

Segal, Walter 1907 - 1985

Walter Segal was born in Ascona, Switzerland on 15 May 1907*. His parents were Jewish of Romanian origin. His father, Arthur Aron Segal (1875-1944), was a painter who, in 1910, co-founded the Neue Sezession group in Berlin. Walter Segal grew up in Ascona and Berlin. He trained as an architect with Marinus Jan Granpré Molière (1883-1972) in Delft, and at the Technischen Hochschulen in Berlin-Charlottenberg and Zürich from 1929 to 1932.

Hitler's accession to power in 1933 prevented Segal from returning to Berlin. After working on a few commissions in Ascona and in Majorca, Spain in 1933-34, he accepted a temporary post as an excavation archaeologist in Egypt, where in 1934-35 he made detailed studies ancient Egyptian dynastic chairs.

In 1936 he emigrated to England and settled in London. Finding it difficult to get architectural commissions, he worked on a number interior design projects and designed furniture for Gordon Russell, Heal's, and others. During World War Two he was engaged on the design of air raid shelters for the Ministry of Supply, and hostels for displaced workers. Segal was aware of the prescient need for large-scale, low-cost housing after the war and drew up a series of designs for small houses. He also wrote extensively on the subject of self-build housing, with which his name has subsequently become synonymous.

Towards the end of the war Segal set up an architectural practice in London and from 1944 taught at the Architectural Association in London. In 1973 he was appointed Banister Fletcher professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College, London; and from 1976 taught at the Thames Polytechnic. Segal died in London on 27 October 1985

* Source: Charlotte Benton, Dictionary of National Biography. Berlin is often given as his place of birth

Worked in
Switzerland
Germany
UK
Works

See: UK Modern House [*link below*]

Bibliography

Benton, Charlotte. A different world: emigre architects in Britain 1928-1958. London: RIBA Heinz Gallery, 1995

McKean, John. 'Becoming an Architect in Europe Between the Wars'. Architectural History Vol. 39, 1996, pp. 124-146

McKean, John. Learning from Segal: Walter Segal's Life, Work and Influence. Basel and Boston: Birkhauser, 1989

McKean, John. 'The Segal System'. Architectural Design, March 1976, pp. 288-296.

Links

- UK Modern House http://www.ukmoho.co.uk/html/architect/Walter_Segal.html
- The Modern House <https://www.themodernhouse.com/directory-of-architects-and-designers/walter-segal/>
- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Segal
- Wikipedia [Text in German] https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Segal
- Charlotte Benton. Walter Segal. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [Subscription service] <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/63143>
- Modernism in Metro-land <https://www.modernism-in-metroland.co.uk/walter-segal.html>
- Segal Self Build <http://www.segalselfbuild.co.uk/home.html>
- Dezeen <https://www.dezeen.com/tag/walter-segal/>
- YouTube. Hugh Strange: Walter Segal and the Rigorous Simplification of Building Process [27 mins] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfAJSPj0cX4>
- YouTube. Walter's Way: The Anarchist's Housing Estate <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JbqJNAUOR8>