

# Respond to question

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



February 11, Mies and Corbu: On Form and Their Buildings What is form in architecture? Le Corbusier (Corbu) and Mies van der Rohe (Mies) are two scholars who tackle the meaning of form. They address form similarly by placing centrality to the spirit of architecture that drives its fundamental elements. Their writings on form and architecture, furthermore, influence their work too, specifically Corbu's Villa Savoye and Mies' Barcelona Pavilion. Corbu and Mies both see form as secondary to the living purpose of the building, where Corbu's writings help explain the minimalist, mechanized design of Villa Savoye that reflects the five points of new architecture, and Mies' writings support the essence of Barcelona Pavilion as the exhibit itself. Corbu and Mies similarly perceive form as a derivative goal to determining the living rationale of the building. Corbu sees form as a reflection of the spirit's beauty. He says that an Architect arranges the form that comes from "his spirit," a form that "affects" the senses and "provokes plastic emotions," emotions that come from the "various movements of our heart and of our understanding," so that viewers/users can "experience the [form's] sense of beauty" (59). The form is a manifestation of spiritual aspirations that produce outside beauty. The purpose of the form is a purpose from the living spirit. In the same way, Mies sees form as a goal only because the true essence of architecture is the life that drives it. Like Corbu, he sees that form is a "striving" for the "outside," but only because of a "living inside" that is based on the "intensity of life" (102). Mies also mentions the "spiritual and real commitments" of the creative process (102), the same spirit that drives the meaning and purpose of form for Corbu. Corbu and Mies likewise agree that form is a goal that the fullness of

life inside the building produces.

In application of the conception of form, Corbu's writings help describe the minimalist, mechanized design of Villa Savoye that reflects the five points of new architecture, and Mies' writings support the essence of Barcelona Pavilion as the exhibit itself. Villa Savoye follows the form of Corbu's new architecture. The supports of Villa Savoye are the slender columns that make the house appear as floating (Corbu 99). The roof gardens provide protection from the elements and outside space (Corbu 99). Villa Savoye has a free-design ground plan with a private inner place, yet the glass walls allow the communion between inner and outer spaces (Corbu 100). Villa Savoye also has horizontal windows (ribbon windows), wherein when people are inside the building, they see both physical and spatial illumination (Corbu 100). Finally, Villa Savoye has free facade that do not have structural members, as the facade extends beyond the supporting construction (Corbu 100). These features of new architecture produce a minimalist, mechanized form. As for Mies, his writings show Barcelona Pavilion as a standalone exhibit, where the boundaries of inner and outer spaces are blurred. The openness of Barcelona Pavilion shows that form is a representation of real life, as Mies says: "Real form presupposes real life. But not something that has already existed, nor something thought out" (102), because "[w]hat matters is not 'what' but only 'how'" (123). Barcelona Pavilion reflects the openness that people need to find peace in their lives, the kind of peace that should be as it is, tranquil and free. Miese and Corbu write about form and architecture that drive their works' meanings.

Form is a goal that is embedded in the spirit of the living. It is outward, but

alive from its essential functions, not only for human shelter, but also for human existence. Mies and Corbu believe in the simplicity of form that souls create. The physical aspects of form are nothing more than the human spirit throbbing for physical beauty.

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