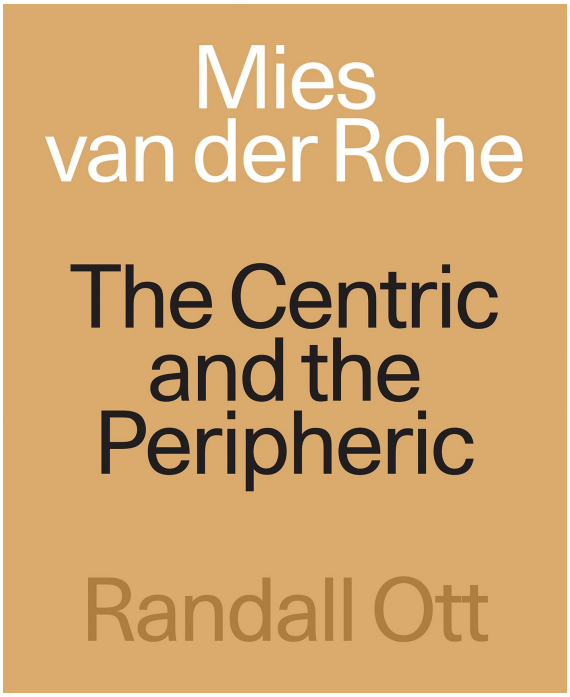
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Mies van der Rohe

The Centric and the Peripheric

Randall Ott

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- A career-long study of Mies van der Rohe that uncovers a new continuity surrounding his exploration of the dialectic of center/periphery and challenges recent trends that halve him into distinct European and American phases
- Includes dozens of canvases that have never before been juxtaposed with Mies's compositions
- Contains entirely new analyses and interpretations of several of Mies's most significant projects, including the Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Competition, the Barcelona Pavilion, the Farnsworth House, IIT's Crown Hall, and the Neue Nationalgalerie
- Substantially compares Mies with painters of the Northern Romantic Tradition, like Caspar David Friedrich, Piet Mondrian, and Mark Rothko

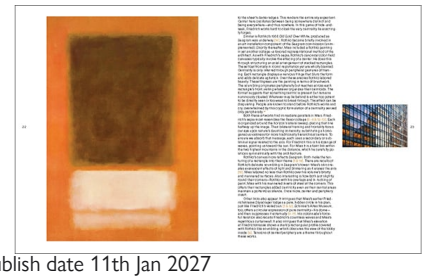
This volume presents anew the influential 20th-century architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, whose reputation has unfairly languished. Critics often see him as a chameleon who turned against the vibrant aesthetic culture of Berlin upon emigrating to Chicago and created instead the spare, tectonically obsessed, blank box stylism that looms over so many American downtowns. That prevailing interpretation ignores the aesthetic and conceptual coherence within his oeuvre.

Mies often spoke vaguely of a "great form" emerging within modernity. He spent his career seeking to express this condition in the spaces he designed. Through close analysis of over sixty of his buildings and projects, this study reveals that underlying essence. A formal dialectic of center/periphery threads throughout his production, which gives nascent form to the profound societal tensions he sensed. A peculiar interleafing of the centric and the peripheric dominates his shaping of space.

Rarely is Mies considered formally. Using nearly a hundred new analytical diagrams, this book unlocks fresh interrelations between his compositions and between his career's phases. Unexpected parallels are struck with nineteenth-century Romantic artists like Caspar David Friedrich and with modernists like Piet Mondrian and Mark Rothko. The strands within Mies's deep readings on philosophy are expanded by comparing him with regional thinkers. The outlines of the "great form" Mies sensed become clearer.

A new and integral Mies emerges, far different from previous interpretations and with enhanced relevance for our contemporary condition.

Randall Ott is a registered architect and educator who served as Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., from 2003 to 2020. Previously, he has taught at the University of Colorado, the University of Michigan, and Columbia University. Ott has written widely on Modernism in central and Northern Europe with a critical focus on Mies van der Rohe, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, and Germany.







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