

ELMHURST ART MUSEUM

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ELMHURST ART MUSEUM'S HIGHLY ANTICIPATED RESTORATION OF MIES VAN DER ROHE MCCORMICK HOUSE FACADE TO BE COMPLETE IN JUNE 2018

Historically significant mid-century modern house and museum gallery unveiled with attention-getting *Seeing Red* 'intervention;' also opening in June will be complementary exhibition, *Mies's McCormick House Revealed: New Views*

(February 20, 2018) The **Elmhurst Art Museum** proudly announced today that the highly anticipated restoration of the original facade of **Mies van der Rohe's McCormick House** (1952) will be unveiled in June 2018. The iconic carport entrance of this historically significant building -- one of only three single-family houses built by Mies in the U.S. -- will be visible for the first time in more than 20 years, having been obscured by an addition connecting it to the Museum since 1997. Elmhurst's Heritage Architecture Studio is working with Elmhurst Art Museum Executive Director **John McKinnon** to oversee the historic preservation by Berglund Construction. This unveiling marks a major transformation of the house, and one part of a multi-phase restoration plan which will continue with the interior at a later date.

"Through this restoration, the Elmhurst Art Museum aims to honor and revitalize the original designs by Mies van der Rohe, while better educating and inspiring generations to come," said McKinnon. "As the only contemporary art center in the U.S. that oversees a building designed by Mies, we have a unique responsibility and programming opportunity. Each of our rotating exhibitions, talks, and other programs build on the legacy of the house in a new way. This aspect of the Museum's mission will be more visible after the construction."

In tandem with the revelation of the building's full exterior for the first time in over 20 years, internationally acclaimed artist **Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle** will create *Seeing Red*, a stunning architectural intervention within the McCormick House that builds on an idea of the original developers Robert Hall McCormick and Herbert S. Greenwald, who offered to make glass windows of the proposed prefab

housing “almost any shade of the rainbow.” Manglano-Ovalle’s architectural interventions have included projects at Mies’s Farnsworth House, Barcelona Pavilion, S.R. Crown Hall at IIT, and Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, as well as the fabrication of the architect’s 1951 proposal for the as-yet-unbuilt House with Four Columns. This intervention will be on view through August 26.

At the same time, the Museum will stage ***Mies’s McCormick House Revealed: New Views***, a complementary three-part exhibition curated by renowned Columbia University Professor of Art History and Archeology **Barry Bergdoll**. *New Views* will provide background, context, and visibility to the McCormick House and serve as an introduction for a broad audience.

“The McCormick House is the great unknown Mies van der Rohe design hiding in plain view. Not only is the restoration going to allow visitors again to experience its spatial sequence, but research has revealed Mies van der Rohe’s contribution, hitherto all but unknown, to the vibrant debate over a future of prefabricated houses in post-World War II America,” said Bergdoll.

New Views’ first gallery will contain models of the prototype house and the potential prefab houses that were to be made after it, in addition to reproductions of historical photographs and advertisements for the houses. Among the highlights will be loans from the Mies van der Rohe archive at the Museum of Modern Art, including three drawings of the McCormick House that have never been exhibited. The exhibition is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

New Views will also serve as the only U.S. venue for an international traveling exhibition curated by **Renato Anelli**, Professor at the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning - University of São Paulo and curatorial advisor for *New Views*. Taking place in the second gallery, the exhibition will contextualize the McCormick House with other glass houses across North and South America. Models and photographs for homes built and proposed by other architects will provide background for Mies’s ‘dream home of tomorrow.’ These materials come from the exhibition *Glass Houses*, which was originally held in Brazilian Lina Bo Bardi’s Glass House.

Finally, the third gallery of *New Views* will display photographs by contemporary artists responding to reflections and transparency on the iconic glass walls designed by Mies, including works by Scott Fortino, Veronika Kellndorfer, and Luisa Lambri. Described by a prefab advertisement used by McCormick, “The glass wall doesn’t merely disclose a section of the outdoors but reveals to the expansive eye and spirit a constant weather-changing spectacle from the earth up, of plant and creature.”

About the McCormick House

In 1952, the renowned modern architect Mies van der Rohe designed a home for Robert Hall McCormick III, a member of one of Chicago’s most prominent families, and his wife, the poet Isabella Gardner. The McCormick House—one of only three single-family homes built by Mies in the United States—originally served two purposes: it was a home for the McCormick family and a prototype for a proposed group of smaller, affordable middle-class homes in Chicago’s suburbs that McCormick, Greenwald, and Mies were hoping to develop. The McCormick House is a rare and important example of Mies’s mature style, incorporating elements of both Farnsworth House (1951) and 860-880 Lake Shore Drive (1951) in a revolutionary prototype for mass-produced modular housing. According to McCormick, however, the progressive design had limited appeal to potential buyers, and the house lacked some desirable features like air conditioning and a basement, a new standard in new suburban developments.

It was originally located nearby at 299 Prospect Avenue, Elmhurst, and was acquired by Elmhurst Art Museum and moved to its current location at 150 Cottage Hill Avenue in 1994.

About Elmhurst Art Museum

Elmhurst Art Museum is located at 150 Cottage Hill Avenue in Elmhurst (IL), 25 minutes from downtown Chicago by car or public transportation (Metra). The Museum is both an international destination for Mies van der Rohe scholars and fans and a regional center where people from Chicago and the western suburbs learn to see and think differently through the study of the art, architecture and design of our time.

The Museum is one block from the Elmhurst Metra station and open Tuesday-Sunday from 11 AM– 5 PM (7 PM on Fridays). Admission is \$9 (\$8 for seniors) and free for students and children under 18. For more information, please call 630.834.0202 or visit elmhurstmuseum.org

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Header image credits (l-r): Archival image of the original McCormick House Carport, Courtesy of Hedrich Blessing Archive, Chicago Historical Society; Rendering courtesy of Heritage Architecture Studio, LLC and LP Studio Inc.; Rendering of *Seeing Red*, an architectural intervention by Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle.