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Women and the Making of the Modern House:

A Social and Architectural History

Alice T. Friedman

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers

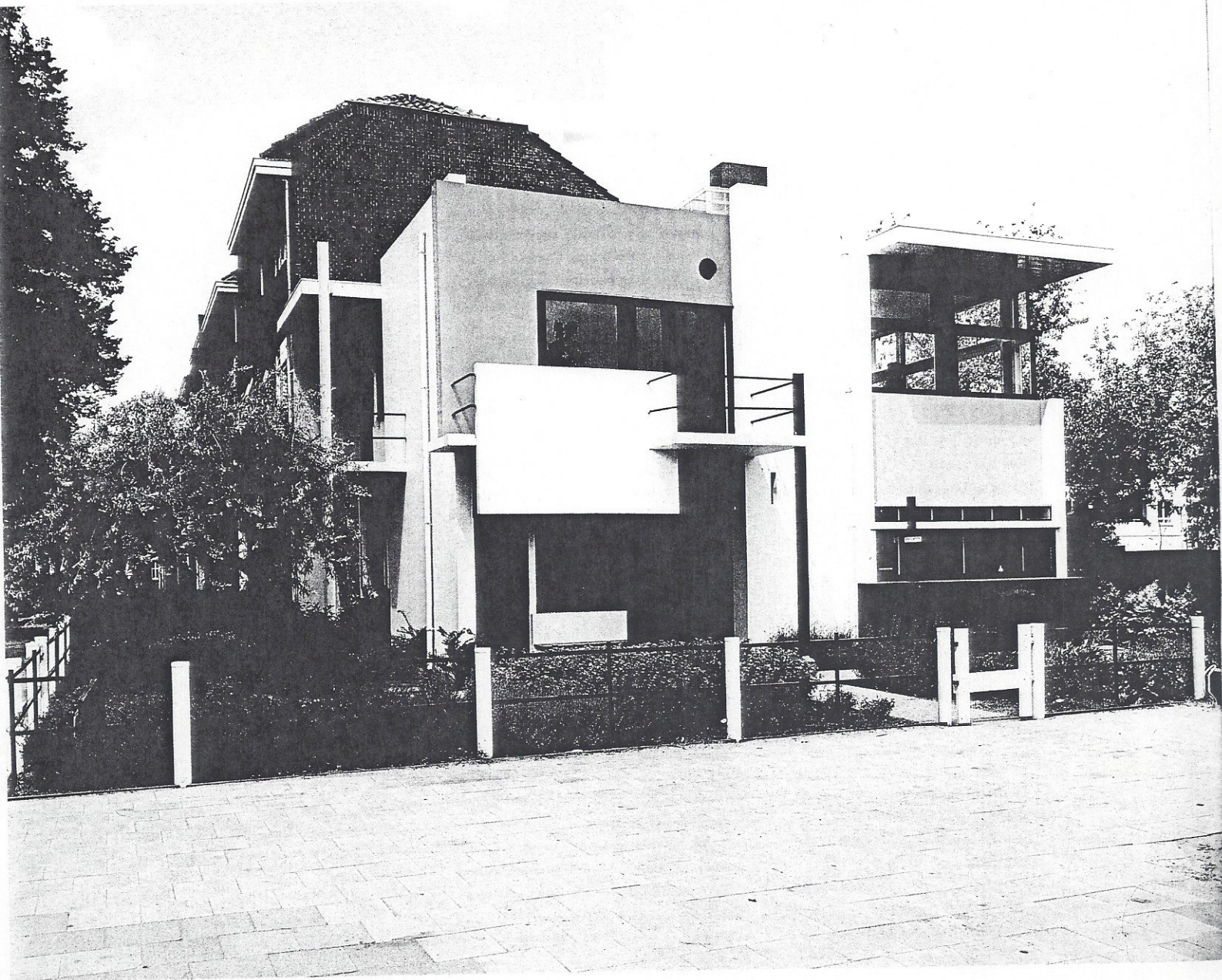


PLATE 1

Gerrit Rietveld and Truus
Schröder. Schröder House, Utrecht,
the Netherlands. 1923-24

No matter how many times one has visited the Schröder House in Utrecht, the Netherlands (plate 1), the sight of it at the end of Prins Hendriklaan is always a happy surprise.¹ Compared to its somber neighbors, dark brick row houses that line the street in an orderly series of doors and windows, the Schröder House seems fresh, playful, and filled with the promise of new discoveries, as if it had been assembled from the parts of a child's building toy. Metal strips, lengths of wood, and bits of tubular steel painted bright red, blue, yellow, and black provide a sort of framework for the roof, walls, and windows, thin planes that never meet at the corners but appear to be propped together in an elegant yet strangely precarious composition. The Schröder House has often been compared to the paintings of Piet Mondrian (plate 2), but the similarity remains on the surface, for when it is experienced in person, the house seems to share little of the painter's patient and cerebral investigation of form. With its smooth, bright walls (maintained in pristine condition since the house was renovated and opened to the public, in 1987), colorful touches, and handcrafted appearance, the Schröder House seems instead the very embodiment of an impulsive, joyful, and confident modernity. Despite its age, the house Gerrit Rietveld (1888–1964) and Truus Schröder designed in 1923–24 is eternally young.²

Yet there is also something self-conscious and didactic about the place; one quickly senses that the parts of this building toy were deliberately shaped and colored to provide us with a learning experience. Indeed, the Schröder House, like so many architect-designed buildings of the 1920s, has its polemical side, expressing new



Truus Schröder. ca. 1925

Family Matters:

The Schröder House, by Gerrit Rietveld and Truus Schröder

with Maristella Casciato

ideas not only about the nature of modern materials and architectural design, but also about a philosophy of progressive education: Mrs. Schröder was a young widow with three children, aged twelve, eleven, and six, when the family moved in, and she had a vision of family life in the modern world. The house's double personality – playful and carefree on the one hand, yet disciplined and even moralistic on the other – reflects the complex personalities of architect and client, and the unique nature of the collaboration between Rietveld, who had never built a building before, and Schröder, a well-to-do woman with strong ideas about how and where she wanted to live.³ Passionate about art and about each other, both saw the house as an opportunity to create a totally modern environment, free of the repressive traditions and rules – both social and architectural – that kept them

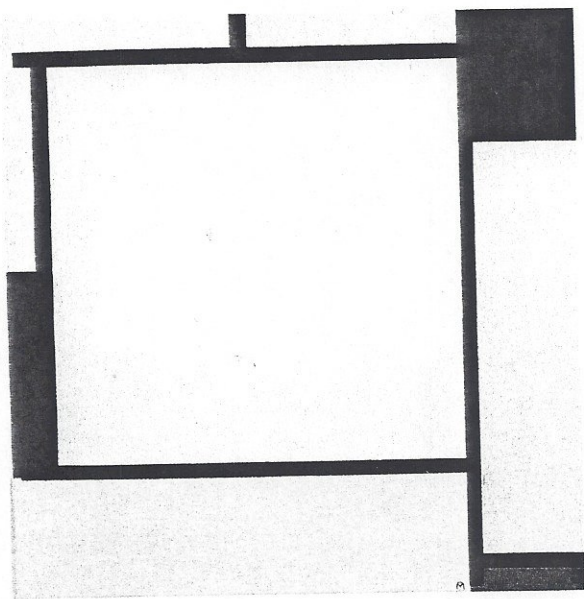


PLATE 2

Piet Mondrian. *Tableau 2*. 1922.
Oil on canvas, 21½ x 21¼ in.
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum, New York, 51.1309

from new experiences and the expression of emotions. Their commitment to this partnership was long-standing: they would continue working together on a number of important domestic and other design projects, particularly during the 1920s and 1930s.⁴

Entering the house via the front door, the visitor is greeted by the orderly (and small-scale) world of the schoolhouse. A narrow hallway, fitted with both adult- and child-size cupboards for coats and shoes, is surrounded by what appear to be four rather ordinary-looking rooms. Directly opposite the door is the stair and a landing, on which there is a bench, telephone shelf, and a row of small drawers.

The experience of this pleasant, unremarkable foyer offers no warning of the extraordinary environment that lies above (plate 3). Having climbed the stairs, the visitor emerges into another realm entirely, a large, open space filled with light and color. On the floor and walls, shiny rectangles of red, blue, yellow, black, gray, and white play off the clear light of the windows, creating in effect a grid of shifting, two-dimensional planes in a three-dimensional composition. Large expanses of glass dematerialize the boundary between interior and exterior and offer changing views of the neighboring buildings on Prins Hendriklaan and of the garden. (A highway constructed next to the house in 1963 destroyed the view from the front window, which originally opened onto unspoiled countryside.) Retractable wooden partitions, deployed along yellow, blue, and red tracks in the ceiling, make it possible to subdivide the open room, creating a constellation of smaller spaces that serve as the living/dining area and rooms for the children. These rooms are sparsely furnished with tables, cupboards, beds, and chairs designed by Rietveld.⁵

This unprecedented assemblage of brightly colored elements produces an environment imbued with a sense of freedom and choice. There is a new attention to the

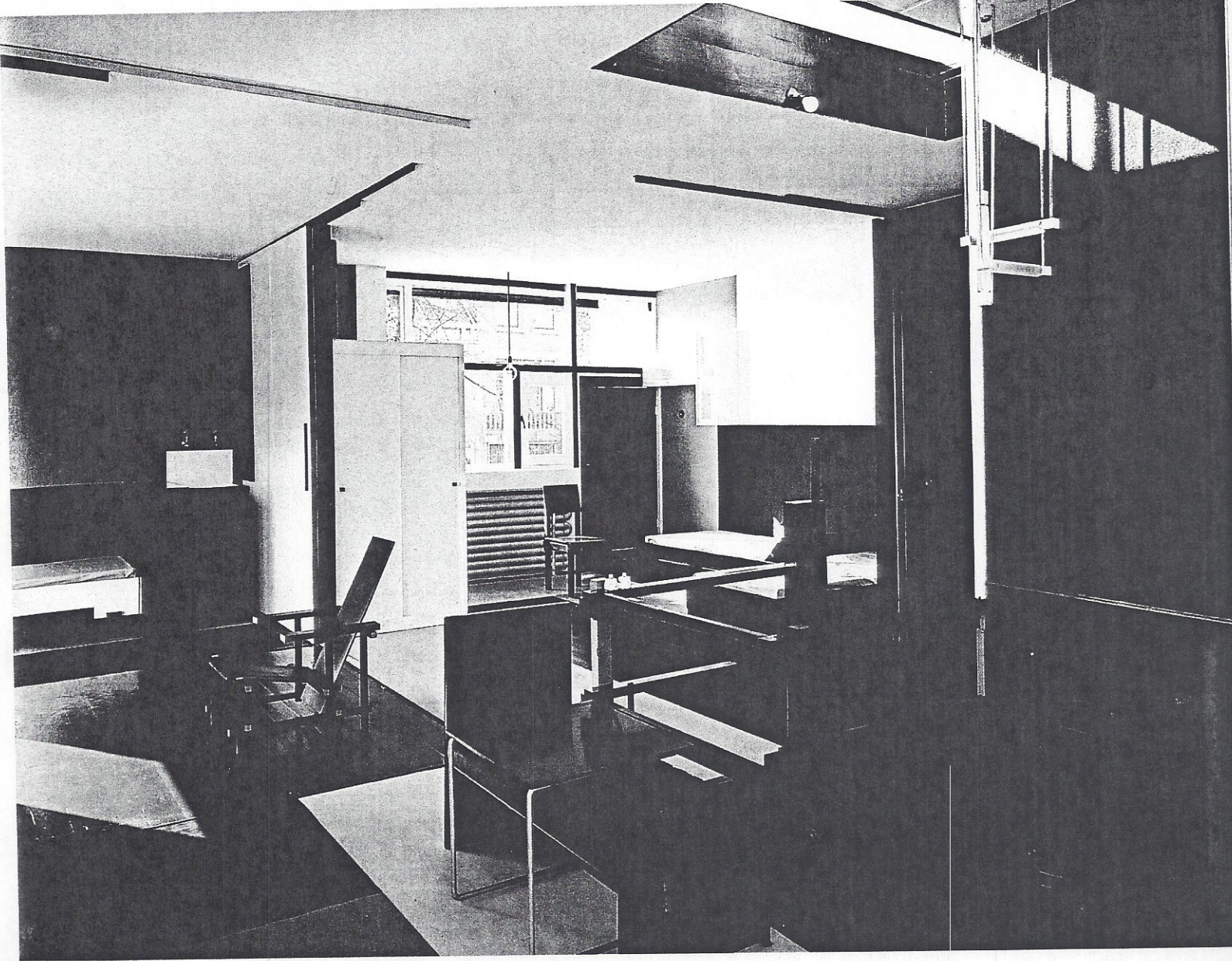


PLATE 3

Schröder House, upper floor,
looking toward the boy's and
girls' rooms

additive processes of design and construction, reflected and reiterated through the day-to-day experience of dwelling. The interior of the upper floor is literally animate; its folding partitions and movable walls (particularly in the corner where the bathroom and Mrs. Schröder's bedroom are located) slide, pivot, click, and lock into place like the smooth wooden parts of a giant magic box in which a coin is made to disappear and reappear at will. Like the exterior, the interior has a serendipitous, playful quality, but it also makes its message clear: one must construct an environment as one constructs a way of life – thoughtfully and deliberately.

In this strange, malleable space all things seem possible. The human body, a living organism in a man-made environment, takes on new importance, just as Rietveld's chairs and other furniture become focal points of attention, demanding to be analyzed, disassembled, and reassembled. In this way the house "stages" individual experiences and interpersonal relationships, heightening awareness of movement, of sight and sound, and awakening a deep appreciation of the complexity of domestic life. Despite its own extraordinary vitality, then, the interior is strangely contemplative, eliminating unnecessary motion by focusing on ritually repeated actions like the folding and unfolding of the partition walls. In this way the house makes room for new thoughts and experiences.

What Rietveld and Schröder shared was an exuberant confidence in the present and in their own ability to make art that was both beautiful and liberating. In 1918 Rietveld had revolutionized furniture design with the first unpainted versions of his Red-Blue Chair (fig. 1; he added the colors in 1923). By reexamining the posture of the human body in a sitting position, Rietveld had been able to identify and isolate the chair's component parts; these he brought together in an elegant three-dimensional composition that was both functional (though hardly

comfortable) and decorative.⁶ For him the process of making architecture, like that of constructing a piece of furniture, itself represented a quintessential modern activity, one in which new machine technology led the way: design was a matter of *assembling* a kit of parts – sections of flat wall, thin metal or wooden supports, windows of various sizes, pegs, hinges, and metal fastenings – with a specific purpose in mind, thereby creating new forms and dynamic spaces. As he wrote in 1932, in an article entitled "New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture":

*It is a sign of progress that the huge monumental edifices will belong to the past and that we now also take an interest in small practical houses. Our pieces of furniture too are no longer heavy immobile objects. They are no longer exclusively intended for a single purpose nor, in fact, made for exceptional surroundings. They are beginning to consist of small, light sections that can be assembled, so that one can construct a sort of framework as large as one wants; a piece of furniture consisting of supporting surfaces, in combination with open and closed boxes, drawers and so on; not just for the welcome variety provided by new materials.... The aim is to preserve a free, light and unbroken space, that gives clarity to our lives and contributes to a new sense of life."*⁷

The work Rietveld and Schröder did together was intended not simply to communicate this "new sense of life" but literally to guide body and mind toward clearer and more natural actions and thoughts. In 1921 Schröder and her husband had hired Rietveld to renovate a room in their house as a private sitting room/study for her; Mrs. Schröder's new room had to look "modern" as well as to communicate something of the feeling of modernity to its users. Their ideas about living in a "free, light and unbroken space," as Rietveld wrote, were bound up with a fierce commitment to a new openness about relationships within their own families and to truth in



FIGURE 1

Gerrit Rietveld, seated on an early version of his Red-Blue Chair, and co-workers in front of his furniture-making workshop in Utrecht. 1918

their emotional lives. Bourgeois notions of respectability and propriety, with their emphasis on discipline, hierarchy, and containment, would be eliminated through architectural design that countered each of these aspects in a conscious and systematic way. They saw their next project, the Schröder House of 1923–24, as an opportunity to pursue their goals on a larger scale, exploring the ways in which the parts of a building could be shaped into a spatial environment that would stimulate people to live and even to think differently.

Rietveld and Schröder were not only professional partners but also friends and lovers; he was often in the house and appeared at art events and social gatherings with her, despite the fact that his own wife and six children also lived in Utrecht. The Schröder House was their laboratory, and they studied its effects on themselves and on the children. Truus Schröder lived there for some

sixty years; Rietveld kept an office in the house in the early years (1924–32) and even lived there himself at the end of his life, from the time of his wife's death, in 1958, until his own, in 1964.⁸ While they speculated about the broader implications and possible applications of their experiments to housing design (for example, in the two apartment houses near the Schröder House on Prins Hendriklaan and around the corner on Erasmuslaan, erected in 1931 and 1935), it is clear that for both Rietveld and Schröder the house and its meaning were intensely personal. It is hardly surprising, then, to discover that it remains unique in the history of architecture: beloved, wondered at, intensely studied – but never imitated.⁹



FIGURE 2
Truus and An Schröder. ca. 1910

Truus Schröder

In a series of interviews conducted in 1982, Truus Schröder described her life and the circumstances that shaped the design of her home.¹⁰ Born in Deventer in 1889 to an upper-middle-class Catholic family (her maiden name was Schröder), she received a first-rate education, developing a taste for books and ideas as well as a sharp critical sense about matters of religion, philosophy, and the arts. Her mother died when she was a small child, and when she was a teenager she was sent to a convent boarding school. The experience shaped her emotionally as well as intellectually; throughout her life her closest relationship was with her older sister An (figs. 2, 3), whose intelligence, avant-garde tastes, and left-wing politics she admired. Trained as a pharmacist, Truus seems never to have practiced but instead immersed herself in reading, concentrating on literature, philosophy, art, and architecture, interests she shared with her sister.¹¹

In 1911 Truus married Frits Schröder, a lawyer, and they settled in Utrecht.¹² The couple had two children, a boy and a girl, born in 1912 and 1913; a third child, a girl, followed in 1918 (figs. 4, 5). The family lived in a comfortable apartment above Mr. Schröder's offices at 135, Biltstraat, but it was apparent that Truus and her husband had major differences about the way in which they wanted to live and bring up their children. In a letter to Truus of June 11, 1914, Frits Schröder outlined their problems. He loved her, he wrote, but "[their] differences manifest themselves in all [their] interests." He was more practical and saw things as they were, while she was more theoretical and saw things "as they ought to be"; his views were the result of experience, whereas hers came from reading books. If they were to follow her ideas about education, he wrote, then the children might very well be better people and experience beauty more profoundly, but they would very likely be unfit for the harsh realities

of society; this, he feared, would ultimately “destroy” them. Moreover, he continued, he deeply disapproved of her sister An’s lifestyle and influence on her. The last point was certain to anger Truus, whose love and admiration for her sister were unshakable.¹³

An Harrenstein-Schröder, a writer and art critic, was married to a doctor and lived in Amsterdam. Through her Truus was introduced to a circle of artists who held far greater interest for her than the bourgeois Utrecht society in which she lived. This group included Jacob Bendien (who lived with the Harrensteins for many years and was, in all probability, An’s lover), Paul Citroen (Bendien’s brother-in-law), Charley Toorop, Theo van Doesburg, and other members of the De Stijl circle, as well as visit-

ing artists such as Bruno Taut and Kurt Schwitters, and left-wing politicians and members of the Dutch Communist party.¹⁴ Their interests stretched beyond art and politics to include spirituality (in particular, Theosophy), meditation, free love, and women’s rights. These were the people to whom Truus Schröder looked for intellectual and artistic stimulation, but theirs was a world far removed from Utrecht and the Biltstraat apartment, with its heavy, dark furniture and high-ceilinged, formal rooms, in which she spent her days as the wife of a successful lawyer. In contrast, Frits Schröder’s support for the local arts community was expressed through membership in such organizations as *Kunstliefde* (Love of Art) and *Voor de Kunst* (For Art), to which he and Truus belonged from 1918 on; these affiliations could hardly have offered his discontented wife much consolation, if any.¹⁵

This unhappy state of affairs dragged on through the First World War and continued in the years that followed. In 1921 Frits Schröder suggested that Truus redesign and furnish a room in their home for her use alone. Frits had been introduced to the work of Gerrit Rietveld by a business associate, and he suggested that she consider him as her architect. Mrs. Schröder was easily convinced. She commissioned Rietveld to design a private study, complete with a built-in daybed and armchair, a table, and some chairs (fig. 6).¹⁶ Mrs. Schröder saw the new room as a place to which she could escape and where she could live as she liked:

I hardly met any people who had a feeling for what was modern. Not through my husband. My husband was eleven years my senior; he had a very busy practice and a great many acquaintances, some of his family lived in Utrecht, and they weren’t at all interested in that sort of thing. It was only through my sister that ideas came in from the outside. We would discuss such things in my room, and then it was mine, only mine. And once or twice Rietveld visited me.¹⁷



FIGURE 3

Truus and An. ca. 1925

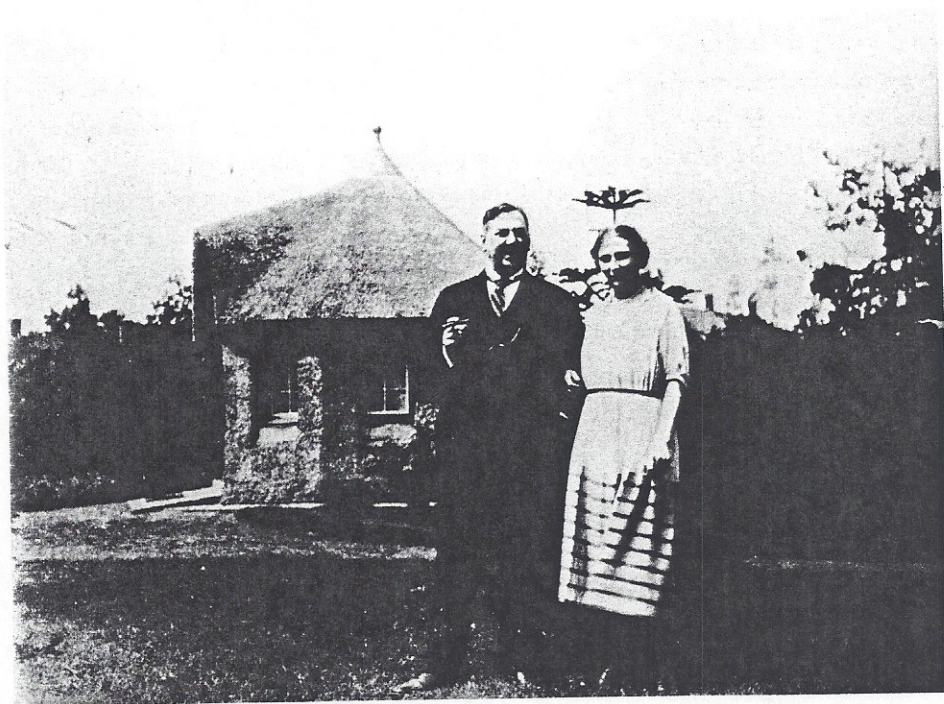


FIGURE 4

Frits and Truus Schröder. ca. 1911

FIGURE 5

Truus Schröder with her mother-in-law and two of her children, Marjan and Binnert. 1923



The room represented more than a retreat; it was a place in which a new way of life could be discussed and experienced. The love affair between Truus Schröder and Gerrit Rietveld, which began about this time, gathered force as the couple talked together about their lives, their relationships, and the meaning of art for each of them: *When I first got to know Rietveld, he, like myself, had been through a lot of unpleasantness. We had a deep understanding of each other's problems with the social norms of our times, which were strongly present. At that time, Rietveld really had to break free from the strict Protestant beliefs with which he had been brought up. And because I had just broken free from religious conventions myself... I think I encouraged this in him... but I think that talking with me helped him sort things out. For a while we were deeply involved with each other's problems and helped each other to develop further.*¹⁸

In his design for the room Rietveld lowered the ceilings and pared the furniture and lighting fixtures down to essentials, rejecting the rich fabrics, ornament, and heavy forms of conventional upper-class interiors.¹⁹ His own ideas about form and color, shaped in part by his contact with the artists of the De Stijl movement, were channeled and challenged by Schröder's critique. This mutual respect and exchange would shape their relationship for a period of more than forty years.

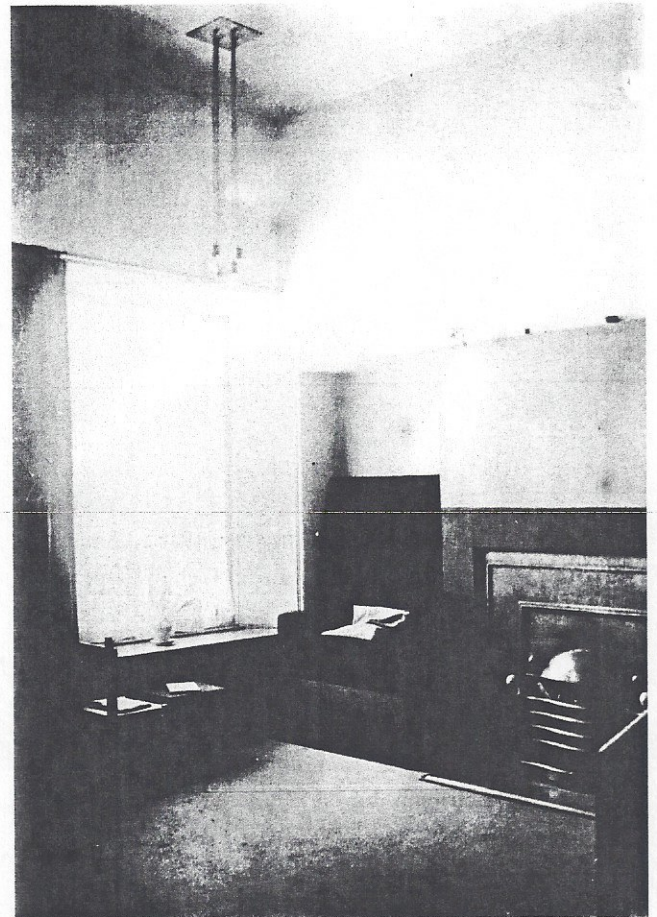


FIGURE 6
Gerrit Rietveld and Truus
Schröder. The study at 135,
Biltstraat, Utrecht. 1921

The Schröder House

When her husband died, in 1923, Mrs. Schröder again looked to Rietveld for help in designing her home. Her first idea was to find an apartment that he could remodel; her plan was to remain in Utrecht for only the next six years, until the children were out of school, and then to move to Amsterdam.²⁰ Nevertheless, having discovered a suitable lot at the end of a row of brick houses on the edge of the town, Schröder and Rietveld set about designing a new house for her family. Although she had a comfortable income from her husband's estate, her budget was limited; the final cost of the house was approximately the same as for a small, semidetached dwelling at that time.²¹

The site Schröder and Rietveld chose permitted them to experiment with a new hybrid type as well as a new style. The site on Prins Hendriklaan was surrounded on three sides by open space (fig. 7) and faced directly onto fields and open countryside. Accordingly, Schröder and Rietveld designed the house to have two principal fronts, a narrow one facing the street, which responded to the scale of its neighbors, and a broad one with a more formal, central entrance, which was approached via an enclosed garden (plate 4). Viewed from the garden side the house resembled a freestanding suburban villa of the type in which the Schröder family lived when Truus was growing up.²² Looking out from the garden with one's back to the house or from inside through the large windows of the principal living areas (fig. 8), one had the sensation of having left the city behind, of being in the more contemplative and peaceful environment of the country. This mixing of urban, suburban, and rural types at the Schröder House offered flexibility and a choice of experiences in daily life; throughout the house there are other design elements, such as the use of both fixed walls and movable partitions, that free the occupants to make

choices among various ways of living. The fact that the house is both literally and figuratively open-ended is one of its most distinctive qualities, and it provides a richer, more complex definition of what the architect and the client thought modern living was all about.

When Schröder described her program to Rietveld, she emphasized her need for a home in which parents and children would be brought together in an open space, where conversations could be wide-ranging, and where focused activities, including the children's schoolwork, might also be carried out: "I thought it was very good for the children to live in an atmosphere like that, also to have Rietveld often around. To have that experience. To hear those conversations, including those with people who disagreed. In fact, to take part in that exchange of ideas. I was very pleased that the children could share in that."²³ Schröder described the design process, which was guided as much by the client's ideas about family life as by aesthetic or architectural considerations:

We didn't make preliminary plans... Rietveld made a sketch of the plot of land, showing the measurements. The next question was: how do you want to live? Well, I was absolutely set against living downstairs. I've never lived this way, I found the idea very restricting. Rietveld was delighted about this, particularly because of the magnificent view. So we started to map out the upper floor, because you can't do without bedrooms. A room for the two girls and a room for the boy – in fact, that's how we started, with rooms. And where should we put them. All of us together, of course; the children had missed so much.²⁴

The result was a small house (21 x 30 feet) with a studio, library, workroom (originally a maid's room), and eat-in kitchen on the ground floor; Truus's room, the children's bedrooms, and a large living and dining area on the second floor (figs. 9, 10). While the downstairs rooms are small and separated by traditional fixed walls, the upper



PLATE 4

Schröder House, on Prins
Hendriklaan

"rooms" are actually one large space that can be partitioned by thin, sliding panels. On the plans submitted to the building department, the upper floor was labeled "attic" to circumvent the local building regulations.²⁵

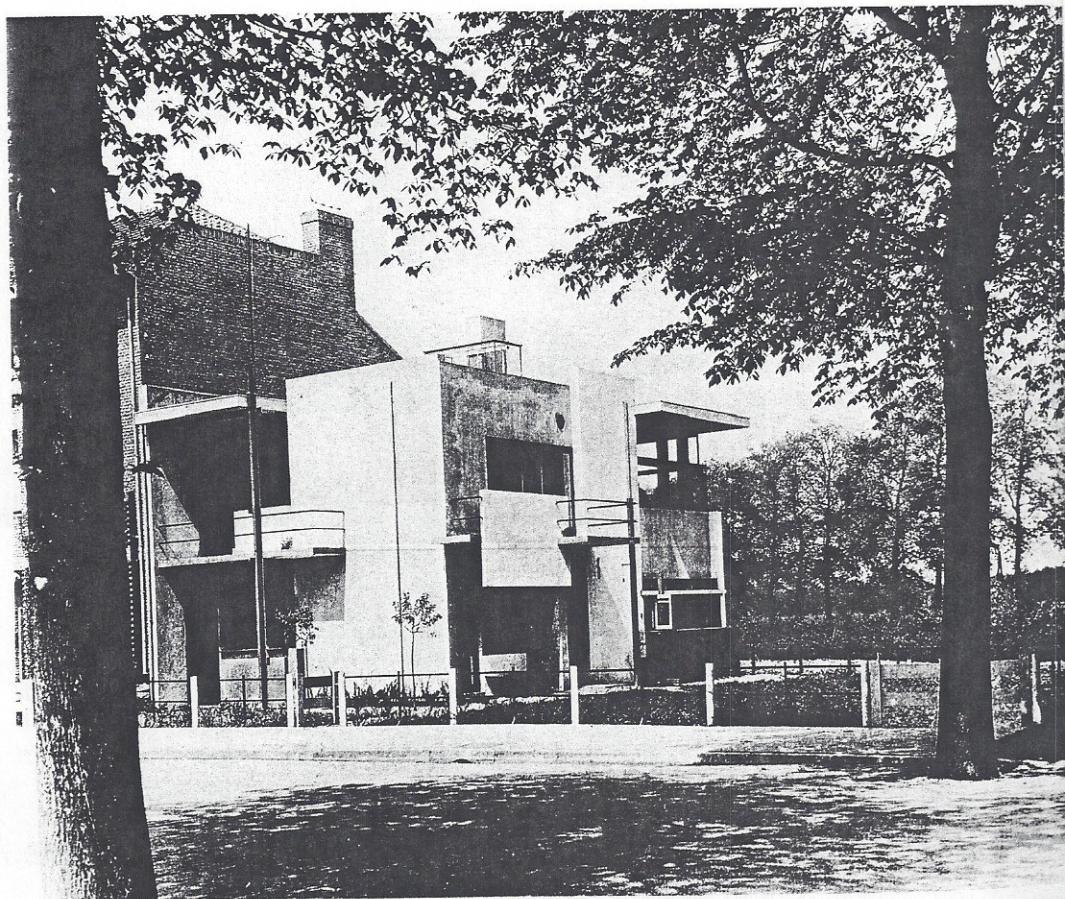
Truus's concept of open space had been forged throughout the difficult years of her marriage to Frits Schröder:

You see, I'd left my husband on three occasions because I disagreed with him so strongly about the children's upbringing. Each time, they were looked after by a housemaid, but still I thought it was horrible for them. And after my husband died and I had full custody of the children, I thought a lot about how we should live together.

So when Rietveld had made a sketch of the rooms, I asked, "Can those walls go too?" To which he answered, "With pleasure, away with those walls!" I can still hear myself asking, can those walls go, and that's how we ended up with the one large space.²⁶

FIGURE 7

Schröder House. ca. 1925



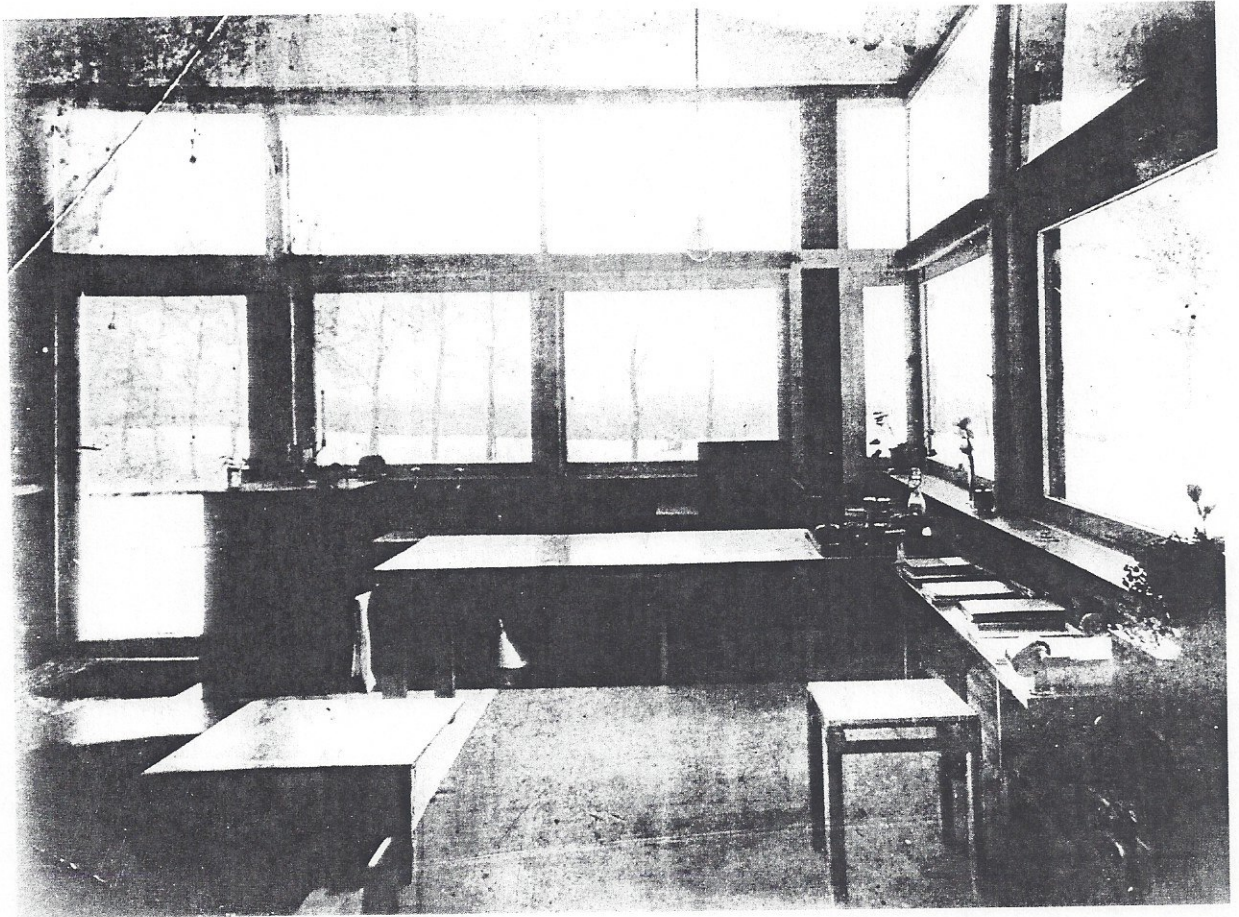
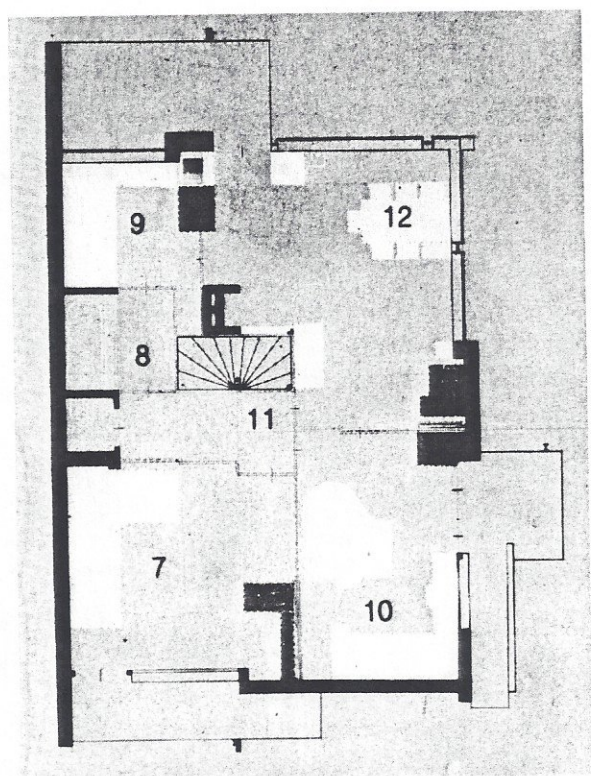
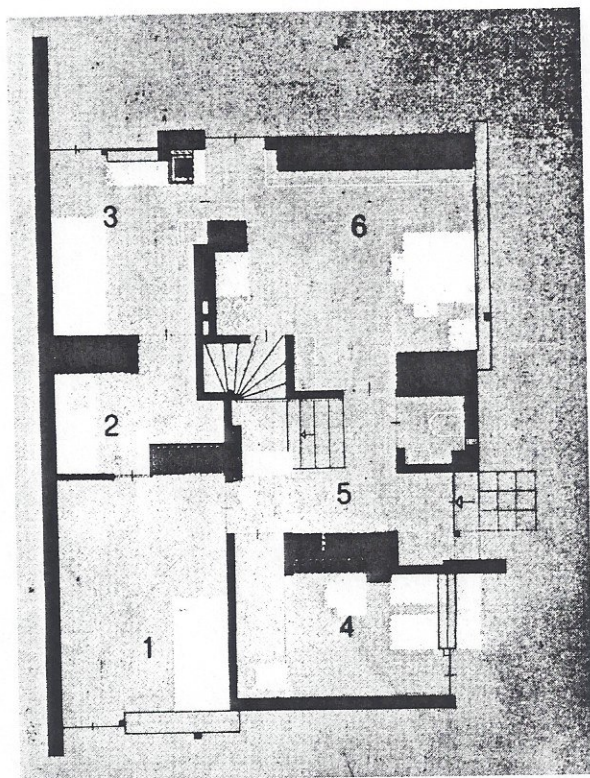


FIGURE 8

Schröder House, living/dining
area. ca. 1925

Although Truus's own bedroom, located in the corner of the upper floor, is separated from the principal living area by fixed walls, it is in no way as prominent or large as a traditional parents' bedroom. Her goal was to live her life in close association with her children, to be a part of their daily lives (fig. 11). A low shelf along the wall in the main living area was intended to be used as a desk where they could do their homework together; in practice, the older children often found the privacy of the small library on the ground floor more appealing. Adults and children were constantly together in the large living/dining room, and the children were encouraged to learn from the frequent discussions among visiting artists and intellectuals. In the end this was one of the most lasting contributions to Schröder's life and to that of her family:



I wanted a real exchange of ideas in this house. That was one of my aims. I wanted to have people here that you could discuss with. People with a critical attitude, all sorts of people. The criticism was less than I had expected, but what there was, was more tangible. Different from cultural evenings, when you come home bubbling with ideas, which have disappeared after a couple of days because you have moved on to the next subject. Actually the discussions here were always on the same topic. But in fact I liked it that way. Not so much a question of a famous house, but something to do with the essentials... that someone really feels spoken to. That someone who comes here takes something away that he or she can ponder over, and maybe reconsider.²⁷ In addition to its educational advantages, living in the house provided opportunities for play that neither Rietveld nor Schröder anticipated. She recalled: There used to be a wide white stripe [on the floor], near the stairwell. And when the children came home from school, I would call, "Look out, the floor's clean." Then they'd have to jump over the white part, because otherwise it was always getting grubby. And I didn't like having to say that. That was something I really disliked. The children told me later that they didn't mind at all. They thought it was quite fun, having a floor that you had to jump over. I thought it was educationally wrong.²⁸

FIGURE 9

Schröder House, plan, ground floor. 1. Studio 2. Workroom (darkroom) 3. Workroom (originally maid's room) 4. Library 5. Entry 6. Kitchen

FIGURE 10

Schröder House, plan, second floor. 7. Girls' room 8. Bathroom 9. Truus Schröder's room 10. Boy's room 11. Stair landing 12. Living/dining area

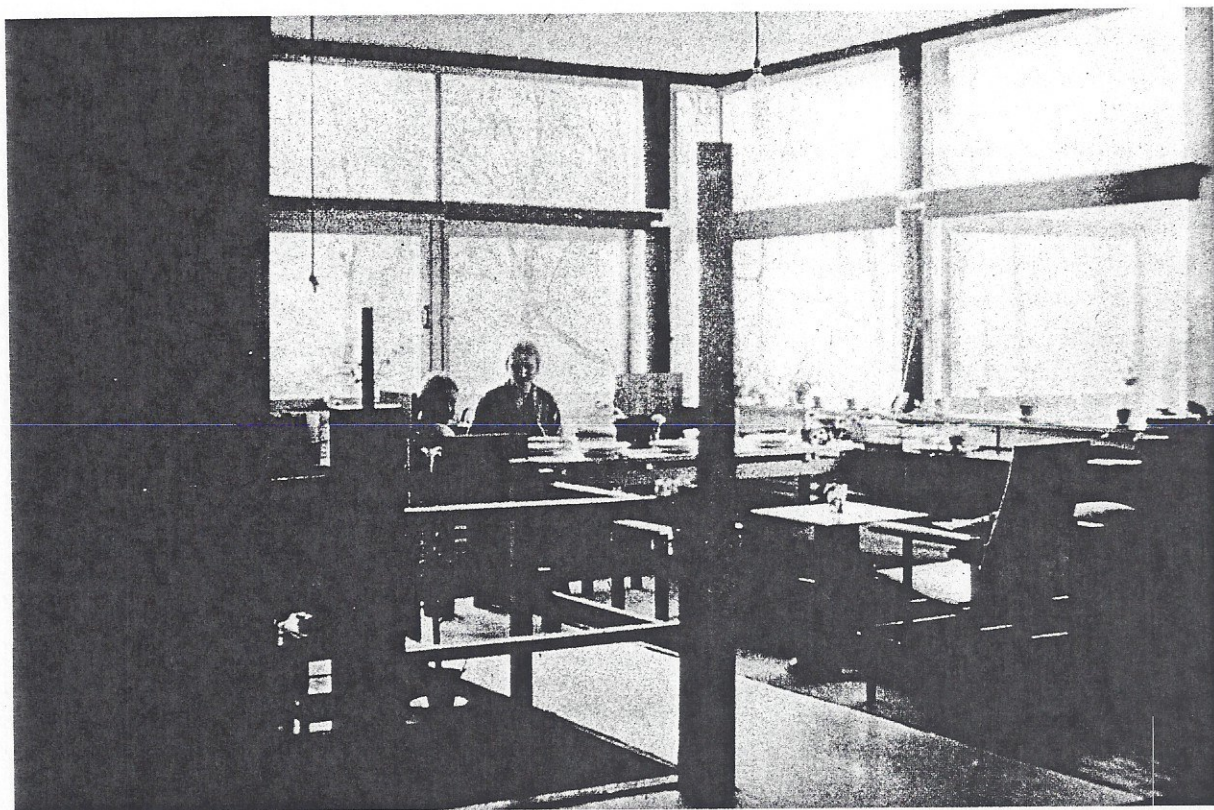


FIGURE 11

Truus and daughter Han
(sitting in the Berlin Chair).
ca. 1925

Nevertheless, living in the house was sometimes a strain for the children:

In the weekends crowds would come to have a gawp... It wasn't so nice for the children. On one occasion my daughter Hanneke came home from school quite scarlet in the face, crying her eyes out, so I asked her what was the matter. She sobbed, "I told a lie, because they said to me, 'You live in that loony house' and I said that I didn't live in that loony house." Something like that was very hard for a child to cope with.²⁹

While Mrs. Schröder's theories about early childhood development, open space, and modern family life contributed greatly to the project, in practice the design of the house was left to Rietveld. He was the acknowledged expert, and it was "his personal vision," his sense of form and color, and his excitement about the potential for change in the world of art that attracted her in the first place: "Rietveld experienced life through his senses, and that 'abstract' manner was nothing for him. The only

thing of which you can be certain, is what you apprehend and can digest through your senses. That was your reality. I found that of the essence, it spoke to me at the deepest level."³⁰

For the previous four or five years Rietveld had been experimenting with wooden furniture in which the component parts were isolated and articulated through the use of cantilevered planes and overlapping supports as well as bright colors. Working with a vocabulary of frame and plane, he created and defined a new sense of space, one in which mass and enclosure were replaced by flat surfaces and displaced grids that allowed a continuous flow of space through and around an object. At the Schröder House, Rietveld's evolving artistic language found expression in the creation of a total environment, where architecture and furniture shared an emphasis on the isolated and brightly colored elements of constructed form. Through such devices as the displaced corner of the living/dining area (see fig. 8), which effectively dematerializes the supporting frame of the building, or the glazed transoms and continuous ceilings on the ground floor, which permit the space of one room to flow into another, Rietveld pushed architectural thinking with the same imagination and originality he had brought to furniture design.

Both Rietveld and Schröder were committed to incorporating the most up-to-date thinking and devices into the design of the house. The original plans included a garage in place of the studio on the Prins Hendriklaan side, reflecting Mrs. Schröder's assumption (unfounded, as it happened) that she, and everyone else, would eventually own a car. Moreover, each "room" on the upper floor had storage cupboards, a washbasin, and an electrical outlet, which Mrs. Schröder felt were important to allow individuals to cook for themselves if they wanted.³¹ For the main living space, Rietveld designed a cabinet with modular storage compartments for sewing supplies,

stationery, a phonograph, and a movie projector. This unusual addition to the house's modern "equipment" (fig. 12) was used for showing the latest art films, including those of Soviet filmmakers banned in the Netherlands, and reflected Rietveld's and Mrs. Schröder's commitment (shared by the Harrensteins and their Amsterdam circle) to film as an experimental art medium and as a vehicle for progressive social commentary.³²

Ultimately, the most lasting benefits of living in the house came from the physical and emotional excitement of the environment. Mrs. Schröder summarized:

*This house exudes a strong sense of joy, of real joyousness. That's something in my nature, but here in this house it's stimulated. And that's absolutely a question of the proportions, and also of the light; the light in the house and the light outside. I find it very important that a house has an invigorating atmosphere; that it inspires and supports joie de vivre.*³³

In his 1932 article Rietveld emphasized this commitment to changing the emotional life of the occupant through design:

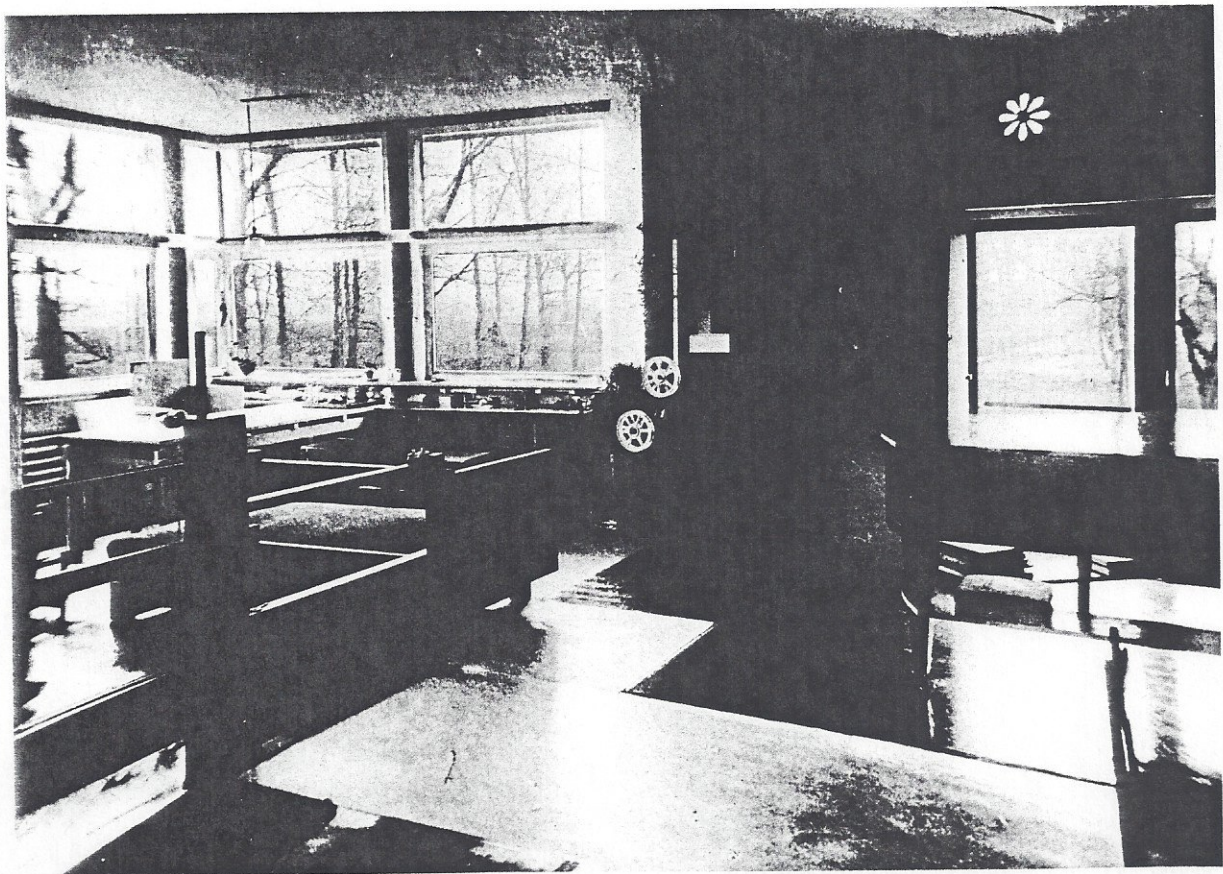
*The greatest change that architecture has gone through in recent times has been its liberation, its separation from the plastic dimension.... Architecture becomes an environment and nothing more. The result is that architecture has become less weighty, but at the same time much more functional and human. The building is no longer a thing that exists in itself or that stands for something; rather it is in active relationship to human beings and human beings will then have to adopt an active attitude towards it in order to be able to experience its qualities.*³⁴

The Schröder House was an intensely modern architectural environment; it provided an entirely new kind of space in which individuals – women, men, and children – could make choices about how they wanted to live. Offering a variety of alternatives, from the privacy of the small rooms on the ground floor to the open communal

space of the light-filled living area upstairs, and containing unique flexibility within itself, the Schröder House was not only a creative work of architectural design but offered its users a new environment in which to redefine family life, women's rights, and the responsibilities of individuals to themselves and to each other. Further, by creating opportunities for these individuals to focus on the rituals of daily life (by opening and closing the partitions, for example) and by making them acutely aware of their surroundings and of the conditions in which they lived, the Schröder House helped to create a modern consciousness, a sense that daily life and values were *staged* and enacted in a work of architecture that was designed and built with a larger purpose in mind. These ideas and experiences were directly related to Truus Schröder's broad social and intellectual goals. Thus, as a client, as a designer, and as a feminist, Schröder helped to shape and define the course of modern architecture.

FIGURE 12

View of the main living area, showing modular cabinet and projector. ca. 1925



Rietveld and De Stijl

Although Rietveld was not a formally educated man (he left school at age eleven), he was entirely familiar with the art movements and theories of his time. He seems to have found numerous ways to keep abreast of the latest thinking, taking evening courses in Utrecht and studying the work of other artists, such as his teacher, the architect and designer P. J. C. Klaarhamer. His friendship with Robert van't Hoff, an architect strongly influenced by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, proved to be especially important for Rietveld's development, as it led to commissions to study and copy some of Wright's furniture designs.³⁵ His membership in the arts society Voor de Kunst provided him with opportunities to meet other artists and prospective clients, among them Frits Schröder and Dr. A. M. Hartog, a doctor whose office in Maarssen he renovated in 1922.³⁶

Rietveld's connection to the artist Theo van Doesburg, the driving force behind both the *De Stijl* journal and the movement of the same name, had an especially dramatic impact on his career in the late 1910s and early 1920s by bringing him into contact with numerous painters and architects, among them Piet Mondrian, Vilmos Huszár, Jan Wils, and Cornelis van Eesteren, whose experiments with abstract form and color helped Rietveld achieve a new level of sophistication in his own work.³⁷ Through *De Stijl*, which published photographs of Rietveld's Child's Chair of 1918 and the unpainted version of the Red-Blue Chair of the same year, Rietveld's furniture and new construction techniques reached a broader audience. This exposure led in turn to further contacts and collaborations, among them an important project, ultimately realized, in which his furniture became an integral part of an experimental interior designed by van Doesburg (fig. 13); it was first published in *De Stijl* in 1920 under the title *Example of Coloristic*

Composition in an Interior (a retouched color illustration was published in *L'Architecture vivante* in 1925).³⁸ With its floating planes, fragmented grids, and protruding edges, Rietveld's furniture of the late 1910s already revealed a marked affinity with the art of De Stijl, and the work drew van Doesburg and others to him.

According to Yve-Alain Bois the art of De Stijl can be understood as the product of two "operations" that control the manipulation of abstract form: "*Elementarization*, that is, the analysis of each practice into discrete components and the reduction of these components to a few irreducible elements. *Integration*, that is, the exhaustive articulation of these elements into a syntactically indivisible, non-hierarchical whole."³⁹ In Rietveld's furniture, for example (and at the Schröder House), there is not only an emphasis on revealing the process of construction but also a celebration of the integral relationship and apparent balance between the component parts and the overall composition. This unity is achieved through an approach to design in which color, form, and space are treated as equal elements, so that the resulting three-dimensional composition says as much about spatial limits and the absence of mass as it does about the relationship between the forms themselves.

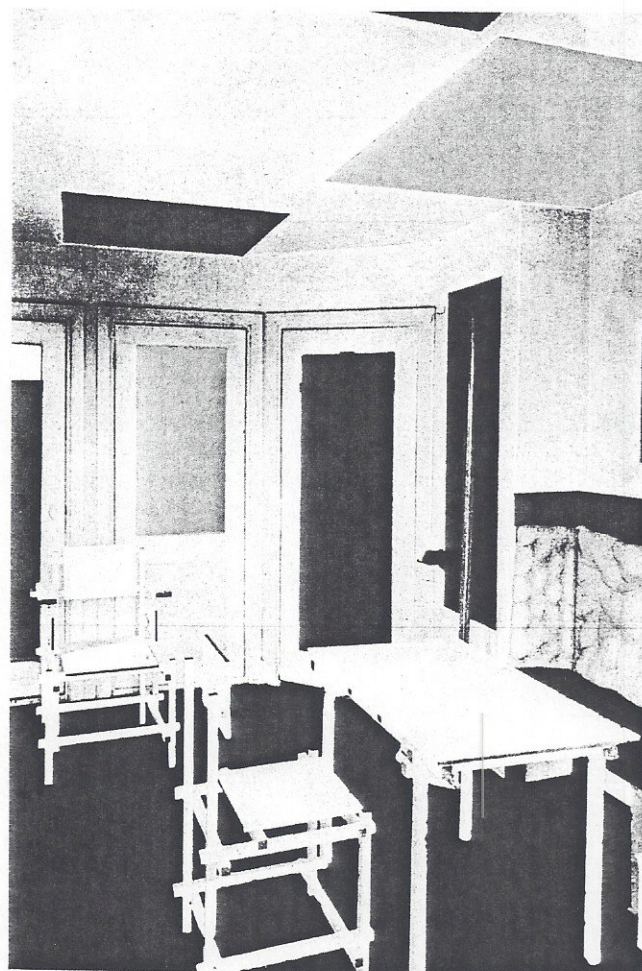
In 1924 van Doesburg published an article entitled "Towards a Plastic Architecture," which clearly outlines his views on the subject. Although it appeared when the Schröder House was already under construction (it is unlikely that Rietveld or Mrs. Schröder had seen the text before it was published), the essay describes the new approach to architectural form that the Schröder House achieved. According to van Doesburg it was the experience of free and open space, realized through "mobile" planes, movable walls and screens, that gave the new architecture its distinctive character. Opening up walls and enlarging windows eliminated the distinction

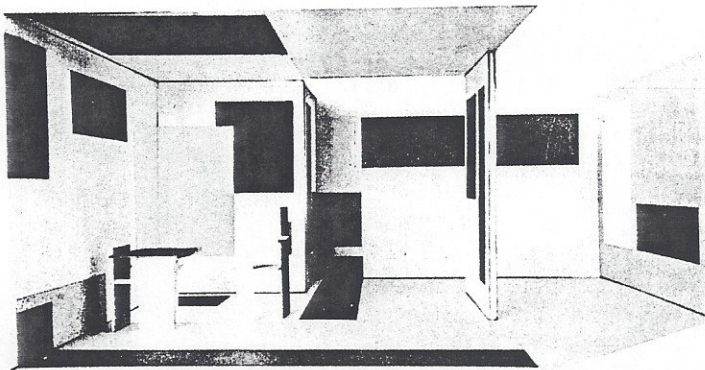
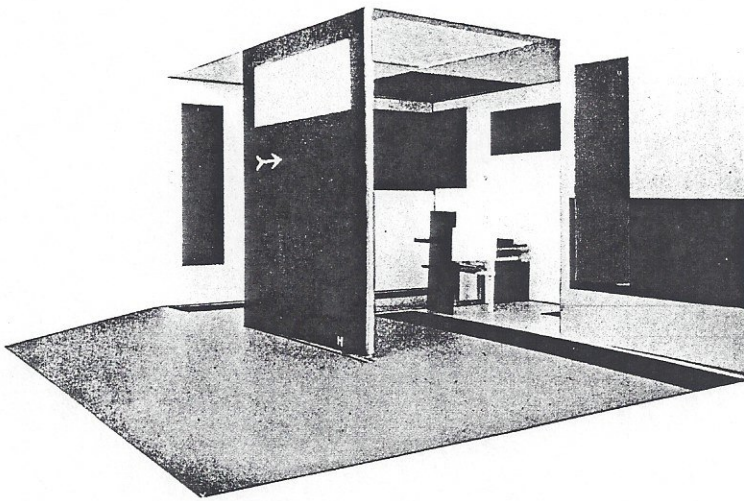
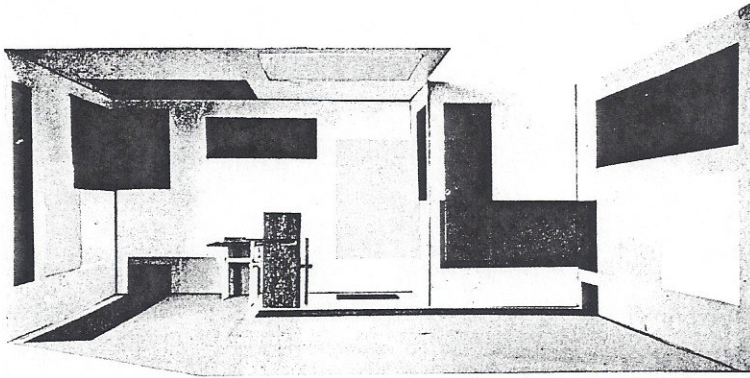
between interior and exterior space, creating what he called the “hovering” aspect of architecture and challenging “the force of gravity in nature.” Moreover, the new architecture was “anti-cubic” and asymmetrical, active rather than passive, with no “dead spaces” or repetitions. Color played an integral part in the design: used “organically” rather than decoratively, color contributed to the creation of a harmonic whole, an aesthetic composition conceived “without prejudice to utilitarian demands.”⁴⁰

Rietveld’s furniture and the Schröder House incorporate and resolve these artistic challenges far more successfully than the De Stijl works of architecture and interior design that predate them. For example, the well-known drawings and models for three small houses by van Doesburg and van Eesteren shown at the Galerie de l’Effort Moderne in Paris in 1923 place much greater emphasis on the composition of boxlike components and the pattern of window openings than on the articulation of the relationship between plane and grid; contrary to van Doesburg’s theories, they display a marked heaviness of form and a distinct separation between outside and inside space.⁴¹ Even in Rietveld and Huszár’s *Spatial Color Composition for an Exhibition*, shown in Berlin in 1923 and published in color in *L’Architecture vivante* the following autumn (plate 5), there is a reliance on the conventional relationship of floor, walls, and ceiling

FIGURE 13

Theo van Doesburg. *Example of Coloristic Composition in an Interior*. 1920. From *L’Architecture vivante*, 1925





MAQUETTE

V. HUSZAR
INTERIEUR, 1924

as enclosing elements; blocks of color are applied to these planes in an effort to fragment them visually, but the project is architectonically conservative. Planes predictably meet at the corners of the composition, although the use of primary colors tends to break up surfaces and unify the composition three-dimensionally. While it is possible that in this case Rietveld was responsible for only the furniture (the famous black and white Berlin Chair, an example of which was in the Schröder House), it is significant that the project exhibits few of the qualities that make his other work distinctive.⁴²

It is not surprising, then, that the Schröder House was greeted with such enthusiasm. Photographs were immediately published in *De Stijl*; in 1925 van Doesburg wrote to a friend to say that the house seemed to be the very embodiment of their “most recent principles.”⁴³ For many critics the house was a milestone in the progress of modern architecture: it represented a real break with the past, a celebration of color and abstract form. Though some commentators focused on its use of materials, mistakenly assuming that concrete had been used to build the walls (they are actually made of brick faced with plaster), it was the huge windows, thin walls, open space, and extraordinary colors that seized the imaginations of the majority of architects, critics, and the public.⁴⁴ The house thus catapulted Rietveld and Schröder into the public eye, drawing crowds to Prins Hendriklaan and focusing attention on the innovative approach of both the architect and the client.⁴⁵

Dutch Feminism and Modern Design

The Schröder House was an extraordinary achievement, a unique and defining moment in the lives of its creators. After it was built Rietveld and Schröder pursued a number of design projects together, collaborating most successfully on interior designs that drew equally on the expertise and experience of each – his in dealing with form, color, and design (in architecture, increasingly), hers in thinking about modern convenience and new ways of living, especially for women and families. Their work included the design of a new living room and bedroom for An Harrenstein’s Amsterdam home, completed in 1926 and widely published (fig. 14), which incorporated many of the ideas used at the Schröder House – built-ins, blocks of bold color, and vertical and horizontal partitions.⁴⁶

In 1930 Harrenstein, with a group of other feminists, founded a women’s magazine, *De werkende vrouw* (The Working Woman), to which both Schröder and Rietveld contributed articles on architecture and design.⁴⁷ The goal of the journal, as stated in its first editorial (presumably written by Harrenstein, who served as editor-in-chief), was to publish articles on the full range of women’s work experience, including work in the home. This agenda would expose readers to a wide range of topics, from women’s unions to legal and financial issues, sports, hygiene, clothing, and of course art, architecture, literature, and “the plastic arts.” The new magazine thus played an important (though all too brief – it survived for only two years) role as a clearinghouse for ideas in the middle-class feminist movement in Holland between the wars. It presented an image of the “modern woman” to which a number of readers could relate: she was well educated, economically comfortable, and concerned with questions about work, home, and family. Although it dealt with the problems of working women generally, *De werkende vrouw* was clearly aimed

PLATE 5

Gerrit Rietveld and Vilmos
Huszar. *Spatial Color Composition*
for an Exhibition. 1923. From
L'Architecture vivante, Autumn
1924

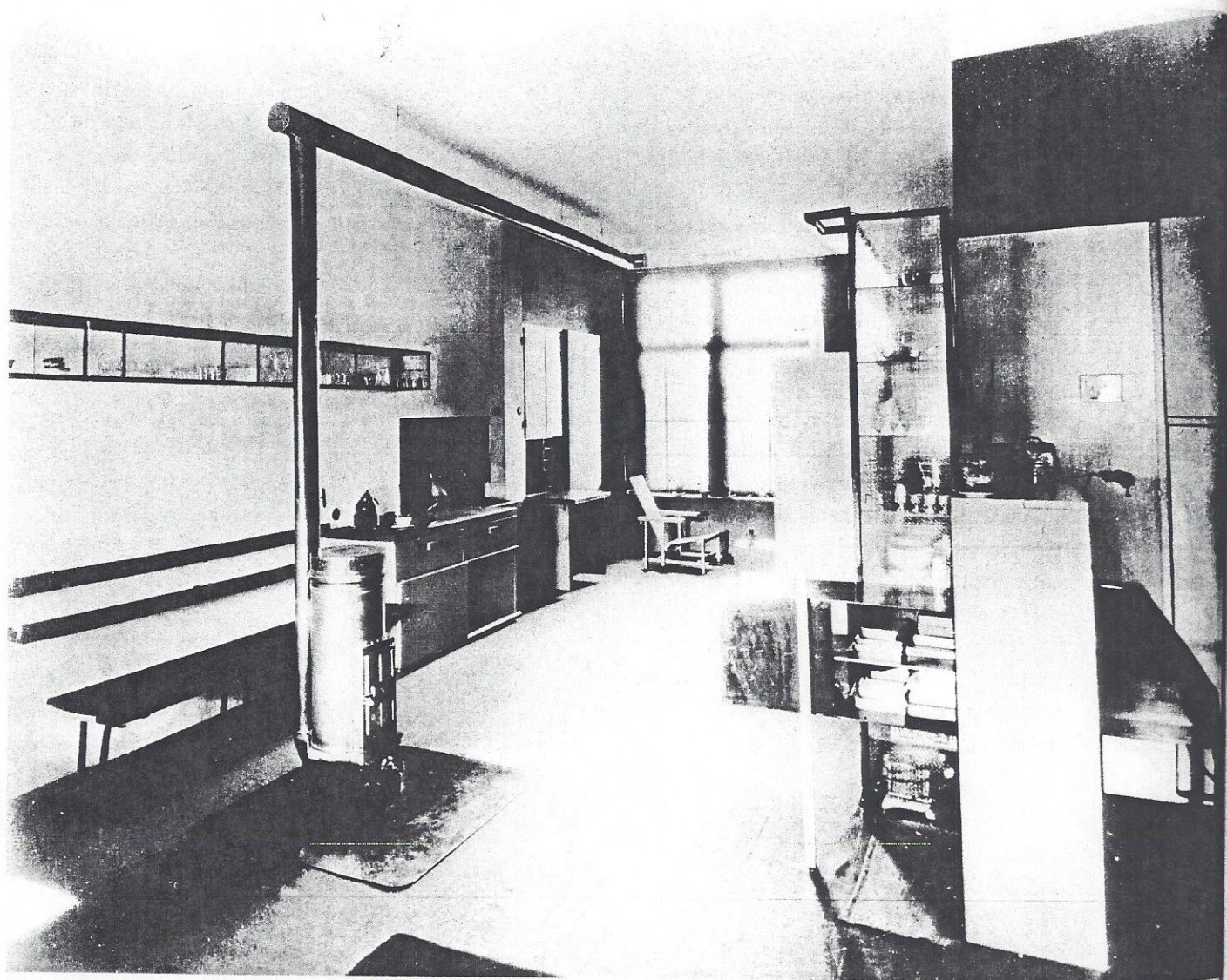


FIGURE 14

Gerrit Rietveld and Truus
Schröder. Harrenstein House,
Amsterdam, living room. 1926

at the interests of bourgeois intellectuals; as such, the magazine represents the significant broadening of Dutch feminism outward from the small circle of working women and upper-class academics and other experts who had dominated the movement through the First World War.⁴⁸ That women like Truus Schröder, her sister, and their friends were not only interested in reading the journal but also willing and able to contribute to it is a marker of their own commitment to feminist ideas and of the importance of feminism in intellectual and left-wing circles in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Schröder's interest in progressive interior design, and specifically her emphasis on women's work at home, were clearly of a professional nature, and the articles she wrote for the journal reflect her research.⁴⁹ They include two pieces that appeared in the earliest issues: an overview and description of the Frankfurt Kitchen, designed by Grete Schütte-Lihotsky and Ernst May in 1926, and a theoretical article on interior design.⁵⁰

In her article on interior design Schröder clearly and succinctly introduced contemporary Dutch architectural theory to a general audience. She described architecture as "space-making," pointing out that the use of planes rather than masses in architectural design enhances consciousness of spatial relations and proportions. Moreover, she continued, this consciousness of space is an active rather than a passive experience and can serve as a stimulus to thought and pleasure for "the tired worker." Bourgeois respectability and luxury have nothing to do with real architecture; on the contrary, this new sort of architectural design, based on the interplay of planar forms, and on the appreciation of relationships of scale, is far superior to "the so-called artistic interior," with its emphasis on coziness and warmth. The piece is illustrated with two photographs of the bedroom she and Rietveld designed for the Harrensteins in 1926, and in the captions both of them are credited.⁵¹

It is possible to situate Truus Schröder's feminism and her goals for her house within the broad movement of Dutch and European feminism in the early twentieth century. Although *De werkende vrouw* was published for only a short period, its contributors included a number of distinguished feminist philosophers and theorists; as mentioned above, its readers were middle-class intellectuals more interested in art, family, and educational theory than in women's rights in the workplace. Truus herself never held a job outside the home, and her position as a widow with three children stimulated her to take a greater interest in household labor and child care than she might have otherwise.

Like many of her contemporaries, Schröder was broadly influenced by the writings of the Swedish feminist Ellen Key, whose ideas on women's maternal gifts and their special role in the home, explained in a series of books published between the late 1890s and World War I, were particularly well known in Holland and Germany.⁵² Key urged feminists to shift their attention away from the workplace and women's equality *outside* the home to focus on women's unique abilities to nurture and guide their families within it. Moreover, Key believed that marriage was unduly restrictive of women's emotional, spiritual, and sexual life, and she thus campaigned for "free love," birth-control, and state support of single mothers. Such ideas had an impact on feminists like Truus Schröder, who sought greater equality for women in all aspects of their lives and who were particularly concerned with creating a more independent and respected role for women within the family.

Although never politically active, Schröder took a strong interest in housing design. In 1930 she and Rietveld collaborated on a project for a block of dwellings to be built across from the Schröder House on Erasmuslaan, on a plot of land that Schröder herself originally owned.⁵³ The first block of four row houses was completed in 1931,

and a model interior was open to the public. The furniture makers Metz & Co. planned to put some of Rietveld's designs into production if the display proved popular.⁵⁴ A second group of houses, four two-story flats with an ingenious interlocking vertical section, were completed in 1935. These projects were realized during Rietveld's most active and professionally prominent years, when he enjoyed both local and international attention.⁵⁵

Perhaps the most unusual commission on which Rietveld and Schröder collaborated was the conversion of a large house in Haarlem into fifteen studio apartments for single working women, in 1937–38.⁵⁶ Sponsored by the *Flatstichting voor vrouwen door vrouwen* (The Foundation for Flats for Women by Women), the project sought to make modern amenities and design available to the occupants; built-in furniture and appliances rendered the small spaces highly efficient, and sliding panels gave them an unusual flexibility for use as both bedrooms and sitting rooms.

Motivated by her strong belief in women's rights, Schröder sought to respond to the needs of nontraditional households.⁵⁷ Her own house is testimony to her ambitious goals and to her concern for broad social and artistic change; her personal circumstances and struggles reinforced that commitment and pushed her to new levels of creativity in problem solving. The Schröder House not only broke down boundaries between generations and redefined social relations through unconventional design; it also contested the structure of the traditional family. It went beyond the familiar type of the artist's studio to suggest a new model for a small family house

and workshop. Through her architecture and design Schröder was thus able to integrate feminist ideas into the modernist program, using her house as a laboratory in which to test, through experience, new architectural forms, new approaches to daily life, and a new vision of women's role in society.

The Schröder House celebrates collaboration while remaining firmly tied to the vision of one woman. The client's contribution was unusually significant in this case: not only did Schröder act as patron and partner, but she created both the program and the opportunity to realize it in built form. Moreover, the Schröder House would not have been built or even conceived without a series of radical breaks with gender convention, each of which was due to the sheer force of Schröder's personality: her financial independence and authority as a client; her ability to act as a spokesperson for her own ideas; Rietveld's respect for her as a collaborator and equal in matters of design; her decision to change the way in which she lived with her family; and her eloquence and commitment to her house and to modern architecture.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the unique design of the house is especially due to Rietveld, to his talent as an architect, and to his own commitment to change in the world of art and architecture. Rietveld, too, had a vision, and it drew Schröder to him and kept her attention over the course of their long life together. Through their passion and commitment, the Schröder House took shape in 1923–24 as a unique, modern building, a home in which the challenges of living in the present were celebrated with energy and exuberance.

- 1 This chapter is based on research conducted in collaboration with Maristella Casciato in Holland and the U.S. during 1994 and 1995; I could not have undertaken this project, in particular the archival research dealing with documents in Dutch, without her. I have also benefitted greatly from her knowledge of Dutch architecture and from her own previous work on Rietveld: see her "Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, Truus Schröder-Schröder: Casa unifamiliare, Utrecht, 1924," *Domus*, no. 686 (Sept. 1987), 40–49, and "Models of Domesticity in Twentieth-Century Dwelling: The Case of the Schröder House (1924)" (unpublished paper). For the Schröder House, see Paul Overy et al., *The Rietveld Schröder House* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988); this volume includes original material drawn from interviews with Truus Schröder conducted by Lenneke Büller and Frank den Oudsten in 1982, first published in *Lotus International* 60 (1988), 33–57. For Rietveld, see Theodore M. Brown, *The Work of G. Rietveld, Architect* (Utrecht: A. W. Bruna, 1958), G. H. Rodijk, *De Huizen van Rietveld* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1991), Marijke Küper and Ida van Zijl, eds., *Gerrit Th. Rietveld: The Complete Works* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 1992), and Bertus Mulder, *Gerrit Thomas Rietveld: Leven, Denken, Werken* (Nijmegen: Sun, 1994). Rietveld's drawings are held by the Rietveld-Schröder Archive, Centraal Museum, Utrecht (hereinafter referred to as Rietveld-Schröder Archive); a small number of other drawings and documents, including early sketches for the Schröder House and the drawings for the two apartment buildings in Utrecht, is held by the Netherlands Architectural Institute, Rotterdam. I am grateful to both institutions, in particular to Jaap Oosterhoff, curator of the Rietveld-Schröder Archive, for their help with my research.
- 2 In *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 121, Yve-Alain Bois describes Rietveld as having "substituted the functionalist ethic" of modernism with something closer to what Baudelaire called the "Ethic of Toys: 'Everything is deployed in such a way as to flatter our intellectual desire to dismantle his pieces of furniture or architecture into their component parts.'" 3 Schröder's contribution was noted by Jean Badovici in *L'Architecture vivante*, where she is named with Rietveld as the architect of the house. Jean Badovici, "Maison à Utrecht par T. Schraeder et G. Rietveld," *L'Architecture vivante* (Autumn–Winter 1925), 28–29, pls. 31–33.
- 4 See Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. nos. 87, 96, 102, 107, 108, 126, 131, 164, 212, 248, 259, 275, 381, 383.
- 5 Ibid., cat. no. 85.
- 6 Ibid., cat. no. 35.
- 7 Gerrit Rietveld, "Nieuwe zakelijkheid in de Nederlandsche architectuur," *De vrije bladen* 9, issue 7 (1932), 1–27; English trans. in Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, 33–39. The quotation appears on p. 39.
- 8 Overy, *Rietveld Schröder House*, 17. Truus Schröder died in 1985.
- 9 For Rietveld's involvement in the modern housing movement, see Richard Pommer and Christian F. Otto, *Weissenhof 1927 and the Modern Movement in Architecture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), esp. 150–51. For the apartment house projects in Utrecht, see Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, 130–34, 157.
- 10 Mrs. Schröder's contribution was also the subject of a short book, *Tr. Schröder-Schröder, Bewoonster van het Rietveld Schröderhuis* (Utrecht: Impress, 1987) written by Corrie Nagtegaal, who lived in the house as a tenant/companion in the last years of Schröder's life. I am very grateful to Ms. Nagtegaal for her willingness to share her research and experiences with us in July 1995.
- 11 Although the majority of the holdings in Truus Schröder's personal library were distributed to family members and sold at auction after her death, the remaining collection (about three hundred volumes), housed in the Rietveld-Schröder Archive, reveals the wide range of her interests in art, poetry, aesthetics, domestic architecture, and psychology. It is worth noting that in addition to the Bauhausbücher, a series of short books on art and design issued by the Bauhaus, she also owned a number of publications of the Department of Architecture at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Schröder's handwritten diaries and her scrapbooks of newspaper clippings and other miscellaneous texts, also in the Rietveld-Schröder Archive, suggest an ongoing interest in women's issues, literature, fashion, and household management.
- 12 Overy, *Rietveld Schröder House*, 21.
- 13 Frits Schröder, letter to Truus Schröder (hereinafter referred to as T. Schröder), June 11, 1914, Rietveld-Schröder Archive. I am grateful to Nancy Stieber for her help in translating this text. See also Nagtegaal, *Tr. Schröder-Schröder*, 8, and Lenneke Büller and Frank den Oudsten, "Interview with Truus Schröder" (hereinafter referred to as "Interview"), in Overy, *Rietveld Schröder House* 43 n. 2.
- 14 Paul Overy, *De Stijl* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 33. In 1933 Bendien and Harrenstein published a book on contemporary painting, *Richtingen in de heedendaagse schilderkunst* (Rotterdam: Brusse, 1933). For Bendien, see the exhibition catalogue *Jacob Bendien, 1890–1933* (Leewarden and Utrecht: Fries Museum and Centraal Museum, 1985). For Citroen, see Herbert van Rheedan et al., *Paul Citroen: Kunstenaar, docent, verzamelaar* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1994), esp. 82–87. In 1940 Citroen edited a collection of Bendien's writings, *Jacob Bendien, 1890–1933: Een herinneringsboek* (Rotterdam: Brusse, 1940). The articles on Bendien and Citroen in the *Dictionary of Art* (London: Macmillan, 1996) are also helpful.
- 15 Frits was a member of Kunstliefde from 1913 to 1916 (Rietveld had joined in 1911). See Marijke Küper, "Gerrit Rietveld," in Carel Blotkamp et al., *De Stijl: The Formative Years, 1917–1922*, trans. Charlotte I. Loeb and Arthur Loeb (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), 259–80, esp. 260, 278 n. 25.

- 16 "Interview," 46.
- 17 Ibid., 47.
- 18 Ibid., 90, 92.
- 19 See Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. nos. 51, 84.
- 20 "Interview," 52.
- 21 The house cost somewhere between 6,000 (Mrs. Schröder's recollection in "Interview," 78) and 11,000 guilders (Overy, *Rietveld Schröder House*, 22, after Brown, *The Work of G. Th. Rietveld*, 155 n. 38). Küper and van Zijl cite, without a source, a figure of 9,000 guilders (*Complete Works*, 101).
- 22 A postcard dated 1901 (Rietveld-Schröder Archive, 993) provides an illustration of the Schröders' home, a substantial, freestanding Italianate villa.
- 23 "Interview," 93.
- 24 Ibid., 56.
- 25 Schröder also recalled that she had visited a friend who lived in "one large empty attic room," and that she had wondered what living in such a place would be like. "Interview," 52. See also Overy, *De Stijl*, 114.
- 26 "Interview," 56.
- 27 Ibid., 96, 102.
- 28 Ibid., 71.
- 29 Ibid., 78.
- 30 Ibid., 61, 89.
- 31 Ibid., 30, 60.
- 32 During the 1920s Rietveld was the secretary of the Utrecht branch of Filmliga, the radical film society, and both he and Mrs. Schröder were fascinated by the artistic potential of film; Overy, *De Stijl*, 33. In her autobiography, Han Schröder mentions that she met "modern artists and avant-garde moviemakers" at the home of her aunt in Amsterdam as well; Han Schröder, "Curriculum vitae," typescript, International Archive of Women in Architecture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Va., 4.
- 33 "Interview," 93.
- 34 Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, 37.
- 35 Overy, *De Stijl*, 75.
- 36 Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. no. 57.
- 37 For van Doesburg, see Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg* (New York: Macmillan, 1974); this volume includes English translations of van Doesburg's key writings.
- 38 *De Stijl* 3, no. 12 (Nov. 1920), 12; *L'Architecture vivante* 3, no. 9 (1925), special issue on *De Stijl*. See Bois, *Painting as Model*, 111–12. For an overview of relevant *De Stijl* projects, see Overy, *De Stijl*, chs. 6, 7, and Nancy Troy, *The De Stijl Environment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), esp. ch. 4.
- 39 Bois, *Painting as Model*, 103.
- 40 "Towards a Plastic Architecture," *De Stijl* 12, no. 6–7 (1924), 78–83, reprinted in Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg*, 142–47; the quotation is on pp. 144–47.
- 41 See Nancy Troy and Yve-Alain Bois, "De Stijl et l'architecture à Paris," in Bois and Bruno Reichlin, eds., *De Stijl et l'architecture en France* (Liège: Pierre Mardaga, 1985), 25–90. Van Doesburg's own axonometric drawings and "counter-constructions" of the same year begin to display greater fragmentation and elemental construction; see Bois, *Painting as Model*, 118.
- 42 Troy, *The De Stijl Environment*, 129ff.
- 43 *De Stijl* 6, nos. 10–11 (1924–25), 160 (exterior); *De Stijl* 6, no. 12 (1924–25), 140 (interior). For the letter to César Domela, see Troy, in Bois and Reichlin, *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*, 46.
- 44 See Walter Gropius, *Internationale Architektur*, *Bauhausbücher* 1 (Munich, 1925), 76–77, where a caption notes that the house was made of "concrete, iron, glass"; and Jean Badovici, "Maison à Utrecht."
- 45 Rietveld and Schröder's designs were included in an exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1929; J. J. P. Oud and J. Duiker were the other featured architects.
- 46 Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. nos. 107, 110–11; the bedroom was bought by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam when the house was demolished, in 1971. A doctor's office and guest room were completed in 1930 (cat. no. 156).
- 47 Truus Schröder-Schröder, "Wat men door normalisatie in den woningbouw te Frankfurt a/d Main heeft bereikt" (What Has Been Achieved by the Standardization of Housing in Frankfurt a/d Main) 1, no. 1–2 (1930), 12–14, and "Een inliedend woord tot binnenarchitectuur" (An Introductory Note on Interior Design) 1, no. 3 (1930), 93–94. Gerrit Rietveld, "De stoel" (Chairs) 1, no. 9 (1930), 244, and "Architectuur" (Architecture) 1, no. 11–12 (1930), 316–18. *De werkende vrouw* was published only until Sept. 1931 and copies of it are extremely rare; a complete run of the journal is held by the Internationaal informatiecentrum en archief voor de vrouwen beweging (International Information Center and Archives for the Women's Movement), in Amsterdam.
- 48 One such specialist, who acted as a bridge between the first and second feminist movements in Holland, was the psychologist and women's rights advocate Ana Polak (1874–1939), author of *De vrouwenbeweging in Nederland 1898–1923* (The Women's Movement in the Netherlands), 1923. The head of the National Bureau for Women's Work, she contributed an article to *De werkende vrouw* on the differences between men's and women's work (see 1, nos. 1–2 [Jan.–Feb. 1930]); a later article focused on the question of whether housewifery was a profession (see 1, no. 10 [Oct. 1930]).
- 49 Truus Schröder's scrapbooks in the Rietveld-Schröder Archive show that she was constantly clipping articles and photographs from newspapers and journals; these clippings range from articles on energy-saving kitchen design to illustrations of modern appliances.
- 50 See *De werkende vrouw* 1, no. 1 (1930), 12–14, and 1, no. 3 (1930), 93–94. For the Frankfurt Kitchen, see Susan R. Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere: Grete Lihotzky and the Frankfurt Kitchen," in Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze, and Carol Henderson, eds., *Architecture and Feminism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 221–53; Peter Noever,

ed., *Die Frankfurter Küche von Margaret Schütte-Lihotsky* (Berlin: Ernst und Sohn, 1991); and Nicholas Bullock, "First the Kitchen – Then the Facade," *AA Files*, no. 6 (May 1984), 58–67.

51 I am grateful to Nancy Stieber for her help with the translation of this text.

52 For Key's influence, see Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894–1933* (London: Sage Publications, 1976), and Katharine S. Anthony, *Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia* (New York: H. Holt, 1915). See also Kay Goodman, "Motherhood and Work: The Concept of the Misuse of Women's Energy, 1895–1905," in Ruth-Ellen Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes, eds., *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 110–27. Key's works influenced Frank Lloyd Wright, and Wright's lover Mamah Borthwick Cheney was designated as Key's official English translator in 1909. See Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Years, 1910–1922—A Study of Influence* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), and his "Taliesin: To Fashion Worlds in Little," in Narciso G. Menocal, ed., *Wright Studies I* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 44–65.

53 Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. nos. 154, 163, 164.

54 Rietveld worked for Metz & Co. from 1927 until the 1950s. See Küper and van Zijl, *Collected Works*, cat. nos. 119, 146–48, 155, 162, 189, 192, 258, 306, 423, 432.

55 Rietveld's other multi-unit projects included a block of apartment dwellings at the Wienerwerkbund Siedlung, in Vienna, of 1929–32, and a group of houses on Robert Schumannstraat in Utrecht, built in 1931–32; see Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. nos. 172, 175.

56 Küper and van Zijl, *Complete Works*, cat. no. 275.

57 According to Corrie Nagtegaal (interview with Alice Friedman and Maristella Casciato, July 1995), Truus Schröder had been influenced by the work of Clara Wichmann (1885–1922), a prominent feminist theorist whose articles on women's rights and jurisprudence appeared in *De groene Amsterdamer*, an Amsterdam newspaper of politics. Schröder was also an avid reader of the romance novels of Cary van Bruggen (1881–1932).