The Dwelling of Our Time:
Surface, Space, and German Identity

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"The Dwelling of Our Time" was the most prominent representation of architecture at the German Building Exhibition held in Berlin during the spring and summer of 1931. Aside from this so-called architecture section, the exhibition itself was filled with displays sponsored by industrial interests, building suppliers, and local contractors. Placed in Hall II, "The Dwelling of Our Time" was directed by Mies van der Rohe and, consequently, was largely the work of Werkbund designers. Its location, both physically and conceptually removed from the rest of the exhibition, suggested that architecture was separate from building. The presentation by the architects seemed to impress the audience with the same notion. Furthermore, it proposed an architectural language that depended on human attributes to confront an environment established by building elements and the building process.

In his reviews of the exhibition for the Frankfurter Zeitung, Siegfried Kracauer praised the event for being a true representation of building industry practice. But his praise was limited to the structure of the exhibition and did not extend to its content. His criticism of the buildings in the open area at the end of the exhibition sequence was based, not surprisingly, in observations of their surfaces. In his eyes, they were covered with materials to the point of suffocation. Of the copper houses, which were the focus of much critical attention, Kracauer said that

> this type of metal accommodation, which strove to be an unprejudiced architecture, could easily be enlarged by a small garden strewn with zinc sheets. Here, the lead-trees, which never wither, must bloom.'

According to Kracauer, building materials didn't simply cover the domestic landscape; they had conquered the entire natural world, including the lives and identities of the residents. The steel chairs in one of the houses, he quipped, "were not there to seat humans, but to seat their XRays."[2] Gradually, Kracauer's commentary revealed his pessimism about the world that surrounded him, a pessimism that emerged out of his experience in the First World War:

> Soon, [people] will probably move into the 3- and 4-room apartments, which will then become a Stahlbad [steel bath] like once in the war.'

Kracauer's suggestion that a world infiltrated by the materials of production was inhumane was consistent with his favorable opinion of "The Dwelling of Our Time." He praised the architecture section because the notion of dwelling was generated by the interior and the activity it contained. Its materiality was determined by the finishes that would surround and affect each person who entered and used the houses and not by the exterior materials chosen, in Kracauer's view, for their efficacy in solving the probiems of building. As if he were seeking refuge from the tyranny of production, he avoided any mention of building materials, and, moreover, of any tangible aspect of the unit exteriors, as he took his readers on a walk through the world of architecture. Here, he said, "[t]he joints are free, but the organization is firm."[4]

Kracauer was fascinated by the atmosphere which, in many different words, he described as lighthearted, free, as the modern person he wanted to know. "If anywhere," he said, "it is here that the Wilheminian age is finally driven away."[5] As his personification of "The Dwelling of Our Time" suggested, he cried out for a modern world that was structured by human existence, not by the inhumane practices of science and technology, whose worst creation was World War I. Science provided the world with the insidious notion that "reality was autonomous," in other words, not defined by human activity. For Kracauer, the intellectual perspective generated by science was the germ of a conspiracy whose consequence was a domination of the world – or, more accurately, humankind – by capitalism and technology.[6]

ARCHITECTURE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

The fact that all of the photographs of Hall II showed a group of buildings with white walls and black columns seemed to indicate the architects' commitment to creating a unified exterior appearance for their buildings and, ultimately, a unified environment. On the one hand, the position of "The

Dwelling of Our Time" in the exhibition sequence would have only reinforced its interpretation as architecture before building and, thus, as a portrayal of something that visitors would never experience during the course of their daily routine. On the other hand, it seemed to be important for the architects to suggest that the results of their efforts - architecture - would look alike, at least on the exterior. In the articles that covered the section, however, there were only a few casual remarks about exterior materials, massing, or construction? Even the brick infill panels of Hugo Häring's free-standing house – the only exception to an otherwise consistent presentation – escaped the reporters' critical eyes. For both building professionals and the general public, the exhibition seemed to claim that the architect's responsibility was confined inside. In the context of dwelling, then, architectural language seemed to be the product of domestic life.

Finishes

The visitor entered Hall II on the balcony occupied by the "Materials Show," directed by Lilly Reich. Overlooking the full-scale constructions of various apartments and single-family homes on the main floor were displays of 24 different finish materials, fittings, and furnishings, such as glass and wood, paint, carpet, upholstery, clocks, and chairs. Reich and Mies based their ideas for this section on an earlier scheme for an exhibit of "Interior Furnishings," which, with the same content, was to introduce the second part of the entire exhibition, then called "The New Apartment and Furnishings."[8] Unlike this earlier scheme, however, but like some of Reich's previous exhibition displays, the "Materials Show" did not emphasize the applied use of materials in a building. Rather, her designs ex ibited the inherent visual characteristics of the materials, such as color and texture, their malleability into a variety of forms, and the effects of these qualities on the shape and flow of the surrounding space.[9] In this context, the function of the chairs and clocks, for example, was subordinate to their visual and spatial effects.

At the expense of building and all of its constraints, Reich's exhibit emphasized the basic reciprocal relationship between object and space. Along with the full-scale models in the rest of the section, in which construction and the specific demands of site and client were not present, the materials' show reinforced the fact that the creation of a threedimensional experience preceded building.

While the materials section itself was similar to other exhibits previously and subsequently designed by Reich, its context was very different. Here, her work was juxtaposed to architectural projects, neither separate from them (as in the final version of "The Dwelling," the 1927 Werkbund exhibition held in conjunction with the Weissenhof Siedlung), nor constituting them (as in the "Velvet and Silk Cafe" at the i927 Women's Fashion Exhibition in Berlin). Furthermore, it preceded the architecture in the exhibition sequence.[10] In "The Dwelling of Our Time," materials were shown to be the basic generator of architectural space, not an application to a pre-existing design."

Given that these materials were experienced as surface phenomena, Reich's exhibit lent further significance to Siegfried Kracauer's remarks on the role of the surface in revealing profound truths about culture, society, and politics. A few years before Reich's Materials Show was displayed to the public, Kracauer introduced his essay, "Das Ornament der Masse," ["The Mass Ornament"] with the following statement:

> The place within the course of history occupied by an epoch is more powerfully defined by an analysis of its inconspicuous superficial expressions than by the judgments of the epoch about itself.[12]

In her display, Reich identified finish materials, architecture's most superficial elements, as the origin of the architectural design process and the key to understanding it. It was up to the full-scale exhibits in the second part of "The Dwelling of Our Time" to complete the definition of architecture or, in the context of Kracauer's theory, the architectural illustration of culture. Here, the visitor would have seen how the interaction of finish materials with domestic space reiterated the principles that defined contemporary German life.

ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE: OBJECTS IN SPACE

On the main floor of Hall Two, visitors encountered full-scale models of various dwellings filled with a wide array of interior finishes and equipment. Descriptions and photographs of the new furniture, cabinetry, and surface treatments filled many of the reviews, confirming the fact that their rich textures and colors - against the white, gray, and black of the underlying walls, floors, and ceilings - immediately captured the attention of the public.[13,14]

In a progress report that appeared in an article published a few months before the exhibition's opening, Mies said that he would use "The Dwelling of Our Time" "to work out actual requirements for living and to present the suitable means to satisfy them." "The program [for the section]," he went on to say,

> is based on the following assumption: that the range of home furnishings readily available today does not adequately take the redefinition of social classes into account. The demand for furnishings today is quite different from that in the past.[15]

The fact that the finishes and furnishing were included in the plans suggested that they did not function in isolation. Wilhelm Lotz of the Werkbund journal, Die Form, agreed with this interpretation, when he said:

> The directors of Hall II understood that furniture alone did not create a dwelling. Instead, they saw the apartment as a unity of space and equipment and viewed this whole in its place within a building and relative to the natural context around it.[16]

Out of all of the units displayed in the section, Mies' house at the end of the sequence illustrated the interaction of objects and space most clearly. Only the careful selection and placement of the furniture, equipment, and finishes negotiated between the large scale of the spaces defined by structure and enclosure and the smaller scale usually attributed to domestic life; furniture, equipment and finishes were necessary to transform a building project into a house.

Other projects, however, similarly demonstrated furniture's negotiation of scale. The projects by Breuer, Reich, and Franz Schuster were especially praised by Dr. Edith Rischowski, the reviewer from the magazine Innen-Dekoration [Interior Decoration], for the effect that the placement, proportion, and material of their furniture had on the surrounding space. In general, she said,

> the question of adequate furniture is important in the small apartment because, in the limited spaces, the freedom expressed by a clear and generous impression of space is only possible through carefully tested measurements."

In a subtle, but not unusual way, the furniture defied the design of the building in which it was placed as it defined a space that was perceived to be larger than that set by the building elements shown in plan. According to Rischowski, the appearance of a space, a consequence of the user's perceptions and impressions of the spatial effect of the objects it contained, seemed to have a greater influence on the character of dwelling than did the actual placement of building elements.

It seemed that the architecture section, like Mies' Barcelona Pavilion, challenged traditional definitions of space, in which the absolute placement of enclosing and structural elements, regardless of the perspective from which the elements were viewed, was central.[18] Human perception and motion were definitive aspects of his theory of architecture. If one also reads Mies' house and the rest of the full-scale displays as an extrapolation of Lilly Reich's Materials Show, like visitors might have done, it would appear that Mies' theory of architecture depended on the visual richness of materials, whose effects were only immediately apparent and could hardly have been perceived in a photograph. Furthermore, the location of the viewer would have been as important to the definition of space as the location of any interior elements. As Philip Johnson said in his review:

> This three-dimensional type of composition defies photography or even appreciation from but one point of view. Only by walking through the building, can an idea of its beauty be obtained."

Any shifts in point of view, however, would not have been the result of unqualified movement but, in this case, a consequence of human participation in domestic activities. This is one difference between "The Dwelling of Our Time" and the Barcelona Pavilion. In the context of "The Dwelling of Our Time," Mies' challenge to traditional definitions of space included a confrontation with functionalism as well.20 Here, function no longer denoted a specific task but a posture or movement that ultimately affected how one viewed the surroundings. In a further extrapolation from Reich's Materials Show, visitors might have understood furniture as an apparatus that set one's posture and, in its role as a destination, controlled one's path through the building. Lying in the bed, not sleeping, and sitting at the table, not eating, were considered to be domestic functions.

Few of the units on display had the luxury of assigning a discrete space or set of spaces to each function as did the free-standing houses by Mies and Lilly Reich. In most, the user literally changed the shape of fixtures and furnishings according to the task he or she had to perform. As the furniture and the user changed shape or position so did the spaces that they defined. Mies thus took the ideas expressed in the Barcelona Pavilion one step farther. Here, a specific function determined the human movement and posture that made the space legible as domestic space.

HUMANS AT A LARGER SCALE

Given Mies' simultaneous preoccupation with philosophical attempts to create a modern version of humanism, it was no surprise that a literal human presence was necessary to the definition of architecture in "The Dwelling of Our Time." As Fritz Neumeyer explained, Mies argued that "[t]he architect did not draw the consequences from the new mode of living and producing by a mere acceptance of mechanization, typification, and norms."[21] "All these things go their value-blind way," Mies said.

> *What is decisive is only how we assert ourselves toward these givens. It is here that the spiritual problems begin.*
>
> What matters is not the what but only the how. That we produce goods and the means by which we produce them says nothing spiritually. Whether we build high or flat, with steel or with glass, says nothing as to the value of this way of building...But it is exactly this question of values that is decisive.[my emphasis][22]

In Mies' architecture, particularly his residential work of the late 1920s, humans asserted themselves toward the "givens" of the modern world in two ways: physically and spiritually. According to many scholars, the modern world was represented in Mies' dwellings with structural systems and exterior facades that had no trace of human scale. A very separate system, comprised of the interaction of the body itself, the equipment it required to perform functions and take positions in a given place, and the space that resulted, brought human scale into the building. In turn, the building was transformed into a specific kind of architecture. But, human scale was not to be understood as a simple physical or functional reference. "The Dwelling of Our Time" made it clear that

> the human has become the measure of space in a spiritual/intellectual [geistigen] sense. Here, the artistic aspect of spatial formation, so-to-speak, has been expressed in a new way.[23]

Besides linking human presence to aesthetic considerations, the reviewer from Die Form claimed that it (human presence) directly evoked architecture's spirit - or meaning. In 1927, Mies had spoken publicly about the human presence in architecture, emphasizing that it existed in both physical and spiritual form. Rather than considering the way in which human presence defined architecture, however, he used the occasion to discuss how specific types of architecture enabled specific types of human activity.

> The apartment is a use item. May one ask for what? May one ask to what it relates? Obviously only to physical [korperliches - bodily] existence. So that all may proceed smoothly. And yet man also has spiritual needs, which can never be satisfied by merely making sure that he can get beyond his own walls.[24]

At the end of the 1920s, Mies clearly felt that it was time to accept the notion that, in addition to public space, domestic space was necessary to the unfolding of spiritual life. Other comments of Mies' suggested that he, along with many others, also believed the converse: that the personal development of spirit - that is to say, the development of the spirit in the private realm - had very public consequences. As the dwelling enabled spiritual growth, it contributed to the strengthening of German cultural identity.

In a speech given in 1932 at the Anniversary Meeting of the Werkbund in Berlin, Mies said

> One speaks much these days of a new Germany. Who wants to doubt the need to rearrange the German space. The new arrangement also applies to our work, and it is our hope that genuine arrangements will be found with a reality content so large that authentic life can unfold in them: but life that - vitally secured - permits space for the unfolding of the spirit. Then, so we hope, the German soil will again carry human features.[25]

With this comment, Mies transformed the arrangement of objects in space – that which indicated human presence – into a national project. Thus, a change in the environment for an individual, best illustrated in the dwelling, would have very general consequences; his hope that "the German soil will again carry human features" expressed the confrontation of extremes of scale most clearly. It was not with words alone, however that Mies discussed the public impact of private life. It seemed possible that, quite literally, his designs for domestic space, shown a year earlier, had a public effect.

Recent criticism of Mies' freestanding exhibit for "The Dwelling of Our Time" by Franz Schulze suggested that Mies did not respect the architectural conventions of residential design. "To all appearances," Schulze said, "Mies designed his "Dwelling of Our Time" as an exhibition piece rather than as a house in the standard functional sense."[26] Here, he was quick to point out Mies' compromise of functional efficiency. Schulze's earlier comments describe the consequences of the compromise:

> None of the blockiness resulting from the contained spaces of the Tugendhat and Nolde houses is evident in it; it appears to explode its material confines more even than the Barcelona Pavilion did. Clearly it was an exhibition piece, in which Mies could fulfill his yearning for controlled fluid space more than he might have if he had had to cope with real tenants. Yet he would never again, even in his dreams, indulge himself quite so freely as he did here.[27]

The "fluid space," characteristic of the Mies house, could only have existed at the expense of an enclosed environment, typically required in the service spaces and the most private rooms in the house. While the glass walls at the end of the two bedrooms protected the occupants of the house from the weather, they obviously defied any request for privacy. More important, it seemed, was that they simultaneously respected and transgressed the boundary between interior and exterior. In addition, Mies enlisted the ceiling, floor, and even the plants to reiterate the fact that, in a house, the notion of boundary was complex. Instead of depending on a hierarchical structure in which materials and furnishings would support distinctions already made by architectural elements, Mies' scheme equally exploited everything in the house in order to distinguish among various areas of activity.

In some of the other projects, shifting boundaries were central to the definition of a dwelling. In their presentation of the interior of a free-standing house, the Luckhardt brothers investigated the division between interior and exterior. A simple continuation of the roof line to the center of the rear terrace suggested that the transition from inside to outside was effected by a series of overlapping spaces, not by crossing a single boundary. In the two story apartment by Haesler and Volker, the house for a sportsman by Breuer, the ground floor house by Carl Fieger, and the studio apartment by Mies, the once-solid boundary between functional spaces - the wall - was replaced by partitions with very different surface qualities. Some used curtains, others used furniture, such as bookshelves, which, at less than full height, maintained spatial continuity at the top of the room. Similarly, floor-to-ceiling glass walls, used by Mies, Lilly Reich, and the Luckhardt brothers or the winter garden wall in the hallway of Haesler and Volker's duplex transformed one's experience of boundary and thus, any fixed assignment of public and private to a given space.

Mies' house and the projects that were able to literally reconfigure the boundaries between public and private were among the most prominent of the exhibits on the main floor. They were the ones that were freestanding, the ones for which the architects could place the walls, not just clad them. In the case of the project by the Luckhardt Brothers, the architects were willing to manipulate the pre-existing facade that cov-

ered the units underneath the balcony. Nonetheless, the fact that Mies' house used furniture and plants as well as walls to define space supports the fact that boundary was not only defined by typical elements of building.

Other architects did not have the same opportunity to reconfigure the relationship between the interior and the exterior of their projects. The public, however, may have equated the shifting boundary in the freestanding exhibits with the functional flexibility of many of the small units under the balcony. Many of these units had furniture which responded to changing use – most often between the communal functions of eating and gathering and the private function of sleeping – with achange in position. In some, the shape of the furniture literally changed, (as in the kitchen in Reich's apartment) in others, the furniture could be completely concealed when not in use, and yet in others (Breuer's house, for example) curtains rather than fixed partitions alternately divided and joined various spaces. Here the architects and, perhaps, the public, rethought the relationship between public and private activity at a more intimate scale.

In any case, no life was completely private. Private lives or their spaces were exposed to public view whether at the intimate scale of the interior or on the exterior of the house. As the example of the boarding house made clear, individual activity was to occur in the public landscape. In the context of Mies' preoccupation with the link between the physical and spiritual life, the physical exposure of the individual to the public realm in "The Dwelling of Our Time" enabled that individual to contribute to the contemporary German spirit and identity.[28]

"The Dwelling of Our Time" thus defied interpretation; the units on display were mechanisms, not symbols or expressions of any sort. They ultimately allowed an individual body to make a literal connection between architecture's surfaces and national spirit and identity. While it is difficult to distinguish between the spiritual effect of two distinct environments in any of the units, perhaps it is enough to claim that it was the mechanism itself – which related sense and spirit and placed the individual in the public realm – that, for Mies, was German.

The exhibition also offered the public a way to understand architecture outside of metaphor or function. Here, the immediacy of architecture was important; one directly associated the physical experience of architecture with meaning. This may explain why Siegfried Kracauer's words so clearly described the event and implied that it had larger ambitions. In his first review of the building exhibition, Kracauer said:

> The majority of the public feels that progressive tendencies are embodied in the new building, which, elsewhere, haven't yet appeared on the surface.[29]

Quite literally, according to Kracauer, the new building embodied progressive tendencies. Like Mies and his architecture section, Kracauer too rejected codes and interpretation and celebrated the surface as the site where the human began to understand the world.

NOTES

[1] Siegfried Kracauer, "Kleine Patrouilledurch die Bauausstellung," *Frankfurter Zeitung* (June 6, 1931, evening edition), p. 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Stahlbad is a reference to Ernst Jiinger and his characterization of the trench warfare of World War I. Ibid.

[4] Siegfried Kracauer, "Deutsche Bauausstellung. Vorlaufige Bemerkungen," *Frankfurter Zeitung* (May 11, 1931, evening edition 1931), p. 2.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Kracauer explained the consequences of the dominance of science in the following comment. "Thus, in the development of our intellectual life today, one feature stands out: 'it is the discovery of the autonomous nature of reality for the purpose of its ever more perfect domination.' This reality is created in part by science...The economic development of capitalism follows the same path with its impersonal laws and thequantitative reduction of all values. Within this reified reality, human beings are bound together by interests, especially occupational interests, 'as one of the main forms of communal action and intellectual cohesion in the present period'. However, what is almost totally lacking in any occupation 'is the existence of the human being, his or her complete essence'." Siegfried Kracauer, "Über den Expressionismus. Wesen und Sinn einer Zeitbewegung," typescript, 81 pages, 1918?, Kracauer Nachlass, Dt. Literatur Archiv, Marbach/Neckar, p. 61. From David Frisby, "Siegfried Kracauer: 'Exemplary Instances' of Modernity," *Fragments of Modernity,* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1988), p. 114.

[7] At most, the exhibits in "The Dwelling of Our Time" were described by vague comments about cubes; indirectly, about the flat roofs; or about "Neue Sachlichkeit, in all of its flat beauty. The most definitive statement about the exterior was made in a cartoon in which someone mistakes one of the houses for an elevator. (Paul Simmel, "In der Bauausstellung," *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* vol. 40, no.10 (May 10, 1931), p. 792.

[8] Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin, Brochure, (Berlin: June 1929), a. 19.

[9] See especially Reich's designs for the 1927 Werkbund Exhibition in Stuttgart, for the "Velvet and Silk Cafe" at the "Women's Fashion" Exhibition in Berlin, also in 1927 (designed with Mies), and the German Textile Exhibit at the 1929 International Exhibition in Barcelona. For a detailed description of these designs see: Matilda McQuaid, *Lilly Reich: Designer and Architect,* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996), pp. 20-26.

[10] The escalator and bridge connected Hall I to Hall II, which contained "The Apartment of Our Time," at the balcony level occupied by Reich's Materials' Show. From there, one would descend to the rest of the architecture exhibit and, when finished, exit through an underground tunnel that crossed below a major street and connected to the rest of the exhibition. The exhibits were numbered to reflect this sequence: 1(marble)-24(furniture, glass) were on the balcony; 25(Gropius: apartment house)-48(Mies: single family house) were on the main floor. One entered the Materials' Show from Hall I at the first exhibit; at the end, one had to pass through the hall and, thus, had an overview of the entire section before leaving the building. The sequence of exhibits was not physically continuous, however. To move from the Materials' Show to the full-scale models downstairs and view the exhibit acording to the designated sequence, one had either to use the stair at one end of the hall and then move through the main floor courtyard or to retrace one's steps through the Materials' Show and walk down the ramp at the other end of the hall. Drawings in the Mies Archive at The Museum of Modem Art indicate that Mies designed both the ramp and the stair to replace the stairs hidden along the sides of the building as the primary circulation routes. (See Drawings 25.191, 25.6, 25.7, 25.8, Mies van der Rohe Archive, Museum of Modern Art.

Published in: Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Mies van der Rohe Archive. Part 1: 1910-1937,* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986) Volume 3 and Franz Schulze, ed., *The Mies van der Rohe Archive. Part 1:1910-1937, Supplementary Drawings in Two Volumes,* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990) Volume 6.) Furthermore, there were entries from the outside that led one directly to the main floor and the model houses that, despite the fact that Mies used displays to visually obstruct them, would allow one to ignore the official sequence completely or to follow it only with some effort.. I have not found records of any decision regarding the numbering of exhibits or the physical sequence made by their organization. All of the conclusions have been made from the visual evidence. See plans accompanying: Ausstellungs-, Messe- und Fremdenverkehrs-Amtder Stadt Berlin, Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin 1931, Amtlicher Katalog und Führer, (Berlin: Bauwelt-Verlag/Ullsteinhaus, 1931).

[11] An example of the public reception of the Materials' Show was published in a weekly illustrated magazine out of Berlin. It was generally in keeping with the essentialist perspective of materials that Reich tried to create with her displays. Amidst praise for the show, the reviewer "[learned] that color and the happiness derived from it were important for an apartment." ("Die Deutsche Bauausstellung," *Berliner Illustrierte Woche* vol. 13, no. 24 (1931). pp. 12-13.) While there was no mention of space, the reviewer did see a direct relationship between a material (color) and an emotional characteristic of the environment.

[12] Siegfried Kracauer, "Das Ornament der Masse," *Das Ornament der Masse,* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977 [originally published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (June 9 and 10, 1927)]), p. 50. Henry-Russell Hitchcock attests to the importance of the surface in modem architecture when he says: "The question of surfaces might appear to be subsidiary to what has already been said. But it is peculiarly central since the new aesthetic is concerned primarily with the surfaces of volumes. The entire use of glass has been proposed and is being illustrated by Mies van der Rohe. Surface treatment remains certainly that which more than anything else requires the attention of technical experimenters, and in which the use of traditional materials is most obviously precarious psychologically as the earlier examples have pointed out." [my emphasis] Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modem architecture: romanticism and reintegration,* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993 (1929)), p. 214.

[13] Many of the journals used the same descriptions and photos to describe the show; only an introductory commentary distinguished one article fromanother. See, for example, "Die Wohnung unserer Zeit," *InnenDekoration* vol.42 (July 1931), pp. 250-281; ""Die Wohnung unserer Zeit" auf der Deutschen Bauausstellung Berlin 1931," *Moderne Baufomen* vol.30, no.7 (July 1931), pp. 329-47; Wilhelm Lotz, "Die Halle II auf der Bauausstellung," *Die Form* vol.6, no.7 (July 15, 1931), pp. 241-249.

[14] In his essay, "Mies van der Rohe's Paradoxical Asymmetries," Robin Evans described the construction of the walls in the Barcelona Pavilion. Although they seemed to be a solid piece of material, Evans said, "Pass over the decided lack of candour in the construction, with its brick vaults beneath the podium and its armature of steel concealed in the roof slab and the marble walls - walls which give a tell-tale hollow ring when tapped." [my emphasis] (p. 239) While Evans uses this example to make the point that "Mies was not just interested in the truth of construction, he was interested in expressing the truth of construction" (pp. 239-240), it is useful here for another reason. Insofar as the quality of interior experience afforded by the pavilion was determined by material, the material only referred to the surface of architectural elements (walls, floors, ceilings, columns) and not to the elements in their entirety. In his discussion of physical vs. abstract structure, Evans argues that Mies is concerned with appearance more than fact. "But the grid of the pavilion suggests that there might be circumstances in which appearance is the final arbiter. If what we seek is appearance, then apearance must be the measure of truth, at least temporarily." (Evans, p. 248). Here again, appearance seemes to be another way to refer to the importance of surface phenomena. Mies' emphasis on the surface as the determinant of architectural experience is more clearly illustrated in "The Dwelling of Our Time," largely because of its presentation method and its context, most importantly Lilly Reich's Materials Show as preface. Evans' essay can be found in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays,* (London: A.A. Publications, 1997), pp. 234-275.

[15] "Dritter Bericht über die Vorarbeiten zur "Deutschen Bauausstellung Berlin 1931" nach dem Stand von Mitte November 1930," *Baugewerkszeitung* vol.62, no.51 (December 18, 1930), p. 3.

[16] Wilhelm Lotz, "Die Halle II auf der Bauausstellung," Die Form, vol.6, no.7 (July 15, 1931), p. 245.

[17] Dr. Edith Rischowski, "Die Wohnung unserer Zeit," *Innendekoration* vol.42, no.7 (July 1931), p. 254.

[18] Robin Evans argued that Mies challenged the perception of his theories of architecture, as well as traditional notions of space, in the Barcelona Pavilion. Mies' expression of structure and symmetry particularly attested to the fact that he was challenging his own preconceptions as well as others. Many of Evans' arguments also seem to require that one move around and inside the actual building rather than only depend on Mies' drawings. Photographs only approximate one's own perception of symmetries around the horizontal axis (rather than the vertical one) which challenge the asymmetrical interpretation enabled only by a reading of the plan. One of the main points Evans makes is that it is the tension between the documentation of the building and the building itself that best describes the Barcelona Pavilion. Only with a comparison of the pieces written about the building during its absence - in the period between destruction and reconstruction - to his own analysis after visiting the reconstruction of the building can Evans illustrate this tension and emphasize the relationship between truth and appearance so crucial to understanding the building and, perhaps, Mies' work.. See Evans, pp. 234-275.

[19] Philip Johnson, "The Berlin Building Exposition of 1931," *TSquare* vol.2, no.1 (January 1932), p. 18.

[20] Several reviewers criticized the way in which the units would have functioned. For example:"The apartment for the childless couple is, as was already said, especially thoroughly represented -but not always correctly because the practical [wohntechnische] and economic problems appear to be too simple and too comfortable." See Völkers, "Die Halle II der Deutschen Bauausstellung," *Stein Holz Eisen* no.14 (1931), p. 270.

[21] Fritz Neumeyer, *The Artless Word* (Mies Van der Rohe. Das kunstlose Wort. Gedanken zur Baukunst), trans. Mark Jarzombek (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1991 (Berlin: Siedler, 1986)), p. 192.

[22] Mies van der Rohe, "Die neue Zeit," *Die Form* vol.5, no.15 (August 1, 1930), p. 406. in Neumeyer, p. 309.

[23] Lotz, p. 247.

[24] Translation partially mine. From page 22 of Mies' notebook (possibly from 1927). Neumeyer, p. 274.

[25] Mies van der Rohe, Manuscript of Speech given at the Anniversary Meeting of the Werkbund, Berlin, October 1932. In Neumeyer, p. 311.

[26] Schulze, ed., *The Mies van der Rohe Archive,* p. 158.

[27] Franz Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 183.

[28] Mies van der Rohe, Manuscript of Speech. In Neumeyer, p. 311.

[29] Siegfried Kracauer, "Deutsche Bauausstellung. Vorlaufige Bemerkungen," p. 2.