

**Working paper**

**Bauhaus Interiors and Diasporic Rooms.  
An Investigation of the Transcultural Implications of Interior Space  
in the context of Shared Heritage**

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**1. Bauhaus and the Frankfurt Kitchen: Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky**

Thinking of Bauhaus, most are likely to imagine white walled modernist buildings with clean edges or iconic design objects and furniture pieces, complimentary to recent large-scale 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Bauhaus school. In contrast, this research project focuses on interior spaces, specifically, within early German Bauhaus thought displayed at Weissenhof Settlement Stuttgart, former Werkbund exhibition site, and furthermore, Zeev Rechter's Israeli modernism in Tel Aviv. Thus, the research won't focus on specific infamous designs, but rather on interior structures with the intent to choreograph and influence social behavior as well as interaction with architecture.

An example to think about elaborated Bauhaus interior space is the Frankfurt Kitchen (1926), an iconic design by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897-2000). This kitchen not only poses a culturally important trace of the translation of industrial and rationalized working processes into the private household – a central aspect of modern architecture and daily culture of the 1920s – but furthermore structures and curates interior space and its inherent ritualization. Would it be possible to translate a Frankfurt kitchen into a different culture and would the specific rituals and choreographed movement, following the design's intention, be translated with the physical interior design structure?

Posing such questions leads to a reflection of the sociology of interior spaces and rooms as inherently site-specific structures, heavily influenced by its performative cultural, more than its national setting. Even though all of the Frankfurt kitchens at the Weissenhof Settlement were destroyed in 1928 due to renovations, the documentation of their initial installment and design enables questions regarding the site's past, current and future realities of interior space. The Weissenhof Settlement in Stuttgart presents the opportunity to investigate the reformation of certain interior structures and rooms as well as how they changed in terms of their social reality and spatial utilization over time and with numerous renovations.

## **2. Bauhaus and German-Israeli heritage: Zeev Rechter**

With this project circling around German-Israeli heritage, illuminating distinctly German ideas within Bauhaus interior, is followed by a further investigation of Zeev Rechter's work, a pioneering Israeli architect and student of LeCorbusier in the 1930s. Rechter (1899-1960) engineered both domestic, e.g. Engel House in Tel Aviv (1934) and representative architecture, such as Beersheeba Municipal Conservatory (1975) or the Israeli Pavilion (1952), located in the Venice Biennial's Giardini – to just name a few of his most iconic buildings. He searched for an ordinary, yet high-quality apartment in Israel's unique climate, while understanding the balcony as a real outdoor room, a utility space just like the kitchen. When German Bauhaus ideas were largely looking to rationalize and standardize architecture through modularization in its interiors, Rechter was aiming to find and implicate a site-specific and distinctly local cultural identity of architecture. To him, this posed a central feature of the consolidation of culture in Israel.

There's currently an influx of contemporary research on the topic of spatial and architectural implications of Diaspora. Modernist architects in Israel were superimposing new architecture that was foreign and distinctly different from the regional architectural formations, such as the Kibbutz. Not only spatial, but social realities were implicated through imported architectural style. Academia largely argues that modernist architecture was neutral enough to contain multicultural complexity and thus became a sort of container architecture, collecting and framing the diversity of Jewish culture brought to Israel from abroad, whilst contributing to the idea of a diasporic architecture in Israel. Were there specific culturally formed spacial realities and rooms in German Bauhaus ideas that were translated into Israeli Architecture and, with that, spacial formation? And, are specific interiors, rooms and their ritualization, or can they be, an indicator of Shared Heritage?

## **3. Research Question**

The ongoing research will question the relationships of German Bauhaus ideas and Rechter's translation, cultural implications of interior architectural space and ritualization as well as indicators of Shared Heritage in mentioned relationships.

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