

Ford, Olga Games 1905 - 1988

Olga Gemes Ford [also known as Olga Gemes and Olga Ford] was born in Budapest, Hungary, on 26 June 1905. She studied architecture in Vienna, Dresden, Berlin and Paris, and trained under Hans Poelzig. She subsequently qualified as an architect with a Dip.Ing. from the Technische Hochschule in Berlin-Charlottenburg.

Some time in the early 1930s she move to England and by the end of the decade was an active member of the design community in Britain, elected to the National Register of Industrial Art Designers and specialising in the design of printed textiles, rugs and carpets and woven textiles. A photograph of a dining room designed by Gordon Russell Ltd. and featuring a hand-tufted rug designed by Elizabeth Gemes [possibly misattributed and in fact by Olga Gemes] is illustrated in 'Decorative Art' 1939 (p.76). Following World War Two her work was shown at a number of major exhibitions and trade fairs including the 'Britain Can Make It' exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in 1946. It also featured in contemporary architecture and design journals including 'Architectural Review', 'L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui', 'Ter es Forma', 'La Construction Moderne', etc.

During the 1940s she began lecturing for the Oxford University Delegacy Extra Mural Studies. In the early 1950s she became an instructor at Leicester School of Architecture. In the early 1960s she also began to teach at Leicester College Art [later part of Leicester Polytechnic, now De Montfort University].

In the 1970s, in addition to teaching, she began working as a freelance photographic Illustrator, contributing images to art publishers in Britain and abroad.

Gemes Ford was a Fellow of the Central Institute of Art and Design (CIAD) and a Member of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers (MSIAD). Her address in 1939 was given as 23 Normanton Road, South Croydon, Surrey. Between the 1940s and the mid-1970s she lived in Stoneygate, Leicester. She then moved to north London. She was married to Oliver E. Ford. She died in Islington, London in September 1988.

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