



The Reuchlinhaus

Architecture in the *International Style*

The Reuchlinhaus is a masterwork of post-war German architecture. Built in 1957-61 as the municipal cultural centre, it presents itself in the clean lines of the *International Style*. Its lobby and heart is the square entrance hall, a foyer flooded with light and offering a view of luxuriant greenery through its huge panoramic windows. The focal point of the upper foyer is a circular opening for the free-standing spiral staircase leading to the ground floor. The lobby is the start and recurrent meeting-point for guided tours.

An Ark for Culture

After total war-time destruction on February 23, 1945, the cultural institutions in Pforzheim with their greatly decimated holdings eventually found, as in a Noah's Ark, a new home in the Reuchlinhaus for the municipal archives, museums and the Kunstverein with its rich tradition. It takes its name in honour of the city's most famous son, the scholar, writer and lawyer Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522).

The Architect

Manfred Lehmbruck (1913-1993), who was born in Paris and grew up in Zürich and Berlin, was a son of the famous sculptor Wilhelm Lehmbruck. In the 1930s, Mies van der Rohe arranged for Lehmbruck to work at the Paris office of Auguste Perret, France's leading architect, where he found the model for his spectacular spiral staircase. In 1942, he took his degree with a doctoral thesis on 'Museum Architecture of the Future'. After internment and active service, Lehmbruck opened an office for industrial architecture in Stuttgart. His breakthrough came in 1953, when he won the Pforzheim competition.

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