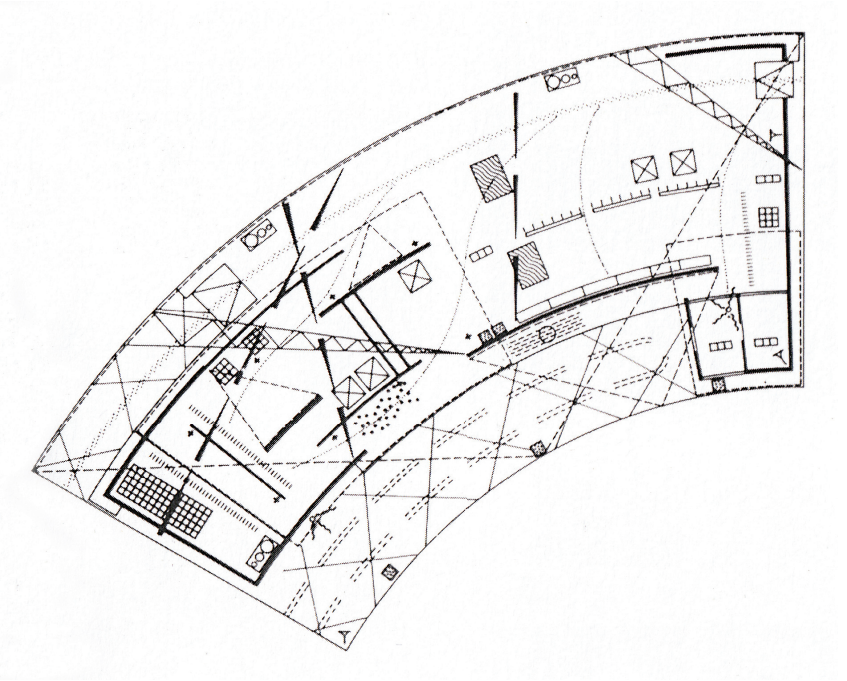


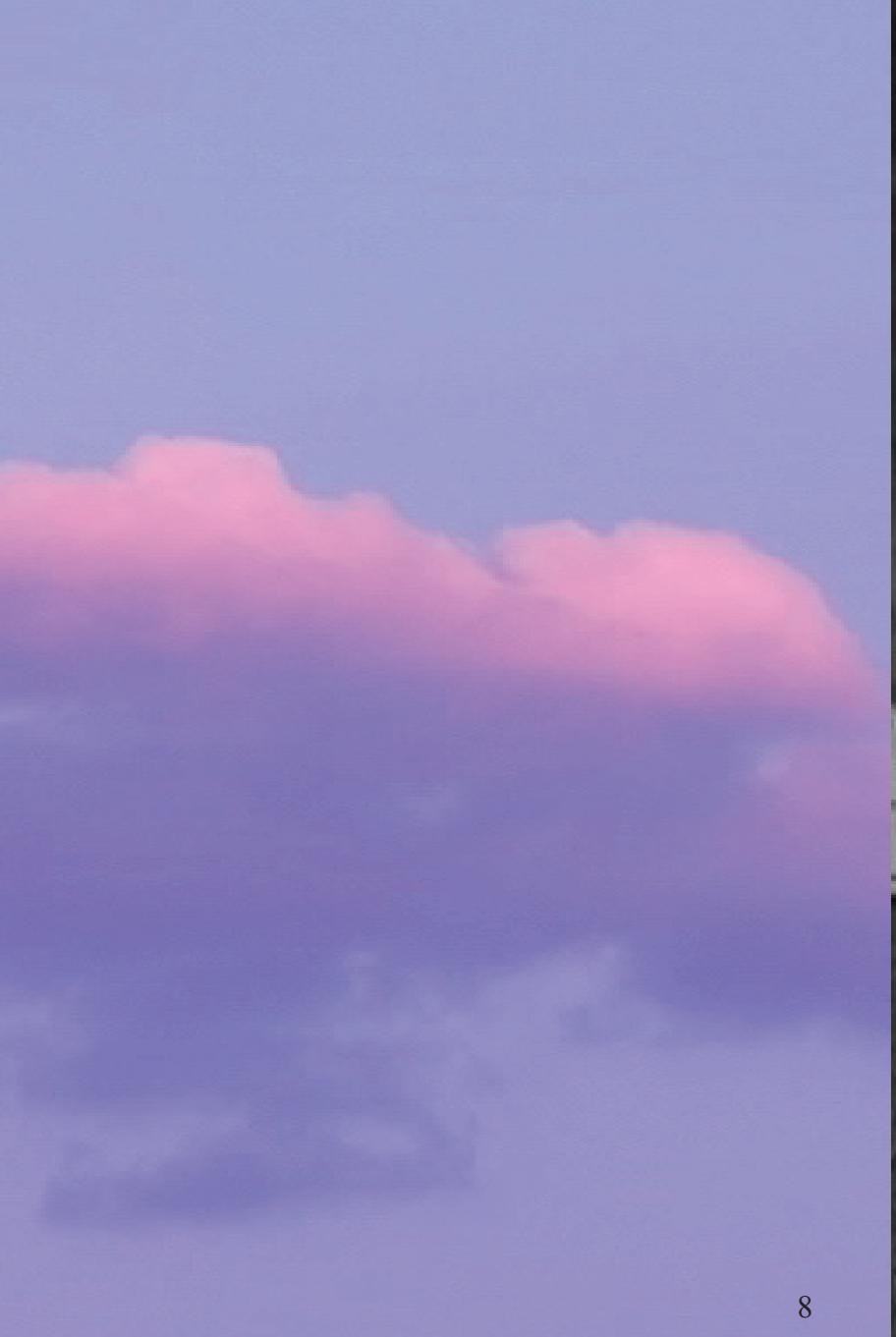


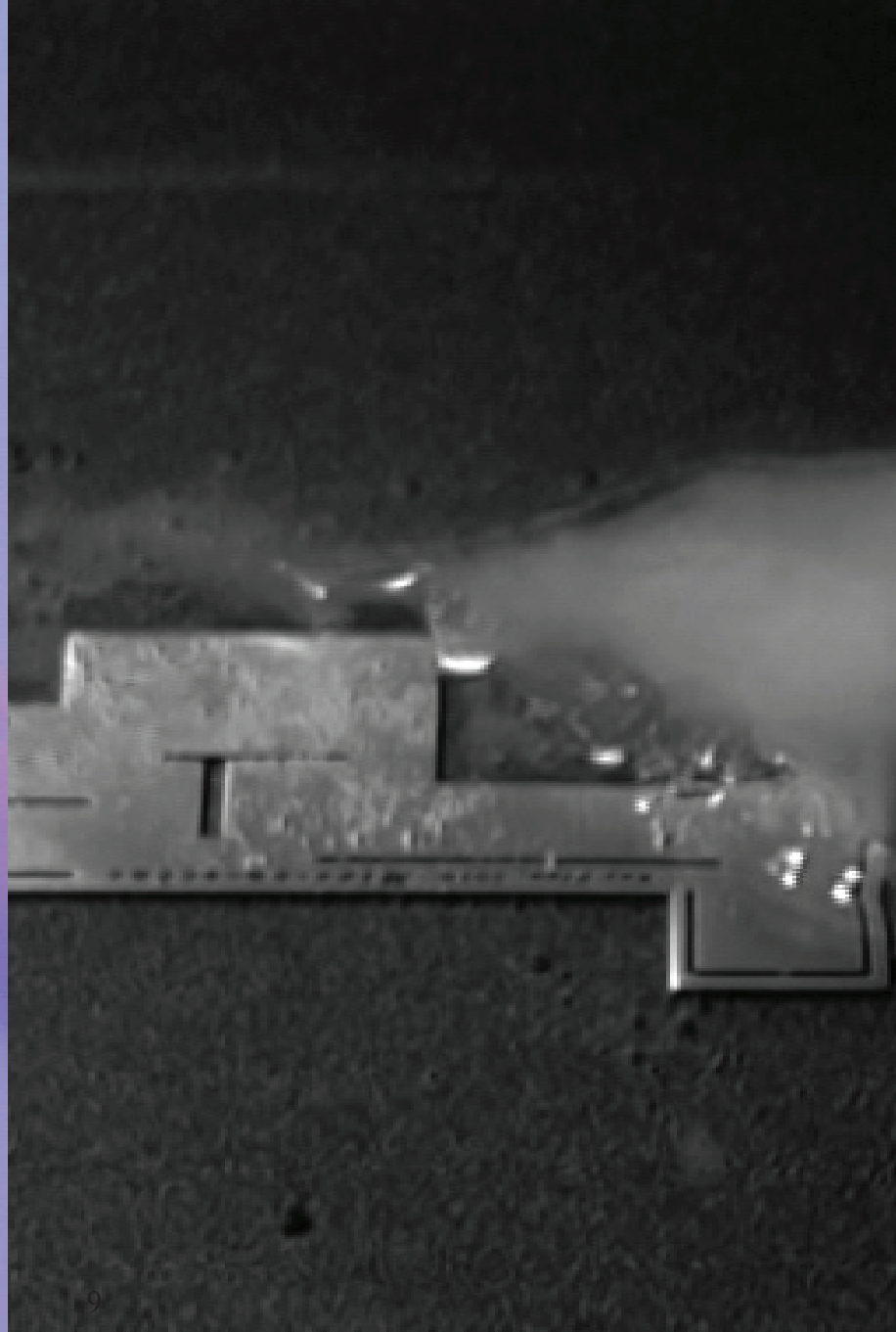


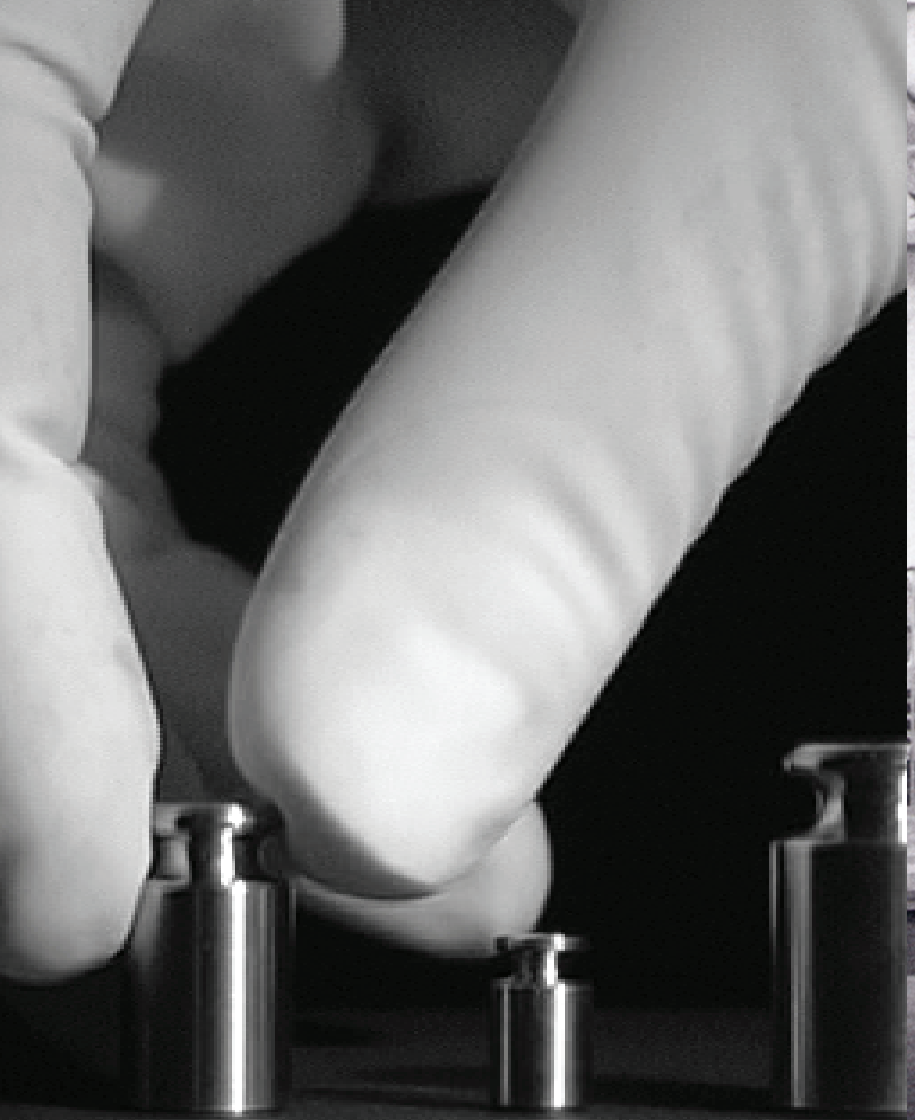


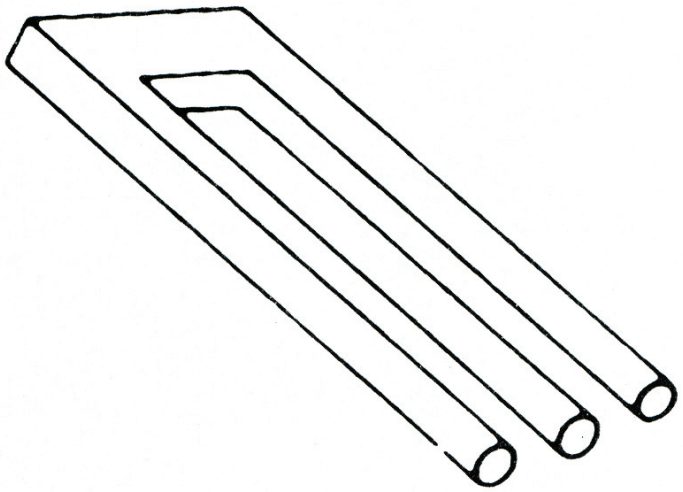




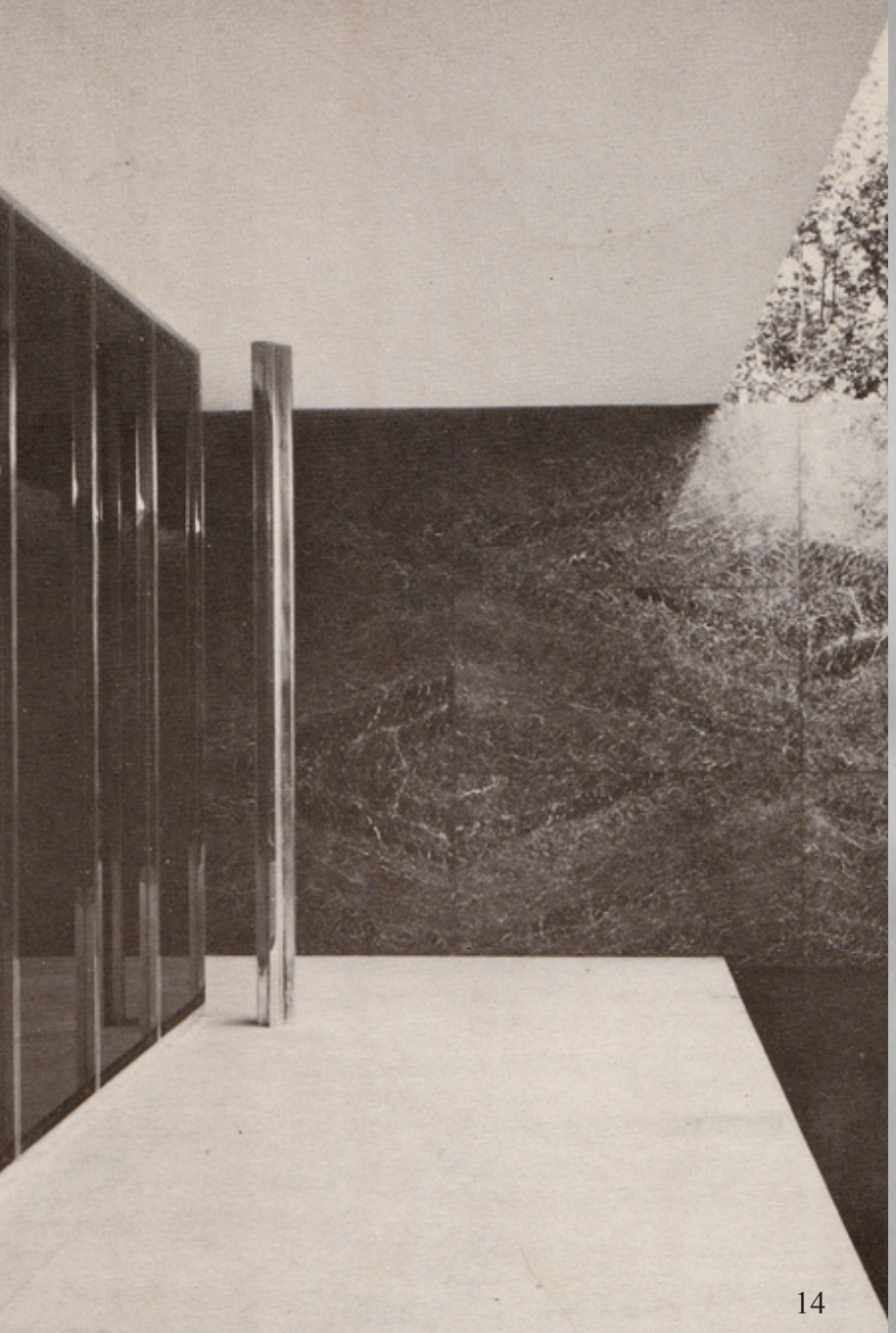


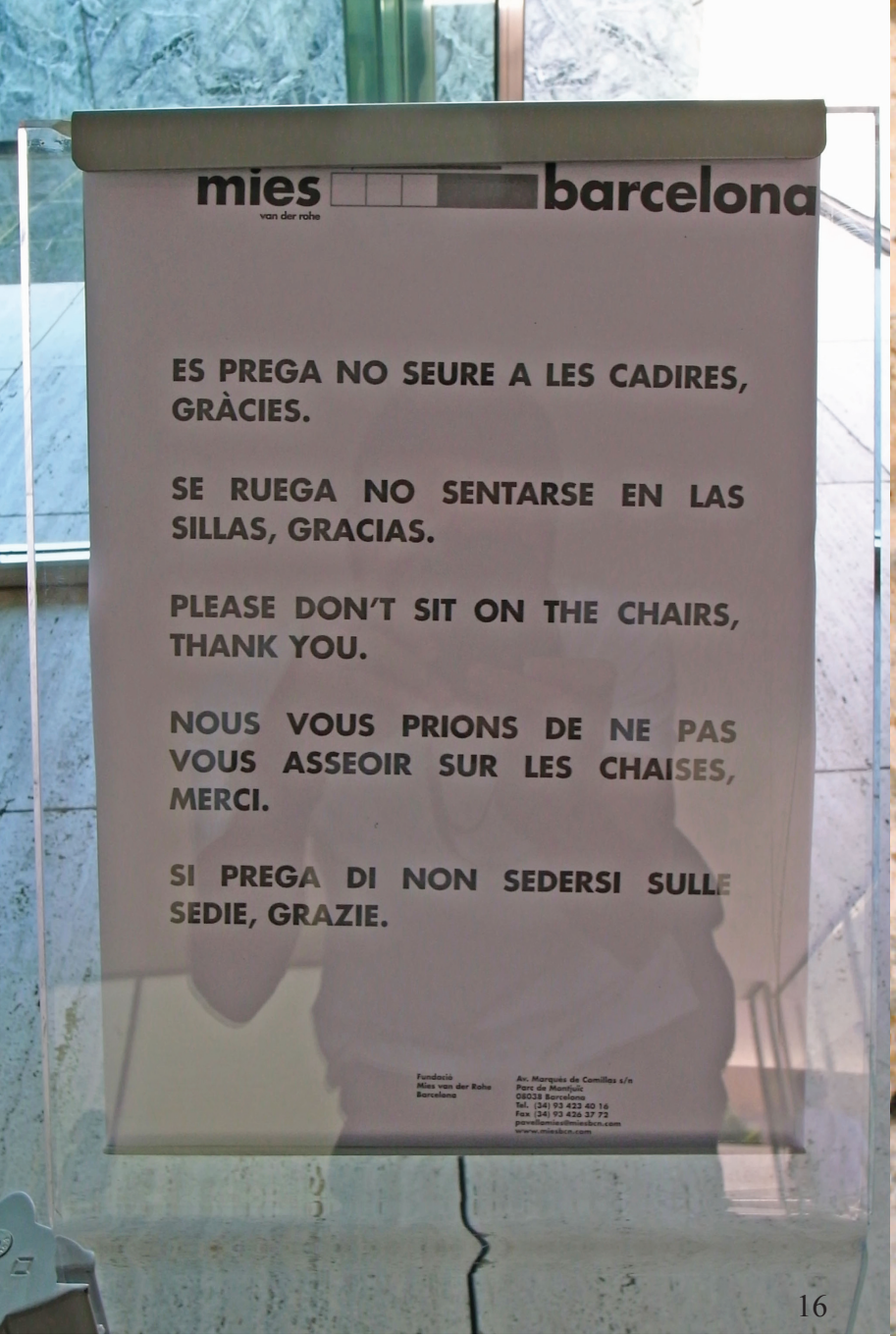


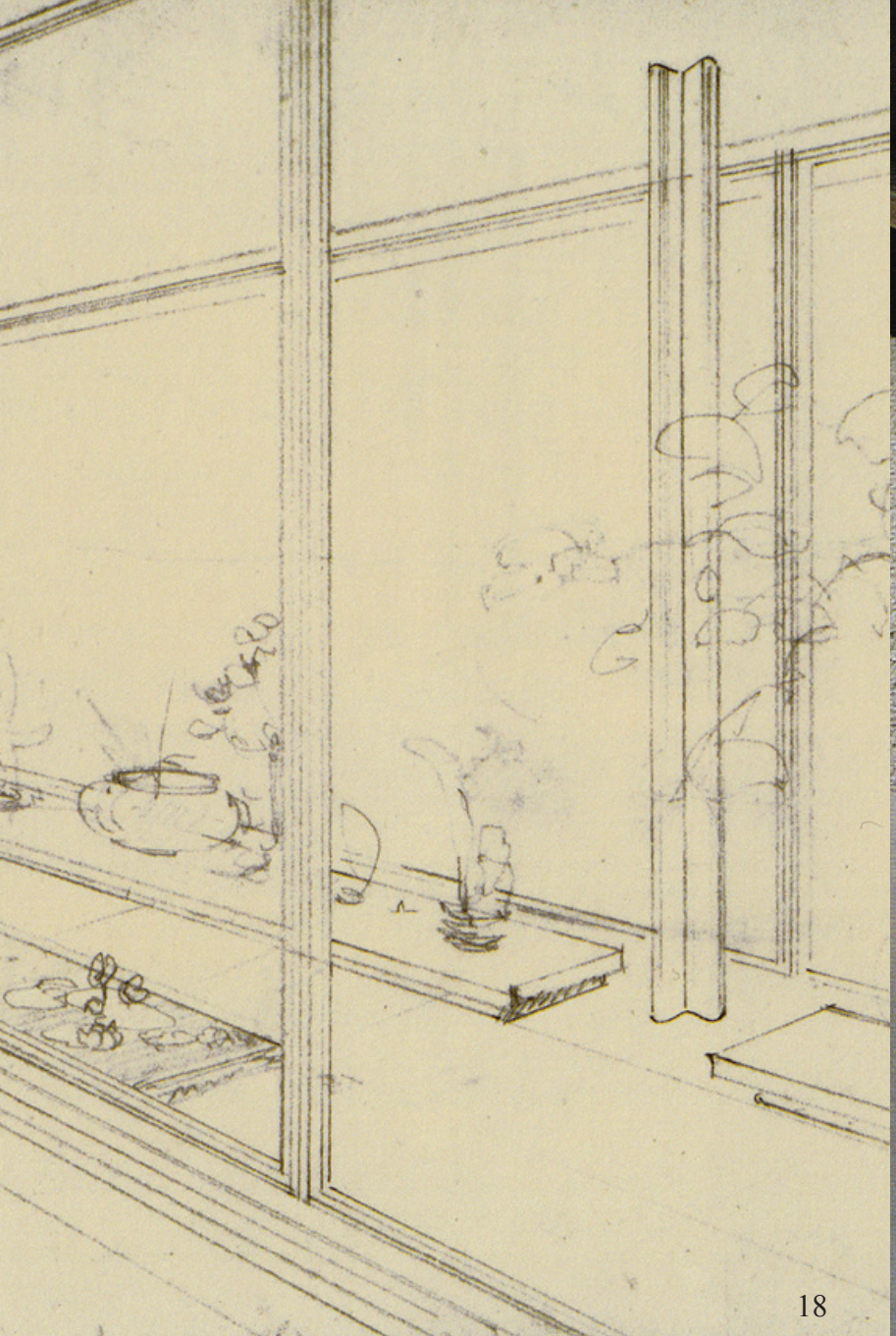




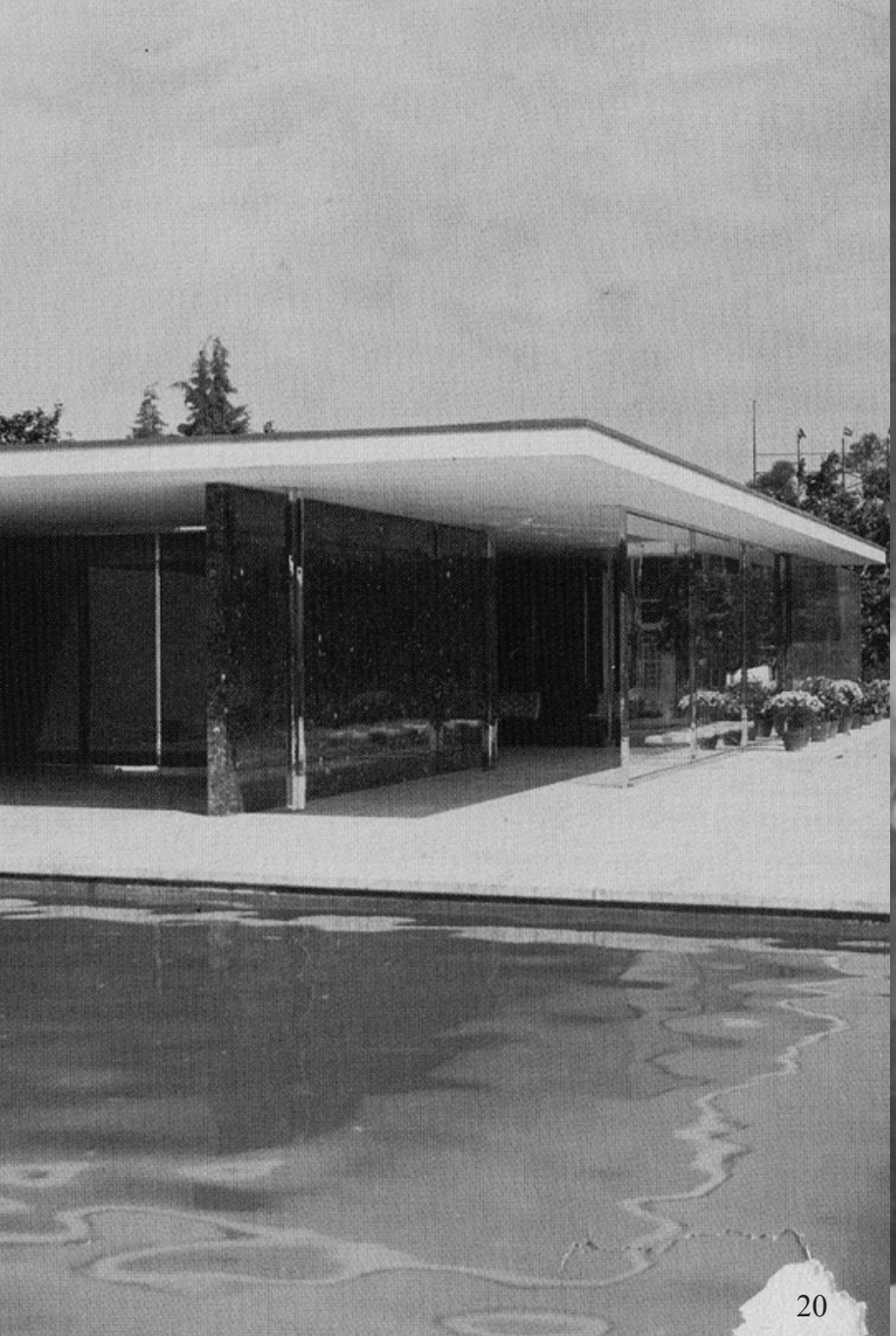





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van der rohe
barcelona
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Visual Essay

Every building tells a story. Yet, only a few stories earn the right to posterity. Thence, when it happens, history becomes potentially a contestable place.

The German Pavilion is an example of this phenomenon. The turmoil from design process to its dismantlement became a contested narrative by many scholars of the field. Then, one day, the canon took the unexpected turn: they carried out the reconstruction of the pavilion in 1986. Therefore it happened: "Behold, the official resurrection of the Modern Movement!"

A new era is reproduced. In the culture of the diffused image where architecture is duplicable and facts are blurred with fiction, mythology tends to thrive in these liquid modern times. Confronted with a labyrinthine ad nauseam case, that is, the overwhelming viewpoints and conflicting interpretations manifested by scholars, media and historiographical uncertainties, I felt that there was still an untold story. A story that is not described anywhere; let alone the leaflet that is at your disposal when you enter the roofed space of the pavilion.

This story may well be the antidote I was looking for. It seems to be hiding behind the holes of the travertine stone walls. And if you are attentive enough, it may secretly whisper to you. Or is it just the wind tunnel effect? I am drawn to auscultate this unheard voice and listen to this inner sound, for there laid the infra-story yet to be unraveled.

João Ó
Lisbon, Summer 2010

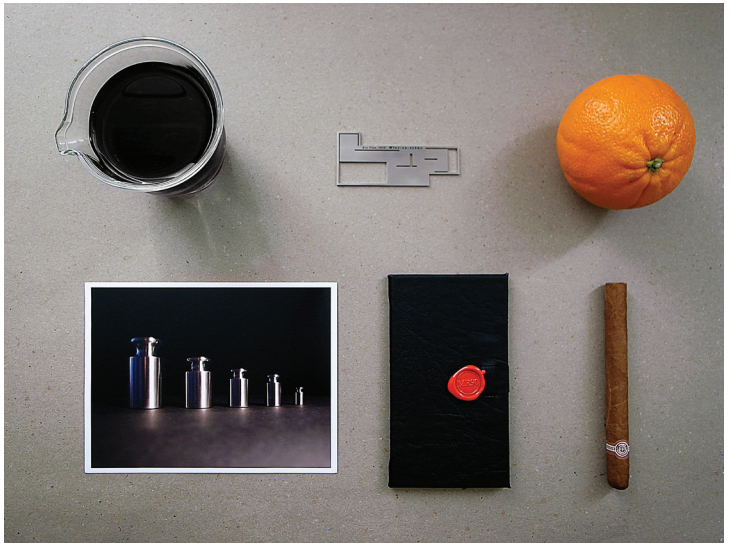
Instruments of Thought

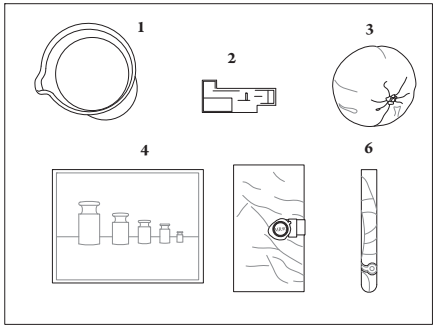
The experimental film, titled *Mies-en-scène*, is inspired by the multiplicity of readings - including my own. First, they were translated into a sequence of moving images. Then, they became strategic variables within a chronological timeline, i.e. the historical occurrences, and thus activating a dialogue with history.

As a way to progress with the plot the film i came up with a strategy of linking elements that would trigger each scene's main subject matter or develop to the next one. I named this strategy *Instruments of Thought* (opposite page); instrumenta that may appear directly or indirectly in the sequence of the plot function as metaphorical objects in relation to the design process of MvdR Pavilion and to Mies himself.

Using everyday objects and punctual domestic scenes, the film alludes to the conceptual house that the pavilion was meant to be. Yet, those habitual behaviors within the different compartments of the house accompanied by the usual objects that one utilizes are all, somehow, subverted to engage in an intertwined relationship between historical facts, collective memory and fiction of the pavilion.

All of these poetic images, intrinsically charged with an enigmatic nature, are actions that came into being by way of performance or installation art; ultimately they were meant to be recorded and seen through the cinematic framework. These moving images were deployed in the film by a process of delirious associations. As a result, they form part of a fictional narrative that was deliberately inserted into the chronological timeline as a way of disturbing the already contested history of the pavilion. It prompts the audience's interpretation, thus activating a dialogue with history.





1. Drawing ink
2. Key Plan, stainless steel laser-cut plate, thk= 2mm.
3. Orange fruit.
4. Stainless steel commercial weights of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 gr.
5. Custom made leather folder sealed with MR90 wax stamp..
6. Montecristo nº 1 cigar.

List of Illustrations (per page)

1. Cover, *Mies-en-scène* (author's film, 2010). Cropped frame enlargement. Large pool at night.
2. Ibid.
3. Photograph by an unidentified photographer (MMA 7361). End of opening ceremony for the German National Pavilion, May, 1929. Cropped image taken from George Dodds, in *Building Desire: On the Barcelona Pavilion*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 47.
4. Photograph by unknown photographer. Cropped image taken from the internet. Aerial view of the Naiku ("Inner Shrine") at Ise Jingu. During the last stage of Shikinen Sengu ("Periodic Renewal of the Imperial Grand Shrine") both structures, old (current sanctuary or *godoshen*) and new (*kodenchi*, the empty site of the next *godoshen*), co-exist. This spatial duplication is an essential part of the Japanese mechanism of renewal, a 8 year process which takes place every 20 years. The next one will be completed in 2013.
5. Plan, OMA "reconstruction" of the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion at the Milan Triennale, 1985. Cropped image taken from George Dodds, ibid., p. 87. It consisted of a clone of the original structure in the form of an installation with a major difference which was the warped plan to fit the curve of the allotted site within the Palazzo della Triennale. This construal engaged the spectator on a synaesthetic experience within the exhibited space.
6. Photograph by an unidentified photographer. Mies van der Rohe visiting the site of Farnsworth House. Cropped image taken from Beatriz Colomina, "Mies's House: Exhibitionism and Collectionism", in *Mies van der Rohe: Houses, 2G: International Architecture Review*, guest ed. Moises Puente, No. 48/49, Vol. IV-I/08.09, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, April 2009, p. 25.
7. *Mies-en-scène* (author's film, 2010). Cropped frame enlargement. Unidentified women gazing at her own mirrored image. Could her be Mies's long term partner Lilly Reich? Or Queen Eugenia who remains absent from the photographs of the ceremonial opening of the pavilion? Who is she?
8. *Mies-en-scène* (author's film, 2010). Cropped frame enlargement. Passing cloud.
9. Ibid., defrost sequence with the appearance of a flat ambiguous object, the size of which resembles a door key that is in fact a stylization of the MvdR Pavilion's plan.
10. Ibid., chess game sequence played with commercial weights.
11. Photo by Julian Wesser. Cropped image taken from the internet. Marcel Duchamp playing chess in the Pasedena Art Museum in 1963.
12. Image by unknown author. Drawing that is logically impossible in three dimensional space. Image taken from Pascal Schöning, Julian Löffler, Rubens Azevedo ed., *Cinematic Architecture*, London: Architecture Association, 2009, p. 17.
13. Jane and Louise Wilson, *A Free and Anonymous Monument*, 2003. Cropped image taken from the internet. View of the installation at the BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art.
14. Photograph from Berliner Bild-Bericht, Berlin, Germany, 1929. Inner pool where George Kolbe's sculpture *Morgen* stand. Cropped image from the cover of the book by Philip Johnson in *Mies van der Rohe*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 3rd edition, 1978. Mies first international exhibition, a retrospective, accompanied by the publication of a monograph with a comprehensive array of his major works and artistic statements.
15. *Mies-en-scène* (author's film, 2010). Cropped frame enlargement from the sequence *Mogen: Geroge Kolbe's Anthropomorphic Figure*. Unidentified women waking up and opening the window shutter.
16. Photograph by author, 2009. Acrylic pedestal notifying the visitor of MvdR Pavilion not to sit on the "Barcelona Chairs." Architecture and other features within the precinct are kept intact, living the spectator in a strange restricted space which the author calls the tautological museum.
17. Photo by Emma Cheatle. Carolyn Butterworth licking the MvdR Pavilion. Carolyn Butterworth, Sam Vardy, "Site-Seeing: Constructing the Creative Survey", in *Field: A Free Journal for Architecture* [on-line document], Vol. 2, p. 132. Consulted on July 20th 2010. Available in Web: <http://www.field-journal.org>
18. Drawing by Sergius Rusenberg. Winter garden from the living room of Tugendhat House in Brno. Cropped image taken from Beatriz Colomina, "Mies's House: Exhibitionism and Collectionism", in *Mies van der Rohe: Houses, 2G: International Architecture Review*, guest ed. Moises Puente, No. 48/49, Vol. IV-I/08.09, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, April 2009, p. 138. The hard evidence of Japanese influence in Mies's conception of space.
19. Photograph by Isao Yoshikawa. Winter garden in Ryogen'in Garden in Kyoto. Cropped image taken from Isao Yoshikawa in *The World of Zen Gardens*, trans. Christopher D. Winner amd Gaynor Sekimori, Tokyo: Graphic-sha Publishing, 1991, p. 27. The garden is *hiraniwa-shiki karesansui*, a flat and dry garden, in which water scenes are represented with white sand and pebbles.
20. Photograph from Berliner Bild-Bericht (MMA 1437 painted version), Berlin, Germany, 1929. Cropped image from Philip Johnson in *Mies van der Rohe*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1947, 3rd edition 1978, p. 69. Some of the canonical photographs were composed, cropped and painted under Mies's direction in order just to show his unique conceptual idea. This one had been retouched so to eliminate the tower of the Casaramona textile factory, because it appeared on the background of the image and disturbed the horizontal line of the pavilion.
21. Photograph by Frank Scherschel. Mies van der Rohe blowing smoke while aloof in his thoughts. Cropped image taken from the internet.

22. Partial section taken from the Barcelona Touristic Bus map depicting the Red Route, which has a stop at Caixa Foum - Pavelló Mies van der Rohe [on-line document]. Consulted on August 9th 2010. Available in Web: < http://www.barcelonabusturistic.cat/web/guest >

23. *The Man with the Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929). Cropped frame enlargement taken from the internet. Vertov's famous experimental mute film, with no storyline or dialogue, records urban life in the Ukraine and other Soviet cities. He pioneered the inception of cinema as an art form completely detached from theater and literature.

24. Photo by author, 2009. Glass table with the pavilion's leaflets and the guest book. In it, visitors from all over the world sign and date, while depicting their appraisal to Mies's work.

25. Photograph by an unidentified photographer at the opening ceremony of the German National Pavilion, May 26, 1929. Cropped image taken from George Dodds, ibid., p. 46. Mies chatting with King Alfonso XIII.

26. *Mies-en-scène* (author's film, 2010). Cropped frame enlargement from the introduction sequence, exposing the fundamental idea of a house: a shelter in the woods.

27. Old postcard of Acropolis and Lycabetos hill in Athens. Cropped image. The author bought it in a flee market during his stay for the shooting of the Parthenon sequence in 2009.

28. Photograph by Nuno Grenha in 1996, author's friend and colleague during the university years. Both went on a summer trip, after the first academic year, to Barcelona to visit a Catalan friend.

29. Video still, Ai Weiwei, *With Milk - Interviews*. Cropped image taken from the internet. In *Canal de Fundació Mies* [on-line document]. Consulted on August 11th 2010. Available in Web: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FundacioMies#p/a>. Pouring milk on the large pool, one of Weiwei's intervention on MvdR Pavilion.

30. Photo by author, 2009. Natural holes of the travertine wall.

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