



Thanks for the View, Mr. Mies: Lafayette Park, Detroit

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Lafayette Park, an affordable middle-class residential area in downtown Detroit, is home to the largest collection of buildings designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in the world. Today, it is one of Detroit's most racially integrated and economically stable neighborhoods, although it is surrounded by evidence of a city in financial distress. Through interviews with and essays by residents; reproductions of archival material; and new photographs by Karin Jobst, Vasco Roma, and Corine Vermeulen, and previously unpublished photographs by documentary filmmaker Janine Debanné, *Thanks for the View, Mr. Mies* examines the way that Lafayette Park residents confront and interact with this unique modernist environment. Lafayette Park has not received the level of international attention that other similar projects by Mies have. This may be due in part to its location in Detroit, a city whose most positive qualities are often overlooked in the media. This book is a reaction against the way that iconic modernist architecture is often represented. Whereas other writers may focus on the design intentions of the architect, authors Aubert, Cavar and Chandani seek to show the organic and idiosyncratic ways that the people who live in Lafayette Park actually use the architecture and how this experience, in turn, affects their everyday lives. While there are many publications about abandoned buildings in Detroit and about the city's prosperous past, this book is about a remarkable part of the city as it exists today, in the twenty-first century.

“Thanks for the View, Mr. Mies is a superb field guide to the diverse cross-section of inhabitants, the variety of habitats they have constructed within their brilliant biome, the lush and abundant flora and the ground fauna of Lafayette Park. The variety of environments created by each particular species in their words, actions and images is a joy to behold. And like the best field guides, wonderfully instructive.” – Phyllis Lambert, founder, Canadian Centre for Architecture

“This beautiful and wonderfully ambitious book tells the comprehensive story of a unique place – Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s magnificent modernist vision built in the midst of a city undergoing the worst of the urban crisis. The story is told through a collage of archival records, insightful essays and, above all, interviews with the residents and photographs of what they have made of Mies. The collision between Mies’s purer-than-pure modernism and the realities of Detroit is both comic and tragic – surprising, disturbing and, finally, inspiring.” – Robert Fishman, Taubman College of Architecture and Planning, University of Michigan

*“Thanks for the View is a surprising paean to human passion and idiosyncrasy, terms not usually associated with the International Style or the architecture of Mies van der Rohe – which in large part is what makes this book all the more welcome. As charming as it is well researched, *Thanks for the View* celebrates the mutual effect that Mies’s Lafayette Park and its longtime residents have had on each other and, by extension, on the city of Detroit.” – Joe Scanlan, Visual Arts Program, Princeton University*

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