



I don't want to change the world. I only want to express it. Mies van der Rohe

COLUMNS TO COMMEMORATE 30 YEARS OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GERMAN PAVILION IN BARCELONA

We are not saying anything new when we remember that the horizontality of the German Pavilion in Barcelona sought to contrast with the verticality of the eight ionic columns, and that the German Pavilion, like all of Mies' architecture, insisted on un-expressing the structure. The columns, the pillars and the supports become objects, and any obvious reading of the structural system is short-circuited. Whether or not Mies knew it, the pavilion's columns, of chrome-plated steel, are strongly related to the classical columns which also came into being to make us believe that they are not affected by weight and which, far from bearing a load, seem to emerge from the ground, rise up and open.

Budgetary constraints prompted a search for eight columns, cheap to build, in which the grace of the old columns was still present. Sheet-steel drums salvaged from chemical waste cemeteries, drums related with the city of now, marked by recognisable signs, are placed one on top of the other thanks to simple welding seams. For us, they are the new "drums" of the columns. They are also objects with a certain value, because time has undertaken to strip and disfigure them, to deactivate their functionality, achieving inimitable effects on their surfaces and their dents. Classical columns surely came into being to celebrate light and the horizon. In a well-known drawing by Le Corbusier, the shafts of the columns of the Parthenon reflect the mountains, the sky and the sea. They are reflective surfaces that speak of the spirit of the place in which they are erected and that multiply this reflection with each of their flutes. The multi-coloured row of columns built with waste industrial drums also offers an ironic commentary on the threats of the industrial landscape, and on the ambiguous and flawed beauty that the same landscape reveals. Maybe the Mies who once said "*I don't want to change the world. I only want to express it*" would have liked these eight slender shafts, made with the materials of our time.

