

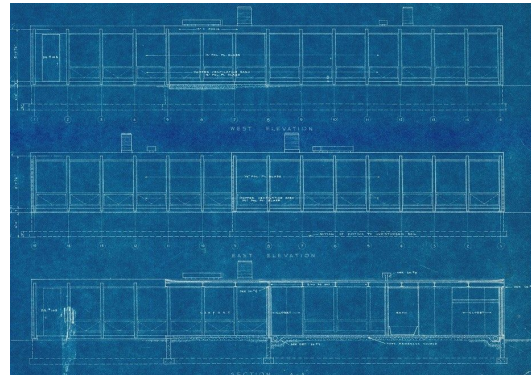
# ELMHURST ART MUSEUM

## ART, EDUCATION & ARCHITECTURE

### Mies, McCormick, & Prefab



Exterior of McCormick House (2018). Kendall McCaugherty © Hall+Merrick Photographers



Mies van der Rohe. Blueprints for the McCormick House

The McCormick House (1952) is one of only three single-family homes built by famed architect Mies van der Rohe. The home is a rare and important example of his mature style, incorporating elements of his celebrated designs for the Farnsworth House and 860-880 Lake Shore Drive. Just as Mies was finishing these iconic buildings in 1951, he started to explore prefabricated housing in response to national housing shortages following the end of World War II.

While the McCormick House would be the only one of two homes built, photographs of models of the Elmhurst house show its possible replication as a repeatable unit. Mies extended the design research for McCormick's own house to designs for a system that could be adapted to a row house format. Today, Mies is often associated with his use of the grid and design that operates within a modular system. Many contemporary artists use this as inspiration to respond to his iconic work.

Many architects use the grid as a standardized way to organize their designs. This activity invites participants to respond to the grid in their own unique way. Embrace, disrupt, or destroy the grid in your creative response.

Check out our website for more information and images of the exhibition, *Mies's McCormick House Revealed: New Views*. Share your creations and tag us on social media!  
#MuseumFromHome

Sincerely,

Joseph Hladik, Director of Education & Grants Administrator



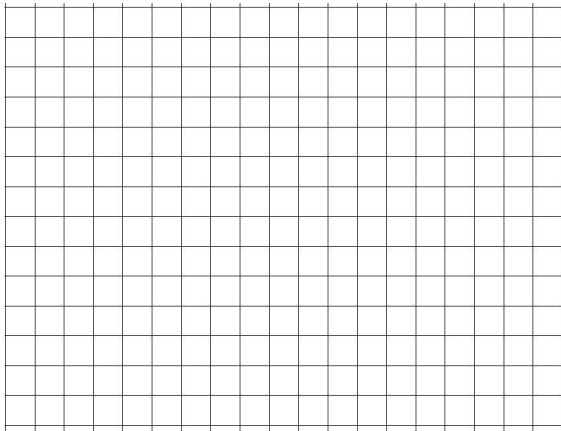
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In the activity you will:

- Study the work of Mies van der Rohe
- Learn about a systematic approach to design
- Create your own creative response to the grid
- Consider the patterns or systems used to design your home



You will need:

- Grid paper (multiple sheets if possible)
  - A printable version is at the end of this document
- Pencil or pen
- Coloring supplies
  - Colored pencils, markers, and crayons work best
- Scissors



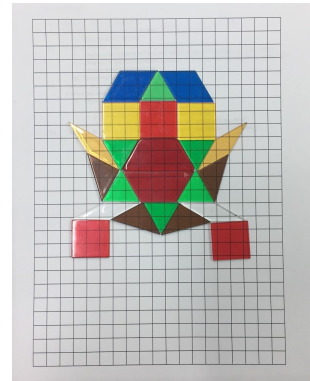
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## ART, EDUCATION & ARCHITECTURE

### INSTRUCTIONS

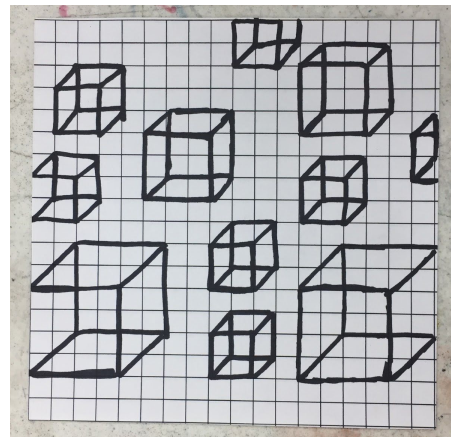
First, use your drawing materials to respond to the grid in a way that **embraces** its rigid systematic structure in a 2D way.

- You may be familiar with grid paper from math, because it is often used to learn about area, perimeters, and other geometric measurements
- Since many architects and designers plan for projects that are very large, grids help to plan on a smaller scale
  - How can the grid inform your design?
  - What are the limitations of the grid?
  - Do you respond to the black and white, or do you add color?
  - How might your design be organized?
  - Are there patterns or symmetry?
  - Do you feel a sense of confinement in staying within the lines?



Next, think of ways to consider **disrupting** the grid within a 2D way

- How can you interrupt the horizontal and vertical lines of the grid?
- How can you still embrace its structure while somehow implying depth while remaining 2-dimensional?
- Grids have a very geometric quality, how might you begin to think of incorporating organic shapes?



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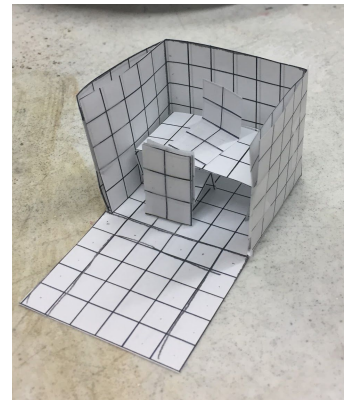
Finally, think of ways to completely **destroy** or reject the grid.

- We've observed the confinement and structural quality of grids, how can your design break away from this?
- The use of color may be a departure from the grid paper itself



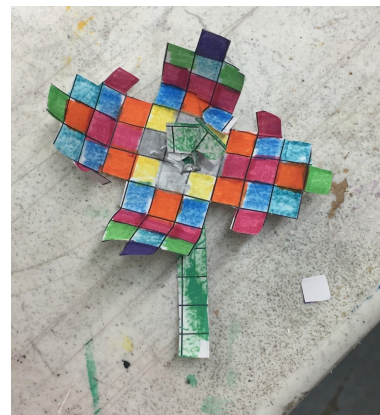
Next, we are going to respond to the grid in a 3D way. First, design something that **embraces** the linear and structured quality of the grid.

- Since the grid is a series of squares, as we move into 3-dimensional space we are now working in cubes.
- While grids help us understand 2D geometry such as area and perimeter, however this same system can also help us learn about volume in the 3D world



Now, consider ways that you can begin to **disrupt** the grid in a 3D way.

- How can you honor the organization or the grid and still interrupt its inherent structure?
- The designer of the image to the left created a way to add movement to the static grid.
  - While visually the grid appears very much intact, its design allows it to disrupt our usual understanding



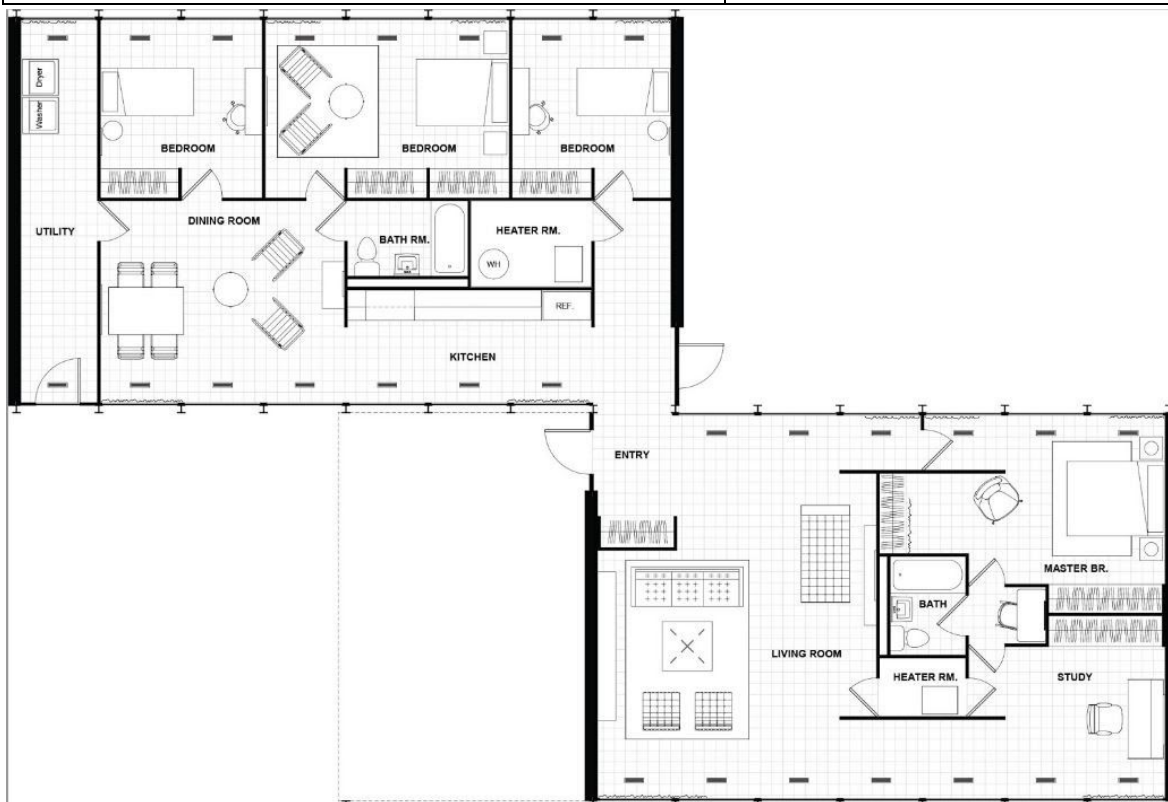
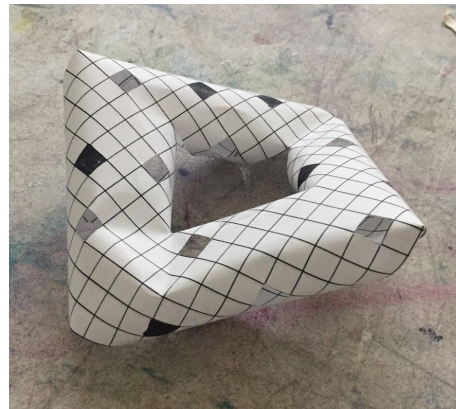


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Lastly, how can you **destroy** the rigid nature of the grid in a 3D way?

- How can you bring in elements that depart from the cubes or squares?
- How can you begin to play with negative space?
- Instead of rigid straight lines, how can you add curved edges and organic shapes?
- Crumpling up your grid paper into a ball is a great example of destroying the grid!



Original layout of the McCormick House

Check out our website to view the Teen Art Council's published zine, **ArchiTeenZine**, which is a contemporary response to architecture.



