

SUN AND SHADOW: LA EXPRESIÓN GRÁFICA AL SERVICIO DE UNA IDEA

SUN AND SHADOW: GRAPHICAL EXPRESSION AT THE SERVICE OF AN IDEA

Salvador Sanchis Gisbert, Ignacio Peris Blat

doi: 10.4995/ega.2019.10016

Marcel Breuer pertenece a la primera promoción de técnicos de la Bauhaus. La particular formación que recibe en esa Escuela le permite explorar el concepto del diseño en su sentido más amplio. En el año 1955, en pleno proceso de su internacionalización, se publica una monografía con su obra titulada *Marcel Breuer: Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*. Este libro, el más importante de toda su carrera, se aborda como un ejercicio de diseño global, contando para su desarrollo con la colaboración de fotógrafos, pintores, diseñadores y arquitectos: se plantea como un proceso creativo multidisciplinar. En este artículo se revisan los contenidos del libro, organizados de un modo pionero y singular, así como los recursos de expresión gráfica adoptados, basados en la fotografía, el dibujo y el color, para facilitar una lectura sencilla y clarificadora de su ideario sobre la Arquitectura.

PALABRAS CLAVE: MARCEL BREUER. SUN AND SHADOW. EXPRESIÓN GRÁFICA. LIBRO

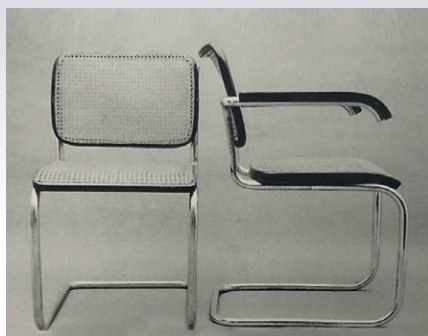
Marcel Breuer belongs to the first class of Bauhaus architects. The special training he receives in that School allows him to explore the concept of design in its broadest sense. In the year 1955, in the process of becoming more and more international, a monograph was published with his work entitled 'Marcel Breuer: Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect'. This book, which is the most important one of his whole career, is seen as an exercise of global design. To fully develop it, it counts on the collaboration of photographers, painters, designers and architects. It manifests itself as a multidisciplinary creative process. In order to facilitate a simple and clarifying reading of his ideas about Architecture, in this article we examine the contents of the book, organised in a pioneering and singular way. We also revise the resources of graphic expression, based on photography, drawing and colour.

KEYWORDS: MARCEL BREUER. SUN AND SHADOW. GRAPHIC EXPRESSION. BOOK

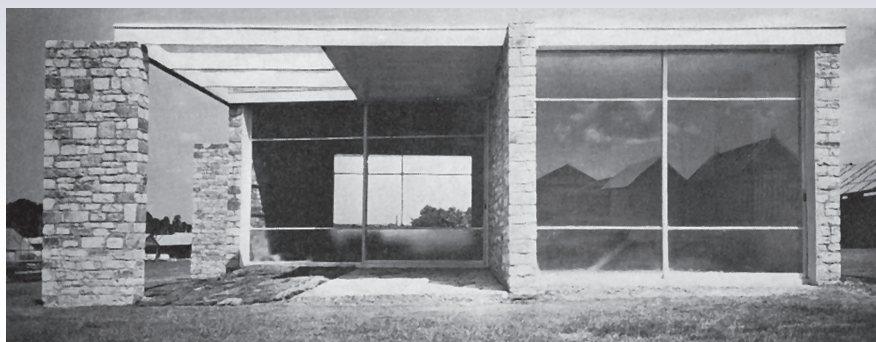


1. Silla B64-B32. "Cesca". 1928
2. Pabellón de Bristol. Inglaterra. 1936

1. Chair B64-B32. "Cesca". 1928
2. Bristol pavilion. England. 1936



1



2

Antecedentes

Marcel Breuer finaliza sus estudios en la Escuela de la Bauhaus pero prácticamente no la abandona 1. Por invitación de su Director, W. Gropius, que se convertirá en un gran amigo, durante unos años ejerce como profesor. Su etapa europea está ocupada, básicamente, por el diseño de mobiliario. Suyos son los diseños, internacionalmente reconocidos, de la butaca *Wassily* y de la silla volada *Cesca* (Fig. 1), basados en el entendimiento y manipulación de las cualidades del tubo de acero cromado. Bajo firmas como *Standard Mobil*, *Thonet* o *Isokon*, facilita la integración del mobiliario de diseño industrial al ámbito doméstico. Las instalaciones interiores y varios estudios teóricos, son el principal legado que deja en Europa cuando se ve obligado a emigrar a Estados Unidos, como muchos otros grandes artistas y arquitectos, por los problemas generados en Europa con la ascensión al poder de Hitler. Una vivienda unifamiliar, la casa *Harnismacher*, un edificio de apartamentos, *Dordelthal*, y el Pabellón de exposiciones de Bristol (Fig. 2) son las únicas obras construidas hasta 1937, año en que parte hacia los Estados Unidos de América para ingresar como profesor en Harvard.

Hasta el año 1947 compagina su labor docente, en la que es muy bien considerado por sus alumnos, con el trabajo profesional. Las obras de esos años están asociadas al campo de la vivienda unifamiliar. Los encargos de la casa *Geller* y de la casa *Tompkins*, y la recuperación que se experimenta tras el fin de la II G. M., le hacen tomar la decisión de abrir un despacho en New York y abandonar la docencia. Con sus nuevos encargos residenciales obtiene un gran reconocimiento en los Estados Unidos, llegando a construir y exponer una casa en el jardín del Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York en 1949 (Fig. 3). En el año 1952 se produce el encargo de la nueva sede de la Unesco en París, convirtiéndose en un arquitecto de proyección internacional.

A partir de ese momento, sus encargos aumentan en número y escala. Encuentra en el hormigón armado un nuevo aliado con el que materializar sus obras y continuar explorando texturas, contrastes, sistemas prefabricados..., cuestiones siempre presentes en sus trabajos (Fig. 4).

En ese momento de su carrera, debe mostrar al mundo sus grandes capacidades como arquitecto. Para ello recurre a la elaboración de una publicación donde los contenidos

Background

Marcel Breuer finishes his studies at the Bauhaus School, but he does not abandon it 1. He works there as a teacher for some years, thanks to the invitation of its Director, W. Gropius, who then becomes a great friend. His European period is basically occupied by the design of furniture. His are the internationally recognised designs of the *Wassily* armchair and the *Cesca* flying chair (Fig. 1), both based on the understanding and manipulation of the qualities of the chromed steel tube. The work with companies such as *Standard Mobil*, *Thonet* or *Isokon* facilitates the integration of industrial design furniture into the domestic sphere. Projects of interior design and several theoretical studies are his main legacy left behind in Europe when he is forced to emigrate to the United States, like many other great artists and architects, due to the problems generated in Europe with Hitler's rise to power. A detached house, the *Harnismacher* house, an apartment building, *Dordelthal*, and the *Bristol Exhibition Pavilion* (Fig. 2) are the only buildings until 1937, the year in which he leaves for the United States of America to start working there as a professor at Harvard University.

Until 1947 he combines his teaching, which he is highly regarded for by his students, with professional work. The works of those years are associated with the field of single-family housing. Both the orders of the *Geller* house and the *Tompkins* house, and the recovery experienced after the end of WW II, make him decide to open an office in New York and resign his teaching position. With his new residential commissions he obtains great recognition in the United States, up to the



point when he builds and exhibits a house in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art of New York in 1949 (Fig. 3). The commissioning of the new Unesco headquarters in Paris in 1952 make him turn into an architect of international repercussion.

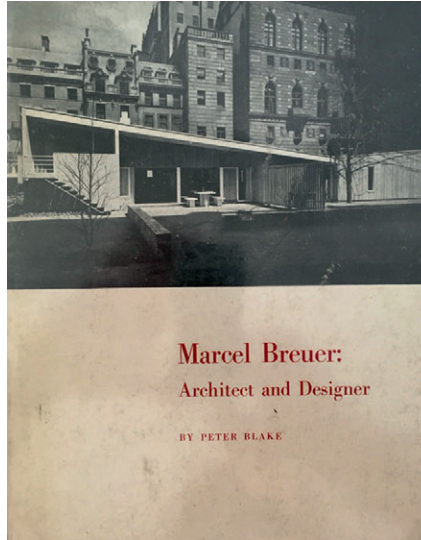
From that moment on, his orders increase in number and scale. He finds a new ally in reinforced concrete, with which he materialises his works and continues exploring textures, contrasts, prefabricated systems..., issues ever present in his work (Fig. 4).

At that point of his career, he must show the world his great abilities as an architect. To do so, he works on a publication in which the graphic contents, drawings and photographs are highly considered: *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*.

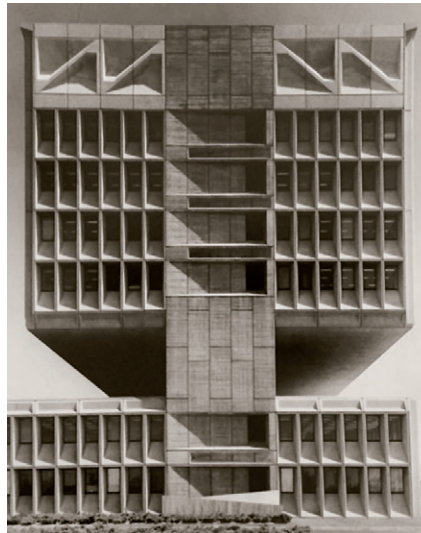
Contents

The book is organised in four parts. The first and fourth, developed by Peter Blake **2**, have the same title, *Works and Projects*, and present the work of M. Breuer in two phases: the first, between 1920 and 1937, corresponds to his European period, and the works are ordered chronologically. The second, between 1937 and 1955, the year of publication, refers to his first period in the United States, and the works are ordered by their use, thereby trying to highlight his qualities as an architect. The preface is also written by P. Blake.

M. Breuer himself wrote the second and third part of the book. The respective titles are *Principles* and *The Art of Space*. They contain seven texts with the ideas that formulate the whole theory. The total of one hundred and twenty one images support those ideas. In this case, however, it is not about explaining or presenting the works, as is usually done in a monographic book, but it is intended, through their constructed work, to clarify the thought behind the elaboration of these works. In the second part, entitled *Principles*, we find three essays: *Sun and Shadow, Architecture in the Landscape* and *Reflections on the City*. These three texts are short, pleasant and simple to read. They do not pretend to generate a dogmatic theory of his work, but contribute to a better understanding of his position towards the architectural project. We highlight the contents that we



3



4

gráficos, dibujos y fotografías, principalmente, estén altamente considerados: *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*.

Contenidos

El libro se organiza en cuatro partes. La primera y la cuarta, desarrolladas por Peter Blake **2**, se titulan igual, *Obras y proyectos*, y recogen el trabajo de M. Breuer en dos fases: la primera, entre 1920 y 1937, se corresponde con su etapa europea y las obras se ordenan cronológicamente; la segunda, entre 1937 y 1955, año de la publicación, hace referencia a su prime-

3. Portada del catálogo publicado por el MoMa, 1949
4. M. Breuer. Sede Armstrong Rubber Company, 1968

5. Grabado del s. XVII que representa el día y la noche

6. Contenidos del libro y organización

3. Cover of the catalogue published by MoMa, 1949.

4. M. Breuer. Headquarters of the Armstrong Rubber Company, 1968

5. Picture of the 17th century that represents day and night

6. Contents and organisation of the book

ra etapa en Estados Unidos, y las obras se ordenan por usos, intentado destacar sus cualidades como arquitecto. El prefacio también lo escribe P. Blake.

La segunda y la tercera parte del libro, son escritos del propio M. Breuer. Se titulan respectivamente *Principios* y *El arte del espacio*. Contienen siete textos con las ideas que formulan su cuerpo teórico. Las imágenes, ciento veintiuna en total, aparecen apoyando esos conceptos, pero, en este caso, no se trata de explicar o presentar sus obras, como suele hacerse en un libro monográfico, sino que se pretende, mediante su obra construida, clarificar el pensamiento con el que se han acometido estos trabajos.

En la segunda parte, titulada *Principios*, se recogen tres ensayos: *Sol y Sombra, Arquitectura en el Paisaje* y *Reflexiones sobre la ciudad*. De extensión breve, sus lecturas son amenas y sencillas. No pretenden generar un cuerpo teórico al uso sino aportar una mirada que permita entender mejor su posición respecto al proyecto de arquitectura. Destacamos los contenidos que consideramos más relevantes para este artículo.

En *Sol y Sombra* (Fig. 5), título seguramente influenciado por sus



5

consider most relevant for this article. In *Sun and Shadow* (Fig. 5), a title which has surely been influenced by his visits to Spain, M. Breuer explains his belief in the potential of making decisions based on contrast. This is largely due to the usual duality of design problems. He encourages the rejection of compromise solutions: "the solution for white and black is grey. This is the easy way. But for me this is not satisfactory. 3"

The third part of the book is entitled *The Art of Space*. After exposing his general ideas about intervention, he begins to focus the discourse on space. His way of manipulating space is what he dedicates the next seventy-nine pages with eighty-nine images to. This high number of images shows that the weight of the argument has now passed from words to images, if it had not always been that way. His definition of space is explained in the following quote: "Although the clay can be molded to become a vase, the essence of the vase lies in the vacuum that remains inside.

... Even though doors and windows are part of the house, the essence of the house is in the interior emptiness ... Therefore, knowing what is there, we recognise the essence of what is not there. 4"

Contemporary space must be free, moving space, favoured by new structural systems that are capable of breaking the rigidity of classical compression systems. New materials that are incorporated into existing ones, proposing a continuous evolution. New textures, new colours and new contrasts are used to generate spaces with the greatest possible comfort for its inhabitants.

Shape

After having discussed the content of the texts that describe his philosophy, we now review the specific form and graphic resources employed that end up defining the unique character of this publication. As a whole it constitutes an indissoluble document.

The Bauhaus teachers were excellent. Due to the obvious relation with Marcel Breuer throughout his career, we would point out Kandinsky and Paul Klee, both painters influenced by Theo Van Doesburg, one of the first people in charge of the abstraction and the geometric developments of the painting developed in the Bauhaus style.

CONTENTS

PREFACE. By Peter Blake.....	9	PART THREE: THE ART OF SPACE	
INTRODUCTION. By Marcel Breuer.....	10	The Art of Space. By Marcel Breuer. This essay introduces a major section of the book dealing with the many elements available to the architect in the shaping of space. The first essay defines space as the reality of architecture—the ultimate thing which all the more concrete elements are employed to serve.....	60
PART ONE: WORK AND PROJECTS, 1920-1937		Structures in Space. By Marcel Breuer. The new concept of structure explained: the suspension bridge versus the pyramid of old—i.e., tension structures in place of compression structures. The important new developments in continuous structures (cantilevers, shell concrete vaults, etc.) all of which make possible entirely new space concepts. Illustrated with examples of the architect's work.....	66
A brief discussion of Breuer's early work in Europe, from the days at the Bauhaus in Germany, until his departure for the United States. By Peter Blake.....	14	Colors, Textures, Materials. By Marcel Breuer. The choice of bright colors, natural or synthetic materials and textures decisively affects the character of any space, indoors or out. Certain principles in the use of these elements emerge: it is important, for example, not to use natural colors or textures since the imitation is likely to fall far short of the original. Examples from the architect's work, including eight pages in color.....	78
A pictorial record of work done in furniture design and in architecture between 1920 and 1937. This section includes first experiments with tubular steel furniture and the design of the first tubular steel chair in 1925. It also covers early projects and buildings executed in Germany, Switzerland and England.....	18	Forms in Space: Stairs. An illustrated section showing staircases designed to exploit the sculptural potentials of their structure. Since these forms are generally in strong contrast with the rest of the building, they form focal points in space.....	100
PART TWO: PRINCIPLES		Forms in Space: Fireplaces. Examples of fireplaces in brick, concrete and stone. They are treated as plastic elements.....	108
<i>Sun and Shadow.</i> By Marcel Breuer. A statement of the architect's basic philosophy. This is an attempt to clarify the fundamental dualism in architecture—the apparent conflicts between architecture and nature, traditional and modern materials, the contradictory requirements of family living—and to explain how these conflicts can be used to create a more vital architectural expression.....	32	Forms in Space: Sunshades. By Marcel Breuer. Ever since the glass wall became technically possible it has presented a problem in sun-control. We like the intimate contact with the outdoors made possible by glass, but we must be guarded against too much heat and glare. The sun control device, whatever form it may take, is therefore fast becoming a symbol of modern architecture—the "Doric column" of our time. Sunshades not only protect the interior; they also give modulation to facades—and hence to exterior space. A discussion of the problem, together with numerous solutions by the architect.....	114
<i>Architecture in the Landscape.</i> By Marcel Breuer. An analysis of the problems that arise when relating architecture to nature—or when contrasting architecture with nature. This essay is followed by a series of illustrations that support the argument set forth in the text.....	36	Forms in Space: Furniture. Chairs, cabinets, tables and so on are free-standing, plastic elements in space and decisively affect their character. Examples of indoor and outdoor furniture.....	126
<i>Thoughts on the City.</i> By Marcel Breuer. An attempt to clarify the reasons for present urban chaos, and a further attempt to bring order into the picture. In place of piecemeal solutions, this essay advocates treating the city as an organism whose individual cells—which are large in size—must be reconstituted.....	52	Art in Space. Examples of collaboration on Breuer's part with several painters, sculptors and graphic artists, showing that a common understanding of the nature of modern space makes such collaboration possible.....	134
		PART FOUR: WORK AND PROJECTS, 1937-1955	
		An account of Breuer's work in the United States and, more recently, in Europe. By Peter Blake. The chronology includes the postwar commission to design the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.....	140
		The House. First in a series of pictorial chapters detailing Breuer's recent work in many fields. This section covers several house-types—e.g., the hillside house, the bi-nuclear house, the long house, the offset house, the multi-level house and the U-shaped house—all of which are attempts to solve problems of family living.....	144
		One Client's Point of View. By Rufus Sillman. An account of the development of one house as seen by its owner. With comments on the relative importance of certain elements within a house, and on the relationship between client and architect.....	146
		The Multiple House. Recent examples of designs for apartments, prefabricated houses, housing developments and communities.....	164
		Educational Buildings. A pictorial record of school and college buildings, both in project form and executed.....	172
		Commercial and Industrial Buildings. Factories and model of a large department store now under construction in Rotterdam, Holland	182
		Cultural Centers. This last and most important pictorial section shows models and drawings of a projected Benedictine Abbey and Monastery in Minnesota, as well as detailed illustrations of the first and second UNESCO projects. The second of these is being built in Paris	188
		PHOTOGRAPHERS' CREDITS.....	206

©1955 by Marcel Breuer. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 55-9928. Lithographed in the United States of America.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO LTD
6 & 7 Chifford Street London W 1
Boston House Strand Street Cape Town
531 Little Collins Street Melbourne

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO INC
55 Fifth Avenue New York 3

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO
29 Cranfield Road Toronto 16

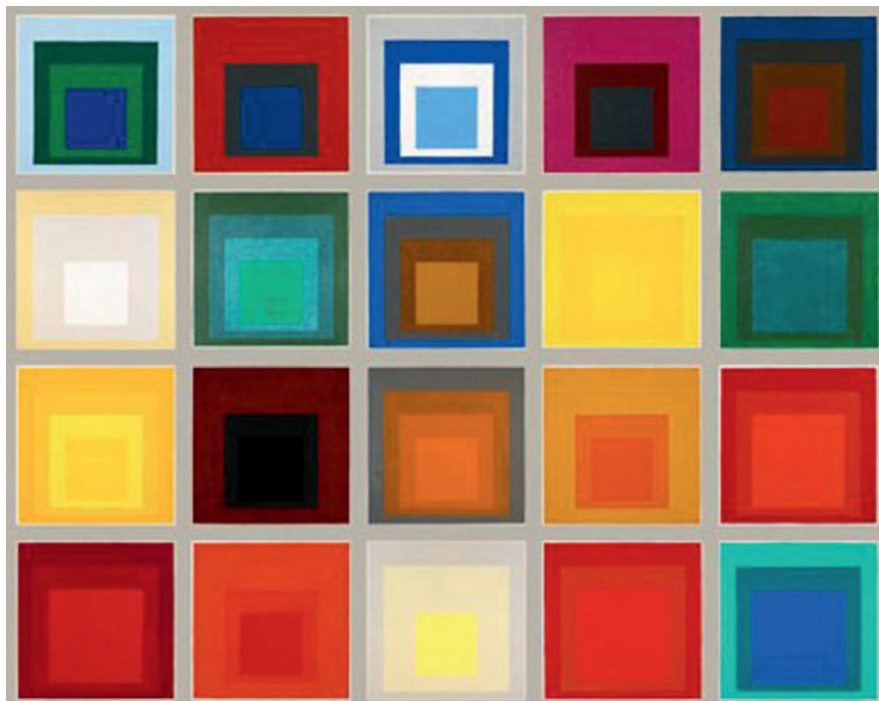
ORIENT LONGMANS LTD
Calcutta Bombay Madras
Delhi Vijayawada Dacca

This edition first published 1956

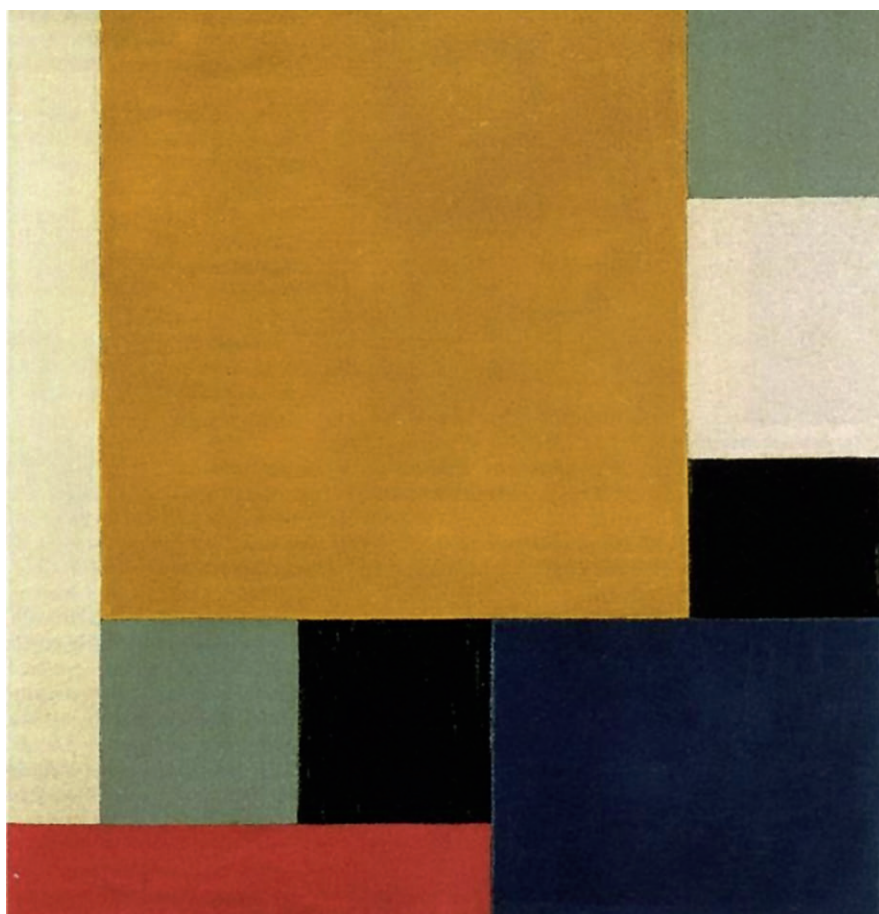
6

- 7. Homenaje al cuadrado. Josef Albers
- 8. Composición XII. Theo van Doesburg
- 9. Prueba de la sobre cubierta en papel

- 7. Tribute to the square. Josef Albers.
- 8. Composition XII. Theo van Doesburg
- 9. Draft of the envelope covered in paper



7



8

visitas a España, M. Breuer explica su convencimiento en el potencial de adoptar decisiones basadas en el contraste, en gran parte debido a la usual dualidad que tienen los problemas del diseño, y anima a desechar las soluciones de compromiso: “*la solución para el blanco y el negro es el gris. Este es el camino fácil. Pero para mí no resulta satisfactorio*”³.

En la tercera parte del libro, titulada *El arte del espacio*, una vez expuestas sus ideas generales de intervención, pasa a centrar el discurso en el espacio. Su modo de manipularlo es a lo que dedica las siguientes setenta y nueve páginas con ochenta y nueve imágenes. Este elevado número de imágenes, evidencia que, el peso de la argumentación, ha pasado ahora de las palabras a las imágenes, ... si no es que siempre fue así. Su definición del espacio queda explicada en la siguiente cita: “*A pesar que la arcilla puede ser moldeada para convertirse en un jarrón, la esencia del jarrón está en el vacío que queda en el interior. ...Pese a que puertas y ventanas forman parte de la casa, la esencia de la casa está en el vacío interior ... Por tanto, conociendo lo que está, reconocemos la esencia de lo que no está*”⁴.

El espacio contemporáneo debe ser un espacio fluido, en movimiento, favorecido por los nuevos sistemas estructurales que son capaces de romper la rigidez de los sistemas a compresión clásicos. Materiales nuevos que se incorporan a los ya existentes planteando una continua evolución. Nuevas texturas, nuevos colores y nuevos contrastes, necesarios para generar espacios con el mayor confort posible para sus habitantes.



9

Forma

Avanzado el contenido de los textos que describen su ideario, revisamos ahora la forma concreta y los recursos gráficos empleados que terminan de definir el carácter singular de esta publicación. El conjunto constituye un documento indisoluble.

El cuerpo de profesores de la Bauhaus era excelente. Destacáramos, por la evidente relación que tuvieron en Marcel Breuer a lo largo de su carrera, a Kandinsky; Paul Klee, pintores, influenciados por Theo Van Doesburg, uno de los primeros responsables de la abstracción y de los desarrollos geométricos de la pintura desarrollados en la Bauhaus; Laszlo Moholy Nagy, diseñador y fotógrafo; Josef Albers ⁵, diseñador, fotógrafo, tipógrafo, profesor, entre otros, de Richard Serra.

Este grupo de docentes, compartía el ámbito profesional, docente y privado. La cercanía y el contacto directo, generaba una transversalidad de conocimientos entre las diferentes disciplinas muy enriquecedora. En consecuencia, Breuer entiende

el diseño como un problema global, un ejercicio creativo multidisciplinar liberado de prejuicios y planteado una profunda abstracción.

En la Introducción del libro se dice que, como proyecto, arranca cinco años atrás ⁶, aunque, el primer documento encontrado, es del año 1954. Un guión mecanografiado con notas manuscritas correctoras. Contiene borradores de los ensayos que acompañan a la publicación futura, un índice preliminar y los listados de los pies de las imágenes, muy exhaustivos en sus descripciones y marcan, desde el inicio, su peso decisivo en la publicación. Existen pruebas de la contraportada en papel con diferentes anotaciones (Fig. 9), aunque sólo se efectuó el cambio de color de la tipografía, de negro a blanco, para reforzar los contrastes y facilitar la lectura ⁷.

El 14 de diciembre de 1955 sale a la venta el libro publicado por la editorial *Longmans, Green and Co* con el título *MARCEL BREUER: SUN AND SHADOW. The Philosophy of an Architect* (Fig. 11). Esta editorial pertenecía al grupo *Dodd, Mead and Company* ⁸, pio-

Furthermore Laszlo Moholy Nagy, designer and photographer, Josef Albers ⁵, designer, photographer, typographer, professor, among others, of Richard Serra.

This group of teachers shared the professional, the teaching and the private sphere. The closeness and direct contact generated a very enriching cross-cutting of knowledge between the different disciplines. Consequently, Breuer understands design as a global problem, a multidisciplinary creative exercise freed from any prejudice with a great level of abstraction.

In the introduction of the book it says that it started as a project five years before ⁶, although the first document found, a typewritten script with corrected handwritten notes, was from 1954. It contains drafts of the essays that accompany the future publication, a preliminary index and the lists of the footnotes of the images, which are very exhaustively described. From the beginning the images mark their decisive weight in the publication. There are first drafts of the back cover on paper with different annotations (Fig. 9), although only the colour change of the typography from black to white was made to reinforce the contrasts and facilitate reading ⁷.

The book was published on December 14, 1955, by the publisher Longmans, Green and Co with the title *MARCEL BREUER: SUN AND SHADOW. The Philosophy of an Architect* (figure 11). This publishing house belonged to the Dodd, Mead and Company group ⁸, a pioneer in the publication of architecture books in the United States. The editor was P. Blake.

The book has a format of 8x10 ½ inches, about 20.3x26.6 cm, somewhat smaller than a DIN A4 format, and comes with hard covers and a light green canvas cover and a dust jacket on coloured paper. It is supposed to be read in landscape format, so we must arrange its spine horizontally.

A wise decision, based on the natural relationship that occurs with architectural photographs, usually in an extended format, allowing for a better contemplation. The texts are organised in two or four columns, facilitating a fluent reading and, sometimes, they are combined with illustrations. Breuer's own words are printed in bold type. The 298 illustrations are distributed along its



208 pages. They are mostly black and white photographs, with some very descriptive captions, supervised by Marcel Breuer, although drawings are also abundant. The work of the graphic designer Alexis Brodovitch **9** is demanded for the design of the book, which is excellent. He is in charge of the composition of the book, including the book jacket. There we find the title of the book together with a drawing of the floor plan of the Neumann house. The confidence in abstract geometrical patterns and colour are evident at this point. Together with Breuer, he is co-responsible for the horizontal arrangement, demonstrating his strong commitment to the field of photography as a vehicle for documenting and explaining architectural works (Fig. 12). In addition, he also designs several colour illustrations, unprecedented in the architectural books of those years. Those illustrations are based on photographs by Ben Schnall **10**, photographer of absolute confidence for Marcel Breuer, or on specific drawings of the architect (Fig. 13). These illustrations are decisive to transmit via graphic language the ideas that are exposed in some of the most relevant chapters of the book: *Sun and Shadow, Architecture and Landscape and Colors, Textures and Materials*. They elucidate the differences between Architecture and Nature. They show the coexistence of both and, as an added value, show their necessary independence: the artificial created by man, i.e. the building, as opposed to Nature. The idea is approached of how the house should be arranged, with its precise and defined geometry juxtaposed to the irregularity of the land **11**. The use of color also supports the concept about materials and textures. To choose the right color, you should first consider the predominant color and then look for the contrasts. In accordance with this, for houses where the green color of the natural landscape predominates, Breuer usually employs yellow, red or blue **12**. In addition, since he understands color as a flat element, he proposes associating it with the textures of the basic materials, in such a way that both come out reinforced.

For M. Breuer, the palette of basic colours to be used includes vermilion red, cobalt blue, cadmium yellow, together with white and black, in contrast to the textures of natural materials. The cover of the book and some

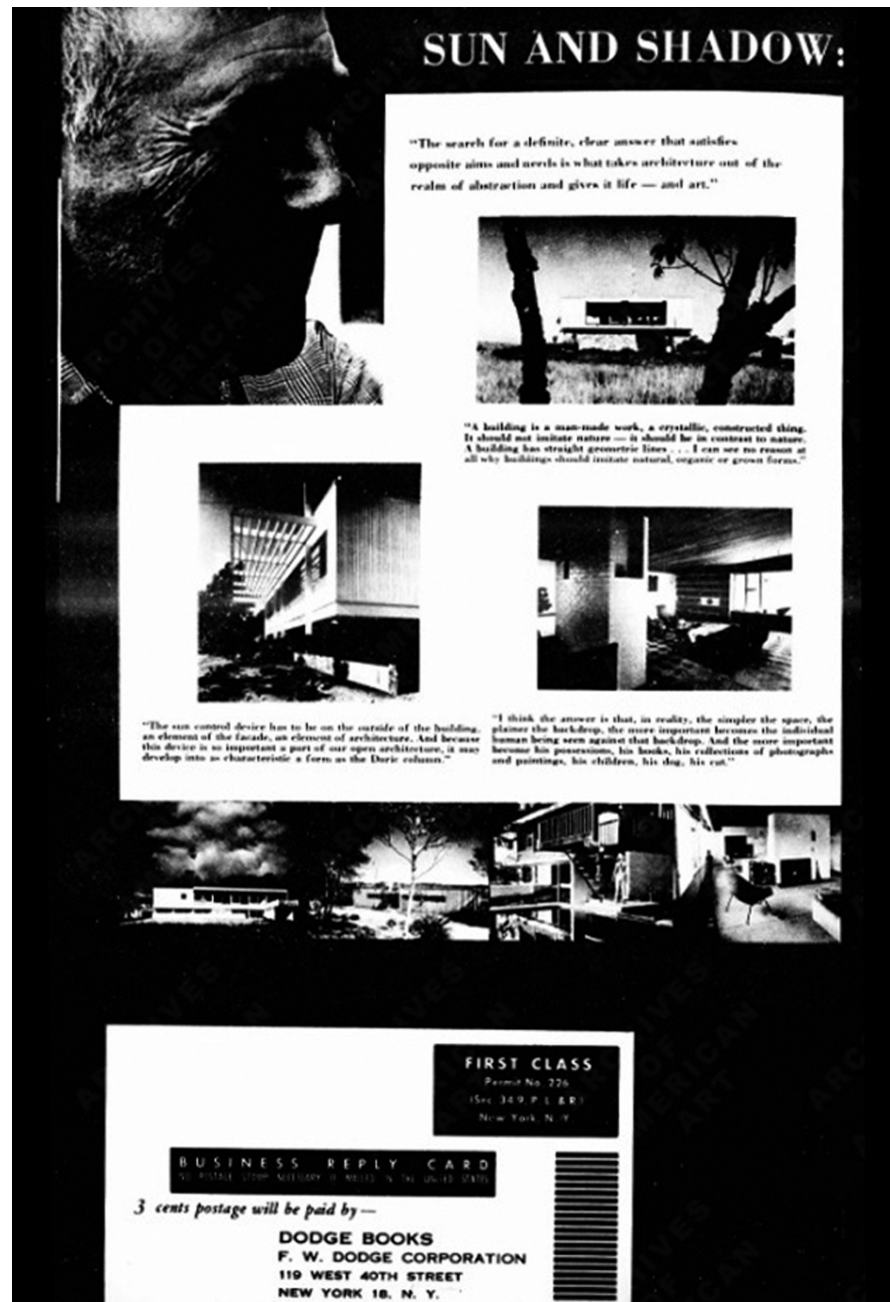
10. Folleto promocional de la venta del libro
11. "Marcel Breuer: Sun and Shadow. The Philosophy of an Architect" Portada libro entelada. Sobre cubierta en papel a color diseñada por Alexis Brodovitch

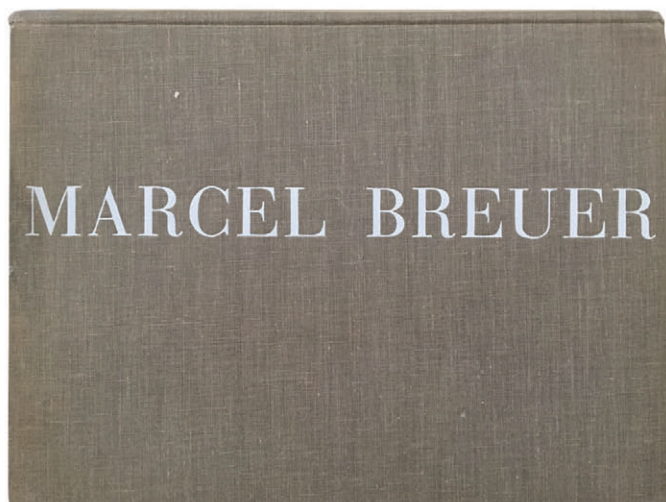
10. Promotional brochure for the book sale
11. "Marcel Breuer: Sun and Shadow. The Philosophy of an Architect" Canvas cover book. Cover in colour paper designed by Alexis Brodovitch

nera en la publicación de libros de arquitectura en los Estados Unidos. El editor fue P. Blake.

El libro tiene un formato de 8x10 ½ pulgadas, unos 20.3 por 26.6 cm., algo menor que un formato DIN A4, y se presenta con tapas duras y cubierta entelada en color

verde claro y una sobrecubierta en papel a color. Se propone una lectura en formato apaisado, por lo que debemos disponer su lomo horizontalmente. Es una decisión muy hábil basada en la relación natural que se produce con las fotografías de arquitectura, normalmente de





11

formato extendido, permitiendo una mejor contemplación de las mismas. Los textos se organizan en dos o cuatro columnas, facilitando una lectura ágil y, en ocasiones, se combinan con ilustraciones. Cuando la voz es la de Marcel Breuer la tipografía es en negrita.

Las 298 ilustraciones están repartidas en sus 208 páginas. En su mayoría son fotografías en blanco y negro, con unos pies de foto muy descriptivos, supervisados por Marcel Breuer, aunque también son abundantes los dibujos de planos.

Para el diseño del libro, de una factura destacable, se recurre al diseñador gráfico Alexis Brodovitch ⁹. Se encarga de la composición del cuerpo del libro, incluida la sobrecubierta, donde aparece el título del libro y un dibujo del plano de suelo de la casa Neumann. La confianza en los patrones geométricos abstractos y el color resultan evidentes en este punto. Junto a Breuer, es responsable de su disposición horizontal, demostrando el fuerte compromiso con el campo de la fotografía como vehículo para documentar y explicar las obras de arquitectura (Fig. 12). Además, diseña también varias ilustraciones a color, inéditas en los libros de arquitectura de esos años, que toman como base fotografías de Ben Schnall ¹⁰, fotógrafo de absoluta confianza para Marcel

Breuer, o dibujos específicos del arquitecto (Fig. 13).

Estas ilustraciones resultan decisivas para transmitir, mediante un lenguaje gráfico, las ideas que se exponen en algunos de los capítulos más relevantes del libro: *Sol y Sombra, Arquitectura y paisaje y Colores, texturas y Materiales*. Hacen evidentes las diferencias entre la Arquitectura y la Naturaleza. Muestran la coexistencia de ambas y convierten, como un valor añadido, su necesaria independencia: lo artificial creado por el hombre, el edificio, frente a la Naturaleza. Se aborda la idea de cómo debe encontrarse la vivienda, con su precisa y definida geometría, frente a la irregularidad del terreno ¹¹. El empleo del color también apoya su idea sobre los materiales y las texturas. Para escoger el color adecuado se propone considerar, previamente, el color predominante y luego buscar los contrastes. De este modo, en sus viviendas, donde el color verde del paisaje natural predomina, suele emplear el amarillo, el rojo o el azul ¹². Además, puesto que el color lo entiende como un elemento plano, propone asociarlo con las texturas de los materiales base, de tal modo que ambos salgan reforzados.

El rojo bermellón, el azul cobalto, el amarillo cadmio, junto al blanco y el negro, forma para M.

of its first furniture in the Bauhaus style are composed with these colours (Fig. 15), source of inspiration for later filmmakers (Fig. 16).

At the age of fifty, Marcel Breuer offers us a book which is an exercise in mastery, exposed with a simple, direct and easy to assimilate style, thanks to the good graphic expression of the whole. It shows that he is still a good teacher, despite his absence from the classroom for almost ten years. It represents that kind of designer that W. Gropius intended to form, one able to combine his technical profile with his creative part in an excellent way. With the necessary knowledge to choose the best industrial products and combine them creatively, building works at the service of users as only a good architect can achieve, useful and simple, to be inhabited. ■

Notes

¹ / He finished his studies in Weimar in 1924 and became a professor at the Dessau headquarters in 1925.

² / Peter Blake is the name that Peter Jost Blach got in 1944 when he settled in the USA, coming from England after the outbreak of World War II. He was a Jew born in Berlin in 1920, architect, critic and editor of the Architectural Forum magazine. Commissioner of Architecture and Design of the Moma since 1948. He wrote the catalogue of the Moma on the occasion of the Exhibition of the House in the Garden, the work of Marcel Breuer (Fig. 3).

³ / BREUER, Marcel; BLAKE, Peter, 1955. Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect. New York Longmans, Green & Company. p. 32

⁴ / Interpretation of a classical Chinese text, Tao Te Ching, foundation of philosophical Taoism, structured in 81 sections. His section 11 comes to say something similar to what Marcel Breuer discusses in his book. The interpretations of this text, written in classical Chinese, are very complex, and contrary and confusing readings can be the result, even for native translators. Ib. 3 p. 60

⁵ / Author of the studies on "The interaction of color", whose theories will help to expand the way of using and perceiving colors in the visual arts, architecture, textiles, interior design and graphic design.

⁶ / Referring to the publication edited by the MoMA of the year 1949, entitled "Marcel Breuer: Architect and Designer".



12



12. Wolfson House, Millbrook, New York, 1950. Negativo original y proporción adoptada para la publicación. Fotografías de Ben Schnall

13. Ilustraciones del libro "Marcel Breuer: Sun and Shadow" pag 82-83, por A. Brodovitch.

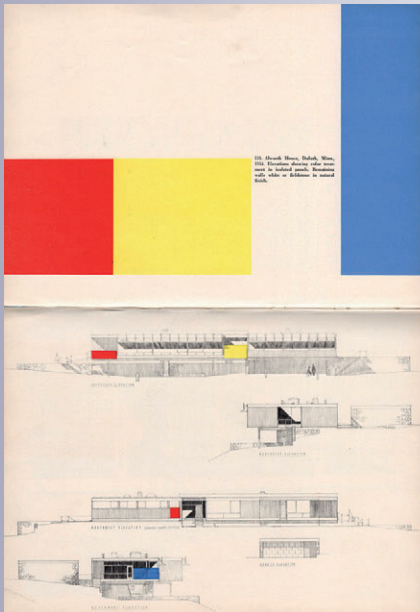
Dibujos base de Marcel Breuer. Casa Starkey 1954

14. A la izquierda, Ilustraciones de las pag. 86-87, realizadas por A. Brodovitch. sobre fotografía base tomada por Ben Schnall. A la derecha fotografías en color casa Neumann y casa Stillman tomadas entre 1954 y 1955

12. Wolfson House, Millbrook, New York, 1950. Original negative and proportion adopted for publication. Photographs by Ben Schnall

13. Illustrations from the book "Marcel Breuer: Sun and Shadow" page 82-83, by A. Brodovitch. Initial drawings by Marcel Breuer. Starkey House 1954

14. On the left, illustrations on p. 86-87, made by A. Brodovitch on basic photography taken by Ben Schnall. On the right, color photographs of the Neumann house and Stillman house taken between 1954 and 1955

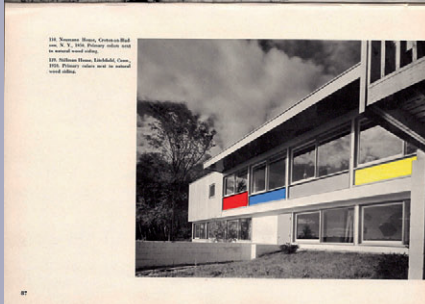


13



Breuer, la paleta de colores básicos a emplear, en contraste con las texturas de los materiales naturales. Con ellos está compuesta la sobre cubierta del libro y algunos de sus primeros muebles en la Bauhaus (Fig. 15), fuente de inspiración para realizadores posteriores (Fig. 16).

El libro que nos ofrece Marcel Breuer, cumplidos ya los cincuenta años, es todo un ejercicio de maestría, expuesto con un discurso sencillo, directo y fácil de asimilar, gracias a la buena expresión gráfica del conjunto. Demuestra que sus dotes como docente siguen intactas, pese a verse alejado de las aulas desde hace casi diez años. Representa esa clase de diseñador que pretendía formar W. Gropius, capaz de combinar su perfil técnico y su parte creativa de un modo excelente. Con los conocimientos necesarios para escoger los mejores productos industriales y combinarlos creativamente, construyendo obras al servicio de los usuarios como solo un buen arquitecto puede lograr, útiles y sencillas, para ser habitadas. ■



14



Notas

1/Finaliza sus estudios en 1924 en Weimar e ingresa como profesor en la sede de Dessau en 1925.

2/Peter Blake es el nombre que se puso Peter Jost Blach en 1944 cuando se afincó en USA procedente de Inglaterra después de estallar la II Guerra Mundial. Era un judío nacido en Berlín en 1920, arquitecto, crítico y editor de la



15. Aparador con vitrina, B66. M. Breuer 1926
16. Estantería Casa de Brasil. Charlotte Perriand. 1957



15



16

15. Sideboard with showcase, B66. M. Breuer 1926
16. House of Brazil Shelving. Charlotte Perriand. 1957

revista *Architectural Forum*. Comisionado de Arquitectura y Diseño del Moma desde 1948. Redactó catálogo del Moma con motivo de la Exposición de la Casa en el Jardín, obra de Marcel Breuer (Fig. 3).

3/ BREUER, Marcel; BLAKE, Peter, 1955. *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*. New York. Longmans, Green & Company. p. 32.

4/ Interpretación de un texto clásico chino, Tao Te Ching, fundamento del taoísmo filosófico, estructurado en 81 secciones. Su sección 11 viene a decir algo similar a lo que reproduce Marcel Breuer en su libro. Las interpretaciones de este texto, escrito en chino clásico, son muy complejas, pudiendo producirse, incluso para los traductores nativos, lecturas contrarias y confusas. Ib. 3 p. 60.

5/ Autor de los estudios sobre “La interacción del color”, cuyas teorías ayudarán a ampliar la manera de usar y percibir los colores en las artes visuales, la arquitectura, los textiles, el diseño interior y el grafismo.

6/ Se refiere a la publicación editada por el MoMa del año 1949 titulada “*Marcel Breuer: Architect and Designer* “. Es una monografía, con fotografías en blanco y negro y planos redibujados, que recoge su obra ordenada cronológicamente y centrada en su etapa americana. La exposición de su prototipo de vivienda de coste reducido, expuesto en el jardín del MoMa, es uno de los contenidos más destacados. BLAKE, P., 1949. *Marcel Breuer, Architect and Designer*. New York. Edited by Museum of Modern Art.

7/ Se conservan también los informes con las ventas de ejemplares y los royalties que pactó Marcel Breuer. Según estos se realizaron dos ediciones, la primera con 8000 ejemplares y la segunda con 2000, que se vendieron prácticamente en su totalidad. Ver <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/marcel-breuer-papers-5596/subseries-6-2/reel-5719-frames-12-79>.

8/ Este grupo se fundó en 1839 y estuvo en activo a través de las muchas empresas que crearon hasta el año 1990. Disponía de sedes en varios estados de los Estados Unidos, entre ellos la principal en New York, así como en Toronto, Londres e incluso en Oriente en Calcuta.

9/ Alexis Brodovitch fue un artista, pintor, fotógrafo y diseñador nacido en Rusia en 1898. Inició sus estudios relacionados con la pintura y las artes industriales en París a partir de 1920 cuando emigró como consecuencia de la Revolución Rusa de 1917. Es considerado el precursor de la prensa gráfica del mundo de la moda y creador de la figura del director artístico en el mundo de la prensa. En 1930 emigró a Estados Unidos y fundó la Asociación de Ingeniería del Diseño en Philadelphia. Revolucionó el mundo del diseño a través de las influencias de la Escuela de la Bauhaus. Destacó por la combinación de técnicas en el diseño de publicaciones hasta ahora independientes como el dibujo, la pintura y la fotografía.

10/ Ben Schnall fue un fotógrafo que realizó un trabajo importante en el campo de la fotografía de arquitectura y en particular con la obra de Marcel Breuer. Su colaboración arranca en el año 1947. Fotografió entre otras la casa Breuer II en New Canaan, Wolfson Trailer House, Vassar College, Casa Grieco, casa Thompson, Torin Corporation Ontario, casa Stillman.... La última referencia que encontramos de sus

colaboraciones es una fotografía del edificio del Centro de Ingeniería y Ciencias Aplicadas de la Universidad de Yale de 1969.

11/ Están presentes en el discurso tanto la casa mirador o casa belvedere, que se sitúa elevada y probablemente con una terraza sobre la que contemplar el paisaje, y la casa anclada al suelo, con un patio mas privado y con mayor vinculación incluso de accesibilidad interior y exterior.

12/ Ver trabajo de A. Brodovitch en *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*. Páginas 82-83, 86-87, 90-91 y 94-95.

Referencias

- ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ARTS [en línea]. Detroit Institute of Arts. 1954. Disponible en [<https://www.aaa.si.edu>]
- BLAKE, P., 1949. *Marcel Breuer, architect and designer*. New York. Museum of Modern Art N.Y..
- BREUER, M., BLAKE, P., 1955. *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*. New York. Longmans, Green & Company.
- GATJE, R., 2006. *Marcel Breuer, a memoir*. New York. The Monacelli Press. ISBN 1-58093-029-8.
- HATJE, G., BREUER, M., 1963. *Marcel Breuer. Construcciones y proyectos 1921-1961*. Barcelona. Gustavo Gili.
- HYMAN, I., 2001. *Marcel Breuer architect. The career and the buildings*. New York. Harry N. Abrams. ISBN 0-8109-4265-8.
- MARCEL BREUER DIGITAL ARCHIVE [en línea]. Syracuse University Library. Disponible en: breuer.syr.edu.

It is a monograph, with black and white photographs and redrawn drawings, which collects his work, ordered chronologically and focused on his American period. The exhibition of his prototype of housing of reduced cost, exposed in the garden of the MoMa, is one of the most outstanding contents. BLAKE, P., 1949. *Marcel Breuer, Architect and Designer*. New York Edited by Museum of Modern Art

7/ The reports with the sales of copies and the royalties agreed by Marcel Breuer are also kept. According to these, two editions were made, the first with 8000 copies and the second with 2000, which were sold almost entirely. See <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/marcel-breuer-papers-5596/subseries-6-2/reel-5719-frames-12-79>.

8/ This group was founded in 1839 and was active through the many companies that were created until 1990. It had offices in several states of the United States, including the principal one in New York, as well as in Toronto, London and even in the East, in Calcutta.

9/ Alexis Brodovitch was an artist, painter, photographer and designer born in Russia in 1898. He began his studies related to painting and the industrial arts in Paris in 1920, when he emigrated as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917. He is considered the forerunner of the graphic press, of the world of fashion and creator of the figure of the artistic director in the world of the press. In 1930 he emigrated to the United States and founded the Design Engineering Association in Philadelphia. It revolutionised the world of design through the influences of the Bauhaus School. He stood out for the combination of techniques in the design of previously independent publications such as drawing, painting and photography.

10/ Ben Schnall was a photographer who did important work in the field of architectural photography and in particular with the work of Marcel Breuer. Their collaboration started in 1947. He photographed, among others, the Breuer II house in New Canaan, Wolfson Trailer House, Vassar College, Grieco House, Thompson House, Torin Corporation Ontario, Stillman House The last reference we found of their collaboration is a photograph of the building of the Centre for Engineering and Applied Sciences of Yale University in 1969.

11/ Both the Gazebo house and the Belvedere house, which is elevated and probably built with a terrace on which to contemplate the landscape, are present in the discourse, and the house anchored to the ground, with a more private patio and with greater connection even of interior accessibility and outside.

12/ See work by A. Brodovitch in *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*. Pages 82-83, 86-87, 90-91 and 94-95.

Referencias

- ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ARTS [en línea]. Detroit Institute of Arts. 1954. Disponible en [<https://www.aaa.si.edu>]
- BLAKE, P., 1949. *Marcel Breuer, architect and designer*. New York. Museum of Modern Art N.Y..
- BREUER, M., BLAKE, P., 1955. *Marcel Breuer, Sun and Shadow, the Philosophy of an Architect*. New York. Longmans, Green & Company.
- GATJE, R., 2006. *Marcel Breuer, a memoir*. New York. The Monacelli Press. ISBN 1-58093-029-8.
- HATJE, G., BREUER, M., 1963. *Marcel Breuer. Construcciones y proyectos 1921-1961*. Barcelona. Gustavo Gili.
- HYMAN, I., 2001. *Marcel Breuer architect. The career and the buildings*. New York. Harry N. Abrams. ISBN 0-8109-4265-8.
- MARCEL BREUER DIGITAL ARCHIVE [en línea]. Syracuse University Library. Disponible en: breuer.syr.edu.