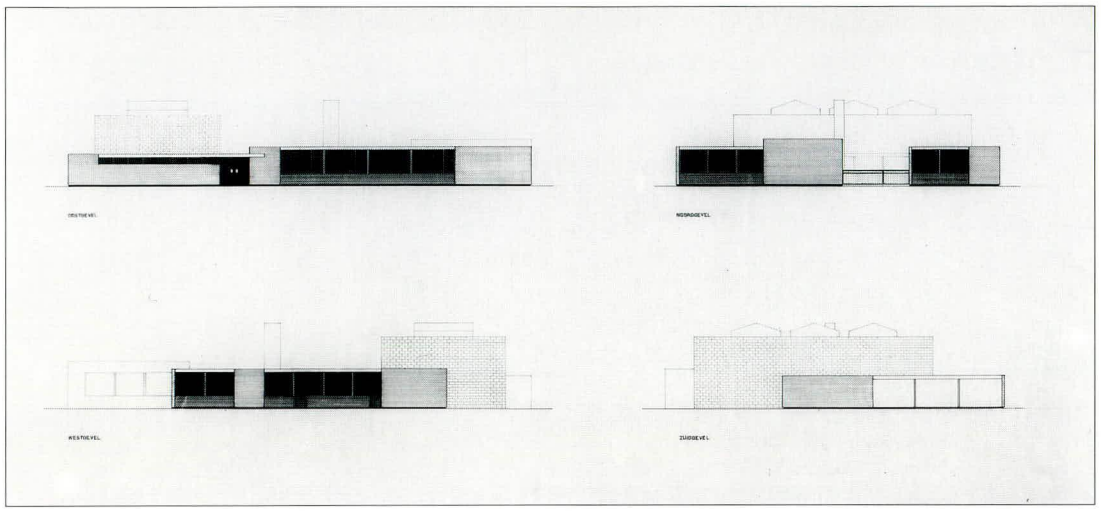
photo c. 1990

610 **Design Post Office**
Nagele

1960-1961

612 **Design Cultural Centre**
Dedemsvaart

1961
co-designer J. van Tricht
not realized



Design drawing
ink on transparent paper
55 x 97.5cm
NAi

613 Design Company Youth Training Centre

Mr. Tripkade, Utrecht

1961
not realized

614 Design dwelling Börger

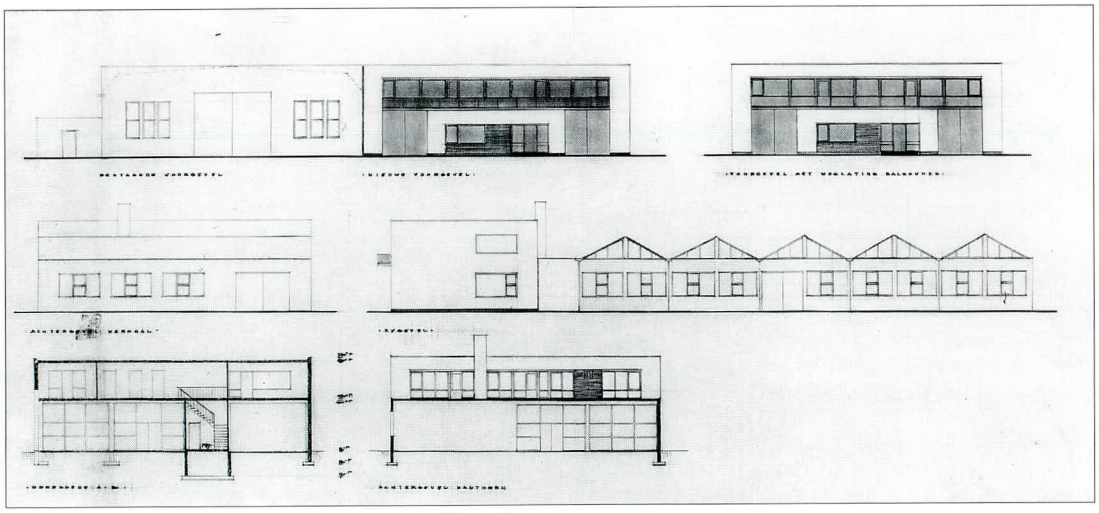
B. van der Helststraat, Hoogezand

1961
client J. Börger

615 Design extension company building Börger

Hoogezand

1961
client J. Börger

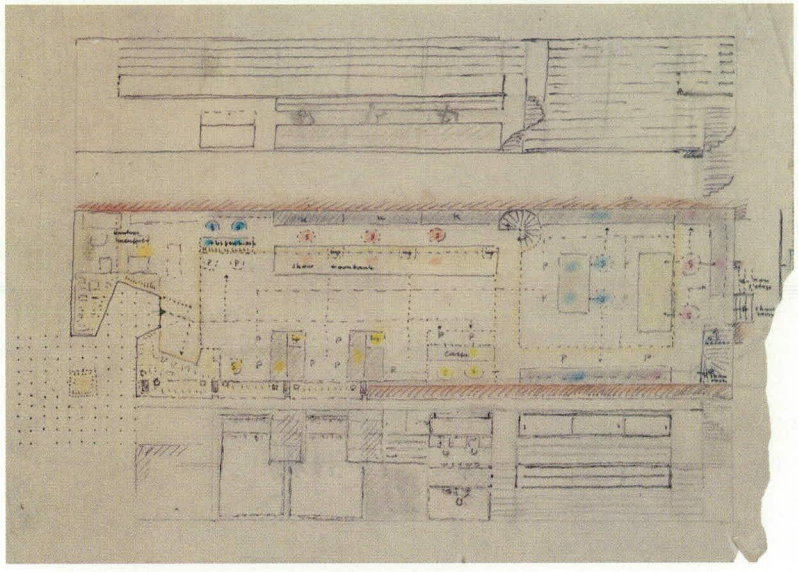


Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
50 x 88cm
NAi

616 **Conversion stationer's Mado** 1961
Oudegracht 116-119,
Utrecht

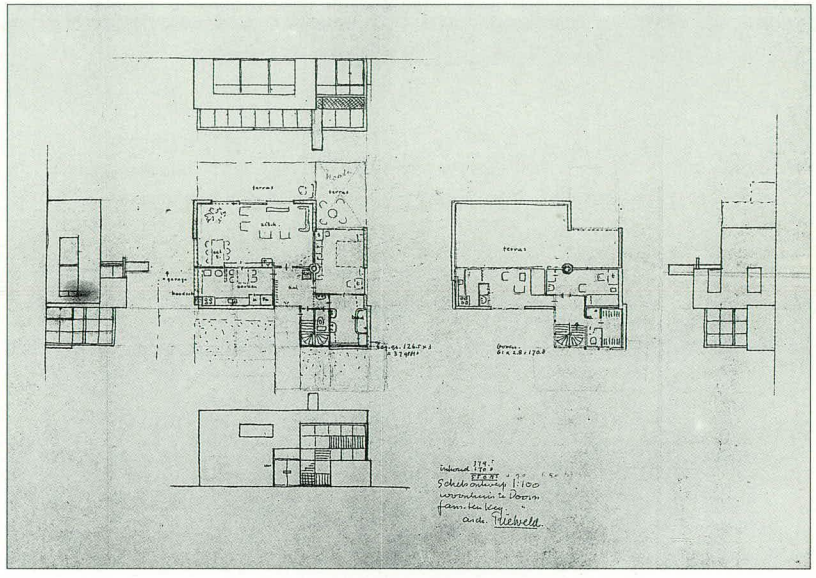
Logo Mado c. 1961

Design drawing
pencil, crayon, ink on
transparent paper
45 x 60cm
NAi



617 **Design dwelling Ten Kley** 1961
Doorn

Design drawing
collotype
58.5 x 79.5cm
RSA



1961

photo 1992

618 **Conversion dwelling Rietveld** 1961
client E. Rietveld
Korte Blekersweg 33, Wissel

619 **Outdoor bench for Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller**
Otterlo

concrete
68 x 263 x 77cm
1961

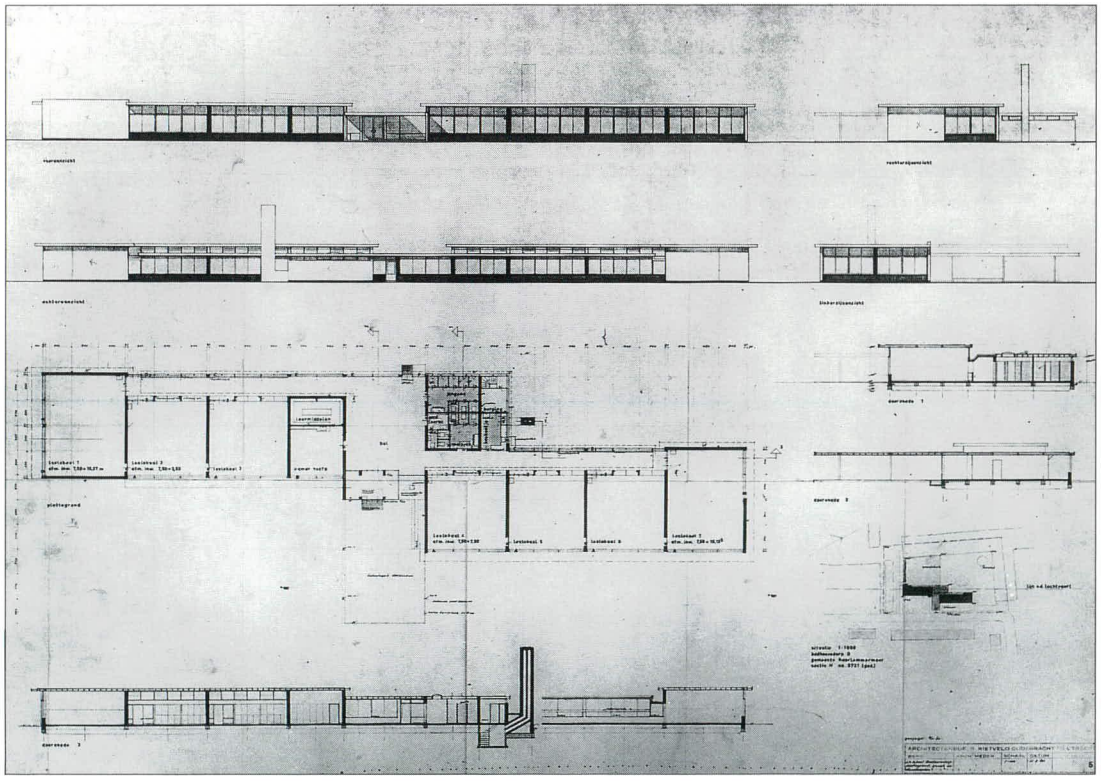
620 **Primary school**
Edisonstraat 3,
Badhoevedorp

1958-1962
client Municipality of Haarlemmermeer

621 **Letterhead Rietveld, Van Dillen & Van Tricht Partnership**

1961

photo c. 1962



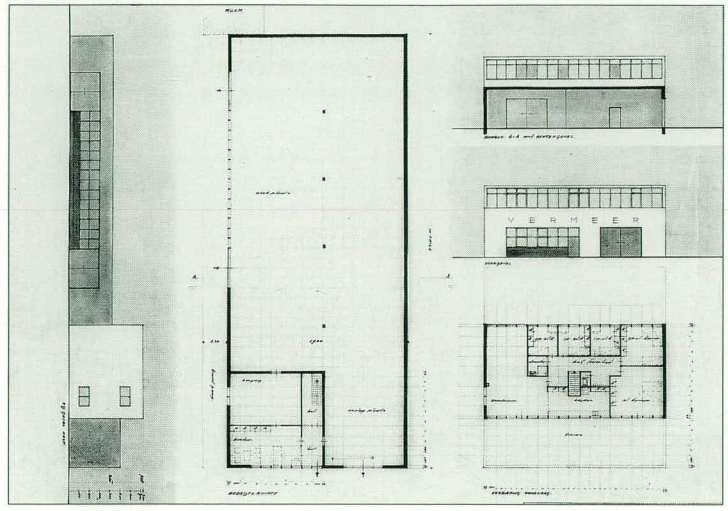
Design drawing
collotype
81.3 x 108.7cm
RSA

1961

622 **Design workshop with upstairs dwelling Vermeer**
Ambachtstraat, industrial area De Bilt

1961-1962
client J. Vermeer
co-designer J. van Tricht
not realized

Although the building permit for a studio with upstairs dwelling had been issued, the application was retracted for unknown reasons in 1963.

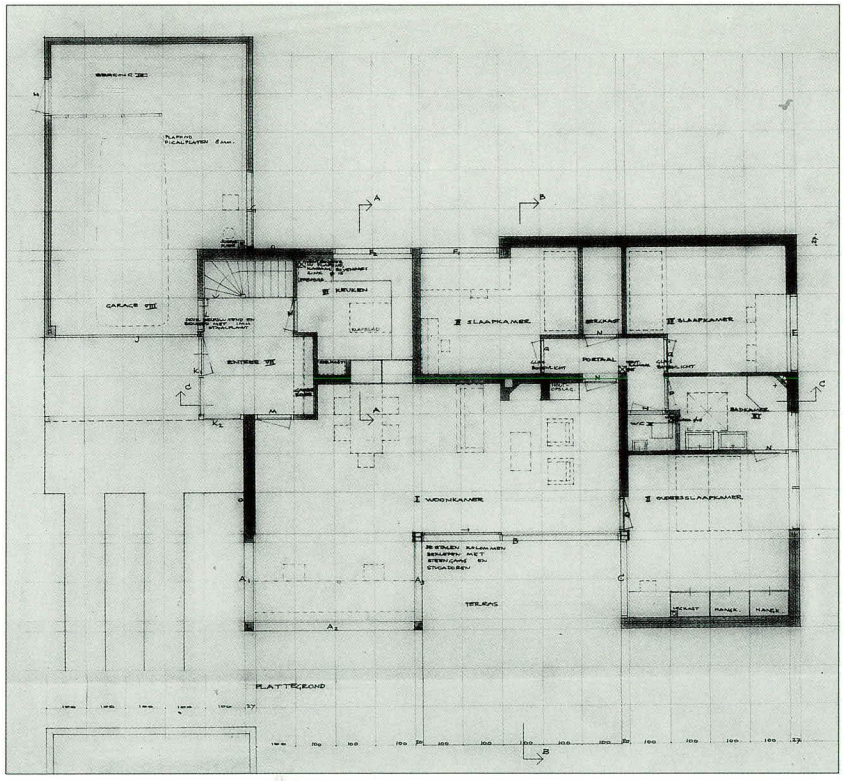


Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
58.5 x 76.5cm
NAi

623 **Dwelling Singelenberg**
Horstweg 32, Hengelo

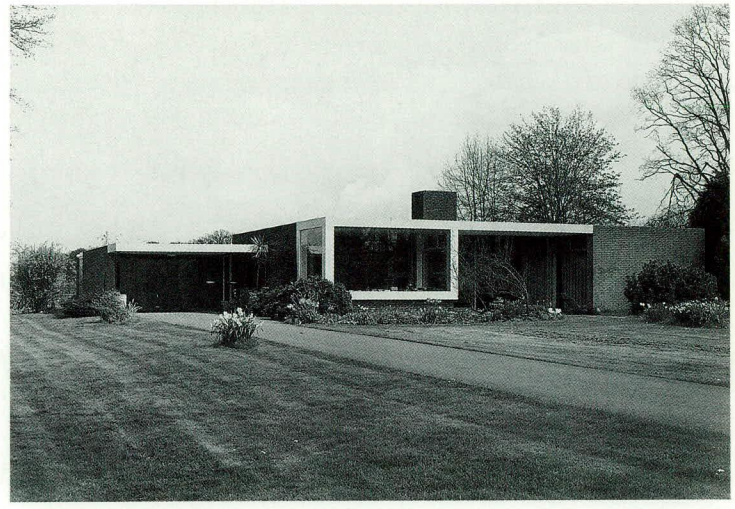
1961-1962
client
O.A. Singelenberg
co-designer J. van Dillen

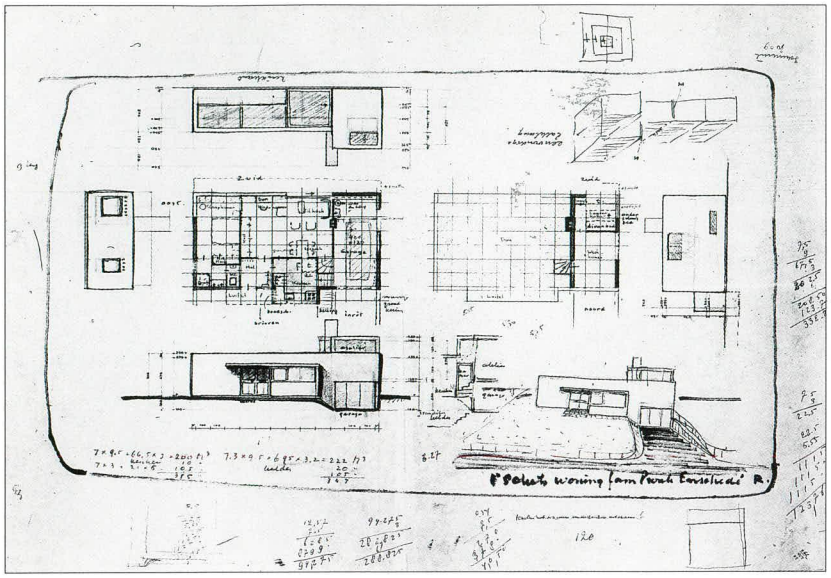
1961

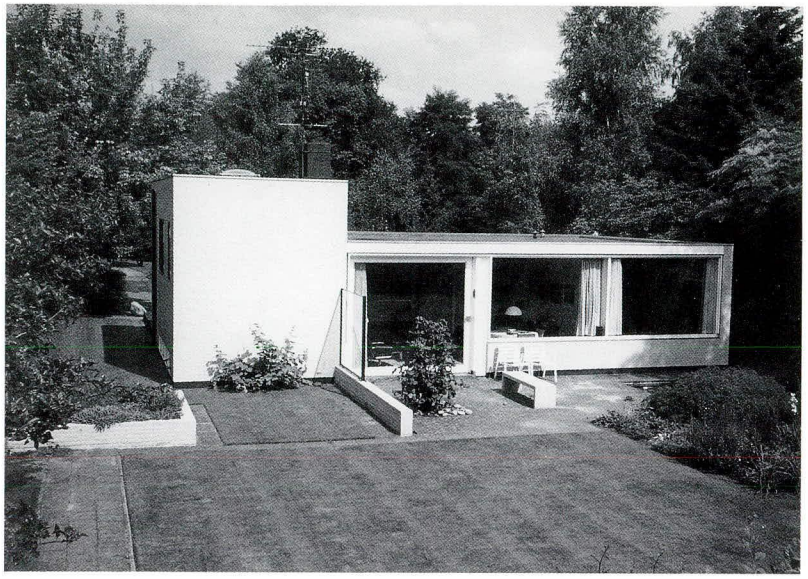


Design drawing, detail
pencil, ink on transparent paper
88 x 115cm
NAi

photo 1992







624 **Dwelling Pronk**
Twickellaan 16, Enschede

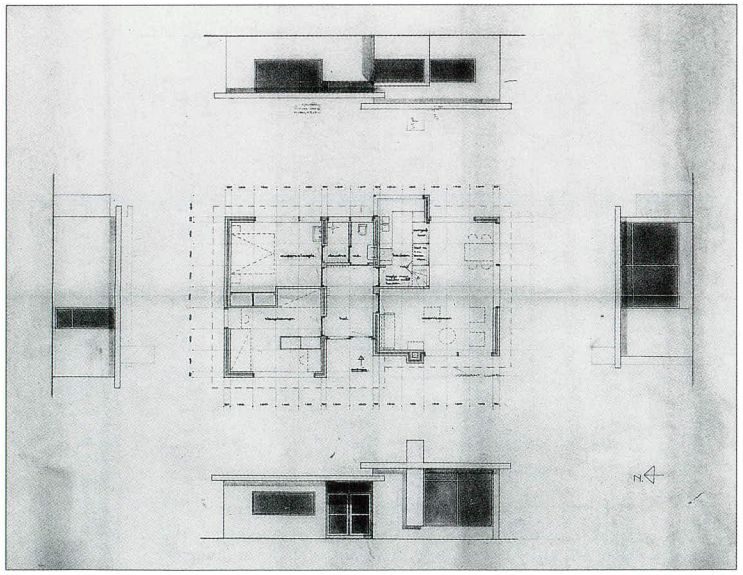
1961-1962
client J.D.J. Pronk
with B. Mulder

Rough draft
ink, biro on collotype
40.5 x 48.5cm
RSA

photo c. 1990

625 **Design dwelling Bakker**
Scherpenzeel

1962



Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
67 x 78cm
NAi

626 Conversion and layout Centre for Industrial Design
Berlage's Beurs, Amsterdam

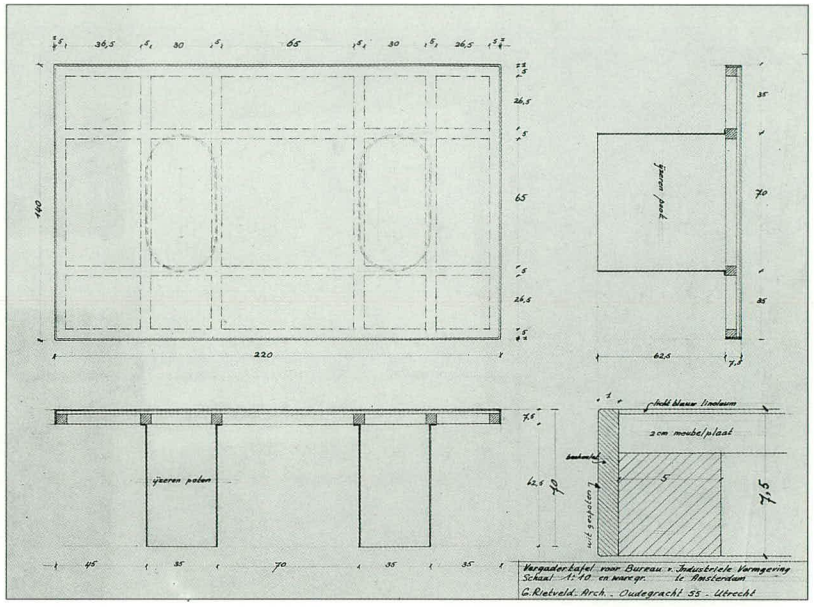
1961-1962
client Stichting voor Industriële Vormgeving
in collaboration with
Kho Liang Ie
no longer extant

Conference table

wood, metal, linoleum
72.5 x 220.5 x 140cm
SMA

Design drawing
conference table
pencil, ink on transparent paper
37 x 46.5cm
NAi

Exhibition hall
photo c. 1960



1962

On 15 October 1962 the Centre for Industrial Design in Amsterdam was opened by Princess Beatrix.
The purpose of the centre was to present quality products in the field of industrial design. The centre was housed in a part of Berlage's Beurs. Rietveld had altered the entrance and together with the interior architect Kho Liang Ie had adapted the interior. The floor of the Corn Exchange was raised and a ceiling of aluminium strips fitted five metres above this floor. In this manner the original ceiling remained visible. The display cases were also designed by Rietveld.

627 Design conversion of dwelling
Utrecht

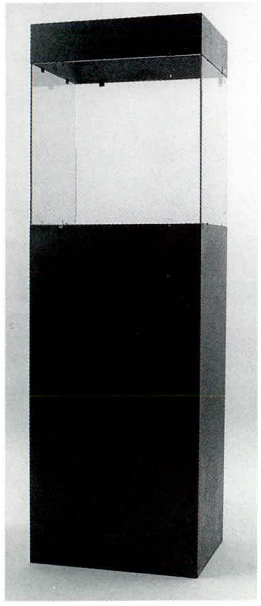
1962
client J. Wildschut

628 **Display cases Aartsbisschoppelijk Museum Utrecht**

glass, wood
1962
client the Aartsbisschoppelijk Museum Utrecht

For the exhibition 'Het Wonder. Miracula Christi' at the Archbishop's Museum in Utrecht, Rietveld designed a large glass display cabinet, small display cases and flat display cases. After the exhibition the display cases were taken into general use. In 1979 one small display case was donated to Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum.[1]

[1] Told by A.M. Janssens, 1992.



Display case
glass, wood
206 x 61 x 49cm
SMA

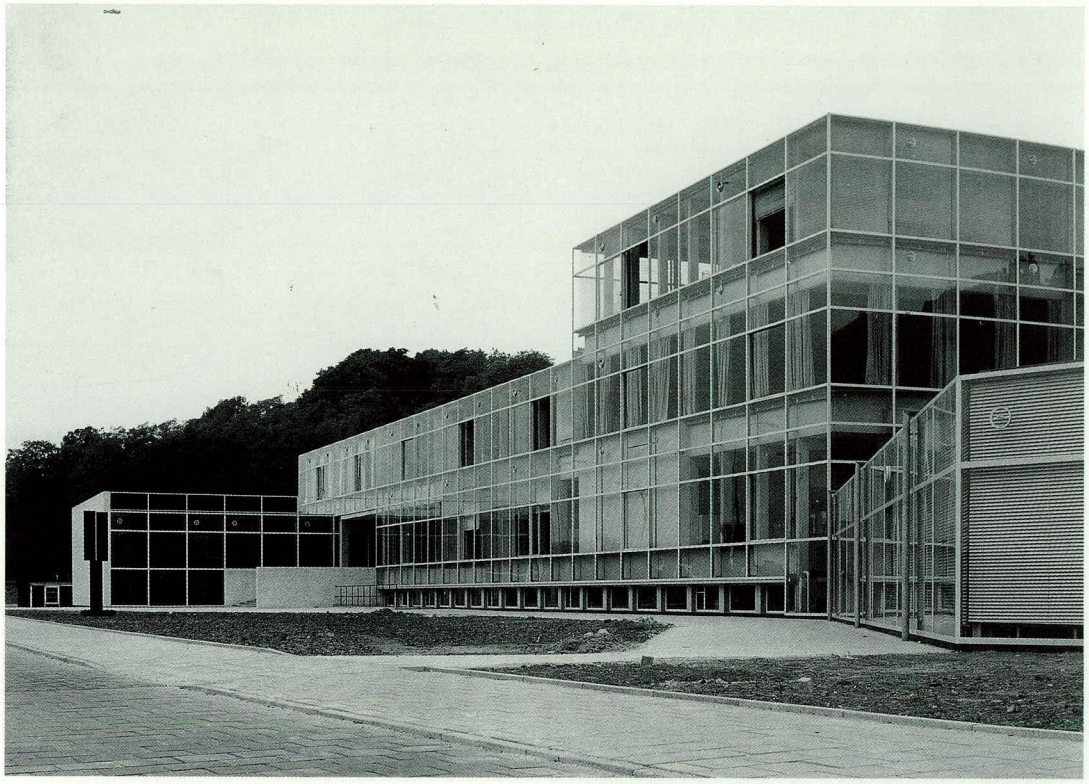
629 **Design extension C&A and design cinema on the fourth and fifth floors** Vredenburg, Utrecht

1962

630 **Academy of Art** Onderlangs 9, Arnhem

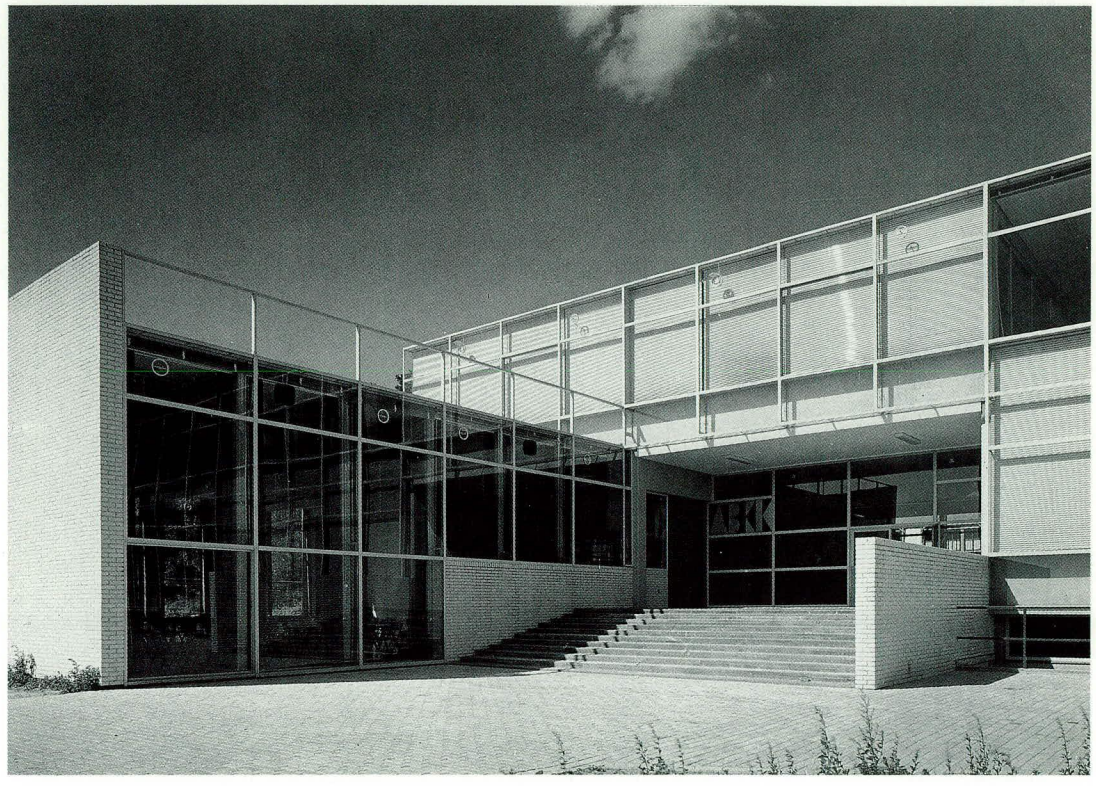
1958-1963
co-designer J. van Dillen

Initially the intention had been to build the academies in Amsterdam (no. 672) and Arnhem simultaneously. Due to various delays in Amsterdam the academy in Arnhem was completed sooner. Rietveld opted for the same construction for both academies and a uniform unit of measurement: 2.10 metres. The building consists of a concrete core onto which prestressed concrete beams were mounted. A non-supporting wall of glass panels, a so-called membrane or curtain wall, was then built around it. In 1963, the year in which the academy was opened, construction work was started on an office block for the Provincial Gelderland Electricity Company directly behind Rietveld's glass creation. He had not been informed about the construction plans and had designed the academy on the assumption that the overgrown slope in the background would be retained. The press was outraged. 'New PGEM building insult to Rietveld's work' was the heading in the *Arnhems Dagblad* of 8 June 1963, 'Arnhem trifles with international reputation' (*Het Vrije Volk*, 23 March 1963), and 'Beastly office near Rietveld building' (*De Tijd/Maasbode*, 10 June 1963).



photos c. 1963

1962



Sketch
paint on photo
20 x 28cm
RSA

631 Design extension Centraal Museum
Agnietenstraat 1, Utrecht

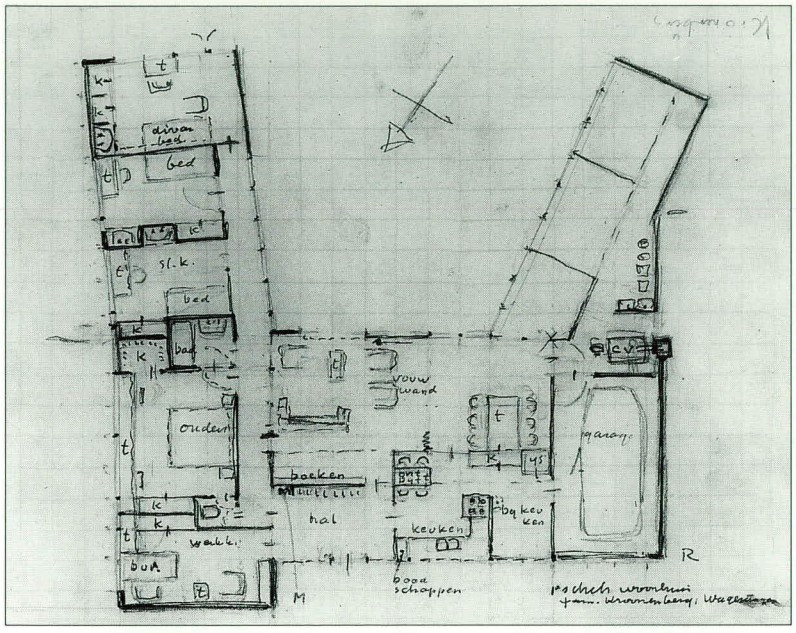
1960-1963
client the Municipality of Utrecht
co-designer J. van Dillen
not realized

632 Dwelling Kronenberg
Hollandseweg 362, Wageningen

1961-1963
client H.G. Kronenberg
co-designer J. van Dillen
with V. Scheffers

In 1958 H. Kronenberg had visited the Rietveld exhibition at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, which had made a profound impression upon him.
In April 1961 he visited the Stoop house in Velp (no. 419) and in June he contacted Rietveld for the first time, concerning the design of a bungalow. Rietveld was positive about the building site and on 16 June wrote to Kronenberg: 'It exceeded my expectations – on the drawing it looked like one of those small neighbourhoods with streets, but it *is* woodland – in any case no streets'. He promised to send the first sketch, which he based on Kronenberg's suggestion of a bungalow with a U-shaped floor plan, within a week. To break the monotony of the long straight corridor in the bedroom wing, he included a kink halfway. He based the floor plan on a one-metre pattern. The indoor and outdoor cubic contents are all multiples or parts of a metre: 2.50, 2.75, 3.00, and 3.25 metres. The highest point is the five-metre high chimney. The last drawings are dated November 1962 and give instructions for the completion of the walls, the lowered glass ceiling, the interior of the kitchen and the circular, sunken floor mat at the front door, which was a recurrent feature in many of Rietveld's postwar dwellings. In the spring of 1963 the Kronenberg family took up residence in their new dwelling.

An account of the construction process, recorded in a book kept by the Kronenberg family, gives an interesting description of Rietveld's improvisational manner of working:
'Near the end Rietveld discovered that the hall needed a special ceiling, because one part had the height of the sleeping wing and the other the height of the living wing. So a lowered, glass ceiling was devised.



Rough draft
pencil, ink on paper
21 x 26.9cm
private collection,
Wageningen

But the hall floor did not measure whole metres. No problem, the windows in the hall were given a quarter-turn and then it fitted (almost). In accordance with the ceiling, the floor tiles were also given a quarter-turn'. An amusing section in this book relates the first reactions of friends and relatives to the dwelling, varying from: 'Rather small' and 'Is this house all yours?' to 'I can never get used to a house without a roof'. Rietveld said: 'Still, it has turned out to be a pleasant, simple house', and wrote in the autumn of 1963: 'As far as the result is concerned, the following: considering your proportions I constantly have the feeling that the scale of the house, especially with regards to the height, should have been 1/5 larger. I hope that it has not been a hindrance to you.'[1] Apparently he only realized later how tall the residents were.

[1] The quotations are from letters and documents kept by the Kronenberg family.

1963

photo 1992

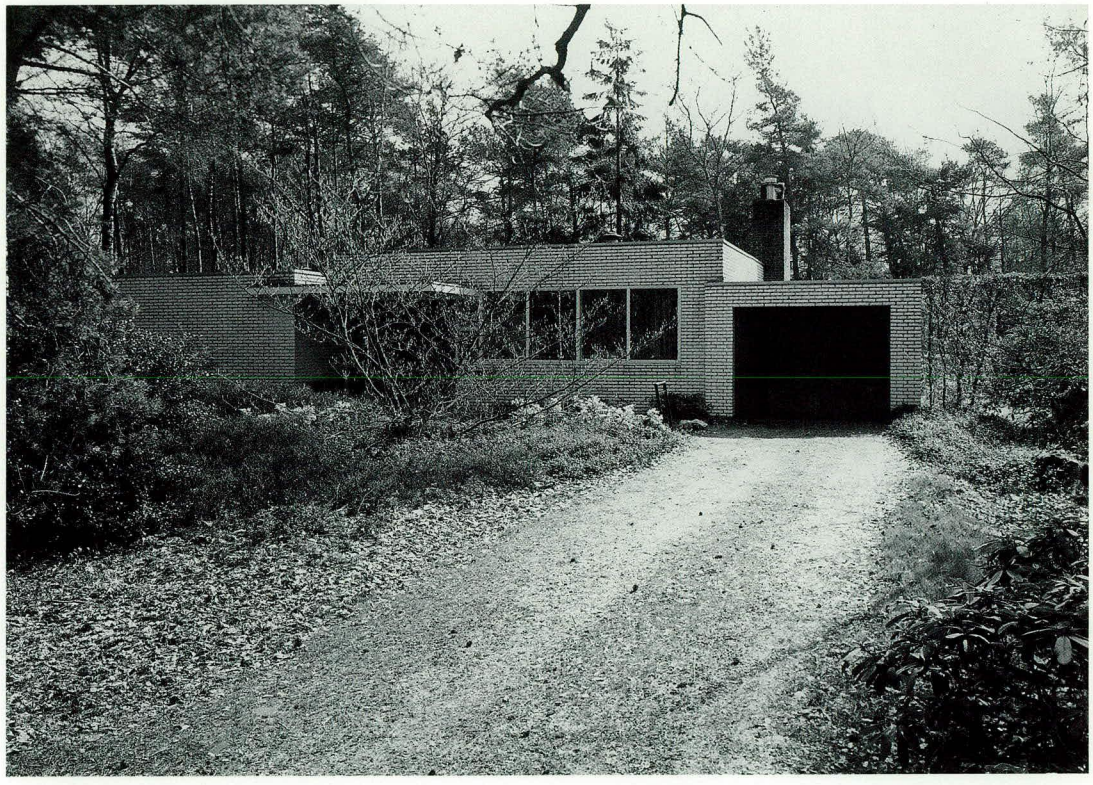


photo c. 1963

Study
photo c. 1963

633 **Dwelling Van Slobbe**
Zandweg 122, Heerlen

1961-1963
client B. van Slobbe
co-designer J. van Dillen
altered

The dwelling which Rietveld built for the mining director B. van Slobbe on a sloping site in Heerlen is in every way characteristic for Rietveld's last designs. The houses for O. Singelenberg, G. Schmidt and J. Koning (nos 623, 609 and 668) have various similarities, the use of a broad framework being the most striking. These frameworks may be supporting concrete parts or the surrounding of the window frames. It is a form of architecture in which the emphasis is upon the strength of the line rather than upon the plane, as is the case in Rietveld's last chair design for Steltman (no. 649). The Van Slobbe house is the largest that Rietveld ever built. The knowledge that the client wanted a design which was 'not too pompous' gave Rietveld confidence that he could deliver a plan which was 'acceptable' to them both.[1]

[1] Szénássy 1976, 6.

634 **Design second hall trade fair, Prins Bernhardhal**
Zuid-Laren

1961-1963

635 **Dwelling Manassen**
Anna Paulownalaan 42,
Amersfoort

1961-1963
client G. Manassen
co-designer J. van Tricht
altered

636 **Design conversion office Schrale Beton**
Willemsvaart 21, Zwolle

1962-1963

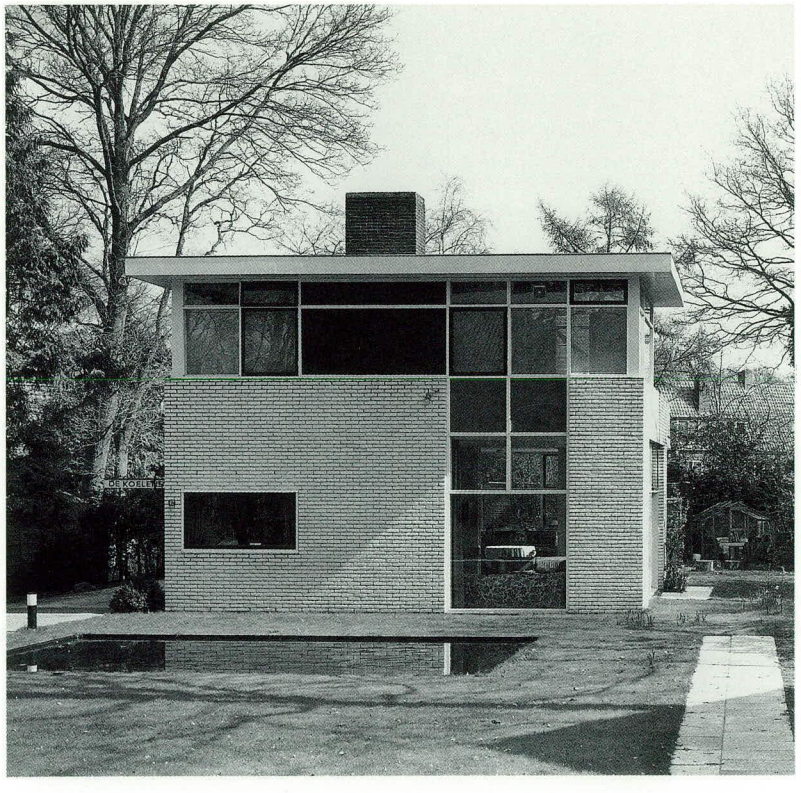
637 **Design extension School of Applied Arts and restaurant**
Gregoriussingel/Hekellaan,
's-Hertogenbosch

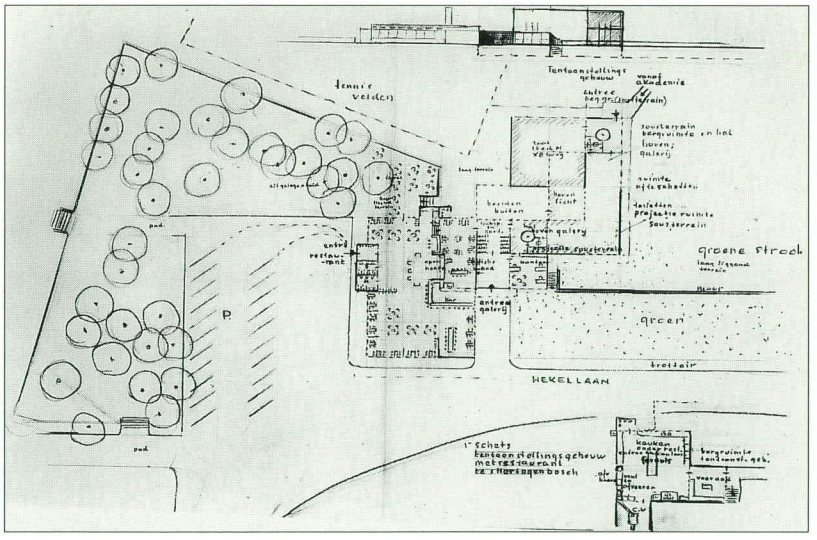
1963
not realized

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
63 x 100cm
NAi

1963

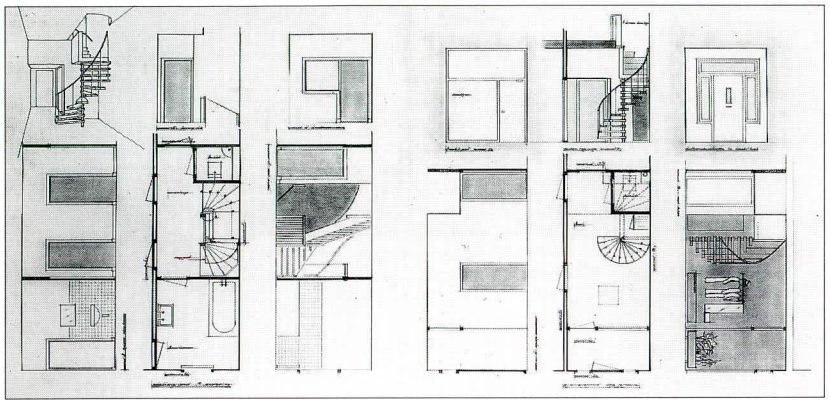
photo 1992





638 **Design conversion dwelling Bosschaert**
Amsterdam

1963
client Mrs Bosschaert

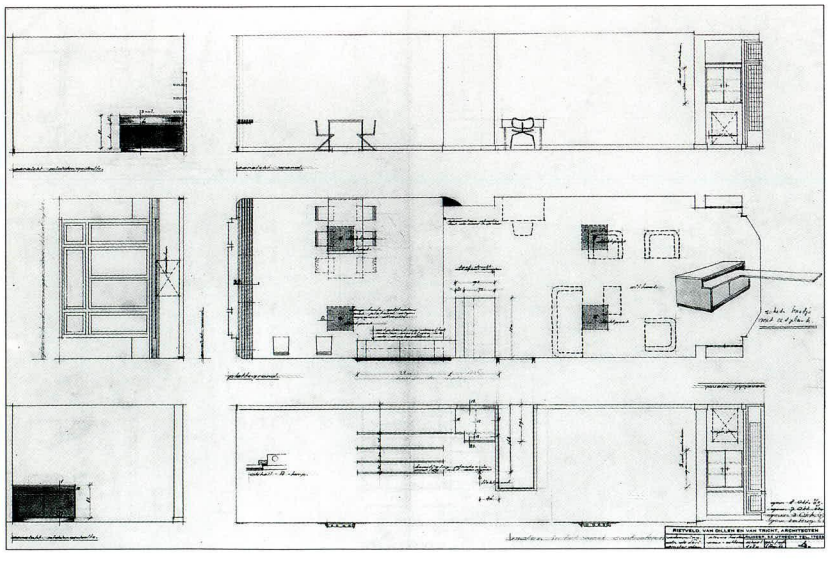


Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
86 x 140cm
NAi

639 **Conversion dwelling**
Chopinstraat 29, Amsterdam

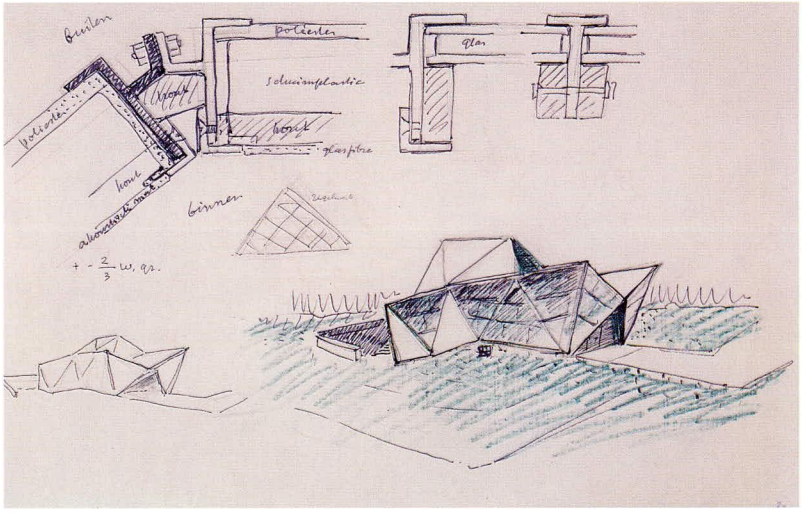
1963
client S.N. Levie

Design drawing
pencil on transparent paper
82.5 x 108.5cm
NAi



640 **Design Meditation Centre and student's flats, Twente Technical University**
Enschede

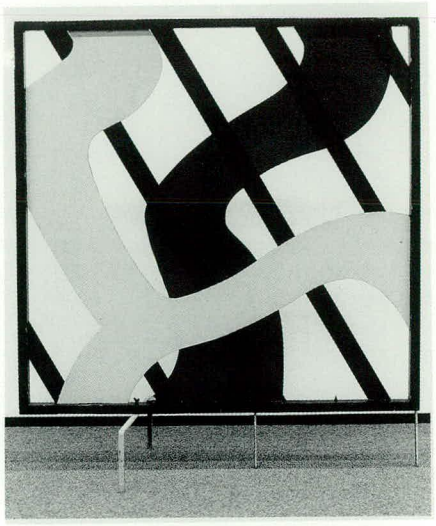
1963
not realized



Design drawing
Meditation Centre
pencil, crayon, ink on transparent paper
42.5 x 63cm
NAi

641 **Conversion dining hall of university house**
Lepelenburg, Utrecht

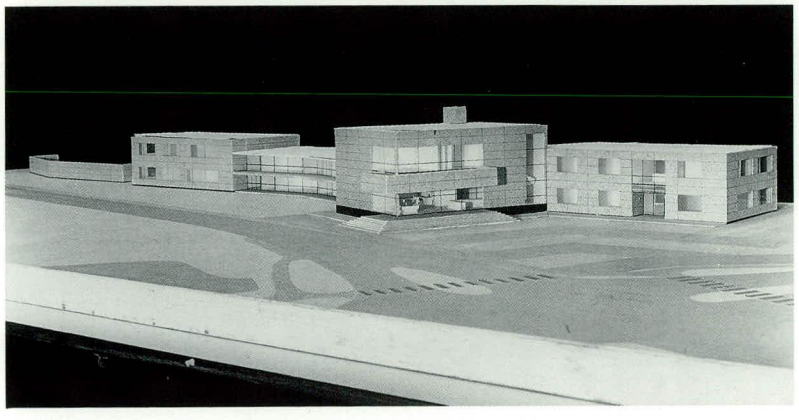
1963
demolished



Screen for dining hall
wood
140 x 140cm
Bonnefantenmuseum
Maastricht

642 **Design Town Hall**
Leerdam

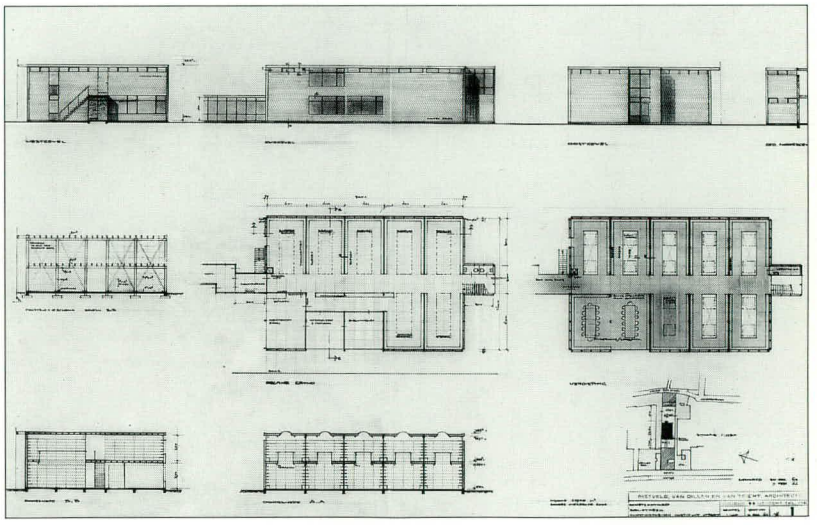
1963
not realized



Maquette
photo c. 1963

643 **Design library Art History Department, Utrecht State University**
Drift 25, Utrecht

1963
not realized



Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
63 x 91cm
NAi

644 Publicity medium
Eindhoven

1963

photo c. 1963

645 Child's commode

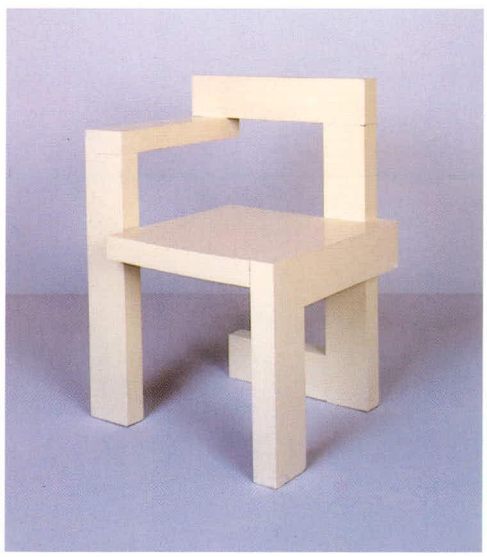
blockboard, chipboard, hardboard, deal
95 x 110 x 52cm
1963
SMA

646 Steltman chair

wood
1963

The chair for the Steltman jeweller's shop occupies a special place. As the last in the series of furniture designs it links up again with Rietveld's early work, and less with his postwar attempts to make designs for the furniture industry. No doubt the nature of the commission, a number of unique pieces for a jeweller's, had something to do with this.
For Steltman the chair was made upholstered in white leather.
The asymmetrical form does not define the space, but has an open structure, as Rietveld also tried to realize in the furniture from the period 1918-1924. The form is related to a number of postwar houses, for example the Slobbe house (no. 633). In that house the composition of the outer walls is built up out of broad wall strips of glazed, often white brick and dark or transparent window and door planes. These strips and planes give the same visual image as the rails and posts of the Steltman chair.
After Rietveld's death, G. van de Groeneken made the chair for Bep Eskes-Rietveld and Truus Schröder, among others.

Steltman chair
oak
69.9 x 48.9 x 44.7cm
CMU



1963

647 **Thank-you card for Rietveld's 75th birthday** 1963

649 **Interior Marian Schröder**
Otterlo c. 1963

Public clock
photo c. 1990

648 **Street furniture**
Bergeyk

c. 1963
client Weverij De Ploeg NV

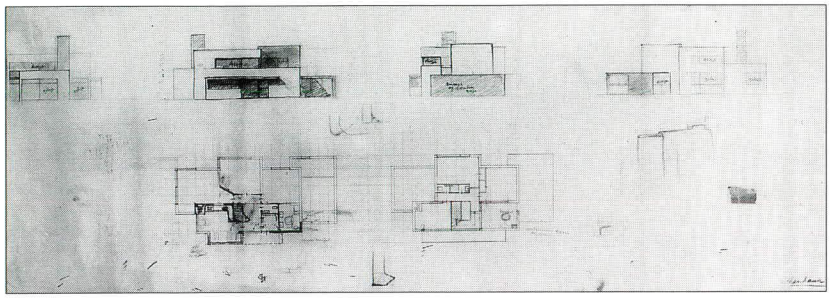
The De Ploeg factory presented the village of Bergeyk with a public clock, two outdoor benches and a bus shelter, to be placed in the town centre. The benches are lost.

Bus shelter
photo c. 1990

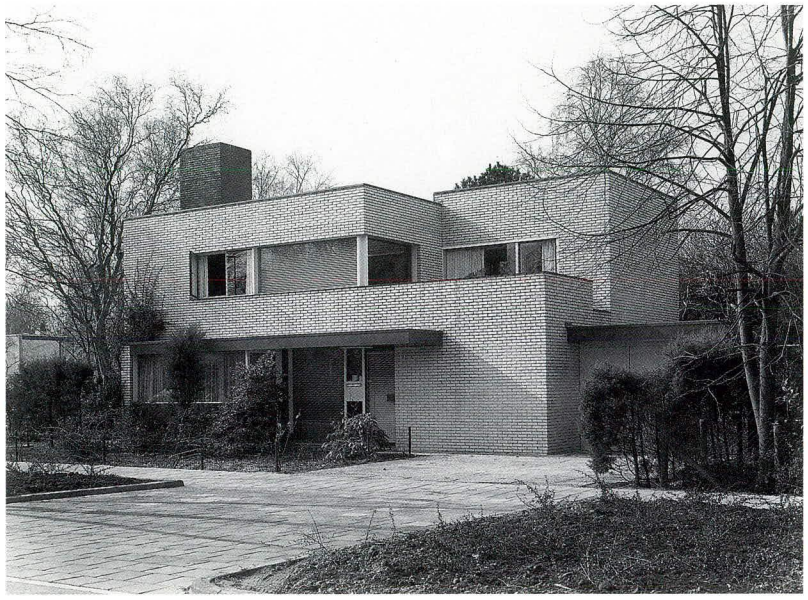
650 **Dwelling Schenkkan**
Weldam 10, Amsterdam

1960-1964
client A. Schenkkan

photo 1992

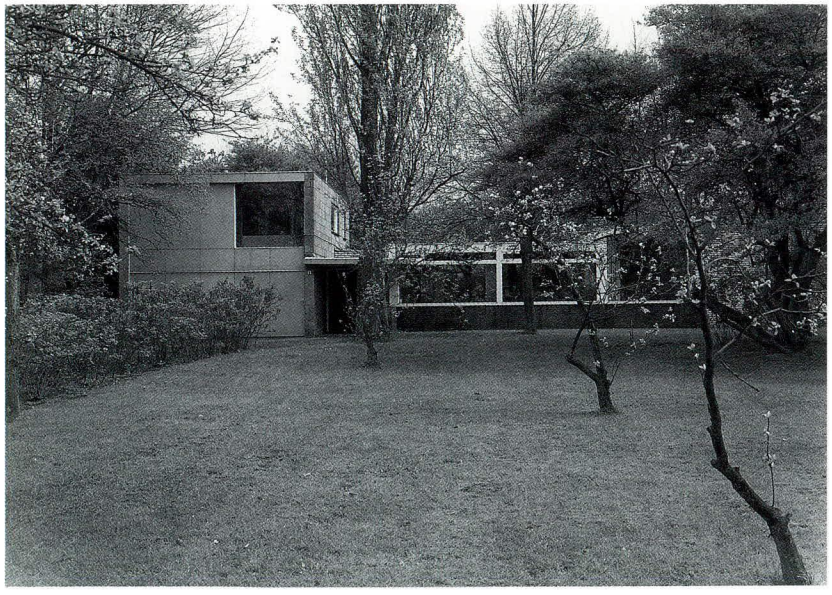


Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
38.2 x 106cm
NAi



651 **Dwelling Verpaalen**
Overaseweg 9, Breda

1960-1964
client O.A.C. Verpaalen



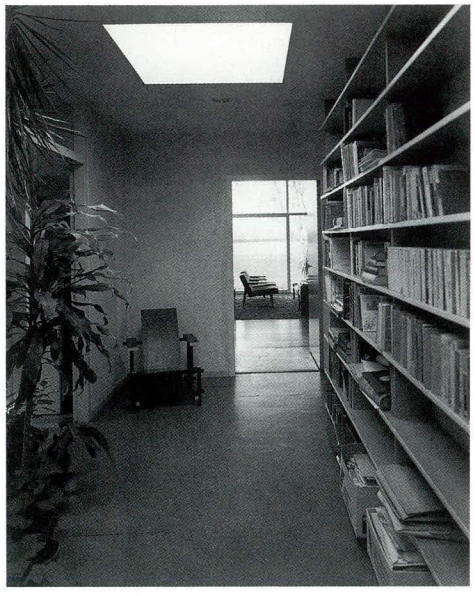


photo 1992

Hall
photo 1992

1964

652 **Dwelling Berkovich**
Pastoor Eykenweg 1,
Knegsel

1960-1964
client E. Berkovich
altered

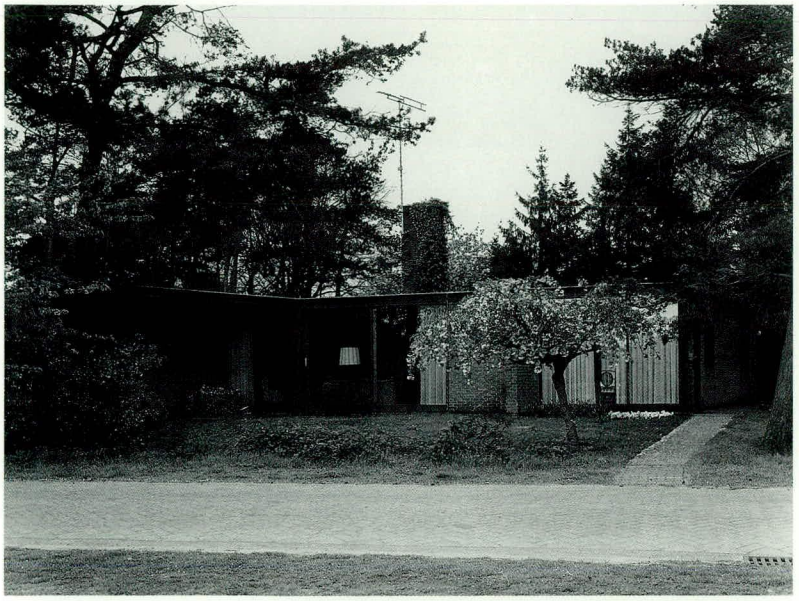
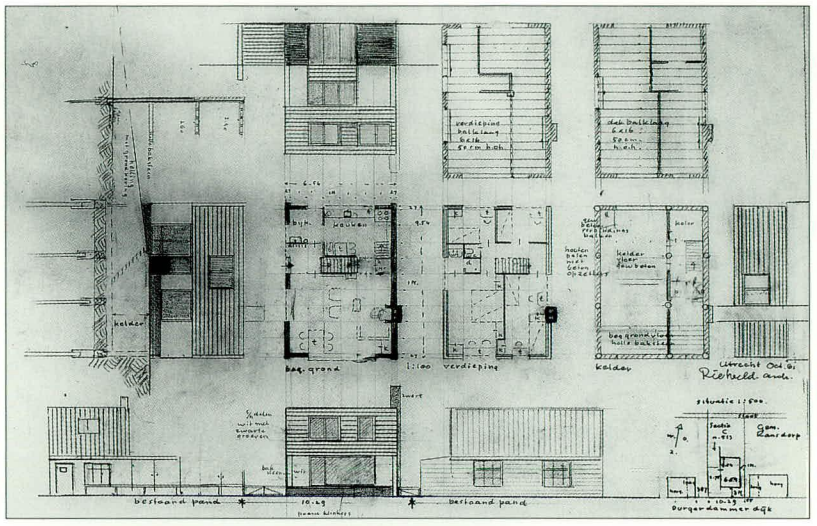


photo 1992

653 **Dwelling Bouhuys**
Durgerdammerdijk 184,
Durgerdam

1961-1964
client P. Bouhuys
co-designer J. van Dillen

Rietveld designed the house in Durgerdam for his granddaughter and her husband.



Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
44 x 57.2cm
NAi

1964

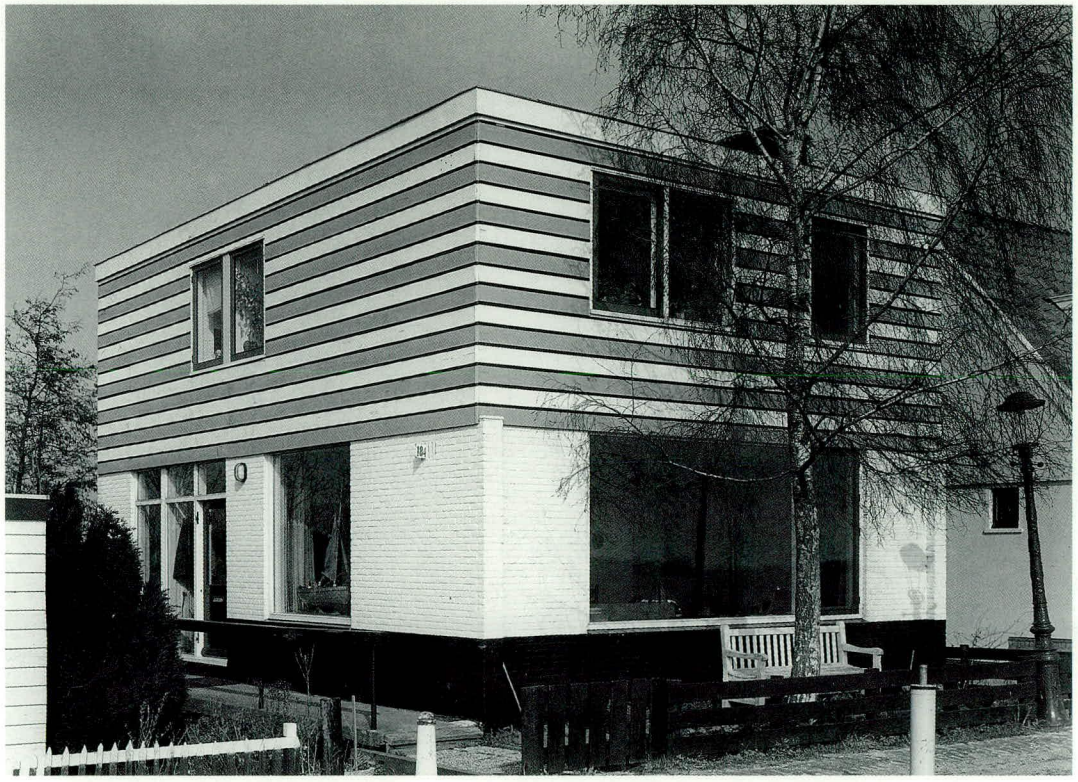
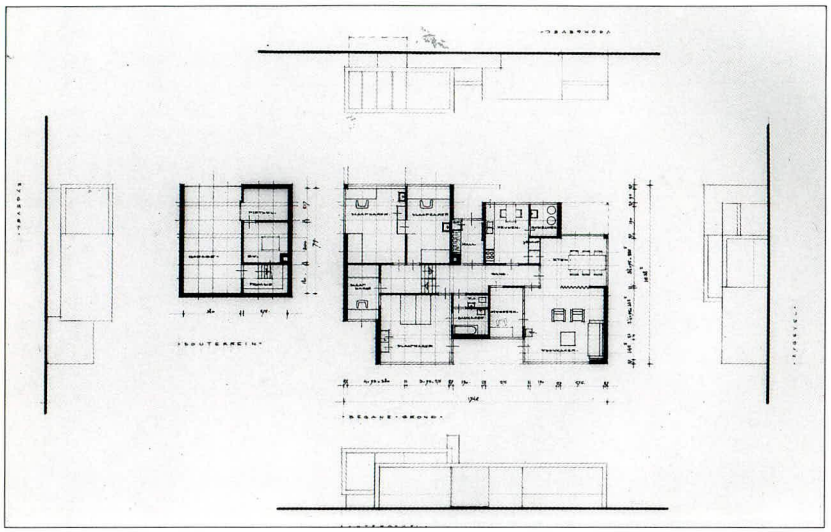


photo 1992

654 **Two dwellings**
Churchilllaan 3-5, Axel

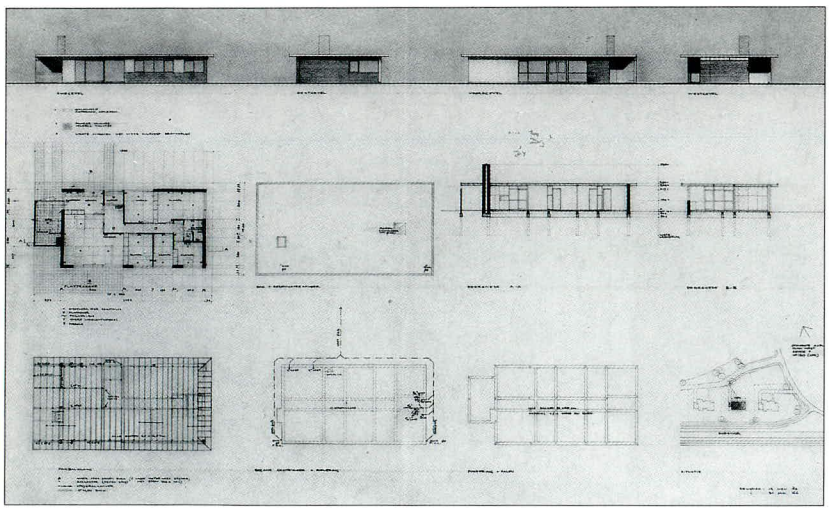
1962-1964
client
Nederlandse Stikstof
Maatschappij NV
co-designer J. van Dillen
altered



Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
46.5 x 60.5cm
NAi

655 **Dwelling Kloosterman**
Zuidsingel, Axel

1963-1964
client B. Kloosterman
altered



Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
66 x 96cm
NAi

656 **Colour application for miners' huts**
Wolfsweg 55, Eygelshoven

1964
no longer extant

657 **Clock tower Twente Technical University**
Enschede

1964

658 **Design centre for the elderly 'De Nudehof'**
Thorbeckestraat 1, Wageningen

1959-1965
co-designer J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht

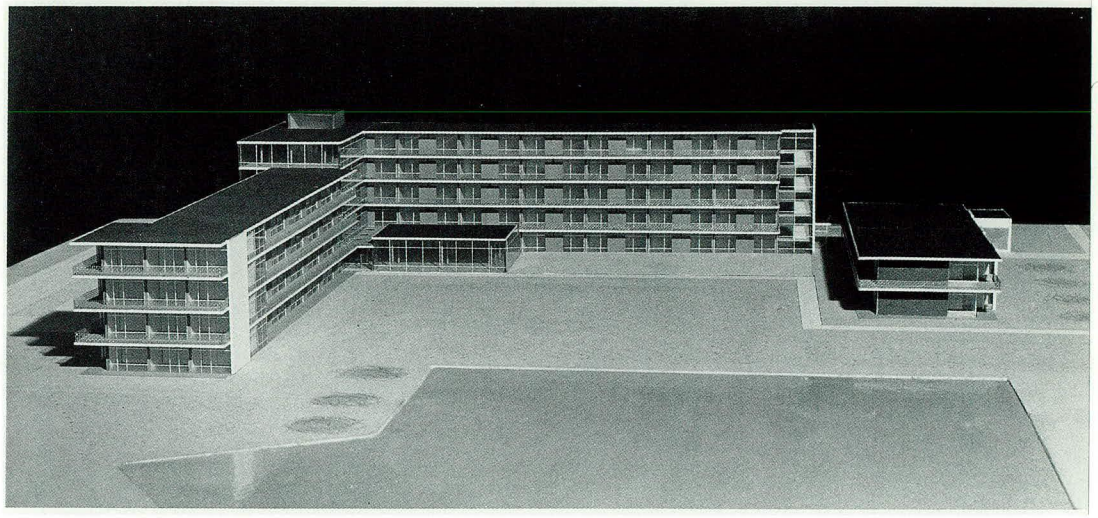
659 **Thank-you card in connection with Rietveld's honorary degree**

1964

o longer extant

1964

Maquette
photo c. 1959



660 De Hoeksteen Church
Hugo de Grootlaan 1,
Uithoorn

1960-1965
client Hervormde Gemeente Uithoorn
co-designer J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht

A 'Rietveld church' was considered by the Hervormde Bouw- en Restauratiecommissie in The Hague to be an 'act of cultural and historical importance'. The committee strongly advised the churchwardens in Uithoorn to choose Rietveld as architect of the new church. Rietveld accepted the commission, on condition that the building would also be used for other purposes; there was also a theatre, a foyer and a creche.[1] In his account of his design he said he was aiming at the simplest forms; 'forms which correspond to the nature of Christianity'. An important factor in the design of the church is its location. Rietveld used the water beside which the building would come to stand. The reflection of the half cube-form of the complex in the water completes the cube. The structure consists of a concrete frame, which is left visible and filled in with masonry of white B-2 blocks made especially for the church. The creche, the sexton's house and the staircase are placed in the two annexes. The main entrance is the only accent on the sober building. Rietveld designed the entrance as an open portal, a space roofed with an awning painted blue on the underside with a couple of seats under it, where according to Rietveld 'people can meet each other casually'. The church hall itself measures 12.5 by 25 metres. The space is provided with abundant light through the windows which on one side reach as high as the roof and make the hall appear larger than it is. The interior is plain. The walls and the ceiling, in which the lighting is hidden, are roughly plastered in a light colour, the wall on which the cross hangs is slate grey, and the floor yellow-grey. Brighter colours have been used in the other spaces, such as the theatre. For the furnishing Rietveld designed among other things a red granite cylinder-shaped baptismal font, a pulpit, a communion table, a cross and pews, made in Parana pine. The pulpit, a table and some pews, property of the Kröller-Müller Museum, are on permanent loan to the Amsterdam nursing home De Buitenhof.[2]

[1] Anon., 'Kerk van Rietveld bijna klaar', in *Trouw*, 29 May 1965.
[2] Straus 1992.

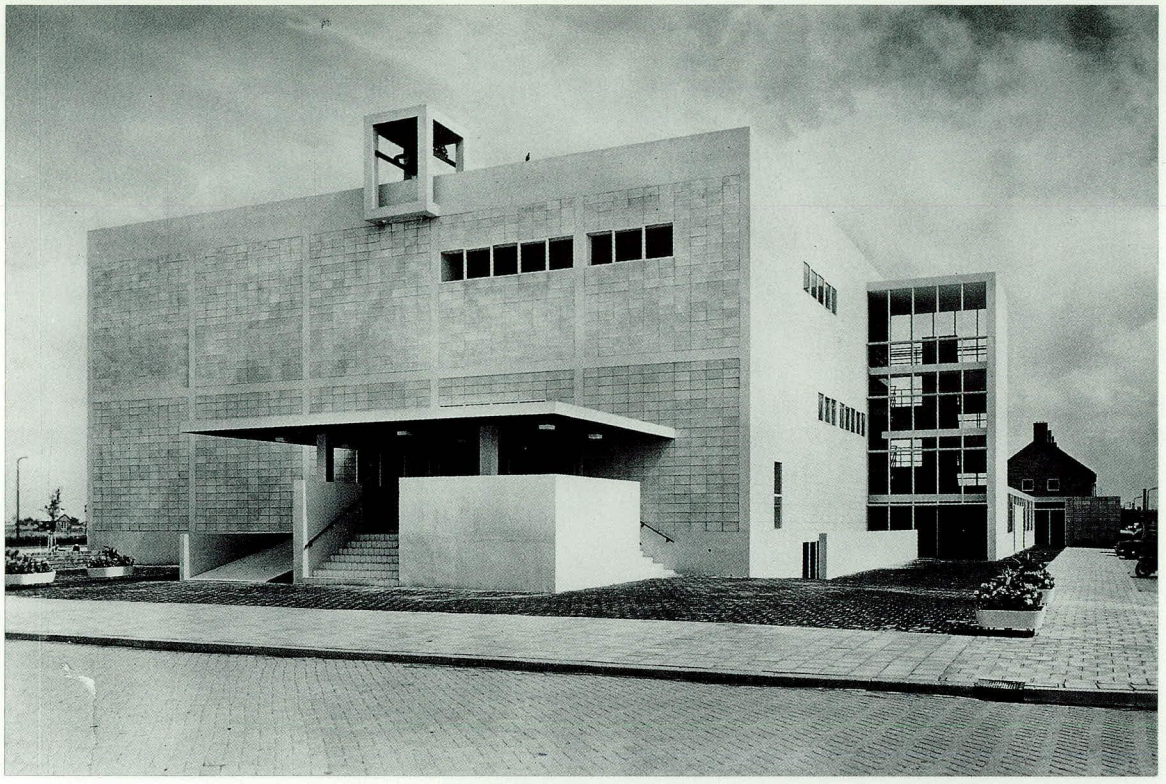
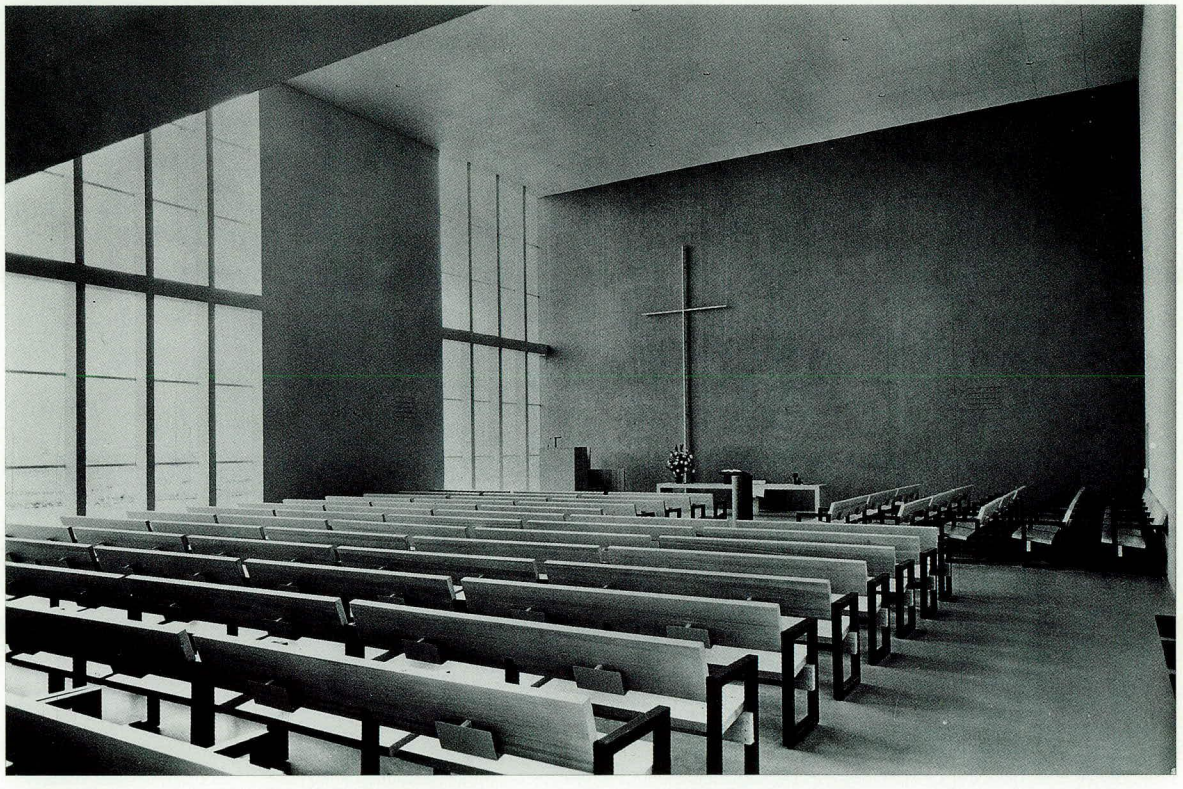


photo c. 1965

Interior
photo c. 1965

1965



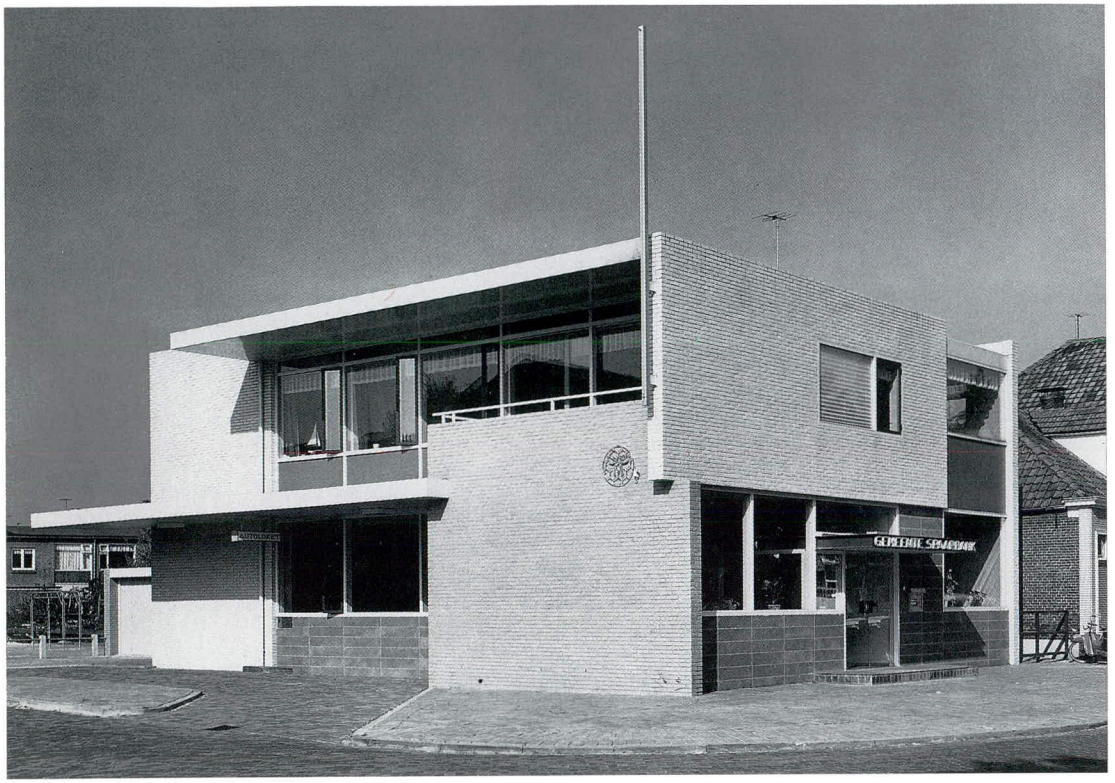


photo c. 1965

Interior
design J. van Tricht
photo c. 1965

1965

661 Gemeente Spaarbank
Dedemsvaart

1962-1965
co-designer J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht
altered

Thanks to the chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank, the then Mayor of Dedemsvaart Jhr Snouck Hurgonje, Dedemsvaart got a Rietveld. 'Someday', prophesied *Het Vrije Volk* on 25 September 1965, 'the building will be included in the list of classic masterpieces of Dutch architecture and it can also be said, perhaps, that this one swallow has made a summer and that it has also opened the eyes of non-urbanites to the possibilities of modern architecture.'

662 Conversion Steltman Jeweller's

Paleisstraat 2, The Hague

1963-1965
client J. Steltman
altered

Logo Steltman Jeweller's

Rietveld began and ended his architectural career with the conversion of a jewellery shop. He did not witness the realization of his design for this conversion. Rietveld's interior design for the sales area was predominantly in black and white. The furniture was specially designed for the shop (see no. 646). On the staircase, in the entrance hall and on the upper floor, Rietveld removed boarding which until then had concealed decorative plasterwork and ornamentation. The oval dome above the entrance was altered to become a light source.

1965

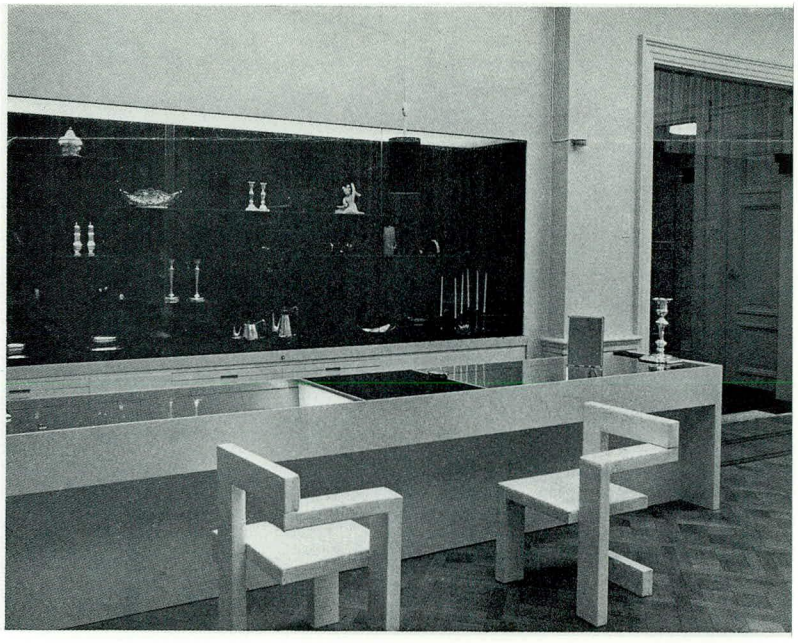
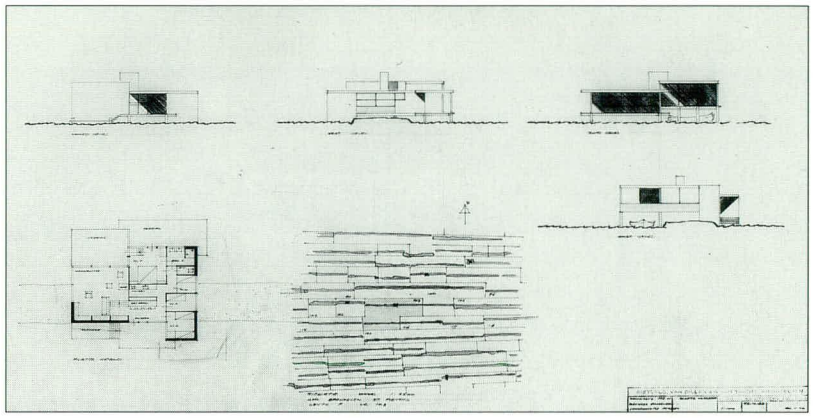


photo from *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 83 (1965) 23

663 Design summerhouse

Section F No. 103,
Breukelen St. Pieters

1963-1965
client W. Bakhuys
Roozeboom



Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
56 x 87cm
NAi

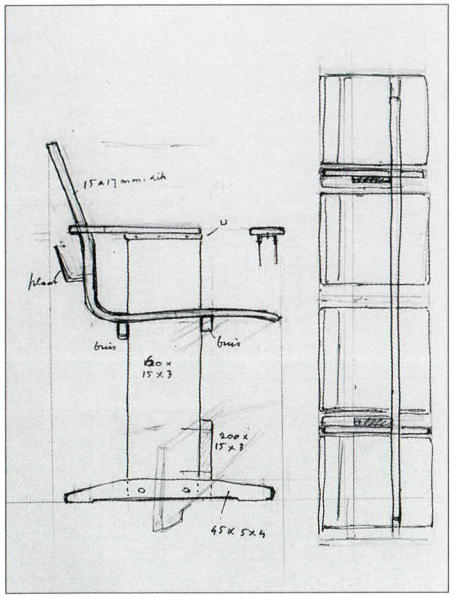
664 Design conversion dwelling Veldkamp

Utrechtseweg 125, Arnhem

1964-1965

665 **Unit chair**

c. 1964-1965



Rough draft
pencil, ink on paper
27.5 x 22cm
NAi

666 **Dwelling Koning**
Baambrugse Zuwe 125e,
Vinkeveen

1962-1966
client J.A.N. Koning
co-designers
J. van Dillen and
J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Dillen
and J. van Tricht
altered, converted in
1973 by Van Tricht &
Timmler Architects

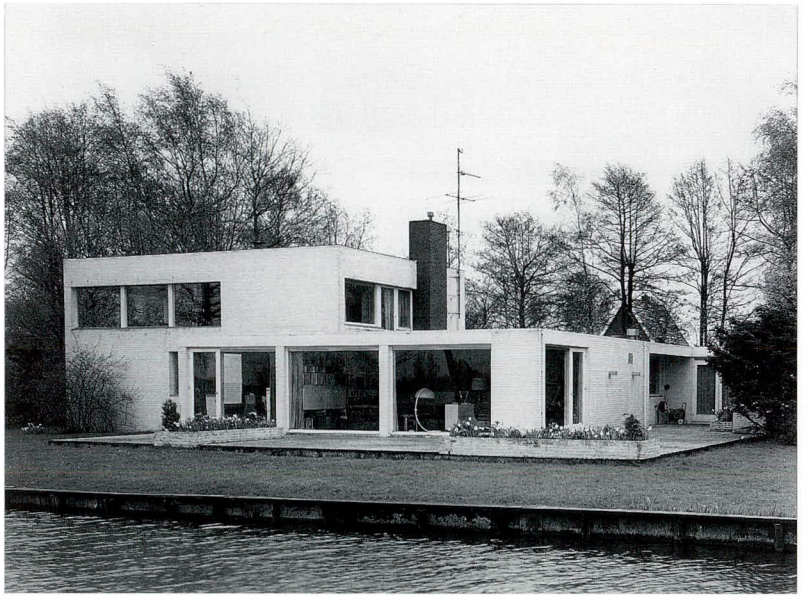
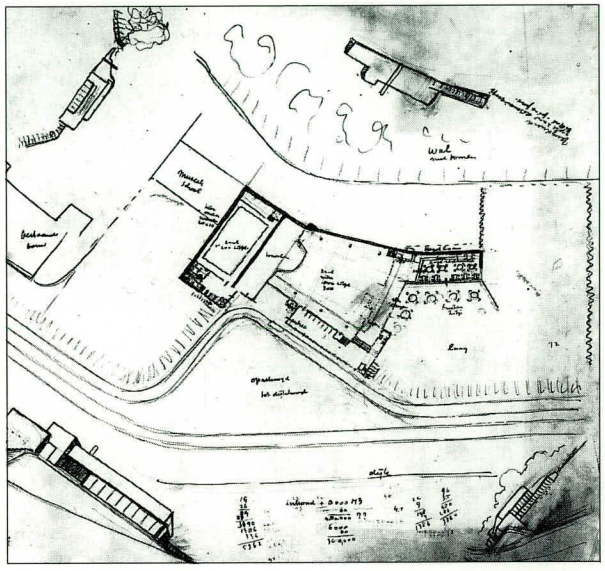


photo 1992

1965

667 **Design Cultural Centre**
Gamerschestraat,
Zaltbommel

1962-1966
co-designer J. van Tricht

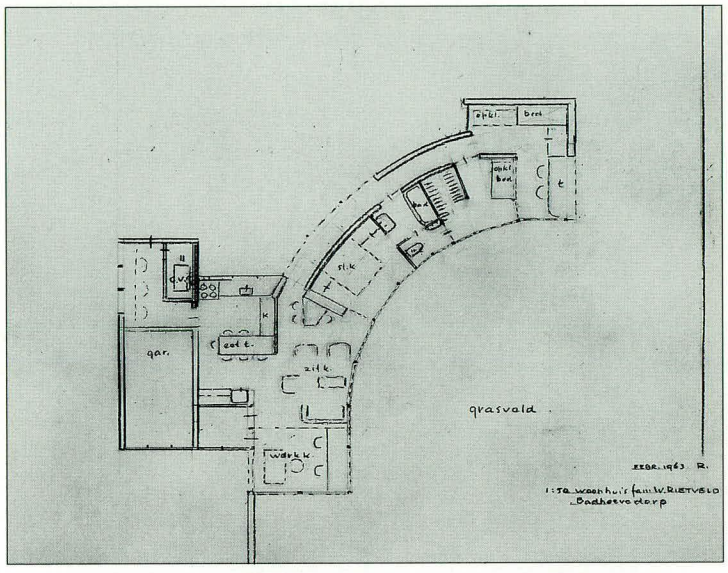


Rough draft
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
56.3 x 59.4cm
NAi

668 **Dwelling Rietveld**
Pasteurstraat 1,
Badhoevedorp

1963-1966
client W. Rietveld
built after an altered design by J. Rietveld
altered

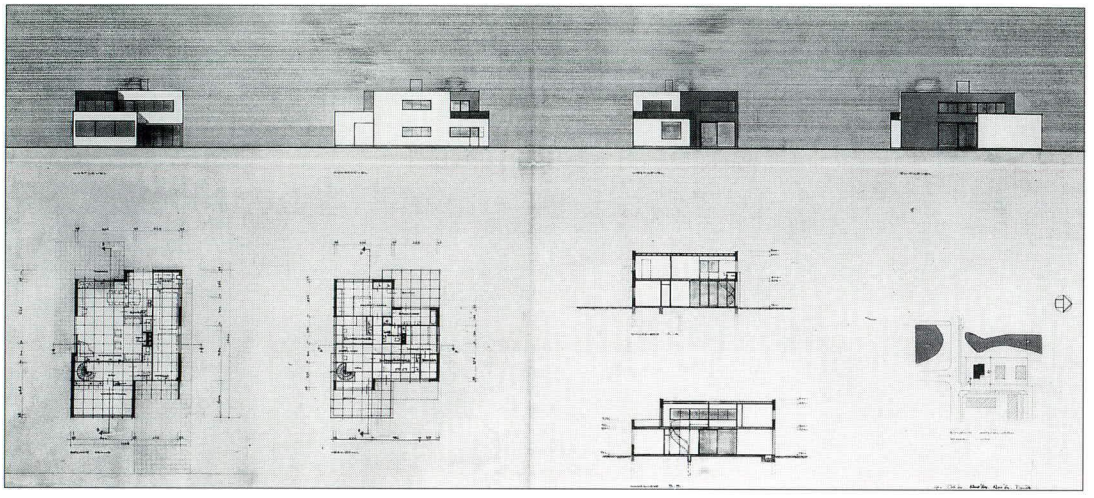
Rietveld made a sketch of a bungalow for his son Wim. The floor plan of the dwelling had the form of a quarter segment of a circumference with a rectangular annexe. Rietveld died in the design phase. His son Jan, who was also an architect, completed the project. He changed the floor plan somewhat, with the curved lines in the floor plan becoming straight lines.



Design drawing
pencil on transparent
paper
55 x 65.5cm
NAi

1966

Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
59.5 x 126cm
NAi



1966

669 Dwelling Dolk
Straat van Mozambique 1, Amstelveen

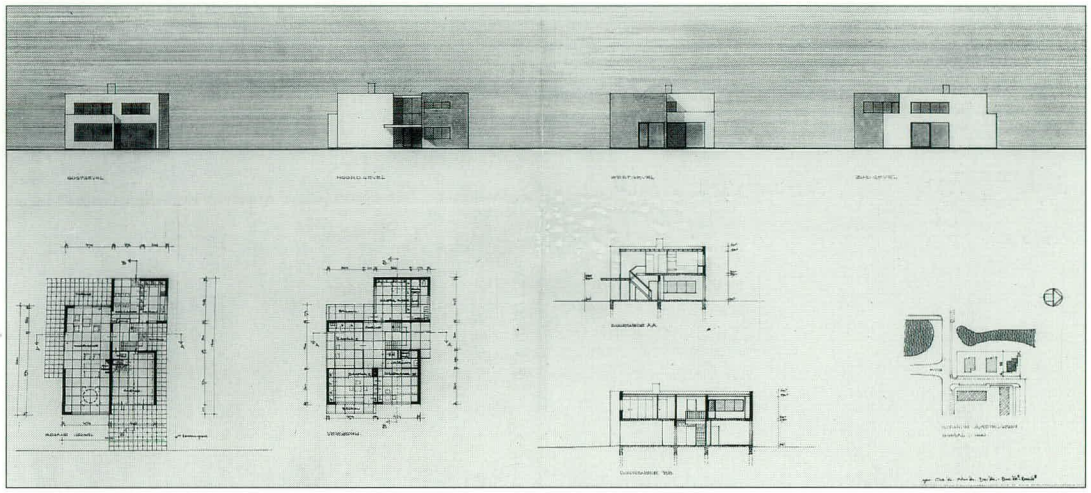
1964-1966
client G.A.J. Dolk
realized by J. van Dillen
and J. van Tricht

The dwellings for G. Dolk, F. Engelhard (no. 670) and A. Wijs (no. 671) are beside each other. Originally the plan was that the three clients would build the same type of house, but when it turned out that they all had different requirements with regard to their dwelling, this idea was dropped. Rietveld made a sketch and a rough design for each of the clients, in accordance with their individual requirements. However, he died before the definitive plans could be made.
The work was completed by J. van Dillen and J. van Tricht.

photo 1992

671 **Dwelling Wijs**
Straat van Mozambique 5,
Amstelveen

1964-1966
client A.M.J.H. Wijs
realized by J. van Dillen
and J. van Tricht
altered



1966

670 **Dwelling Engelhard**
Straat van Mozambique 3,
Amstelveen

1964-1966
client F.M.A. Engelhard
realized by J. van Dillen
and J. van Tricht

Design drawing
pencil, ink, watercolour
on transparent paper
59.5 x 129cm
NAi

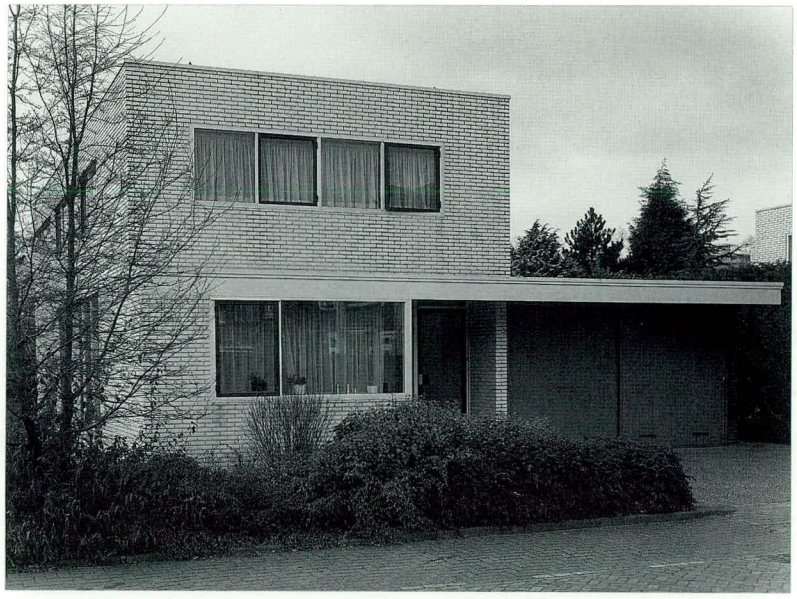


photo 1992

672 **Fine Arts Academy, Gerrit Rietveld Academie**
Fred. Roeskestraat 96, Amsterdam

1956-1967
co-designer J. van Dillen
realized by J. van Tricht
altered

The plans for the building of what was then still called the Institute for Applied Arts, date back to around 1950. Rietveld originally worked on the project with B. Merkelbach, until the latter became the Amsterdam city architect. Because the location was uncertain for a long time, Rietveld made sketches but also elaborated plans for Museumplein and together with Merkelbach, for the site on Wibautstraat near Amstel Station (no. 447). The definitive site was finally in Amsterdam South. The structure of the building was partly determined by the organization of the training course. The subjects in the field of spatial design were taught on the ground floor, the textiles department was on the first floor, the graphics section on the second, and the foundation year and teacher training on the third floor.

It was Rietveld's intention that the layout of the interior could be altered. The walls can easily be moved. The partitions between the classrooms consist of steel frames which are filled in to a height of 2.10 metres with chipboard and above that with glass. Between the classrooms and corridors there are cupboard units alternated with display cases. A ceiling of separate sections has been fitted in the corridor at a height of 3.15 metres. Wiring and pipes run in the space between the ceiling and the floor above it, a system that was also used in the Julianahal of the Utrecht Trade Fair (no. 495).
The building consists of a concrete skeleton of beams and columns against which a curtain wall has been hung, at a distance of 40 centimetres (see also no. 630). The structure of the workshops is a steel skeleton.

Rietveld never saw the building in its finished state, for he died while the preparatory groundwork stage was underway. In 1967 the academy was named after him.

1967

1967

photo c. 1967

673 **Auditorium cemetery**
Vijfhuizerweg,
Haarlemmermeer

1958-1967
realized by J. van Dillen
and J. van Tricht

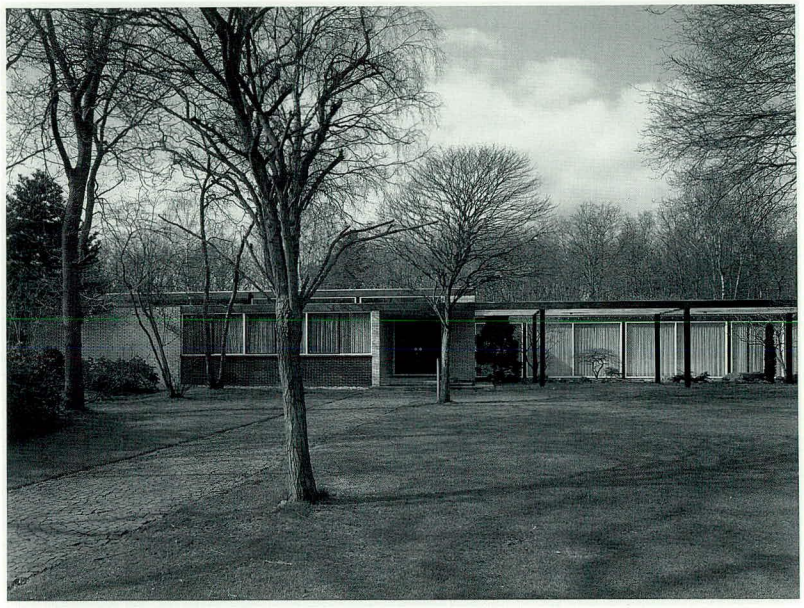
photo c. 1967

Interior
photo c. 1967

674 **Dwelling Bosschaert**
Lange Wijnen 9, Laren

1961-1967
client A.A. Bosschaert
co-designer J. van Dillen
realized by T. Bakker

photo c. 1967



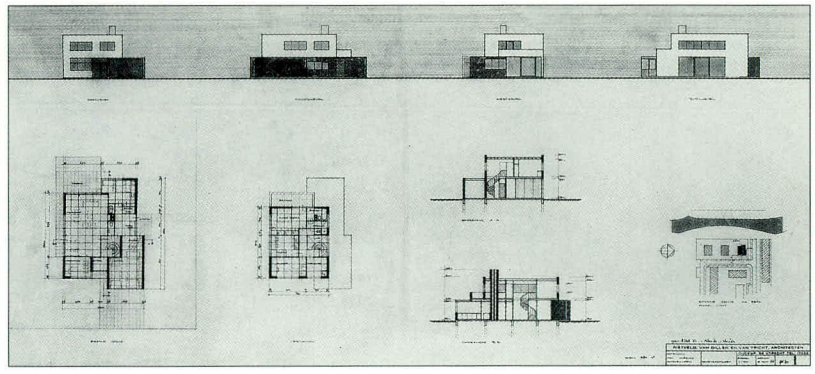
1967

675 **Dwelling Nuesink**
De Roos van Dekema 5, Amstelveen

1964-1967
client G.O.J.A. Nuesink
realized by J. van Dillen and J. van Tricht
altered

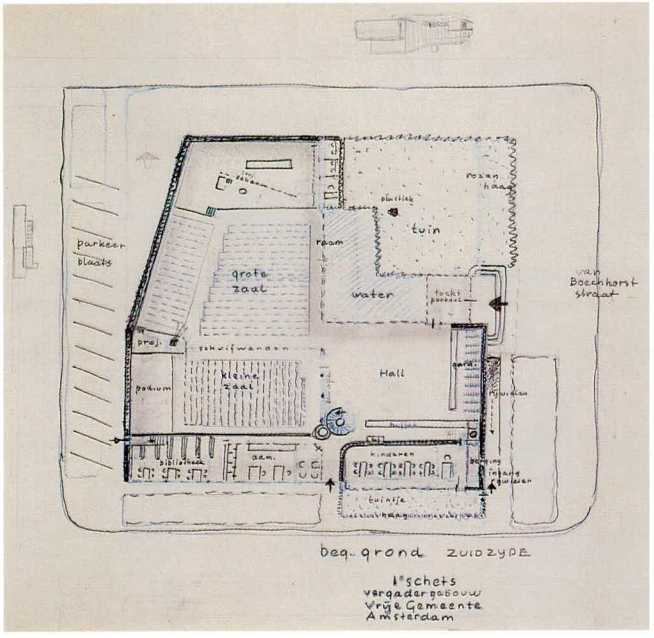
G. Nuesink had purchased a piece of land near Laan van Mozambique where, as he knew, three dwellings by Rietveld were to be built (nos 669-671). He too was interested in having a design by the architect who was by now famous. Shortly before his death, Rietveld made a sketch for the house for Nuesink. However, the design had to be elaborated and realized by J. van Dillen and J. van Tricht.

Design drawing
pencil, ink on transparent paper
59.5 x 114.7cm
NAi



676 **Vrije Gemeente building**
Van der Boechhorststraat
26, Amsterdam

1964-1967
co-designer J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht



Rough draft
pencil, crayon, ink on
transparent paper
91 x 82cm
NAi

photo c. 1967

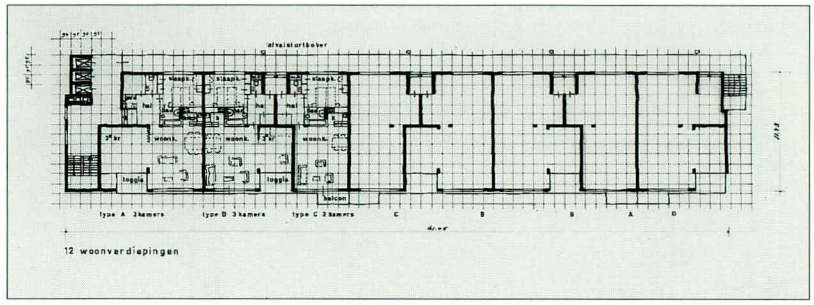
1967

677 **Raiffeisen Bank**
Prinses Christinalaan 23,
Uithoorn

1964-1968
co-designer J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht

679 **Service flats**
Utrechtseweg/
Hulkesteinseweg, Arnhem

1955, 1961 and
1964-1968
client Bouwonder-
neming L. de Vries
realized by J. van Dillen
and J. van Tricht

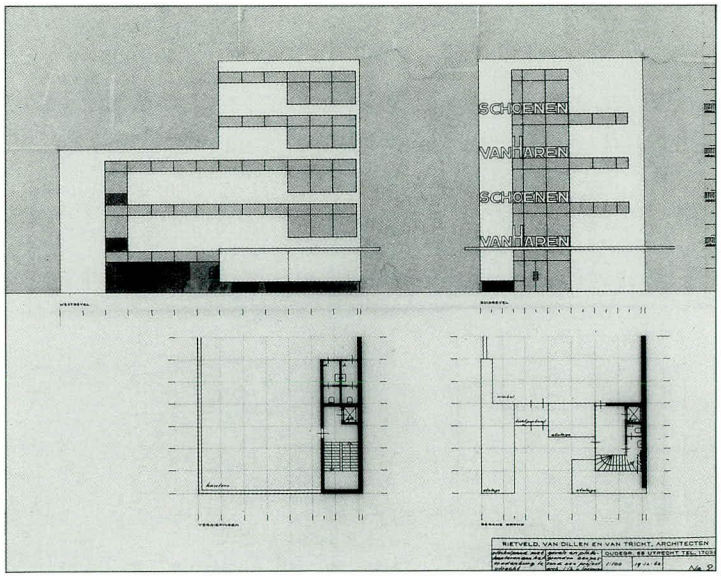


Design drawing, detail
ink on transparent paper
74 x 89cm
NAi

678 **Facade adaptation branch of shoe shop Van Haren**
Vredenburg/Willemstraat,
Utrecht

1962-1969
client Van Haren
realized by J.J.H. van
Leeuwen and J.B. van
Grunsven

1968



Design drawing
pencil, ink on
transparent paper
60 x 73.5cm
NAi

photo 1992

680 Nieuw Gemeentelijk Lyceum
Kruisbergseweg 4, Doetinchem

1961-1971
client Municipality of Doetinchem
co-designer J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht
altered

The commission to design the municipal school was given to the architectural bureau of Rietveld, Van Dillen and Van Tricht in 1961. When Rietveld died, official permission for the building had not yet been granted. Although he was involved in the design at the earliest phase, the school was built under the supervision of Van Tricht, who developed and adjusted Rietveld's design.

photo 1992

681 Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh
Paulus Potterstraat 7, Amsterdam

1963-1973
client The Kingdom of the Netherlands
co-designers J. van Dillen and J. van Tricht
realized by J. van Tricht

The design of the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh in Amsterdam was a unique commission. The museum was specially built to house the work and collection of a single artist. The client, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the initiator in the building of the museum, V. van Gogh, son of Vincent's brother Theo, had a number of requirements. The most important were that the scale of the other buildings had to be borne in mind, particularly the adjacent Stedelijk Museum, and that the exhibition space had to be illuminated from above with daylight. Rietveld produced a preliminary sketch which met both requirements. It shows a building with three floors. As in his other exhibition buildings (nos 463 and 481) but also in some of his dwellings (nos 419 and 632) he based the arrangement of the space on a metre grid. A central hall was planned in the middle, which was as high as the building. The upper floors are drawn

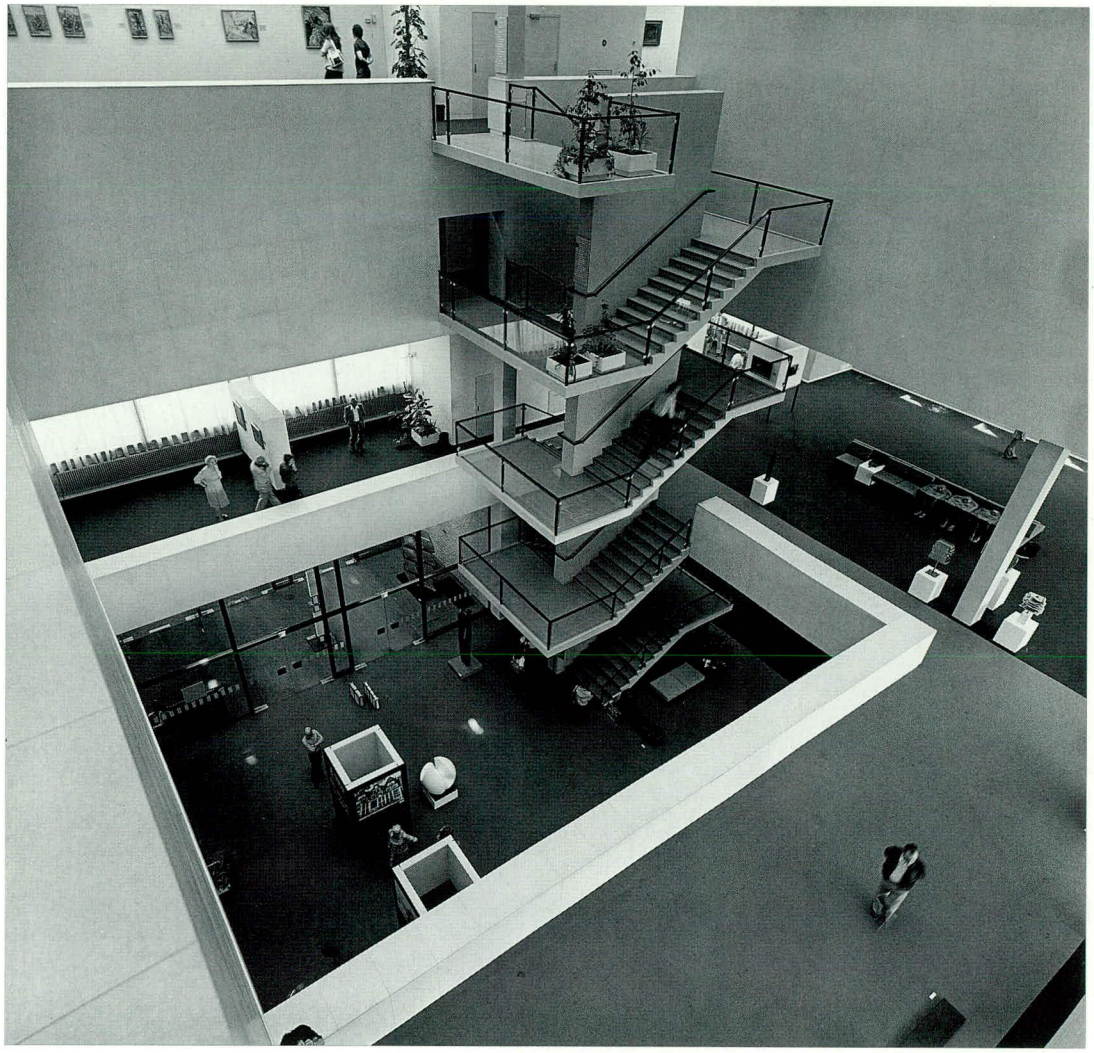
photo c. 1973

1973

as open galleries. The higher the floor is, the smaller the floor surface area. In this way the visitor could see both the galleries below and the hall. In fact, the principle for the interior was the same as in De Zonnehof (no. 567), except that Rietveld had a more complicated and extensive version in mind for the Van Gogh Museum. A sketch shows that the daylight was supposed to enter through glass openings in the roof. Rietveld's plan got no further than the stage of a programme of requirements and rough sketches. After Rietveld's death in 1964, J. van Dillen worked on the commission, basing himself on Rietveld's sketches. When Van Dillen died in 1966, the torch was passed on to J. van Tricht. The museum was built after an adjusted design by Van Tricht.

1973

photo c. 1973



Rietveld as draughtsman at the goldsmith workshop of the jeweller C.J.A. Begeer, photo 1913.

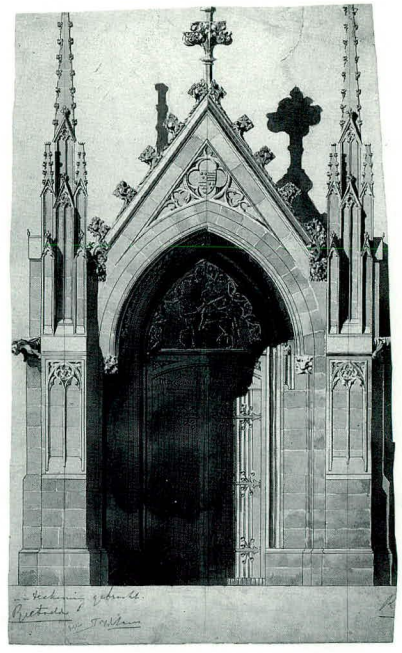
Biographical data

Family of Rietveld senior

Parents:
Johannes Cornelis Rietveld,
Utrecht 1860, died Utrecht 1933.
Elisabeth van der Horst,
Monnickendam 1860, died Utrecht 1927.
They were married on 12 May 1886
in Utrecht.

Birth dates of the children:

21 January 1887	Johannes Cornelis
24 June 1888	Gerrit Thomas
10 February 1890	Willem
11 June 1894	Franciscus Jacobus
8 August 1897	Marijtje
27 December 1898	Johanna Francina



Porch of Utrecht Cathedral drawn by Rietveld between 1904 and 1908.

1888 24 June 1888. Birth of Gerrit Rietveld, Ooftstraat 14, Utrecht.

1890 20 June 1890. Family moves to Adriaanstraat 1, Utrecht.

1891 3 July 1891. Family moves to Poortstraat 98, Utrecht.

1900 Rietveld leaves primary school and goes to work with his father in the furniture workshop at Poortstraat 98, Utrecht.

1904 1904-1908. Evening course at the 'Het Kunstindustrieel Onderwijs der Vereeniging "Het Utrechtsch Museum van Kunstnijverheid te Utrecht"' during the day Rietveld works at the goldsmith workshop of the jeweller C.J.A. Begeer.

1906 c. 1906. Evening course with the architect P.J.C. Klaarhamer, Heerenstraat 19, Utrecht.

1907 First mention in the Utrecht directory, profession: 'cabinet-maker'

1909 c. 1909-1913. Employed by C.J.A. Begeer.

1910 According to the Utrecht directory his profession is 'draughtsman'.

1911 28 September 1911. Marries Vrouwgien Hadders (born Assen, 1883).
12 October 1911. Settles at Oudegracht Tolsteegzijde 61 (now 231), Utrecht.

1912 Member of the society Kunstliefde.
Exhibitions
21 April – 5 May 1912
Exhibition of works by members of the Schilder- en Teekenkunstig Genootschap 'Kunstliefde', Gebouw van Kunstliefde, Utrecht.

1913 5 May 1913. Moves to Ooftstraat 23, Utrecht.
26 October 1913. Birth of daughter Elizabeth.
No profession listed in the Utrecht directory.

1915 13 August 1915. Birth of son Egbert.

1917 1 May 1917. Moves to Adriaen van Ostadelaan 25 (later 93) Utrecht.
The furniture workshop is started at this address.
According to the Utrecht directory his profession is 'cabinet-maker'.
Winter 1917-18. Gerard van de Groenekan (born 1904) comes to work for Rietveld as apprentice.

1918 6 May 1918. Birth of daughter Vrouwgien.
Member of Voor de Kunst.

1919 27 April 1919. Birth of son Johannes Cornelis.
First contact with Theo van Doesburg and with J.J.P. Oud.
Collaborates on the journal *De Stijl*.
Exhibitions
22 September – 22 October 1919
'Tentoonstelling voor Aesthetisch uitgevoerde gebruiksvoorwerpen', Museum voor Kunstnijverheid, Haarlem.

1920 *Exhibitions*
July – August 1920
Furnishing of model dwelling in a housing block by J.J.P. Oud, Spangen, Rotterdam.

1921 First commission from Truus Schröder-Schräder (Deventer 1889, died Utrecht 1985).
September-October 1921. Trip to Berlin/Hanover.
21 October 1921. Birth of son Gerrit.
Exhibitions
March 1921
Crafts Exhibition, Zwolle

1923 Meets Bruno Taut, who is giving a lecture in Utrecht, Kurt Schwitters, who comes to Utrecht on a Dada tour, and El Lissitzky.
Exhibitions
19 May – 17 September 1923
'Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung', Landesausstellungsgebäude, Lehrter Bahnhof, Berlin.
15 October – 15 November 1923
'Les Architectes du Groupe De Stijl', Galerie L'Effort Moderne, Paris.
Autumn 1923
'Juryfreie Kunstschau' in collaboration with Vilmos Huszár, Landesausstellungsgebäude, Lehrter Bahnhof, Berlin.'

1924 5 May 1924. Moves to Bachstraat 11, Utrecht.
Until November of that year the furniture workshop is also at this address, after which it is moved to Oude Kamp 3a, Utrecht. G. van de Groenekan takes over the workshop.
According to the Utrecht directory his profession is 'int. architect'.
18 July 1924. Birth of son William.
Exhibitions
April 1924
'De Tentoonstelling van Kunstnijverheid', organized by the Utrechtse Kunstkring, Gebouw voor Kunst en Wetenschappen, Utrecht.
October 1924
Rotterdamse Kring, Rotterdam.

1925 Established as architect in the Rietveld Schröder House, Prins Hendriklaan 50, Utrecht.

1926 Renews acquaintance with El Lissitzky, when the latter visits the Rietveld Schröder House with Mart Stam on 27 September 1926.
Exhibitions
7 May – 15 June 1926
'Typen Neuer Baukunst', Staatliche Kunstgewerbeschule, Hamburg.

Wander Ausstellung der Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim / BDA Landesbezirk Norden.

1927 First contact with László Moholy-Nagy.
1927-1930. Member of the board of the Utrecht branch of the Nederlandsche Filmliga (chairman: S. van Ravesteyn, treasurer: M.R. Radermacher Schorer, other members: L.M. Kuitenbrouwer, A.J. Vos, H.F. Mertens and G. Seyler).
Exhibitions
25 June – 10 July 1927
Furnishes 'work room' in model dwelling', in collaboration with T. Schröder-Schräder; organized by the Instituut voor arbeiders-ontwikkeling, Beetsstraat 158, The Hague.
Art hall of Molly Melius, Grimburgwal, Amsterdam.
First exhibition of Modern Architecture, in Moscow.
'Internationale Plan- und Modell-Ausstellung Neuer Baukunst "Die Wohnung"', Stuttgart.

1928 Takes part in the preliminary congress for the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in La Sarraz (Switzerland); other Dutch representatives are H.P. Berlage and Mart Stam.
Member of the Genootschap Nederland-Nieuw Rusland.
Architecture editor of *Nieuw Rusland*.
A number of visits to Wesel and Cleve in Germany, in connection with commissions.
Exhibitions
4 February – 1 March 1928
'Architectuur', Schilderkunst en Beeldhouwkunst (ASB) exhibition, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; here Rietveld exhibits on his own and in collaboration with T. Schröder-Schräder.
September – October 1928
'Der Stuhl', Städtischen Ausstellunggebäude, Interimtheaterplatz, Stuttgart.

1929 Member of the exhibition committee of the Utrechtsche Kunstkring.
With Mart Stam, Dutch delegate to the CIAM 'Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum', Frankfurt am Main.
Jury member for a competition for furniture designs, set by the Thonet Mundus Concern; the other jury members were: Oliver Bernard, London; Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Paris; Joseph Frank, Gustav Siegel and Hans Weill, Vienna; Edmund Farago, Budapest; Joseph Cocar, Prague; Enrico Griffini, Milan; Bruno Paul, Berlin; Adolf Schneck, Stuttgart; and Ernst Wiesner, Brünn.
Trip to Vienna.
Exhibitions
March 1929
'Der Stuhl', Frankfurt am Main.
20 April – 20 May 1929
'Der Stuhl', Staatliche Kunstbibliothek, Lichthof des Ehemaligen Kunstgewerbemuseums, Prinz Albrecht Strasse 7 [place unknown].

Participants of the first meeting of CIAM. Photo 1928.

29 June – 28 July 1929
'Moderne Nederlandsche toegepaste kunst', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
October 1929
Wanderausstellung 'Neues Bauen', Architectural exhibition of the Utrechtsche Kunstkring, Utrecht.
2 – 24 November 1929
Architectuur Schilderkunst en Beeldhouwkunsttentoonstelling; Architectuur: Wanderausstellung des Deutschen Werkbundes 'Neues Bauen', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1930 *Exhibitions*
September 1930
'Union des Artistes Modernes', Pavillon de Marsan, Paris.

1931 Honorary member of Kyoto International Architects' Association
Board member Kunstliefde.
Exhibitions
7 – 28 February 1931
'Artibus Sacrem', in collaboration with T. Schröder-Schräder, Arnhem.
18 April – 10 May 1931
'Expositie Utrechtsche Jongeren', Voor de Kunst, Nobelstraat 12, Utrecht.
4 – 25 October 1931
Layout of model dwelling in the row of four dwellings designed by Rietveld and T. Schröder-Schräder, Erasmuslaan, Utrecht.

1932 Trip to Vienna on the occasion of the opening of the Wiener Werkbundsiedlung.
Exhibitions
May – June 1932
Exhibition of furniture, Metz & Co., Hoogstraat, The Hague.
25 June – 6 July 1932
'Rationelle Bebauungsweise', Middelbare Technische School, Amsterdam.

1933 The Rietveld Architectural office moves to Oudegracht 55 I, Utrecht.
Exhibitions
September 1933
'Op het dak', Metz & Co., Keizersgracht 455, Amsterdam.
23 December 1933 – 15 February 1934
Exhibition of the Nederlandsche Vereeniging voor Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst VANK [location unknown].

1934 *Exhibitions*
Furnishing of model dwelling in the Bergpolderflat (design W. van Tijen, J.A. Brinkman and L.C. van der Vlugt), Rotterdam.
14 December 1934 – 23 January 1935
Chairs exhibition of the VANK, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1935 Member of the jury for a competion for wood and steel furniture, set by Metz & Co.; the other jury members were J.J.P. Oud and Willem Penaat.
Exhibitions
December 1935
Jubilee exhibition 'Bouwkunst en Aanverwante Vakken', Rotterdam.

1937 Moves to Vredenburg 8 bis, Utrecht, but is registered at the address of the architectural office: Oudegracht 55 I, Utrecht.
Exhibitions
'De nieuwe woning', Metz & Co., Hoogstraat 10, The Hague

1938 *Exhibitions*
'Het nieuwe meubel', Metz & Co., Keizersgracht 449, Amsterdam.

1940 *Exhibition*
Exhibition of furniture, Metz & Co., Keizersgracht 449, Amsterdam.

1941 *Exhibition*
5 July – 3 November 1941
'In Holland staat een huis', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
'Woonmogelijkheden in het nieuwe Rotterdam', Nieuwe Beurs, Rotterdam; organized by Volkswoningbouw Rotterdam NV.

1944 1944-1955. Teacher of architectural design at the Voortgezet Hoger

B. Merkelbach, Rietveld and Ch. Karsten with the box containing the cake that *De 8 en Opbouw* sent to Rietveld to celebrate his 50th birthday. Photo 1938.

Bouwkunst Onderricht (from 1946: Academy of Architecture) in Amsterdam.

1945 Member of preliminary committee for the Resistance Exhibition, 'Weerbare Democratie'.

1946 20 March 1946. Officially registers at the address Vredenburg 8 bis, Utrecht.
Member of selection committee for exhibition Dutch Decorative Art (1946 Liège and Ghent and 1947 Paris).
Editor of *Open Oog* (with Wim Brusse, W. Sandberg, J.P. Kloos, H.L.C. Jaffé and Mart Stam).
Member of the Provincial Committee for War or Peace Memorials, Utrecht.
Trip to Stockholm.
Exhibitions
October 1946
'Dutch Decorative Art', Académie Royale des Beaux Arts, Liège.
November 1946
'Dutch Decorative Art', Ghent.

1947 Member of the Technical Committee of the Exhibition of Craft and Handicrafts, The Hague, 1948
Trips to Paris, New York and Chicago.
Exhibitions
20 June – 20 July 1947
'L'art décoratif hollandais', Orfèvrerie Christofle, Paris.
1947-1951. Teacher of Architectural design at the School of Fine Arts and Technical Sciences, Rotterdam.

1948 Member of the Vereniging Beoefenaars van Gebonden Kunsten.
Member of the Foundation 'Comité tot oprichting van een monument voor de gevallenen in het verzet van de stad Utrecht'.
1948-1958. Member of the Utrecht Planning Board.
1948-1951. Teacher of Architectural design at the Stichting Voortgezet Bouwkunst Onderricht, Arnhem.
Exhibitions
Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, Paris.

1949 Member of the organizing committee and of the jury to assess the entries for the exhibition 'Schoonheid in Huis en Hof', Amersfoort 1950.
Member of the jury for the study competition 'Ontspanningsgebouwtje bij kleine fabriek', set by the Landelijk Contactorgaan van de Cursistenvereniging van Voortgezette en H.B.O. opleidingen.
Trips to Chicago, New York and Curaçao.

1950 Member of the committee set up by the Provisional Arts Council, with the task of designing a movable exhibition space (with G.H.M. Holt and B. Merkelbach).
Curator of the 'Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten, Kunstnijverheid en Industriële Vormgeving Utrecht' Foundation.
Trip to Paris (Meudon, with Willem Sandberg).
1950-1954. Teacher of Practical aesthetics and design at the Academy of Fine Arts, The Hague.
Exhibitions
15 July – 28 August 1950
'Schoonheid in Huis en Hof', Stedelijk Gymnasium, Amersfoort.

1951 *Exhibitions*
8 October – 15 November 1951
'Kunst en Kitsch', Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.
'De Stijl 1917-1928', Stedelijk

Museum, Amsterdam.
May – September 1951
Triennial, Milan.

1952 Trip to Mexico.
Exhibitions
Crafts exhibition, Copenhagen.
'De Stijl 1917-1928', Greek pavilion Biennial, Venice.
December 1952 – February 1953
'De Stijl 1917-1928', Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1953 *Exhibitions*
21 November 1953 – 5 January 1954
'Mens en Huis' [location unknown].

1954 Appointed Officer of the 'Orde van Oranje Nassau'.
Exhibitions
'Het kleurenplan 1954', in collaboration with Constant, De Bijenkorf, Amsterdam.

1955 Member of the Advisory Committee of the School for Industrial Design, Eindhoven, with L.C. Kalff and K. Sanders.
Member of the National Selection Committee for the Netherlands for the International Furniture Exhibition in the Bouwcentrum Rotterdam.
1955-1956. Member of the Commissie Atelierbouw (with among others J.H. van den Broek, M. Flothuis, B. Groenier, Ch.J.F. Karsten, J. Kassies, and G. Lataster).
Exhibitions
11 July – 18 September 1955
'Nederland bouwt 1945-1955', Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.

1956 Member of the jury for the Karel de Grote Prize for architecture of the City of Nijmegen.
Member of the jury for the ideas competition set by the Illustrissimus Senatus Studiosorum Amstelodamensium and the Huisvestingscommissie van de Civitas, on the occasion of the 325th anniversary of the University of Amsterdam.
1956-1957. Member of the Museum committee of the City of Utrecht.

1957 31 March 1957. Death of Vrouwgien Rietveld-Hadders.
Foreign member of the Royal Flemish Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts: Fine Arts sector.
Chairman of the Committee of Preparation for the Dutch entry to the 11th Triennial in Milan.
Member of the exhibitions committee for the BNA anniversary exhibition in Amsterdam 1958.
Member of the advisory committee for a gift to the Royal Trade Fair, Utrecht.

1958 Member of the homage committee 'Vilmos Huszár 75 jaar'.
Exhibitions
World's Fair, Brussels.
March 1958
De Stijl exhibition, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.
10 May – 10 August 1958
'Rietveld. Bijdrage tot de vernieuwing der bouwkunst', in the context of the Holland Festival, Centraal Museum, Utrecht.

1959 *Exhibitions*
6 March – 6 April 1959
'Rietveld. Bijdrage tot de vernieuwing der bouwkunst', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
16-25 March 1959
'Cocos-huis': stand designed by Edo Spier for the Dutch 'Cocos convention in which furniture by Rietveld and Ch. and R. Eames were placed, Huishoudbeurs, RAI, Amsterdam.

1960 17 June 1960. Receives the Sikkens Prize for 1959.
Member of the jury (with Jan Derks and the graphic artist C.J. Kelfkens) of a national shopwindow and slogan competition set by the publishers Het Spectrum.
Member of the organizing committee of the De Stijl exhibition in Rome (1960-61) and Milan (1961).
Member of the jury for the competition for a creche, set by the Koninklijke Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst and the City of Den Bosch.

Member of the advisory committee for Art and Crafts, Utrecht.
Exhibitions
June 1960
'Meubelen van deze tijd', Metz & Co., Amsterdam and The Hague.
15 November 1960 – 17 January 1961
'De Stijl 1917-1930', Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome.

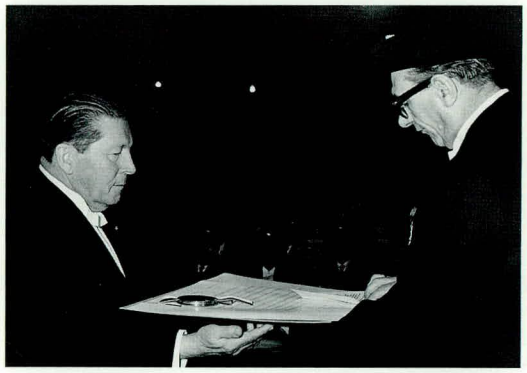
1961 Founding of the Rietveld, Van Dillen and Van Tricht Partnership.
15 November 1961. Registers at the address of the Rietveld Schröder House, Prins Hendriklaan 50, Utrecht.
Exhibitions
21 September – 7 October 1961
'Pioniers van het hedendaagse interieur', De Bijenkorf, Rotterdam.
September – December 1961
Sixth Biennial of Sao Paulo.

1962 February 1962. Member of the jury for the Karel de Grote Prize for Culture.
Contributor of the journal *Kunst in Utrecht.*

1963 Member of the jury for a multiple commission to design a church building for the Opleidings- en Vormingscentrum Kerk en Wereld in Driebergen (with J.B. Bakema, Brouwe, Christiaan de Moor and the theologian H.R. Blankensteijn).
5 July 1963. Receives Silver City Medal from the City of Utrecht with the inscription: 'Zijn bouwen is bewaren en scheppen tevens (His architecture is both conservation and creation).
Exhibitions
February 1963
'Pioniers van het hedendaagse interieur', De Bijenkorf, The Hague.
September 1963
'Maaltijd der vrienden', Museum De Zonnehof, Amersfoort.

1964 Honorary Doctorate from Delft Polytechnic.
Honorary member Association of Dutch Architects.
25 June 1964. Rietveld dies in the Rietveld Schröder House in Utrecht.

Exhibitions
May – June 1964
'De Stijl', Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund.



Rietveld and J. van den Broek at the presentation of Rietveld's honorary degree in Delft. Photo 1964.

most important exhibitions after 1964

1966 3 June – 4 September 1966
'Vijftig jaar zitten', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1968 23 February – 24 March 1968
'De Stijl', Camden Arts Centre, London.

1971 27 November 1971 – 28 January 1972
'Gerrit Rietveld', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1972 1 February – 12 March 1972
'Gerrit Rietveld', Hayward Gallery, London.

1976 'Zomeropstelling Toegepaste Kunst', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1976-1977 'Architect G. Rietveld in Limburg', Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht.

1977 28 October – 18 December 1977
'Classics of Modern Design', Camden Arts Centre, London.

1979 1 December 1979 – 28 January 1980
'Gerrit Rietveld', De Zonnehof, Amersfoort.

1982 'De Stijl: 1917-1931', Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis.
'De Stijl: 1917-1931', Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institute, Washington.
6 August – 4 October 1982
'De Stijl: 1917-1931', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo.

1983 16 July – 11 September 1983
'Rietveld als meubelmaker. Wonen met experimenten, 1900-1924', Centraal Museum, Utrecht.
summer exhibition 'Gerrit Rietveld. Maquettes / Models by Gerrit Rietveld', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1986 7 October – 3 November 1986
'De Stijl csoport', Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Budapest.

1988 25 June – 14 August 1988
'Rietveld Schröder archief', Centraal Museum, Utrecht.
3 October – 12 November 1988
'Gerrit Rietveld: A Centenary Exhibition', Barry Friedman Ltd, New York.
9 December 1988 – 16 January 1989
'Gerrit Rietveld: A Centenary Exhibition', Struve Gallery, Chicago.

1989 3 February – 6 March 1989
'Gerrit Rietveld: A Centenary Exhibition', Dayton Art Institute.

1991 27 August – 29 September 1989
'Rietveld Furniture and The Schröder House', Royal Festival Hall, London.

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The bibliography is ordered chronologically. Names of authors are included in the index. We have tried to provide a comprehensive overview of publications that appeared during Rietveld's lifetime. Work published after 1964 was selected according to content.

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1921

Anon., n.t., in *Elseviers Geïllustreerd Maandschrift* 31 (1921) 5, 354.

1922

Anon., G. Rietveld 1918, in *De Stijl* 5 (1922) 12, 219.

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1924

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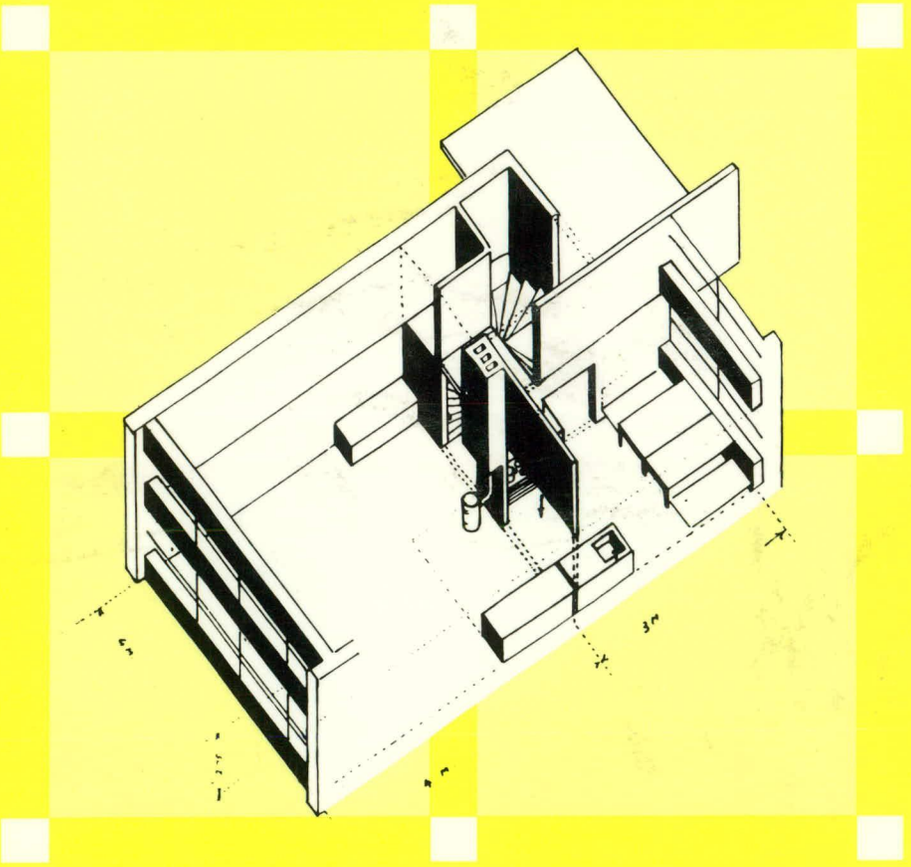
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