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Autor: Casper, Mary

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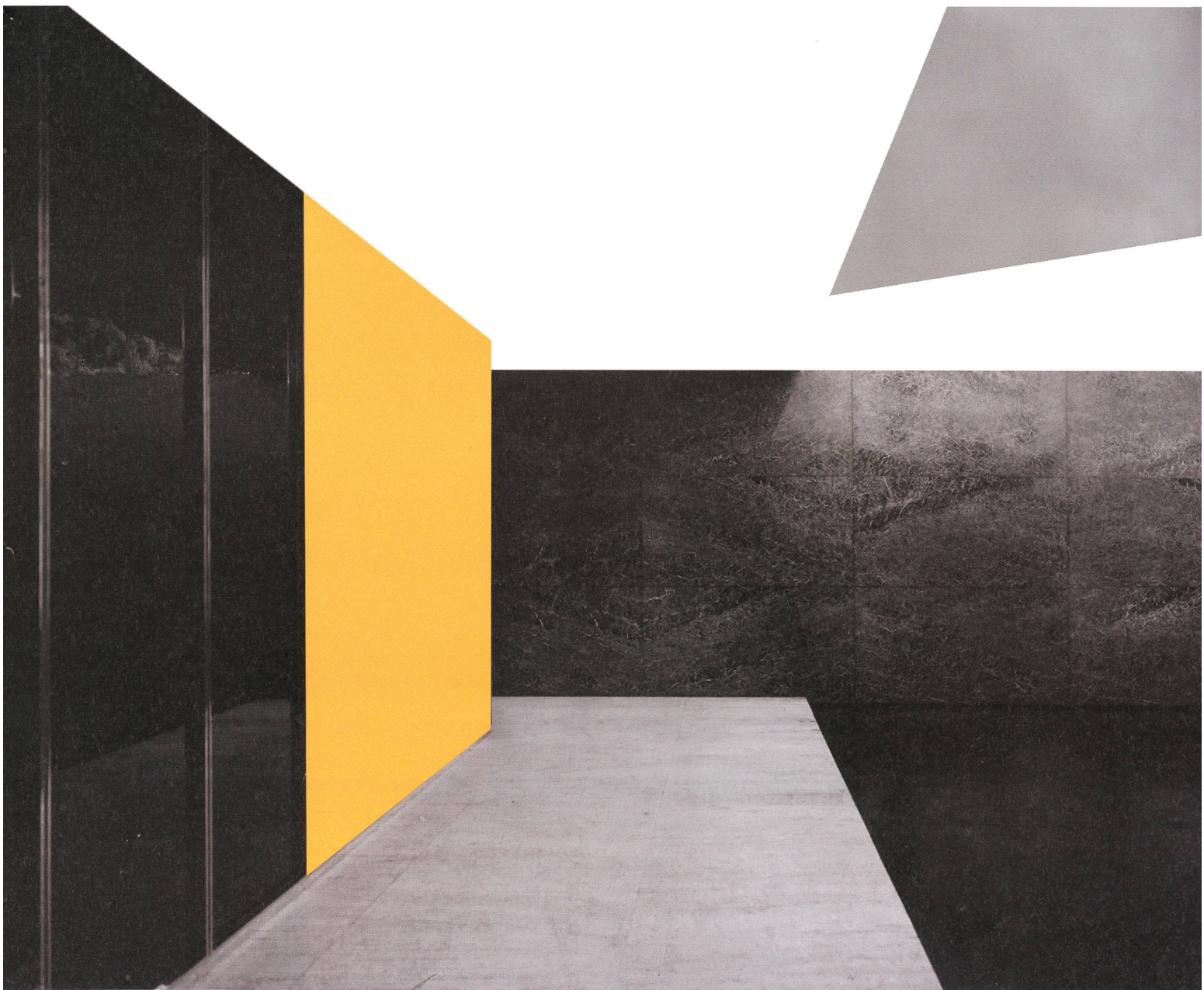
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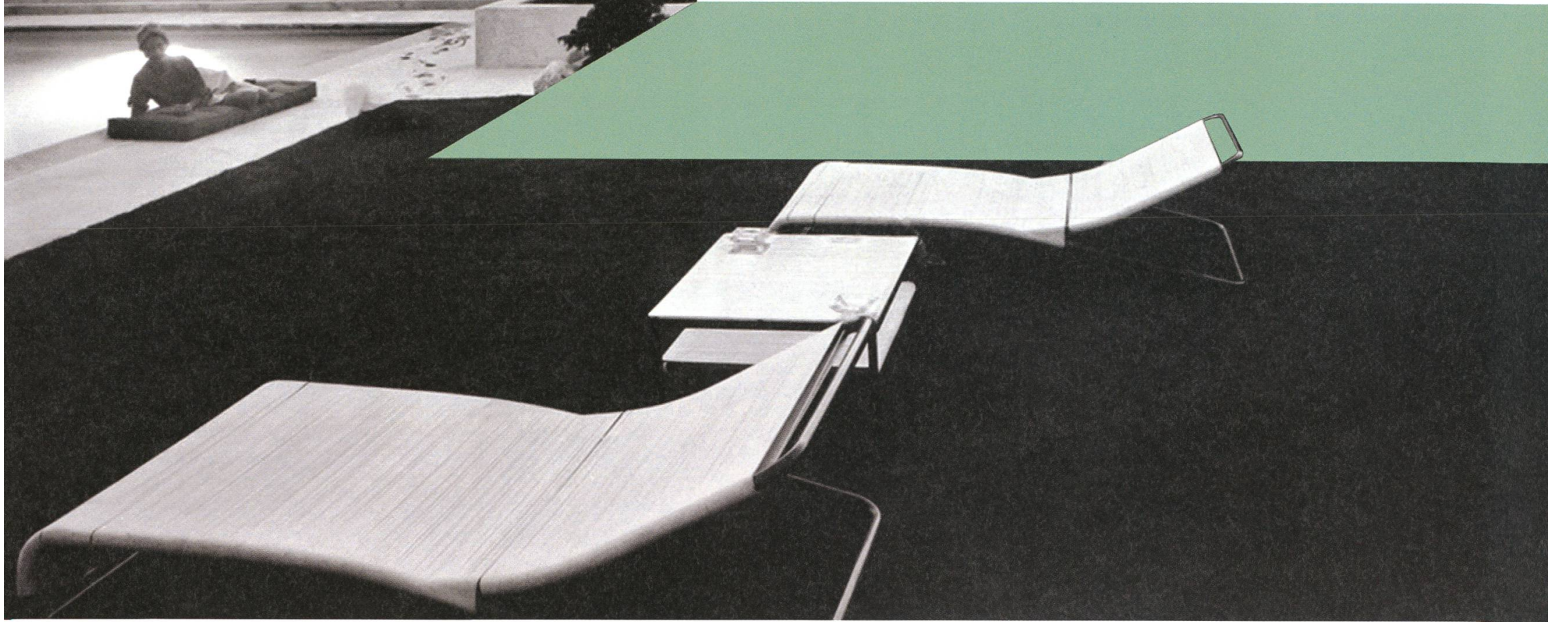
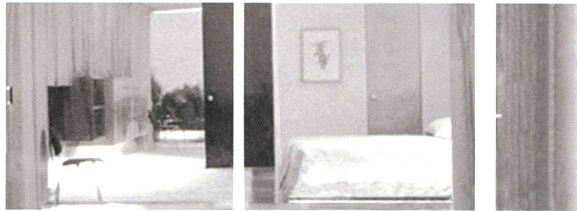
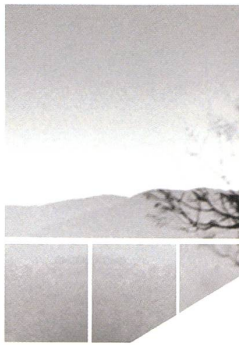
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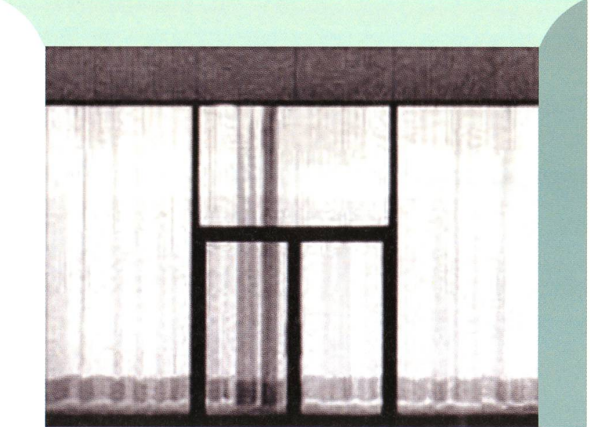
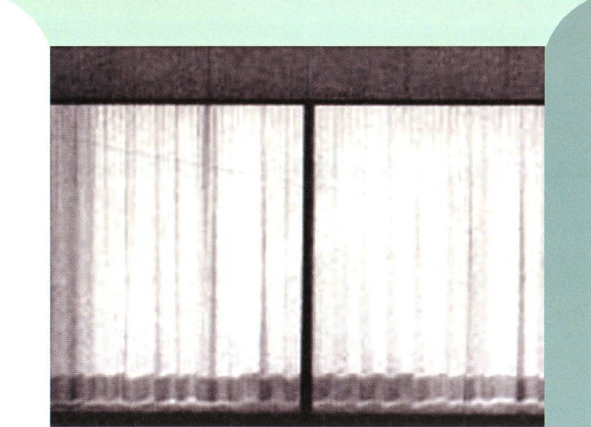
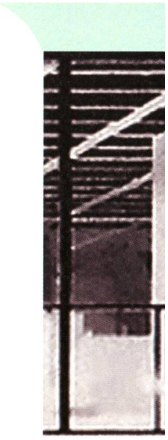
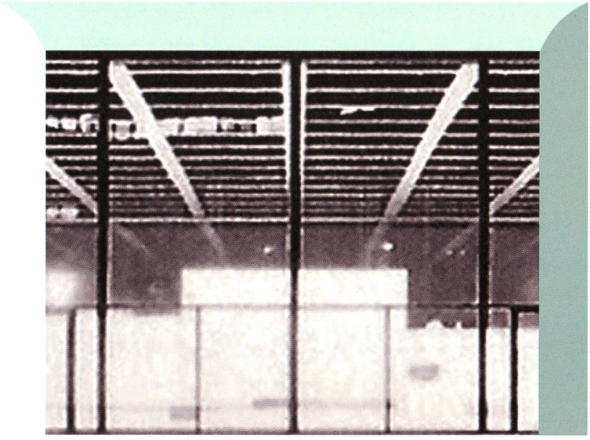
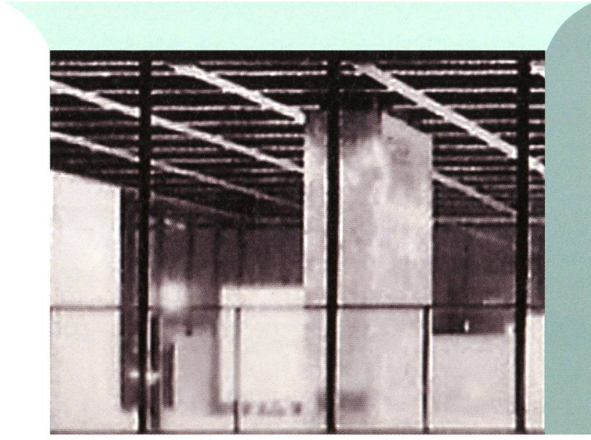
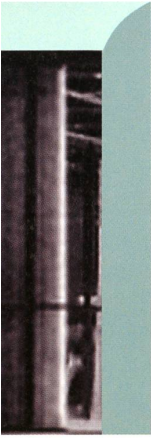
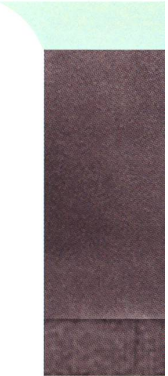
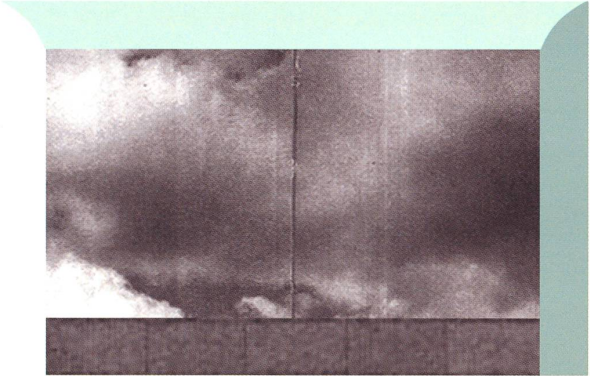
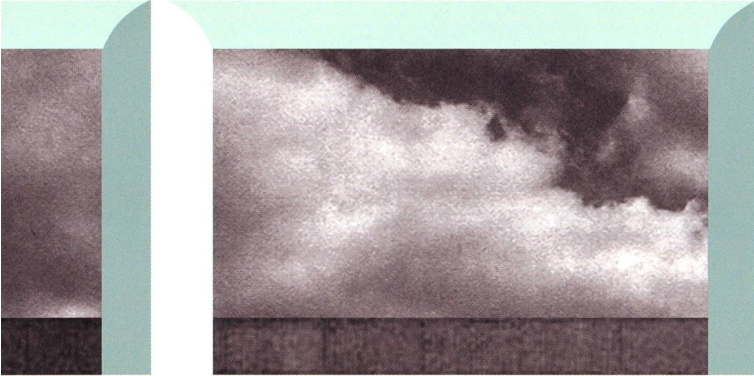
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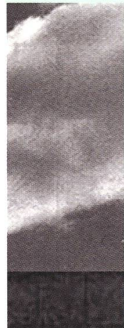
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Cut Paste
Mary Casper
Johnston Marklee Architects









The architectural experience today, as in most other cultural realms, is an overwhelmingly visual one. We encounter space in the two dimensional realm of the page, across the hyperactive, refreshable display of the screen. While flat images have certainly transformed the context for built architecture, they have also pushed it to new limits — demanding increased versatility, immediacy, saturation, spectacle and gratification.

We are what we want. Hungry for identity, we devour images as though they were commodities. Today, one need not take a photograph to own it, but merely pin it, retweet it, host it, tag it, or simply like it. Especially as designers, we are defined by our precise curation of references.



To collage is to see something you want and to take it, cut and paste it. The act is pure mimicry; collaging exploits, is opportunistic, and completely self-serving. The collage operates beyond the polity of copyright and citation, in a territory governed by aesthetic decision. Once clipped from its original source, an element is absorbed into its new context; by combining fragments a completely new reference emerges, embodying its component parts whilst reinterpreting their original meaning.

Collage is the formal equivalent of the hyperlink: a direct, acknowledged reference to something existing, which authors claim as part of their work. It prefers the direct quotation to the paraphrase. The collage refuses to explain why; explanation kills the impact of its immediacy. Through collage, Mario Botta, Kazuo Shinohara and Alvar Aalto can be reconciled in a single work. Bomp-bomp-bomp.

Collage, as an act of composition, offers both a medium and a method for working.

Unlike the literally built collage of postmodernism, collage as a process is quick and sloppy, such that ideas — as images — pass through a project with great expediency. It can be promiscuous with regard to precedent because its form remains untethered to any singular style. The work itself emerges as the white space resulting from its assembled pieces.

Historical timelines, in our image-driven culture, no longer operate in a linear fashion, but in a three dimensional, free-for-all modern arena, in which everything and nothing is contemporary. The collage artist, like the bricoleur, asserts their agency as a curator rather than a creator, working in concert with existing conditions, though not confined by them. Ironically, the most genuine and original architectures of our time are those that tacitly forge their originality with a ferocious appetite for the formal lineage of buildings that have come before them. The architectural work designed by collage within this continuum of history — and make no mistake, this continuum is all encompassing and inescapable — is best understood as a curated moment of influences than as a unique or autonomous act.

All images by Johnston Marklee Architects.

Mary Casper, born 1984, earned her Bachelor of Arts in sociology at Vassar College. Since completing her M.Arch in 2014 at Rice University, she has worked as a project designer for Johnston Marklee in Los Angeles. She is co-editor of *‘The Petropolis of Tomorrow’* and co-editor of *‘PLAT’ Journal* issues 2.5 and 3.0.

