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THE MIXABLE ONE: TWO PROJECTS FOR COMPAÑIA RON BACARDI, S.A.

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ABSTRACT

Between 1957 and 1962, spurred by the globalization of rum consumption, the Bacardi Company rolled out an extraordinary program of expansion and modernization of its facilities throughout the Americas. These facilities, which spanned a range of building types, design strategies and architects, helped negotiate and define the company's brand during a critical period (including the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the expropriation of its Cuban assets in 1960 and its subsequent exile) that saw the company transform into a pan-American entity. The breadth of Bacardi's efforts is emblemized by two projects in particular: Mies van der Rohe's new corporate headquarters in Santiago de Cuba, and Felix Candela's sprawling production and bottling plant outside Mexico City. Unified by their bold use of concrete, these works explored the structural, functional and expressive possibilities of the material as it was reaching new levels of applicability in the late 1950s. Yet the two projects are also extraordinarily different, exemplifying the range of postwar concrete modernism. Together, they form an industrial/corporate exemplar of Brutalist architecture beyond Corbusian types.

Brutalism is often taken as a badge of public purpose, used for school and colleges, government structures, infrastructure and public housing. Its given moral/ethical position, staked out by Alison and Peter Smithson and consecrated by Rayner Banham, could easily be assimilated for commercial use, as it advocated efficiency and economy in use. Yet, paradoxically, economy was not the primary driver in the Bacardi projects. Rather, the famed distiller understood the power of this architecture to deliver cultural relevance. Although the Bacardi works employ no set style or mode of modernism, they do converge toward a single corporate strategy: the expression of an identifiable "image", a central aim as the company began to attach symbolic and cultural importance to its building activity.

The corporate nature of these projects, and the motivations/volitions of their iconic architects have prevented a careful analysis of their larger importance. Mies, whose work was virtually related to the Brutalist cannon, strikes in a new direction with his concrete project for Santiago; even in its minimalism, the Bacardi project was too rich to be considered ethically Brutalist, but it achieved extraordinary monumentality using post-tensioned concrete to its maximum abilities. On the other hand, Candela wielded the geometry of shell construction to create a new vernacular targeted to the opportunities of concrete construction and the needs of a new age of industry. Candela and Mies used the Bacardi projects to expand their own repertoire, but the irony of their different approaches (even on the same site) is probably less significant than the commonalities.

The mixable one: two projects for compañía ron bacardi, s.a.

[IMAGE 1]

Between 1957 and 1962, spurred by the globalization of rum consumption, the Bacardi Company rolled out an extraordinary program of expansion and modernization of its facilities throughout the Americas. These facilities, which spanned a range of building types, design strategies and architects, helped negotiate and define the company's brand during the critical years that included the acceleration of its global development strategy, the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the expropriation of its Cuban assets in 1960 and exile. The breadth of Bacardi's efforts is emblemized by two projects in particular: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's new corporate headquarters in Santiago de Cuba (1957), and Félix Candela's sprawling production and bottling plant outside Mexico City (1958). Unified by their bold use of concrete, these works explored the structural, functional and expressive possibilities of the material as it was reaching new levels of applicability in the late 1950s. Yet the two projects are also extraordinarily different, exemplifying the range of postwar concrete modernism. Together, they form an industrial/corporate exemplar of Brutalist architecture beyond Corbusian types.

Brutalism is often taken as a badge of civic purpose, used for school and colleges, government structures, infrastructure and public housing. However, its given moral/ethical position, staked out by Alison and Peter Smithson and consecrated by Reyner Banham, was easily assimilated for commercial use, as it advocated efficiency and economy in use. Economy, though, was not the primary driver in the Bacardi projects. Rather, the famed distiller sought to use the power of architecture to enhance its image, a central aim as the company began to attach symbolic and cultural importance to its building activity. Each iconic work delivered a powerful, if heterodox, message about its corporate culture, and about Bacardi's emerging role in the American hemisphere.

The corporate nature of these two projects, and the motivations/volitions of their renowned architects, have resisted a careful analysis of their larger importance. Mies, whose work was connected virtually to the Brutalist canon, strikes in a new direction with his concrete project for Santiago; even in its minimalism, the Bacardi project was too rich to be considered ethically Brutalist, but it achieved extraordinary monumentality using post-tensioned concrete to its maximum abilities. In contrast, Candela wielded the geometry of shell construction to create a new vernacular that fully exploited the nature of concrete construction and the needs of a new age of industry. Candela and Mies used the Bacardi projects to expand their own repertoire, but in the Bacardi cocktail they together worked to create, the irony of their different approaches is probably less significant than the commonalities.

The Mixable One

*Anyway you drink it...Bacardi rum is the mixable one.*¹ Bacardi is best known for its smooth, mixable rums and of course its trademark bat logo. Yet the famed spirits company has also been an important force in the use of commissioned architecture in service of building identity and brand. True to the company slogan, Bacardi has asserted its corporate identity through buildings designed by a potent mix of modernist architects with varying, sometimes radically different approaches to architecture. Corporate headquarters, distilleries, bottling plants, and executives' private homes have shaped and reflected Bacardi's evolving position as a regional upstart, a national icon, and a global corporation with outposts spanning from Cuba to Mexico and from Brazil to Bermuda and the United States.

Bacardi was founded in 1862 in Santiago de Cuba, the city that forged its vocation and early character as an enterprise. [IMAGE 2] The Caribbean port is Cuba's second city, a Creole center built on colonial trade networks. Sugar played an important role in this economy. By the middle of the 19th century, the cash crop had become Cuba's principal commodity, and Cuba its primary producer. The development of a rum industry was a natural by-product of this abundance. Don Facundo Bacardi Massó, a Catalan immigrant, fused technique and native raw materials to create an especially refined and consistent clear spirit. The company's clear (and mixable) rum revolutionized the industry, creating new markets that slowly built Bacardi into the powerhouse it would wish to become.

The inaugural landmark of this emerging company was the wood shed on Matadero Street that was its first distillery, and the coconut tree (El Coco) planted beside it by Don Facundo's son. This primitive shed was memorialized in countless paintings, illustrations, labels, advertisements and even bronze castings. An underlying search for identity and authenticity could be inferred, one that would find additional significance in the subsequent development of the site. When, in 1915, Bacardi replaced the shed with a dignified new plant, it paid homage to the site by monumentalizing El Coco in its center patio. The new plant mixed classical and industrial forms, and also featured the prominent iconography of bats. In the 1950s, another new structure was built in the patio, in a manner that preserved and celebrated El Coco. Inspired perhaps by the filigree industrial architecture of the old distillery, it incorporated in its façade an open armature of concrete verticals and horizontals screened with metal louvers—a tropicalist screen in the spirit of Cuba's traditional persianas that framed El Coco like a painting.

An even richer and more complex hagiography monumentalized the life of the company's first president, Emilio Bacardi (1844-1922), who played multiple roles in his home city of Santiago de Cuba. He merged the growth of the company with cultural and political engagements on a national and civic level as an independence activist, writer, politician and chronicler of the life of the city. It is with Emilio that the company's engagement as a patron of the arts began. The Museo Emilio

Bacardi Moreau, designed by Santiago architect Carlos Segrera Fernández and completed post mortem in 1927, was an important symbol that conflated corporate patronage with civic construction. The museum appropriately took the form of a temple, featuring a grand staircase that stretched across the street front rising to a deep front portico. Thirty years later, Bacardi would return to the temple type in the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

As Bacardi solidified its commercial position in the first decades of the 20th century, it transformed Santiago into the industrial base and administrative center of an increasingly far-flung network of production, distribution and management. By 1925 Bacardi was the largest industrial enterprise in Cuba and—with plants in New York and Cataluña—the country's first multinational corporation. Through its prominent economic position Bacardi became a bearer of the new Cuban (national) identity, and began to attach significant importance to its building activity. For the first time, it deployed new buildings and spaces on the international stage. The Edificio Bacardi in Havana, begun in 1927 and located on the edge of the Colonial city, was the most spectacular of these. Architects Esteban Rodríguez Castells and Rafael Fernández Ruenes, who won first place in the national competition to design the building, created an 11-story Art Deco commercial block topped by a stepped pyramid and crowned by a bronze bat. Striking civic art and metropolitan ambition blended to represent the Bacardi family and its interests in the Cuban capital, and to announce its new identity as a Cuban icon. [IMAGE 3]

Notwithstanding the centrality of the distiller's Cuban identity, by the 1950s much of the action began moving overseas. Jose "Pepin" Bosch became the third president of Bacardi, and promoted a globalized enterprise established on scientific and international business principles. Spurred by the globalization of rum consumption, Bosch intensified an already ambitious expansion and modernization program with important building works in Mexico and the Caribbean region. Bacardi's first modern industrial campus was established (by Bosch) in 1944 on the Palo Seco peninsula in Puerto Rico, followed by plants in La Galarza, Mexico (1955), Mexico City (1958), Recife, Brazil (1962), and Nassau, Bahamas (1964). After the 1959 Cuban Revolution and subsequent nationalization in 1960 of the company's Cuban assets, Bacardi was a company in exile, a transnational body with worldwide assets and a Pan-American identity. It was an archipelago of industry and administration that was a forerunner of today's globalized enterprises.

During these extraordinary years, Bosch directed the company's development as he shuttled continuously around the Americas on El Murcielago, the Bacardi plane. He re-oriented the building program to send messages about the type of international-minded, progressive, civic-minded company Bacardi was—and wished to become. It is with Bosch that Bacardi developed forms of architecture that made the specific nature of the company's operations visible. To this end he employed modern design implemented by notable regional architects. In 1957, on the verge of several important new initiatives, Bosch conceived a new approach to exploit the cultural impact of its building activities. He initiated projects led by prominent international architects, whom he paired

with the trusted Cuban firm of Saenz-Cancio-Martin and Alvarez-Gutierrez (later SACMAG) as Architect-of-Record.² These included designs for Bacardi's new headquarters in Santiago de Cuba and Mexico City by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), and the new Bacardi bottling plant in Tultitlán, Mexico by Félix Candela Outeriño (1910-1997). Writing to *Architectural Record's* Jeanne Davern, Bosch explained how these prominent works were conceived to enrich the culture of Bacardi: "...it is possible I may want to mark my tenure of office with indelible marks that to my successors would create a definite necessity to work for the greater success of our enterprise."³ The Mies and Candela works transcended the needs of Bacardi, however, as they became international icons and participated (in different ways) in the invention of modern corporate architecture.

Mies van der Rohe in Cuba

Pepin Bosch's work with Philip Johnson in 1957 on the Bacardi chief's beach house in Varadero, Cuba may have laid the groundwork for the Mies commission. Paradoxically, it was conceived at the moment when the architect began to question the strictures of the International Style, and his own close position with regard to Mies. Johnson's un-built design is tangential to the story, but related in its planning and materiality. It was a concrete pavilion-in-the-round, or more accurately an octagon, rising to a vaulted roof system. [IMAGE 4] Its delicately-profiled vertical supports and sculptural concrete vaults in the manner of Pier Luigi Nervi⁴ sheltered a single airy space veiled in a sheer tropicalist skin that may have been metal, wood or perforated concrete. The simplicity and elegance of the project derived partly from its spatial conceit and geometric clarity, and from its use of concrete in a classically inspired yet modern way.

Bosch seems to have had, likewise, a single open space in mind when he commissioned Mies to design the Bacardi global headquarters in Santiago de Cuba. He intended the headquarters building to commemorate the company's centenary and provide a state-of-the-art administrative face. Bosch envisioned a structure that would express his own corporate philosophy. "My ideal office is one where there are no partitions, where everybody, both officers and employees, are seeing each other."⁵ Having visited Mies's Crown Hall, the Bacardi chief shared the architect's enthusiasm for unitary open spaces. "I came to the conclusion that Mies work in one story building was foremost in the world," he noted.⁶ In Mies van der Rohe, Bosch found an architect that supported his vision of interior space and corporate organization. This common ground formed a solid working basis for the project.

The Bacardi decision to leave its administration from quarters in the colonial center of Santiago and develop a high-profile corporate headquarters reflected its evolution as a modern, global enterprise.⁷ It followed the example of Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, the Canadian distiller whose new tower rising on Park Avenue in New York had recast the company as a business frontrunner. It also followed North American leaders like General Motors and IBM in using the modern

architecture of a suburban corporate campus to communicate progressive ideas about corporate form and well-organized capital.⁸ The architects leading the development of such corporate architecture, Eero Saarinen, Eliot Noyes, Charles Eames, and of course Mies, conceived building form in iconic terms. Mies's authoritative position and singular abilities designing monumental space in the service of corporate clients was established in his work with Philip Johnson for Seagram (1954-58), nearing completion in 1957. For Bacardi, Mies would develop not a tower, but a monumental glass and concrete pavilion, a modern temple in the service of industry. [IMAGE 5] This temple would emphasize universality, transparency and order—the very corporate principles that Bosch and Bacardi wished to transmit to an increasingly global public.

Mies and Project Architect Gene Summers arrived in Havana on April 4, 1957.⁹ They stayed at the Hotel Nacional, where they developed the main lines of the project on hotel stationary. The ideas proposed in those first sketches distilled Mies's thematic investigations of 'Universal Space' into a new synthesis: an open square pavilion comprising a single space, set atop a broad plinth. The project would be built in concrete, a material well-suited to Santiago and the tropics in general. To deal with the Caribbean sun, the roof incorporated a continuous overhang, shading the glass space enclosure and emphasizing the prominence of the roof plate. In order to achieve maximum clarity in the open space, service spaces and a visitor's center would be located in the plinth.

Mies used the project to advance several critical ideas about architecture. Most important was his own search for a structural order to universal space. The single big room, Mies wrote, "is the most economical and most practical way of building today. The purposes that the building serve change continually, and we can't afford to knock down the building every time. Therefore we revised Sullivan's formula 'form follows function' and constructed a practical and economical room, and we fitted its function in."¹⁰ The specific structural and spatial concepts for Mies's Bacardi Administration Building in Santiago had roots in the architect's earlier glass-walled housing prototype, the Fifty x Fifty house (1950-52), which comprised a single interior space under a square roof held aloft on four columns. The Bacardi adaptations follow what Phyllis Lambert has called "Mies's process of working through and improving a single structural type in the slow unfolding of architecture."¹¹ Accordingly, the project's subsequent evolution involved the refinement of technique, proportions and materials.¹² The roof plate would be structurally ambitious, a grid of post-tensioned concrete beams, spanning 54 meters in both directions, and tapered to reduce weight. The roof plate's 1.5m deep edge beam was to be prominent, and supported on steel pin-connections over eight peripheral columns. The definitive structural parti that resulted was illustrated in an iconic plan and perspective that were published widely. [IMAGE 6]

Located on a small rise, the building's horizontal skyline hovered over a granite plinth. Its vine-covered brick walls and reflecting pool created a precinct whose enclosure/openness to the surrounding landscape was carefully modulated. In terms of planning, it hews to the pattern Mies had cultivated since at least the Barcelona Pavilion in 1928, a compositional arrangement of

partitions floating in open space. Indeed, the single six meter high space beneath the roof was infinitely flexible, subdivided by only low marble walls, the stair and the core, and bound by plate glass and bronze mullions. The intended character of the interior space was represented in the photo-collages that assembled the open office space, the marble and wood textures of the floating elements, the sea and mountains into one composition. [IMAGE 7] In designing the cover of *Architectural Design* that featured the Bacardi work, Mies selected these collages to represent the project.

In juxtaposition to the open plan/collage aesthetic, elements of the Bacardi headquarters seem outright classical. Most striking in this regard are the columns, whose cruciform, tapering profile represents notions of fluting and entasis, and where the structural pin linking column and roof plate could be understood as a capital. The concrete roof plate seems a proper entablature, decorated by “metopes” that were actually precast concrete caps covering the terminations of the post-tensioning rods. It was a classicism translated to modern values, of proportions, of material integrity, but also of abstracted quotations.

Mies's Santiago opus was never built (in Santiago, anyway). Friction between Bacardi and the regime of president Fulgencio Batista, and later fallout from the Cuban Revolution doomed the proposal.¹³ By 1960, the Bacardi enterprise was exiled from Cuba entirely. Nonetheless, the Bacardi commission was an important work in Mies's oeuvre. The architect reiterated its fundamental diagram at for the Schafer Art Museum in Schweinfurt, Germany, 1960-1963, and then at the Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery) in Berlin, 1962-1967. Both German projects adopted the building's structural parti, albeit in steel, a transformation essentially re-appropriated by Bacardi in 1972 at the Bacardi International Limited Building, the company's corporate offices in Hamilton, Bermuda. [IMAGE 8] The Bermudan administrative headquarters was a coda to the Bacardi Company's re-organization following its exile from Cuba, as well as its postwar building program. Whether an act of defiance or nostalgia, Architect Ricardo Eguilior's Miesian pavilion activated collective memory into a physical symbol for the company. Mies and Bosch's vision of an open office was morphed into a distinctly different structural and organizational diagram, but Eguilior's building mainly achieved the symbolic image of the Mies original.

The Santiago project occupied a problematic position within the concrete modernist architecture of the 1950s, one where a Brutalist ethic comes to into direct conflict with the Brutalist aesthetic. Perhaps Mies's authorship places the work in an intellectual framework that ignores these polemics. Mies's command of materials and rigorous technical supremacy were heroic among young modernists. His oeuvre holds up well against Banham's reformist prescriptions: formal legibility of plan, clear exhibition of structure, and valuation of materials for their inherent qualities 'as found.'¹⁴ If the Bacardi structure is an outlying work in an oeuvre more appreciated for its steel and brick construction, as represented by the architect's better-known IIT buildings, Bacardi was

just as impactful. Cast in concrete to precise and monumental effect, it was a frank and direct exhibition of structure and material use and modern building technology. Aesthetically, however, its classical, aristocratic representation challenged the notion of “machine-made” object. The building was designed as an exhibition of logic, but also of beauty. Its concrete would have been painted white, not to express machine age sensibilities but rather a classical unity. Its minimalism, orchestrated in concrete, brick, granite, bronze and glass, was “de luxe”. By 1972, what was most remarkable was its iconic form, now given additional authority through its use in the Germany and Bermuda projects. The type would have a strong influence on modernist architects, and its powerful trabeated structure and projecting roof plate would become a familiar modernist trope in the 1960s.

Félix Candela Outeriño in Mexico

In 1958, as work on the Santiago headquarters advanced, Bacardi began to develop a major new production facility in Tultitlán, an industrial district north of Mexico City. The work was designed to complement the recently completed fermentation and distillation plant at La Galarza, near Puebla, Mexico. The Spanish émigré architect/engineer/builder Félix Candela, who contributed several original structures at La Galarza,¹⁵ was hired to direct the development of the new Tultitlán facility. He was paired with SACMAG, and with Luis Torres Landa, a Mexican engineer.

In Félix Candela, Bacardi selected an architect whose ambition was to transform architecture through the structural arts. In 1950, Candela founded Cubiertas Ala in partnership with his brother Antonio and sister Julia. Cubiertas Ala became a major designer and builder of industrial buildings and warehouses – as well as university and government buildings – in Mexico. Eschewing traditional practice, Candela made innovative use of concrete shell technology, capitalizing on the efficiency and natural economy of such structures. Candela used the language of shell enclosures to challenge the strictures of trabeation and cubic architecture. In this regard, Candela was specifically critical of Mies: “The sole mention of this name brings us at once to the first of such causes, which is the more or less conscious classical convictions of most designers and builders.”¹⁶ Candela’s mastery of concrete shells predicted a new form world, one inherently more sculptural and governed by natural properties.

Candela’s earlier work for Bacardi previews his approach to the Tultitlán project. At La Galarza, he produced a variety of purpose-built structures—ascetic solutions to the functional problems of a distillery. The majority of new structures reinterpreted the ancient barrel vaults of an extant 17th century hacienda, although the chef-d’oeuvre was the 1½” thick concrete handkerchief dome that covered the fermentation tanks. Intriguingly, Candela’s concrete shells were poignantly silhouetted against the hacienda’s rustic brick and stone walls, as well as the groves, gardens, lawns, canals and lagoons installed subsequently by Bacardi, producing a sublime contrast between pastoral and industrial. Candela had also designed a warehouse for the Bacardi distillery in Puerto Rico that

employed hyperbolic paraboloid concrete shells, double-curved surfaces whose ultra-thin shell-like structural membranes have the unique quality of producing no bending, only compression and tension.

Candela produced an even greater variety of concrete shell structures at Tultitlán, including groin vaults, barrel vaults, umbrellas and folded plate concrete slabs. The lead figure in this cast of shell forms, the one invested with a sense of monumentality, was the cavernous groin-vaulted Bottling Hall. [IMAGE 9] Here, Candela projected a square hall of nine groin-vaulted bays, three hundred square feet, covering an area of 8,350 square meters with only four interior supports. Inspired by the recently-completed Lambert-St. Louis Airport Terminal (1956) by Minoru Yamasaki and Anton Tedesko, Candela re-interpreted Lambert's intersecting barrel vaults using lighter hyperbolic paraboloid shells. The Bacardi shells were similar in ambition, and nearly as dramatic, as shells of the church of San Antonio de las Huertas (1956) and Los Manantiales Restaurant in Xochmilco (1958). Efficiently formed over hand-framed formwork made of straight pieces of lumber, they took advantage of abundant labor in Mexico. Although intended for industrial use, The Bacardi Bottling Hall produced an extraordinary room, more akin to Roman bath or the main hall of a railway station than to a factory. [IMAGE 10] The groin-vaulted bays stood independent, allowing gaps between the shells to create bat-winged skylit slots. Non-structural glass walls filled the open parabolic end walls. As Carlos Brillembourg notes, "the beauty of the solution asks us to consider these spaces independent of their original use, inhabited by art and people rather than by industry..."¹⁷

Around the Bottling Hall, Candela developed warehouses, parking structures and even housing using row upon row of 'umbrellas,' integrated mushroom-like assemblies that incorporated a different kind of hyperbolic paraboloid shell, also developed by Cubiertas Ala. Each umbrella had its own structure and a drainage system that fed the plant's waterworks. They were capable of efficient and endless repetition to create a modular system of roofing. Further, by tilting each row, the system allowed the warehouse space to be illuminated by continuous monitors. Perfected into a proprietary system for roofing large industrial sheds, umbrellas were the workhorse product of Cubiertas Ala.¹⁸ Candela experimented with this system, producing umbrellas of various sizes and configurations. In the ageing warehouses, for instance, he extenuated the umbrellas along one axis to increase the column span. Candela also produced worker houses at the Bacardi plant, where the umbrellas were inverted in order to shed water. The main efficiency of the structure, in terms of the housing, was that the roof could be built before the walls using mobile formwork. The variations in shelter geometry signify distinct meanings and internal hierarchies within the plant, but also use of the most efficient tool for the job. Underlying Candela's varied forms was an experimental and evolutionary approach that, as Edward Segal has pointed out "relied less on calculations and more the structural insight he had gained from each completed full-scale structure."¹⁹ Although keen to exploit modern building technique in original ways, Candela considered the quality of a structural design to be "in inverse proportion with the amount of

calculations necessary for its erection.”²⁰ An extraordinary result of the Tultitlán campus was its assimilation of concrete shell technology in so many different forms, and at low cost.

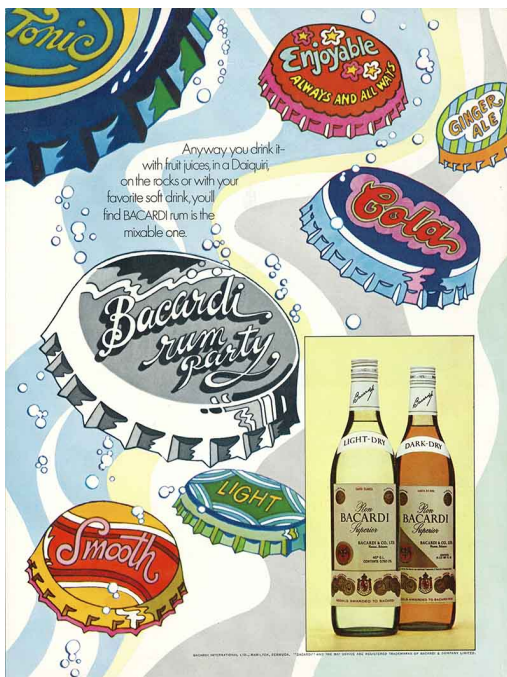
Synthesis

In 1959, as Tultitlán’s hypar vaults began to take shape, Bacardi returned to Mies van der Rohe to design the campus’s administration building. The open plan idea, first articulated in Santiago, found a different synthesis in Mexico: a broad rectangular space centered on an open void connecting to the ground level. Raised on pilotis, the long low volume of the office floor appears to float, an impression reinforced by the building’s cantilevered ends and inset ground floor lobby. In contrast to the concrete and granite proposed for Santiago, here Mies returned to his more habitual formulation of an exposed steel skeleton (painted black), grey-tinted plate glass and travertine flooring. Discreetly separated from the industrial works, the building sat in a park-like garden facing the adjacent Central Highway. In contrast to the industrial plant, where Candela used expressive concrete forms in repetition to form crystalline patterns, Mies’s black pavilion stood in monumental singularity and cool corporate abstraction.

The discourse between Mies and Candela extends beyond polemical reduction. Both were more interested in construction systems and the evolutionary processes that refined them. Both used concrete, emphasizing (in their career) what Banham called topology over form platonic. They worked ethically within a syntax that merged structure and form. Both executed choice commissions, Mies in the service of corporate culture, and Candela in support of industry. Each balanced functional and economic realities with civic purpose, and in doing so both advanced a particular image in defense of brand and identity. They marked the classical and vernacular edges of postwar concrete modernism. This breadth of exploration and expression further underscored Bacardi’s ability to assimilate difference, and to transcend paradox. They truly were, the “mixable one”.

It is interesting to reflect that both Mies and Candela were exiles in adopted lands, Mies in the U.S. and Candela in Mexico. Within a couple of years, Bacardi and its president, Pepin Bosch, would be in exile as well. For each, the larger diaspora was the New World. Candela, for one, acknowledged a new freedom for a transnational identity, as a pan-American.²¹ Even before its exile, Bacardi’s synthetic, syncretic view of Modern architecture emerged from its pan-American position. The extraordinary concrete works of the late 1950s were the visible construction of this hemispheric reality.

[IMAGE 1]



BACARDÍ Rum Party: Any way you drink it. Artist unknown, 1969. Original print advertisement, 8 ¼ x 11 in. Courtesy of The Bacardi Archive.

The Any way you drink it campaign emphasized mixability, a principal trait of the company's signature rum product. The Bacardi approach to mixability resonated in several of the company's signature buildings as well. It is illustrated most clearly at the Bacardi Imports campus in Miami, where straightforward modern architecture was blended with tropical murals to create a hybrid cocktail.

[IMAGE 2]



Bacardi Distillery on Matadero Street, with El Coco, Santiago de Cuba. Architect unknown, 1830s, Street view B & W photograph, 20 x 13 ¾ in. Courtesy of The Bacardi Archive.

[IMAGE 3]



Bacardi Building, Havana, Cuba. First place entry: Esteban Rodriguez-Castells, Rafael Fernandez Ruenes
B & W photograph. Courtesy of the Bacardi Archive.

[IMAGE 4]



Bosch Beach House, Reparto DuPont, Varadero, Cuba. Project, Philip Johnson, architect with Saenz-Cancio-Martin, 1956-57.

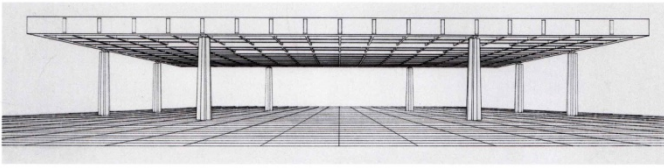
Aerial view of model. Digital print of B & W photograph. Louis Checkman, photographer
The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

[IMAGE 5]



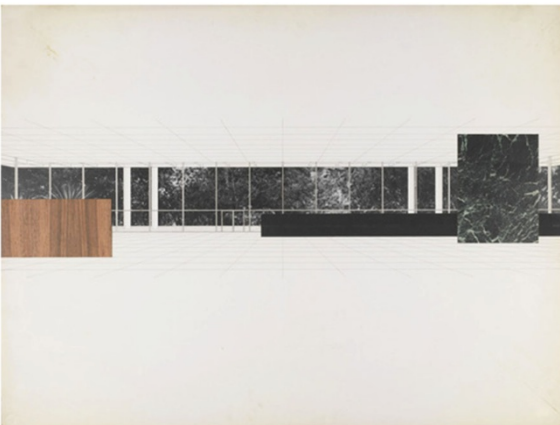
Ron Bacardi y Compañía S.A. Administration Building, Santiago de Cuba. Project, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1957. Model. Digital print of B & W photograph. Hedrich-Blessing, photographer
Courtesy of Chicago History Museum.

[IMAGE 6]



Ron Bacardi y Compañía S.A. Administration Building, Santiago de Cuba. Project, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1957. Perspective of columns and roof plate.. Digital print from “Mies’ one-office office building,” *Architectural Forum*, February 1959, c. 110, part 1.

[IMAGE 7]



Ron Bacardi y Compañía S.A. Administration Building, Santiago de Cuba
Project, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1957

Photomontage, preliminary version. Ink, wood veneer, marbled paper, cut-out reproduction on illustration board. 30 x 40 in., 1957. Digital print from *Architectural Forum*, February 1959, c. 110, part 1.

[IMAGE 8]



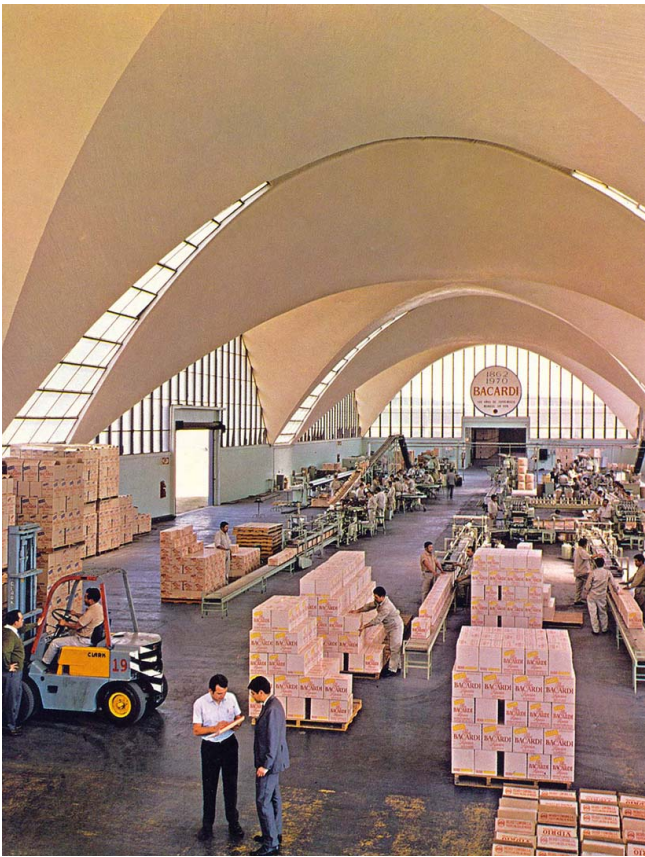
Bacardi International Limited building, Hamilton, Bermuda. E. Ricardo Eguilior architect, 1972. B&W photograph. Courtesy of The Bacardi Archive.

[IMAGE 9]



Bacardi y Compañía S.A. Bottling Plant, Tultitlán, Mexico. Félix Candela (Cubiertas Ala) with SACMAG and Luis Torres Landa engineers, 1960-61. Bottling Hall. Digital print of color photograph, 8 x 10 in., 1970s. Courtesy of The Bacardi Archive.

[IMAGE 10]



Bacardi y Compañía S.A. Bottling Plant, Tultitlán, Mexico. Félix Candela (Cubiertas Ala) with SACMAG and Luis Torres Landa engineers, 1960-61. Interior view of Bottling Hall. Digital print from color photograph, 11 x 14 in. Courtesy of The Bacardi Archive.

[IMAGE 11]



Bacardi y Compañía S.A. Administration Building, Tultitlán, Mexico. Mies van der Rohe with Saenz, Cancio, Martin, Gutierrez (SACMAG) engineers, 1960. Digital print of B & W photograph, c. 1960 Balthazar Korab, photographer. Courtesy of The Library of Congress.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ BACARDÍ Rum Party: **Anyway you drink it**, Advertisement, 1969, The Bacardi Archive.
- ² Engineers Saenz-Cancio-Martin, along with architects Raul Alvarez and Enrique Gutierrez, were the core of the future Cuban office SACMAG, the Havana-based multi-disciplinary professional practice that planned and built nearly all of Bacardi's postwar campuses.
- ³ Letter from José María Bosch to Jeanne Davern, Assistant to the Editor of **Architectural Record**, August 31, 1959. Mies van der Rohe Archive, MoMa (Ron Bacardi Office Building folder 10).
- ⁴ Phyllis Lambert has demonstrated the influence of Pier Luigi Nervi on the contemporary Monaco Hotel project in Havana, by Philip Johnson. Phyllis Lambert, "Philip Johnson: Breaking with Modernism – The "Whence & Whither" of It." in Emmanuel Petit, ed., **Philip Johnson: The Constancy of Change**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- ⁵ Letter from José María Bosch to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Feb. 14, 1957. Mies van der Rohe Archive, MoMa. (Ron Bacardi Office Building Folder 1).
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ The new Bacardi headquarters site was inscribed in a larger urban project that included the expansion of Santiago around the Carretera Central (Central Highway), constructed in the 1920s. The move leveraged the mobility and visibility of the national highway with connectivity to Bacardi's other assets. The building faced the highway, while the rear terminated Avenida General Wood, a broad paseo that connected via the Paseo Marti to the Bacardi factories along Carretera Bacardi.
- ⁸ Brynna Nelson Swenson, **The Corporate Form: Capital, Literature, Architecture. Dissertation**, Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, June 2008, p. 225.
- ⁹ Western Union Telegram, March 27, 1957.
- ¹⁰ C. Norberg-Schulz, "Ein Gespräch mit Mies van der Rohe," in **Baukunst und Werkform XI**, 1958, pp. 615-616. From Immo Boyken and Hans J. Oestmann, "Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Egon Eiermann: The Dictate of Order," **Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians**, vol. 49, no. 2 (June 1990), pp.133-153.
- ¹¹ "Mies Immersion" in Phyllis Lambert, ed., **Mies in America**, New York: H.N. Abrams, 2001, p. 490.
- ¹² The refinement of the ideas was done collaboratively with Havana-based engineers and architects Saenz-Cancio-Martin and Alvarez-Gutierrez. "Mies Immersion", p. 482.
- ¹³ Perhaps as retribution against Bacardi, a proposal was advanced directing the Avenida de los Olivos directly through Bacardi's site. Postcard from José María Bosch to Gene Summers, MVDR office. June 17, 1958. Mies van der Rohe Archive, MoMa. (Ron Bacardi Office Building, Folder 2).
- ¹⁴ Reyner Banham, "**The New Brutalism**," *The Architectural Review*, December, 1955, p. 357.
- ¹⁵ At La Galarza, Candela worked with Mexican architects Hector Mestre and Manuel de la Colina and the Cuban engineer Luis P. Saenz (later of the Cuban firm SACMAG).
- ¹⁶ Félix Candela, "**The Shell as Space Encloser**," *Arts & Architecture*, Jan. 1955, vol. 72, p. 29.
- ¹⁷ Carlos Brillembourg, "Great Curves," **Architects Newspaper**, April 20, 2012.
- ¹⁸ According to Candela's biographer Colin Faber, in Mexico City alone, 3,000,000 square feet were roofed with Cubiertas Ala umbrellas. Sarah M. Halsey, Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, "Umbrellas," in Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, **Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist** (Yale University Press) 2008, p. 102.
- ¹⁹ Edward Segal, Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, "Bacardí Rum Factory," in Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, **Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist** (Yale University Press) 2008, p. 160.
- ²⁰ F. Candela, correspondence with Anton Tedesko, December 5, 1963. From Edward Segal, Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, "Bacardí Rum Factory," in Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, **Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist** (Yale University Press) 2008, p. 160.
- ²¹ Brillembourg, "Great Curves."