

The Mies Mystique: Irreducible Opposites in the Work of Mies Van Der Rohe

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ABSTRACT

A chronological historiography of Mies van der Rohe's architecture uncovers a constant reassessment of his work by critics in changing eras. By the 1990's he was reassessed as a more complex figure than previously understood. Publications, such as, *The Presence of Mies*, and, *Mies in Berlin/America* revealed new ways to conceptualize his work. Today he's a well-worn symbol of the elite European architect in a necessary, refreshing, and fruitful landscape of broader inclusivity. However, in the canon of Western Modern Architecture Mies is the most mysterious; an architect who conceals multitudes with his silence. Mies's works are like tofu, his buildings act as tabula rasa in which new meanings can be absorbed within the constant, restless, and shifting tastes of architectural scholarship.

Mies cultivated this mystery by saying one thing and doing another. Like Andy Warhol he reduced explanations of his design process to the point of rationalist banality.

But a closer understanding of Mies's philosophy betrays a much deeper surface. A new English translation of highlighted passages in Mies's personal copy of Romano Guardini's "Der Gegensatz" (The Opposite), gives a clue into how mysteries within Mies's works are cultivated. For Mies, these passages revised the understanding of dualities as laid out by classic German philosophy. Hegel supported the synthesis of contradiction through a reposed resolution, but this passage declares an irreducible simultaneity present within paradox. Architecture is a relevant discipline for exploring dualities because it is a discipline steeped in both the rational and the spiritual, serving immediate and abstract needs. Reframing a transitional period in Mies's career—the projects for the Ulrich Lange and Hubbe House—within the context of his meditations on Guardini reveals a new complexity embedded in the work. His quest to understand the nature of dualities is the underlying flavor of his work after the 1920s.

THE MIES MYSTIQUE

A chronological historiography of Mies van der Rohe's architecture uncovers a constant reassessment of his work by critics in changing eras. In the 1920s progressive peers deemed him an avant-garde revolutionary, in mid-century he was the establishment paragon of minimalist modernism, in the 70's and 80's he was faulted for his inhuman aesthetic reductivity, and in the 1990's he became a more complex figure than previously understood. Publications, such as, *The Presence of Mies*, and, *Mies in Berlin/America* framed new ways of conceptualizing his work.¹ These publications painted most previous assessments as reductionist. Today he's a well-worn symbol of the elite European architect in a necessary, refreshing, and fruitful landscape of broader inclusivity.

However, in the canon of Western Modern Architecture Mies is the most mysterious; an architect who conceals multitudes with his silence. Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier are comparative dead-ends, their fruits digestible as products of their individual creative labors,² and explained through copious self-publishing. Their works, therefore, are not as receptive to a multiplicity of meaning. But Mies's works are like tofu, his buildings act as tabula rasa in which new flavors can be absorbed within the constant, restless, and shifting tastes of architectural scholarship. Through this "almost nothing," a void is created in the silence, clearing a path for new conceptualizations. Mies's architecture transcends specificity. It is less a personal statement and more a framing device designed to capture meaning(s) and inspire contemplation.

Mies cultivated a mysterious persona by saying one thing and doing another. Like Andy Warhol (the great pop artist whose repeated silkscreen method upended all that was sacred in the established art world) Mies reduced explanations of his design process to the point of rationalist banality.³ In an interview discussing Lafayette Park in Detroit he summarizes this sentiment:

But generally, I think my work has so much influence because of its reasonableness. Everybody could do that. To do it well you don't have to have too much fantasy. You just need to use your brain. And, after all, that is something that everyone can do.⁴

"I am a deeply superficial person." – Andy Warhol

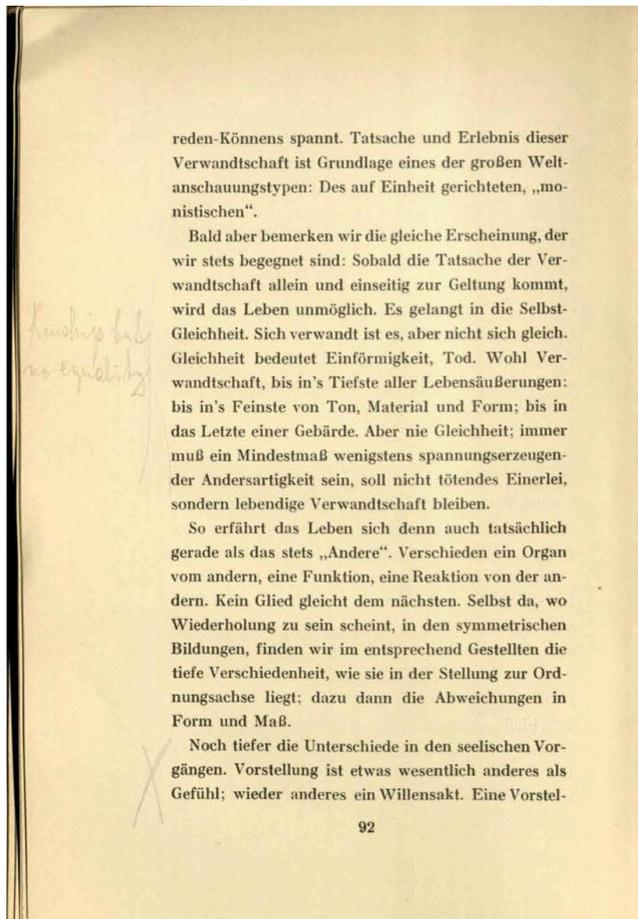


Figure 1. A page from personal copy Mies's personal copy of Romano Guardini's *Der Gegensatz* (*The Opposite*). Scan by Author.

This representative example of Mies discussing his work in an offhand, even dismissive, way could be mistaken for a quote by Warhol, who stated that with his new mass-produced factory inspired paintings, “*anyone can be an artist.*” But a closer understanding of Mies's philosophy—as laid out in Fritz Neumeyer's masterful book, *The Artless Word*—betrays a *deep surface*. Neumeyer shows that Mies, from the 1910's onward, was an avid reader of a wide range of topics including philosophy, theology, the arts, and the sciences.⁵ Extant copies of books in Mies's library are rich with hand scrawled marginalia, revealing a working-through of the texts. It is not a stretch, therefore, to speculate—in the absence of Mies's own words—how these complex far ranging topics seeped into his professional work.⁶

A new English translation⁷ of portions of Mies's personal copy of *Der Gegensatz* (*The Opposite*), a book by the Catholic philosopher Romano Guardini, offers clues into how Mies cultivated ambiguities in his work (fig.1). In a series of highlighted⁸ passages there is a thorough rethinking of the nature of paradox.

*Life exists in a unified oppositeness; in an opposingly constructed unity. It's about opposites, not contradictions. Life is essentially a paradox... Not “synthesis” of two moments into a third. Neither a totality for which the two sides comprise “parts...” One side of the opposing side cannot be deduced from the other, and cannot be discovered in the other...We are thus constrained to recognize both.*⁹

Mies translated these spiritual concepts into a formal aesthetic methodology, which the undiscerning eye may confuse for irreconcilable contradictions present in the work. Guardini and Mies, however, proposed something more nuanced—a simultaneity where opposites reside at the same time, not in a resolved synthesis, as Hegel had proposed, nor in an open contradiction, but in dualistic autonomy, with the goal of achieving a more truthful form.

Hegel's solution for achieving a total work of art hinged on the reposeful resolution of opposites: “*what constitutes truth is merely the resolution of this antithesis, and that not in the sense that the conflict and its aspects in any way are not, but in the sense that they are, in reconciliation.*”¹⁰ For Hegel the resultant of this reconciliation of opposites completed the artwork. In the 19th century Friedrich Nietzsche complicated this methodology in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The opposing poles of art—the rational Apollo and the free-spirited Dionysus—contained echoes of Guardini's simultaneity of opposites.

Thus the intricate relation of the Apollonian and Dionysian in tragedy may really be symbolized by a fraternal union of the two deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo, finally the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of...all art is attained.¹¹

By mid-twentieth century the philosophy of art history in Robert Venturi's book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, upended the Hegelian resolution, arguing that an awkward irresolution of opposites contributed a dynamic aesthetic power, and itself stood for a more holistic and inclusive understanding of “truth.”

...an architecture of complexity and contradiction has a special obligation towards the whole: its truth must be in its totality or its implications of totality... A feeling of paradox allows seemingly dissimilar things to exist side by side, their very incongruity suggesting a kind of truth.¹²

Venturi criticized Mies for his simplicity, suggesting that he practiced an imperfect Hegelian dialogue of resolution. Mies's close reading of Guardini in *Der Gegensatz* supports a third way, where a middle-ground between Hegel and Venturi allowed bounded *and* dependent opposites to coexist. Guardini states: *The opposing elements have to be similar, related, otherwise no relationship is possible; they also have to be different, individual—otherwise it amounts to qualitative identity.*¹³

Der Gegensatz framed motivations for Mies's work beyond the rational minimalist narrative that has proliferated (in Mies's own public statement, by his followers, and, critically, by post-modernists). His work was not only a search for distilled essences (which were explored later in his free-span projects in America), but also a search for a holistic understanding of the architectural object; the use of the architectural problem as a vessel for grappling with philosophies of the whole and the true. In order for this to occur Mies concluded that a Hegelian resolution of opposites did not fully address the paradoxes present in architecture. The cultivation of a multiplicity of irreducible simultaneous opposites afforded Mies an opportunity to confront inescapable paradoxes in architecture without the obfuscating burden of reductive synthesis, and without leaving things in open irresolution.¹⁴ This methodology opened up a rich new world of formalist expression, where Mies strove for a more honest redress within the battleground of architectural production. Reframing a transitional period in Mies's career (before his migration to America) through the lens of Guardini reveals logic within complexity, and helps to de-conceal the mystique of Mies. Ultimately, this analysis acts as a challenge to current practitioners grappling with the relationships between part and whole amidst the myriad (inherited and new) contradictions present in design.

FORMAL MANIFESTATIONS: THE BARCELONA PAVILION

Conscious formal applications of autonomous opposites began to reveal themselves in Mies's later European work, after he began reading Guardini. The Barcelona Pavilion is a playground for simultaneous phenomena, ones which exist in a gestalt double-reading. Clarity and obfuscation coexist in the liberal use of glass, a material which simultaneously reveals all *and* creates deceptive reflections (a double reading, therefore, between a distilled corporeal building is combined with a spiritual counter-current rich with ambiguity). This phenomenon is exploited and reified in water reflections, book-matched marble, and—most notably—in the chrome cladding on the columns. Mies simultaneously revealed and concealed the structural system of the space by both utilizing a free-plan and obscuring that structure in a wrapping of weightless reflectivity. The columns structural purpose is mitigated by the Gothicized crucifix fluting, which breaks up the columns piecemeal. Combined with the mirrored cladding, this results in a complex column that is both present and absent, tense and compressed, visible and almost not there. These dualities create rich experiential oscillatory readings that change as one moves through the space—neither a Hegelian resolution or a Venturian tension, but a Guardinian simultaneous autonomy, a new architectural conception that attempted to express the underlying invisible truth of a Mass machine age.¹⁵

THE HUBBE HOUSE

Mies's projects in the thirties reveal further, restless, and playful interrogations of simultaneity. The free-plan was utilized in mysterious ways in two unrealized house projects from the

1930s, the Margarete Hubbe house and the Ulrich Lange house. The plan of the Hubbe house project of 1935 (fig. 2) is much more than a free-plan column grid with freestanding walls like the Barcelona Pavilion. The cruciform columns occur in only a region of the full house—the main entry and the living room. Beyond this zone several thick bearing walls occupy the same space as potential columns, rendering additional columns conceptually present but actually absent. An extrapolation of the column grid through the extents of the housing envelope shows both acknowledgement and ignorance of this conceptual grid. The far southern wall aligns with the grid, as does the exterior wall perpendicular to the dining room. The far northern wall does not, and there are many other instances where the columns in this grid would have intruded in the middle of rooms or in windows. The house both acknowledges and ignores this conceptual columnar field.

Peter Eisenman drew attention to the presence of one extra column outside the centrally located column field in the hallway extending toward the master bedroom: "*How is it to be explained? Possibly as a sign that there are other missing columns, which would be present either as a spine along the length of the middle of the building or as an entire field of columns.*"¹⁶ This stray column validates an impression of a continuous field of columns throughout the residence.

Eisenman further points out that the centralized column field introduces symmetrical play in the project. This symmetry is simultaneously reinforced and undermined by various elements in the house, such as furniture and partition walls. The large fireplace that separates the dining room from the living room "*is asymmetrical about the vertical axis of the bay but symmetrical about the horizontal axis.*"¹⁷ The placement of the living room furnishings, dining table, and fireplace opening undermine one symmetry while accentuating another, further reinforcing a complex acknowledgement and indifference towards the column grid (a continual oscillation between centered and de-centered space). The only clear symmetrical moment in relation to the column field happens at the entrance where two large flanking walls frame a glass entry centered about 4 columns. This symmetrical gesture, however, is undermined by the asymmetrical sliding wall that separates the entry from the living area, and is disrupted further by two chairs placed off center on this wall. The symmetrical entrance gap is asymmetrically placed on the front façade and competes with programmatically placed and unevenly sized windows on the rest of the solid brick elevation. The accepted power of the free-plan derives from its ability for programmatic elements to liberate themselves from any structural obligations: program and structure become autonomous operations. In the Hubbe House, Mies simultaneously bound *and* liberated the program elements from the columns resulting in a complex dialogue, interrogating the compartmentalized functionality of free plan. This can be interpreted as a formal working-through of Guardini's concepts of simultaneity in *Der Gegensatz*.

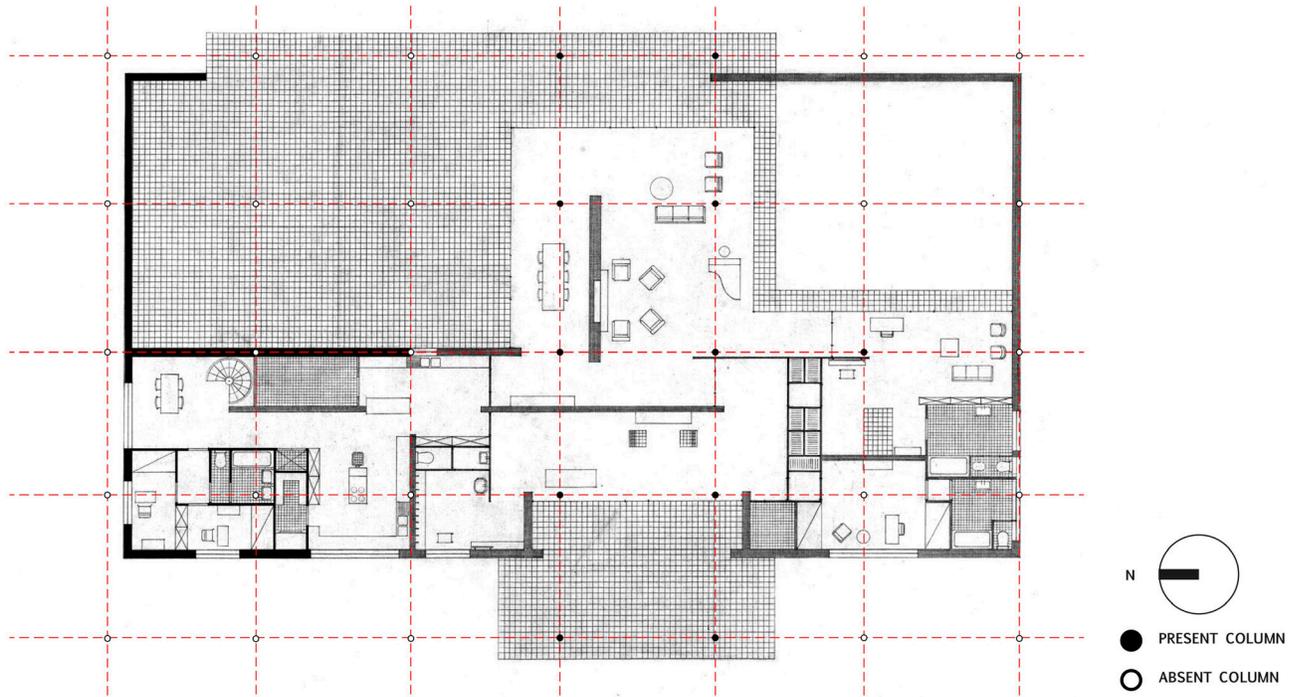


Figure 2.Hubbe House Column Diagram. Images from Mies Archive. Diagram by Author.

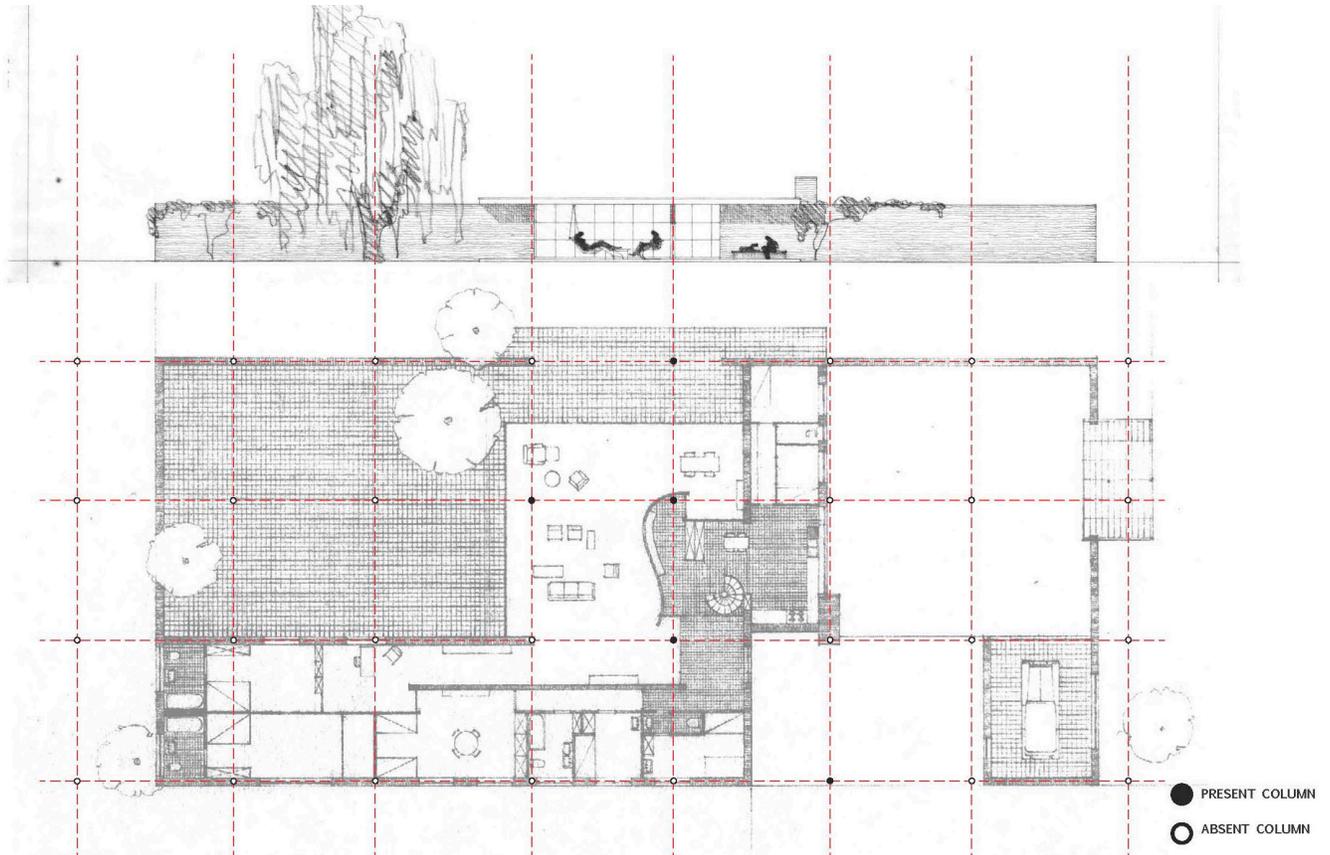


Figure 3.Ulrich Lange House Column Diagram. Images from Mies Archive. Diagram by Author.

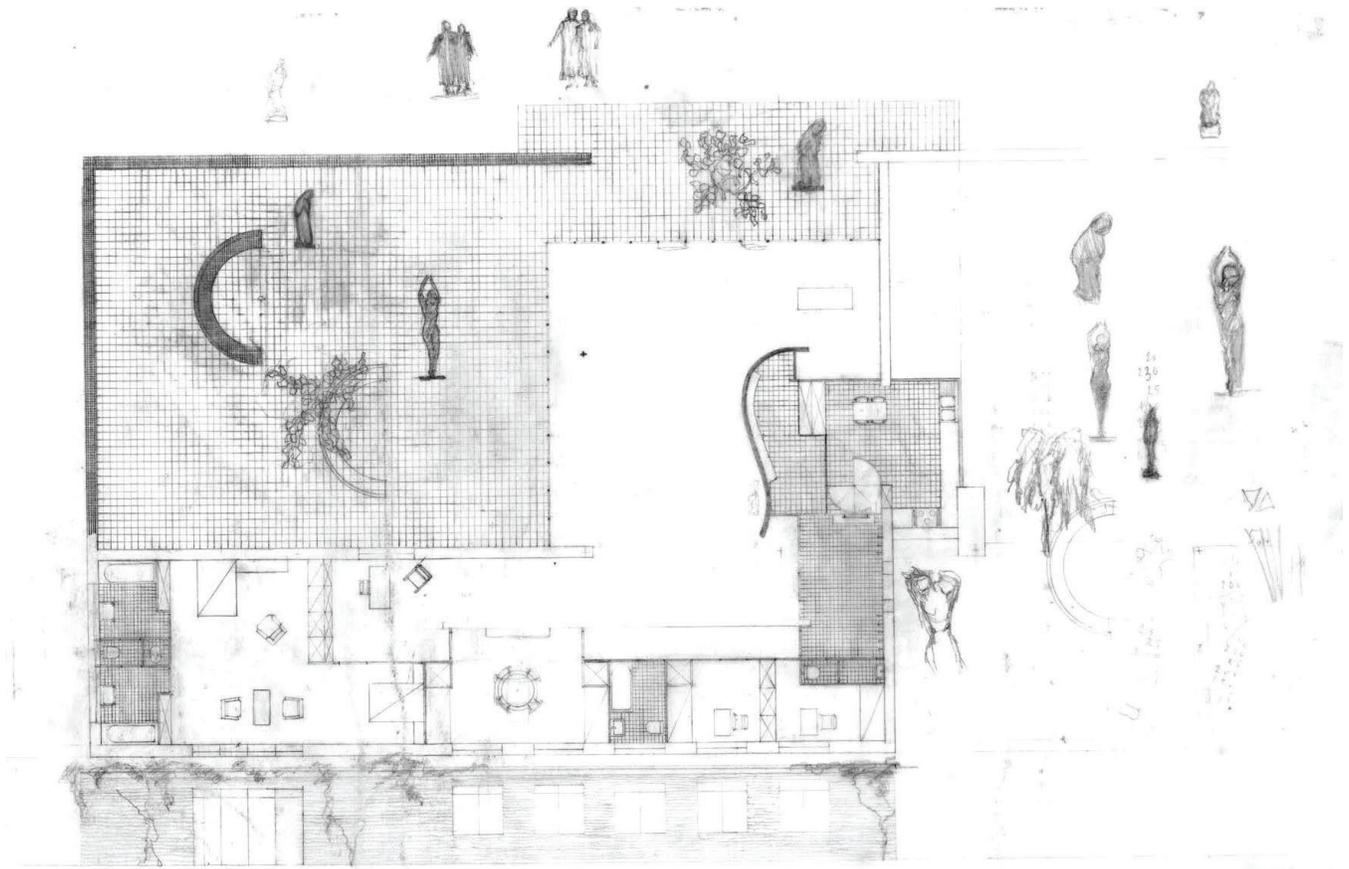


Figure 4. Ulrich Lange House Plan Sketch Studies. Mies Archive.

A simultaneous reading between inside and outside occur in the house when full height exterior brick walls reach outdoors beyond the glazed enclosure, framing views of the nearby river and creating semi-enclosed courtyard spaces. Over the whole footprint of the structure the building is both tangible as a solid object (through the reinforcement of its four solid bounding corners) and as a hollowed shell (at the east facade one realizes that the outer enclosure is not the same as the interior enclosure of the house). Interior and exterior are not clearly understood because of cultivated paradoxes between inside and outside, between centrifugal (the extension of the roof plane beyond the bordering walls) and centripetal motion (the four solid corners), and between the autonomy of the object and its diffusion.

If one reads the Hubbe House through a functionalist lens it makes little sense. If it is read as an exercise in pure subjective formalism there are too many constraints that limit it. If one reads it in Hegelian terms it is fragmentary, incomplete and unresolved. But, through the lens of Guardini the moves begin to make sense. Moves which appear arbitrary, clumsy or contradictory are better understood in the context of a dialogue

of opposites, which simultaneously negate and reify particular states of freedom and constraint, presence and absence, material and spiritual.

THE ULRICH LANGE HOUSE

These experiments are extended in the final version of the Ulrich Lange House project from the same year (fig.3). In this house the free-plan is, again, suggested as a continuous field of columns through the house, but there are so many absences and absorptions of this column grid that it is never read as such—there is an ambiguous overlapping of structural systems, between the Corbusian free-plan and traditionally understood bearing walls. Because of these absorptions the free-plan is never understood as a matrix. In each sequence of spaces, from the garage forecourt, to the entrance vestibule to the living room, one is confronted with a single visible column at one time (and on a few rare occasions two). Without immediately visible reinforcement of the columnar grid only the movement through space can complete the fragmentary picture. In their isolation a strange reversal occurs; the columns become autonomous totems rather than a part of a larger system. Columns are commonly understood as participating in an interdependent

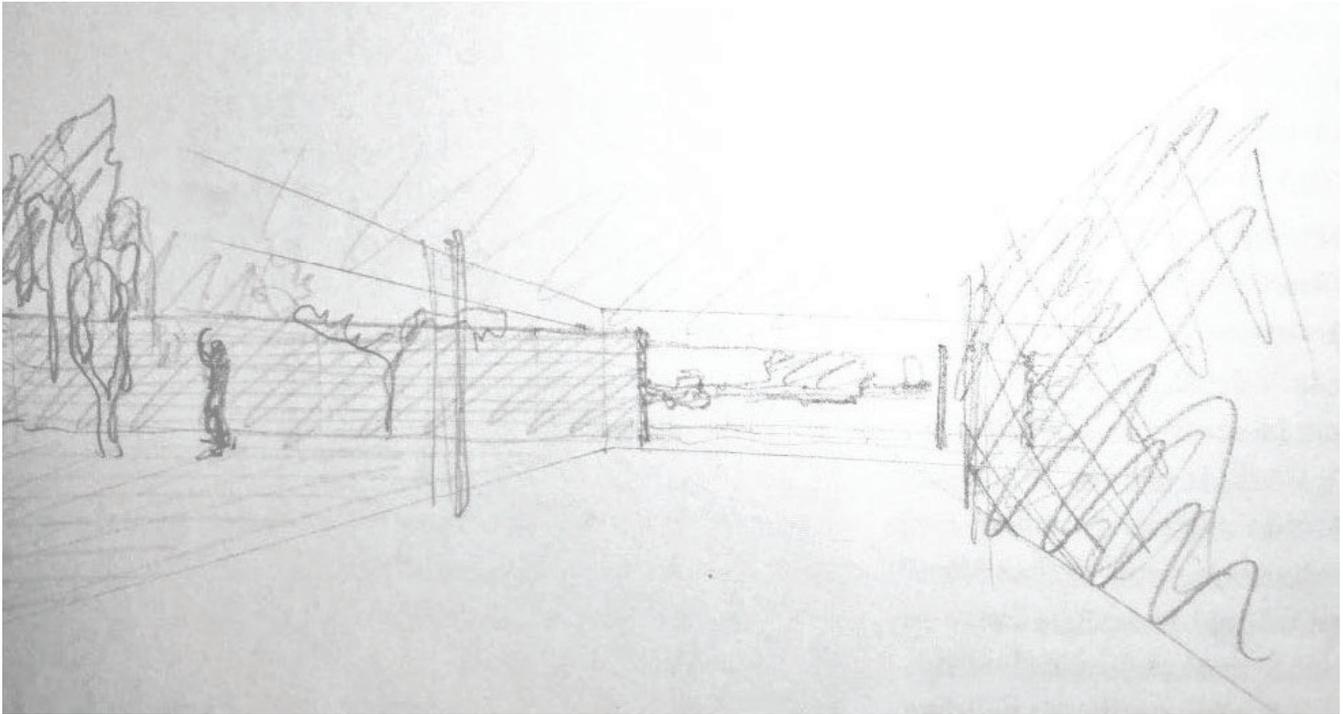


Figure 5. Sketch of Ulrich Lange House Living Room by Mies van der Rohe. Mies Archive.

field of cooperation with similar columns, the isolation of the columns in the spaces of the house give them specificity as singular objects, but the accumulative effect of seeing these columns in sequence may activate the viewer to fill in the blanks and perceive a larger grid (motion through space de-conceals the hidden column field). There is thus an animated simultaneity in the object of the column between “*regularity and originality.*”¹⁸

The two thick brick flanking walls that wrap the closed courtyard adjacent to the living room are just long enough to absorb two columns that would otherwise be visible in the living room. The rear façade consists of a solid brick wall with a lid roof resting over a portion of it. A large gap in the wall reveals the glass living room façade behind and a single visible column (fig.3). This solitary column echoes exactly the same formal sequence of the forecourt entrance elevation—a mirrored and reversed symmetrical move, and an inscription on the façade of a free-plan column grid (which is once again undermined by the uncharacteristic singular nature of the column). When standing in the living room a uniquely conspicuous curved wall conceals two columns from view; a minor flourish of this curved wall masks the column in the vestibule, while another column in the kitchen is concealed entirely. This little flourish connotes intentionality in the concealment (a clue to motivations similar to the way book-matched marble is self-reflexive of glass reflectivity in the Barcelona Pavilion). The rhetoric of the free-plan approaches near obliteration when these four potentially visible columns in the living room are masked or absorbed by walls

(at IIT Mies would express the columns as pilasters within solid walls, eliminating confusion between structure and infill). The furniture in the Lange house is not beholden to the columns in a complex affirmation and ignorance of symmetry (as Eisenman had pointed out in the Hubbe House) for the simple reason that there are so few columns visible at any given moment. If the living room furniture was centered around columns it would be difficult to perceive the relationships in experience.

In his essay, “*The Secret Life of Columns,*” Fritz Neumeier takes the totemic quality of the column in the Lange House a step further: *Only the single free-standing column could emancipate itself fully in sculptural terms and thus achieve its freedom of action in space.*¹⁹ This passage gives an indication of a desire for the autonomy of the column as a singular, rather than general, entity. Furthermore, the column mingles in an open dialogue with a proposed sculpture of a female nude form placed in the courtyard adjacent to the living room (reminiscent of Kolbe’s *Morning* in the Barcelona Pavilion courtyard). A clue to this relationship is boldly indicated in a working sketch of the house (fig. 4). In this image we see multiple doodles of a proposed sculpture sketched by Mies over top an unfinished drafted plan of the house. The omissions of poché in the half-drafted plan are telling; only a portion of the courtyard wall, the curvilinear wall in the living room, and a solitary column are boldly rendered (the column closest in proximity to the proposed exterior sculpture). The other nearby column in the plan, on the back façade, is covered over by a sketch of a tree—there is, thus, only one column visible in the entire drawing. This dialogue between

sculpture and column is further reinforced in an interior sketch of the living room (fig.5).²⁰

This relationship opens up new fields of perception in the architectural space, adding more layers of simultaneity. There is a reciprocity between the architectural field of space and the object-ness of the sculpture, an organic and real shape in bold contrast to the abstraction of the column. There emerges an oscillatory dialogue between the real and the virtual, material and spiritual, movement and stasis, being and becoming. The column takes on the flavor of the sculpture as a symbol of its prior or subsequent form. Gradients of time and abstraction unfold between the two extreme forms: the corporeal, tangible, solid and grounded presence of the sculpture on the one hand, and the ephemeral comparatively virtual chrome clad column on the other.

*...the statue is the counterpart to the abstract realm of architecture. It represents and stands in for the anthropomorphic presence that had disappeared from modern architecture in the process of its methodical geometrical abstraction...the statue stimulates the analogous reading of architectural elements in sculptural terms, so that both become complementary components of a single spatial composition.*²¹

Zooming out, the overall footprint of the house—similar to the Hubbe House—is enforced by the strong presence of four solid brick corners, but the house is again hollowed out to reveal an incomplete whole: it is both autonomous as an object and incomplete. The house, therefore, becomes a rebellion against the rigidity of formal autonomy—of immanence. Instead, it expresses a desire to instantiate an opposite condition: that of transcendence.²² There is a sense that the house is in a suspended state on its way to becoming, reminiscent of Victor Hugo’s “frozen music.” These peculiarities suggest a playful temporal operation upon the plan, of a prior state that contained more order, or a future state of arrival, or both of these conditions suspended in eternal recurrence.

The series of opposites discussed are not isolated phenomena. Unlike in Gestalt Psychology—where a famous example image oscillates between a vase and couple about to

kiss—an architectural experience encompasses a vast multiplicity of opposites, some more prominent than others.²³ Heavy and light, free plan and bound plan, inside and outside, repetition and singularity, open and closed, point to a series of higher oppositions: immanence and transcendence, being and becoming, matter and spirit. The three late European works discussed demonstrate this constant suspension between the object of architecture as immanent *and* as a transcendent experience beyond itself, or, as Mies put it in his uniquely vague way: *Only where the building art leans on the material forces of a period can it bring about the spatial execution of its spiritual decisions.*²⁴

The Hubbe and Lange Houses constituted the apex of formal complexity in the work of Mies van der Rohe, but their strange motivations are elucidated in the concepts found in Guardini’s *Der Gegensatz*. Mies’s later works distilled these investigations into a cleaner architectural package. The cultivation of dynamism through oppositions did not vanish, but became subtler through a constant reduction of constituent parts, towards the almost nothing of pure space. Guardini’s principles were absorbed into a more integrated and easily digestible unity. The Berlin National Gallery, for example, represents a distilled classicizing of Mies’s avant-garde past. Games played with symmetry and asymmetry in these projects are compartmentalized; the symmetrical pavilion of the National Gallery is offset by the asymmetrical moves of the plinth and exterior stairs. In Lafayette Park, individual buildings read as autonomous centripetal objects, far removed from the fragmentary state of *becoming* found in the Ulrich Lange House, but at a larger scale these buildings are arranged asymmetrically in a park-like setting. Therefore, the simultaneous opposition between being and becoming, centripetal and centrifugal, occurs in a dialogue between individual buildings and their urban placement. The same urban relationship occurs at IIT, the Chicago Federal Center, Toronto Dominion, and others.

THE GOAL

An engaged ambiguity results from Mies’s conscious application of simultaneous opposites, a suspension between several states in a chimerical oscillatory vibration: *What is meant is imperfectly understood; it shimmers in many forms and meanings.*²⁵ But why is Mies manifesting Guardini’s ideas through architectural aesthetic tropes? Is it simply to create a dynamic aesthetic

experience, filled with tensions and shifting meanings? Is it to reveal a hidden truth about the state of modern humanity and their new position in the universe? Is it to create a framework for the contemplation of the visitor—a machine that produces deeper thinking and forces questions to be asked that would otherwise not be? Isn't the goal of important works of art to stimulate thought, philosophy, spirituality, transcendence and meaning out of our existence? The Barcelona Pavilion is saturated with scholarship and analysis. It is a sounding board—concepts inhabit its framework and the framework is generous. It is successful as a machine for cultivating thought and contemplation, without forcing a monolithic reading. Had the Hubbe and Lange houses been built they may have been equally rich candidates for scholarship.

In his quest for an autonomy of opposites—inspired by the path laid out by Guardini—Mies created a rich, complex, and distilled architectural expression of his time. This complexity was masked by his taciturn demeanor, his silence opens up his work to a multiplicity of interpretations. This indeterminacy in the work is shared by Warhol—a lack of clear motive creates a vacuum in which meanings are ascribed. For Mies, key passages from *Der Gegensatz* revised his understanding of dualities as laid out by classic German philosophy. Hegel supported the synthesis of contradiction through a reposed resolution, but Guardini declared an irreducible simultaneity present within paradox (This more complex vision also interrogates the one laid out by Robert Venturi years later). Mies's projects reject a catholic reading: motivations are diffuse and allow for multiple interpretations depending on the analytical lens. This mystery keeps Mies's work rewarding over generations. Architecture is a relevant discipline for exploring dualities because it is a complex practice without a true home, one steeped in both the rational and the spiritual, serving immediate and abstract needs. Mies's explorations are not mired in their time, this openness and generosity in the work allows for application of these broader concepts in current practice, and challenges current practitioners to meditate more seriously, yet less prescriptively, on the relationship between part and whole. When architects focus too much on one aspect (formalism, politics²⁶, phenomenology, functionalism, performance) they reduce a totalized reading of the work. This total architectural expression, the *"entire fullness of life,"*²⁷ is only achievable when the way is cleared for a multitude of competing yet bound oppositions to reside in simultaneity.

ENDNOTES

- Rosalind Krauss went so far as to mention "the postmodernist Mies." Krauss, Rosalind. "The Grid, The /Cloud/, and the Detail," in, *The Presence of Mies* (NY, NY.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 133.
- Wright's work logically appears as remnants of a larger corpus of a personal formal architectural vocabulary. Le Corbusier cultivated mystery through abstraction. There is more quantity than mystery in the works of these masters. Alvar Aalto, on the other hand, is a different kind of mysterious—a figure for another paper.
- For example, Warhol does not go into the deeper implications for the art world and for consumer culture at large when he is asked about the series of Campbell's Soup cans. He simply stated that that is what he ate every day for many years. This mundane explanation for the creation of the Soup Cans winks at larger concepts without revealing secrets.
- Moises Puente, ed. *Conversations with Mies van der Rohe* (NY, NY.: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 16.
- For more on Mies's formative explorations in various topics, both through books and magazines, see: Neumeyer, Fritz. *The Artless Word* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1991), Part 2, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Francesco Dal Co states that Romano Guardini was, "one of the authors most quoted in the records and notebooks that Mies left behind." See: Dal Co, Francesco, *Figures of Architecture and Thought*, (NY, NY.: Rizzoli Inc., 1990), 270.
- Commissioned by myself and William Huchting. Translated by Dr. Gerhard Schutte, professor Emeritus of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin.
- Mies would mark passages in his copy of the book with small penciled "x's."
- Mies highlighted these passages in his personal copy of: Guardini, Romano, *Der Gegensatz: Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten*, trans. Gerhard Schutte (Mainz: Der Werkkreis, 1925), 179, 185, 41, 55.
- Hegel, Friedrich. *Introductory Letter on Aesthetics*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 60.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 130.
- Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: MOMA, 2002), 16.
- Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 88. Guardini's dialogue of opposites is not the same as Venturi's definition of "both/and." Instead it is the concept of both/and overlapping each other at the same time—resulting in oscillatory readings of an architectural space. Furthermore, Venturi interprets these opposites as contradictions rather than Guardini's view of an open display of autonomous phenomena, paradoxically bound to each other and independent.
- These complexities were perhaps too subtle for Venturi to pick up on, which is why he criticizes Mies for his perceived hypocrisy as not being a truly rationalist architect (Kahn's corsets remark for Seagram). For further discussion on *Der Gegensatz* see: Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, 200.
- Mies may be attempting to express an idea summarized in a later text: *"Man no longer has a place, not merely in the theoretical sense that all hierarchic orders have disappeared in a collectivist society of mass men, but in the more profound sense that the universe of relativity physics has abolished the concept and the very reality of place itself."* From the introduction by Frederick D. Wilhelmson in: Guardini, Romano. *The End of the Modern World*, (Wilmington, DE.: ISI Books, 1998), XV.
- Eisenman, Peter. "miMiSeS READING: does not mean A THING," in, *Mies Reconsidered* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1986), 96.
- Ibid*, 96.
- "Regularity should be wholesome... it should be alive and not a dead mechanism. Every secure process has to be interwoven with a minimum of creative originality." Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 79. (underlining by author)
- Neumeyer, Fritz. "The Secret Life of Columns," in, *Mies van der Rohe—Barcelona 1929* (Barcelona: Tenov Books, 2018), 115.
- Both of these images are placed side by side in Neumeyer's essay but are not specifically discussed in the text. *Ibid*, 112.
- Ibid*, 109.
- "These two positions of life's internal home and standing beyond it, its interior self and its other side, its immanence and transcendence..." Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 85.
- This is nicely illustrated in diagram 24 in: Rowe, Colin, and Slutzky, Robert, "Transparency Literal and Phenomenal, Part II." In *As I Was Saying: Vol. 1* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1996), 101.
- Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, 262.
- Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 9.
- Politics and the implications of Mies's architectural manifestations in relation to the two houses proposed during the Nazi regime in Germany are too rich and demand too much attention for this paper alone.
- Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, 198.