

QUANDO L'USO NON CAMBIA. QUESTIONI APERTE SUL RESTAURO DELLA NEUE NATIONALGALERIE DI MIES VAN DER ROHE

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Abstract

When use does not change. Open issues on the refurbishment of the Neue Nationalgalerie by Mies van der Rohe

The slogan *As much Mies as possible* marks the beginning of a five-year project of refurbishment, enhancement and modernization of the Neue Nationalgalerie. The gallery, opened to the public in 1968, is a material expression of the relationship that art engages with the concept of modernity. The modern temple, considered an icon of the 20th century, is part of the legacy of the Mies van der Rohe's work.

Almost half a century after construction, the building showed some physiological decay of reinforced concrete structures and of the materials that make up its shell. However, the architecture is considered somewhat obsolete given the changing methods of use and differing standards of comfort of an international art gallery affected by a growing influx of visitors.

The intervention carried out by David Chipperfield Architects with the supervision of the Federal Building and Regional Planning Office (BBR) pursues systematic modernization of the building according to the most recent requirements related to climate control, safety and fire regulations. Among the most incisive outcomes are the replacement of the glass walls in the façade system and the expansion of deposit volumes placed on the basement.

Starting from a critical analysis of the intervention, the paper aims to outline how changing cultural and socio-economic needs, and the increasing pressure of visitors, have influenced project choices. Although the intervention confirms the continuity of the original use and the need to maintain the image of a 20th century icon, it imposes on the monument some transformations that are incompatible with the preservation of its material meanings and values.

Keywords: *Neue Nationalgalerie, Mies van der Rohe, conservation, refurbishment, material identity*