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POSITIONS ON MODERNITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM, AACHEN, OCTOBER 25TH – 27TH, 2011
ON THE OCCASION OF LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE’S 125TH BIRTHDAY
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Positions on Modernity in the 21st Century

International Symposium from October 25th to 27th, 2011 in the Crown Hall of historic Aachen City Hall

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was born in Aachen in 1886. On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of his birthday, Aachen Fenster e.V. and the Department of Theory of Architecture at RWTH Aachen University, will jointly host an international conference.

By determining new, yet sustainable ties between technology and aesthetics, as well as between ideas and artifacts, Mies van der Rohe defined a path leading to architectural modernity. The works of Mies have been documented, inventoried, published and displayed in countless exhibitions. As major references they stand apart from the rapid change of attitudes and stylistic preferences. The Aachen symposium on Mies is not meant to be a hagiographical laudation on the person, the work or its reception. "Rethinking Mies" will rather provide opportunities to understand the essence of Miesian thought and its relation to the modern movement as well as to contemporary practices of architecture.

In dialogue with eminent personalities who are contributing to the promotion of contemporary architecture and its theories, we want to re-examine Miesian key principles. Are these principles „classical“ and of timeless validity? Are they still a stimulating source for new visions and interpretations? How does Mies’s legacy relate to different cultural contexts? Does his memorable œuvre still engender current debates, attitudes and building activities?

As a transdisciplinary discourse, the symposium’s lectures and panels will be divided into five thematic sessions:

- Ingenious Architecture – On Technical and Aesthetic Standards
- Mies Mimesis – Models and Imitations in Modern Contexts
- Beyond the Border – Architecture and other Arts
- Iconic Architecture – Mies and the Images of Modernity
- Open Spaces – On Modern Landscapes

The symposium will be the prelude to an ongoing investigation on Mies van der Rohe’s work and thought. The contributions to the symposium will be published and displayed in an exhibition.

The symposium is initiated und organized by:

aachen_fenster : raum für bauen + kultur
Prof. Klaus Klever, Projektmanager Mies 2011

RWTH Aachen University – Faculty for Architecture
Prof. Axel Sowa, Dept. Theory of Architecture

Partners:

Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen
Dr. Brigitte Franzen

M:AI Museum für Architektur und Ingenieurkunst, Gelsenkirchen
Ursula Kleefisch - Jobst
The speakers of the symposium are:

**Architecture:**

- **Wiel Arets**  
  Wiel Arets Architects, Maastricht  
  Chair at UdK Berlin University
- **Cecil Balmond**  
  BALMOND/STUDIO Art + Structure, London, Penn Design, University of Pennsylvania
- **Peter Eisenman**  
  Peter Eisenman Architects, New York
- **Junya Ishigami**  
  Junya Ishigami + Associates, Tokyo
- **Christian Kerez**  
  Zürich, ETH Zürich Professor Architektur + Entwurf
- **Dominique Perrault**  
  DPA Dominique Perrault Architecture, Paris
- **Werner Sobek**  
  Mies Chair, IIT Chicago, ILEK Institut für Leichtbau Entwerfen + Konstruktion Stuttgart  
  Souto Moura arquitectos, Porto
- **Eduardo Souto de Moura**  
  Souto Moura arquitectos, Porto
- **Bernard Tschumi**  
  Bernard Tschumi Architects, New York / Paris
- **Kjetil Thorsen**  
  Snøhetta Architects Oslo / New York, (to be confirmed)
- **Arnold Walz**  
  designtoproduction, Stuttgart

**Cultural Studies:**

- **Christoph Asendorf**  
  Europa - Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)  
  Faculty for Art and Cultural Sciences
- **Barry Bergdoll**  
  Columbia University New York, Philipp Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design MoMA, New York
- **Beatriz Colomina**  
  Princeton University, School of architecture, Director Media and Modernity Program
- **Susanne Hauser**  
  Universität der Künste, Berlin, History of Arts and Cultures
- **Wilfried Kuehn**  
  Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe, Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice  
  Kühn Malvezzi Architekten, Berlin
- **Phyllis Lambert**  
  Founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture
- **Michael Mönninger**  
  University of Fine Arts, Braunschweig, History and Theory of Art
- **Lutz Robbers**  
  IKKM Weimar, Research-Fellow Programm Werkzeuge des Entwerfens
- **Brett Steele**  
  Architectural Association School of Architecture, Director

**Philosophy:**

- **Peter Sloterdijk**  
  HfG Karlsruhe, Director, Philosophy und Aesthetics, (to be confirmed)

**Art:**

- **Christopher Dell**  
  Hafenuniversität Hamburg, Urban Design, Theorist, Percussionist und Curator  
  for architecture, art and philosophy
- **Tomas Saraceno**  
  Artist, Frankfurt
The symposium’s program will be enriched by several cultural events:

EXHIBITION 3 VIEWS ON MIES

The exhibition shows works of three photographers, dealing with Mies van der Rohe’s architecture.

LUDWIG GLAESER

The exposition will show recently discovered black and white photographs of Miesian architectures by Ludwig Glaeser, one of the first curators at MoMA, New York. The photographs were first been shown in the Mies van der Rohe Haus in Berlin and at the Bauhaus in Dessau.

HEIDI SPECKER

Heidi Specker works as an artistic photographer in Berlin. Her photographic essay deals with the Miesian Landhaus Lemke in Berlin, today home of the Mies van der Rohe Haus. By isolating details from their original context the images reflect upon the idea of abstraction.

CORINE VERMEULEN

The Detroit based Dutch photographer Corine Vermeulen, together with the authors Danielle Aubert, Lana Cavar and Natasha Chandani, created the book project Thanks for the view, Mister Mies. Her photographs show the people living in Detroit’s Lafayette Park apartments, designed by Mies van der Rohe, 50 years ago.
CONCERT CHRISTOPHER DELL

Christopher Dell is both a philosopher and one of Europe’s most eminent Jazz vibraphonists.

BEWEGTBILDTHEATER NEUN und EINS

bewegtbildtheater is an innovative form of theater, developed by the actress Martina Roth and the scenographer Johannes Conen, and connects art, music, dance and theatre with video sequences. NEUN und EINS is a play based on the novel „the waves“ by Virginia Woolf.

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