

# Impact of Less is More in Present Time

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**Abstract:** Famous architect Mies van der Rohe used this phrase to describe how he thought buildings should be constructed. Inspirations- the Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, use of post and lintel construction, Dutch De Stijl philosophy of simplicity architecture and Russian Constructivism to benefit society. Less complicated is better understood and more appreciated than what is more complicated. Simplicity is preferable to complexity. The renowned architect, Mies van der Rohe, revolutionized the sphere of architecture by adopting the famous aphorism less is more in his buildings. The concept of Minimalism, which was seen in artworks, was adopted into architecture. He borrowed from the art theory which talks about the object qualities and aesthetics. Mies buildings called masterpieces" encompass this theory which shows that architecture can also be an art, just like painting or sculpture. With specific reference to one of Mies's very famous „work of art“, the „Farnsworth house“, this paper will try to illustrate how the concept „less is more“ is beautifully incorporated into the architecture of this building, thereby showing the perfect coalescence that exists between Mies and minimalism. Mies van der Rohe adopted this movement in architecture at a time when it was the age of rationalization, structural rigidity, and mass production. His buildings were simple in form, had minimum use of material like steel, glass, and concrete, but were aesthetically immaculate. They were neither an imitation of any works from the past nor were they based on any social ideas or individual emotions. They were like a moment in history. They were self-referential, like any work of art (Mertins, 2014).

**Keywords:** minimalism, less, more, mies, architecture

## 1. Introduction

Less complicated is better understood and more appreciated than what is more complicated. Simplicity is preferable to complexity. Architectural meaning building should be stripped of any extras and constructed on essentials of clarity, utility and effect.

The minimalist design vocabulary emphasizes employing geometry and using basic shapes, flat surfaces; simple forms; minimal interior partitions; clean, smooth finishes; and straight components to create building structure. Conceptually now a day's less is more adopted in structure and simplicity emphasis the visual impact. Less is more" mentality of minimalist architecture, it seems to succinctly define a modernist ethic.

## 2. History

Mies van der Rohe's 'Less is More' seems to succinctly define a modernist ethic. What's less well known however is that van der Rohe wasn't actually the originator of the phrase, even if it did come to be inextricably linked with him. The pithy observation was, in fact, given its first airing by Peter Behrens, a godfather figure to the young Mies who he drafted in to work on aspects of the AEG Turbine Factory in Berlin, between 1907 and 1910. Mies's signature phrase means that less decoration, properly deployed, has more impact than a lot.

Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect A Ludwig Mies van der Rohe floor plan for a 860/880 Lake Shore Drive apartment building in Chicago, 1951. Minimalist architectural designers focus on the connection between two perfect planes, elegant lighting, and the void spaces left by the removal of three-dimensional shapes in an architectural design.

"I heard it in Behrens's office for the first time," he later recalled. "I had to make a drawing for a facade for a factory. There was nothing to do on this thing. The columns were 5.75 meters (19 feet). I will remember that until I die. I showed him a bunch of drawings of what could be done and then he said, 'Less is more'," but "he meant it in another way than I use it."

Mies was to return to the phrase again and again, effectively making it his own, referring to his later efforts to reduce and distil buildings and their components into simple forms in which art and techniques - geometry and matter - were integrated in a more persuasive tectonic expression than Behrens, his former master, had ever achieved.

They collectively helped transform design/architecture from a decorative/excessive pre-modern style to a simple/clean modern one, based on the aesthetic that favored subtraction over addition in many senses.

The shift revolutionized design, but it was also a reaction to the tectonic change of the underlying society as it was rapidly transforming from a rigid, hierarchical regime to a group of increasingly empowered citizens.

Innovative creators like Mies sensed completely new opportunities to democratize design/architecture, taking it out of the hands of people in power so that it could become an effective tool to solve the problems of the society at large.

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### 3. Philosophy

- Mies' buildings, beyond merely affecting our lives, endow them with greater significance and beauty.
- The absence of any decorative treatment was fundamental.
- His buildings radiate the confidence, rationality, and elegance of their creator and,
- His buildings were free of ornamentation.
- His works confess the essential elements of our lives.
- He followed the reductionist approach.
- Less is more.



Balance between empty and filled spaces



Garden and sea week-end house designed by takao shiotsuka



Shilmada house design



Dancing living house designed



Dining area with minimum design elements a loft in New York designed by architect



Claudio silvestrin.

Abstract or minimalist: light, geometrical forms and natural material are key points in his style.

Architectural international styles followed along the lines of less is more:



Villa savoye- le corbusier



Bauhaus - Walter Gropius



Peristyle hall illinois institute of seagram building New York City



Technology ludwig mies van der rohe

The transparency of buildings, construction (called the honest expression of structure), and acceptance of industrialized mass-production techniques contributed to the international style's design philosophy.

- Glass and steel, in combination with usually less visible reinforced concrete, are the characteristic materials of the construction.

#### Less is more characteristic features

- Simplicity and clarity of forms and elimination of "unnecessary detail"
- Materials at 90 degrees to each other
- Visual expression of structure (as opposed to the hiding of structural elements)
- The related concept of "truth to materials", meaning that the true nature or natural appearance of a material ought to be seen rather than concealed or altered to represent something else
- Use of industrially-produced materials; adoption of the machine aesthetic.

#### Principles

- Rectilinear forms.
- Light, taut plane surfaces that have been completely stripped of applied ornamentation and decoration.
- Open interior spaces.
- A visually weightless quality engendered by the use of cantilever construction.

#### Significance

Mies pursued an ambitious lifelong mission to create a new architectural language that could be used to represent the new era of technology and production. He saw a need for architecture expressive of and in harmony with his epoch. He applied a disciplined design process using rational thought to achieve his spiritual goals.

One notable way that Mies connected his buildings with nature was by extending outdoor plaza tiles into the floor of a lobby, synthesizing the exterior and interior spaces of the site. The device accentuated the effortless flow between natural conditions and artificial structures. This characteristic is often found in his large building projects such as the Seagram Building.

#### Benefits of less is more in architecture

- Clarity of mind
- More freedom
- Better functionality
- Less stress
- Saves time
- No waste

- Less material consumption
- Authenticity in work
- Simplicity in forms

**Minimalism Color Palettes and Shapes**

Minimalism is all about extreme simplification of form. As a result, you can't expect complex shapes and all the subtle shades of a color you never knew existed. The use of color palettes and shapes varies through time. De Stijl artists limited themselves to squares, rectangles, horizontal and vertical lines and primary colors.

The minimalists of today use more complex shapes and richer color palettes. Nevertheless, it's still typical for (neo) minimalists to use clean, simple shapes and color palettes that are either limited to multiple shades of one color, or that use a few different but high-contrast colors.

When less	More
Less use of materials	Proper & execution of materials and design
Less use of economy	It is affordable to client
Less waste of materials	More quick execution and use of proper needed materials
Less use of time	More technology is adopted to construct.
	Work on time is necessary.
Less use of harmful materials	More ecological balance
	More ecofriendly environment
Less elements	More functionality and better execution
Less ornamental work	More space utilization
Less use of different geometrical form	More simplicity, more aligned work.

Assumptions when less cannot be more
According to survey less cannot be more when
Linear forms are brought up with geometric form, hence giving design a different look.
More use of technology in this modern world cannot be defined to less economy.
Executing more design elements will definitely take more time span to complete.



**Modernism in architecture**

It was associated with an analytical approach to the function of buildings, a strictly rational use of (often new) materials, structural innovation and the elimination of ornament. The style became characterized by an emphasis on volume, asymmetrical compositions, and minimal ornamentation. The buildings got more sleek and less ornamental as well as the usage of new materials such as glass and aluminum pumped up. Modernism became the single most important new style or philosophy of architecture and design of the 20th century. It was also known as International Modernism or International Style, after an exhibition of modernist architecture in America in 1932 by the architect Philip Johnson.

**Why modernism is important?**

Modern architecture focuses more on industrial metals such as steel, concrete and glass (innovative industrial developments of the time). Overall, modern architecture is defined by clean lines and minimalist interiors that allow the structure to speak for it and take center-stage.

**Less is more accepted by modernism**

Modern Architecture adopted modern industry, new materials and technology resulted in characteristics such as simplicity of forms; functional, flexible, and flowing spaces; exposed structure; visual weightlessness; and lack of ornamentation. Moreover uses of glass and steel. Whereas, The of less is more justifies rectilinear forms, minimalism, simplicity, less use of materials, stripped ornamentation.



Broached in 2012, the idea to re-house London's Design Museum Designed by minimalist architect, John Pawson.

**Less is more with minimalism**

Minimalist architecture became popular in the late 1980s in London and New York, where architects worked to achieve simplicity, using white elements, cold lighting, large space

with minimum objects and furniture. Mies connection to minimalism can be better understood by examining the different principles of minimalistic art: Though minimalism in architecture was also considered art, different tenets to minimalism in art are seen. It is generally seen as a materialist undertaking. The East-coast of USA sees minimalism as being more materialist, whereas the West-

coast perceives it as being more idealists. Donald Judd, an American artist believes in the “research of truth with simple forms”.

He also adds that, “To make good things, you have to have some sort of belief”. Idealist minimalism has a more spiritual approach. Mies van der Rohe’s minimalism intersects between materialist and idealist (Chave, 2008). According to Mertins (2014), though Mies’s architecture is considered as Philosophical, it is also very scientific in character. A self-taught person, Mies studied both philosophy and science, and he put this education into his profession. His concept of sacred architecture, in a secular world, but primed by science, is very evident in his buildings like the S.R Crown Hall at IIT campus in Chicago and the Seagram Building in New York. The philosophy behind Mies’s minimalism: If one argues Mies architecture as being philosophical, then it could Mean that it also aspires to make the world a better place. It decrees that the space we live in should be inspiring. Architecture is something that should be experienced to be understood. Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher avers that minimalism in architecture and the philosophy of experience of life go hand in hand. It means that the space one lives in is essential to understand architecture. What we perceive and what we feel in a living space is important (Vasilski, 2016).

Furthermore, if the space that we live in is essential to understand architecture, then understanding different

elements of the building structure is important in order to perceive and feel the space we live in. In this context, Vasilski (2016) postulates that in minimalism, light is also an important structural element. In the space we live in one can experience this light as proximity to time. And at the same time, in the silence one feels the space. Providing purity, harmony, transparency, and simplicity of life is the ultimate goal of minimalist architecture. According to Mertins (2014), Mies van der Rohe also adheres to this notion.

He was drawn to the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher. He believed that the search for the essence by shedding the superfluous was possible.

His architecture was considered philosophical. He postulated that it was possible to integrate cosmos with it. Spatial fluidity and continuity from interior to exterior was an example of harmony between nature and the living world. Thus, minimalism in architecture provided Mies with a concept of sensation to perception through tangible physical objects, which were pure and simple.

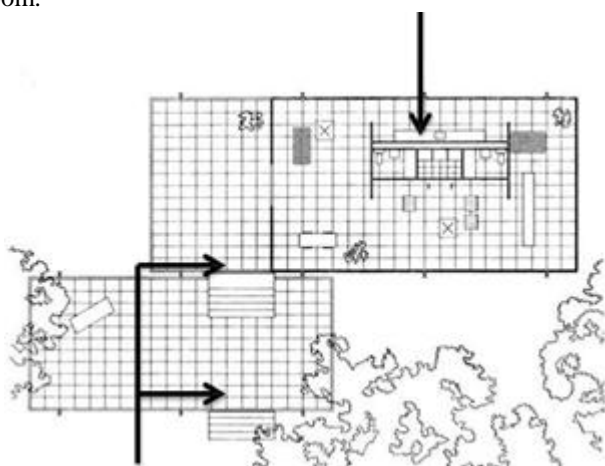
**Works by Mies Van der Rohe**

**Farnsworth house, plano, Illinois**

A weekend retreat outside Chicago for an independent professional woman - Dr. Edith farnsworth. Built between 1946 and 1951. Area- 1,500-square-foot (140 m2).



A central wood core contains sanitary facilities and creates a separation between the kitchen, two bedrooms and the living room.



The platform is not the focal point; it is the emptiness and beams work like screen to surround space of house.

**Seagram Building (1958): New York**

Setting the standard for the modern skyscraper, the 38-story Seagram Building is located in the heart of New York City on Park Avenue. The integral plaza, building, stone faced lobby and distinctive glass and bronze exterior were designed by Mies van der Rohe. It is a 160m tall skyscraper.

It stands as one of the finest examples of the functionalist aesthetic and a masterpiece of corporate modernism.

The functional utility of the building’s structural elements were made visible. It was built of a steel frame, from which non-structural glass walls were hung. This building emphasizes transparency through the use of glass.

Materials: Curtain wall of glass and bronze in the front due to the fire law in force in 1954, at the time of concrete construction was used as a structural material, both outside and inside.



**The Barcelona Pavilion (1929)**

The German pavilion at the Barcelona exposition had simplicity and clarity of means and intentions—everything is open, nothing is concealed.”

Free of external ornament, the building was made of the most luxurious materials. Walls were fashioned of thin plates of luminous semi-precious stone, from green polished marble to golden onyx.

They didn’t physically limit space.

Materials: Glass, steel and four types of marbles.



**Less is More in India**

**The Concrete Void Factory Building in India by sP+a**

With the Concrete Void, Sameep Padora & Associates have created this 2,000-m<sup>2</sup> factory building by Vijay Transtech on the outskirts of Mumbai. They conceived the building as a massive concrete structure whose deliberately empty spaces create a pleasant working atmosphere and bring some variety to the roads of this industrial area, which is otherwise dominated by monotonous façades of corrugated sheeting.

Details-

Client: Vijay Transtech

Architect: Sameep Padora & Associates (sP+a)

Location: Mahavir Logiplex, Amane, Maharashtra 421302 (IN)

In the middle of the floodplain, water levels and topography are essential components of the planning process.

With the Concrete Void, the architects from Sameep Padora & Associates decided in favour of direct action - instead of holding the water out, they have included it in their design. They have purposefully created the factory grounds to meet this goal and created a small pond at the western corner of the lot.

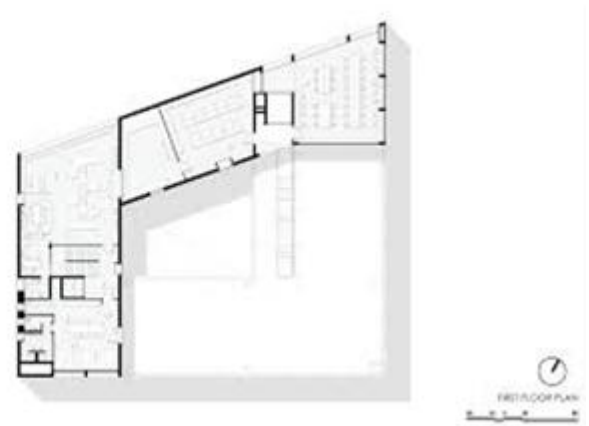
In contrast to the light, yet opaque neighboring buildings of corrugated metal that seem to deliberately avoid any connection to their surroundings, the Concrete Void factory rises as a massive, quadrilateral structure of in-situ concrete.

The northwest façade of the building is directly adjacent to the road and develops as a two-storey edifice around an unobtrusively planted patio. In the area of the pond, the entrance level features a large recess in the volume; this joins onto the central courtyard and opens up to the outside in an inviting gesture.

A three-legged concrete bridge connects interior and exterior and functions as an access path to the Concrete Void. The upper storey juts over the access zone, making the empty space into a comfortably cool recreation area for the factory workers.

Thanks to extensively glazed openings and the shallow depth of the building, the interior spaces of the factory are flooded with light. Rough brick surfaces and the soft green of the central patio complete the pleasant working atmosphere at the Concrete Void.







**Apollo premier**

Location: Indore (Madhya Pradesh)

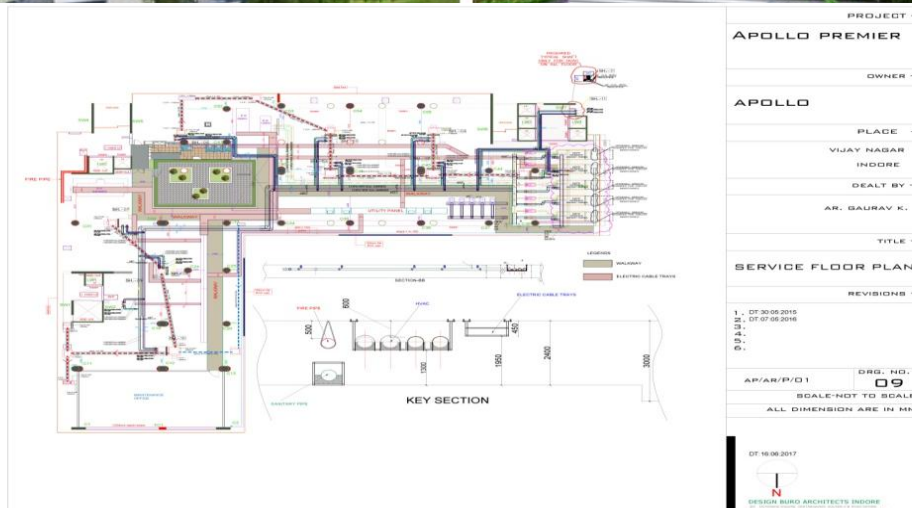
Name of the firm/company - m/s design buro architects

Name of the architect- Mr. Navendu shrivastava

Client - Apollo creations Pvt. Ltd.

This building located in Indore justifies the less is more principles and adapts its all the characteristics of minimalism. Hereby, used more glasses and shaping with

rectilinear forms. Having open and wide interior spaces for commercial and corporate uses and also depicts visually weightless quality by cantilever construction. Thus, adopting a unique concrete design and glass facades, with 3 basements in it. Whereas, less is more concept is still dicey to adapt less is more concept as according to reviews 75% feel less is more concept in this building where, 25% still feel many more concepts about it.



Skewed house by studio Lagom

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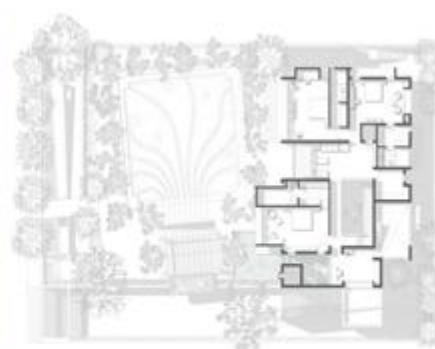
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By architect: designed by Lijo Jos and Jeny Ijio  
 Firm name: studio Lagom  
 Location: Surat  
 Completed in 2017

Architects showcase an evocative space that reflects the inherent flux in nature and urbanity. Material shifts and

elevation modulation establishes the programmatic changes within the Skewed House. A nine-foot exposed concrete cantilever marks the master bedroom, a strategic communication about family hierarchy. Similarly, an L-shaped glass inset reveals the internal free standing Pooja tower, reiterating the significance of spirituality.



#### 4. Conclusion

'Less is more' is a proverb that can apply to numerous different situations. It helps us to appreciate what we have in modernism.

The aphorism is one of the most used (and abused) in design and architecture. Beyond the determinants of the technical form Mies van der Rohe said that, what he contributed was "indeed almost nothing". And it was in working on this elevation that Mies first came across the infamous expression, 'less is more'. In modernism it was return to the phrase again and again, effectively making it his own, referring to later efforts to reduce and distil buildings and their components into simple forms in which art and techniques - geometry and matter - were integrated in a more persuasive tectonic expression.

Mies van der Rohe, beautifully encompassed the aphorism, less is more, which is the tenet of minimalist design and architecture, in his buildings, during the period of rationalization and mass production, and brought about a new vision in the sphere of architecture (Mertins, 2014). The simplicity in basic geometrical forms, the use of simple materials like glass and steel, and invisible qualities like natural light, sky, earth, and air, all portray a sense of order of simple and clean spaces.

This is the only art form that allows you to experience the Live movement, that one can discern „inside“ the object.

Mies postulated that the primary objective of architecture is to unequivocally represent its epoch, and that it's the role of the architect to bring to light and articulate the significance of the time. Till today, this postulation of his has credence among the generations of architects he has inspired and continues to inspire (Mertins, 2014).

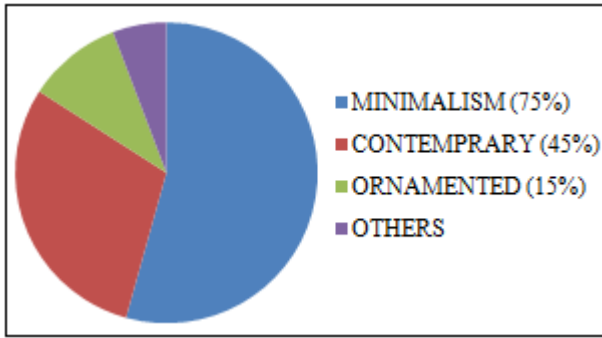
Thus, less is more being the most trending contribution done by Mies. Minimalism being the great part of lifestyle, People adopting less is more concept with sorting there ideas before implementation

Here, Less Is More satisfies points like: Zero Waste, Less Materials, Time save, Easy functionality, authentic look

On the basis of survey less is more has a great impact on modernism yet with different outlooks and reviews.

Further according to the survey less is more – impact on modernism is thus accepted by 75% of people where as other have their own views on this theory carried through modern impacts.

What do you think of less is more – Impact on modernism?



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