The Umbrella Diagram
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House
“Less is more” or “Less is a bore”

“Roland Barthes’s citation of ‘the boring’ as a locus of resistance…”

“the Farnsworth House reveals important deviations from the modernist conventions of the open plan and the expression of structure.”

According to Barthes, how is ‘boring’ good? What does he mean by ‘locus of resistance.’
"...the Farnsworth House marks one of the beginnings of the breakdown of the classical part-to-whole unity of the house."

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Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois  1946-51

Gerrit Rietveld: Schroeder House, Utrecht, Netherlands

“...these were still single, definable entities.”
Mies van der Rohe, Concrete Country House, 1923, Germany

“…these were still single, definable entities.”
Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois 1946-51

Mies van der Rohe, Brick country House, 1924, Neubabelsberg, Germany

“…these were still single, definable entities.”
Mies van der Rohe, Hermann Lange House, 1927-30, Krefeld, Germany

“...these were still single, definable entities.”
“Mies’s rejection of the part-to-whole unity is more subtle than Walter Gropius’s and Marcel Breuer’s obvious bi-nuclear houses, which are conceptually two-thirds of a Palazzo type.”
“Mies’s rejection of the part-to-whole unity is more subtle than Walter Gropius’s and Marcel Breuer’s obvious bi-nuclear houses, which are conceptually two-thirds of a Palazzo type.”
“Heidegger’ notion of dwelling concerned the rootedness to a place: site specificity, the grounding of the subject, and ultimately the presentness of presence.”

“we attain to dwelling, so it seems, only by means of building. The latter, building, has the former, dwelling, as its goal.”

“dwelling and building are related as end and means.”

“For Mies, dwelling is an abstract series of conditions and, in the case of the Farnsworth House, the ‘dwelling’ itself offers the opportunity to enact a critical reading of modernity.”

Can you discuss the two different types of ‘dwelling’?
How is Mies’s idea of dwelling evident in the Farnsworth House?
“it is a hinge between what modernism was in Mies and what will appear postmodern in his work.”
“the Farnsworth House also sets up the difference between a scenographic, or postmodernist, use of architecture elements to create visual illusion, and the alternative use of the column and wall to provoke a critical reading of modernity.”
Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois 1946-51

Mies van der Rohe, Brick country House, 1924, Neubabelsberg, Germany

“…used vertical walls extending and pinwheeling out from a central vortex.”
“…were composed of vertical planes which no longer extended out from the main volume, but rather defined and enclosed space.”
“…were composed of vertical planes which no longer extended out from the main volume, but rather defined and enclosed space.”
“The walls here are no longer load-bearing, rather the columns become the load-bearing elements; the enclosing elements are distinguished from the tectonic elements.”

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Discuss the difference between Raumplan, free plan, and open plan.

“The pavilion could be called an open plan, as opposed to a Raumplan or even a free plan...which allowed for a free movement of enclosing walls.”
Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois 1946-51

Adolf Loos, Villa Muller, 1930
Prague, Czech Republic
Alberti said that all architecture is *firmitas* because all architecture must stand up, and suggests that Vitruvius was stressing *firmitas* not in reference to standing up, but in reference to the *appearance* of standing up – in other words, as the sign of structure.
Discuss the difference between the Maison Dom-ino and the Farnsworth House diagrams in terms of columns.
“...the column was a didactic mark that punctuated space in the free plan. Usually these punctuations were round, allowing space to flow freely around them.”
Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois 1946-51

Le Corbusier, Villa Savoy, 1929, Poissy, France
“Another theoretical proposition resides in the problematic of the corner...the play of solid, void, and edge are simultaneous conditions.”
“Another theoretical proposition resides in the problematic of the corner...the play of solid, void, and edge are simultaneous conditions.”
Farnsworth House

How is the use of columns different in the Farnsworth House?
How is this an umbrella diagram? What does Eisenman mean by umbrella diagram?

“...the columns are no longer at the corner, neither gridding space internally nor holding the outboard corners.”
"The Farnsworth House is not about trabeation, but rather engages the look of trabeation in bringing the columns outboard and suspending the floor and roof slabs between the columns."

Philip Johnson, Glass House, 1949, New Canaan, Connecticut

Why does Eisenman think a comparison to Le Corbusier's Maison Dom-ino and Philip Johnson's Glass House is superficial?
“Instead the column reads as both structure and the sign of its diagrammatic condition.”

How do the columns in the Farnsworth House read as ‘structure’ and as a ‘sign.’
“This thematic in Mies’s postwar work engages structure that is the sign of structure; what is seen is not the actual column, but a mask of the structure.”
Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois 1946-51


What does Eisenman mean by the ‘mask of structure?’
Lecture 3: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois 1946-51

Le Corbusier’s Maison Dom-ino

Discuss the differences of the plinths and roof planes in these two buildings.

“The plinth and the horizontal roof plane are again conceptually different in Mies’s space as opposed to Le Corbusier’s space.”
Mies van der Rohe, Resor House, 1937-38, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

“The house seems to float above the ground, though it actually spans a ravine and is anchored at both ends.”
“This lifting of the house has a different value than Le Corbusier’s Dom-ino diagram. For Le Corbusier it signals the infinite horizontal extension of space; for Mies, it sets out the ultimate distinction between ground and the roof...”

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What are the implications for the 50 X 50 House that came from the Farnsworth House?

Do you see any implications from other previous projects?

“The Farnsworth House also had important implications for the 50 X 50 House...”
“Together, the roof line and single columns produce an image of an umbrella-like structure. What follows, less literally but no less conceptually...”
Mies van der Rohe, National Gallery, 1962-68, Berlin, Germany

Explain how the diagram is finally concept and not image in the National Gallery.

“...the umbrella effect is finally presented as concept and not image.”
“The idea of dwelling, or use, is clearly not what is at stake...”
Farnsworth House

Why does Eisenman think the Farnsworth House is not about the scenographic condition?

What do you think about his argument?

“...it becomes clear that a scenographic condition between the viewer and the building is not what is desired.”
How is the bottom statement made evident by the drawing at the right?

“The different axes formed by a series of symmetrical parts indicate that the parts do not create a whole. What seems to be a classical and symmetrical whole is rather broken down into asymmetrical dynamic parts.”
“Johnson’s intent is to render the surface as a vertical plane, while at the Farnsworth House, Mies renders it as absence.”
How is a scenographic representation linked to postmodernism different from a critical reading of modernity’s idea of a spatial continuum?

In what way can the Glass House be read as a scenographic representation linked to postmodernism?

And, in what way is the Farnsworth House the latter?

“…columns read not for their tectonic truthfulness, or for their visual composition, but for their condition as a sign of a conceptual diagram.”
What are these three drawings about?

Le Corbusier ‘s Maison Dom-in-o and Citrohan

Farnsworth House
Why do you think the corner is designed this way?
What are the implications for these alternative designs for the columns?

Do you think it would have made a difference in the reading of the building and why?
Do you think this building was able to break from the classical part-to-whole relationship that Eisenman says persisted throughout previous history?