



MODERN ARCHITECTURE

EXPOSICIÓN DE ARQUITECTURA DE LUDWIG MIËS VAN DER ROHE. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, 1938-1939

THE EXHIBITION OF ARCHITECTURE BY LUDWIG MIËS VAN DER ROHE. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, 1938-1939

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La primera monografía sobre Mies van der Rohe fue publicada en 1947 con motivo de la exposición que Philip Johnson comisarió en el MoMA de Nueva York. Aunque esta exposición ha sido considerada por la crítica como la primera que presentó en exclusividad la obra de Mies, nuevos documentos revelan que en diciembre de 1938 se inauguró en el Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) la “Exhibition of Architecture by Miës van der Rohe”, que incluyó dibujos, fotografías y maquetas de su etapa europea. Este artículo quiere dar a conocer esta exposición monográfica, analizando gráficamente el material hasta hoy inédito: siete fotografías conservadas en los archivos de la *University of Michigan* y una nota de prensa

custodiada en el *AIC Archives Research Center*. El levantamiento tridimensional aportado detalla la arquitectura expuesta y la relaciona comparativamente con las exposiciones americanas anteriores y posteriores (1932 y 1947), ambas organizadas por el MoMA.

PALABRAS CLAVE: MIES VAN DER ROHE, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, EXPOSICIÓN, 1938

The first monograph on Mies van der Rohe was published in 1947 to coincide with the exhibition curated by Philip Johnson at MoMA in New York. Although this exhibition has been considered by critics as the first to present Mies’s work exclusively, new documents reveal that in December 1938 the

“Exhibition of Architecture by Miës van der Rohe” opened at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), which included drawings, photographs and models from his European period. This article aims to present this monographic exhibition by graphically analysing the material that has remained unpublished until now: seven photographs in the archives of the University of Michigan and a press release in the AIC Archives Research Center. The three-dimensional survey provided details the architecture on display, and compares it with the American exhibitions that preceded and followed it (1932 and 1947), both organised by MoMA.

KEYWORDS: MIES VAN DER ROHE, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, EXHIBITION, 1938



Las exposiciones fueron determinantes en la carrera profesional de Mies van Rohe. En primera instancia, las exhibiciones de principios de la década de 1920 "no sólo le ofrecieron la oportunidad de presentar sus primeros proyectos modernos, sino que éstos fueron modernos, precisamente porque se produjeron en dichos contextos" (Colomina 2009, p.6). En segundo lugar, fueron el laboratorio en el que, junto a Lilly Reich, desarrolló la mayor parte de su producción comprendida entre 1927 y 1937; así, la colaboración Mies-Reich materializó más de ochenta espacios expositivos, entre pabellones, montajes arquitectónicos y stands industriales (Lizondo, 2012). Finalmente, las exposiciones fueron la plataforma de difusión a través de la cual Mies se dio a conocer en Estados Unidos. Es, precisamente, en este último punto en el que se centra este artículo: cómo y cuándo se conoció la arquitectura de Mies en suelo americano.

Todo estudioso de la arquitectura de Mies van der Rohe conoce las primeras publicaciones internacionales que introdujeron su obra y la primera exposición monográfica que la mostró, ambas circunstancias promovidas por Philip Johnson en calidad de Director del Departamento de Arquitectura del *Museum of Modern Art* de Nueva York (MoMA). Por ello, cualquiera que esté familiarizado con el legado de Mies sabe que en 1932 el MoMA exhibió la maqueta de la Tugendhat House, incluyéndose parte de su obra en el catálogo *Modern Architecture*. También que en 1947 tuvo lugar, de nuevo en el MoMA, la exposición exclusiva de la obra de Mies, una muestra cuyo catálogo constituye la primera monografía de su arquitectura. Esta

exposición, ampliamente estudiada, ha sido considerada por la crítica como la primera presentación del trabajo de Mies en América. Sin embargo, documentos recientemente encontrados demuestran que no fue así. Una nota de prensa custodiada en el *AIC Archives Research Center* y siete fotografías conservadas en la *University of Michigan*, permiten conocer un hito importante en la trayectoria arquitectónica de uno de los maestros del Movimiento Moderno: *The Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe, Art Institute of Chicago, December 15 to January 15, 1939* (AIT 1938, p.18) ¹.

Antes y después: 1932 y 1947. Las conocidas exposiciones del MoMA

Introducido en diferentes círculos de vanguardia desde 1915 –año en el que se independizó de su familia y estableció su residencia y estudio en Berlín– y formando parte del *German Werkbund* desde 1924, Mies van der Rohe prosperó profesionalmente experimentando, especialmente, desde la temporalidad de los encargos que realizó como vicepresidente de la asociación. Junto a Lilly Reich trabajó en Stuttgart (1927), Barcelona (1929) y Berlín (1927 y 1931), siendo este último escenario el que realmente trascendió fuera de Europa. El motivo fue la presencia de Philip Johnson y Henry-Russel Hitchcock en la exposición *Die Wohnung unserer Zeit*, en la que ambos ensalzaron el trabajo de Mies en el diario *T-Square* y la revista de Harvard *Hound and Horn*, respectivamente.

El conjunto urbano y arquitectónico que Mies y Reich generaron

Exhibitions were decisive in Mies van Rohe's professional career. First of all, the exhibitions at the beginning of the 1920s "did not simply give Mies the opportunity to present his first modern projects. The Project were modern precisely because they were produced for those contexts" (Colomina 2009, p.6). Secondly, they were the laboratory in which, together with Lilly Reich, he developed most of his production between 1927 and 1937; thus, the collaboration between Mies and Reich resulted in more than eighty exhibition spaces, including pavilions, architectural assemblies and industrial stands (Lizondo, 2012). Finally, the exhibitions were the platform for dissemination through which Mies became known in the United States. It is precisely on this last point that this article focuses: how and when Mies's architecture became known in the United States.

Every scholar of Mies van der Rohe's architecture is familiar with the first international publications that introduced his work and the first monographic exhibition that showed it, both promoted by Philip Johnson as Director of the Department of Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art of New York (MoMA). For this reason, anyone familiar with Mies's legacy knows that in 1932 MoMA exhibited the model of the Tugendhat House, and that part of his work was included in the *Modern Architecture* catalogue. Also that in 1947 the MoMA again held the exclusive exhibition of Mies's work, an exhibition whose catalogue is the first monograph of his architecture. This exhibition, which has been widely studied, has been considered by critics as the first presentation of Mies's work in America. However, recently found documents show that this was not the case. A press release stored at the AIC Archives Research Center and seven photographs kept at the University of Michigan reveal an important milestone in the architectural career of one of the masters of the Modern Movement: *The Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe, Art Institute of Chicago, December 15 to January 15, 1939* (AIT 1938, p.18) ¹.



Before and after: 1932 and 1947. The known exhibitions at the MoMA

Introduced into different avant-garde circles from 1915 –the year in which he became independent of his family and established his residence and studio in Berlin– and a member of the German Werkbund from 1924, Mies van der Rohe prospered professionally, experimenting especially with the temporary nature of the commissions he undertook as vice-president of the association. Together with Lilly Reich, he worked in Stuttgart (1927), Barcelona (1929) and Berlin (1927 and 1931), the latter being the scenario that really transcended outside Europe. The reason for this was the presence of Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock at the exhibition *Die Wohnung unserer Zeit*, where they both praised Mies's work in the T-Square newspaper and the Harvard magazine *Hound and Horn*, respectively.

The urban and architectural ensemble that Mies and Reich generated within an existing building and the full-scale model of Mies's experimental dwelling found favour with American critics. Johnson stated that: "in this kind of three-dimensional composition photography is defied (...) Only by walking through the building can one get an idea of its beauty" (1932, p.18); Hitchcock called it: "The most important architectural event of the summer..." (...) From the marble, wood and fabrics on display - selected by Mies and arranged by Lilly Reich - to Mies's house at the centre of the composition, everything is displayed with a clarity that can only be achieved by mastering a unitary and positive criterion." (1931-1932, p.94).

The impact the exhibition had on Johnson and Hitchcock, curators of the *Modern International Architecture Exhibition*, was decisive for Mies to be on the list of the ten most representative architects of the avant-garde, and whose works would be included in what they called the International Style. Nevertheless, Johnson was already a self-confessed admirer of Mies van der Rohe's architecture; he had visited the Tugendhat House and in 1930 he had commissioned him to decorate his bachelor flat at 424 East 52nd Street, New York.

dentro de una nave preexistente y la maqueta a escala real de la vivienda experimental de Mies obtuvieron el favor de la crítica norteamericana. Johnson afirmó que: "en este tipo de composición tridimensional se desafía la fotografía (...) Sólo andando a través del edificio se puede obtener una idea de su belleza" (1932, p.18); Hitchcock, por su parte, lo calificó como: "El evento arquitectónico más importante del verano (...) Desde los mármoles, las maderas y tejidos expuestos - seleccionados por Mies y dispuestos por Lilly Reich hasta la casa de Mies en el centro de la composición, todo se exhibe con una claridad que sólo puede lograrse dominando un criterio unitario y positivo" (1931-1932, p.94).

El impacto que la muestra causó en Johnson y Hitchcock, comisarios de la *Modern International Architecture Exhibition*, fue determinante para que Mies estuviese en la lista de los diez arquitectos más representativos de la vanguardia, y cuyas obras estarían incluidas en lo que denominaron como Estilo Internacional. No obstante, Johnson ya era un admirador confeso de la arquitectura de Mies van der Rohe; había visitado la Tugendhat House y en 1930 le había encargado la decoración de su apartamento de soltero en 424 East 52nd Street, Nueva York.

Esta muestra celebrada en varias salas del MoMA entre el 10 de febrero y el 23 de marzo de 1932, consistió eminentemente en la exhibición de una maqueta y ocho imágenes por cada arquitecto seleccionado (Montes et al., 2018): Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, J.J. Pieter Oud y Otto Heasler representaron la arquitectura europea, y Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, Raymond Hood, Howe & Lescaze y los her-

manos Bowman la norteamericana. Johnson, además, otorgó a Mies un papel activo en la muestra, confiándole el diseño de "*bases for models, tables for the literature, chairs, photograph racks and partition screens of glass and metal*" (Eggler-Gerozissis 2023, 69).

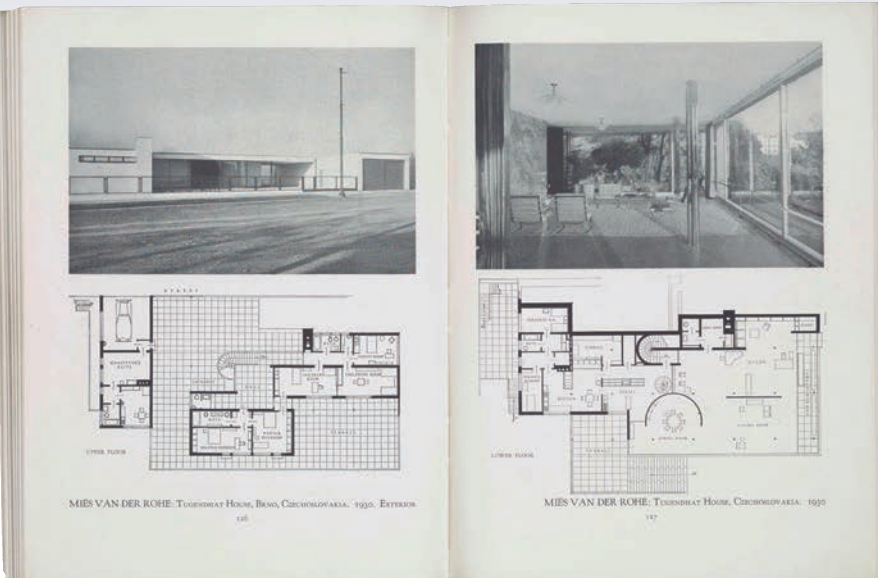
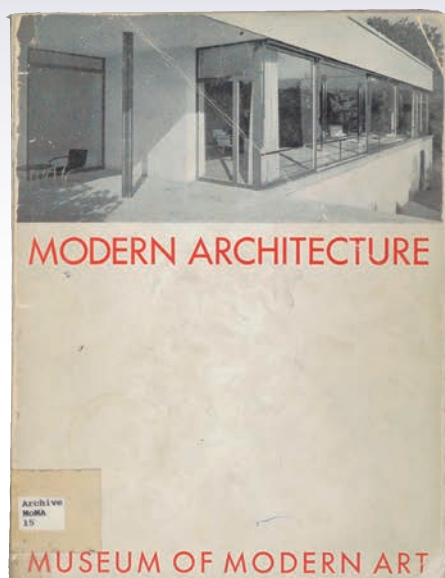
La exposición, el catálogo *Modern Architecture* y el libro *The International Style* (Hitchcock et al, 1932), fueron para Mies la carta de presentación de su posterior carrera docente en Chicago. Además de la Tugendhat House, el catálogo mostró gráficamente la Krölller-Müller House, la Brick Country House, la Weissenhofsiedlung, el Barcelona Pavilion y la Exhibition House. Las fotografías expuestas en la sala se limitaron al bloque de apartamentos de Stuttgart, la Lange House, el Barcelona Pavilion y la Tugendhat House, cuatro proyectos en los que Lilly Reich estuvo implicada. De hecho, Johnson la mencionó en el catálogo en estos términos: "*Since 1927 Lilly Reich has been associated with Miës in the designing of interiors and displays at expositions*" (Barr 1932, p.120). Es de destacar que la Tugendhat House fue la obra más representativa del certamen, apareciendo en la portada de la publicación (Fig. 1).

Los estudios sobre la arquitectura de Mies mencionan que la siguiente exposición sobre su obra tuvo lugar quince años después, entre el 16 de septiembre de 1947 y el 25 de enero de 1948. La muestra, nuevamente comisariada por Philip Johnson para el MoMA, se tituló *Mies van der Rohe* y tuvo un carácter monográfico. Afincado en Chicago desde 1938 y con una trayectoria docente y profesional consolidada, Mies fue el encargado de diseñar la escenografía. El reportaje de Charles



1. Portada y páginas *Modern Architecture*, 1932. ©MoMA

1. Cover and pages of *Modern Architecture*, 1932. ©MoMA



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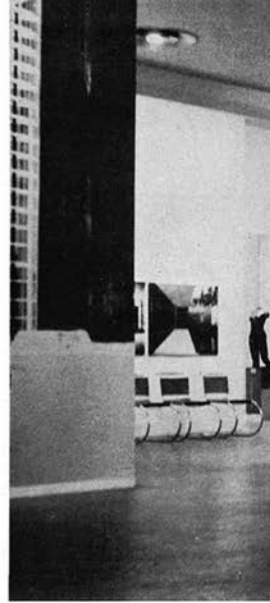
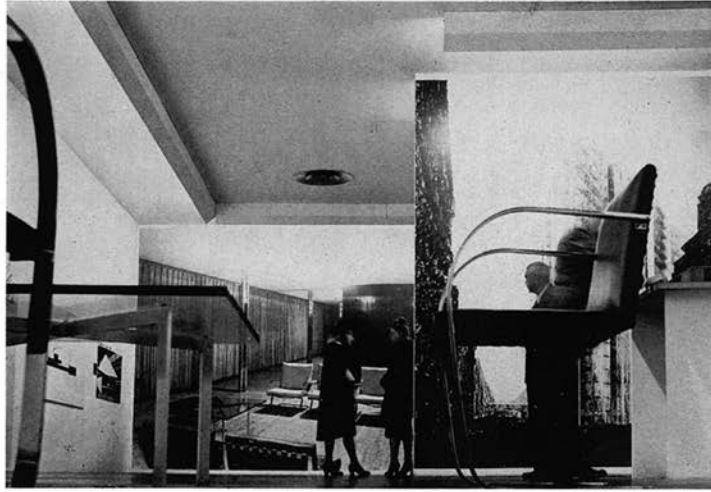
Eames en la revista *Arts and Architecture* manifestó, con acierto, que el montaje de Mies no pretendió únicamente mostrar su obra sino que “*the significant thing seems to be the way in which he has taken documents of his architecture and furniture and used them as elements in creating a space that says ‘this is what it’s all about’*” (1947, p.27).

Efectivamente, la exposición situada en la galería del segundo piso del museo, no fue innovadora por su contenido, sino por el modo de componerlo para ser percibido volumétricamente. Mies convirtió la geometría rectangular de la sala en cuadrangular y situó cuatro planos exentos de suelo a techo –en relación con los pilares existentes–, propiciando un recorrido laberíntico con dos posibilidades de acceso. Adicionalmente, la manipulación estratégica de la escala y perspectiva de las fotografías, dibujos, collages, maquetas y piezas de mobiliario consiguió una experiencia tridimensional: “la arquitectura se convirtió en exposición y la gráfica de los pa-

neles expositivos en arquitectura” (Martínez et al., 2013, p.184).

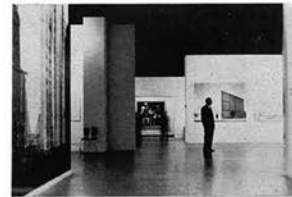
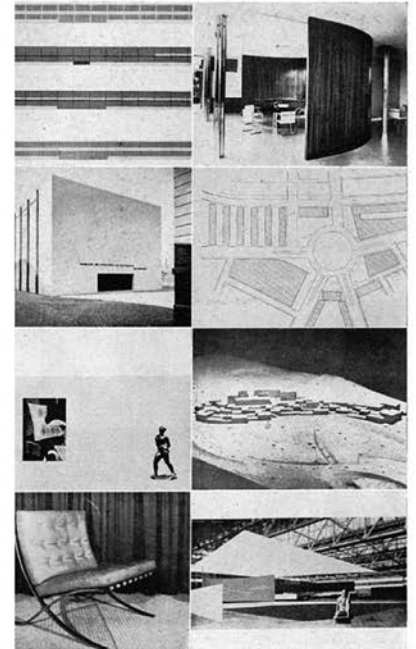
Sobre los planos exentos se expuso el Office Building, el Glass Skyscraper, el Monument to Liebknecht and Luxemburg y el Barcelona Pavilion. Éste último, también se mostró en las paredes de la sala, en concreto en la parte central, enfrente a la Tugendhat House. Así, desde el acceso principal, los proyectos de Brno y Barcelona ocuparon el tercio central en sentido transversal, siendo el foco visual principal; dos obras que Mies materializó junto a Reich, de nuevo referenciada en el catálogo pero con menos fortuna que años antes: “*his brilliant partner, Lilly Reich, who soon became his equal in this field*” (Johnson 1947, p.49). Los otros proyectos se exhibieron en los dos tercios laterales del cuadrado, agrupándose en: los edificios en construcción del Illinois Institute of Chicago (IIT), el resto de arquitecturas-manifiesto de los años veinte, proyectos teóricos americanos y las Court Houses, realizadas con alumnos de la Bauhaus y el IIT

This display, held in several rooms at MoMA between 10 February and 23 March 1932, consisted primarily of one model and eight images for each selected architect (Montes et al., 2018): Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, J.J. Pieter Oud and Otto Heasler represented European architecture, while Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, Raymond Hood, Howe & Lescaze and the Bowman brothers represented the USA’s. Johnson, also gave Mies an active role in the show, entrusting him with the design of the “bases for models, tables for the literature, chairs, photograph racks and partition screens of glass and metal” (Egglar-Gerozissis 2023, 69). The exhibition, the *Modern Architecture* catalogue and the book *The International Style* (Hitchcock et al, 1932) were Mies’s calling card for his later teaching career in Chicago. In addition to the Tugendhat House, the catalogue contained illustrations of the Kröller-Müller House, the Brick Country House, the Weissenhofsiedlung, the Barcelona Pavilion and the Exhibition House. The photographs exhibited in the room were limited to the Stuttgart flat block, the Lange House, the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House, four projects in which Lilly Reich was involved. In fact, Johnson mentioned her in the catalogue



BELOW ARE EXAMPLES TAKEN FROM THE 167 ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE MONOGRAPH BY PHILLIP JOHNSON, PUBLISHED BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, AT THE TIME OF THE EXHIBITION.

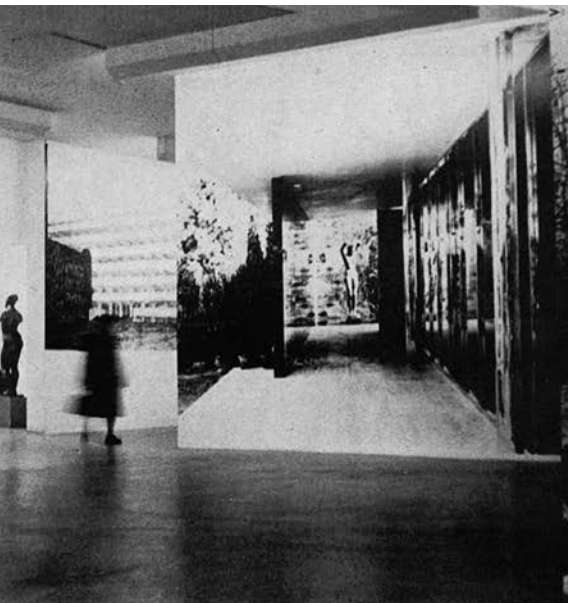
MIES VAN DER ROHE DESIGNED AND ARRANGED THIS EXHIBITION OF HIS OWN WORK IN THE SECOND FLOOR GALLERY IN THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



in these terms: "Since 1927 Lilly Reich has been associated with Mies in the designing of interiors and displays at expositions" (Barr 1932, p.120). It should be noted that the Tugendhat House was the most representative work of the competition, appearing on the front cover of the publication (Fig. 1). Studies of Mies's architecture mention that the next exhibition of his work took place fifteen years later, between 16 September 1947 and 25 January 1948. The display, again curated by Philip Johnson for MoMA, was entitled *Mies van der*

(descripción realizada partiendo del acceso en sentido horario). Pese a la predominancia de los proyectos alemanes, las cinco maquetas expuestas fueron proyectos americanos: Farnsworth House, Resor House, Cantor Drive-in Restaurant, Court House y IIT Administration Building (Montes et al., 2019). Es indiscutible la trascendencia internacional de este montaje; las connotaciones del lugar, la consideración de su comisario y la calidad

de su catálogo. La exposición y su publicación, ambas tituladas *Mies van der Rohe*, se consagraron como la primera muestra exclusiva de la arquitectura de Mies en América y la primera monografía editada de su obra (Fig. 2). Pero su repercusión, en cierta manera, silenció la exposición previa realizada al poco de instalarse Mies en Chicago. Recién nombrado Director del Departamento de Arquitectura del Armour Institute of Technology (AIT), Mies



2. Páginas artículo Charles Eames *Arts and Architecture* 12, 1947. ©A&A

2. Pages from the article by Charles Eames in *Arts and Architecture* 12, 1947. ©A&A

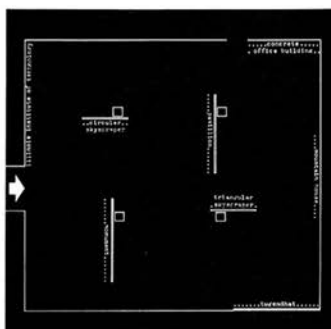
que fue considerado uno de los edificios culturales más importantes de Estados Unidos (Fig. 3). Thomas Burleigh, estudiante de Mies, relató que la escuela no gozaba de las mejores condiciones funcionales para la enseñanza, pero su valor cultural convertía las incomodidades en estímulos: “(...) *the Department of Architecture of AIT was located on the third floor of the Art Institute of Chicago, in attic space over the front galleries (...) The only access to that black space, as it was for us in the upstairs quarters, was via the front entrance to the Museum on Michigan Avenue, opposite Adams Street. We students greatly appreciated the cultural bonus of having to walk every day through art galleries on the way to either of our department’s spaces because that way we got to see all the exhibits*” (Burleigh 1998, p.8). En este simbólico escenario, el 1 de septiembre de 1938 Mies inició su carrera docente en América, y tres meses y medio después inauguró la *Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe*, tal como se lee en la nota de prensa escrita por John Barney Rodgers (AIT 1938, p.18). Mies conoció a Rodgers en Berlín y, junto con Ludwig Hilberseimer y Walter Peterhans, fue uno de los profesores sugeridos por Mies para incorporarse al AIT (Mies van der Rohe 1938).

Según los argumentos de Schulze y Windhorst, Mies preparó la exhibición del AIC a partir del material enviado por Lilly Reich –dibujos, ampliaciones de fotografías y maquetas–, puesto que sus pertenencias permanecían todavía en Alemania, (Schulze et al. 2016, p.237). No obstante, nadie ha publicado ningún documento gráfico de la instalación; por ello, una de

Rohe and was a monographic exhibition. Based in Chicago since 1938 and with an established teaching and professional career, Mies was commissioned to design the set design. Charles Eames’s report in *Arts and Architecture* magazine rightly stated that Mies’s installation was not only intended to showcase his work but rather “the significant thing seems to be the way in which he has taken documents of his architecture and furniture and used them as elements in creating a space that says ‘this is what it’s all about’” (1947, p.27).

Indeed, the exhibition located in the gallery on the first floor of the museum was not innovative in its content, but in the way it was arranged to be perceived volumetrically. Mies turned the rectangular geometry of the room into a quadrangular one and placed four free floor-to-ceiling walls –in relation to the existing columns–, creating a labyrinthine route with two access possibilities. In addition, the strategic manipulation of scale and perspective of the photographs, drawings, collages, models and furniture pieces achieved a three-dimensional experience: “The architecture turned into exhibition and the graphic design of the exhibition panels into architecture” (Martínez et al., 2013, p.184).

The free-standing surfaces showed the Office Building, the Glass Skyscraper, the Monument to Liebknecht and Luxemburg and the Barcelona Pavilion. The latter was also displayed on the walls of the hall, specifically in the central part, facing the Tugendhat House. So, from the main entrance, the Brno and Barcelona projects occupied the central third in a transversal sense, being the main visual focus; two works that Mies created together with Reich, again referenced in the catalogue but with less success than years before: “his brilliant partner, Lilly Reich, who soon became his equal in this field” (Johnson 1947, p.49). The other projects were exhibited in the two lateral thirds of the square, grouped into the buildings under construction at the Illinois Institute of Chicago (IIT), the other manifesto-architectures of the 1920s, American theoretical projects and the Court Houses, made with students from the Bauhaus and the IIT (as seen moving in a clockwise direction). Despite the



expuso su obra en el mismo edificio en el que impartió docencia hasta 1946: *The Art Institute of Chicago*.

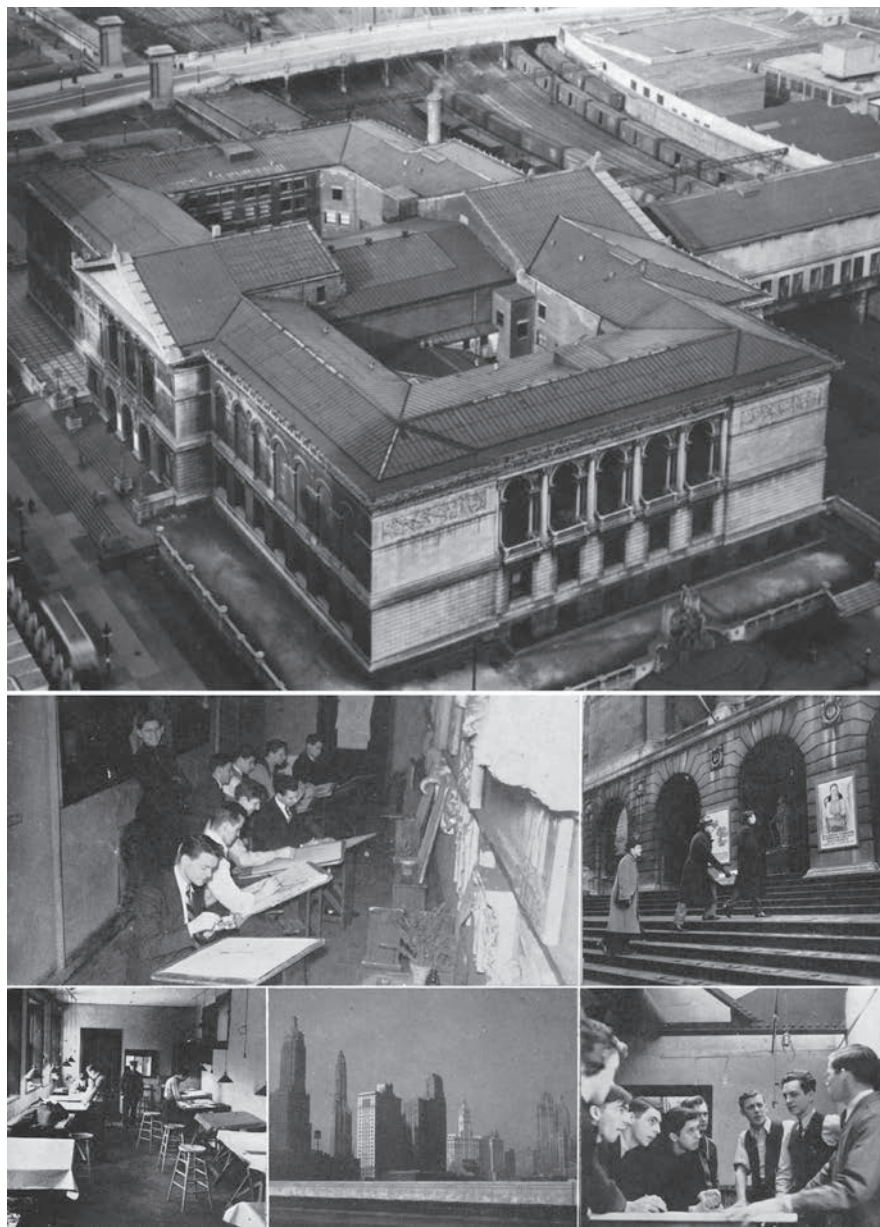
Entremedio: 1938. La desconocida exposición del AIC

Desde 1895 y hasta 1946 la Escuela de Arquitectura del AIT se alojó en el Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), un edificio que compaginó la función docente con la museística, y

predominance of German projects, the five models on display were American projects: the Farnsworth House, Resor House, Cantor Drive-in Restaurant, Court House and the IIT Administration Building (Montes et al., 2019). The international significance of this exhibition is indisputable; the connotations of the venue, the thoughtfulness of its curator and the quality of its catalogue. The exhibition and its publication, both entitled *Mies van der Rohe*, established themselves as the first exclusive exhibition of Mies's architecture in America and the first published monograph of his work (Fig. 2). But its impact, in a way, silenced the previous exhibition held shortly after Mies moved to Chicago. Newly appointed Director of the Department of Architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology (AIT), Mies exhibited his work in the same building where he taught until 1946: The Art Institute of Chicago.

In between: 1938. -The unknown exhibition at the AIC

From 1895 to 1946 the AIT School of Architecture was housed in the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), a building that combined teaching and museum functions and was considered one of the most important cultural buildings in the United States (Fig. 3). Thomas Burleigh, a student of Mies, recounted that the school did not have the best functional conditions for teaching, but its cultural value turned discomfort into stimulation.: "(...) the Department of Architecture of AIT was located on the third floor of the Art Institute of Chicago, in attic space over the front galleries (...). The only access to that black space, as it was for us in the upstairs quarters, was via the front entrance to the Museum on Michigan Avenue, opposite Adams Street. We students greatly appreciated the cultural bonus of having to walk every day through art galleries on the way to either of our department's spaces because that way we got to see all the exhibits" (Burleigh 1998, p.8). In this symbolic setting, on 1 September 1938 Mies began his teaching career in America, and three and a half months later he inaugurated the *Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der*



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las aportaciones más relevantes de esta investigación es ofrecer el primer redibujado del espacio y lo que allí se mostró. Aunque los archivos del *AIC Archives Research Center* listan la existencia de un catálogo no conservado, sí se ha localizado la mencionada nota de prensa. Además, se han encontrado siete fotografías en los archivos de la *Art, Architecture & Engineering Library, University of Michigan*, en cuyo reverso puede leerse *Gallery View [The Art Institute of Chicago]. Exhibition of Architecture by Miës van der Rohe, 1938*. La nota de prensa no es demasiado explíci-

ta en cuanto al diseño expositivo. Consta de seis páginas, en donde la primera recoge una breve biografía de Mies, la segunda se hace eco de las palabras que pronunció en el discurso inaugural del AIT el 20 de noviembre de 1938 y las cuatro últimas, firmadas por Rodgers, explican brevemente nueve de las catorce obras expuestas. Por el contrario, la imágenes presentan un detalle adecuado para identificar el espacio expositivo y entender su organización.

La galería se ubicó en la segunda planta del AIC, en una de las salas del *Gunsaulus Hall*, el puente cons-



3. Exterior e interior (aulas de la Escuela de Arquitectura) AIC, 1939. ©University Archives and Special Collections, Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology.
4. Axonometría del AIC, planta segunda, referenciando la situación de la sala. ©Los autores

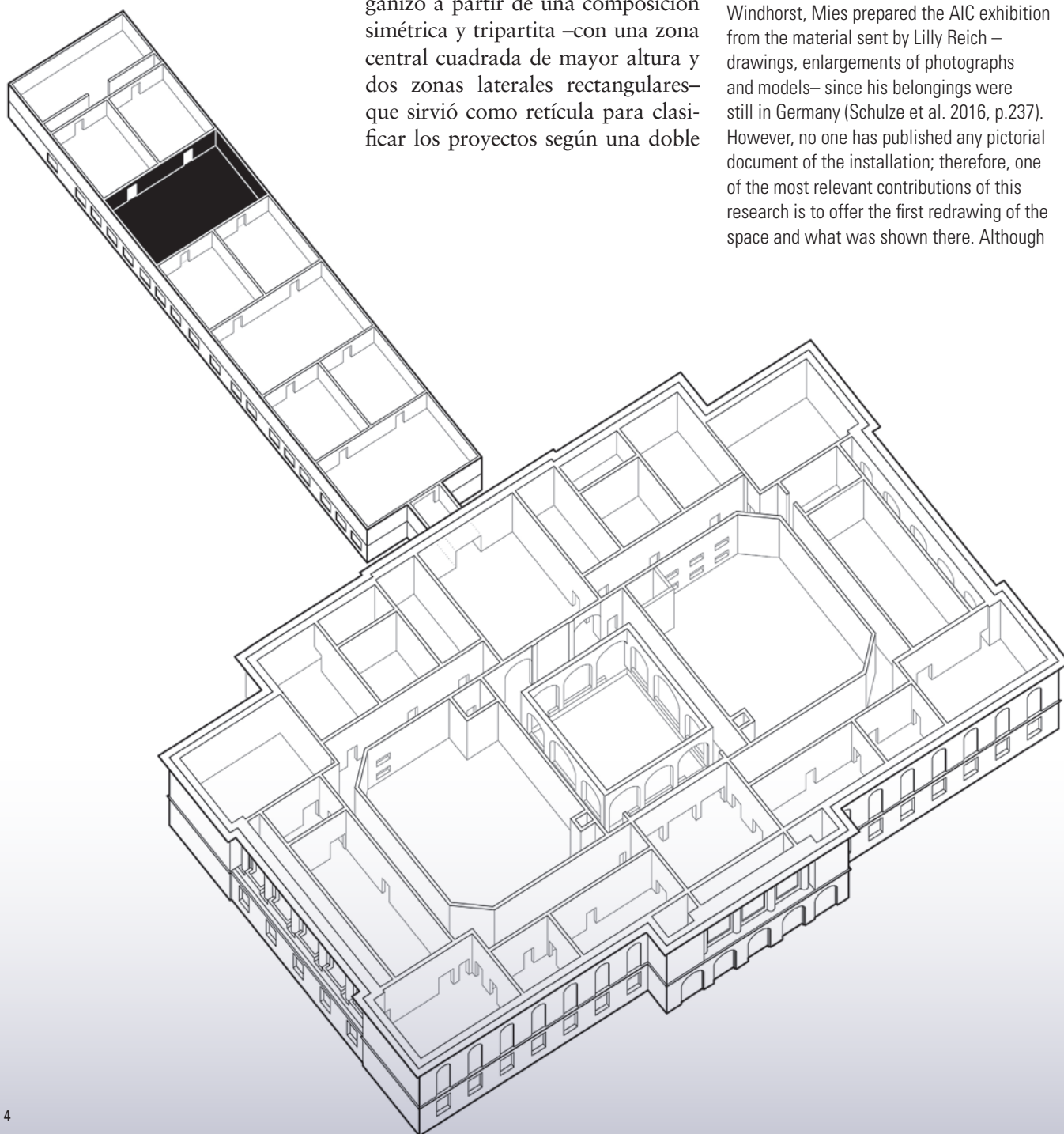
3. Exterior and interior (lecture halls of the School of Architecture) AIC, 1939. ©University Archives and Special Collections, Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology.
4. Axonometry of the AIC, second floor, referencing the situation of the room. © The authors

truido sobre las vías del *Illinois Central Railroad* en 1916 (Bruegmann 1988) (Fig. 4). El espacio era de planta rectangular –10,5 por 16 metros aproximadamente– con dos entradas en cada uno de los lados ma-

yores. Pese a que la sala era diáfana, estaba sectorizada virtualmente por dos vigas que se aprovecharon para establecer techos a distinta altura. El único mobiliario dispuesto fueron dos bancos en línea con el cambio de sección. De este modo, la sala se organizó a partir de una composición simétrica y tripartita –con una zona central cuadrada de mayor altura y dos zonas laterales rectangulares– que sirvió como retícula para clasificar los proyectos según una doble

Rohe, as we read in the press release written by John Barney Rodgers (AIT 1938, p.18). Mies met Rodgers in Berlin and, together with Ludwig Hilberseimer and Walter Peterhans, was one of the professors suggested by Mies to join the AIT. (Mies van der Rohe 1938).

According to the arguments of Schulze and Windhorst, Mies prepared the AIC exhibition from the material sent by Lilly Reich – drawings, enlargements of photographs and models– since his belongings were still in Germany (Schulze et al. 2016, p.237). However, no one has published any pictorial document of the installation; therefore, one of the most relevant contributions of this research is to offer the first redrawing of the space and what was shown there. Although



5-8. *Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe, AIC, 1938-39.* ©Edward V. Olencki papers (BOX 1), Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

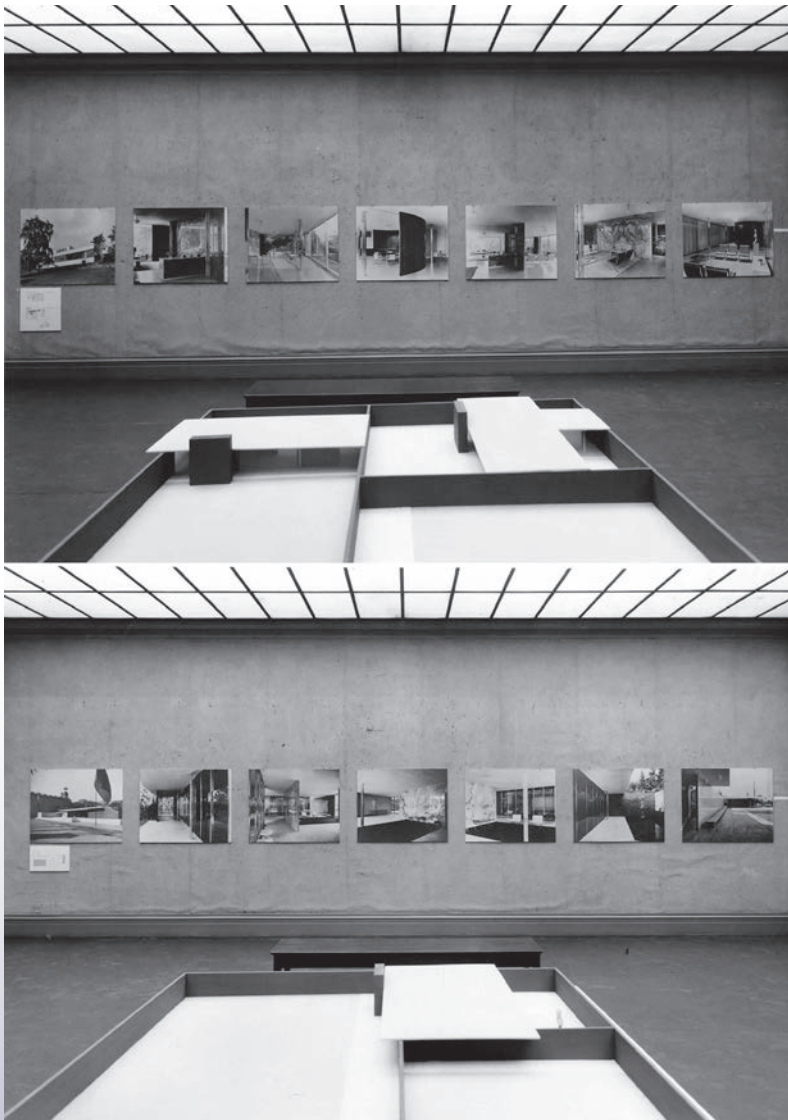
5-8. *Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe, AIC, 1938-39.* ©Edward V. Olencki papers (BOX 1), Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan



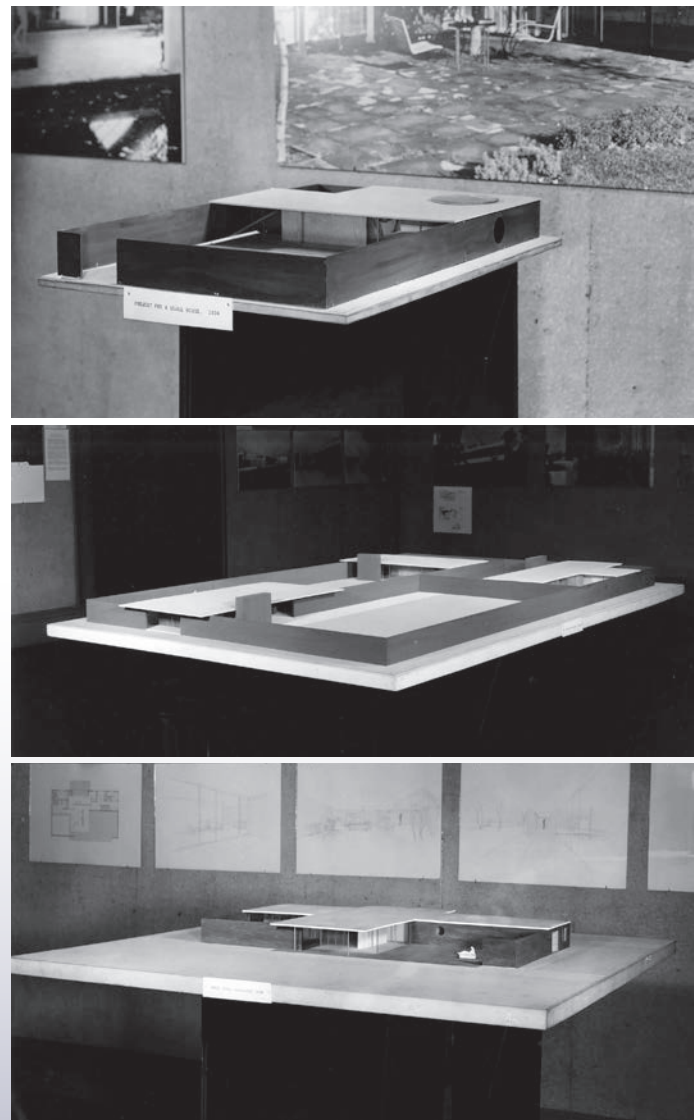
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categoría: teóricos o construidos / públicos o residenciales. El material expuesto consistió en tres maquetas y treinta y tres paneles colocados perimetralmente, consistentes en diecinueve fotografías y catorce en formato dibujo o collage.

Accediendo a la sala desde la avenida Michigan, el visitante encontraba de frente la única sección de proyectos teórico-públicos, compuesta por cuatro dibujos pertenecientes al Glass Skyscraper (1922), Concrete Office Building (1923), Office Building Stuttgart (1928) y Reichbank Building (1933). El texto de Rodgers enfatizó la enorme influencia de estos proyectos en el desarrollo de la arquitectura miesiana, al evidenciar las posibilidades estructurales del acero y el hormigón en combinación con el vidrio. Ninguno de ellos se expuso en la exposición de 1932 pero los tres primeros sí volvieron a mostrarse en 1947 (Fig. 5).

A la derecha de esta sección los tres paramentos del área lateral incluyeron imágenes de proyectos construido-residenciales: Tugendhat House (1930), Exhibition House (1931) y Lemke House (1932) (Fig. 6). Rodgers relacionó los muros y paños de vidrio de la Lemke House con la fluidez espacial interior-exterior de las Court Houses, en parte porque una de las maquetas de esta tipología –la nombrada como Small House (1934)– se situó justo delante de la Lemke House. En cualquier caso, la Tugendhat House fue nuevamente el proyecto con mayor número de imágenes. Rodgers comparó el espacio fluido de Brno con el de Barcelona, en cierto modo, de forma homóloga a la situación equidistante de ambos proyectos en los dos lados menores de la galería (Fig. 7). El Barce-

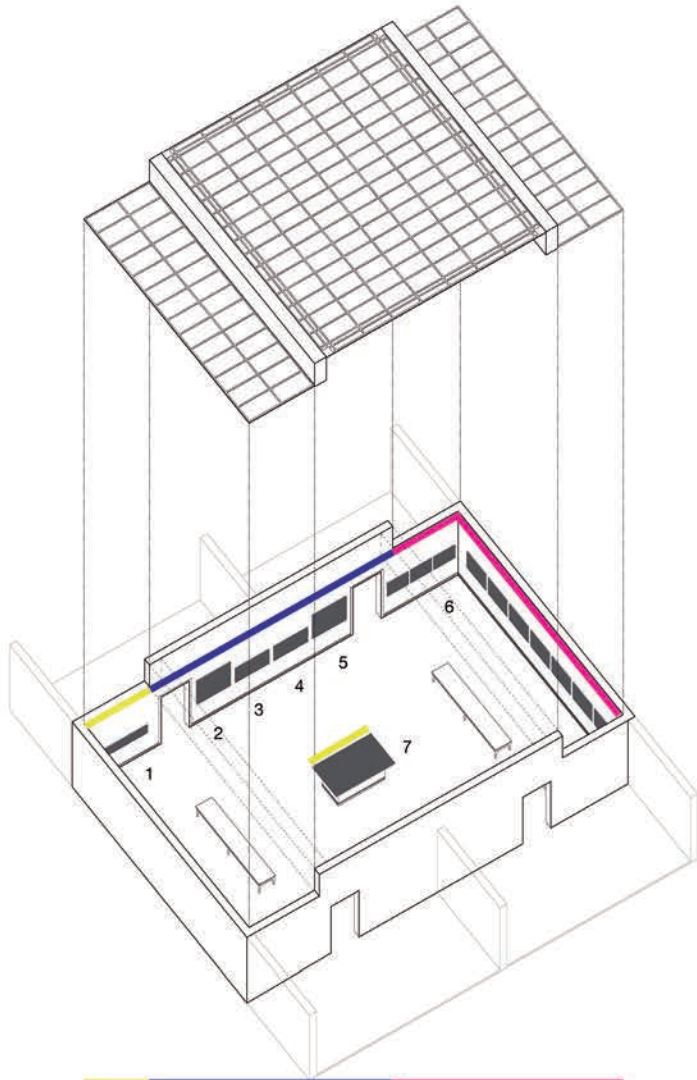
lona Pavilion (1929), única obra perteneciente al grupo construido-público, fue alabado por su lógica estructural, sus proporciones y el uso de los materiales nobles con propósito representativo.

El resto de los paramentos incluyeron proyectos teórico-residenciales: en la parte central la Kröller-Müller House (1912) y la Hubbe House, incluida su maqueta, (1935); y en el área lateral la Brick Country House (1923) y la Reinforced Concrete House (1922), una enfrente de la otra enmarcando el Barcelona Pavilion. A excepción de la Hubbe House todos los dibujos y collages teórico-residenciales fueron expuestos en el año 1947 (Fig. 6).

La Tugendhat House y el Barcelona Pavilion fueron los proyectos protagonistas; planos y fotografías ocuparon los dos lados menores de la sala y se situaron estratégicamente en la galería. En definitiva, estas dos obras, realizadas en autoría compartida con Lilly Reich –a quien la nota de prensa no nombró ni como coautora, ni como mediadora en el envío del material desde Alemania–, configuraron el eje longitudinal percibido por el espectador desde el acceso principal. También se concedió un claro protagonismo a la tipología doméstica de Court House. Las dos maquetas antes mencionadas, junto con el modelo del Group of Court Houses (1938), conformaron la imagen profesional del Mies arquitecto y el Mies profesor, más aún teniendo presente que el espacio expositivo era un edificio vinculado con la enseñanza de la arquitectura. Asimismo, la posición central de la maqueta Group of Court Houses distinguió espacialmente el único proyecto desarrollado en América y, además, junto a los alumnos del IIT (Fig. 8).

the archives of the AIC Archives Research Center mention a catalogue that has not been preserved, the aforementioned press release has been located. In addition, seven photographs have been found in the archives of the Art, Architecture & Engineering Library, University of Michigan, on the back of which the following can be read: *Gallery View [The Art Institute of Chicago]. Exhibition of Architecture by Miës van der Rohe, 1938*. The press release is not very explicit about the exhibition design. It consists of six pages, the first of which contains a brief biography of Mies, the second summarises his inaugural speech at the AIT on 20 November 1938, and the last four, signed by Rodgers, briefly explain nine of the fourteen works on display. In contrast, the images present adequate detail to identify the exhibition space and understand its organisation.

The gallery was located on the second floor of the AIC, in one of the rooms of the Gunsaulus Hall, the bridge built over the Illinois Central Railroad tracks in 1916 (Bruegmann 1988) (Fig. 4). The space was rectangular in shape –approximately 10.5 by 16 metres– with two entrances on each of the larger sides. Although the room was open-plan, it was virtually sectorised by two beams that were used to establish ceilings at different heights. The only furniture provided were two benches in line with the change of section. In this way, the room was organised on the basis of a symmetrical, tripartite composition –with a square central area of greater height and two rectangular side areas– which served as a grid to classify the projects according to a double category: theoretical or built / public or residential. The material on display consisted of three models and thirty-three panels placed around the perimeter, consisting of nineteen photographs and fourteen in drawing or collage format. Entering the room from Michigan Avenue, the visitor was confronted by the only public-theoretical project section, consisting of four drawings corresponding to the Glass Skyscraper (1922), Concrete Office Building (1923), Office Building Stuttgart (1928) and Reichbank Building (1933). Rodgers' text emphasised the enormous influence of these projects on the development of Mies's architecture by highlighting the



9 y 10. Levantamiento gráfico AIC Exhibition, 1938-39. ©Los autores

Conclusiones

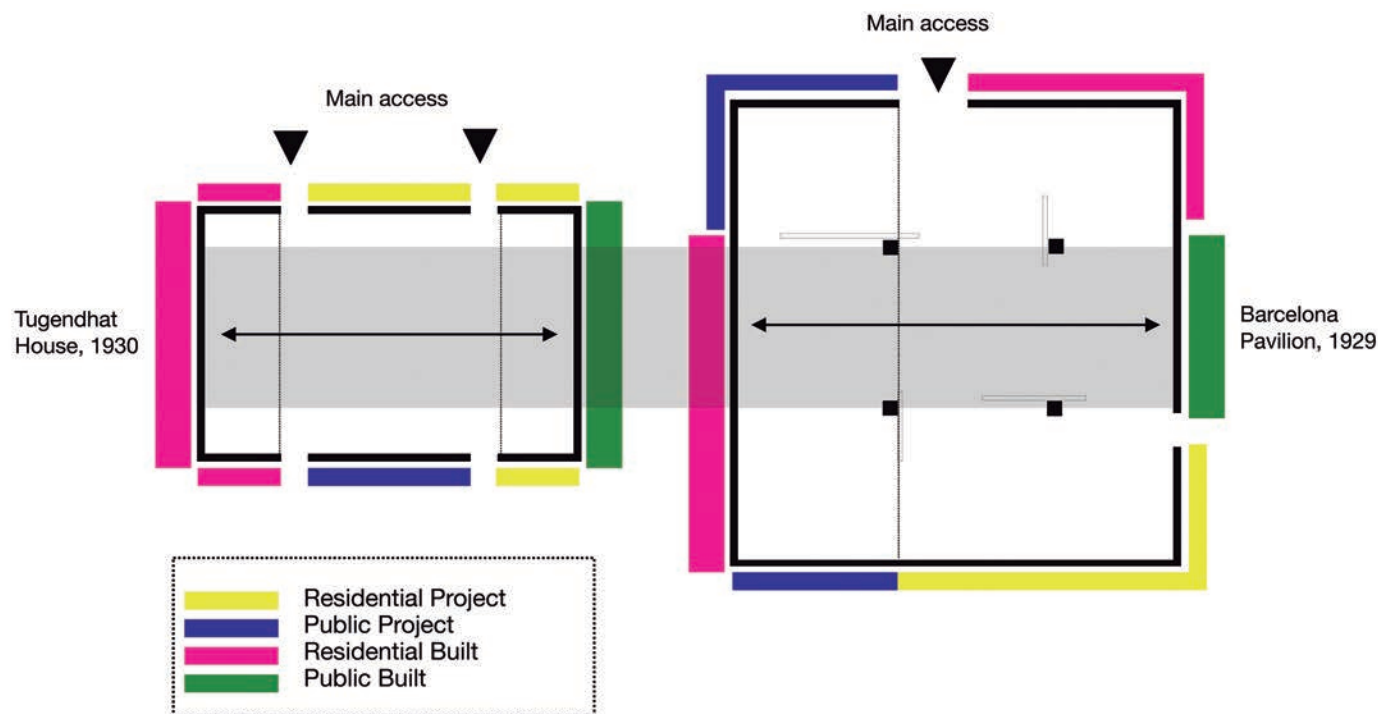
La principal conclusión de este artículo consiste en dar a conocer y analizar una exposición de Mies hasta la fecha no estudiada: *The Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe. Art Institute of Chicago, 1938-1939* (Fig. 9 y Fig. 10). Asimismo, surgen aspectos de interés al compararla con la exposición anterior y posterior.

En primer lugar, conviene señalar que estas tres exposiciones significan las primeras muestras de la obra de Mies van der Rohe en Estados Unidos: 1932 (MoMA), 1938-39 (AIC) y 1947-48 (MoMA). En segundo lugar, es preciso cotejar los proyectos coincidentes en los tres escenarios y observar la relevancia que Mies concedió a sus proyectos teóricos –en especial la Kröller-Müller House y la Brick Country House– y a dos proyectos construidos en colaboración con Lilly Reich: el Barcelona Pavilion y la Tugendhat House. Finalmente, sorprenden las convergencias, a priori irreconocibles, entre las dos exposiciones monográficas.

Es indiscutible la diferencia en cómo se mostraron las obras de Mies, y mientras que la exposición celebrada en 1938 fue en base a un recorrido simple y sujeta al clasicismo del edificio que la albergó, la de 1947 fue absolutamente innovadora, modificándose las características originales de la sala y adicionando muros exentos. No obstante, al analizar y comparar qué obras se expusieron y cómo se relacionaron entre sí, se evidencia que la exposición del AIC sirvió de ensayo de la instalación organizada por el MoMA nueve años después. Obviando la existencia de los paneles exentos, el perímetro se dispuso



- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| ■ | Residential Project |
| ■ | Public Project |
| ■ | Residential Built |
| ■ | Public Built |
1. Concrete Country House, 1923
 2. Reichsbank Building, 1933
 3. Office Building, Stuttgart 1928
 4. Concrete Office Building, 1923
 5. Glass Skyscraper, 1922
 6. Tugendhat House, 1930
 7. Group of Court Houses, 1938



11

structural possibilities of steel and concrete in combination with glass. None of them were shown in the 1932 exhibition, but the first three were shown again in 1947 (Fig. 5).

To the right of this section the three walls of the side area included images of residential building projects: Tugendhat House (1930), Exhibition House (1931) and Lemke House (1932) (Fig. 6). Rodgers related the walls and glass planes of the Lemke House to the indoor-outdoor spatial fluidity of the Court Houses, partly because one of the models of this typology – the one named Small House (1934) – was located directly in front of the Lemke House. In any case, the Tugendhat House was again the project with the largest number of images. Rodgers compared the fluid space of Brno with that of Barcelona, in a way, homologous to the equidistant situation of both projects on the two smaller sides of the gallery (Fig. 7). The Barcelona Pavilion (1929), the only project belonging to the public-built group, was praised for its structural logic, its proportions and the use of high-quality materials for representational purposes.

The rest of the walls included theoretical-residential projects: in the central part the Kröllner-Müller House (1912) and the Hubbe House, including its model, (1935); and in the side area the Brick Country House (1923) and the Reinforced Concrete House (1922), one opposite the other framing the Barcelona Pavilion. With the exception

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11. Planta comparativa AIC Exhibition, 1938-39 y MoMA Exhibition, 1947-48. ©Los autores

11. Comparative layout of the AIC Exhibition, 1938-39 and MoMA Exhibition, 1947-48. © The authors

of the Hubbe House, all the theoretical-residential drawings and collages were exhibited in 1947 (Fig. 6). The Tugendhat House and the Barcelona Pavilion were the star projects; plans and photographs occupied the two smaller sides of the room and were strategically placed in the gallery. In short, these two works, created in joint authorship with Lilly Reich – whom the press release did not name either as co-author or as an intermediary in the shipment of the material from Germany–, configured the longitudinal axis perceived by the spectator from the main entrance. The domestic typology of the Court House was also clearly emphasised. The two models mentioned above, together with the model of the Group of Court Houses (1938), shaped the professional image of Mies the architect and Mies the professor, especially bearing in mind that the exhibition space was a building associated with the teaching of architecture. Moreover, the central position of the Group of Court Houses model spatially distinguished his only project undertaken in America and, in addition, in collaboration with the students of the IIT (Fig. 8).

Conclusions

The main conclusion of this article is to present and analyse a hitherto unstudied exhibition by Mies: *The Exhibition of Architecture by Ludwig Miës van der Rohe*. Art Institute of Chicago, 1938-1939 (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10). In addition, interesting aspects emerge when compared with the exhibitions that preceded and followed it. First, it is worth noting that these three exhibitions were the first displays of Mies van der Rohe's work in the United States: 1932 (MoMA), 1938-39 (AIC) and 1947-48 (MoMA). Secondly, it is necessary to compare the coinciding projects in the three venues and to observe the relevance that Mies gave to his theoretical projects –especially the Kröller-Müller House and the Brick Country House– and to two projects built in collaboration with Lilly Reich: the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House. Finally, the initially unrecognisable convergences between the two monographic exhibitions are surprising. The difference in the way Mies's works were

shown is indisputable, and while the 1938 exhibition was based on a simple walk-through and subject to the classicism of the building that housed it, the 1947 exhibition was absolutely innovative, modifying the original characteristics of the hall and adding free-standing walls. However, when analysing and comparing which works were exhibited and how they related to each other, it becomes clear that the AIC exhibition served as a rehearsal for the installation organised by the MoMA nine years later. Apart from the existence of the free-standing panels, the perimeter was arranged in almost the same way, with the Tugendhat House and the Barcelona Pavilion facing each other on the central walls perpendicular to the main entrance and the rest of the architecture grouped together at the ends, according to the same project categories. In addition, over half of the selected works coincided with each other (Fig. 11).

Finally, the regressive visibility (and even omission) of Lilly Reich in these exhibitions, in which jointly authored works were shown, should not be overlooked. Although she was mentioned by Johnson in the *Modern Architecture* catalogue as an associate, the shared authorship disappeared fifteen years later in the monograph *Mies van der Rohe*. Far worse was her recognition at the AIC exhibition, where she was not even named as the person who provided the material. Even so, Reich visited Mies in July 1939 with the unsuccessful intention of staying with him (Hochman 1989, 307).

The fact is that the 1947 exhibition marked a milestone in the Mies-Reich partnership, and signified both an end and a beginning. While it was underway, on 14 December 1947, Lilly Reich died in Berlin, and her legacy also disappeared until 1996, when the MoMA held the only exhibition of her work. For Mies, however, it was the beginning of a long list of exhibitions held during his lifetime and after his death. ■

Notes

1 / The title of the exhibition is referenced literally according to the archival documents found. Beatriz Colomina states that Mies added the umlaut to the "e", Miës, to get rid of the diphthong, because in German 'mies', pronounced *mis*, means 'ugly, bad, ordinary, poor, miserable'. (2009, 5).

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