



Left
Mies van der Rohe,
Crown Hall, Architecture &
Design Faculty Building,
Illinois Institute of
Technology, Chicago 1956

that even a great architect is unable to apply the theoretical assumptions in practice.

Kahn's categories are probably not surprising in view of the increased importance and cost which services occupied in a great many buildings, and not just laboratories, in the second half of the 20th century. One suspects that the characteristic emphasis on these two categories was abetted by the ability to create greater expressiveness than was then current in architecture. It was a rationale for form making. Although it is generally seen that way, Kahn vehemently contradicted that conclusion in an interview and also emphasised the difference between the architect's gesture and the engineers' use of the given space.

'I have made statements about the Richards Laboratories towers. I have said, *These shafts are independent exhaust*. Now they are being taken as show-pieces. I wouldn't think of that. They are not worthy. These ducts are generalised units for certain services, without knowing what they are. I wasn't making jewelry out of exhaust ducts. They are simple, but they are not ordinary. I sense the differences in instruments in the broadest way, but I don't know every mechanical detail. First of all, I don't know the instruments that well. I cannot distinguish one thing from another. So I put them all in one great big wastebasket, and that's the exhaust duct. But to pull it out and make a submarine out of it, that's ridiculous!

'Let me put it a different way. The space you live in can be beautiful, especially if it is unfettered by all these other things. I don't believe in pipes in living rooms. I hate them. I believe they should be in their place like children. I want to remain ignorant of how the mechanics really work. I'm impatient with the restrictions of mechanical and construction engineers and with details about how every little thing works. But its *place* I think I know. I want