

mies[UPGRADE]

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flat pack [flat pak] -adj: furniture packed flat for home assembly: an item of furniture that is sold as a set of pieces packed flat, for ease of storage and transportation, and assembled by the buyer.

Modernism, now at the 50 year life cycle originally envisioned as non-historic, is now essential to UPGRADE past its original life cycle. This project explores and provides an opportunity to build upon the work of a 1957 Mies van der Rohe dual towers in Chicago, into a pre-fabricated upgrade specification commodity that reduces waste, energy, and cost of improvements.

Building upon contemporary precedents in mass culture influencing technological and sustainable thinking (i.e. Ikea, Lumber Liquidators, HGTV, etc.) illustrates that the present role of architecture is a potential backdrop for change and revision into the mediated commodity experience, while subverting authorship into a collaborative effort.

The premise of pre-fabrication, energy efficiency, and conservation supplies the framework for the UPGRADE. Programmatically, the kitchen, bath, and walk-in-closets are spatially re-skinned to maximize conveniences of contemporary lifestyle rather than preserve 1957 fixtures. This change over time and at urban scale through the multiplication of 6 units per 28 floors within two towers equal 336 opportunities to postulate the massive conservation of waste in the DNA of one building.

Three proposals are generated for a prototypical one-bedroom space on the eleventh floor of the 28-story tower overlooking Lincoln Park and Lake Michigan. Planned as a series of specifications for sale, the budget parameters are for 15K/ 30K/ 60K. Presently the \$15,000 version is currently being designed and fabricated as an economical prototype show-case space. The main materials for the 15k upgrade are walnut plywood and white polyurethane plastic, with bamboo flooring. Wood portal inserts prefabricated off site expand the existing dysfunctional closet spaces, and the plastics are custom fit to the sizes of the existing mies bathtub as an exploration of the typical bathroom surround kit which eliminates demolition.

These upgrades make a more sustainable alternative to the usual remodeling strategy, all cut with CNC technology creating an opportunity to package it in an Ikea flat pack prototype for delivery and self-assembly.

The public urban space of the residential tower is then challenged through the mies[UPGRADE]. It is designed to be an integrated social steward of progress that the usual home improvement phase might miss as an opportunity. Generating more from less to be applied to the work of the originator of less is more, creates an intrinsic design value for upgrading modern architecture.

