

AFTER THE MANIFESTO

EDITED BY
CRAIG BUCKLEY

ARCHITECTURE

THEORY BOOKS

WESBADEN

AFTER THE MANIFESTO

**WRITING, ARCHITECTURE, AND
MEDIA IN A NEW CENTURY**

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MANIFESTO ARCHITECTURE

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- 1 THE MANIFESTO IS MEDIA. IT DOES NOT EXIST OUTSIDE OTHER MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINES, PAMPHLETS, POSTERS, RADIO, ETC.).
- 2 DESIGN IS PART OF THE ARCHITECTURAL MANIFESTO. IT IS NOT JUST THE DESIGN OF THE MANIFESTO, ITS GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT. AN ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT CAN BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A MANIFESTO—PART OF THE ARGUMENT, NOT AN ILLUSTRATION.
- 3 THE MANIFESTO PRECEDES THE WORK. IT IS A BLUEPRINT OF THE FUTURE.
- 4 EVERY MANIFESTO IS A RE-WORKING OF PREVIOUS MANIFESTOS.
- 5 NEW MEDIA = NEW MANIFESTOS, BUT THEY MAY NO LONGER LOOK LIKE MANIFESTOS.

THE HISTORY OF THE AVANT-GARDE (in art, architecture, literature) cannot be separated from the history of its engagement with the media. It isn't just that the avant-garde used media to publicize its work—the work didn't exist before its publication.

Futurism didn't really exist before the publication of the "Le Futurisme" on the front page of *Le Figaro*, the most revered newspaper in Europe, on February 20, 1909. As Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzola have pointed out, "the birth of futurism was a stroke of advertising genius." Even members of the Futurist group (Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo, and others) were recruited from the manifesto.¹

Adolf Loos didn't exist before his polemical writings in the pages of newspapers and in his own little magazine *Das Andere*, of which only two issues were published in 1903 (1). As Reyner Banham hinted, when Loos arrived in Paris he was already famous, but his fame was due to his writings—some of which had been translated into French—rather than to his buildings, "which seem to have been known only by hearsay."² Loos didn't arrive in Paris until 1922, but he was still known only through his writings, which go back to turn-of-the-century Vienna, and operated like radical manifestos (think *Ornament und Verbrechen* and *Architektur*). Herwarth Walden had published five articles by Loos in his magazine *Der Sturm* by 1912. To have access to the pages of *Der Sturm*, as Banham noted, was to have access to a limited but international audience. It was through this channel that Loos's words arrived in Paris, where his writings were reprinted

in other magazines and where he was appreciated by the Dadaists.³ Loos's only building in Paris was the house for Tristan Tzara in Montmartre (1925–26). Manifesto, once again, preceded building.

Likewise, Le Corbusier didn't exist before his magazine *L'Esprit nouveau* (1920–25) and the books that came out of its polemical pages (*Vers une architecture*, *Urbanisme*, *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, *Almanach d'architecture moderne*) (2). In fact, the very name Le Corbusier was a pseudonym used for writing about architecture in *L'Esprit nouveau*. He became known as an architect and created a clientele for his practice through these pages. In that sense it can be argued that Le Corbusier was an effect of a set of manifestos.

Even an architect like Mies van der Rohe, who is primarily thought in terms of craft and tectonics, and not as a writer, didn't really exist without *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* (1923–26), the journal that he was part of, and the many little magazines that he contributed to, from *Frühlicht* to *Merz* (3).

1 Adolf Loos, advertisement for *Das Andere* (1903).



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Entire groups from Dada and Surrealism to De Stijl became effects of their manifesto-journals. On the occasion of the 1978 Hayward Gallery exhibition *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, Rosalind Krauss wrote: "Witnessing the parade of surrealist magazines—*La Révolution surréaliste*, *Le surréalisme au service de la révolution*, *Documents*, *Marie*, *The International Surrealist Bulletin*, *VVV*, *Le Surréalisme, même*, and many others—one becomes convinced that *they* more than anything else are the true objects produced by surrealism."⁴ Little magazines, photography plus text, and manifestos are the "true" surrealist productions, rather than paintings or sculptures.

Likewise in the 1960s and '70s, Reyner Banham used to tell a story about a limousine full of Japanese architects that one day stopped in the street where he was living in London and asked directions to the office of Archigram. But Archigram didn't really exist as an architectural group yet. *Archigram* was a just little leaflet practically produced in the kitchen of Peter Cook, who lived across the street from Reyner and Mary Banham. Only much later did the loose group of young architects (Peter Cook, Mike Webb, Dennis Crompton, Ron Herron, Warren Chalk, and David

2 Le Corbusier, covers of *L'Esprit Nouveau* 1–4 (1920).



3 Mies van der Rohe, Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project, on the cover of *G: Materialien zur elementaren Gestaltung* no. 3 (June 1924).



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Greene) call themselves Archigram, after their magazine (4). And Archigram comes from architecture and "telegram"—once again, architecture as a communication system.

In fact, during this period there was a full-blown explosion of architectural little magazines, which instigated a radical transformation in architectural culture by generating many manifestos. One can argue that during this period little magazines—more than buildings—were, once again, the site of innovation and debate in architecture. Banham could hardly contain his excitement. In an article entitled "Zoom Wave Hits Architecture," of 1966, he throws away any scholarly restraint to absorb the syncopated rhythms of the new magazines in a kind of Futurist ecstasy:

Wham! Zoom! Zing! Rave!—and it's not Ready Steady Go, even though it sometimes looks like it. The sound effects are produced by the erupting of underground architectural protest magazines. Architecture, staid queen-mother of the arts, is no longer courted by plush glossies and cool scientific journals alone but is having her skirts blown up and her bodice unzipped by irregular newcomers, which are—typically—rhetorical, with-it moralistic, mis-spelled, improvisatory, anti-smooth, funny-format, cliquy, art-oriented but stoned out of their minds with

science-fiction images of an alternative architecture that would be perfectly possible tomorrow if only the Universe (and especially the Law of Gravity) were differently organized.⁵

If manifestos and little magazines drove the historical avant-garde of the 1920s, the 1960s and '70s witnessed a rebirth and a transformation of these polemical publications. In recent years there has been a huge interest in the experimental architecture of this time—from Archigram, the Metabolists, Ant Farm, Superstudio, and Archizoom to Haus-Rucker-Co, and others, dubbed "Radical Architecture" by Germano Celant in 1972—but the manifestos of that revolution have been, for the most part, neglected.

Banham's article itself can be understood as a kind of manifesto—the historian's manifesto exclaiming and exulting over the arrival of the new kind of publication. Even the opening words of his article: "Wham! Zoom! Zing! Rave!" are a reference to F. T. Marinetti's sound poem "Zang Tumb Tumb" (1912), which echoed the sounds of gunfire and explosives of the Battle of Adrianople in the first Balkan War that Marinetti had witnessed as a reporter (5). War and manifesto are inseparable. In its content, Banham's manifesto could be seen as responding, forty years later, to the call from the editors of *G* to abandon traditional art history in favor of writing manifestos:

4 Warren Chalk, *Archigram 4* cover (1964).



5 F.T. Marinetti, "Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianopoli Ottobre: parole in libertà" (October 1912).



Those of you doing art history, take some advice:
 Have your manuscripts pulped!
 Write manifestos for us!
 Live for the thing that exists today-----to the extent you see it.
 Learn to see the thing-----to the extent you want to
 and
 learn to want the thing.
 Art history that is not a serious manifesto for the thing will only warm
 us is the central heating.⁶

In this spirit, Banham perfected the technique of the short essay, publishing around one thousand punchy texts. In the meantime, another kind of manifesto emerged in the 1960s and '70s in the form of books: Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), a self-declared "gentle manifesto," and Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York* (1978), a self-declared "retroactive manifesto." And, to insist again, it is not just that we learn about the work of these architects through these publications. The manifesto precedes the work. And the work is understood as an extension of those polemics.

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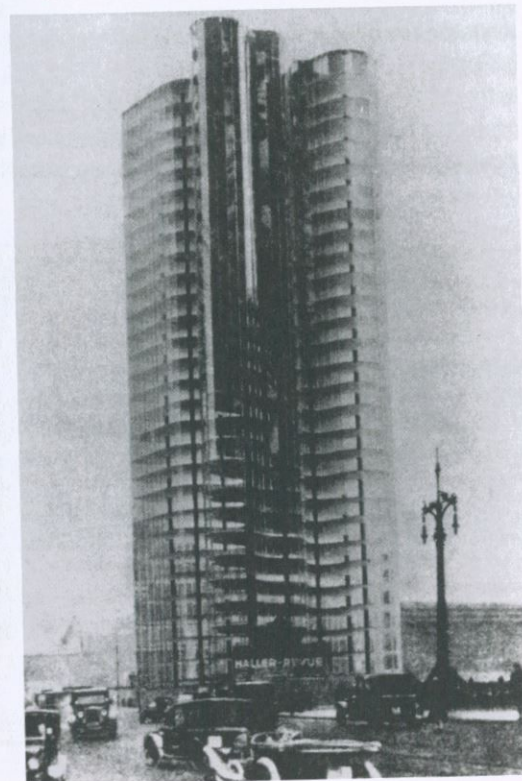
Manifesto Mies

Mies might be the most unexpected yet remarkable case. His place in architectural history—his role as one of the leaders of the Modern Movement—was established through a series of five projects (none of them actually built, or even buildable—they were not developed at that level) he produced for competitions and publications during the first half of the 1920s. I am referring to the 1921 Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper entry for a competition (exhibited at Berlin City Hall), the Glass Skyscraper of 1922, produced for the *Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung* (Annual Berlin Art Exhibition), the Reinforced Concrete Office Building of 1923, and the Concrete and Brick Country Houses, presented in the Berlin Art Exhibitions of 1923 and 1924 (6). After Berlin, the projects were shown in a number of venues, including the *Internationale Architekturausstellung* (International Architecture Exhibition) at the Bauhaus in Weimar, curated by Walter Gropius, and the exhibition *Les Architectes du groupe De Stijl* (The Architects of the De Stijl Group) at Léonce Rosenberg's Galerie de L'Effort Moderne in Paris organized by Theo van Doesburg, and published in a long list of avant-garde journals, including *Frühlicht*, *G*, *Merz*, and *L'Architecture vivante*, as well as in many books on modern architecture written during the 1920s.⁷

Mies's first writings were also produced in relation to these projects. His first article, "Hochhäuser" ("Skyscrapers"), was published in the first issue of *Frühlicht* (1922); "Bürohaus" ("Office Building") was published in the first issue of *G* in 1923 alongside the Concrete Office Building; and "Bauen" ("Building"), written with Hans Richter, the editor of *G*, appeared framing the Concrete Country House in the second issue of *G* in 1923. Mies wrote a total of seven articles in these years, contributing significantly to the making of his persona.

Zooming in on these articles, they clearly take the form of manifestos. In "Bürohaus," Mies makes a series of stark declarations in the form of a poem and the image of the project of the Concrete Office Building is given exactly the same space on the page as the poem. They are placed side by side, both sitting on top of the bold label "BÜROHAUS," with a gradually more technical description underneath. Statement and project are inseparable. The project is seen to make a statement and the statement is seen as

6 Mies van der Rohe, Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project, Berlin (1921).



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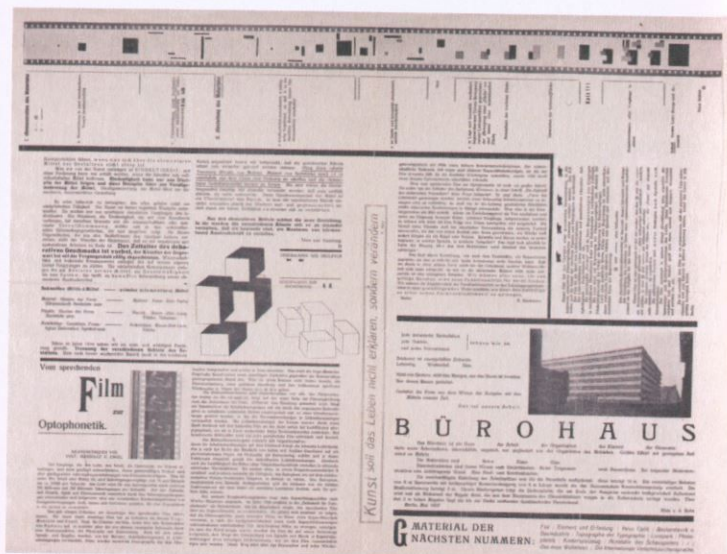
a project. The image of the project is not an illustration of the statement; it is part of the statement itself (7).

In G number 2, Mies repeats the strategy, again insisting on the equivalence of statement and project, and again dividing the text between a series of manifesto declarations and a more detailed technical description, each signed, with the project between occupying the same amount of space as the text (8).⁸

It was also around 1920 that Mies separated from his wife and children in order to dedicate himself fully to architecture and changed his name, Mies, to Miës van der Rohe, adding his mother's family name (Rohe) to his own with the Dutch preposition "van der." According to Sandra Honey, "things Dutch ran high in Germany at the time." Other critics have suggested that he was hoping it would ring close to "von," with its aristocratic overtones. He even added the umlaut to the "e" of Mies, so that the word would be pronounced in two syllables. "Mies" in German means "awkward, nasty, miserable, poor, seedy, out of sorts, bad or wretched."⁹ He clearly did not want any of these attributes associated with his work. His entry into the Friedrichstrasse competition was already made under the new name Miës van der Rohe.

It was these five projects, this "paper architecture," together with the publicity apparatus enveloping them, that first made Mies into a historical figure. The houses that he had built so far, and that he would continue to

7 Mies van der Rohe, "Bürohaus", in G no. 1 (1923).



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develop during the same years, would have taken him nowhere. While it is true that the Riehl House of 1907 was noted by a critic and published in *Moderne Bauformen* and in *Innen Dekoration*, between the somewhat modest articles covering this house in 1910 and his own article in *Frühlicht* in 1922 presenting the glass skyscraper, nothing else of Mies's work was published. Twelve years of silence! Imagine the trauma.

Could we attribute this silence to the blindness of architectural critics of his time, as some historians seem to imply? Mies's attitude is much clearer. In the mid-1920s he destroyed the drawings of most of his work prior to that time, thereby constructing a very precise "image" of himself, one from which all incoherencies, all faux-pas, were erased.¹⁰ Note the parallelism with Adolf Loos, who destroyed all the documents from his projects when he left Vienna for Paris in 1922, and with Le Corbusier, who excluded all his early houses in La Chaux-de-Fonds from publication in his *Oeuvre complète*. A manifesto requires destruction of history, even destruction of one's own history. Still in 1947, Mies did not allow Philip Johnson to publish most of his early work in the monograph that Johnson was preparing as a catalogue for the first "comprehensive retrospective" exhibition of Mies's work at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and that would constitute the first book on Mies. "Not enough of a statement," Mies is supposed to have said about the drawings of an early house project that Johnson wanted to include.¹¹ Not enough of a statement? Not enough of a manifesto. Mies

8 Mies van der Rohe, Concrete Country House, in G no. 2 (1923).



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excluded from the exhibition all his more traditional early work up to 1924, with the exception of the project for the Kröller-Müller Villa (1912–13).

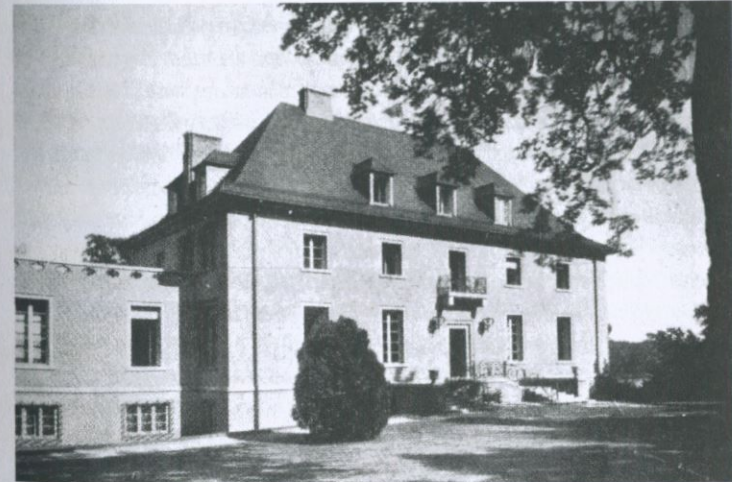
And when thirty years later, on the occasion of the third edition of his book, Johnson was asked in an interview, "How would you do the book today?", he answered: "Most of all I would look into . . . the suddenness with which Mies went from what he had been doing to the glass skyscraper of 1921."¹² A key clue to Mies's sudden change of direction was provided by Sandra Honey when she wrote that the breaking point came when Walter Gropius refused to exhibit Mies's project for the Kröller-Müller Villa in his 1919 *Ausstellung für unbekannte Architekten* (Exhibition for unknown architects).¹³ According to Mies, Gropius said: "We can't exhibit it, we are looking for something completely different."¹⁴ The failure of this house, a project that Mies was so attached to as to still include it forty-five years later in the MoMA exhibition, or the trauma of that rejection, stimulated a major change in his work. Excluded from an exhibition dedicated to an emergent sensibility, he started designing directly for exhibitions and in so doing revolutionized his work. The competitions, exhibitions, and publications of the early 1920s did not simply give Mies the opportunity to present his first modern projects. The projects were modern precisely because they were produced for those contexts. The exhibition became the site of his laboratory.

Mies's work is a textbook case of a wider phenomenon. Modern architecture became "modern" not as it is usually understood by using glass, steel, or reinforced concrete, but by engaging with the media: with publications, competitions, exhibitions. The materials of communication were used to rebuild the house. With Mies this is literally the case. What had been a series of rather conservative domestic projects realized for real clients (the Riehl House, the Perls House, the Kröller-Müller Villa, the Werner House, the Urbig House) became, in the context of the Berlin Art Exhibition, of *G*, of *Frühlicht*, and so on, a series of manifestos on modern architecture.

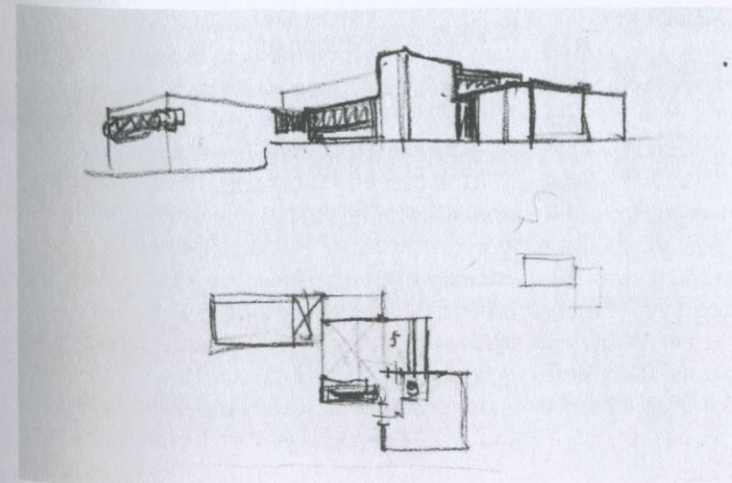
Not only that. In Mies one can see, perhaps as with no other architect of the Modern Movement, a true case of schizophrenia between the projects developed for publications and exhibitions and those developed for clients. Still in the 1920s, at the same time that he was developing his most radical designs, Mies could build such conservative houses as the Villa Eichstaedt in a suburb of Berlin (1921–23) and the Villa Mosler in Potsdam (1924) (9). Can we blame these projects on the conservative taste of Mies's clients? Georg Mosler was a banker and his house is said to reflect his taste. But when in 1924 the art historian and Constructivist artist Walter Dexel, who was very much interested in and supportive of modern architecture,¹⁵

commissioned Mies to do a house for him, Mies blew it (10). He was unable to come up with the modern house his client had desired within the deadline. He gave one excuse after another. The deadline was repeatedly postponed. And in the end Dexel gave the project to another architect. In fact, it was not until 1927 that Mies was able to break with tradition, when he managed to use a steel structure and put up non-load-bearing walls in his apartment building at the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart (11).

9 Mies van der Rohe, Villa Mosler, Potsdam (1924).



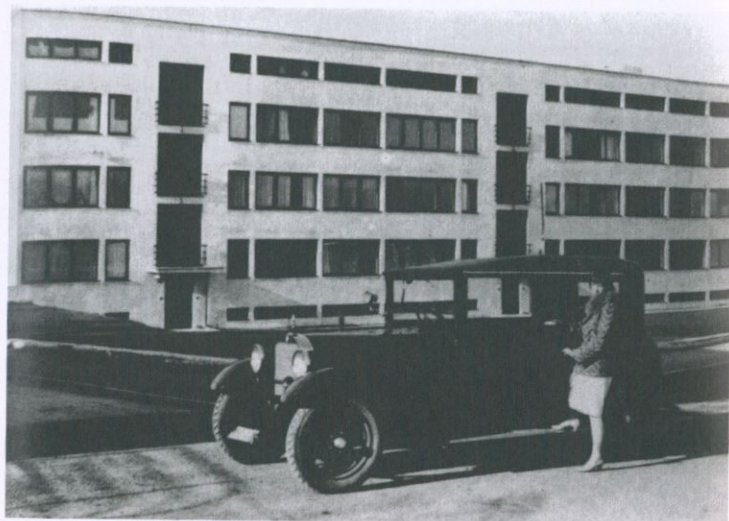
10 Mies van der Rohe, sketch for Walter Dexel House, Jena (1924).



For a long time, then, there was an enormous gap between the flowing architecture of Mies's published projects and his struggle to find the appropriate techniques to produce these effects in built form. For many years he was literally trying to catch up with his publications. Perhaps that is why he worked so hard to perfect a sense of realism in the representation of his projects, as in the photomontage of the Glass Skyscraper with cars flying by on the Friedrichstrasse.

It is not by chance that Mies started to catch up with himself in the context of structures built for exhibitions: his apartment building in the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart (1927) and the German Pavilion in the 1929 International Exposition in Barcelona. Indeed the most extreme and influential proposals in the history of modern architecture were made in the context of temporary exhibitions. Think about Bruno Taut's Glashauss (the pavilion for the glass industry in the 1914 Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne); Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's L'Esprit Nouveau Pavillon in Paris (1925); Konstantin Melnikov's USSR Pavilion at the *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* in Paris (1925); Mies and Lilly Reich's "Café Samt und Seide (Velvet and Silk Café)" at the exhibition *Die Mode der Dame*, Berlin (1927), their Glass Room in Stuttgart (1927) and, of course, the Barcelona Pavilion (1929); Alvar Aalto's Finnish Pavilion at the World Exposition, Paris (1937) and his Finnish Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair; Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis's Philips Pavilion in Brussels (1958); Buckminster Fuller's Geodesic Dome for the American

11 Mies van der Rohe, apartment building at the Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart (1927).



Exhibition in Moscow (1959) and his U.S. pavilion for Expo '67 in Montreal; Eero Saarinen and Charles and Ray Eames's IBM Pavilion for the 1964 New York World's Fair; Frei Otto's German Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal; the Pepsi Pavilion for Expo '70 in Osaka by E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology); Coop Himmelblau's The Cloud, a prototype for future living, designed for Documenta 5 (1972); Aldo Rossi's Il Teatro del Mondo, a temporary theater built for the Venice Architecture Biennale of 1979 to recall the floating theaters of Venice in the eighteenth century, popular during carnivals; and countless other examples. The tradition of the pavilion as the site of architectural experimentation continues into the turn of the century with such mythical projects as Diller + Scofidio's Blur Building in Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland, an inhabitable cloud as media pavilion for Swiss Expo 2002 (now destroyed), and the series of pavilions that spring up every year at the Serpentine Gallery in London and include those of Zaha Hadid, Toyo Ito, Oscar Niemeyer, Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, Frank Gehry, SANAA, Olafur Eliasson and Kjetil Thorsen, and Herzog & de Meuron with Ai Weiwei.

This relentless tradition of exuberant and experimental buildings raises the question of whether the pavilion is itself an architectural manifesto. Architects treat exhibitions, like magazines, as sites for polemical statements about the future. The history of manifestos is inseparable from the history of experimental pavilions. This is a tradition of manifesto through design.

When commissioned to build the German Pavilion for the Barcelona International Exposition in 1929, Mies asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs what was to be exhibited. That is a normal question for an architect: what is the building for? An artist never needs to ask that. "Nothing will be exhibited," was the answer. "The pavilion itself will be the exhibit."¹⁶ In the absence of a traditional client or program, Mies was able to take his work to new limits and one of the most influential buildings of the century emerged as a pure manifesto.

Mies was treated as an artist in Barcelona. If, according to Gordon Matta-Clark, the difference between architecture and sculpture is that one has plumbing and the other does not, the Barcelona Pavilion is art. The pavilion became an exhibit about exhibition. The only thing it exhibited was a new way of looking.

Manifesto Rewrites

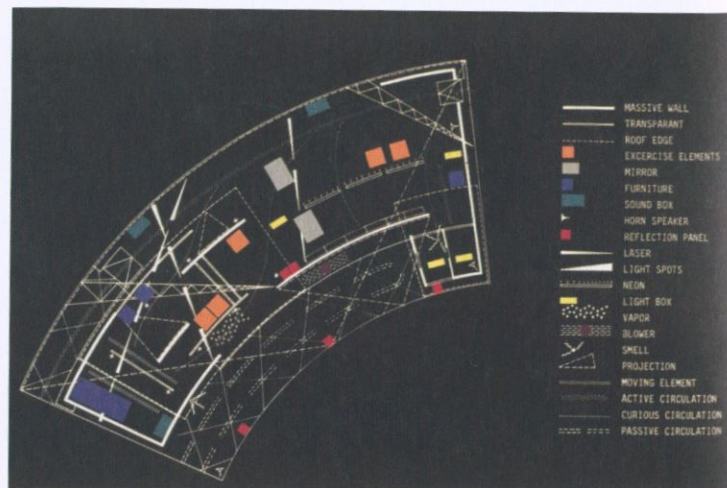
Manifestos always refer to earlier manifestos. Each is a reworking of earlier statements. Mies's polemic in Barcelona, for example, was revisited in the XVII Milan Triennale (1986) when OMA constructed its Casa Palestra

(Body-building home, a Barcelona Pavilion "bent" to fit the curve of its allotted site within the exhibition building):

By then, phobic about the duty to reveal, we decided to embody our resistance in an exhibit about exhibition. At the time, a clone of Mies's pavilion was being built in Barcelona. How fundamentally did it differ from Disney? In the name of higher authenticity, we researched the true history of the pavilion after the closing of the 1929 International Fair and collected whatever archaeological remnants it had left across Europe on its return journey. Like a Pompeian villa, these fragments were reassembled as far as possible to suggest the former whole, but with one inevitable inaccuracy: since our "site" was curved, the pavilion had to be "bent."¹⁷

OMA's manifesto echoes and transforms an early manifesto (12). Even the framing of the project echoes Mies's polemical statements in *G* by giving equal value to image and text and signing the text. OMA's manifesto is an homage not only to the Barcelona Pavilion but also to modern architecture, under attack in those years as "lifeless, empty and puritanical": "It has always been our conviction that modern architecture is a hedonistic movement, that its abstraction, rigour and severity are in fact plots to create the most provocative settings for the experiment that is modern life."¹⁸ The earlier manifesto is not just echoed. It is re-launched and rewritten.

12 OMA, Casa Palestra, Milan Triennale (1986).



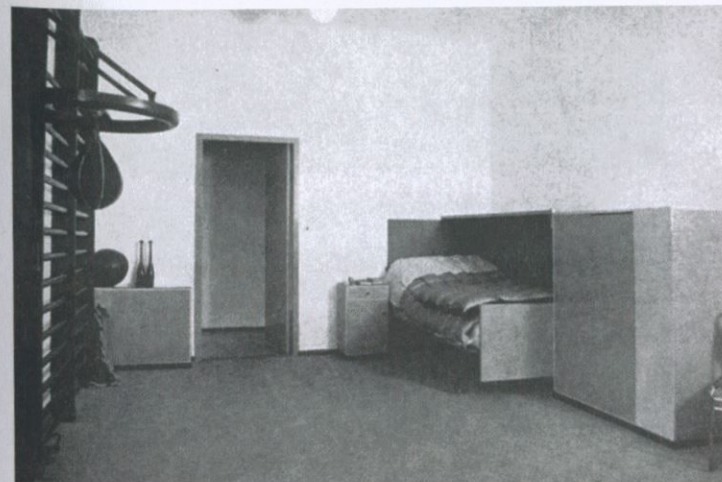
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In the Casa Palestra the Barcelona Pavilion is inhabited by gymnasts, bodybuilders, and exercise equipment. Mies's minimalist statement becomes engorged with activities. The references multiply. The project alludes to the tradition of the bodybuilding house in modern architecture: from Marcel Breuer's bedroom for Erwin Piscator in Berlin (1927) (13) to Walter Gropius's gym in his apartment for the German Building Exhibition in Berlin (1931), to Richard Döcker's gym on the roof at the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart (1927), to the 1,000-meter running track that Le Corbusier proposed for the roof of his Immeuble Villas (1922), to Richard Neutra's Lovell House (1929), and even to the transformation in the 1960s of Mies's Tugendhat House in Brno into a children's gym by Communist bureaucrats. OMA takes modern architecture's dream of a healthy body to a new level. Experimentation in exhibitions always becomes collective in the end. Other architects pick up some ideas, work on them, and then are themselves responded to in different exhibitions. That is what architectural discourse is all about—an exchange of manifestos. OMA positions itself here in relationship to its own time, the height of postmodernism and its attack on modern architecture, through a twisting of Mies that unleashes the repressed sensuality of modern architecture. A new manifesto is produced by twisting an old one.

Out-Miesing Mies

The process keeps going. In 2008, SANAA did an installation in the reconstructed Barcelona Pavilion. The project is a classic SANAA move

13 Marcel Breuer, Bedroom for Erwin Piscator, Berlin (1927).



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of "out-Miesing" Mies by inserting a transparent curtain into his pavilion. The pavilion is completely transformed by doing almost nothing. As with Mies, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa are also famous for saying almost nothing. And yet their description of the project is a sophisticated repetition of Mies's manifesto technique. Once again, an image of the design is given equal status to a series of polemical points (14). In a sense, SANAA goes one step forward by having the polemical statements actually spell out the steps in the design process. It is almost like shoptalk that takes us through the process.

This mode of statement itself might be a new kind of subtle manifesto, a soft manifesto, refusing to define the future yet organizing it into a set of points. SANAA's pamphlet is unambiguously a manifesto. It directly echoes the polemical aesthetic of the 1920s posters and pamphlets even as it refuses to play the game:

14, 16 SANAA, Installation in the reconstructed Barcelona Pavilion (2008).



"We decided to use acrylic to make transparent curtains. We imagined an installation design that leaves the existing space of the Barcelona Pavilion undisturbed. The acrylic curtain stands freely on the floor and is shaped in a calm spiral. The curtain softly encompasses the spaces within the pavilion and creates a new atmosphere. The view through the acrylic will be something different from the original with soft reflections slightly distorting the pavilion."

SANAA in the Barcelona Pavilion is the ultimate encounter, since SANAA is widely considered the inheritor of Miesian transparency—a "challenge," as Sejima admitted—a return to the scene of the crime, one could argue. The installation carefully marks off a part of the pavilion with an acrylic curtain acting as a kind of crime-scene tape, leaving, as SANAA put it, "the space of the Barcelona Pavilion undisturbed." And yet a completely new atmosphere has been created.

But what crime has been committed here? What has been cordoned off? Is it the freestanding golden onyx wall at the center of the pavilion and the two Barcelona chairs where King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenia of Spain were supposed to sit during the opening ceremonies of the building on May 26, 1929, and sign the golden book? Or is it the space outside the spiral that has been marked off, preserved, "undisturbed"?

In any case, the cordon is loose. The spiral is open. We can walk in, but not so easily. First we have to find the entrance, slide around the outside of the curtain. Only when we are in the other side of the space of the pavilion, having squeezed between the acrylic curtain and the pavilion's front glass wall, can we suddenly fold back into the spiral by making a 180-degree turn, which echoes the two 180-degree turns already required to enter the Barcelona Pavilion. Just as Mies narrowed the entrance down, subtly constraining the visitor with a folded path, SANAA spins and squeezes the visitor between the narrow planes of acrylic that curve around until suddenly one is inside, facing the two Barcelona chairs, or rather the chairs are facing us, as if the king and queen were still there, sitting down, presiding over everything (15).

But what do they mean that the space of the pavilion is "undisturbed"? Something has changed. In fact, everything seems to have changed. The simple spiral makes a new pavilion out of the old one—a

pavilion inside a pavilion, each transforming the other to produce a whole new architecture. The most famous pavilion of the twentieth century becomes something else. All the classic images embedded in the brain of every architect now have additional layers of reflections.

SANAA returns the curtain to the pavilion, or is it the pavilion to the curtain? The acrylic freestanding curtain recalls the Velvet and Silk Café a brilliant collaborative work of Lilly Reich and Mies for the exhibition *Die Mode der Dame* in Berlin, two years before Barcelona, where draperies in black, orange, and red velvet and black and yellow lemon silk hung from metal rods to form the space. The café is a kind of prototype of the pavilion, in its radical approach to defining the space by suspending sensuous surfaces. In the pavilion the richly veined marble surfaces take over the role of the curtains—the hard surfaces absorbing softness. In fact, Mies pretends that they are curtains, denying that they have a structural role, even if we now know they did. That the walls are curtains may also explain why we don't enter the Barcelona Pavilion frontally, but at an angle, as if entering behind a curtain on a stage.

SANAA's project reminds us that the Barcelona Pavilion comes from curtains, from a soft material. The beginnings of architecture were textile. It is a Semperian idea of architecture. The space that SANAA has wrapped with the new transparent curtain is precisely the center of the pavilion, the throne room, the space where the king and queen of Spain were supposed to sit and sign the book. In old pictures the space is marked by a black carpet on the floor, which nobody dares to step in, as in the photograph of the mysterious woman (is she Lilly Reich?) standing outside its border, he back to the camera, looking in. SANAA's curtain is the invisible cloak that further protects that space—a royal transparent cloak. The garment moves. It billows outward, allowing us to enter between its folds. Space is defined by a kind of invisible movement, neither limited nor unlimited, a paradox that the spiral has always communicated.

SANAA's diaphanous curtain preserves the pavilion by allowing it to breathe. It is a kind of life support in a moment in which the subtlety of Mies might so easily be forgotten precisely because the building is so intensely celebrated. The single curtain slows us down, allowing us to enter the pavilion again, as if on the day of its opening. Once again, the fact that Mies did so little, when asked to do so much (represent Germany in Barcelona), can be appreciated. Yet what allows SANAA to take us back or bring the pavilion again forward toward us, is that the curtain is precisely not transparent. What is added is not a clear window but a delicate veil. SANAA's acrylic, like its glass, is never neutral.

SANAA's vision is far from crystal clear. In fact, its architecture appears to be more interested in blurring the view, and softening the focus, than sustaining the transparency of early avant-garde architecture. If Sejima is the inheritor of Miesian transparency, the latest in a long line of experiments, she is the ultimate Miesian, deepening the logic of transparency into a whole new kind of mirage effect. The temporary acrylic curtain in Barcelona intensifies the Miesian effect. A plastic lens is placed inside a glass lens to intensify and therefore prolong the Miesian effect, the masque of modern architecture.

The ghost here is unambiguously modern architecture, preserved rather than transformed by subtle deflections. Manifesto has gone from loud battle cry to almost silent preservation. The heroic image is preserved by an anti-heroic act: a new kind of manifesto.

Blogging Polemics

The arrival of this new kind of soft manifesto might be the endgame of the twentieth-century manifesto—the endgame of print and pavilions as the vehicles for the architectural manifesto. In an age in which electronic media is a primary site of debate and exhibition, new forms of manifesto are surely

ing. Once again, as with the early avant-garde manifestos forged in, and as battle, war is the primal context. Before they were stopped, in Iraq had been uploading their videos of war on YouTube and .ks. If World War I was the first media war and Vietnam the first and war, the war in Iraq is the first Internet, YouTube, and WikiLeaks. Journalists are no longer the first ones on the scene, or the most ting. Think about the blogger Riverbend, a young Iraqi woman who 2003 to 2007, when her family moved to Syria in exasperation, d on the day-to-day life in Iraq under the occupation in a blog called ad Burning." Or think about "CBFTW" ("Colby Buzzell Fuck the War"), hand account of war in the blog of an American soldier posted l, Iraq, in 2004. The blog lasted only a few weeks before the Army im to close it. These blogs have told us more about the war than r forms of traditional media.

the audience is now itself the journalist, the critic, the artist. Iraq shoot and edit their videos, add music to them, and so on. l's blogs have been published as a book that was translated languages and received many prizes. It has also been dramatized al plays and in a BBC series. Colby Buzzell published his blogs as a book and became a writer for *Esquire* magazine. New media occupies

and transforms old media. The Internet feeds new kinds of journalism, new kinds of literature, new forms of theater, new kinds of video art. Can architecture be far behind?

While most architects are still using the techniques developed by Le Corbusier and others in the wake of World War I, a new generation of architects is experimenting with a new set of media. It is perhaps this reality that makes looking at the twentieth-century little magazines and manifestos current again. As Marshall McLuhan said, every new technology makes us aware of the old one.

Le Corbusier and Mies were fascinated by the latest media and used it as a true site of architectural production. In so doing, they brought architecture into the twentieth century with a manifesto blitz. In recent years, an unexpected revolution of at least the same significance as the one that brought us photography, film, illustrated magazines, and modern publicity has taken place. The Internet, email, blogs, Google, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, WikiLeaks, and the like have profoundly changed the way we work, write, analyze, theorize, socialize, interact, play, make love. Can we expect architecture not to be affected?

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1 Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978).

2 Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 88-89.

3 "Architektur" and "Ornament und Verbrechen" were published in French in abridged versions in *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui* 2 (December 1912) and 5 (June 1913), respectively. "Ornament und Verbrechen" was reprinted again in French in *L'Esprit nouveau* in 1920, while Paul Dermée, a Dadaist poet, was still part of the editorial board. *L'Esprit nouveau* announced the publication of "Architektur" in a forthcoming issue but never carried it out. The article was published in French again in *L'Architecture vivante*, (Autumn/Winter 1923): 26-34.

4 Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October* 19 (Winter 1981): 15-17.

5 Reyner Banham, "Zoom Wave Hits Architecture," *New Society* (3 March 1964): 21.

6 "History Is What Is Happening Today," *G: Material zur Elementaren Gestaltung*, no. 5-6 (April 1926). English translation in Detlef Mertins and Michael W. Jennings, eds., *G: An Avant-garde Journal of Art, Architecture, Design, and Film 1923-1926* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 229.

7 Incidentally an accompanying manifesto to the exhibition entitled "Vers une construction collective" was distributed during the exhibition and then published in *De Stijl*, signed by Theo van Doesburg, Cornelis Van Eesteren, and Gerrit Rietveld.

8 Mies signed the manifesto "Bauen" with his initials, M.v.d.R., and the more technical text underneath it with Mies v. d. Rohe. It is curious that he felt the need to sign twice when historians claim he wrote the text with Hans Richter, whose signature does not appear.

9 Sandra Honey, "Mies in Germany," in *Mies van der Rohe: European Works* (London: Academy

Editions, 1986), 14 and 25 (note 14); David Spaeth, "Ludwig Mies van de Rohe: A Biographical Essay," in John Zukowsky, ed., *Mies Reconsidered: His Career, Legacy and Disciples* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1986), 15.

10 "At some point in late 1925 or early 1926, Mies directed his assistant Sergius Ruegenberg to climb to the attic of his studio at Am Karlsbad 24 and destroy all the old plans and drawings that had been stored there." Wolf Tegethoff, "From Obscurity to Maturity," in Franz Schulze, ed., *Mies van der Rohe: Critical Essays* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 33.

11 Philip Johnson, *Mies van der Rohe* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1978; originally published 1947), 208.

12 Ibid., 211.

13 The exhibition was organized by Walter Gropius for the Arbeitsrat für Kunst. Sandra Honey, "Who and What Inspired Mies van der Rohe in Germany," in *Architectural Design*, 3/4 (1979), 99; and "Mies in Germany," in Honey, 16.

14 Mies van der Rohe in an interview with Ulrich Conrads, Berlin 1966 ("Mies in Berlin" [LP], in *Bauwelt Archiv*, 1), quoted by Honey, 16.

15 As director of the Jena Kunstverein, Walter Dexel had organized an exhibition of modern German architecture (*Neue deutsche Baukunst*, 1924), which included the Brick Country House and other projects by Mies. Wolf Tegethoff, "From Obscurity to Maturity," 57-58.

16 Julius Posener, "Los primeros años: de Schinkel a De Stijl," in *A&V: Monografías de Arquitectura y Vivienda* 6 (special issue on Mies van der Rohe, 1986): 33.

17 Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *S, M, L, XL* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995), 49.

18 OMA/Office for Metropolitan Architecture, "La Casa Palestra," in *AA Files* 13 (1987): 8.

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