



The [Center for Austrian Studies](#) at the University of Minnesota is pleased to present

**Thursday, November 12
7:00 PM
Minneapolis Institute of Art**

**Judith Eiblmayr on Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky
a casual talk and tour of the Frankfurt Kitchen at Mia**

**Led by architect and University of Minnesota Fulbright Visiting Professor
JUDITH EIBLMAYR**



Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897-2000) was the first woman to complete architectural studies in Vienna and is therefore considered to be the first female architect in Austria. Her best known work is the design of the "Frankfurt Kitchen," a fitted kitchen designed for Ernst May's ambitious citywide housing project initiated in Frankfurt, Germany to provide low-income housing for some two million soldiers returning to Germany following the 1918 Armistice, as well as thousands of war widows.

Schütte-Lihotzky lived a long and remarkable life. As an active resistance fighter against the Nazi regime, she was imprisoned for four years before being liberated by the U.S. troops in 1945. After the war it was not easy to reestablish her career as an architect.

She worked as a consultant for urban planning projects, primarily in Cuba, China, and East Germany. In her later years, she received honors for her work and political activities from the Austrian Government. In 1993, when she was 96, the Vienna Museum of Applied Arts held an exhibition of her work. The installation at the Minneapolis Institute of Art of the Frankfurt Kitchen was added to the museum's permanent collection in 2004.

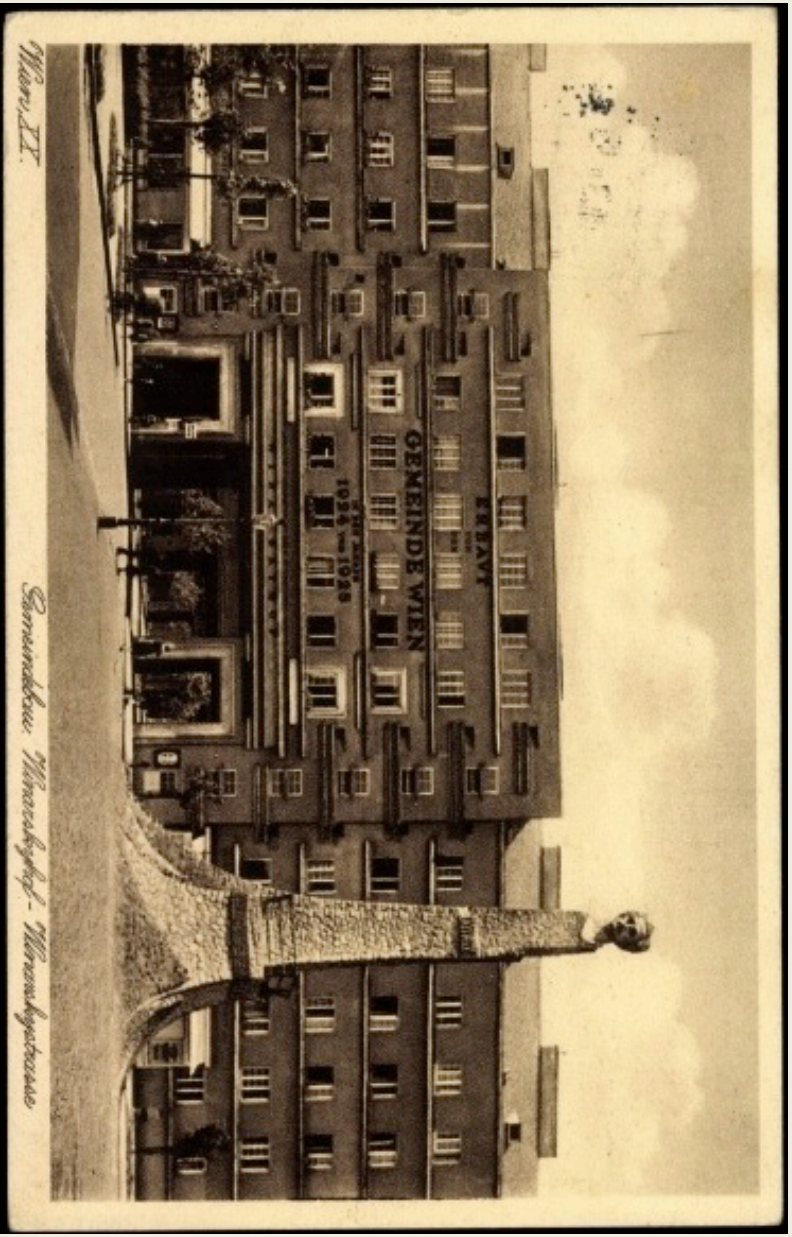


[Judith Eiblmayr](#) is an architect, architectural critic, and curator from Vienna, Austria. She is currently the Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Minnesota, teaching in the Department of Geography fall semester 2015. One topic of her research is women architects in Austria throughout history and today. She will be giving a talk on Thursday, November 19 as part of the [CAS fall lecture series](#) entitled "Is There a 'Perfect' Town? The Rational Grid and the Medieval Maze-Two Systems of Urbanization."

CAS.UMN.EDU



Grete Schütte-Lihotzky at the age of 100
with her cat, Schurl, in her apartment in
Vienna, 1997



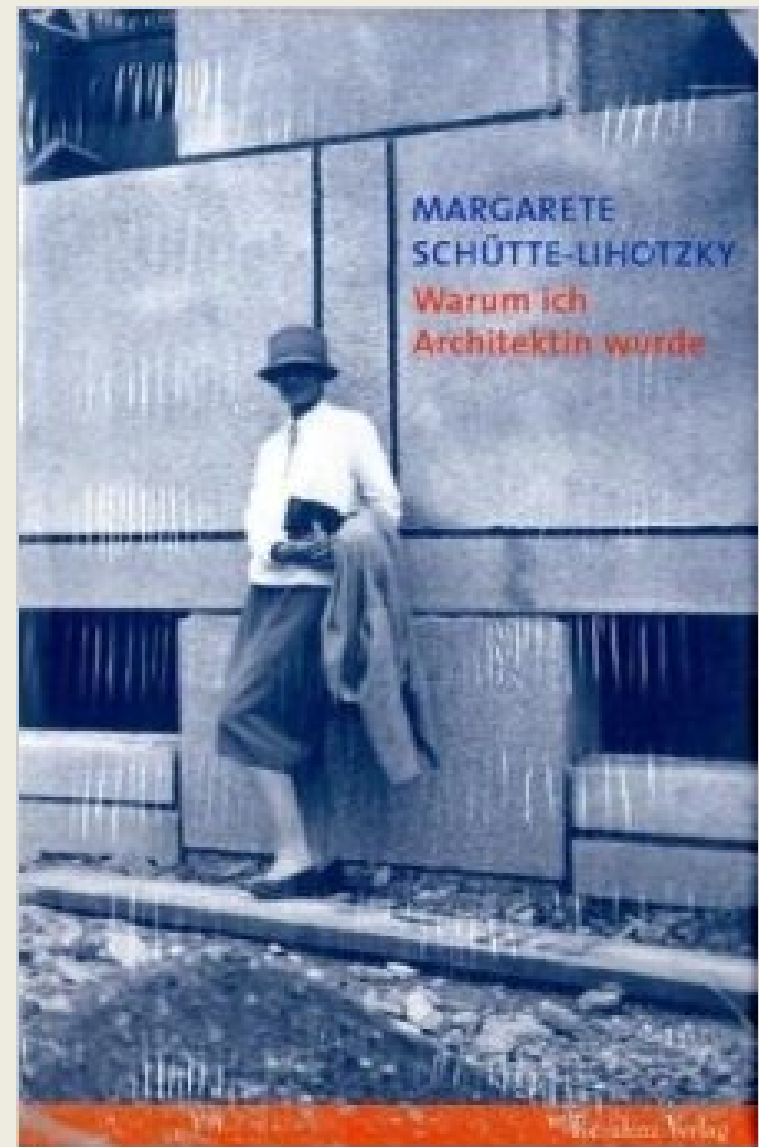
Social Housing in Vienna, Winarsky Hof, 1926-27



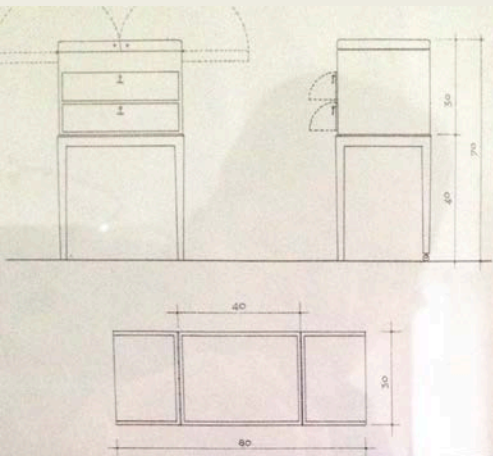
Double House at Werkbundsiedlung, Vienna, 1930-32



„Memories from the Resistance Fight“, 1985



„Why I Became an Architect“, 2004

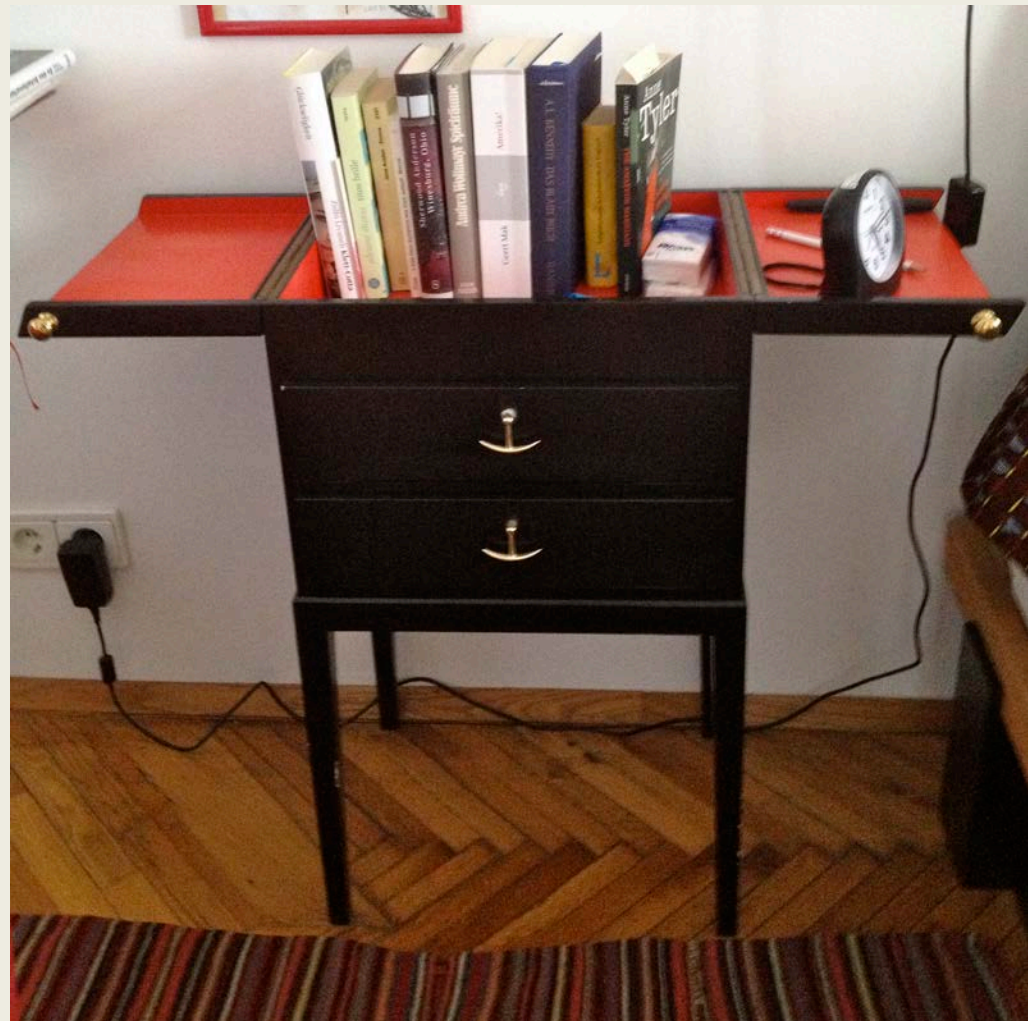


8 TOILETTETISCHCHEN, 1917/18
an der K. K. Kunstgewerbeschule,
3. Studienjahr, bei Strnad



Cabinet, lacquered, 1997

Designed by Grete Lihotzky as
a student, 1917-18



Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen,

Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art MOMA, NYC, Sept 2010 – May 2011

https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/counter_space/the_frankfurt_kitchen

The Frankfurt kitchen

War and inflation precipitated a housing crisis in all major German cities, including Frankfurt, where the response was an ambitious program known as the New Frankfurt. This initiative encompassed the construction of affordable public housing and modern amenities throughout the city. At the core of this transformation were about 10,000 kitchens designed by Grete Schütte-Lihotzky and constructed as an integral element of the new dwelling units.

The Frankfurt Kitchen, as it was known—rational, unpretentious, and socially oriented—was conceived as one of the first steps toward building a better, more egalitarian world in the late 1920s. Under the overall direction of chief city architect Ernst May, new architectural forms, new materials, and new construction methods were applied throughout. Within five years, more than ten percent of Frankfurt's population was living in housing and communities that were newly designed. In 1930, at the request of the Soviet Russian government, May led a “building brigade,” whose members included Schütte-Lihotzky, to implement the lessons of Frankfurt on an even larger scale in the planning of new industrial towns in the Soviet Union.

The Architect: Margarete (Grete) Schütte-Lihotzky (1897–2000)

© University of Applied Arts, Vienna

The Frankfurt Kitchen is the earliest work by a female architect in MoMA's collection.

Reminiscing about her decision to study architecture, Schütte-Lihotzky remarked that “in 1916 no one would have conceived of a woman being commissioned to build a house—not even myself.” Inspired by her mentor at the Vienna School of Applied Arts, Oskar Strnad, she became involved in designing affordable housing and worked with another Viennese architect, Adolf Loos, on planning settlements for World War I veterans.

Impressed by the functional clarity that she applied to housing problems and kitchen design in these projects, Ernst May invited her to join his Frankfurt department in 1926. She remains best known for the Frankfurt Kitchen, but her achievements as an architect working in the Soviet Union, Turkey, and Austria were more varied. During World War II her career was interrupted by four years in prison for her activities in the anti-Nazi resistance movement. In the Cold War period that followed, her professional opportunities in Austria were limited because of her continued membership in the Communist Party.

The Frankfurt Kitchen

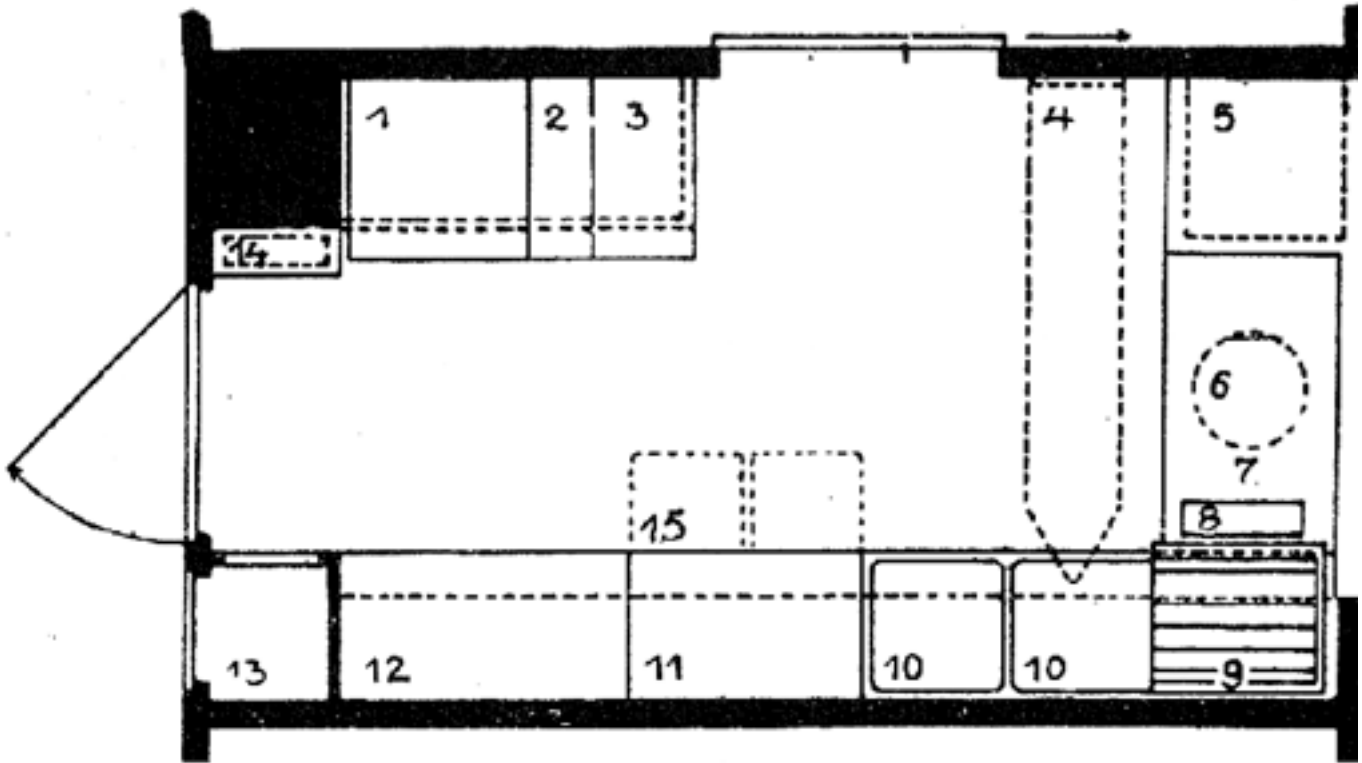
The Frankfurt Kitchen was designed like a laboratory or factory and based on contemporary theories about efficiency, hygiene, and workflow. In planning the design, Schütte-Lihotzky conducted detailed time-motion studies and interviews with housewives and women's groups.

Each kitchen came complete with a swivel stool, a gas stove, built-in storage, a fold-down ironing board, an adjustable ceiling light, and a removable garbage drawer. Labeled aluminum storage bins provided tidy organization for staples like sugar and rice as well as easy pouring. Careful thought was given to materials for specific functions, such as oak flour containers (to repel mealworms) and beech cutting surfaces (to resist staining and knife marks).



The Frankfurt Kitchen: view toward the window 1926

After reading Christine Frederick's book on household efficiency in 1921, Schütte-Lihotzky became convinced that "women's struggle for economic independence and personal development meant that the rationalization of housework was an absolute necessity." Her primary goal in the design of the Frankfurt Kitchen was to reduce the burden of women's labor in the home. The design of a kitchen by a woman helped promote the modernization of housing in Frankfurt to those who viewed cooking and cleaning as women's work, but as Schütte-Lihotzky pointed out, "The truth of the matter was, I'd never run a household before designing the Frankfurt Kitchen, I'd never cooked, and had no idea about cooking." The Frankfurt Kitchen comprised three basic models, each with minor variations. The type exhibited here was the most common and least costly.



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|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. GAS STOVE | 6. SWIVEL STOOL | 11. ALUMINUM STORAGE |
| 2. COUNTERTOP | 7. WORK SURFACE | 12. CUPBOARD FOR POTS |
| 3. COOK BOX | 8. GARBAGE DRAWER | 13. BROOM CLOSET |
| 4. FOLD-DOWN IRONING BOARD | 9. DRAINING BOARD | 14. HEATER |
| 5. FOOD CUPBOARD | 10. SINK | 15. PULL-OUT BOARD |

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Plan of the Frankfurt Kitchen indicating its labor saving features, 1927