

MIES: A FIGHTER FOR FILM [First Part]

Lutz Robbers

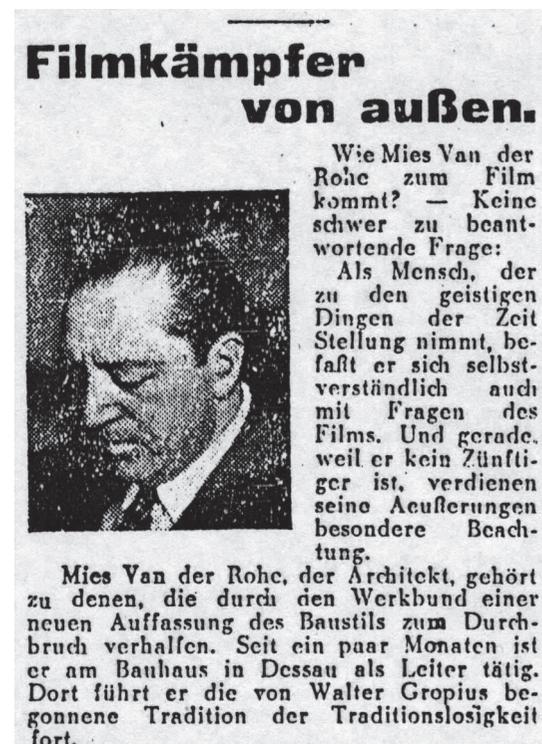
1. Cinematic Knowledge and Architecture

At the beginning of 1931, a short article entitled “Filmkämpfer von außen” (A Fighter for Film from the Outside), appeared in the industry magazine *Film-Kurier*. In the introductory sentence, the author, who remains anonymous, asked: “How did Mies van der Rohe come to film? Not a difficult question to answer: As a person who takes a stand on the spiritual matters of his time, he naturally also addresses questions of film.”¹ But the article neither explains what Mies’s involvement with film was, nor how the architect and then-Bauhaus director became interested in film. Even today, the assumption of an affinity between Mies and film is anything but self-explanatory. Neither the research on Mies, nor the research on ‘architecture and film’ done by architecture theorists and film scholars, has so far dealt in detail with the question of a possible relationship between Mies and the new visual medium.² This shortcoming can be explained, above all, by the fact that his buildings, drawings and published writings do not contain any direct references to film. Although he apparently was a regular moviegoer, Mies built neither cinemas nor film sets,³ nor did he take part in film productions or write movie scripts,⁴ as did many other representatives of the avant-garde in the 1920s: Hans Poelzig and Robert Mallet-Stevens designed film sets; Bruno Taut integrated film projectors into some of his buildings, built innovative “daylight cinemas,” patented a vertical cinema for reclining viewers and wrote screenplays; and Le Corbusier used film as a propaganda tool to spread his architectural and urban planning ideas.⁵

Based on this discrepancy between the “*Filmkämpfer*” Mies and the lack of any obvious connection, two sets of questions can be asked. First, it has to be determined what tangible relationships actually existed between Mies and the film world. Special attention must be given to the connection between Mies and the abstract film pioneers Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling, who were both key to the founding of the journal *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* in the year 1923. What role did Mies have in the public discourse of early 1920s Berlin, in which the medium of film played an

essential role? And how can it be explained that Mies was the only architect connected to these artists and intellectuals, who discovered fundamentally new possibilities of thinking and designing the cinematographic image?

Second, the aforementioned discrepancy is to be taken as an opportunity to question certain a priori assumptions and limitations regarding historical research on art and architecture and to underline the intermediary character



of architectural knowledge. The non-consideration of the “*Filmkämpfer*” Mies is typical of the problematic handling not just of the historical sciences, but also of time-based visual media⁶ The question of the importance of film for architecture cannot be reduced to formal analytical or iconological descriptions of what can be seen in film, technological extensions of the architectural object or generalized stylizations of cinema as a cipher of modernity. Rather, the fact that, in the early 1920s – the period in which he tried to “understand architecture”⁷ – Mies sought out those artists who did not identify the potential of film as lying in its capacity to capture the real world or spectacular fantasy images, but rather in the possibility of a fundamentally new, abstract – as Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling put it – “universal language,” which points to a hitherto untapped perspective that cinema opens up for modern architecture. With film, not only did the field of vision expand, but what was conceivable, experienceable and ultimately designable took on new forms. The fact that film does not merely appear as a medium of representation, but as an apparatus, opens up questions that go beyond the limited field of research on architecture and film. What is made visible through such an expanded understanding of film is the relationship to its own pictoriality as it is constitutive for architecture. In other words, the case of the “*Filmkämpfer*” Mies makes it clear that an understanding of architecture is always tied to the insights of its images.

Even though there has been no systematic research to date, the literature on Mies contains isolated references to film, mostly in the form of suggestive metaphors. Detlef Mertins, for example, describes the experience of the Barcelona Pavilion as “cinematic poesis.” Just like the cinematographic apparatus, with its possibilities of temporal and spatial manipulation through slow motion, time lapse, repetition and montage, the pavilion is also capable, according to Mertins, of generating revealing moments of everyday life.⁸ Likewise, Spyros Papapetros interprets Mies’s glass high rise model as “an early cinematographic machine, creatively engineered for the projection of other architectures.”⁹ Regarding the concrete relationships and possible theoretical interferences between Mies and the filmmakers Richter and Eggeling, the literature mainly leaves us with superficial statements. Philip Johnson, for example, makes a formal comparison between the curved floor plan of the glass high rise and “certain abstract film designs of Viking Eggeling.”¹⁰ Reyner Banham, on the other hand, without going into detail, writes that the films of Richter and Eggeling “would obviously appeal” because abstraction and the space-time theme were popular with the avant-garde.¹¹ Nor is Bruno Reichlin specific when he writes that the “space-time effects” of Richter’s abstract films “were certainly capable of inspiring the imagination of an architect.”¹² Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co go one step further and directly relate Mies’s proximity to the avant-garde to film. Although, in the early 1920s,

Mies had taken over “the lesson of elementary experience,” his “discourse” with the avant-garde had been limited to the period of his collaboration with the journal *G* (1923-1924). What is more, his architecture did not follow the development of Walter Ruttmann’s later films.¹³ With reference to Mies’s glass architecture, they argue that “distortion is a form of dialogue, a technique of the avant-garde” – just like Eggeling’s film *Diagonal Symphonie*, which consists of “deformations and separations.”¹⁴

However, all these references to film remain on the level of suggestive hints, lacking a more precise historical and theoretical determination of the place of the medium of film in Mies’s architectural thinking. This requires an analysis of those fields of discourse in which he participated during the first half of the 1920s. Only then can conclusions about Mies’s architecture as media be reached and alternative perspectives on modernity be put forward.

2. The League for Independent Film

In what concrete context can the “*Filmkämpfer*” article from 1931 be placed? It most likely relates to the events organized by the German League for Independent Film at the end of 1930. The first meeting of the league (the German offshoot of the International League for Independent Film, founded in 1929 in La Sarraz)¹⁵ took place on November 16, 1930 in the Rote Mühle event hall and film theater in Berlin-Halensee.¹⁶ Accompanied by statements by Hans Richter, who called on the audience to turn against “film kitsch,” and Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, who criticized the methods of the capitalist film industry, the following films were shown: *Earth* by Alexander Dovzhenko (1930), *Étoile de mer* by Man Ray (1928), and Vsevolod Pudovkin’s documentary on Pavlov’s physiological laboratory, *Mechanik des Gehirns [Mechanics of the Brain]* (1925).¹⁷

Although it is not certain whether Mies attended the event, there is evidence that he was actively involved in the league during its founding phase in 1930. He became a board member in July 1930 and his name appeared in a pamphlet from that period, in which he was listed as a member of the “*Zentrale*”. Under the title “Filmfreunde!” the flyer criticized the “fabrication of kitsch” that had taken the place of film art, in which “technical progress [...] is being misused for the reproduction of products of fairground booths alien to the essence [of film].”¹⁸ Alongside Mies, the other people who signed the pamphlet were all directly or indirectly connected with film: the filmmakers Hans Richter and Walter Ruttmann; Werner Graeff, a former contributor to the magazine *G*; the actress Asta Nielsen; the animation pioneer Lotte Reininger; the documentary filmmaker Carl Junghans; the writer Arthur Holitscher;¹⁹ the gallerist Karl Nierendorf; the composer Paul Hindemith; the theater critic Herbert Ihering; Hans Feld, the publisher of the industry newspaper *Film-Kurier*; and the lawyer Otto Blumenthal.



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FILMFREUNDE!

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An Stelle der Filmkunst tritt die Fabrikation von Kitsch und die Beeinflussung der öffentlichen Meinung durch Machtgruppen. Der technische Fortschritt wird zur Reproduktion wesensfremder Schaubuden-Erzeugnisse mißbraucht.

Dagegen kämpft die deutsche Liga für unabhängigen Film!

G e g e n Geschmacksdiktatur der Konzerne!
G e g e n Wien - Heidelberg - u. Gartenlaubenromantik!
G e g e n Fesselung der künstlerischen Gestaltung durch offene und verkappte Zensur!

F Ü R den künstlerischen, unabhängigen Film als Ausdruck der Zeit!
F Ü R unverfälschte Gestaltung der Wirklichkeit!
F Ü R unbedingte Freiheit von Wort und Bild!

Kämpft für den künstlerischen Film gegen Jede Kulturreaktion mit der Deutschen Liga für unabhängigen Film!

Für die Zentrale:
 Dr. Blumenthal / Dr. Feld / W. Gräff / P. Hindemith / A. Holscher / Ihering / Junghans / Mies van der Rohe / Asta Nielsen
 K. Nierendorf / Lotte Reiniger / H. Richter / W. Ruttmann.

It can be assumed that Mies's commitment went beyond purely representative support of the league. His correspondence with Blumenthal in July 1930 shows that Mies was actively involved in the drafting of the pamphlet.²⁰ Indeed, phrases such as "For artistic, independent film as an expression of the time" or the emphasis on "shaping reality" are reminiscent of expressions that can already be found in Mies's first publications from the early 1920s. He actively participated in the promotion of the league. In November 1930, for example, Mies sent information about the league to Gustav Stotz, the organizer of the Werkbund exhibitions *Die Wohnung* (1927) and *Foto und Film* (1929).²¹

The Mies archive contains a report on another meeting of the league held on November 20, 1930, which includes a list with names of people who were either present or considered potential members. The list was apparently written out by Mies himself, since all the people listed had a direct connection to him: Dr. Wolfgang Bruhn (an art historian and the brother of Mies's wife, Ada Bruhn), Emil Nolde (whom Mies met in Dresden-Hellerau in 1911 or 1912 at the latest), the art dealer Hugo Perls (for whom Mies had already designed a house in 1911) and Bruno and Max Taut.

Mies remained a member of the league in the following two years, but his active participation seems to have declined.²² Nevertheless, even at the end of 1931, he inquired with the "gentlemen from Düsseldorf about the steel film" – this probably refers to the 1930 film *Ein Riese aus Stahl* (*A Giant of Steel*) (the original title of the documentary *Making of a Skyscraper (Steel)*, which shows the construction of the Empire State Building), shown at a league event on architectural film called "Neues Wohnen – Neues Bauen" (New Living – New Construction).²³ Even after the National Socialist seizure of power, Mies's interest in film seems to have continued. In December 1934, Mies was invited by the president of the "Reichskammer der bildenden Künste" (Reich Chamber of Visual Arts) in Munich to participate in a roundtable discussion with filmmakers. One of the items on the agenda was "Architecture and Film." Mies gratefully accepted the invitation.²⁴

Remarkable in the context of his collaboration with the League for Independent Film is a letter from the graphic artist Paul Renner from September 1930. Renner, known as the designer of the

typeface Futura, complained to Mies on behalf of the Munich branch of the league that “in Munich you hear absolutely nothing anymore about the German League.”²⁵ Interestingly, Renner, like Mies a member of the Werkbund board, suggested the founding of a small, inexpensive weekly or monthly magazine led by “Krakauer [sic] and published by Reckendorf.” There’s no doubt that he’s referring to the journalist and later film scholar Siegfried Krakauer, who reported on the annual meeting of the Werkbund in Essen in 1926 for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, emphasizing the election of Mies as the second chairman.²⁶ As a special correspondent, Krakauer travelled to the Werkbund exhibition *Die Wohnung* in Stuttgart in 1927. In a short initial article, he quoted from the opening speech of Mies, who acted as artistic director, emphasizing his understanding of modern architecture: rationalization and typification are only “means to an end” and, ultimately, architecture is about the “formation of new forms of life.”²⁷

In the detailed review of the exhibition that appeared shortly thereafter, Krakauer, who at that time was skeptical of modern architecture, was deeply impressed by the “striking” glass room by Mies and Lilly Reich, which he describes as a disembodied, enigmatic harbinger of a completely new architecture. This cinematic space, which produces images and reflections

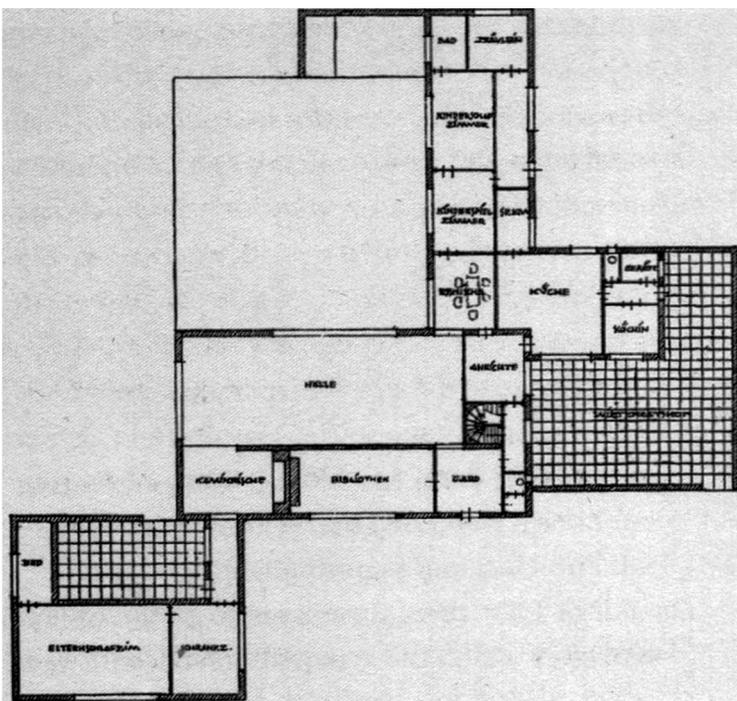
from within itself, possesses its own magical power of action and shows that functional architecture “is not a final fulfillment.” In fact, the glass room, by making the visitor feel the “sorrow” of the renunciation of decoration and the “remainder-compositions” of contemporary society, opens up the possibility of a messianic “passageway to a fullness from which nothing more needs to be taken away. Today they can only be attested negatively, through sorrow.”²⁸ This positive description of the glass space as a potentially redeeming experience is all the more remarkable when one considers that the trained architect Krakauer turned away from his “bread and butter” profession²⁹ in the early 1920s because he didn’t see the potential in architecture to unleash the “magic of time” that revealed societal reality in the surface phenomena and spatial images of Weimar mass culture.³⁰

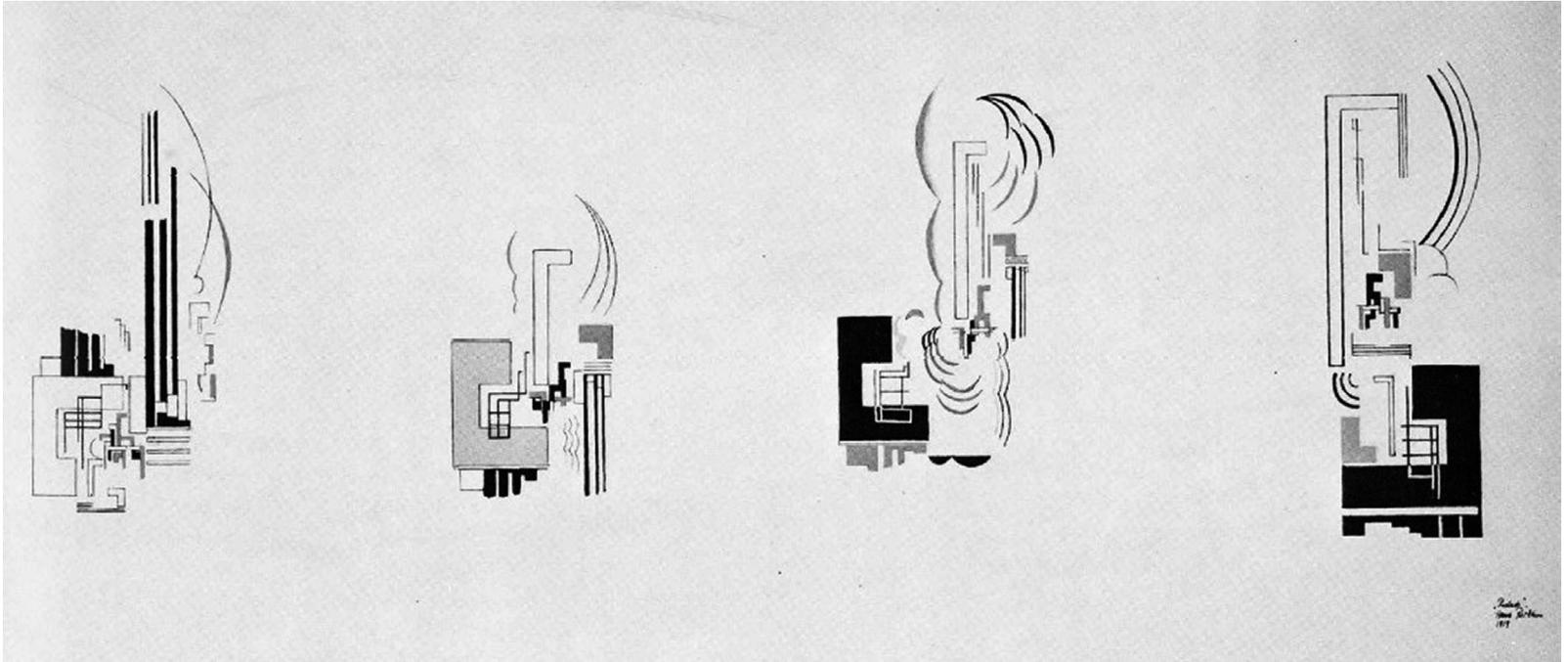
3. Absolute Film

The answer to our original question – how Mies came to film – is not to be found in the early 1930s, but even earlier in his career. His engagement with the League for Independent Film is directly related to his involvement with abstract film in the first half of the 1920s. His acquaintance with Hans Richter, the first abstract filmmaker, is of central importance. Their first meeting, arranged by Theo van Doesburg, most likely took place in Mies’s apartment at Am Karlsbad 24 in 1921. In his memoirs, Richter describes the encounter as an unexpected revelation:

I had met Mies through Doesburg when Doesburg lived with me [...] in the Uhlandstraße. One day he asked me to go with him to see a young architect he had just met. I assured him that I was not particularly interested in architects and architecture. My father had long insisted on a proper profession [that of an architect] for me... before I became a painter. I am therefore still allergic to this area. “But the layouts of his houses resemble the drawings of Mondrian or your own from your *Präludium* scroll drawing,” Doesburg convinced me. That was something different, of course. So I went with Doesburg to the young architect named Mies van der Rohe who lived in the finest area of the Old West of Berlin, Am Karlsbad 24. The layouts and plans [of a house he was building in Neubabelsberg] did indeed look not only like Mondrian’s or my drawings, but like music, the very visual music we were talking about, which we discussed, worked on and made into film. It was not just a floor plan, but a new language, precisely the language that seemed to unite our generation.³¹

It is impossible to reconstruct which floor plan Richter actually saw in Mies’s studio. Of his well-known projects, the *Petermann House* (1921) and the *Lessing House* (1923) are likely suspects, as their floor plans consist of L-shaped





and rectangular-orthogonal elements and thus show similarities with the scroll drawings that Richter and Eggeling produced at the time as preliminary studies for their later films. However, this similarity between Mies's floor plans and, for example, Richter's serial drawing *Preludium* (1919) does not denote a formal resemblance between two rigid images. Rather, Richter's drawing is to be regarded as a snapshot of a process that must be thought of as in motion. The similarity therefore only becomes apparent when observed over time.

In 1919, Richter and Eggeling had already begun to design a visual sign system based on abstract, contrapuntal musical compositions using sequential compositions. This "universal language" did not consist of signs, but of sequences of abstract "contrast analogies" that developed over time. The intention was that the observer should not perceive what was depicted as a static object or fact, but rather as a process of rhythmic-dynamic relationships unfolding over time. As Richter wrote in his 1921 article "Prinzipielles zur Bewegungskunst" (Principal Considerations on the Art of Movement), polarity functions "as a general principle of life" to which the various arts must submit as well.³² Meaningful presence should be created, namely in the "process itself." Film, but also architecture or other forms of elementary design, make it possible to experience "pure material" as "tension and solution," the meaning of which is "elementary-magical because all material comparisons and memories are omitted."³³

The new language that he recognized in Mies's plans is based on the assumption of a prelinguistic original state. Richter was not the only one at that time who was trying to search for new forms of language that were capable of bridging the world of modern technology with a magical, prelinguistic primordial foundation. Walter Benjamin's thesis *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (begun in 1923/24) – which he worked on during the same period in which he translated an article by Tristan Tzara for the third issue of *G* in 1924 – deals in detail with linguistic figures that have emancipated themselves from meaning-generating structures. Benjamin is interested in language fragments that no longer serve "the process of communication," but that, as a "new-born object," gain the power of "natural forms."³⁴ Benjamin quoted Johann Wilhelm Ritter, the physicist and philosopher of early Romanticism, who wanted to "rediscover the original or natural writing by electric means, or to search for it."³⁵ In Ritter's allegorical view, Benjamin finds confirmation for his thesis that the world is created by the word and

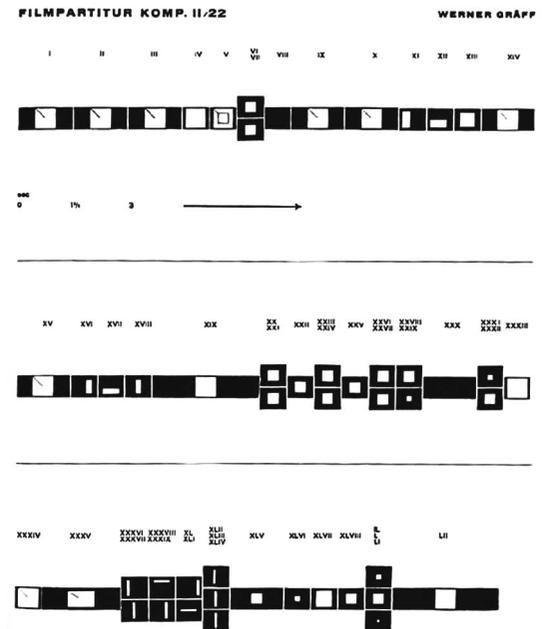
that even the image is less a reflection of something real than a “*Schriftbild*” [written image], “only a signature, only the monogram of essence, not the essence itself in a mask.”³⁶

The floor plans and layouts Richter discovered in Mies’s studio, like his own images and films, are not to be understood as representations of a projected reality, but as elementary magical images that, by means of technology, enable access to a “primordial zone of design” that existed prior to concepts and meanings.³⁷ Early on, Richter was aware of this necessary differentiation. Already, in 1925, he warned of a possible misunderstanding of Mies’s drawings. In an article entitled “Der neue Baumeister” (The New Master Builder) he added a caption to the floor plan for the Brick Country House (1923) warning the viewer that the drawing was “not a mathematical abstraction,” but “sensually readable.”³⁸ In other words, the plan should not be understood as a technical image that allowed the viewer to (re)construct a three-dimensional building by means of projective-geometric processes. Rather, Mies’s drawings were in synch with new perceptive and cognitive practices that emerged “in a stream of movement, noise and light that did not exist 20 years ago.”³⁹ The new master builder, Richter notes, must reckon with a “new sensuality (he must possess it).” And Mies is just this new master builder, whose principal skill consists less in the construction of material worlds but rather in the creation of “bodies,” as Richter himself put it, as the present technical and spiritual circumstances demanded of him.⁴⁰

This first encounter between Richter and Mies was not without consequences. From the outset, Mies actively participated in Richter’s journal *G - Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* (1923-1926). Alongside Richter, Werner Graeff, Theo van Doesburg and El Lissitzky, Mies, as the only architect, belonged to the inner circle of the so-called group “G” – even though at that time he had only published an article in Bruno Taut’s *Frühlicht* (“Hochhäuser,” 1922) and had not otherwise distinguished himself as a member of a particular movement.⁴¹ It may therefore come as a surprise that Richter described him as a “principal collaborator” who “significantly influenced” the journal.⁴² His three articles (“Bürohaus,” “Bauen,” “Industrielles Bauen”) and the famous cover of the third issue – with the tilted red G in front of an abstract charcoal pen drawing of a high rise building – are not the only evidence of Mies’s active participation. In fact, he showed himself to be an energetic defender of G’s programmatic orientation: After returning from his visit to the Bauhaus exhibition in 1923, Mies wrote a letter to the Altona architect Werner Jakstein in which he lamented the “rude constructivist formalism” and “artistic fog” with which he was confronted in Weimar. This experience led him to make his point of view clear at the next meeting of the “G-people” and to secure a commitment as to “who can stand by us and who cannot” in order to then “draw up an exact program of action.”⁴³

It is important to stress that *G* cannot be described merely as another Constructivist avant-garde magazine, as emerged in the first half of the 1920s in many European metropolises – such as *MA*, *Vesce’ Objet Gegenstand* or *Devětsil*. Rather, *G* was inextricably connected to the medium of film. In fact, the magazine was a substitute for a film project that Richter and Eggeling had been working since 1920, and which had not been brought to fruition due to financial and technical difficulties. It was Van Doesburg, Richter later recalled, who suggested that he invest the money earmarked for film production in the production of a magazine.⁴⁴

It is therefore hardly surprising that film was of central importance for *G*. Many authors of the first issue (with the exception of Mies) had already dealt with questions of the moving image before. As early as 1917, Van Doesburg recognized the mutual relationship between film and the “fourth dimension.”⁴⁵ From 1921 on, after he had made Richter’s acquaintance, he began to contemplate the possibility of an “architecture of light and time” that would be created by film – which he tried to carry out in 1928 with the Cine-Dancing Hall of the *Aubette* in Strasbourg.⁴⁶ In 1923, Werner Graeff published the “Filmpartitur,” a visual notation of abstract forms that were intended to “give the viewers massive impressions of an almost physical effect.”⁴⁷ And Raoul Hausmann had already declared in 1921: “Our art today is already film! At the same time process, plastic and picture!”⁴⁸



Film is therefore neither to be understood as a means of reproduction nor as a carrier of symbolic or aesthetic meanings. The rectangles and lines represent nothing, and are neither to be perceived as abstractions nor as signifying forms. Rather, they are “supportive devices,” as Richter himself calls them, which keep the elementary materials of film (light and movement) in tension or bring them to life. In other words, film is not a medium for the reproduction of reality, but it is film itself that makes the “overcoming of reproduction” possible.⁵³ The rigid drawings, even if they are shown as a sequence and their perforations suggest a celluloid strip, are therefore simply references to processes “that are meant to be in motion.”⁵⁴ Consequently, the journal *G* was also a surrogate that could only express the absence of what is actually meant. While, in the first two issues in particular, attempts were still being made to assemble the texts, images and other graphic elements in such a way that, like other constructivist graphics of the time, they simulated the sensuously cacophonous experience of movements, tensions and shocking contrasts (e.g. Moholy-Nagy’s *Dynamik der Gross-Stadt* [*Dynamics of the Big City*]), the “tidy” appearance of the third issue bears testimony to the insight that a magazine should be designed with its own “elementary” means.

The article summarized the basic theoretical positions on art and film that he first published in 1921 under the term “art of movement” in *De Stijl*.⁵⁵ These articles outlined the insights that surfaced in his joint experiments with Eggeling from 1918 on and were first depicted in the now-lost pamphlet “Universelle Sprache” [Universal Language].⁵⁶ Both started out from the utopian assumption that the polarized, rhythmic play of abstract forms reveals a universally valid language that is “above and beyond all language frontiers.”⁵⁷ Through the precise exploration of the basic elements of this language, it is possible to redefine human cognition and rediscover the body as the site of collective, immediate production of meaning. Their general critique of a transcendental subjectivity, of any formalism and of a positivist definition of science is opposed by the emphasis on the “time problem” and polarity as a “general principle of life,” which allow for the “unambiguity of diversity” to be experienced as meaningful.⁵⁸

Mies’s “Bürohaus” (Office building) article – placed between Hausmann’s and Richter’s contributions – is to be understood in this direct discursive context. The cryptic definition of architecture – the “spacious will of time. Vivid. Alternating. New.”⁵⁹ – that he formulated here extends the cinematic understanding of the new “art of movement” to architecture. It loses its static-objective nature and becomes not only a dynamic object, but an animated actor that organizes counter-relationships within itself and with its urban environment. Here, architecture creates experimental spaces for unpredictable resonances between the designing subject and its living environment. And just as Richter understood film first and foremost as a “play of light conditions,” Mies also described his architecture as a “rich play of reflections of light” in an article published in Bruno Taut’s *Frühlicht* magazine as early as 1922.⁶⁰ Just as the filmgoer is integrated into a play of tensions through the

composition of contrasting forms, the glass skin of the skyscraper entangles the passerby in the “street scene” of the pulsating metropolis.⁶¹ And as the visible rectangles and lines function as “supportive devices” in abstract film, so the Mies buildings, embedded in an existing urban space, are also to be understood as “media” that do not depict a vision of a future architecture, but instead make it possible for the modern subject to experience new experimental spaces for the creation of an emergent, but not yet existent architectural art. The task of the architect was thus to recognize the “new order” and to build “in” it in such a way that it “gives life leeway to develop.”⁶² And this was precisely the fundamental concern of *G*: to identify the seeds of an “inner order of our being” in the technological world in order to create “new life,” as Richter and Graeff wrote in their programmatic editorial in the first issue.⁶³

It could be argued that, despite these discursive parallels, there is a clear difference at the level of visual representation. In contrast to the serial celluloid strips that illustrate the articles by Richter and Hausmann, the “office building” drawing by Mies appears as an emphatically conventional image. Instead of a dynamic play of purely abstract forms in time, Mies presents a view of a street scene, a classic image and urban space with which the horizontally layered office building blends seamlessly. Nevertheless, here Mies seems to transfer the rule of the contrapuntal play of opposites, fundamental for Richter and Eggeling, to architecture in all its specific conditions. The office building is set in a space that is “quite different.”⁶⁴ The buildings of the existing city are merely black silhouettes without identifiable details, ruins of an outdated visual and architectural regime; the luminous office building, on the other hand, seems to float, ghostlike, in this ruined city. The architecture of the age of mechanical reproduction, to paraphrase Benjamin, explodes the old space and allows the subject to undertake “adventurous journeys” through the ruins.⁶⁵ Just as film creates a new sense of community by “mastering the material in accordance with the functions of our sensory apparatus,”⁶⁶ so major architecture does not emerge on a tabula rasa, but in dependence on physiological, historical and media conditions.

[To be continued in issue 41]

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Notes

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1. "Filmkämpfer von außen," *Film-Kurier* 1, January 1931.
2. An exception is the work by Detlef Mertins, who has studied Mies's relationship to different avant-garde currents. Detlef Mertins, "Architectures of Becoming: Mies van der Rohe and the Avant Garde," in Barry Bergdoll, Terence Riley (eds.), Exhibition catalog, *Mies in Berlin* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art), 124-133.
3. His daughter Georgia writes in her biography that her father would regularly take her to the cinema with him. See Georgia Van der Rohe, *La Donna é mobile* (Berlin: Aufbau Publishers, 2002): 34-35.
4. The only exception is a 16-millimeter film projector installed in the Tugendhat Villa, in a separate room next to the staircase, dedicated to him. It would be called "Locomotive" by the residents of the house. During film screenings, the living room, as Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat remembers, was transformed into a "Cinema Hall." See Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, "Living in the Tugendhat House," in Daniela Hammer Tugendhat and Wolf Tegethoff (eds.), *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: The Tugendhat House* (Vienna: Aufbau Publishers, 1998): 21.
5. Regarding the topic of architecture and film, see: François Penz and Maureen Thomas (eds.), *Cinema & Architecture: Méliés, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia* (London: British Film Institute, 1997); Lamster Mark (ed.), *Architecture and Film* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000); Mikhäil Lampolski, "Le Cinéma de l'architecture utopique," *Iris* 12 (1991), 39-46; Andres Janser, "Die bewegliche kinematographische Aufnahme ersetzt beinahe die Führung um und durch einen Bau, Bruno Taut und der film," in Winfried Nerdinger (ed.), *Bruno Taut: 1880-1938: Architekt zwischen Tradition und Avantgarde* (Mailand: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001), 267-274. Le Corbusier's interest in film is evident on various levels. On the one hand, under the direction of Pierre Chenal, he filmed his architectural theory and urban planning ideas in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1930); on the other, film played a central role in the discourses in and around Le Corbusier's magazine *L'Esprit nouveau*. François Arnault, "La cinématographie de l'œuvre de Le Corbusier," *Cinémathèque* 9 (1996), 39-55.
6. Thomas Meder, "Die Verdrängung des Films aus der deutschen Kunstwissenschaft 1925-1950," in Joachim Paech (ed.), *Film, Fernsehen, Video und die Künste: Strategien der Intermedialität*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994); See also Horst Bredekamp, "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as Bildwissenschaft," *Critical Inquiry* 29-3. (2003), 418-28; Marc Ferro, *Cinéma et Histoire*, Paris, 1993.
7. Mies, quoted in Peter Blake, "A conversation with Mies," in *Four Great Makers of Modern Architecture: Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Wright*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 101.
8. Detlef Mertins. "Architectures of Becoming:..." 133.
9. Spyros Papapetros, "Malicious Houses: Animation, Animism, Animosity in German Architecture and Film—From Mies to Murnau," *Grey Room* 20 (2005), 27.
10. Philip Johnson, *Mies van der Rohe* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1947), 26. "The prismatic plan of the first is rather Expressionistic in its oblique angles, whereas the second plan has a free curvilinear form of astonishing originality. The form bears some resemblance to certain abstract film designs of Viking Eggeling and to the biomorphic shapes of the painter Jean (Hans) Arp."
11. Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Architectural Press, 1960), 187.
12. Bruno Reichlin, "Mies' Raumgestaltung: Vermutungen zu einer Genealogie und Inspirationsquellen," in Adolph Stiller (ed.), *Das Haus Tugendhat: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe - Brünn 1930* (Salzburg: Pustet, 1999), 59.
13. Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture* vol. 1 (London: Faber, 1986), 132.
14. Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, 132.
15. The first Congrès International du cinema indépendant took place between September 3 and 7, 1929 in the castle of Hélène de Mandrot in La Sarraz, one year after the first CIAM meeting was held there. Among the participants were filmmakers (including Sergei Eisenstein, Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann and Alberto Cavalcanti) as well as critics, such as Béla Balázs, and the architect Alberto Sartoris. See Antoine Baudin, *Hélène de Mandrot and the Maison des Artistes de la Sarraz*. (Lausanne: Payot, 1998).
16. The "red mil" had about 800 seats and was located in the immediate vicinity of the famous "Lunapark" in Berlin-Halensee.
17. L.H.E, "Film Kritik 1 Matinee der Liga für unabhängigen Film," in *Film-Kurier* 12, 27-2 (November 17, 1930). The L.H.E abbreviation probably stands for Lotte H. Eisner, a former pupil of Wölfflin and a later film scholar. On a program sheet from the first event of the league, which can be found in the Mies van der Rohe Archive in the Library of Congress, there are a number of other shows featuring Méliés, Ivens, Richter, Vertov, Cavalcanti and Eggeling, among others, some of which were shown at the following events.
18. See the pamphlet "Filmkämpfer" from the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin Archive.
19. Holitscher was known as a travel writer and published, in December 1911, the extraordinarily successful travel review "Amerika heute und morgen in der Neuen Rundschau" [America Today and Tomorrow in the Neue Rundschau]. In 1912, this text appeared in book form. Of particular interest are his descriptions of New York's skyscrapers, which seem to anticipate Mies's later skyscraper designs. While describing the skyline as unreal, as a "thin backdrop with nothing behind it, truly," he enthuses about the "iron frame" of the municipal building under construction: "The scaffolding is beautiful and the finishing is of unrefined energy, which, among these monstrosities, touches me deeper than the results it yielded." Arthur Holitscher, *America Today and Tomorrow* (Berlin: Fischer, 1919) 39, 41.
20. In a letter dated July 22, 1930, Blumenthal asked Mies whether the revised text of the pamphlet satisfied him. The papers of Mies van der Rohe. Library of Congress, Washington D.C., Box 2, Folder R.
21. See: "letter from Mies to Stotz, November 27, 1930." Mies van der Rohe: Research papers, documents and tape recordings related to Mies van der Rohe and the establishment of the Museum of Modern Art. Mies van der Rohe Archive, compiled by Ludwig Glaeser. Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture.
22. In the Mies Archive, there is a letter in which an unnamed writer complains about the entire board of the league having lost interest in the league.
23. The event "Neues Wohnen – Neues Bauen" took place at the Alhambra Cinema in Berlin, on January 31, 1932. It showed *Wo wohnen alter Leute* by Ella Bergmann-Michel (1931), *Die neue Wohnung* by Hans Richter (1931) and *Hier wird gebaut* (an animated film). An invitation to this event can be found in the Mies Archive, Box 2, Folder S. Library of Congress.
24. "I am glad to participate and await the details of the exact date. Heil Hitler," Letter from Mies to the president of the Reichskammer der bildenden Künste, dated December 18, 1934. Box 1, Folder R. The papers of Mies van der Rohe, Library of Congress.
25. Letter from Paul Renner to Mies, September 19, 1930. Box 2, Folder R. The papers of Mies van der Rohe, Library of Congress.
26. Siegfried Kracauer, "Der Deutsche Werkbund. Rhein Ruhr Tagung," *Frankfurt Zeitung* (July 27, 1926).
27. Siegfried Kracauer, "Werkbundaustellung: 'Die Wohnung'. Die Eröffnung" ["Werkbund Exhibition: 'The Apartment'. The opening"], *Frankfurter Zeitung*, (July 24, 1927). In the undated lecture notes by Mies, the phrases used by Kracauer in his article can be found: "We can only talk of a new building art when [...] new life forms have been formed." Mies quoted in Fritz Neumeyer, *The Artless Word: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* (London: The MIT Press, 1991), 269.
28. "In the exhibition halls one finds a striking space by Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich. Its walls are made out of milk- and dark-colored plate glass. It is a transparent glass box interpenetrated by the neighboring spaces. Every piece of furniture and every movement creates magical shadow plays upon the walls, corporeal silhouettes that waft through the air and merge with the mirror images arising from the glass space itself. The conjuring of this elusive glass ghost, which shifts as kaleidoscopically as the light reflections, is a sign that the new dwelling is not a final fulfillment. [...] From their content, the new houses seem like remainders, that is, contemporary constructive foreordinations of elements cleansed of bad superfluities. And undoubtedly these remainder-compositions are a direct product of contemporary society. But one wishes they would express, more than they do today, sorrow for that which they have had to renounce - that same ludicrous sorrow that clings to the apparitions captured in the glass surfaces. For these house-skeletons are not an end in themselves but the necessary passageway to a fullness

from which nothing more needs to be taken away. Today they can only be attested negatively, through sorrow. The skeletons will take on flesh only when man steps out of the glass." Siegfried Kracauer, "The New Building. On the Stuttgart Werkbund exhibition 'Die Wohnung,'" *Frankfurter Zeitung*, (July 31, 1927).

29. Theodor W Adorno, "Der wunderliche Realist: Über Siegfried Kracauer," in *Noten zur Literatur III* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1965), P. 85.
30. See Gerwin Zohlen, "Smugglerpath: Siegfried Kracauer, architect and writer," in Michael Kessler and Thomas Y Levin (ed.), *Siegfried Kracauer: New Interpretations* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1990), 325-334. Of the approximately two thousand articles that Kracauer wrote until 1933 – film reviews, book reviews, political commentaries, travelogues, *feuilletonist* essays – only a few are architectural criticism. In these, Kracauer takes a distanced critical position on modern architecture.
31. Hans Richter, *Köpfe und Hinterköpfe* (Zurich: Die Arche, 1967), 9.
32. Hans Richter, "Prinzipielles zur Bewegungskunst," *De Stijl* 4-7 (1921), 110.
33. Hans Richter, "Prinzipielles zur Bewegungskunst," *De Stijl* 4-7, 109.
34. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), 208.
35. Quotes from Ritter in "Gesammelte..." 388. Benjamin also lists those passages from Ritter's *Fragments from the Legacy of a Young Physicist: A Pocketbook for Friends of Nature* (1810), in which the latter named all the fine arts, "Architectur, Plastik, malerey, etc." as "Schift."
36. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 214.
37. See Siegfried Ebeling, *Der Raum als Membran* (Dessau: Dünnhaupt, 1926), 24. The work, which is characterized by influences from biology and "Lebensphilosophie," is an attempt to redefine architecture. It was found in Mies's private library.
38. Hans Richter, "Der neue Baumeister," *Qualität* 4-1 (February, 1924), 27.
39. Hans Richter, "Der neue Baumeister," *Qualität* 4-1, 8.
40. Hans Richter, "Der neue Baumeister," *Qualität* 4-1, 8.
41. Richter, quoted in Raoul Hausmann, "More on Group 'G,'" *Art Journal*, 24, 4 (1965), 352. Since the Group G understood itself as an informal union of various artists, writers and intellectuals around the journal G, there are various statements about their exact composition. See Werner Graeff, "About the so-called 'Group G,'" *Werk und Zeit*, 11 (1962), 5. Hans Richter, *Köpfe und Hinterköpfe*, 69.
42. Hans Richter, *Begegnungen von Dada bis heute* (Cologne: Dumont Schauberg, 1973), 54.
43. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Letter to Werner Jakstein, September 13, 1923. Mies van der Rohe: Research papers, Canadian Centre for Architecture.
44. Hans Richter, *Begegnungen von Dada bis heute*, 189.
45. Theo van Doesburg, quoted in Tom Gunning, "Modernity and Cinema: A Culture of Shock and Flows," in Murray Pomerance (ed), *Cinema and Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2006), 297.
46. Theo van Doesburg, "Abstrakte filmbeelding." *De Stijl* 4-5 (1921), 71-75. Theo van Doesburg, "Licht- en Tijdbeelding (Film)," *De Stijl* 6-5 (1923), 62.
47. Werner Graeff, "Anmerkungen zur Filmpartitur Komp II 22," *De Stijl* 4- 9 (1921), 3.
48. Raoul Hausmann, "PRÉsentismus: gegen den Puffkeismus der deutschen Seele," *De Stijl* 4-9 (1921), 3.
49. Raoul Hausmann, "Vom sprechenden Film zur Optophonetik," *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* 1 (1923).
50. Maria Gough describes Lissitzky's "Demonstration Spaces" as "paracinematic works" designed to turn the passive viewer into an active participant. See Maria Gough, "Constructivism Disoriented: El Lissitzky's Dresden and Hanover Demonstration Rooms," in Nancy Perloff, Brian Reed (ed). *Situating El Lissitzky: Vitebsk, Berlin, Moscow* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2003).
51. El Lissitzky. "Prounenraum," in *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung*, 1 (1923)
52. Hans Richter "Demonstration des Materials," *G: Zeitschrift für elementare Gestaltung*, 1 (1923). The text does not actually have a title. "Demonstration des Materials" is the heading of the explanation of the image sequence running along the top of the double page.
53. See Hans Richter Hans, "The Film as an Original Art Form," *College Art Journal* 10- 2 (1951), 157.
54. Hans Richter, "Principles zur Bewegungskunst," 109.
55. Adolf Behne (who had invited van Doesburg to Berlin at the end of 1920) and Ludwig Hillberseimer published articles in 1921 in which they propagated the new "art of movement." Eggeling also published an article in *MA* that same year

that was largely identical to Richter's essay. See Adolf Behne, "Art of Movement" *Freedom*, 4. 452 (1921), 2; and Ludwig Hillberseimer, "Bewegungskunst," *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 27 (1921), 467-468; Viking Eggeling, "Elvi Fejtegetesek a Mozgoműveszetről," *MA* 8 (1921), 105-06.

56. Concerning Richter and Eggeling's "Universal Language," see Wolf Eva, "Von der universellen zur poetischen Sprache," in Justin Hoffman (ed.), Exhibition Catalog, *Deutsches Filmmuseum: Hans Richter: Painting and Film* (Frankfurt am Main: ED, 1989), 16-23; Malcolm Turvey, "Dada Between Heaven and Hell: Abstraction and Universal Language in the Rhythm Films of Hans Richter," *October* 105 (2013), 13-36; Bruce Elder, "Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling: The Dream of Universal Language and the Birth of the Absolute Film," Graf Alexander and Dietrich Scheune-mann, *Avant Garde Film* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 3-35.
57. Hans Richter, "My Experience with Movement in Painting and Film," in Gyorgy Kepes (ed.), *The Nature and Art of Movement* (New York: Braziller, 1965), 144.
58. Hans Richter, "My Experience with Movement in Painting and Film," Gyorgy Kepes (ed.) *The Nature and Art of Movement*, 144.
59. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Bürohaus," *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung*, 1 (1923).
60. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Hochhäuser," *Frühlicht* 4 (1922), 122.
61. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Hochhäuser," *Frühlicht* 4, 122.
62. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Die Voraussetzungen baukünstlerischen Schaffens," in Fritz Neumeyer, *Mies van der Rohe: Das kunstlose Wort*, 365. On the concept of "leeway" in relation to the architecture of Mies, see Lutz Robbers, "Espaces pour jeux de lumière: Mies van der Rohe, le cinéma, l'innovation," in Spielraum, *Walter Benjamin et l'architecture* (Paris: Editions de la Villette, 2011), 87-114.
63. Hans Richter and Werner Graeff, "Ewige Wahrheiten," *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* 1 (1923).
64. Werner Graeff later reported how Mies told him that his designs were created with the awareness that his buildings would stand in an environment that was "quite different." Werner Graeff: Interview with Werner Glaeser, 17 September 1972, tape recording. Mies van der Rohe: Research papers, CCA. Box 3, 4.
65. Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," in Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (eds.), *Gesammelte Schriften* 1, 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 499-500.
66. Hans Richter, "Die schlecht trainierte Seele," *G: Zeitschrift für elementare Gestaltung* 3 (1924).

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