

## *Beautiful failures*

Site-specific intervention at the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion  
From 15 to 18 April 2021

Guided visits. Prior reservation required.



Press kit: [mies.link/PressKit\\_BeautifulFailures](https://mies.link/PressKit_BeautifulFailures)

Barcelona, April 2021.-

Fundació Mies van der Rohe, in collaboration with the *Master in Ephemeral Architecture and Temporary Spaces* by Elisava, presents, from 15 to 18 April 2021, ***Beautiful failures***, a site-specific piece at the **Mies van der Rohe Pavilion**.

This intervention, resulting from the academic work of the master's students and tutored by Stella Rahola Matutes, sculptor and installation artist, and Dr. Roger Paez, Profesor and researcher in Elisava, works on fragility, identifying the two most delicate materials used in the construction of the Pavilion: **glass** and the **travertine** of the pavement. Glass is the Pavilion's paradigmatic material, with its constant play of reflections and transparencies, while the travertine plinth is one of the most identifiable elements of Mies van der Rohe's architecture. Consequently, the installation proposal *Beautiful Failures* is based on a fundamental material order that allows us to revisit this seemingly polished, perfect and safe architecture from its most **vulnerable** side.

*"The actions and performances resulting from academic collaborations activate the Pavilion as a public platform to dissolve the boundaries between architectural research and the arts, bring together and generate synergies between the academic world, artistic production and architectural culture, and build around the Fundació Mies van der Rohe an extensive and varied network of entities and people who love architecture in Barcelona and everywhere else."*

Anna Ramos, director of the Fundación Mies van der Rohe

From the formal point of view, the resolution of the installation **consists of 17 raised travertine slabs** that reveal the under-space resulting from a construction system that diverges from the solution of the original Pavilion. These 17 holes contain **defective pieces of glass**, originally from artisan workshops in the city of Barcelona. The glass pieces correspond to the collection made by the students of more than 2,000 units discarded by craftsmen's workshops. They are made of **borosilicate glass of German origin, which cannot be recycled in our country. The rubble and discarded pieces** make it possible to establish a link with the Pavilion's past history, while raising questions of sustainability for the present at the same time.

The new landscape resulting from **the partial lifting of the pavement** and the relationship with the pieces of glass finds analogies with a stratigraphic excavation using a grid system, commonly used in archaeology. The proposal is a ceremonial action that rides between the discovery and the funerary act, between that which is mortuary and that which is revealed to us. The temporary intervention in the Pavilion is understood simultaneously as a rite of discovery and burial. And in this cycle of birth, death and rebirth, all the elements play an important role, from the history of the Pavilion itself, implicit in the actions with the travertine, to the life accumulated in each of the pieces of glass.

Beautiful Failures also wants to be a reflection on the nature of a Pavilion that is no longer just a replica **but** a living entity that is no longer limited to projecting an identical image of the mythical original. Through multiple artistic interventions, from 1996 to the present day, the characteristic temporality of the 1929 Pavilion has been reinterpreted as a sensorial temporality, turning the current Pavilion into a multiform and organic space capable of reflecting on its spatial, material and historical qualities through constant change. A valuable lesson in an enriched understanding of identity.

*"Beautiful Failures is a dream come true: transforming the Mies Pavilion, one of the freest references of modern architecture, from a radically temporary sensibility. For MEATS (Master in Ephemeral Architecture and Temporary Spaces) and Elisava, it means becoming a part of an exciting project where, for 25 years, interventions by artists, architects and designers have reinterpreted the inexhaustible quality of the Pavilion.."* –

Roger Paez, director of the *Master in Ephemeral Architecture and Temporary Spaces* by  
Elisava

**Stella Rahola Matutes** is a sculptor and installation artist. In her practice, as a woman, she reconsiders artisanship, historically developed by men. Starting from craftsmanship as a sustainable, productive, collaborative and memory-related process, Stella assumes the challenge of bodily experimenting the possibilities of making as a way of renewing the relationship with our material culture. Through complex, physically demanding and almost alchemical processes, she claims the crucial role of hands as knowledge capacities. She has held exhibitions both nationally and internationally, among her latest ones we can highlight "Babelia y otras historias" in Fundación Vilcasas (2019), "Politics of Translation" The Stone Gallery in Londres (2019), Los Angeles Contemporary Fair with Union Pacific (2019), "Theory of Joy" in MACE (2020).

**Roger Paez** is a PhD architect, a professor and a researcher. Architect ETSAB, Barcelona; MS AAD Columbia University, New York (GSAPP Honor Award for Excellence in Design); PhD UPC, Barcelona; Certified PhD (AQU 2020). Professional experience in the studios of Alison and Peter Smithson and Enric Miralles. Founder of A i B arquitectes and designer of award-winning projects including Mas d'Enric Penitentiary. Research leader and Director of MEATS at ELISAVA, architectural design professor at ETSALS, guest professor at universities worldwide. Author of *Design Strategies for Temporary Intervention in Public Space* (Elisava, 2013), *Critical Prison Design* (Actar, 2014) and *Operative Mapping* (Actar, 2019). He works at the intersection of design, architecture, and the city, and his main research interests include mapping and information design, temporary space design, public space, design with social impact and the articulation between artistic and architectural practices.

### **About Elisava**

Elisava, Barcelona University School of Design and Engineering promotes education, knowledge and research in the fields of design engineering and communication. With more than 50 years of experience, it has trained more than 17,000 students and has established its position as one of the world's leading schools. The school collaborates with internationally renowned companies, institutions and NGOs to offer a university education that prepares students to face current and future challenges. Elisava trains skilled professionals with the ability to design and create products, services and environments that make society better. For more information: [www.elisava.net](http://www.elisava.net)

### **About the Artistic Interventions Programme at the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion**

The interventions that take place in the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion are conceived as light, short-lived installations or exhibitions. The programme of interventions provides a unique type of activity in the city that builds on the exceptional spaces of the Pavilion. The installations are a way of maintaining active interpretations and making sense of the Pavilion's current events. A periodicity of one or two projects per year is considered, maintaining an appropriate proportion between interventions by artists and architects.

### **About the Pavilion**

The Barcelona German Pavilion was designed by Lilly Reich and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as the German national pavilion for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition that was held in Montjuïc. This symbolic piece of work of the Modern Movement has been exhaustively studied and interpreted, while inspiring the work of several generations of architects. Built from glass, steel and different kinds of marble, the Pavilion was conceived to accommodate the official reception presided over by King Alfonso XIII of Spain along with the German authorities.

After the closure of the Exhibition, the Pavilion was disassembled in 1930. As time went by, it became a key point of reference not only in Mies van der Rohe's own career but also in twentieth-century architecture as a whole. Given the significance and reputation of the Pavilion, thoughts turned towards its possible reconstruction.

In 1980, Oriol Bohigas promoted this initiative from the Urban Planning Delegation of the Barcelona City Council, and architects Ignasi de Solà-Morales, Cristian Cirici and Fernando Ramos were the ones appointed to the research, design and direction of the reconstruction of the Pavilion. Works began in 1983 and the new Building was inaugurated in 1986 on its original site.

**Fundació Mies van der Rohe** was created in 1983 by Barcelona's City Council with the initial aim of carrying out the reconstruction of the German Pavilion. In addition to preserving and disseminating knowledge about the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion, the Fundació promotes debate and awareness on contemporary architecture and urban Planning issues.

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*Beautiful Failures* is a collaboration with Elisava within the Research and Debate Programme of Fundació Mies van der Rohe, which aims to develop projects with academic institutions to promote debate and research on modern architecture, as well as contemporary architecture and urban planning.

#### **OPENING HOURS AND GUIDED VISITS**

Dates: From 15 to 18 April 2021

Place: Mies van der Rohe Pavilion (Av. Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, 7 Barcelona)

Opening hours: Monday through Sunday from 10:00 to 20:00 hours

→ Prior reservation required [here](#)

→ Visit only with the accompaniment of a guide. Included in the [ticket price](#).

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→ Find on the following link: [http://mies.link/PressKit\\_BeautifulFailures](http://mies.link/PressKit_BeautifulFailures)

- Press release (CAT, ESP, ENG)
- Pictures and graphical material

#### **Fundació Mies van der Rohe – Press office**

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