

A Space Problem

for Mies van der Rohe's
McCormick House at the
Elmhurst Art Museum

Organized by David Salkin

In this exhibition, imagined as the home of a design enthusiast, iconic mid-century furnishings converse with the work of artists operating in differing aesthetic and academic domains. The result is an eclectic residential environment in an archetypal modernist setting.

Marshall Brown

b. 1973, East Orange, NJ. Lives and works in Princeton, NJ.

Cut-paper vignettes by Brown, an architect, scholar, and professor at Princeton University School of Architecture, reveal the optimism and scope of modernist architectural ambitions. New space, free of scale or site, is composed through clear, gestural juxtapositions. The use of found material and negative space echoes Mies van der Rohe's seminal collage-drawings.

Jennefer Hoffmann

b. 1971, Toronto, ON. Lives and works in Chicago.

The gestural handwork of Hoffmann's ceramic sculptures makes palpable the immediacy of intuition and the collaborative relationship of human and material. In this exhibition, acting as a surrogate for the natural world, her sculptural vessels contrast the freedom of improvisation with the restraint and precision of modernism.

Sterling Lawrence

b. 1980, OR. Lives and works in Chicago.

Lawrence's unique sculptures echo the lines of mid-century furniture and industrial design. In a distortion of modernist philosophy, these objects exhibit a precision of intention and execution while eluding clarity of purpose. In this venerable setting, they can be read as proxies for, or thorny foils to, contemporary living.

David Salkin

b. 1985, Sarasota, FL. Lives and works in Chicago.

Salkin's one-off rugs condense and compress prototypical non-repeating patterns for cities and landscape into the domestic scale. These textiles are placed as meditative fields, encouraging the viewer to seek comfort in inconspicuous repetition and order.

Geoffrey Todd Smith

b. 1973, Cleveland, OH. Lives and works in Westchester, IL.

In the spirit of Mies van der Rohe, Smith's body of work is defined by the refinement of his distinct visual vocabulary. The mixed-media paintings shown here, identified by gridded, storyboard-like frames, represent part of an endless series of exercises in the shaping of compositional rules,

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“The Space Problem” is an evolving pedagogical tool first developed by Mies van der Rohe at the Bauhaus and continued at the College of Architecture at Illinois Institute of Technology. In a series of exercises, a structural framework is modified by planar surfaces, expressive material, furnishings, painting, and sculpture. Proportion is the tool to solve a particular architectural problem: space.

“Mies’ concept of universal space is based on an understanding of architecture as both flexible and sustainable; an idea that a permanent structure can accommodate changing functional needs over time. The structural expression of universal space was the frame structure which, with its lighter profiles, opened up facades and let in more daylight and air, and with its greater spanning capability, reduced or eliminated the need for interior structural supports and opened up and liberated the interior space. Concurrent with the pursuit of universal space in his architectural projects, Mies introduced the ideas to his students at the Bauhaus and IIT in the exercise which came to be known as the Space Problem.

The basics of the Space Problem are the structural analysis and design of a steel frame structure (one-two stories), the study of interior space (freely arranged partitions, stairs, etc.) and material and color selections, using physical models and interior perspective collage as design tools. Other factors include the integration of painting and sculpture, the study of the exterior enclosure (materials, detailing, etc.), and the relationship between exterior and interior. To transform these factors into one beautiful and coherent architectural expression is the essence and challenge of the Space Problem.”

Kristin Jones, Architect / Assistant Professor
College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology

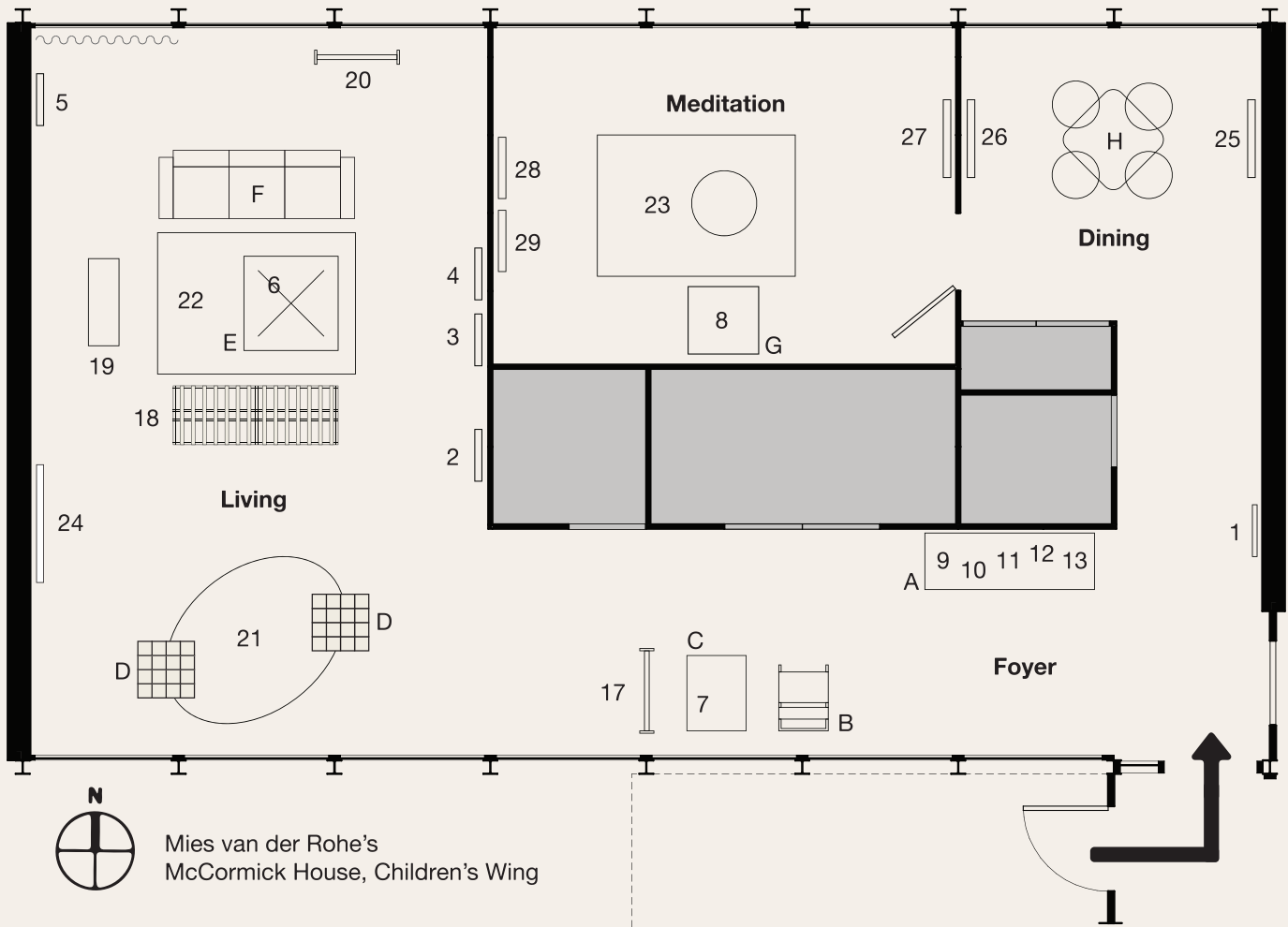
“The Space Problem’ was a logical next step in a series of expertise-building curricula. Students entered this study of space with a thorough exposure to materials and means of construction, overlaid with an understanding of program and use of space. These skills were then complimented through the space problem, with aesthetics. This exercise was conceived of to build visual intuition of proportion, character, and quality of space. its methodology was to study, with a physical model, how a larger space could be divided into multiple spaces of distinct character. The project involved iterations of walls, differentiated by height, length, color and texture. It is the end of a sequence of visual training courses meant to train the eye, when dealing with issues of lineweight, proportion, shape, texture and color.”

Dirk Denison, Architect / Professor
College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology

“A semester-long course taught by Professor Arthur Takeuchi, ‘The Space Problem’ moves beyond understanding architecture as a summation of the materials that manifests as a physical building, but rather explores the relationship of the materials, objects in space, the negative spaces, and human proportion as direct agents in affecting the perception of space.”

Andrew Jiang, B.ARCH 2020
College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology

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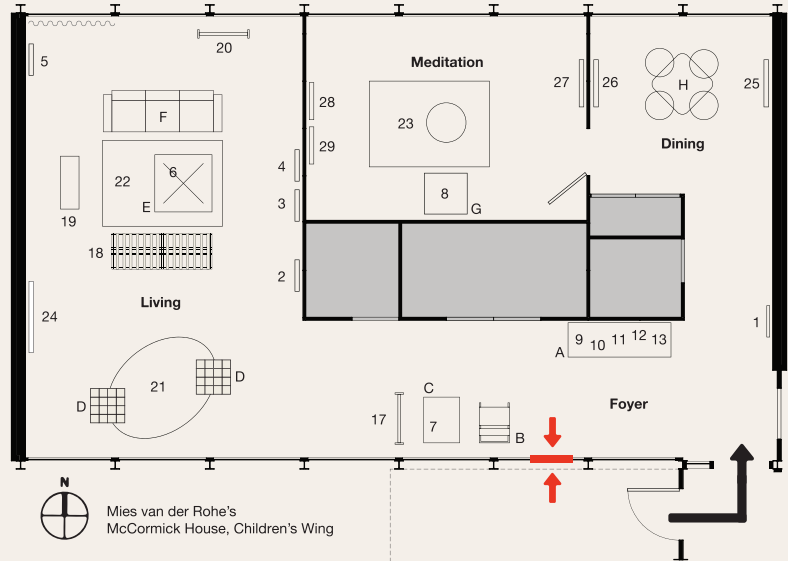
"As the only contemporary art center in the U.S. that oversees a house designed by Mies van der Rohe, the museum has a unique responsibility and programming opportunity. Because of this combination, the McCormick House (1952) can be a historic home and site-specific exhibition space. Each of our rotating exhibitions, talks, and other programs build on the legacy of the house in a new way, forming a complex narrative over time. During each visit, our guests see a different art or design installation, and view the house through another lens."

John McKinnon, Executive Director
Elmhurst Art Museum

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| <p>A Florence Knoll
Knoll Credenza, 1961
Elmhurst Art Museum Collection</p> <p>B Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
MR10 Chair, 1927 (example circa 1955)
Elmhurst Art Museum Collection</p> <p>C Florence Knoll
End table, 1954
Elmhurst Art Museum Collection</p> <p>D Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
Barcelona Ottomans, 1929
Elmhurst Art Museum Collection
Gift of Jane Deuble</p> <p>E Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
Barcelona Table, 1929
Elmhurst Art Museum Collection</p> <p>F Hans Wegner
'Airport Sofa' Model AP34/3, 1960
Collection of David Salkin & Dirk Denison</p> <p>G Hans Wegner
Coffee Table Model AT12, 1950
Collection of David Salkin & Dirk Denison</p> <p>H Gae Aulenti
Locus Solus dining set, 1964
Collection of David Salkin & Dirk Denison</p> | <p>1 Marshall Brown
<i>A Choice to Do Both</i>, 2019
Collage on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>2 Marshall Brown
<i>Easement</i>, 2019
Collage on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>3 Marshall Brown
<i>Nothing for as Long as Possible</i>, 2019
Collage on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>4 Marshall Brown
<i>Simple Subtraction</i>, 2019
Collage on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>5 Marshall Brown
<i>Repetition as a Form of Change</i>, 2019
Collage on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>6 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Untitled</i>, 2020
White stoneware and glaze
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>7 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Interior Goya</i>, 2020
Stoneware and oil paint
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>8 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Friday February 10, 2017</i>, 2017
Dark and light stoneware
with clear glaze
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>9 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Wednesday May 2, 2018</i>, 2018
Stoneware and oil paint
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>10 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Friday July 6th, 2018</i>, 2018
Ceramic with glaze
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>11 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Monday July 23, 2018</i>
White stoneware
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>12 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Untitled</i>, 2020
Terracotta
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> <p>13 Jennefer Hoffmann
<i>Monday December 4 2017</i>, 2017
Dark stoneware with glaze
Courtesy of the artist
and Volume Gallery</p> | <p>17 Sterling Lawrence
<i>Screen 2</i>, 2016
Aluminum, plexiglass
Courtesy of the artist
and DOCUMENT</p> <p>18 Sterling Lawrence
<i>Rack 03</i>, 2015
Rubber, aluminum and hardware
Courtesy of the artist
and DOCUMENT</p> <p>19 Sterling Lawrence
<i>Side Table</i>, 2016
Aluminum and plexiglass
Courtesy of the artist
and DOCUMENT</p> <p>20 Sterling Lawrence
<i>Screen</i>, 2016
Aluminum, plexiglass and hooks
Courtesy of the artist
and DOCUMENT</p> <p>21 David Salkin
<i>Opal Rug</i>, 2018
Hand-knotted wool. Unique.
Courtesy of the artist</p> <p>22 David Salkin
<i>Lake Rug</i>, 2018
Hand-knotted wool. Unique.
Courtesy of the artist</p> <p>23 David Salkin
<i>Village Rug</i>, 2018
Hand-knotted silk. Unique.
Courtesy of the artist</p> <p>24 Geoffrey Todd Smith
<i>Jealousy Trellis</i>, 2015
Enamel and gouache on panel
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>25 Geoffrey Todd Smith
<i>Chaste Waterfall</i>, 2018
Enamel, gouache, ink
and paper on panel
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>26 Geoffrey Todd Smith
<i>Astral Guide 2.0</i>, 2018
Enamel, gouache, ink
and paper on panel
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>27 Geoffrey Todd Smith
<i>Love In a Lunar Lander</i>, 2018
Enamel, gouache, ink
and paper on panel
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>28 Geoffrey Todd Smith
<i>Arctic Foxtrot</i>, 2018
Enamel, gouache, ink
and paper on panel
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> <p>29 Geoffrey Todd Smith
<i>Friction Within the
Science Fiction Faction</i>, 2018
Enamel, gouache, ink
and paper on panel
Courtesy of the artist
and Western Exhibitions</p> |
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