



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe is one of the few architects to have not gone to architecture school and yet became one of the most prolific architects, giving definition to modern architecture. Instead, he even went on to reform architecture school, emphasizing the study of construction materials, especially steel and glass and how they affect the building. He exposed steel beams in some of his buildings like the Seagram Building, as opposed to hiding them like other architects would, and made those materials a part of the design of the building. A lot of Mies' buildings appeared stark and simple, but that was because he wanted to study the basics of material functionality and how they influence space. As a result, although a lot of Mies' buildings appeared simple, they presented a sense of elegance and fluidity.

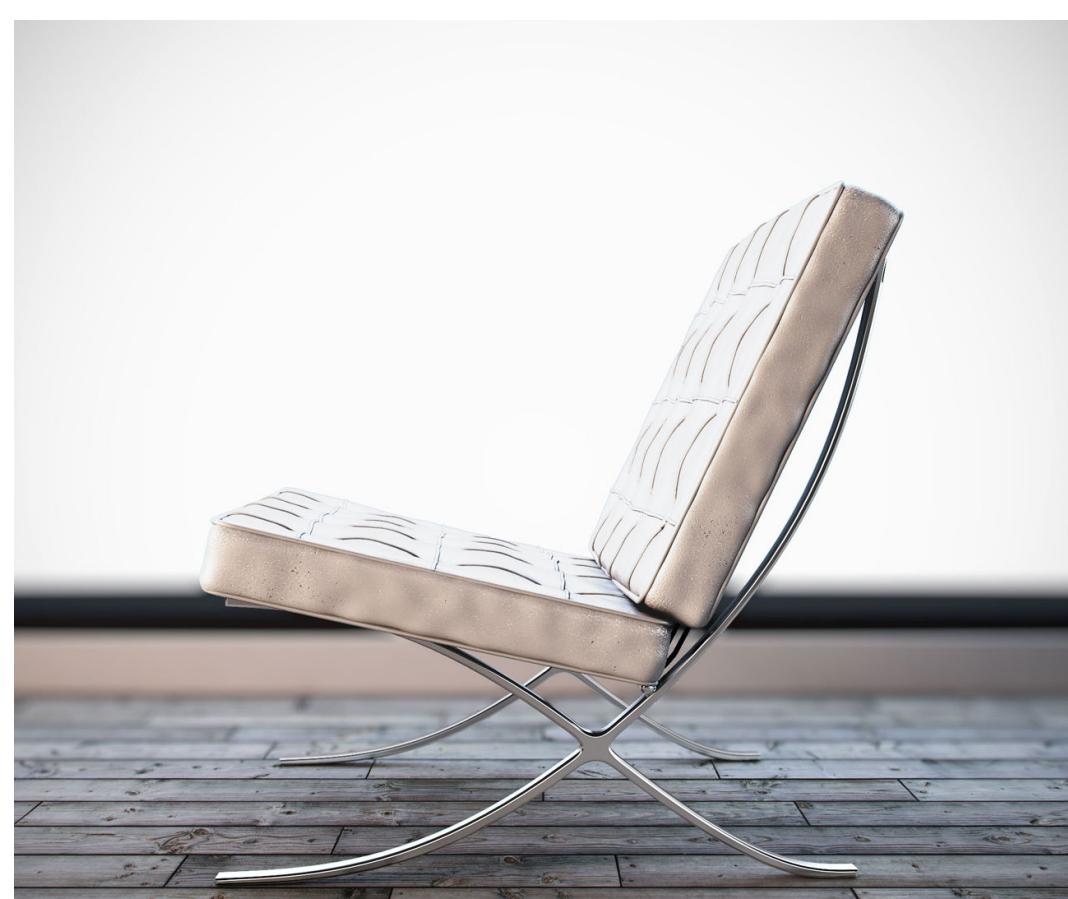
Mies is one of the few architects that was acknowledged by the famous American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, for Mies understood the essence of architecture, as opposed to many others at the time who were frivolous with their designs. The essence of Mies' designs can be encapsulated in the phrase he is famous for, "less is more." Mies' designs were simple, but somehow was also able to display elegance and

fluidity. His buildings were simple, yet displayed a sense of authority and serenity. All of these traits, combined with the sense of rationality that arose from the simplicity of his architecture, gave him most of the credit for defining modern architecture.

Mies was the director of the German Bauhaus school of art for three years, after being shut down due to pressure from the Nazi Regime. However, he did not stop redefining architecture education. After moving to America, Mies designed the Master Plan for the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, which reshaped the campus to blend the architecture of the past with a new modern architecture that he defined. He became the director of architecture at IIT and taught students the importance of construction materials and the necessity to avoid frivolousness in architecture. He was awarded with the AIA Gold Medal in 1960, and later the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963 by President Lyndon Johnson. Finally, Mies passed away in 1969 due to a cancer in his esophagus. He lived a prolific life of eighty-three years, having built a total of seventy-seven buildings.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), Aachen, Germany (adoptive hometown: Chicago, Illinois)

Barcelona Chair, 1929



Mies' iconic Barcelona Chair expresses elegance and fluidity.

Farnsworth House, 1951

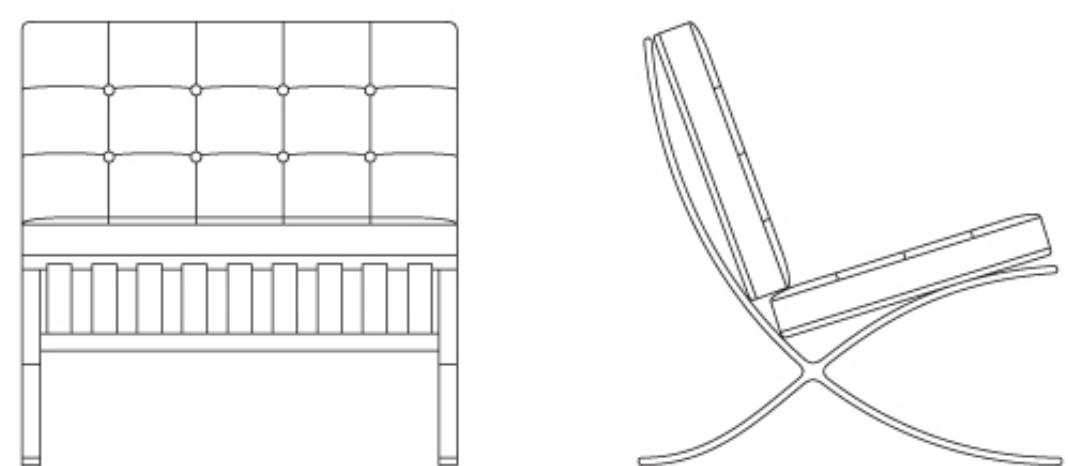


Mies' Farnsworth House emphasized the use of glass and its effect on space.

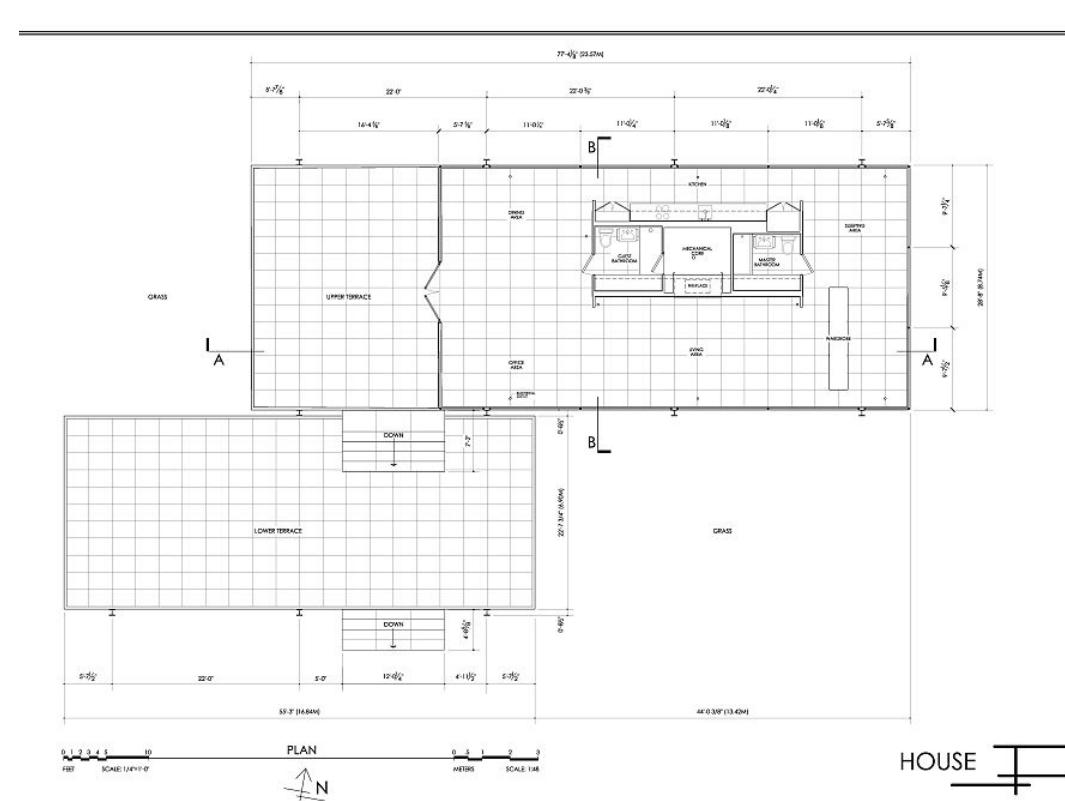
Barcelona Pavilion, 1929



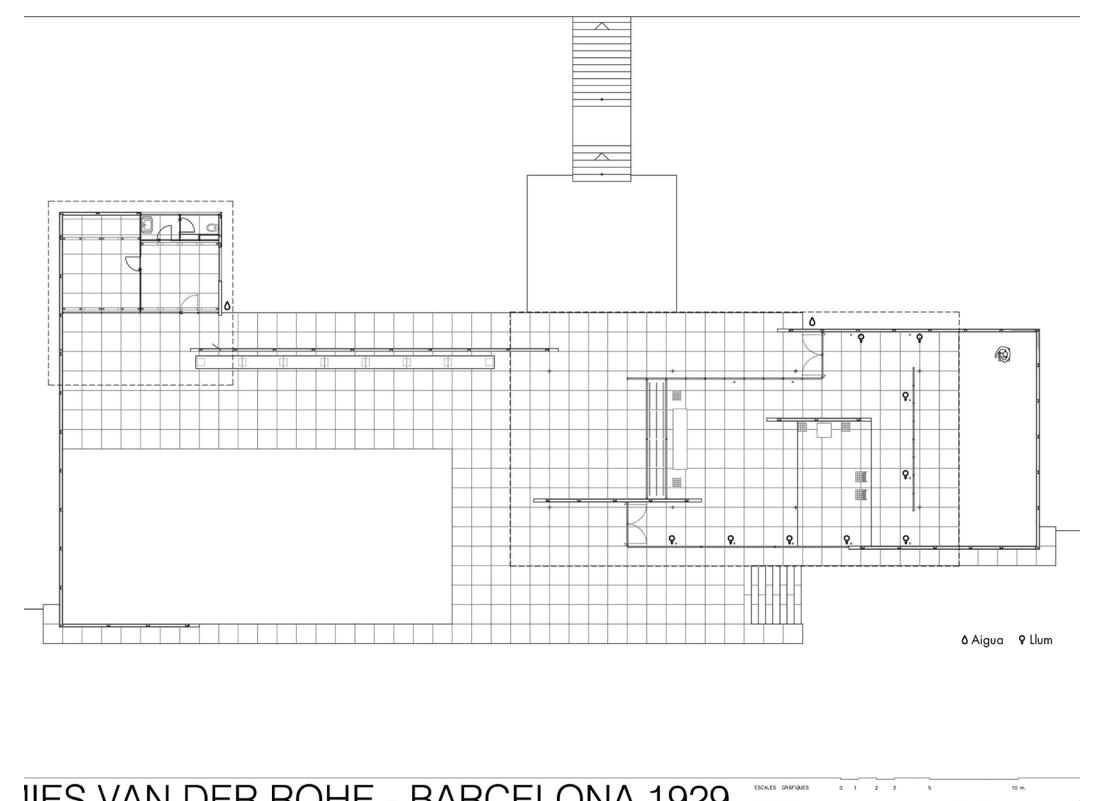
Mies' Barcelona Pavilion best demonstrates the overhead and parallel planes concept.



The Barcelona Chair uses fluid and solid lines to create both a sense of elegance but also rationality, two characteristics of many of Mies' buildings.

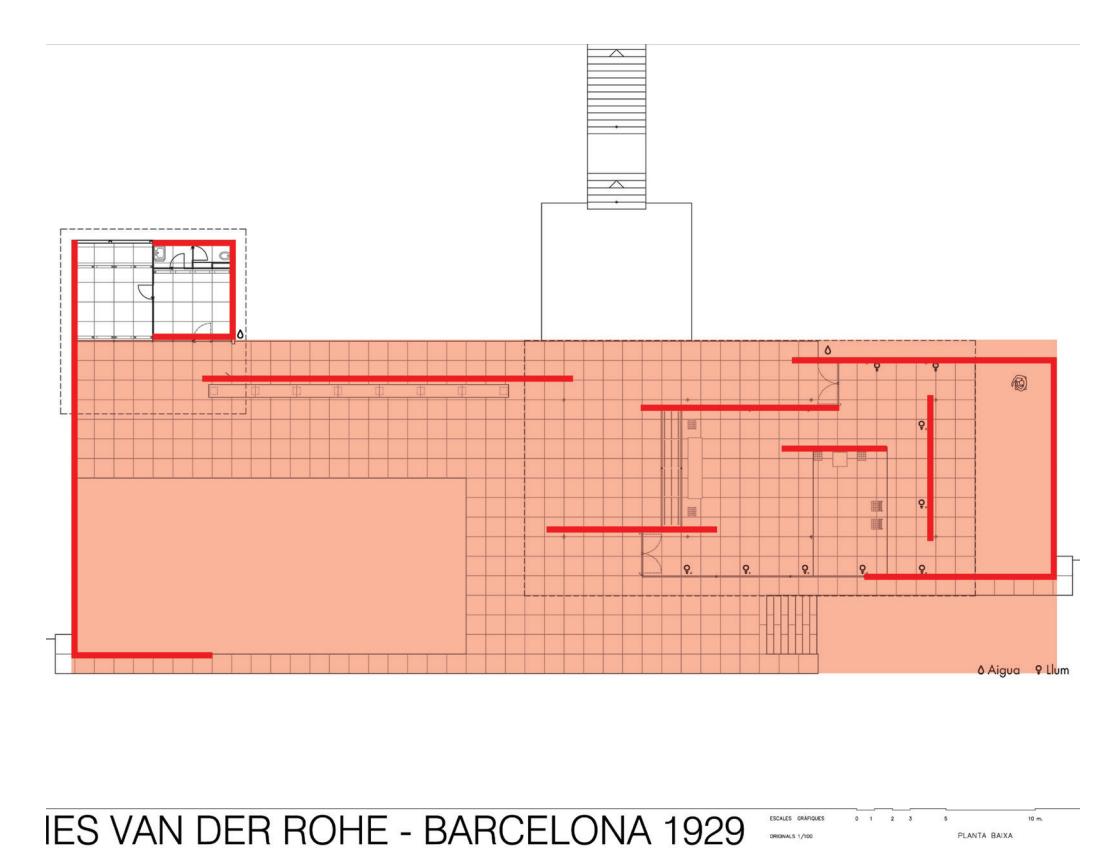


The plan of the Farnsworth House shows two major rectangular bases, one almost the same size as the other, even though it only serves the function of a patio.



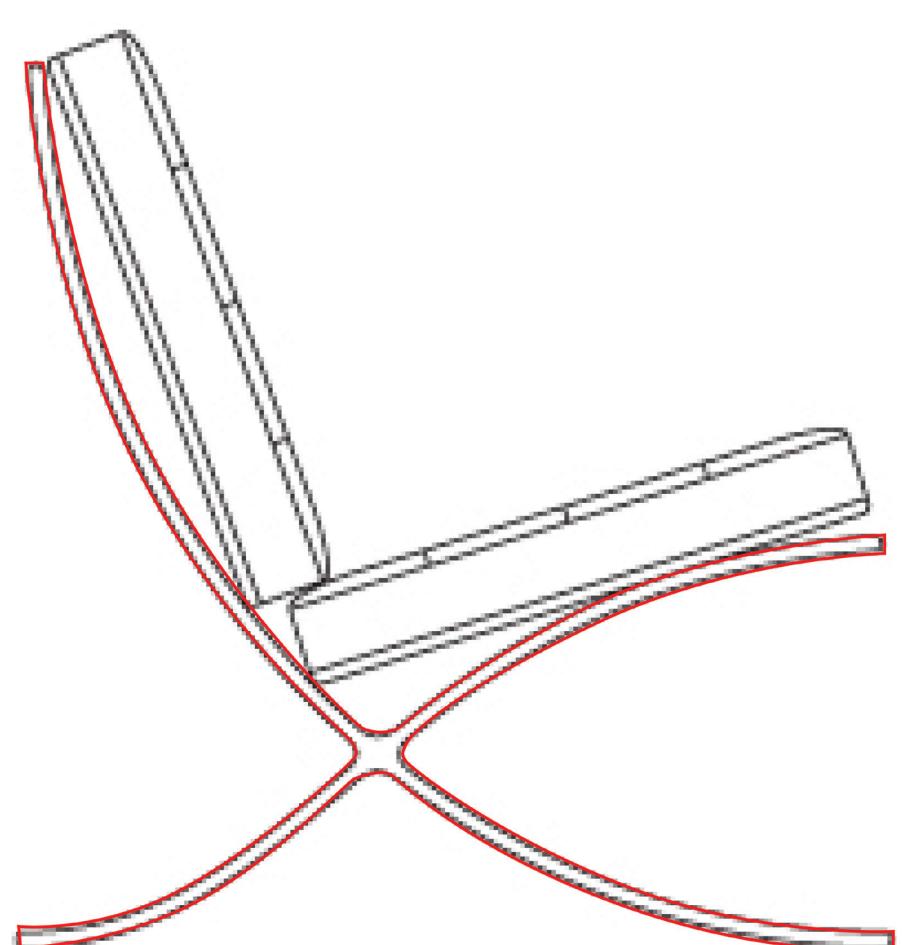
IIES VAN DER ROHE - BARCELONA 1929

One of the most unique features that gives the Barcelona Pavilion its character are the many L and U shaped walls, as well as the parallel ones, that give it infinite spaces.

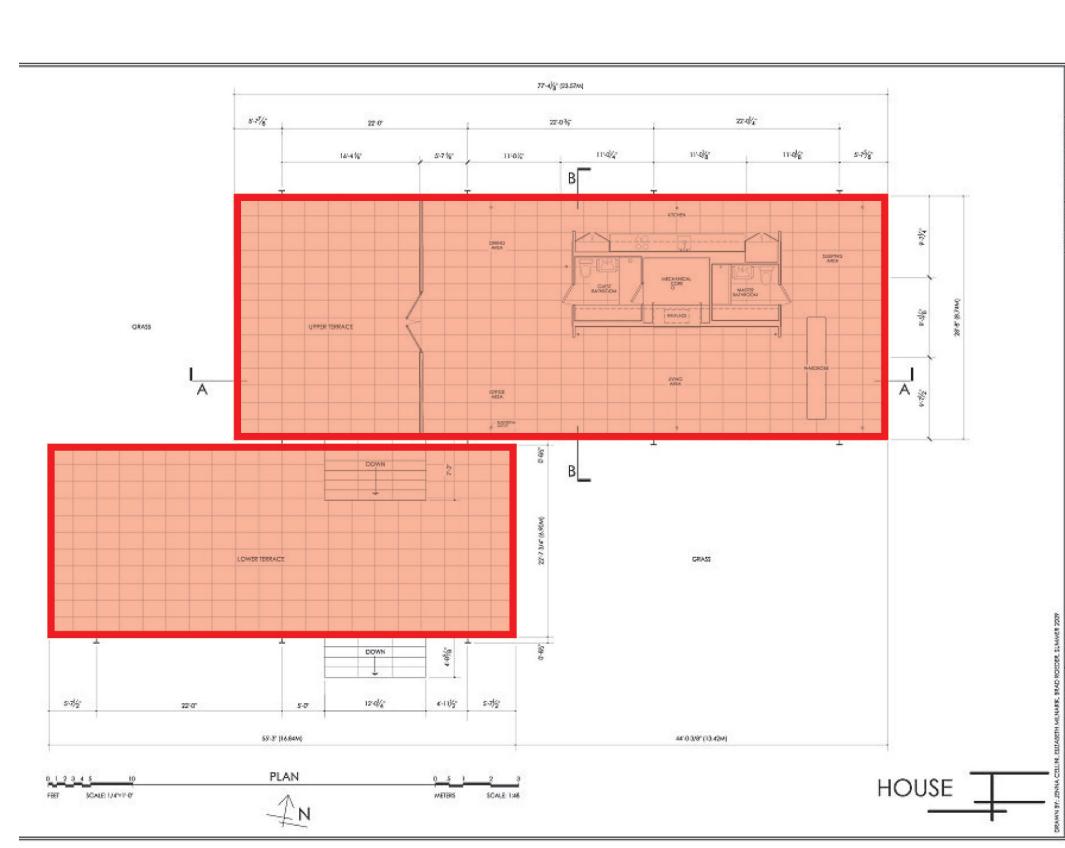


IIES VAN DER ROHE - BARCELONA 1929

The Pavilion's U and L lines create a collage of elegant and 90-degree angles that combine to fill an elongated rectangular form (the whole base of the plan).



Mies' drawing of his Barcelona Chair shows how he aimed to give steel, a seemingly bland material, a form that makes it appear fluid and elegant.



The relationship between the two large rectangular bases is that they are shifted (as opposed to aligned with each other).

THE
ART

OF
SCIENCE

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AND
SHADE

LINE
AND
TONE

FORM
AND
MATERIAL

IDEAS
AND
THEORY

CHARACTER
AND
PERSONALITY

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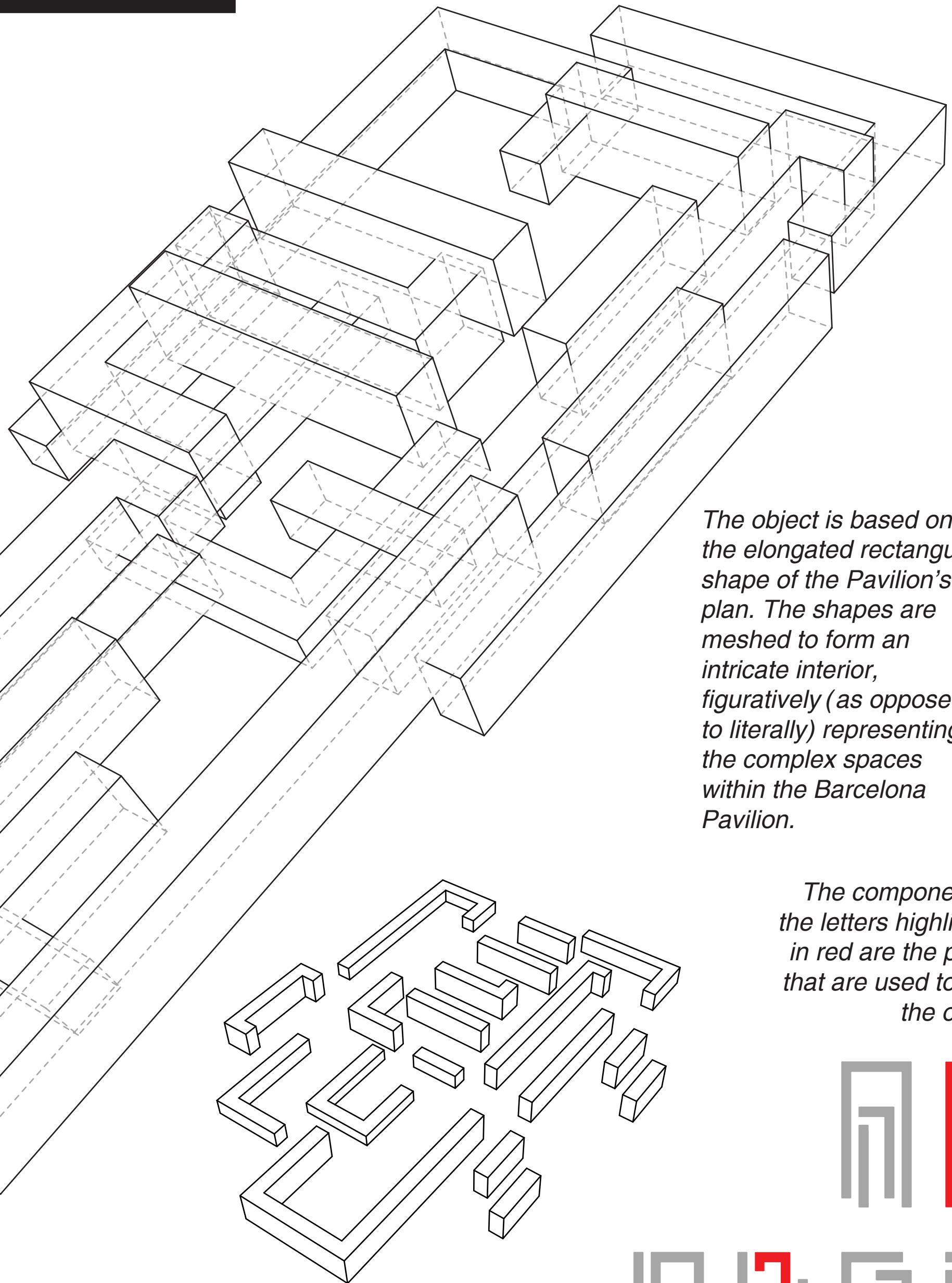
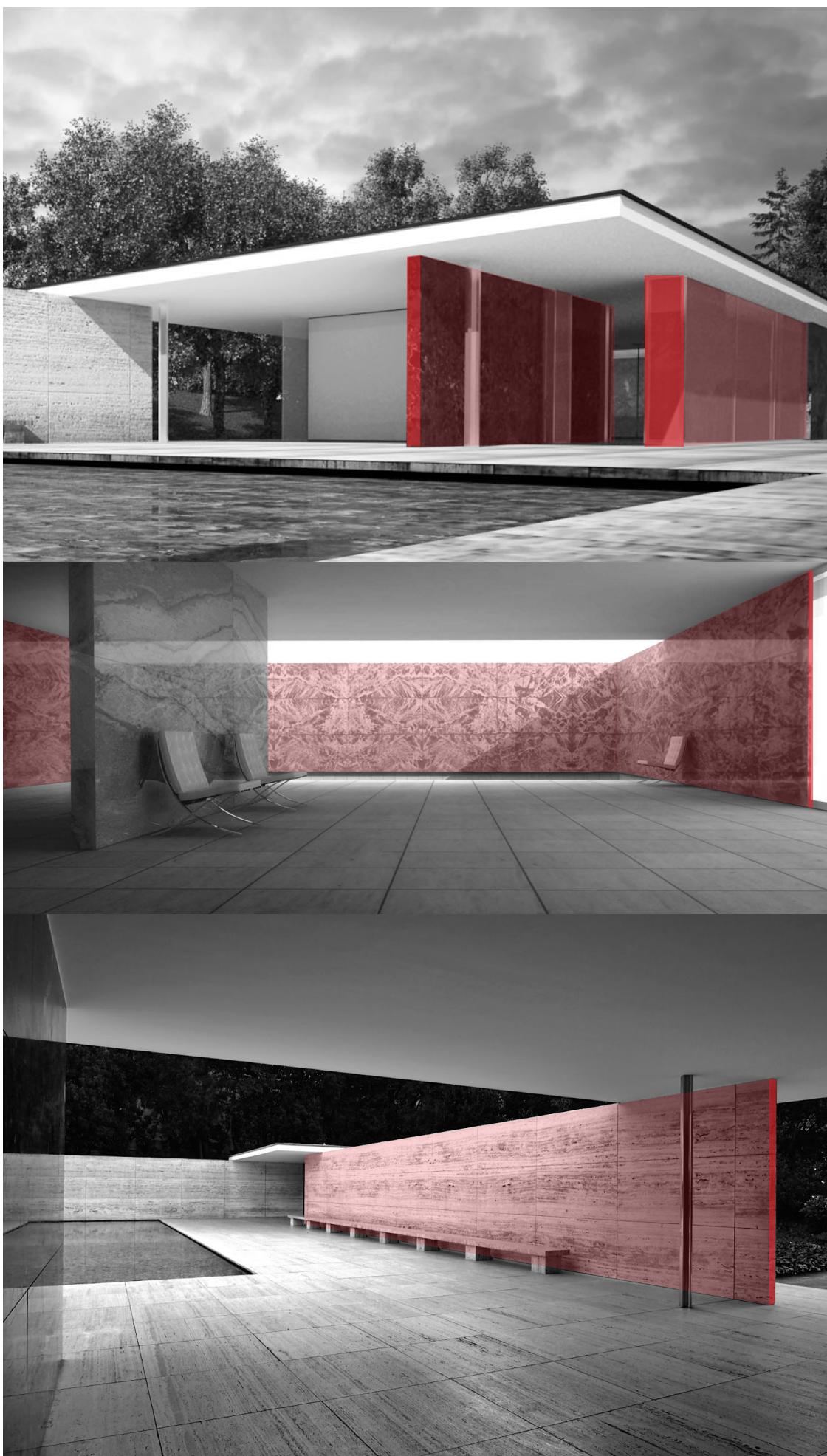
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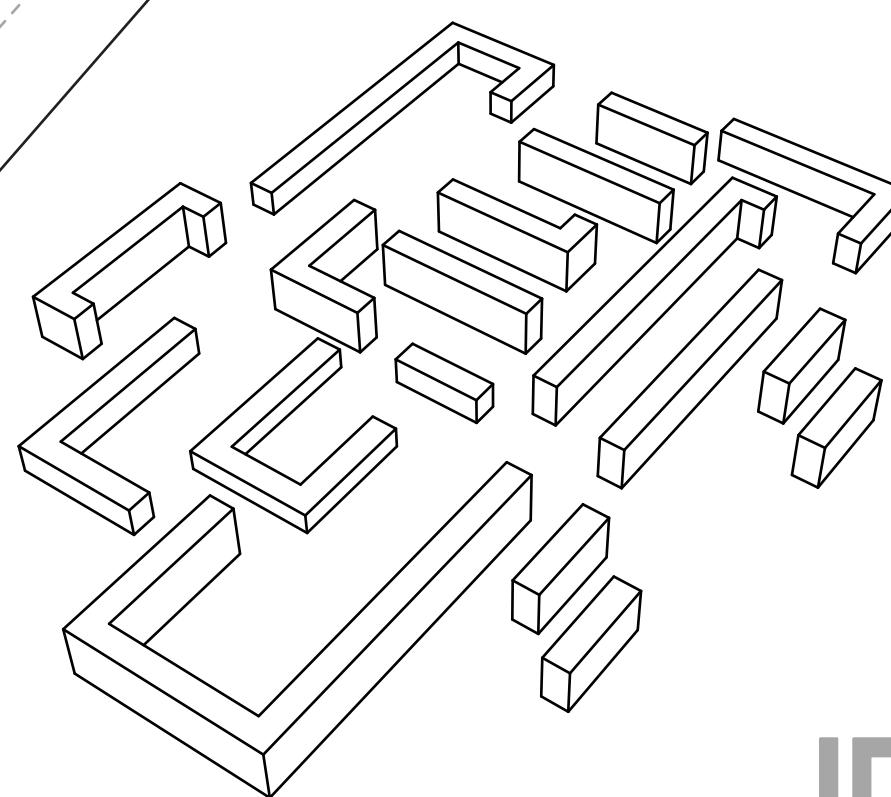
MIES

The Barcelona Pavilion is characterized by perfect 90-degree angled planes, from the walls to the ceilings. This is due to Mies van der Rohe's strong adherence to the philosophy of rational architecture. He creates rational architecture by removing it from unnecessary and frivolous features; "less is more." By doing this, he is able to focus more on the essential concepts that define space. The Barcelona Pavilion has many unique, complex spaces defined only by simple-shaped planes.



The object is based on the elongated rectangular shape of the Pavilion's plan. The shapes are meshed to form an intricate interior, figuratively (as opposed to literally) representing the complex spaces within the Barcelona Pavilion.

The components of the letters highlighted in red are the pieces that are used to build the object.



Object exploded to show components.

The general outline of the Barcelona Pavilion is an elongated rectangle. The walls are either long straight lines, U-shaped, or L-shaped. The parallel vertical planes created by the straight planes give some areas the effect of having infinite spaces. The L-shaped planes give attention to both its corner and spaces outward from it. The U-shaped planes give an effect of both introspection and extrospection. Together, there is a combination of few narrow and many open spaces, and there is little to no distinction between the interior and exterior.

The alphabet and numbers derived from the Barcelona Pavilion highlights the essential shapes and concepts that define the pavilion. The letters are built from I's, L's, and U's, all at perfect 90-degree angles. Some features of the letters and numbers mimic the parallel vertical planes, while others create both narrow and open spaces.

