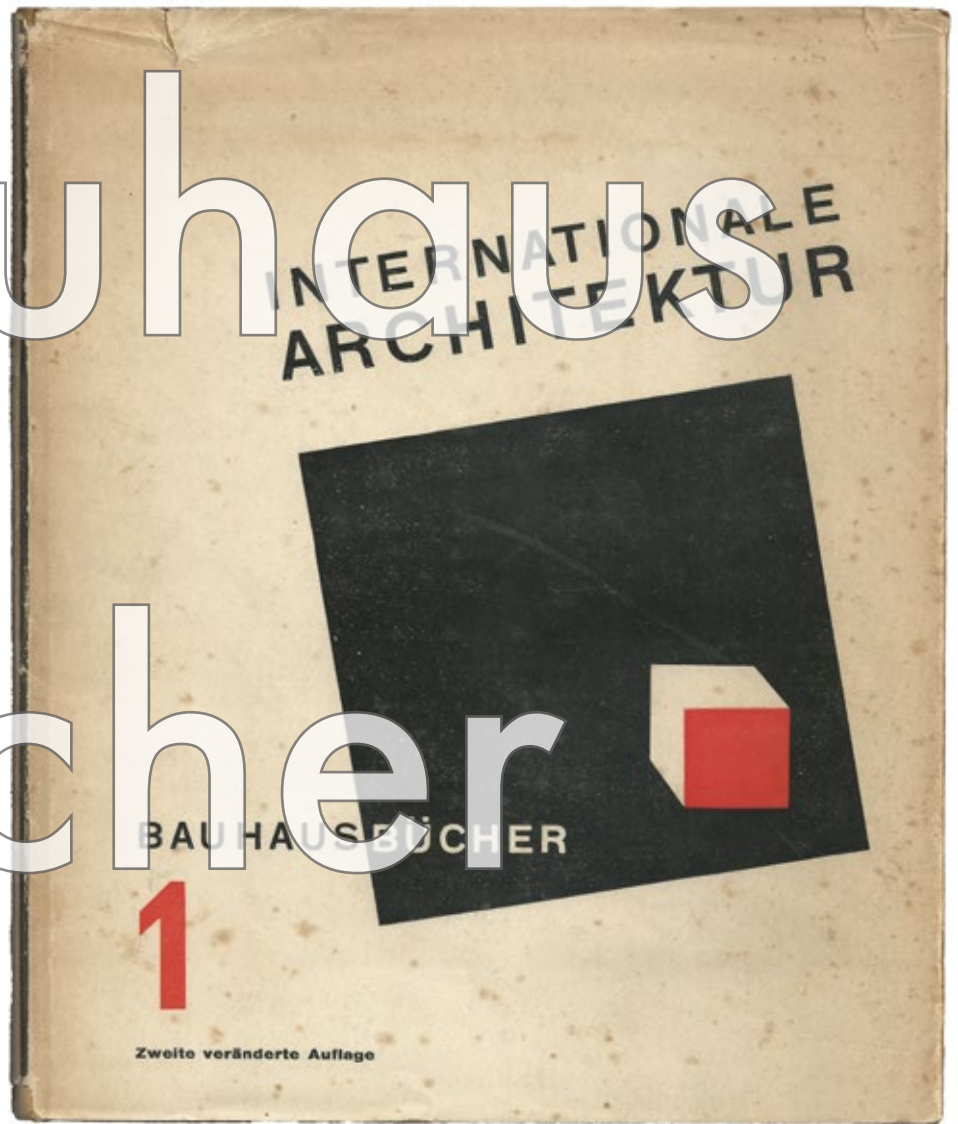


Bauhaus

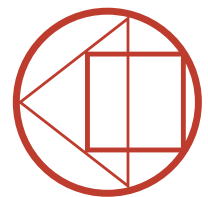
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BAUHAUS- BÜCHER



No. 1 Internationale Architektur herausgegeben von Walter Gropius: a case study



Bauhaus

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**BAUHAUS-
BÜCHER**

No. 1 Internationale Architektur herausgegeben von Walter Gropius: a case study

Bauhausbücher No. 1

Internationale Architektur herausgegeben von Walter Gropius: a case study

Bauhaus

In 1919, the German architect Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus in Weimar. In 1925, the Bauhaus moved to Dessau. As an interdisciplinary school the Bauhaus fused a new way of thinking in art, architecture, and design, and challenged its role in education and society. His utopian vision, the alliance of craftsmen, artists, and architects to create a better world, Gropius proclaimed in the manifesto *Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses Weimar*: 'The Bauhaus strives to coordinate all creative effort, to achieve, in a new architecture, the unification of all training in art and design. The ultimate, if distant, goal of the Bauhaus is the collective work of art – the Building – in which no barriers exist between the structural and the decorative arts.'¹ Though measuring only twenty-three by eighteen centimeter, one of the most notable examples of a 'collective work of art' that derived from the Bauhaus is the Bauhausbücher series. The books are called 'a first-rate source for the Bauhaus's programmatic self-understanding'.² By focusing on the first title from this series this article likes to give some insight into the Bauhausbücher phenomenon.

Bauhausbücher

At the end of 1923, Walter Gropius began planning a series of books to bring to attention the achievements and objectives of the Bauhaus. The books were to be the 'manifesto for the synthetic understanding of life and art at the Bauhaus'.³ Titles were supposed to be published by the Bauhausverlag, but financial troubles in 1924 forced Gropius to search for a new publisher. Over the years, a total of forty-five Bauhaus books were announced. Even Albert Einstein was slated to publish a book in the series, but over the years authors and the number of planned titles changed.⁴ The first eight volumes that appeared in 1925 differ significantly from a list of thirty planned books which were compiled in 1923. In 1925 twenty-two additional titles were announced and seventeen more titles were added in an announcement of 1926, though certain prior titles were deleted.⁵

From 1925 to 1930 Gropius found himself surrounded by a group of artists and architects who contributed to the execution of the Bauhausbücher series. A key factor for its importance is the international approach of the series. Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Schlemmer, all of whom were teachers at the Bauhaus, wrote monographic texts. A wide array of authors, Dutch and Russian theoreticians of the avant-garde like Piet Mondrian and Kazimir Malevich for example, were offered a platform to show and discuss the various currents of the international avant-garde movement.⁶ Mondrian's essays on art theory were mostly written for the *De Stijl* journal and though he was not even a very active member of the Bauhaus, his ideas on modern art were translated and combined in the fifth published Bauhausbücher.⁷ Theo van Doesburg, the founder of *De Stijl* movement, could share his ideas about the principles of Neo-plastic art in the sixth title.⁸ In the years between 1925 and 1930, a total of fourteen volumes were published by Albert Langen Verlag, edited jointly by Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy. The series kicks off with *Internationale Architektur von Walter Gropius*.



1. Walter Gropius, *Manifest und Programm des staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar*, April 1919. With an original woodblock illustration by Lyonel Feininger depicting the Bauhaus as a "Cathedral of Socialism."

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- 1 Walter Gropius, *Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar*, Weimar: Bauhaus, 1919 digital copy retrieved from <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3445408>
English translation of the credo from Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, Ise Gropius, *Bauhaus, 1919-1928*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1938.
digital copy retrieved from https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_2735_300190238.pdf
 - 2 Florian Illies, 'The Bauhaus Books as Aesthetic Program, The Avant-Garde in a Format of 23 x 18' in: Michael Siebenbrodt, Jeff Wall, Klaus Weber, *Bauhaus: a conceptual model*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2009, p. 234.
 - 3 Ibidem, p. 236.
 - 4 Ibidem.
 - 5 Ibidem.
 - 6 retrieved from <https://www.bauhaus100.com/the-bauhaus/works/printing-and-advertising/bauhaus-books/>
 - 7 Piet Mondrian, *bauhausbücher* No. 5, *neue gestaltung: neoplastizismus, nieuwe beelding*, Munich: Albert Langen Verlag, 1925.
 - 8 Theo van Doesburg, *bauhausbücher* No. 6, *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*, Munich: Albert Langen Verlag, 1925.



2. Portrait of Walter Gropius, photo: E. Bieber, c. 1928

E. Bieber

Bauhausbücher No. 1 *Internationale Architektur* herausgegeben von Walter Gropius

Internationale Architektur was intended to be a visual guide. In the foreword Gropius remarks: 'Die „Internationale Architektur“ ist ein Bilderbuch moderner Baukunst. Es will in knapper Form Überblick über das Schaffen führender moderner Architekten der Kulturländer geben und mit der heutigen architektonischen Gestaltentwicklung vertraut machen.'⁹ *Internationale Architektur* gives a broad overview of international avant-garde architecture during the 1920s. The extensive illustrated section features work by, amongst others, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Adolf Loos, Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra, Bruno Taut, Henry van de Velde and Frank Lloyd Wright. Dutch architecture is represented by Hendrik Petrus Berlage, Bernard Bijvoet & Jan Duiker, Willem Dudok, Johannes Martinus van Hardeveld and Johannes Bernardus van Loghem. A pivotal part of *Internationale Architektur* is dedicated to architecture designed by members of De Stijl movement. The Rietveld-Schröder House (*Wohnhaus in Utrecht. Beton, Eisen Glas.*) is presented, as well as projects by Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren (*Modell zu einem Wohnhaus in Beton, Eisen, Glas.*), Jan Wils (*Wohnhausgruppe der Siedlung „Daal en Berg“ im Haag, Leichtbeton.*) and Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud.¹⁰ J.J.P. Oud, during those years he was architect for the city of Rotterdam, together with Theo van Doesburg played an important role between the cross-pollination of Dutch architecture and the Bauhaus.¹¹ Oud's architectural social housing projects, several are featured in *Internationale Architektur*, once caught Gropius's attention and in 1923 Gropius asked Oud to give a lecture at the Bauhaus. Oud's ideas about architecture and social engagement inspired Bauhaus students as well as teachers like Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn and Max Taut.¹² The lecture included many examples of Dutch architecture and it has been noted that the photos presented during the lecture must have found their way into *Internationale Architektur*.¹³



3. The Masters on the Roof of the Bauhaus Studio Building in Dessau, during the opening of the Bauhaus: Josef Albers, Hinnerk Scheper, Georg Muche, László Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Joost Schmidt, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger, Gunta Stözl, Oskar Schlemmer. Photo: unknown, 1926.

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- 9 Walter Gropius (ed.), No. 1 *Internationale Architektur* von Walter Gropius, Munich: Albert Langen Verlag, 1925
10 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 19-12-1925
11 <https://www.boijmans.nl/en/exhibitions/bauhaus>
12 Barry Bergdoll, Leah Dickerman, *Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity*
13 <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/netherlands-bauhaus-pioneers-of-a-new-world-review-rotterdam>

László Moholy-Nagy

Internationale Architektur wasn't a venture executed by Gropius only. In 1923, while looking for a partner in crime to bring to life the unity of art and technique, Walter Gropius asked László Moholy-Nagy to teach at the Bauhaus. Moholy-Nagy taught at the Bauhaus from 1923 to 1928. He collaborated with Oskar Schlemmer and others on murals, ballet and stage designs, in light and color experiments, and in printmaking, layout design and typography. It has been stated that Gropius's role was largely a formal one, such that the Bauhausbücher and their avant-garde layout may be ascribed to the oeuvre of Moholy-Nagy.¹⁴ Influenced by constructivism, Moholy-Nagy was a pioneering figure in the fields of photography, sculpture, painting, industrial design.¹⁵ He gained recognition for his concept of typo-photo, the synthesis between typography and photography. In his essay, *The new typography*, Moholy-Nagy coined the idea that typography is 'a tool of communication.'¹⁶ Communication in 'its most intense form'.¹⁷ By designing and editing the Bauhausbücher Moholy-Nagy closely put into practice this type of communication. With the execution of Bauhausbücher, supported by his wife Lucia Moholy, who had experience in publishing, Moholy-Nagy underscored his role as an avant-garde publisher.¹⁸ Moholy-Nagy is the author of the Bauhausbücher no. 8 *Painting, Photography, Film* and dust jackets and layouts by amongst others Kazimir Malevich, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian, and Theo van Doesburg were designed. As the printmaker of the Bauhausbücher Moholy-Nagy was able to create a new language of typography. Sans serif type, asymmetrical composition, the preference of the lowercase, the use of grids and an absence of decoration, all are characteristics for the design of the Bauhausbücher. The way Moholy-Nagy condensed authors' artistic oeuvres and their respective programs into 'symbols of simplicity' has been called 'the greatest achievements of interpretation and distillation in the art history of the twentieth century.'¹⁹ To a large extent, *Internationale Architektur* wasn't the fruitful collaboration between Gropius and Moholy-Nagy only. A pivotal, but very often neglected role is played by Farkas Ferenc Molnár.

Farkas Ferenc Molnár

The cover design of *Internationale Architektur* is created by Farkas Ferenc Molnár. Molnár, an architect by profession who worked in his later career in the office of Walter Gropius, was like Moholy-Nagy a Hungarian-born artist. He emigrated to Germany in 1920. From 1921 to 1925 Molnár studied at the Bauhaus in Weimar under Johannes Itten. When Theo van Doesburg arrived at the Bauhaus in April 1921, he was a man on a mission and became Itten's main rival. Van Doesburg's goal was to spread the ideas coined by De Stijl movement and teach the principles of Neoplastic art. His ideas, opposite to the Expressionist and craft-oriented approach advocated by Itten, were proclaimed to the Bauhaus students. Though not an official teacher at the Bauhaus, his independent classes were attended by Bauhaus teachers including Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky.²⁰ Compositions seen in van Doesburg's studio must have influenced students like Molnár. By attending Van Doesburg's De Stijl courses from March to July 1922 Molnár and his colleagues Andor Weinger, Alfred Forbat and Marcel Breuer got acquainted with Neo-plastic principles.²¹ One only has to glance at the cover design of *Internationale Architektur* to notice the geometric shapes and a sober red and black color scheme that resembles the Neo-plastic art created by De Stijl members Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg.



4. Farkas Ferenc Molnár, Photo by Gyula Pap, c. 1930

14 Florian Illies, 'The Bauhaus Books as Aesthetic Program, The Avant-Garde in a Format of 23 x 18' in: Michael Siebenbrodt, Jeff Wall, Klaus Weber, *Bauhaus: a conceptual model*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2009, p. 234

15 <https://www.widewalls.ch/bauhaus-typography/>

16 László Moholy-Nagy, *The New Typography*, Originally published in Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar, 1919-23 (Munich, 1923)

17 Ibidem.

18 Florian Illies, 'The Bauhaus Books as Aesthetic Program, The Avant-Garde in a Format of 23 x 18' in: Michael Siebenbrodt, Jeff Wall, Klaus Weber, *Bauhaus: a conceptual model*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2009, p. 234

19 Florian Illies, 'The Bauhaus Books as Aesthetic Program, The Avant-Garde in a Format of 23 x 18' in: Michael Siebenbrodt, Jeff Wall, Klaus Weber, *Bauhaus: a conceptual model*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2009, p. 234

20 <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/van-doesburg-and-international-avant-garde/van-doesburg-and-6>

21 https://monoskop.org/Farkas_Molnár



5. László Moholy-Nagy at the Bauhaus in Dessau, wearing his customary red workman's suit. Photograph by Lucia Moholy, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin 1926

The current state of *Internationale Architektur*

In 2009, commemorating the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Bauhaus, the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin and the Museum of Modern Art in New York hosted the exhibition *Bauhaus. A Conceptual Model*. Supporting the exhibition a profusely illustrated, comprehensive catalogue was published. In his essay 'The Bauhaus Books as Aesthetic Program, The Avant-Garde in a Format of 23 x 18' the art historian Florian Illies crowned the Bauhaus books 'a central work in one of the most important avant-garde movements of the twentieth century'.²² In 2013 design critic and founding member of the Italian avant-garde Memphis Group Barbara Radice donated an authentic copy of *Internationale Architektur* to one of the most important libraries specializing in the arts: The Kandinsky Library.²³ In 2019, the Bauhausbücher series was on display at the *Netherlands = Bauhaus - pioneers of a new world exhibition* organized by the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen. Original editions of *Internationale Architektur* can be found in the collections of the Harvard Art Museums, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Bauhausbücher series can be found on the internet in several digital formats, but because of its rareness original copies of Bauhausbücher hardly ever show up on the art market. Persons or organisations interested in acquiring an original 'zweite edition' copy of *Internationale Architektur*, or whoever wants to share thoughts, insights and knowledge about the Bauhaus and/or the Bauhausbücher phenomenon are gladly invited to contact me.



6. First eight Bauhausbücher titles published by Albert Langen Verlag, 1925

22 Florian Illies, 'The Bauhaus Books as Aesthetic Program, The Avant-Garde in a Format of 23 x 18' in: Michael Siebenbrodt, Jeff Wall, Klaus Weber, *Bauhaus: a conceptual model*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2009, p. 234.
23 <http://bibliothequekandinsky.centrepompidou.fr>

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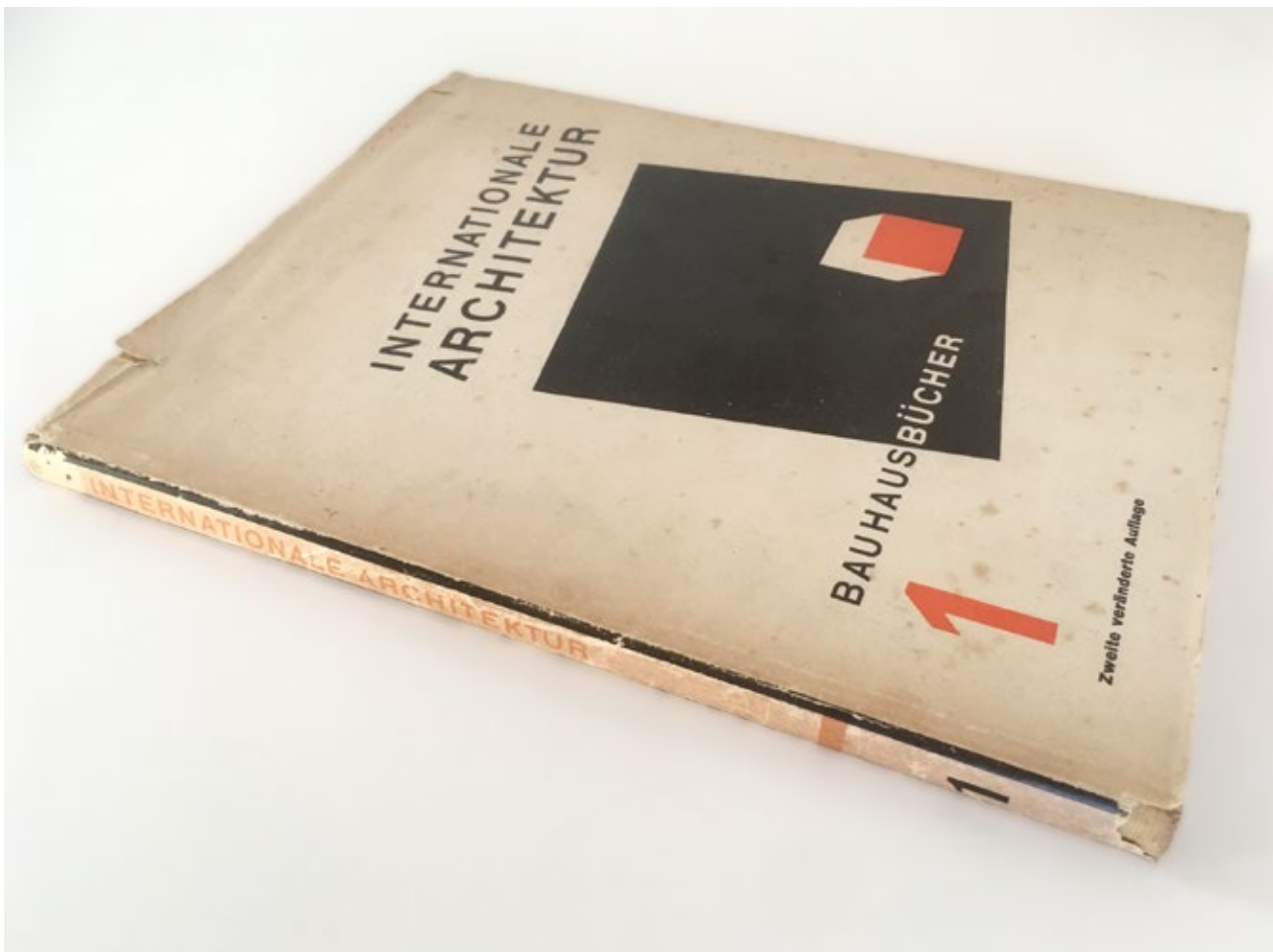
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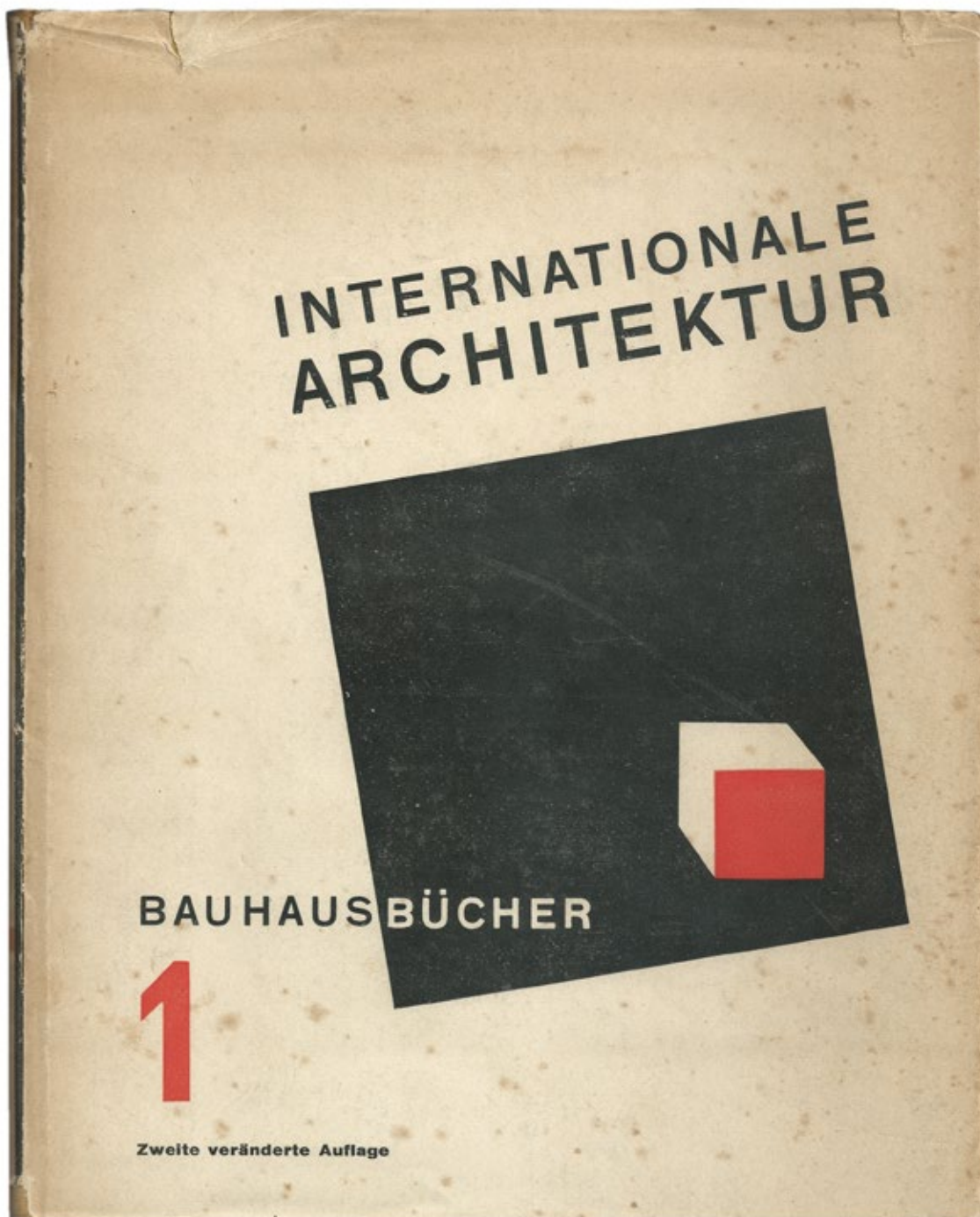
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4. https://monoskop.org/Farkas_Molnár#mediaviewer/File:Farkas_Molnar_ca_1930.jpg
5. <https://moholy-nagy.org/photo-album/>
6. <https://magazines.iadb.org/issue/BHB/1925-01-01/edition/8/page/1?query=>



Specifics *Internationale Architektur*

- *Internationale Architektur* is a work which is complete in itself, but a total of 14 works were published under the general heading of 'Bauhausbücher' between 1925 and 1930.
- Edited by Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy / typography by László Moholy-Nagy / cover designed by Farkas Ferenc Molnár
- second edition 1927 (first edition published in 1925).
- Hardcover, clothbound with dustjacket (minor imperfections).
- Original lithographic two-color dustjacket (minor imperfections).
- Pages: 111
- Place: München
- Year: 1927
- Publisher: Albert Langen Verlag
- Size: Small quarto / 9 1/8 x 7 1/4 inches, approx. 23 x 18 cm.



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BAUHAUSBÜCHER

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**INTERNATIONALE
ARCHITEKTUR**

ZWEITE VERÄNDERTE AUFLAGE. VIERTES BIS SECHSTES TAUSEND

HERAUSGEGEBEN

VON

WALTER GROPIUS

BAUHAUSBÜCHER

SCHRIFTLEITUNG:
WALTER GROPIUS
L. MOHOLY-NAGY

DRUCK:
HESSE & BECKER, BUCHDRUCKEREI
LEIPZIG

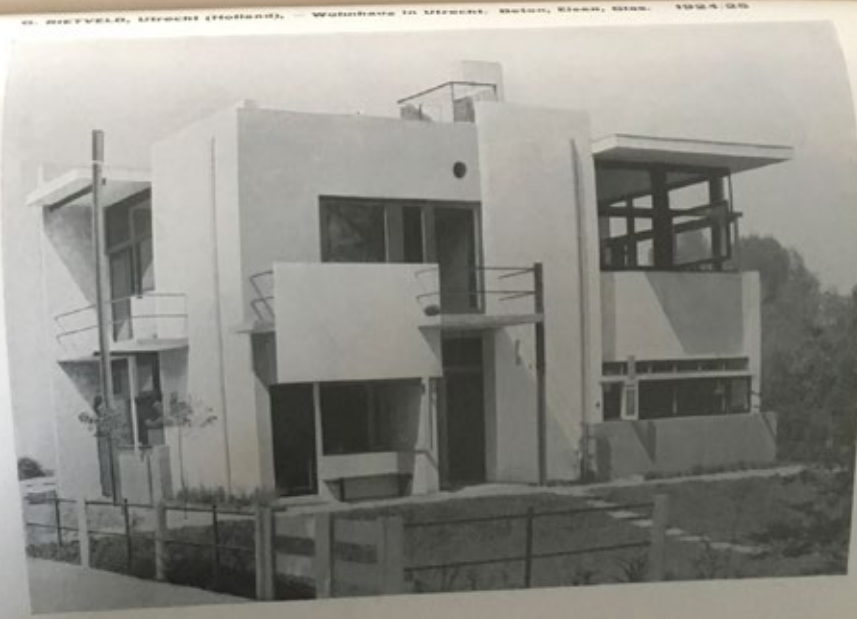
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UMSCHLAG:
FARKAS MOLNÁR

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G. RIETVELD, Utrecht (Holland), — Wohnhaus in Utrecht. Beton, Eisen, Glas. 1924/25



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G. RIETVELD, UTRECHT (HOLLAND). — WOHNHaus IN UTRECHT. BETON, EISEN, GLAS. 1924/25

