

The New National Gallery in Berlin

Art, technique, and use

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Abstract

The New National Gallery Berlin was built from 1961 to 1968 following Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's plans. Dedicated to representative art exhibitions, the building became an iconic work of modern architecture. Today it is listed not only among the historic monuments of the city of Berlin, but it is also considered as one of the most prominent examples of twentieth-century architecture. As such, it is more than a place to show representative art – it is in itself a piece of art.

Today the New National Gallery houses a high standing collection of twentieth-century art. However, envisaging the building as piece of art questions its functionality as a museum. The overwhelming simplicity of the architecture is a challenge to the practical requirements of the exhibition business. An exploration of the New National Gallery's architectural and artistic qualities reveals how this constitutive dilemma can be turned around to add an exceptional value to the building from the perspective of the visitor.