The art of building (Baukunst) of Mies van der Rohe

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Abstract
This dissertation attempts to interpret the statements of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) that pertain to his lifelong theory of Baukunst, or the art of building in terms of tectonics. In order to use the concept tectonics as a criterion according to which one can comprehend Mies words and works, this dissertation attempted to define tectonics in a more general sense by collecting existing definitions and categorizing them. The result of this endeavor showed that tectonics does not signify a supportive structure but the art of framing construction, in which linear elements are put together with joints and clad or infilled with lightweight material. It is proposed that Mies, who called the ideal of tectonic architecture the art of building, during his lifelong career, experienced two periods of critical awareness through which he established his own type of tectonic buildings: awareness of the open plan and then that of clear space. After the former occurred in 1926, he focused on the creation of inner spatial openness; after the latter, which this dissertation proposes occurred around 1930, when he met Karlfried Graf Drckheim (1896-1988), who had been absorbed in Lao-tzus philosophy, Mies intended to show that his architectural concern was beyond physical construction by employing the concept of changing nature and by designing his buildings to be neutral frames. Mies finally achieved a tectonically integrated body of a building that contained extroverted and undetermined space, which he referred to as clear space, or generally called Mies universal space, through his lifelong pursuit for the accomplishment of his own art of building, which this dissertation terms Miesian tectonics.

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Mies’ response to the city with the Seagram Building was the grand gesture of setting back the building 100 feet from the street edge, which created a highly active open plaza. The plaza attracts users with its two large fountains surrounded by generous outdoor seating. By making this move, Mies distanced himself from New York urban morphology, lot line development, and the conventional economics of skyscraper construction. Save this picture! Lobby floor plan. This dissertation attempts to interpret the written and spoken statements of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) that pertain to his lifelong theory of Baukunst, or the art of building in terms of tectonics. In order to use the concept tectonics as a criterion according to which one can comprehend Mies words and works, this study attempted to define tectonics in a more general sense by collecting existing definitions and categorizing them. Mies finally achieved a tectonically integrated body of a building that contained extroverted and undetermined space, which he referred to as clear space, or generally called Mies universal space, through his lifelong pursuit for the accomplishment of his own art of building, which this dissertation terms Miesian tectonics. Mies van der Rohe. 115K likes. Aachen, Germany, March 27 1886– Chicago, USA, August 19 1969. Brutalist buildings. Arts & Humanities Website. Archiscope. Arts & Humanities Website. In 1944 Frank Lloyd Wright invited Mies van der Rohe to a Thanksgiving meal - not certain if he attended but here’s a copy of the typed in...vation! Image courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives. #franklloydwright #unitytemple #worldheritage #miesvanderrohe #thanksgiving.