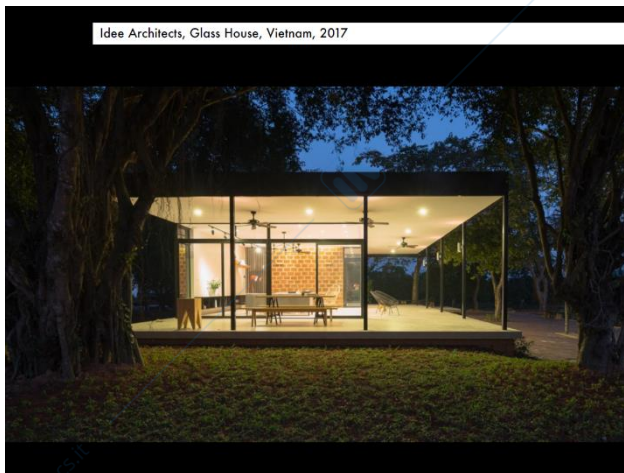


GLASS

The obsession for glass and transparency in contemporary architecture. If you look at contemporary production, we can see the idea of designing glass buildings is really common and can somehow become an obsession for designers searching to underline or chase all the features of the use of glass in architecture. This is particularly true when having a look not only at the construction of skyscrapers but also at the domestic dimension architecture.



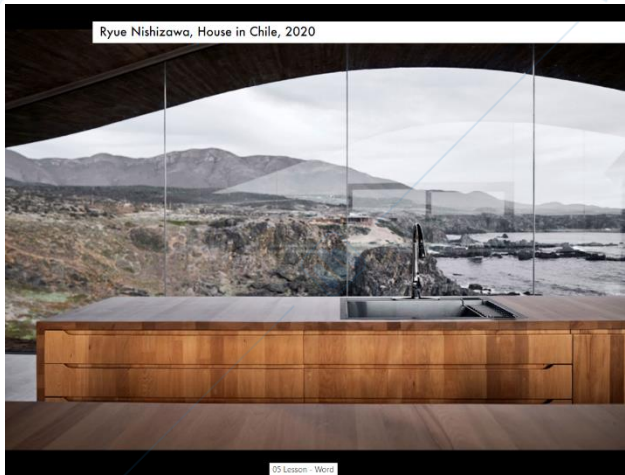
This is a glass house by the Dutch architect Mecanoo in the UK.



This is a small glass house in Vietnam by Idee Architects in 2017.



This is another kind of glass house in Spain, near Madrid, by Penelas Architects.



This is a quite impressive example in Chile by Nishizawa (quite famous Japanese architect). It is another version of a glass house, in this case with a quite bearing roof structure made out of a very thin layer of reinforced concrete, dialoguing with the context and the impressive south American landscape.

“VISIBILITY IS A TRAP” MICHAEL FOUCAULT, DISCIPLINE & PUNISH

Glass does not always mean transparency, nor always visibility (the purity of cleanliness or all the features that we can somehow attach to a pure idea of glass in architecture).

This is a sentence written by Michael Foucault in Discipline & Punish. This is a provocative statement. In Foucault’s case, visibility was analysed in relationship with the panopticon (man seeing everybody). This sentence is quite appropriate for funny case studies such as:

Tate Modern wins privacy case brought by owners of £4m flats

Residents had complained of ‘near constant surveillance’ by visitors to London gallery

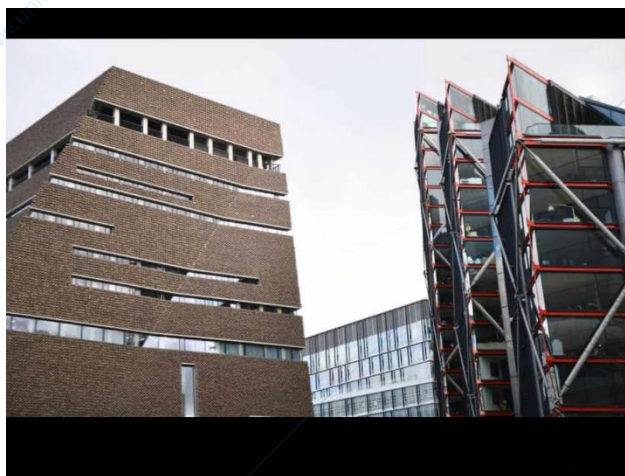
Mark Brown Arts correspondent
Tue 12 Feb 2019 18:13 GMT

▲ Flat owners had objected to being viewed at and photographed from Tate Modern’s rooftop terrace. Photograph: Victoria Jones/PA Wire

One of Tate Modern’s most popular areas, a top-floor terrace that offers spectacular 360-degree views of London, is to remain fully open after neighbours lost a privacy case.

[Article to read on Beep] It is a recent story of an excess of transparency of the whole track of the inhabitants of this apartment building in London, designed and build recently a few years ago.

Tate Modern wins privacy case brought by owners of £4m flats. (Refurbishment conceived by Herzog & de Meuron)



This is the context: in the left-hand side, the new tower of the Tate Modern (an addition to the existing building) designed by Herzog & de Meuron and inaugurated a few weeks ago. On the right side of the picture, this luxury apartment building completely transparent and glazed with large windows.

“One of the Tate Modern’s most popular areas, a top-floor terrace that offers spectacular 360-degree views of London, is to remain fully open after neighbours lost a privacy case.” (Of course, the top of that terrace/last floor of the building in the left)

"More than half a million visitors a year get lifts up to the 10th floor of the gallery's £260m extension and breathe in fresh air as they look out to St Paul's, or the Shard, or the luxury interiors of expensive flats in the Neo Bankside development of a little over 34 meters away. "We have this wonderful panoramic terrace open towards London skyline, which is visited by millions of visitors, but the problem is that the building is facing a private apartment building.

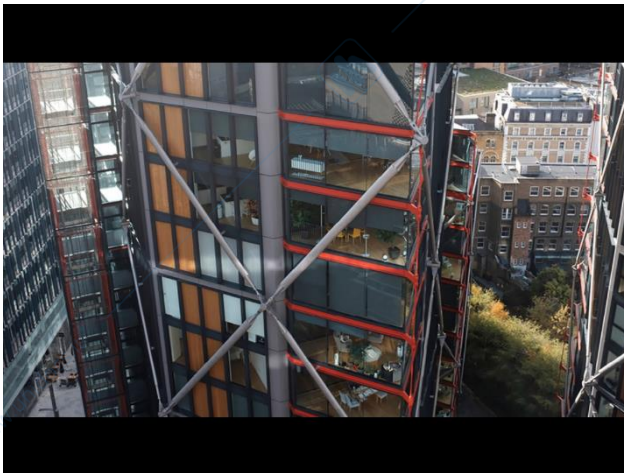
"Tate put up notices asking visitors to respect their neighbours. Security guards discouraged people photographing the flats." People on top of this building (on top of the Tate Modern) takes selfies or pictures and they can often feel the need of taking pictures of this luxury totally transparent buildings in front of the Tate Modern.

"The former Tate director Sir Nicholas Serota suggested the residents installed net curtains.

But none of it was enough for owners of the £4m flats who complained of "near constant surveillance" because of endless peering, waving, photographing and even obscene gestures from people of Tate Modern's terrace. Owners of four flats took the gallery to court alleging their rights to privacy were being breached under nuisance and human rights laws." There was an issue about the lack of privacy due to this new building (addition to the Tate modern, tower) which was actually designed not much after the luxury apartment building. They are both quite contemporary (designed and built at the same time).

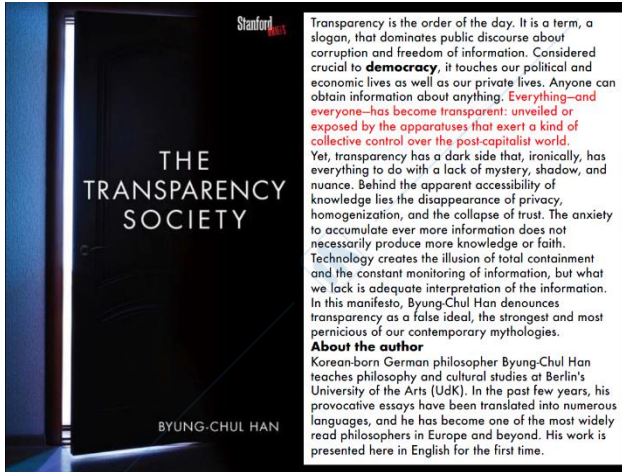
It is quite funny and interesting the way in which the idea of designing an apartment completely open towards the outside with a really wonderful view of London skyline in this area of the city (almost city centre) close to many services and places.

The main feature of this apartment building became its main problem: visibility became a sort of trap (following Foucault's approach) and so it became the point for a sort of fight between the Tate (who actually won this battle) and the inhabitants of the building.



Another picture of this apartments; some with curtains in order to close/keep their privacy and stop people from making bad gestures or taking pictures of their privacy.

This case study example is interesting because it can encourage us to fleet upon the role and concept of transparency, not only in architecture but in a wider sense in contemporary society.



This is a quite famous book written by a quite famous German, but Korean born philosopher who wrote this book on transparency and titled "The transparency society".

He explains how today everything and everyone has become transparent, and so this transparency leads to a sort of over exposure, which is part of the way we live today our society (not only physically). Transparencies meaning also other aspects of our lives, habits, interests and so on.

"Transparency is the order of the day. It is a term, a slogan, that dominates public discourse about corruption and freedom of information." This is an awful debate in relation to social networks and use of our private data and info for advertisement and commercials.

"Considered crucial to democracy, it touches our political and economic lives, as well as our private lives. Anyone can obtain information about anything. Everything—and everyone—has become transparent: unveiled or exposed by the apparatuses that exert a kind of collective control over the post-capitalist world. Yet, transparency has a dark side," This is the dark side that we have trying to approach also in our today's lecture about architecture and contemporary interiors.

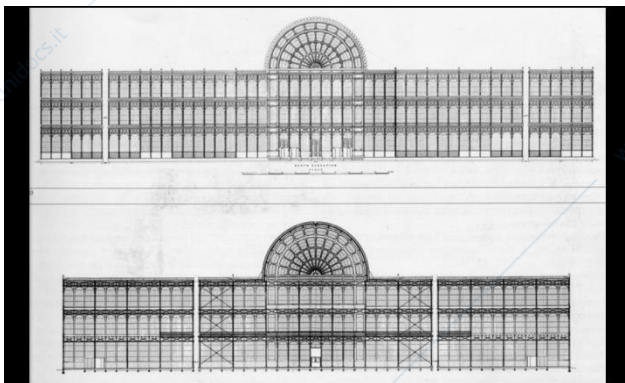
"A dark side that, ironically, has everything to do with a lack of mystery, shadow, and nuance. Behind the apparent accessibility of knowledge lies the disappearance of privacy, homogenization, and the collapse of trust. The anxiety to accumulate ever more information does not necessarily produce more knowledge or faith. Technology creates the illusion of total containment and the constant monitoring of information, but what we lack is adequate interpretation of the information."



Where does this myth of transparency in architecture (spaces, building houses) completely made out of glass start from? What is the starting point? There are many possible starting points but usually Crystal Palace, the very famous temporary building, built in London in the middle of Hyde Park in 1851 to host the first international exhibition (EXPO).

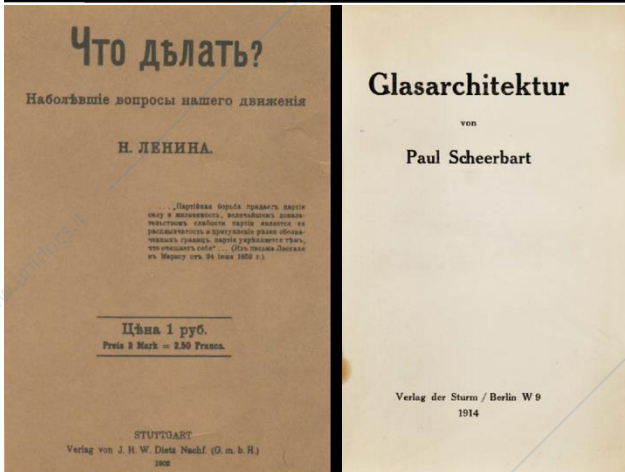


It was made of a steel frame and large glass panels which allowed to have this sort of crystal atmosphere (totally glazed space) with these huge halls and everything is based, from the technical point of view, on the use of prefabrication and industrialized building process to build this gigantic building which was made to host all the goods and production of hundred of nations coming in London in 1851 in order to present their material culture.



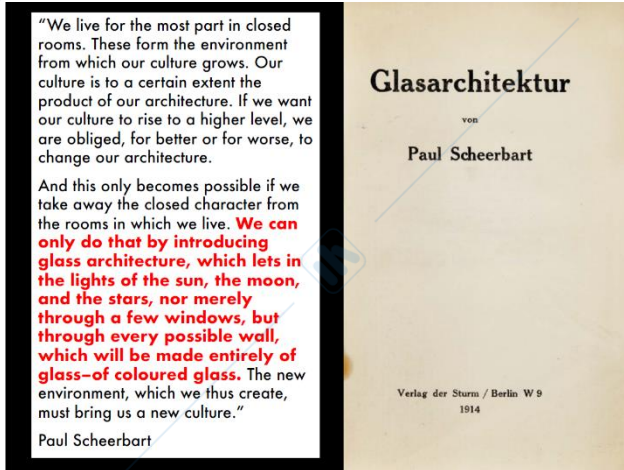
John Ruskin: "nient'altro che una grande serra, la più vasta di quante ne fossero mai state fabbricate" che dimostrava l'eterna impossibilità di raggiungere la bellezza attraverso il ferro. A.W. Pugin: "mostro di vetro", "impostura di cristallo", una "costruzione brutta e vile", "il più mostruoso oggetto mai immaginato".

All the critics and polemics related to it are quite famous, there were many people attacking and criticizing the concept/logic of this building. Some stating that this was only an industrialized building but not architecture was something completely different; this was only a product from the industry meaning this was something totally far away from the concept of beauty.



This building was a starting point for architectural revolution and also aesthetic evolution in the way we all (170 years ago) approached buildings and architecture with aesthetics. So, if the Crystal Pallace was the symbol/paradigm of new kind of architecture made out of completely transparent glass and somehow among its main features (idea of visibility, cleanliness, light coming inside as an exchange between the inside and outside) we can see in the 20th century many other approaches to glass architecture. One of the most famous

books or manifestos of the early 20th century architecture is this one: *Glasarchitektur* (glass architecture) written by Paul Scheerbart.



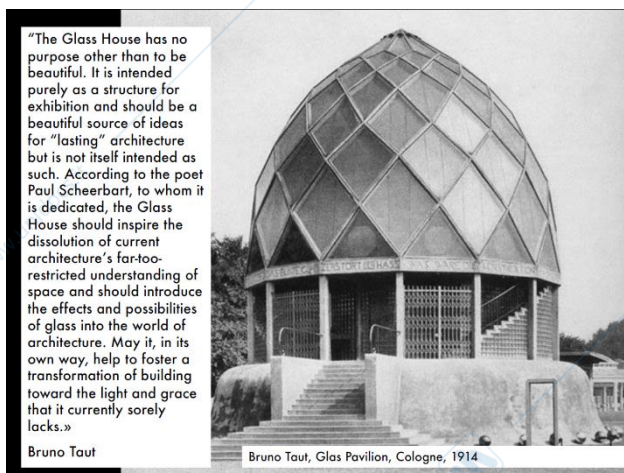
This is a really famous book trying to underline the need for a new species/kind of architecture based on the only use of glass and not only stone or bricks like architecture was traditionally made.

"We live for the most part in closed rooms. These forms the environment from which our culture grows. Our culture is to a certain extent the product of our architecture. If we want our culture to rise to a higher level, we are obliged, for better or for worse, to change our architecture." This is a statement saying we have to change our

world through the change of our architecture.

"And this only becomes possible if we take away the closed character from the rooms in which we live." No more closed rooms, no more enclosed spaces but rather a new kind of freedom and openness.

"We can only do that by introducing glass architecture, which lets in the lights of the sun, the moon, and the stars, not merely through a few windows, but through every possible wall, which will be made entirely of glass-of coloured glass. The new environment, which we thus create, must bring us a new culture." It is stating we need not more windows, but walls made out of glass. There is a strong shift between an architecture made out of walls to an architecture made out of glass walls; an architecture that can breathe somehow with an exchange of light between the inside and outside. This is made not by a normal transparent glass but rather coloured glass, that changes completely the idea and features of space that we can approach through Scheerbart's suggestions and advices. We can touch the result of his suggestions through the work of very famous architect Bruno Taut in his Glass Pavilion in Cologne (in a famous exhibition of 1914).



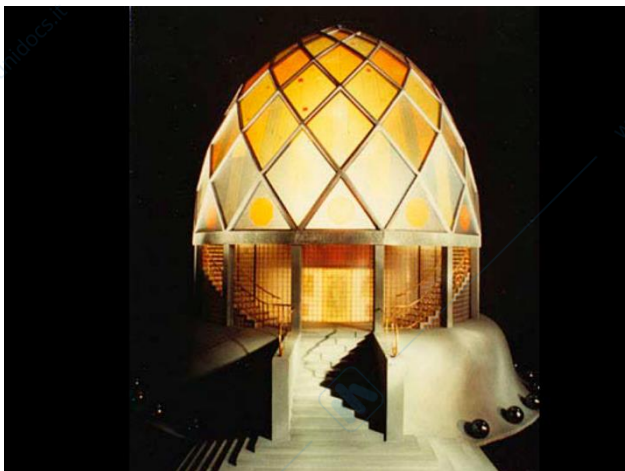
This is the Glass Pavilion, which was designed according to Scheerbart's instructions. You can read some of the statements written by Scheerbart in his book on the pavilion:

"The Glass House has no purpose other than to be beautiful. It is intended purely as a structure for exhibition and should be a beautiful source of ideas for "lasting" architecture but is not itself intended as such. According to the poet Paul Scheerbart, to whom it is dedicated, the Glass House should inspire the dissolution of current architecture's far-too-restricted

understanding of space and should introduce the effects and possibilities of glass into the world of architecture. May it, in its own way, help to foster a transformation of building toward the light and grace that it currently sorely lacks."



This is another manifesto building. You can see inside that it is made of a very particular kind of glass: luxfer. These are small tiles made of glass which allow light to enter the building. There is a strong research on material.



This is a model that you can appreciate more the colour of the building and so the light entering the building and colouring the interior space of this pavilion.

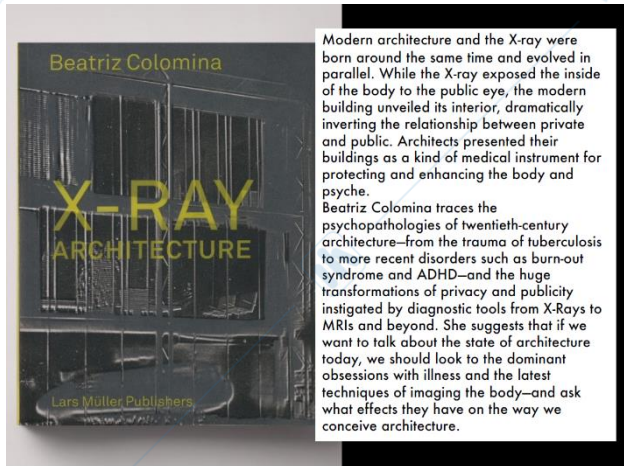
In this case, glass does not mean transparency or visibility, it leads us to a different perception and atmosphere which is also in this case particularly religious (there is a sort of mysticism within this building, with a lot of symbols and references to a religious space, also with the idea of a sort of path from the entrance up to the main hall and the space below the coloured vault).

This is an interpretation/version of glass architecture; really famous for the history of architecture but also for the history of construction because Bruno Taut researched and tested a lot of different kinds of glasses in order to use these tiles for the main façade, or vault or also all the steps of the staircases. There was search for the total use of glass.



This particular and original kind of obsession with glass construction/glazed building was a feature shared also with another building erected in the same year (1914) in Koln. This is another famous building of the history of architecture of the last century: The Model Factory designed by Walter Gropius. Designed by a man who in 5 years would be the director of the Bauhaus.

Here we can approach a totally different idea of glass. Glass here is transparency. You can see the corner of the building with the heliocidal spectacular staircase running up to the top of the building.



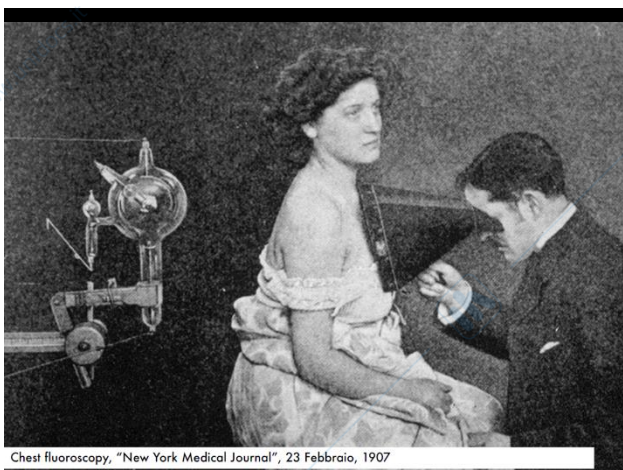
This is an interesting book written by Beatriz Colomina, *X-ray Architecture* which is about building a sort of analogy between modern architecture and technical invention and use of X-rays in medicine but not only in medicine. This is the abstract:

“Modern architecture and the X-ray were born around the same time and evolved in parallel. While the X-ray exposed the inside of the body to the public eye, the modern building unveiled its interior, dramatically inverting the relationship between private and public.” So there is an issue

between private and public space/dimension.

“Architects presented their buildings as a kind of medical instrument for protecting and enhancing the body and psyche.” Your body and mind together are like protected but there is also a sort of power coming from the use of glass in architecture because glass allows the sun to enter the space. The sun is good, and sun means a healthy body; this is a revolution in terms of our relationship with our climate and atmosphere if compared to what happened in previous years.

“Beatriz Colomina trace the psychopathologies of twentieth-century architecture—from the trauma of tuberculosis to more recent disorders such as burn-out syndrome and ADHD—and the huge transformations of privacy and publicity instigated by diagnostic tools from X-Rays to MRIs and beyond. She suggests that if we want to talk about the state of architecture today, we should look to the dominant obsessions with illness and the latest techniques of imaging the body—and ask what effects they have on the way we conceive architecture.” She is suggesting this parallelism, a strong connection between a sort of medical instrument that influences our way to conceive and design spaces. This is particularly true today with the pandemic, because in terms of hygiene for example we take lifts alone and there is a wide attention paid to cleanliness and the possibility to take some diseases. Today this book published few years ago shows us how there are connections between the analysis of our body as the object of medical investigations and also the way in which society deals with these issues (body-architecture-medical/scientific devices).



Chest fluoroscopy, "New York Medical Journal", 23 Febbraio, 1907

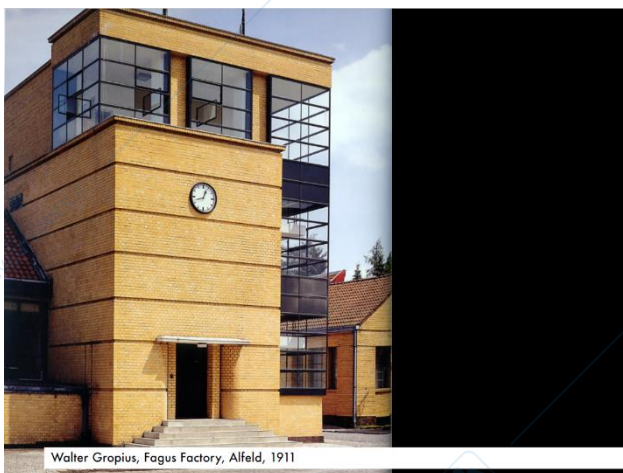
This is an image of a Chest fluoroscopy, published in "New York Medical Journal" in 1907 and is showing a doctor looking through this strange tool in order to check the health of this woman. It is another picture taken from Beatriz Colomina's book and showing the idea of passing through spaces/surfaces/layers in order to see beyond, what before couldn't be seen by our "normal" eyes.



Another nice picture: this is a X-ray view of a chameleon, showing the visible and clear distinction of the main structure (in this case of the body of the animal) that can be put together with the structure of a building like identifying the main bearing structure and all the rest of the components; first, the primary structure and then, secondary or less important parts of this "system" (body).



This other case of a school in Amsterdam designed by two Dutch architects in the 1920's is showing the symbol of this obsession with transparency and exchange between inside and outside. In the Netherlands (at least more than in Italy) this is something precious that you would like to take as much as you can. This is a school which is totally glazed and where children are supposed to dialogue, live, play and be educated with as much sunlight as they could thanks to this particular and unfiltered architecture.



This is another famous building by Walter Gropius, the Fagus Factory. One of the main features of it was the idea of the use of the glass showing that it was a building with a main bearing structure (frame) with a new logic/approach to architecture.



This is one of the famous pictures taken in that time of this wall of light entering this industrial space and allowing all the workers to work in a very healthy place thanks to the use of glass.



Walter Gropius, Bauhaus building, Dessau, 1925-26

If in the later there was a real factory (place intended to be experienced by industrial workers to produce parts of shoes), Gropius 50 years later designed another kind of building: the Bauhaus building in Dessau. Designed as a factory in which people is producing industrial design and architecture. There is a different kind of production, more about creativity but always dealing with logic of the industry.



Again, one of the main features of this building is glass. The building has an enormous quantity of glass façade. The image is underlining the role of glass and so the transparency of the building. We should pay attention at the nature of this glass and the effect that transmits.

"Transparency," "space-time," "simultaneity," "interpenetration," "superimposition," "ambivalence" in the literature of contemporary architecture these words, and others like them, are often used as synonyms. We are familiar with their use and rarely seek to analyze their application. To attempt to make efficient critical instruments of such approximate definitions is perhaps pedantic. Nevertheless, in this article pedantry will be risked in an attempt to expose the levels of meaning with which the concept of transparency has become endowed.

According to the dictionary definition, the quality, or state, of being transparent is both a material condition—that of being pervious to light and air—and the result of an intellectual imperative, of our inherent demand for that which should be easily detected, perfectly evident, and free of dissimulation. Thus the adjective transparent, by defining a purely physical significance, by functioning as a critical honorific, and in being dignified with far from disagreeable moral overtones, becomes a word which from the first is richly loaded with the possibilities of both meaning and misunderstanding.

A further level of interpretation—that of transparency as a condition to be discovered in a work of art—is admirably

defined by Gyorgy Kepes in his *Language of Vision*: "If one sees two or more figures overlapping one another, and each of them claims for itself the common overlapped part, then one is confronted with a contradiction of spatial dimensions. To resolve this contradiction one must assume the presence of a new optical quality. The figures are endowed with transparency; that is they are able to interpenetrate without an optical destruction of each other. Transparency however implies more than an optical characteristic, it implies a broader spatial order. Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity. The position of the transparent figures has equivocal meaning as one sees each figure now as the closer now as the further one" (1).

By this definition, the transparent ceases to be that which is perfectly clear and becomes instead that which is clearly ambiguous. Nor is this meaning an entirely esoteric one: when we read (as we so often do) of "transparent overlapping planes," we constantly sense that rather more than a simple physical transparency is involved.

For instance, while Moholy-Nagy in his *Vision in Motion* continually refers to

"transparent cellophane plastic," "transparency and moving light," and "Rubens's radiant transparent shadows" (2), a careful reading of the book might suggest that for him such literal transparency is often furnished with certain allegorical qualities. Some superimpositions of form, Moholy tells us, "overcome space and time fixations. They transpore insignificant singularities into meaningful complexities...The transparent quality of the superimpositions often suggest transparency of context as well, revealing unnoticed structural qualities in the object" (3). And again, in commenting on what he calls "the manifold word agglutinations" of James Joyce, or the Joycean pun, Moholy finds that these are "the approach to the practical task of building up a completeness from interlocked units by an ingenious transparency of relationships" (4). In other words, he seems to have felt that, by a process of distortion, recomposition, and double-entendre, a linguistic transparency—the literary equivalent of Kepes' "interpenetration without optical destruction"—might be effected, and that whoever experiences one of these Joycean "agglutinations" will enjoy the sensation of looking through a first plane of significance to others lying behind it.

Therefore, at the very beginning of any

Glass and transparency are concepts that can be interpreted and seen from multiple perspectives. The transparency that we can see in Gropius' factories are many, there is not only one single and simple idea of transparency. This is well explained by the text given us to read by Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky about the role of transparency and the many ways through which we can experience this concept in architecture, as well as in art.

"'Transparency', 'space-time', 'simultaneity', 'interpretation', 'superimposition', 'ambivalence': in the literature of contemporary architecture

these words, and others like them, are often used as synonyms. We are familiar with their use and rarely seek to analyse their application. To attempt to make efficient critical instruments of such approximate definitions is perhaps pedantic. Nevertheless, in this article pedantry will be risked in an attempt to expose the levels of meaning with which the concept of transparency has become endowed.

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A further level of interpretation – that of transparency as a condition to be discovered in a work of art – is admirably defined by Gyorgy Kepes in his 'Language of Vision': "If one sees two or more figures overlapping one another, and each of them claims for itself the common overlapped part, then one is confronted with a contradiction of spatial dimensions. To resolve this contradiction one must assume the presence of a new optical quality. The figures are endowed with transparency; that is they are able to interpenetrate without an optical destruction of each other. Transparency however implies more than an optical characteristic, it implies a broader spatial order. Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity. The position of the transparent figures has equivocal meaning as one sees each figure now as the closer now as the further one." There can be done many shades and interpretations of the use of glass in architecture.



Jeff Wall, *Morning Cleaning*, 1999

Another view is the perspective of Jeff Wall, famous artist, entitled *Morning Cleaning* in 1999. Here, within the reproduction of the famous Barcelona Pavilion, it is quite interesting the perspective shown with the person cleaning the glass and therefore the transparency of this building; showing as blurred the really famous sculpture on the background of the pavilion and in dialogue will all the stones of the building.

(From <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/wall-morning-cleaning-mies-van-der-rohe-foundation-barcelona-t12294>)

Morning Cleaning, Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona is a colour photograph displayed as a transparency in a lightbox that measures over three and a half metres in length and almost two metres in height. It shows the interior of the German Pavilion in Barcelona, an iconic glass-walled building designed by the German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969). The minimally-furnished space is seen in the bright light of early morning. In the foreground, a gleaming steel pillar divides the composition vertically almost in half. Beyond the pillar, across an expanse of dark carpet, an attendant is in the process of cleaning a glass-panelled wall. The morning sun illuminates the clear and crisp lines of the building's architecture, while producing pronounced shadows on a deeply veined onyx wall to the left. On the panels the custodian has prepared for cleaning, streaming water adds a random design onto the surface of the symmetrically-patterned glass, which partially obscures a courtyard where a sculpture of a female nude by Georg Kolbe (1877–1947) stands by a pond.

Mies's pavilion was first constructed in 1928–9 for the 1929 International Exposition held in Barcelona. An important example of high modernist architecture, it was disassembled in 1930 at the conclusion of the exhibition, but reconstructed by Barcelona City Council in the 1980s because of its cultural significance. The Pavilion is now open to the public. Mies designed every detail of the Pavilion and its interior, including the steel Barcelona chairs and stools upholstered in white leather that are visible in Wall's image. Whilst the building's formal rigour and its opulent materials convey a sense of luxury, the appearance of a cleaner calls attention to the support systems necessary to maintain Mies's artistic vision, which he characterised with the famous principle 'less is more'.

illuminates the clear and crisp lines of the building's architecture, while producing pronounced shadows on a deeply veined onyx wall to the left. On the panels the custodian has prepared for cleaning, streaming water adds a random design onto the surface of the symmetrically-patterned glass, which partially obscures a courtyard where a sculpture of a female nude by Georg Kolbe (1877-1947) stands by a pond." How many shades of transparency we can see here? There is visibility, there is a sort of filtering (fog between us and the statue, but we can see it) and at the same time there is a reflection/glare/deformation of the space and alteration (mirroring/reflection) of the stone (the onyx) in a play of darkness and light. Again, the same material, quite similar transparent simple panel of glass can offer as many different perspectives and also meanings.

Wall has said: '[These] buildings require an especially scrupulous level of maintenance. In more traditional spaces a little dirt and grime is not such a shocking contrast to the whole concept. It can even become patina, but these Miesian buildings resist patina as much as they can.' (Quoted in Burnett, pp.90–1.)

Wall has pictured cleaners in other works that, as this one, make visible activities which are normally unseen or overlooked. In *Volunteer and Housekeeping*, both 1996, a man mops the floor of a shabby drop-in centre kitchen and a chambermaid exits a pristine but nondescript hotel room (reproduced in *Jeff Wall: The Complete Edition*, London 2009, pp.102–3 and p.215, respectively). 'Cleaning is mysterious,' the artist has commented, 'since it is the labour that erases itself if it is successful.' According to Wall, the idea of maintenance is 'to do with virtue. It's about what we have to do to be virtuous.' (Quoted in Burnett, p.90.) His concept for *Morning Cleaning*, Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona has its origins in an idea to depict a cleaner working in a private house and developed into this image after he staged an exhibition, entitled *Odradek*, at the Pavilion in 1999.

The artist has explained of this work:

The man in the picture is the real cleaner. The picture is documentary in the sense that that's exactly what he would be doing at that moment of the day. It's what I call 'near documentary'. Although I arranged the picture and worked in collaboration with the cleaner, the picture resembles very closely what a snapshot made at that moment would show. (Quoted in Burnett, p.90.)

Further reading:

Craig Burnett, *Jeff Wall*, London 2005, reproduced pp.112–3.
Vincent Honoré and Kate Paul, *Jeff Wall: Photographs 1978–2004*, exhibition guide, Tate Modern, London 2005.
Peter Galassi, *Jeff Wall*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York 2007, reproduced pp.130–1

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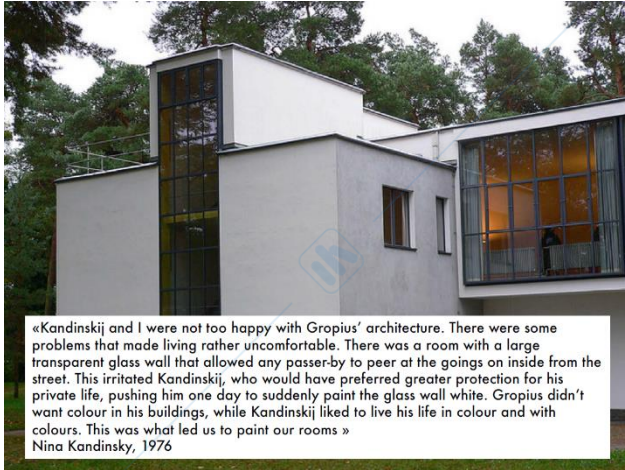
It is a really famous picture with a great sense of effort to render and represent the spatial features of Mies' pavilion at the same time playing with the daily real life of the pavilion, which was meant to be a sort of ideal architecture and prototype for modern building, still having a normal daily life (needs to be clean probably everyday because it is a building in which the idea of cleanliness and tidiness is something important, part of the quality of this space).

"Morning Cleaning is a colour photograph displayed as a transparency in a lightbox that measures over three and a half metres in length and almost two metres in height. It shows the interior of the German Pavilion in Barcelona (...) The minimally-furnished space is seen in the bright light of early morning. In the foreground, a gleaming steel pillar divides the composition vertically almost in half. Beyond the pillar, across an expanse of dark carpet, an attendant is in the process of cleaning a glass-panelled wall. The morning sun

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«Kandinskij and I were not too happy with Gropius' architecture. There were some problems that made living rather uncomfortable. There was a room with a large transparent glass wall that allowed any passer-by to peer at the goings on inside from the street. This irritated Kandinskij, who would have preferred greater protection for his private life, pushing him one day to suddenly paint the glass wall white. Gropius didn't want colour in his buildings, while Kandinskij liked to live his life in colour and with colours. This was what led us to paint our rooms »
Nina Kandinsky, 1976

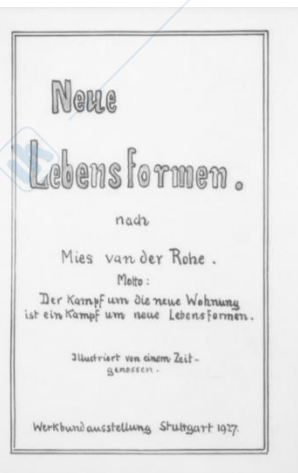
More perspectives, interpretations and critics to this obsession with glass walls and architecture (visibility) come, from example, from Nina Kandinsky (wife of famous artist Vasili). This is the house designed and built by Walter Gropius in 1925-26 in Dessau (not far away from the previous Bauhaus building). These houses were full of glass; they had this large windows. Nina and Vasili Kandinski weren't very happy with it.

“Kandinskij and I were not too happy with Gropius' architecture. There were some problems that made living rather uncomfortable. There was a room with a

large transparent glass wall that allowed any passer-by to peer at the goings on inside from the street. This irritated Kandinskij, who would have preferred greater protection for his private life, pushing him one day to suddenly paint the glass wall white. Gropius didn't want colour in his buildings, while Kandinskij liked to live his life in colour and with colours. This was what led us to paint our rooms.” This is the idea of a modern artist disturbed by this overwhelming transparency with the consequent lack of privacy. He painted the glass wall in white in a sort of contradiction, opposition towards Gropius' idea of living and relationship between inside and outside.

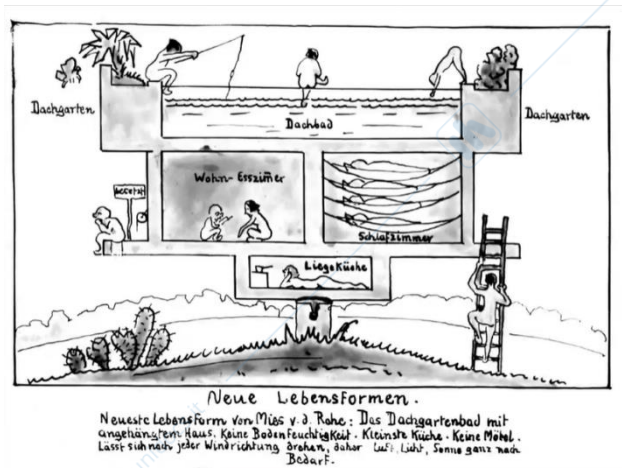


Dr. Alfred Gastpar (1873-1944)



This is another perspective, quite original. This man was in charge of checking and analysing the well-being in terms of healthcare of this new architecture. In other words, the architecture of this state was so modern, because of the geometrical shapes and features such as glass panels, that this man (Dr. Alfred Gastpar) was in charge of checking it. He started doing a survey analysing all the new architectural features like the use of glass and all the rest, in order to state if this architecture was good or bad for their health. While doing this survey, he designed a series of

caricatures with this title 'Neue Lebensformen' meaning "New ways of life/living" by Mies van der Rohe. He was mocking a sort of parody of Mies van der Rohe's approach to architecture (The battle for new housing/spaces is a battle about new ways of living).

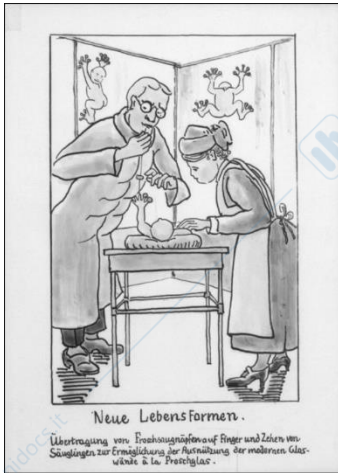


Neueste Lebensform von Mies v. d. Rohe: Des Dachgartenbad mit angehängtem Haus. Keine Bodenfeuchtigkeit. Kleinste Küche. Keine Möbel. Last-submax. jeder Winkrichtung. Brauch, daher Luft, Licht, Sonne ganz nach Bedarf.

These are the caricatures/pictures of a modern house. You can see the houses suspended on the air (on a single pillar) being like a parody of Le Corbusier. Everyone is naked because modern people at that time (from Bauhaus etc) were considered by many people as strange people (communists and so on) with strange habits. You can also see very small rooms with a woman lying down while cooking in order to criticize the idea of making small spaces (so called existence minimum; having the best of your space in a very small space in order to save space). This sort of minimalism

avoided any kind of furniture. Since the roof is flat, all the water can't go away and so all the

rainwater remains there and you can have a sort of swimming pool in top of it. This is a sort of funny critic of modern architecture, also with some disturbing perspectives or approaches to commenting these modern buildings.



"it is not an assured fact that these houses promote good healthy living. We do not even know if some of them are effectively habitable. Therefore, their living conditions must be subject to urgent and careful appraisal" Alfred Gastpar (Stadtarzt Stuttgart) to Daniel Sigloch, Mayor of Stuttgart, 1 November 1927.

This play is quite weird and it is commenting the idea of houses made out of glass (featuring large glass windows and panels). The caption says: in order to live or experience in a proper way in these houses made out of glass (where glass is everywhere), doctors are modifying the hands of the new-borns in order to let them walk on glass panels like frogs. This is quite weird and funny caricature having more meaning in this context.

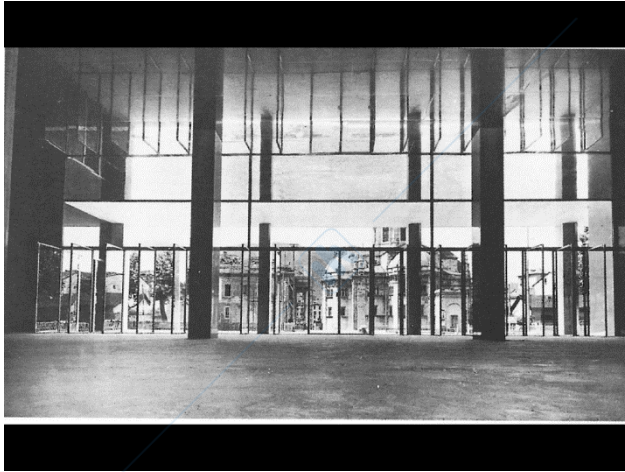
On the right side of the slide, you can see an extract from a letter to the major of Stuttgart: "it is not an assured fact that

these houses promote good healthy living. We do not even know if some of them are effectively habitable. Therefore, their living conditions must be subject to urgent and careful appraisal". This means that something like the use of glass were put on trial and analysed because they were strange/weird; there was a sort of reaction/ opposition which came from different perspectives, first one being scientific curiosity of people like Alfred Gaspar (who tried to check if it was good or not for people's health) but at the same time there were also something like political issues because this kind of architecture was criticized by a certain political path (in particular, people working or supporting traditional styles). At the end, these critics towards modern architecture and architects became one of the main battles of the Nazi party, which was supporting the traditional (or at least a part) building industry and fought strongly against all the interpretations and episodes of modern architecture; having the closure of the Bauhaus as one of the conclusions of this story.

Healthcare, politics, economics and other issues/perspectives were joined together in this use of glass as a new way of living in these years.



Again, politics and glass but in this case in a very famous building designed by Giuseppe Terragni (one of the most famous Italian architects of the last century) in Como, which was meant to be the headquarter for the local fascist party.



In this building we can find many different features but in particular the role of transparency in the rhetoric of this kind of architecture. In other words, Terragni tried to express and include a wide transparency and exchange between interior and exterior for many different reasons: the house of the fascist party was meant to be something transparent in which you could have the visibility on what was happening inside.

The idea of transparency in politics is something that is very common and always chased even today in 2020 when we are always trying to see what is

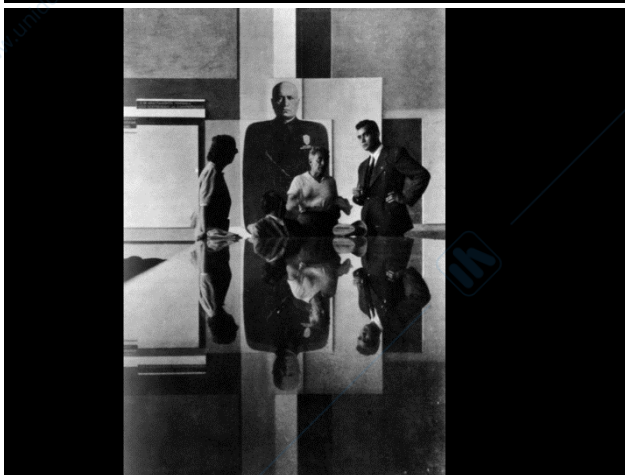
happening within the headquarters of our parties where politics is made and decisions are taken and made. In this case, in the project of such an important project for the local political life, the idea of an exchange between the inside and the outside. The idea of transparency was one of the most important features of this architecture.

From the interior looking towards the exterior there is a very subtle relationship between the modernity of this modern architecture and the Duomo (most important religious architectural space in Como, which is in the front) in order to find and underline this kind of production.

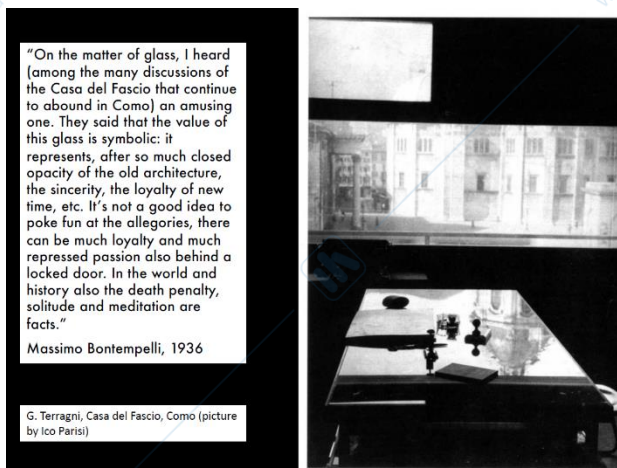


You can see the glass everywhere inside, even as a material for furniture as for the main table and main hall under the horrible silhouette of Mussolini. There is also some abstract art in the back of this picture; you can see the dialogue between art, architecture, design, furniture design, layout design and so on.

In this room we can see transparency; we are supposed to be seen from the outside but there is also an issue of reflection and glare.



This wonderful picture is showing this table reflecting the face of Mussolini and other people in the room. The idea of reflecting figures and mirroring the space is showing another/the other side of the tale (story). In this case, the reflection gives the idea of double side and opacity, a sort of deformation of the reality.



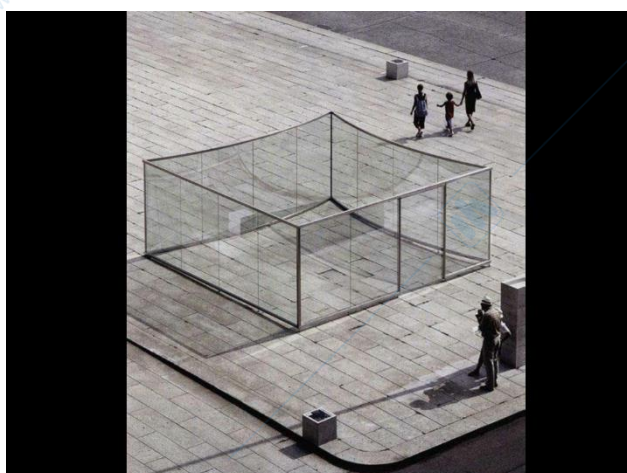
This is another picture by Ico Parisi (another great architect) and it is again underlining this double nature of glass; on the one hand, glass is transparency and on the other hand, this reflection on the table alters/ deforms (turns upside down) the image of the context (the reality). As you can see there are many ways to interpret this architecture.

Massimo Bontempelli (a great artist of that time) wrote a good statement: "On the matter of glass, I heard (among the many discussions of the Casa del Fascio that continue to abound in Como) an amusing one. They said that the value of

this glass is symbolic: it represents, after so much closed opacity of the old architecture, the sincerity, the loyalty of new time, etc. It's not a good idea to poke fun at the allegories, there can be much loyalty and much repressed passion also behind a locked door. In the world and history also the death penalty, solitude and meditation are facts." It is somehow commenting these direct and simple ideas that are a symbol for a new sincerity and purity (not only for architecture but of our society) and instead stating that this would be probably too simple to just make this allegory tracing a line between visibility, transparency and good managing of the country (way to shape the society). Again, visibility, clarity, purity, tidiness but also cloudiness, glare, deformation, alteration created by the glass.



There are dozens of declinations and interpretations of these issues. One of the most interesting linked to Casa del Fascio in Como was this installation; a small pavilion in front of the Casa del Fascio in 2004. Dan Graham, who is a very famous artist often dealing with the use of glass in small pavilions (this theme of reflection, visibility, filtering, multiplication and visuals), did something entitled Half square Half crazy for this glass pavilion in front of the Casa del Fascio.



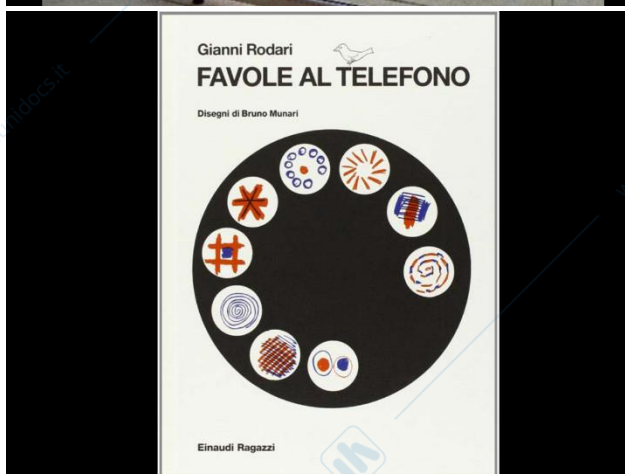
It was a way to create a dialogue between the pavilion and the Casa del Fascio; (it is doing something more than showing its geometry, Dan Graham designed this sort of glass box allowing people to enter inside with 2 straight and 2 concave walls in order to make a dialogue between on the one hand, the round shapes of the Duomo, and on the other hand a multiplicity of reflections through the use of straight or concave glass. With a very subtle and small deformation of these glass panels, he provoked the multiplication and deformation of all the perspectives and

reflections of the surrounding urban landscape (mainly the façade of the Casa del Fascio which was totally altered and deformed by this free subtle geometrical deformation).



This is a picture showing the use. It became a sort of playground for adults.

There is also a catalogue of this installation with a lot of good pictures and also some interesting text showing the story of the pavilion also connected to the work of Dan Graham.



Reflections, misunderstandings, disfigurements, deformations, reflections, opacity and so on... Many features own by glass and glass architecture. There is a great short story written by the great Gianni Rodari called *Favole al telefono* (Tales at the phone). This book published in the early 1960 contains a story about a child whose name is Giacomo and it's somehow a strange boy because his body has a particular feature.

"Once in a faraway city there was born a baby who was completely transparent. You could see through his arms and legs just as if they were air or water. He was made of flesh and bone but he looked as if he were made of glass. If by chance he happened to fall he didn't break into pieces. At most there would be a transparent bump on his forehead. You could see his heart beating, and his thoughts flickering like colored fish in their tank.
One time by mistake, the boy told a lie. Right away the people could see it like a ball of fire just behind his forehead: then he told the truth and the ball of fire dissolved. All the rest of his life he never told a lie.
Another time a friend told him a secret and right away everyone could see a black ball which rolled without stopping in his breast, and the secret wasn't secret anymore. The boy grew, became a youth, then a man, and everyone could read his thoughts. When they asked him a question, they could guess his answers before he could even open his mouth.
His name was Giacomo, but people called him "Giacomo-of-Crystal" and loved him for his loyalty. Everyone become kind when they were around him.
Unhappily in that country there came to power a ferocious dictator who began a time of bullying, injustice and poverty for the people. Whoever dared to protest disappeared without a trace. Whoever rebelled was shot. The poor were persecuted, and humiliated in a hundred different ways.
People kept quiet and suffered, afraid of what might happen otherwise."

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"But Giacomo couldn't keep quiet. Even if he didn't open his mouth, his thoughts spoke for him: he was transparent and everyone could read behind his forehead angry thoughts and condemnation for the injustice and outrageousness of the tyrant. In secret, then, people began to repeat the thoughts of Giacomo and they took hope.

The tyrant had Giacomo-of-Crystal arrested and ordered him thrown into the darkest prison.

But then an extraordinary thing happened. The walls of the cell in which Giacomo had been shut became transparent, then the inner walls of the prison and at last the outermost walls. The people who walked near the prison saw Giacomo seated on his stool, as if the prison were made of crystal and they continued to read his thoughts. At night a great light poured out of the prison and the tyrant in his palace had all the curtains drawn so that he wouldn't see it, but all the same he wasn't able to sleep. Giacomo-of-Crystal, even in chains, was stronger than he, because the truth is stronger than any other thing, brighter than day and more terrible than a hurricane."

Gianni Rodari, *Favole al telefono*, 1962

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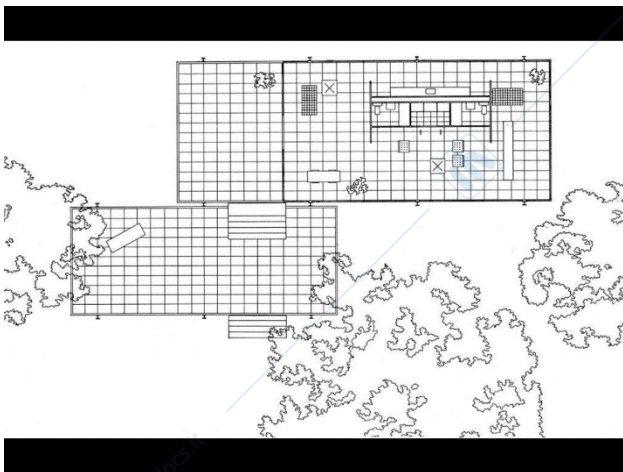
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Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, IL, 1945-51

This is one of the most famous houses of the 20th century, the Farnsworth House by Mies van der Rohe next to Chicago, when he moved there after the Nazi party took power and after his experience with the Bauhaus. This was the first built project he did in the USA for a couple. They wanted a small house where to enjoy their weekends in this natural landscape which often had floods and that is why it is built suspended on this very thin steel structure.



The apparent simplicity of this plan recalls somehow the asymmetry of some works of the neoclassicism: avantgarde works of the Dutch and also German neoclassicism of the pre-war period, also the idea of an architecture based on the principle of industry and so this sort of clarity and purity of an architecture which is of course, an industrial architecture (made of industrial materials), but at the same time an architecture which also has many ideal spiritual connection with an idea of the tradition of classic architecture which was one of the bases of Mies' approach to

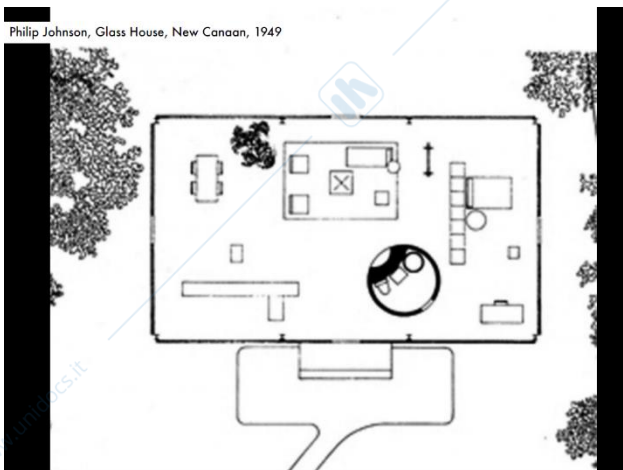
architecture and design.



This is a radical project, because it is quite extreme how the interior is exposed/put on show. Also the life of the inhabitants are put on show so it is felt a complete lack of privacy, even if we are in a natural place.

[Video: Alex Beam On How A Modernist Masterpiece Became A Monster – Open Studio with Jared Bowen] Interview to the writer of the book called 'Broken Glass'

This is a well-known story and well written in the book by Alex Beam, who reflects upon this dialogue or even this contradiction between the idea of a platonic perfect model house (Mies trying to build the perfect summer house) and the shortcomings and problems he had in terms of technology (as the roof leaking, there was no air conditioning and no heating system because it would have ruined the purity of this volume). If on the one hand this house is a monumentalization of technology or celebration of the industry era of the 20th century, at the same time it could also be seen as a sort of failure of an approach to building a house where the nature and interior space are one single thing.



He was also mentioning the Glass House by Philip Johnson, which is a sort of copy actually really different even if the concept at the base is the same (having a house made out of glass) but with many different features: certain asymmetry in the plan with the exception of the bathroom cylinder.



inside the house.

Another big difference is the way Philip Johnson (pupil of Mies van der Rohe) shaped these glass panels because, if in Mies van der Rohe there was no interruption in the glass panel from the floor to the ceiling, in this case there is a sort of rail at the height of 80 cm more or less (horizontal interruption of this frame on the look towards the outside). This is something in Johnson's mind to keep the landscape outside of the building and was almost the opposite of what Mies intended to do in his Farnsworth house, where the lack of any horizontal interruption brought the landscape



(Farnsworth house) In this case there is only a vertical frame which is to some extent a mechanical and abstract reproduction of the verticality of the trees of the surrounding landscape. It is a completely different approach and attitude in Johnson's glass house.

[Video: Sarah Morris – Points on a Line (excerpt)] This video shows the good and dark sides of this architecture, the relationship of landscape and architecture. It is quite interesting the lack of human in the video with the only exception for the man who was cleaning the glass façade of the building. Again, this reflection upon the empty space; it is like an empty cage and the space is showing only itself and the need for a permanent and never-ending care in order to keep it clean and pure, avoiding all kind of "contamination" that nature could suggest.



Again, glass like a single and unique feature but at the same time with never-ending and multiple declinations and several interpretations. This is a famous picture by Arnol Newman, Glass, House and taken in 1985, which is quite neutral perspective showing nature, transparency, relationship between inside and outside.



In this picture, instead, Arnol Newman tries to give us more perspective, a multiplicity of different layers and the addition of several participating layers. You can see or rather not see the glass façade in front of the house, but you see the reflection of nature on the glass that is mirroring it. At the same time, we can see the inside and beyond the second glass panel towards the landscape. There is this multi-layer picture with an accent on metal man-made verticality together with the natural verticality.

This is a great picture that was followed by other installations.



In this case, this shot was taken after an artificial fog was created in order to embrace and surround this glass house. Again, the idea of the pure visibility; clear visibility at the same time of blurring this perspective and making opposition between visibility and flog, sort of cloudiness and turbidity of the space and landscape.

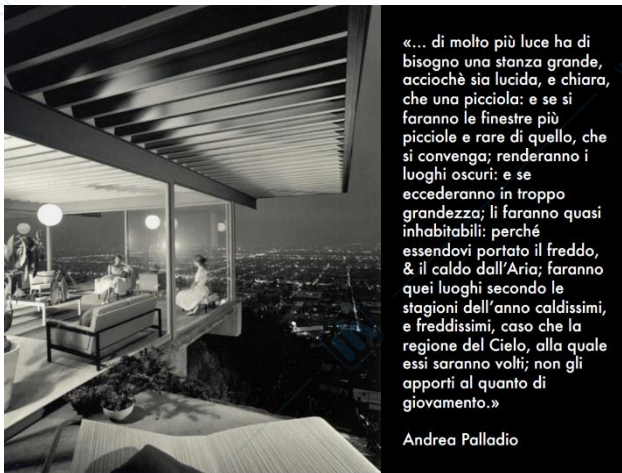


This is another good picture repeating again the same concept. A glass house but instead showing the black and white colours of the landscape, uses this red filter and the reflection which is altering and deforming the masterpiece.



This is one of professor's favourite pictures taken by Hiroshi Sugimoto, Japanese photographer famous for this kind of blurred images approaching modern architecture masterpieces. In this case we have again the idea of having the representation of the glass house but instead of remarking the idea of visibility, we can appreciate in contrast a blurred image in which the substance of architecture is blurred in the middle of leaves, grass and even the sky.

All these are great pictures that need to be interpreted in the search for analysing the multiple faces of glass architecture.



«... di molto più luce ha di bisogno una stanza grande, acciò che sia lucida, e chiara, che una picciola: e se si faranno le finestre più picciole e rare di quello, che si convenga; renderanno i luoghi oscuri: e se eccederanno in troppo grandezza; li faranno quasi inhabitabili: perché essendovi portato il freddo, & il caldo dall'Aria; faranno quei luoghi secondo le stagioni dell'anno caldissimi, e freddissimi, caso che la regione del Cielo, alla quale essi saranno volti; non gli apportri al quanto di giovamento.»

Andrea Palladio

Another great picture taken by Julius Shulman (one of the best American architectural photographers of the last century) showing one of the case study houses built around LA and California in the 1940-50-60s. This famous picture showing another glass house suspended on the hills surrounding LA. Again, in this case we can see two women sitting in the living room, suspended on this endless perspective of electricity and urban terrace of LA. This image gives a further layer because you can see transparency (complete visibility and exchange of cleanliness between us and

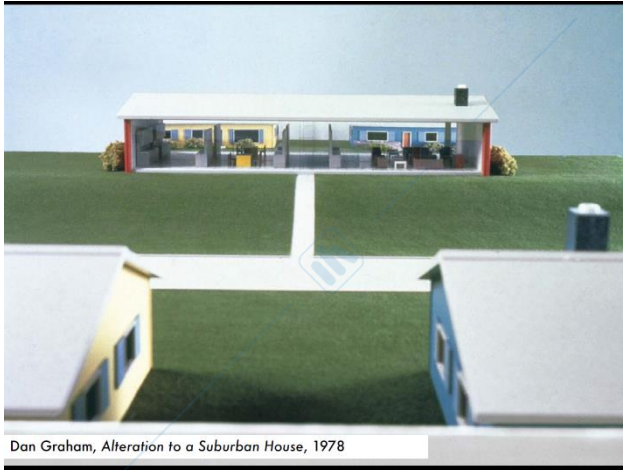
the interior) and there is a sort of feeling of fragility because they are like stuck in a glass cage exposed. From our perspective we can see everything happening inside of it. The glass allows me to see outside (nature, landscape, LA, etc) but at the same time I can be seen (I am put on show).

On this topic of seeing and been seen there are a huge number of caricatures, drawings and illustrations, particularly in the USA:



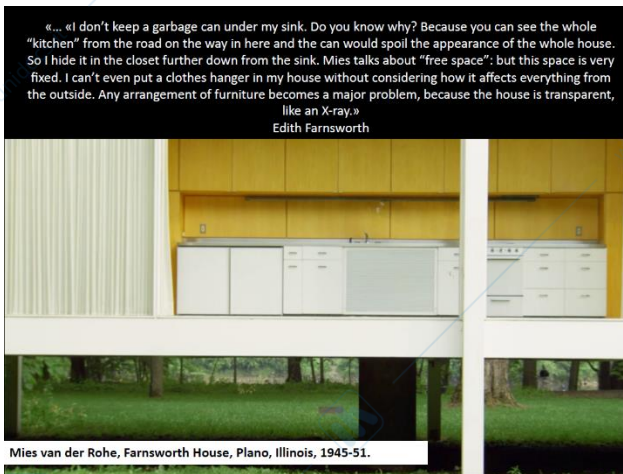
R. J. Day, «The New Yorker», 21 July 1951

This one is from The New Yorker in 1951, a few months before Johnson completed his Glass House. Here you see the caricature in which the wife like an art director is trying to shape the best view of her living room not from the inside but rather (due to this picture window which was a typical element of the detached houses in the USA after the WW2) giving directions from the outside because that is the main perspective that all people passing would have seen.



Dan Graham, *Alteration to a Suburban House*, 1978

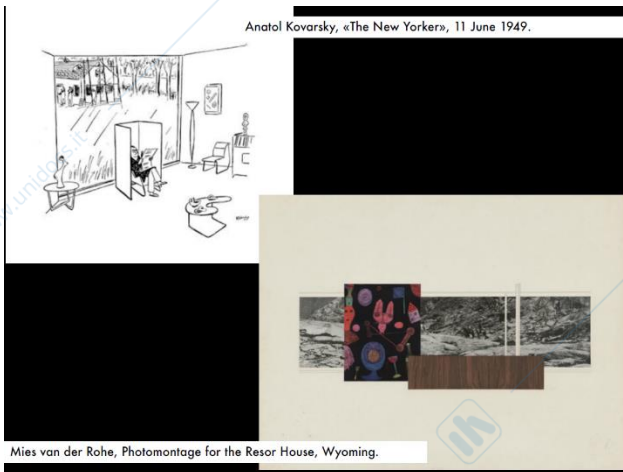
On this topic, again, Dan Graham shows how he was interested by this idea of transparency, visibility and reflections. Many years before the work in front of the *Casa del Fascio* did this *Alteration to a Suburban House*. This was taking away the main façade of the typical and average detached house of an American suburbia, showing a kind of x-ray shot of what is happening inside and reflecting upon this relationship between private and public dimension.



Mies van der Rohe, *Farnsworth House*, Plano, Illinois, 1945-51.

This is back to Mies van der Rohe's *Farnsworth House*. One of the main comments in the trial after the construction of this building was this one by Edith Farnsworth: *"I don't keep a garbage can under my sink. Do you know why? Because you can see the whole "kitchen" from the road on the way in here and the can would spoil the appearance of the whole house. So I hide it in the closet further down from the sink. Mies talks about "free space": but this space is very fixed. I can't even put a clothes hanger in my house without considering how it affects everything from the outside. Any arrangement of furniture becomes a major problem, because the house is transparent, like an X-ray."*

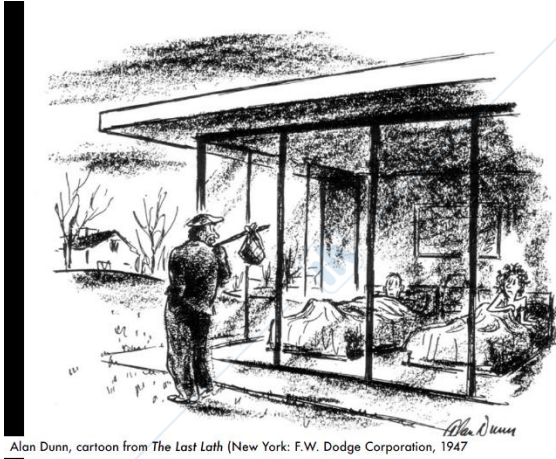
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Anatol Kovarsky, «The New Yorkers», 11 June 1949.

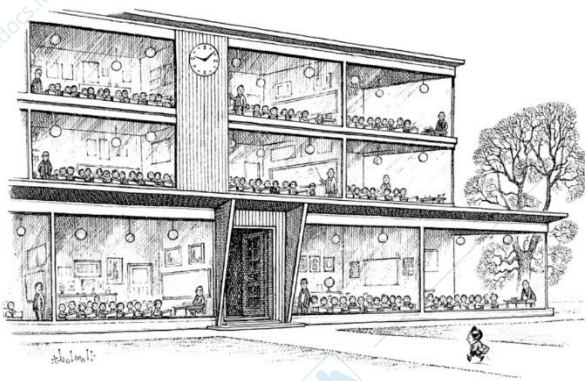
Mies van der Rohe, *Photomontage for the Resor House*, Wyoming.

Again, some cartoons from *The New Yorker*. On the right hand side there is a *Photomontage* for the famous *Resor House* built by Mies van der Rohe in Wyoming about a glass house allowing inhabitants to see landscape. On the left hand side, there is a cartoon in which a man who is a lover of modern art and design wanted a very big picture window from the floor to the ceiling but couldn't know in advance that someone was going to build a traditional house in front of his. Since he doesn't want to be on show, he has to put a sort of panel for avoiding the lack of his privacy.



Alan Dunn, cartoon from *The Last Lath* (New York: F.W. Dodge Corporation, 1947)

Another American cartoon by Alan Dunn in 1947 is showing a homeless walking around and looking inside this house since it is completely made out of glass. The couple inside is surprised of this invasion of their privacy but this is how glass architecture works.



Norman Thelwell, "Punch", 18 January 1961.

This is another cartoon published in London, UK in the "Punch" magazine in which you can see one of the prefab schools designed and built between the 1950-60s in the UK. They were often made out with great picture windows and so visibility. In this case, you can see another aspect of this overwhelming exposure; you can see all the children looking towards the poor boy who is late and underlining the power of visibility. In this case, it is not a panopticon, but the glass allows everybody to see the behaviour of the single one (the fact that this guy is being late is put on show so everyone can look at him). It is a quite profound picture.

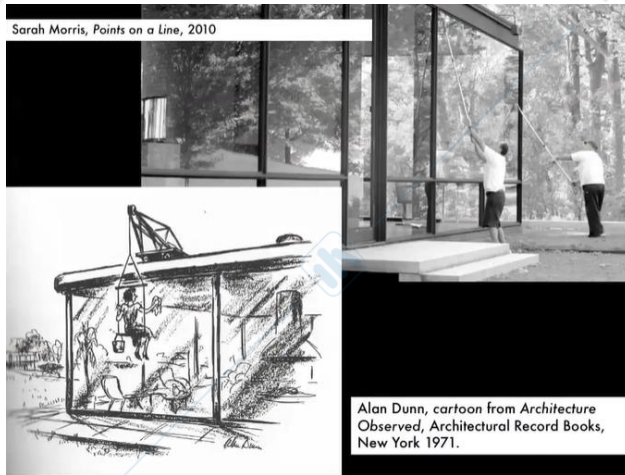
In Zamiatin's novel, Soviet totalitarianism finds concrete expression in total visual permeability. In fact, the completely transparent architecture meant that each member of the community imagined by Zamiatin served as both the watched and the watchers:

"Normally we live surrounded by transparent walls which seem to be knitted of sparkling air; we live beneath the eyes of everyone, always bathed in light. We have nothing to conceal from one another; besides, this mode of living makes the difficult and exalted task of the Guardians much easier. Without it many bad things might happen. It is possible that the strange opaque dwellings of the ancients were responsible for their pitiful cellish psychology» EIZ



Evgenij Ivanovič Zamiatin, *We*, 1924

This is a novel written in 1924 talking about soviet totalitarianism and finding in glass a metaphor, analogy or allegory for visibility and transparency of society and things like privacy (this social and political value of glass and its features).



This is another cartoon by Alan Dunn, focused on the hard task of people in charge of cleaning this glass housing. Again, the idea of some dirt in your house is something in a glass house that can be stand, otherwise you immediately point out this sort of lack of care and purity.



We can also see other declinations starting from the idea of glass architecture. Casa das Canoas in Rio de Janeiro is another glass house built in the same years by Oscar Niemeyer, modern architect with a very different approach to architecture and geometry. In this case he is not exalting/celebrating the perfect industrial geometry of Mies van der Rohe or Walter Gropius but rather celebrating the fluid, organic, natural shapes like curves which are also the shapes of our bodies (particularly female in Niemeyer's spirit and mind).

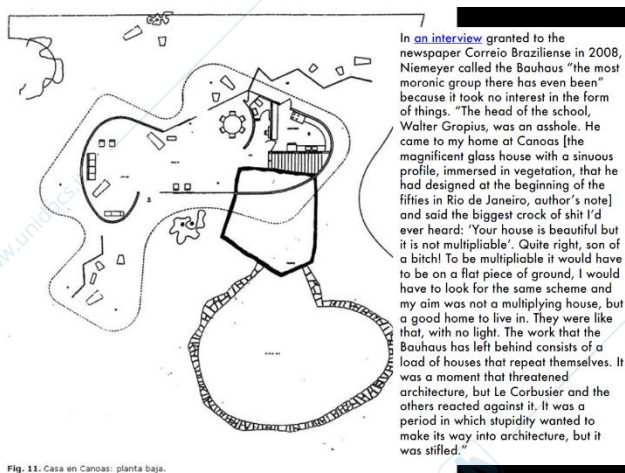


Fig. 11. Casa en Canoas: planta baja.

ground, I would have to look for the same scheme and my aim was not a multiplying house, but a good home to live in. They were like that, with no light. The work that the Bauhaus has left behind consists of a load of houses that repeat themselves. It was a moment that threatened architecture, but Le Corbusier and the others reacted against it. It was a period in which stupidly wanted to make its way into architecture, but it was stifled."

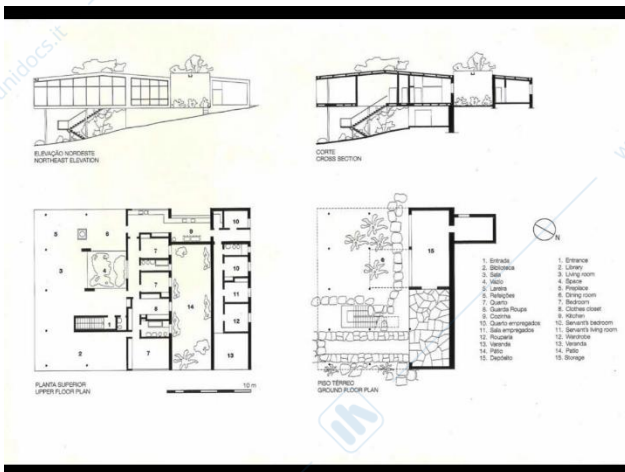
Niemeyer had a very tough approach towards the approach of Walter Gropius about architecture. This is a funny interview granted to the newspaper in 2008. He was asked to say something about the Bauhaus school and answered: "The Bauhaus was the most moronic group there has ever been. The head of the school, Walter Gropius, was an asshole. He came to my home at Canoas and said the biggest crack of shit I'd ever heard: 'Your house is beautiful but it is not multipliable'. Quite right, son of a bitch! To be multipliable it would have to be on a flat piece of



Lina Bo Bardi, Casa de Vidro, Sao Paulo, 1950-51

Another glass house and masterpiece is the *Casa do Vidro* in Sao Paulo by Lina Bo Bardi. You can see the obsession in contemporary architecture for this idea of glass house.

We also have something similar today: same issues but often with different shapes.



This has a more complex plan and section if compared to the other glass houses.

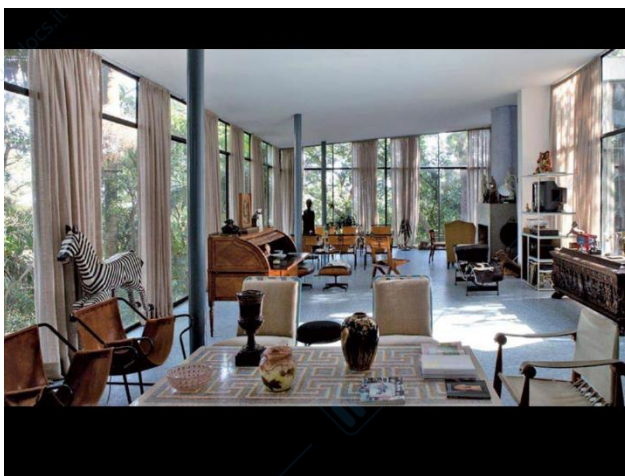


Here we can see the idea of exploiting or dealing with the landscape, having a suspended staircase to reach the main floor of the house and elevate yourself from the ground (landscape) up to the living plan.



past).

In this case you can see a more complex relationship between nature, landscape and the inside because if you look at the section actually you have a house split in two parts; the main one facing the landscape but on the back you have also a part dedicated to services which is separated from the main part by a sort of open-air corridor with nature and other materials like stone; trying to have a more complex relation with, on the one hand nature but on the other tradition, because this is not only a modern house (not only furnished with modern pieces but full of works of art coming from the



There is a more complex dialogue between modernity and tradition, between memory and the future, between the past, present and future.

This is a house in which you can live but you can see there is something more, it is not a pure expression of a pure platonic architecture; it is intended to be a real place for living and not only a statement/model.

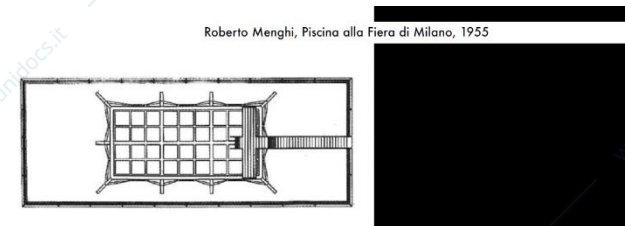


If you compare this picture to one of the other glass houses you will find something more profound, completely different approach to the role of memory, history and space.



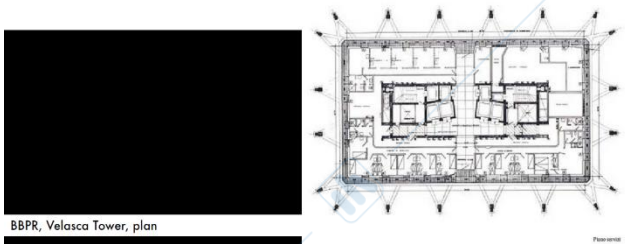
Roberto Menghi, Piscina alla Fiera di Milano, 1955

This is not a house, but professor loves this project. It is a crazy project designed by the Milanese architect Roberto Menghi in 1950's. He was asked to design something (structure) in order to put on show all the dresses and equipment for submarine activities which were produced with Pirelli rubber. They were need to put on show on the great fair of Milan and so he conceived this structure that seems to be a slice of a reinforced concrete skyscraper.



Roberto Menghi, Piscina alla Fiera di Milano, 1955

Here you can find some analogies between the structure of this swimming pool and the structure of the Velasca Tower, which was designed in the very same years in Milan.



BBPR, Velasca Tower, plan

Persepolis



This is a nice sketch by Roberto Menghi. So the idea of having a suspended swimming pool in which you could put on show all the men wearing suits to explore the ocean sea.



This is a quite outstanding interpretation of glass architecture. Of course, here Meghi had to face great structural problems because on the one hand, the load of the water was a create challenge for him and the structural engineers to design the reinforced concrete structure but at the same time, also the glass panels were pressed with great pressure due to hydrostatic pressure and so they had to design a multi-layered system of different glasses and plastic to bear all this pressure from the water inside.



This was a crazy attempt to put on show these guys diving and swimming in the water.



Coming a bit closer to our time, there is plenty of other projects. This is Kengo Kuma's Glass House designed about 20 years ago in Japan. Again, we can see also in recent times, this obsession for glass.



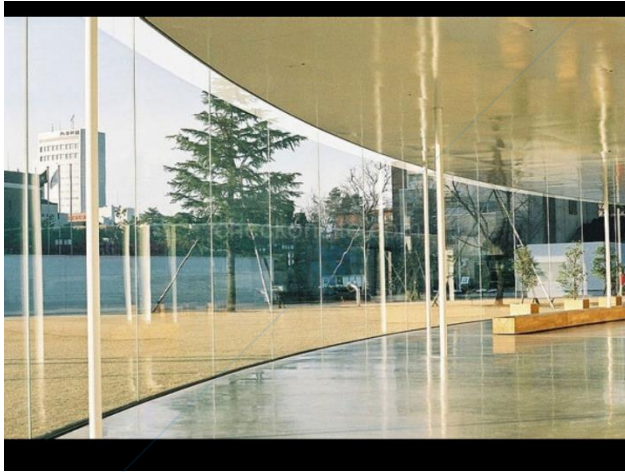
Another interpretation, in this case the glass is not something that allows to look through it, it is rather something that can bring you in light, also offering a double perspective with daily light.



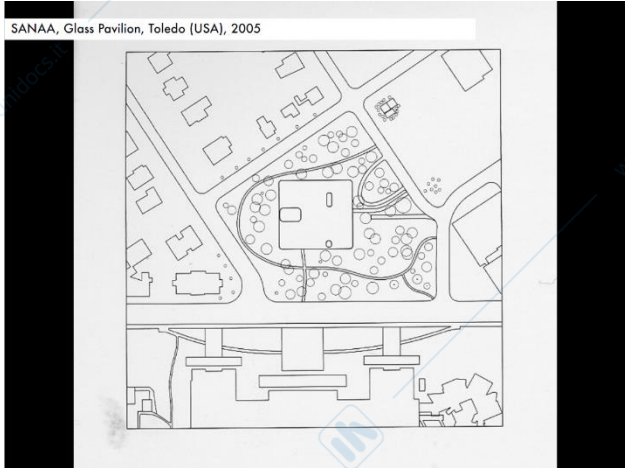
This is probably, if not the best, one of the best interpreters of this idea of transparency and also the ambiguities of transparency in architecture who is the architectural office SANAA. These two Japanese architects tested and have been researching on the use and experience of having an architecture made out of glass or multiple layers of glass throughout their entire career. This is an outstanding project in Kanazawa, Japan built in 2004.



It is a sort of geometric elementary shape: a round plan, a circle with inside a lot of very pure volumes. Everything is glazed with these large glass panels from ceiling to the floor, giving you a great visibility but also a lot of shades and reflections not only in the use of glass, but also in the use of particular kind of cement, plastic, aluminium, metal for all the other parts of the building.



You can see transparency but also filtering, multiplication of perspectives and alteration of views.



SANAA, Glass Pavilion, Toledo (USA), 2005

Probably the best, if not the best buildings in which you can see this approach is another glass pavilion designed by SANAA in Toledo (USA). Glass was a central material when it was asked to build this pavilion for the history of the place.



They created this impressive pavilion which starts from a quite simple shape (a square) but in which they created a complex composition of different rooms made out of glass in order to test this multi-layered effect that could be reached superimposing different layers of glass to separate and identify different spaces.



The final effect is quite impressive because putting together more than one sheet of glass panels you start to see and experience a strange atmosphere. This is the way in which transparency is in part avoided and another dimension starts.



Looking at these pictures, in particular this final one, probably we can reflect again about this obsession that modern architecture and modernity in architecture had and probably still has. Such a project, more than giving us a clear impression of what glass architecture is, it says that more than relieving its inhabitants, glass architecture can show us all the ambiguity, not only of glass but all the ambiguities of architecture. All can lead to an extreme the way in which in every architectural project we can find ambiguities between public and private

dimension, between seeing and being seen, between the idea of visibility and opacity. All these features that are included or summarized by the use of glass which has been continuing for many centuries and decades, and will continue to be one of the main testing round and research field for contemporary architects and designers.