

La cura del dettaglio per la difesa dall'acqua. Il caso di Farnsworth House

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyse the iconic case of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House (Illinois, 1945-1951), central to the debate on the safety of the building from the increasingly dangerous floods of the adjacent Fox River.

Symbol of experimentation and, at the same time, example of the fragilities of Modern Architecture, Farnsworth House was built on the river alluvial plain, a little higher than the height of maximum flooding recorded in the hundred years preceding the realization. If Mies makes seasonal flooding an element of the project by designing the house occasionally at the water's edge, today the intensity and frequency of flooding are increasing, representing a threat to the integrity of the building.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, through the Flood Mitigation Project (started in 2014), is developing projects dedicated to the experimentation of a permanent solution to address this issue. The Organization explored some options for securing from floods, finally preferring an experimental hydraulic lifting system. The research aims to document the phenomena of damage caused by water, by providing a critical analysis of the interventions and by considering a wider context of solutions for flood protection.

How can we relate to the preservation aims to the respect of the spirit of the project, in the multiplicity of possible technical/technological solutions? The goal is to critically analyze the effects of these choices on the architecture, starting from the belief that a multifaceted conservation project cannot be solved only on technical level, but it must represent a cultural path.

Keywords: *Farnsworth House, Mies van der Rohe, flooding, water damage, intervention*