



SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

NEWS

2002
may | june



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Modern Patrons

SAH/SCC Lectures and Tours

The Modern Patrons series continues in May and June with events in Ojai and Orange. The informal talks and tours take place on Saturday, from 2PM to 4:30PM. The events are \$10 each, and are open to Life and Patron-level members of the SAH/SCC (the program will be available to the general membership only in the event there is space available). If you are a Life member or Patron and would like to attend, fill out and mail the order form on the back page. Space is limited.

Walker in Ojai

Saturday, May 18th

On May 18th, we will visit the Ojai residence that Rodney Walker designed for his family in 1958. We'll spend the afternoon experiencing springtime in the delightful Ojai valley visiting with the architect's son Craig Walker, and learning about the house and Rodney Walker's legacy of buildings in Southern California.

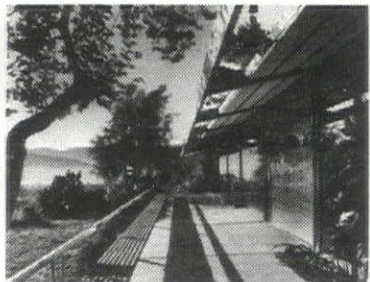


Photo by: Rodney Walker

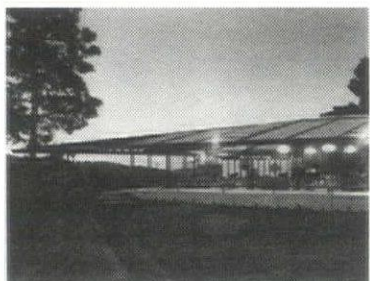


Photo by: Craig Walker

In her book *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* (The MIT Press, 1989), Elizabeth A. T. Smith writes of Rodney Walker:

"Throughout his architectural career, Rodney Walker remained true to the goals of experimenting with new cost-saving materials in aesthetically innovative, modern structures. He was an architect who entered fully into the building process, not only designing and supervising, but actually participating in the construction of most of his buildings with his workmen.

"Walker, born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1910, spent his early years in Ely, Nevada. He attended Pasadena City College to study engineering, then studied art and mechanical arts at the University of California, Los Angeles, having received an athletic scholarship for track. With his wife, Dorothea, whom he met at UCLA, Walker designed and built his first house in 1937 in Los Angeles.

"John Entenza invited Walker to participate in the Case Study program after seeing the architect's 1946 home for himself and his wife in the hills above Beverly Hills, which became Case Study #16 (1946-47). Walker soon completed two more Case Studies, #17 (1947) and #18 (1947-48).

"In 1955, Rodney and Dorothea Walker moved to Ojai, where he bought an old house and remodeled it, winning second prize in the *Better Homes & Gardens* remodeling competition. By 1958 he had built another home for his family — a remarkable steel and glass hexagon overlooking the Ojai valley."

Our afternoon at the Walker residence will be an opportunity to experience the house, learn a great deal more about the architect firsthand and share the perspective of the architect's son, who continues to live in the house.

Eichler in Orange

Saturday, June 15th

On June 15th, we will visit with Fran Karns, an original Eichler homeowner in the Fairhills tract near the city of Orange in Orange County. As an extension of the SAH/SCC "Modernism for the Masses" tour held last Fall, we will gain an interesting perspective of the Eichler lifestyle from an original homeowner, whose house was constructed in 1964.

From his essay *"Eichler Homes: A Popular Modernism,"* author and noted Eichler expert Paul Adamson writes of the experiment of bringing modern architecture successfully to suburbia:

"Eichler homes are a particularly brave attempt to bring architecture of critically pure ideology and good aesthetic taste to the popular marketplace. The Eichlers were originally developed during a period of high demand, so the developer for whom the houses are named, Joseph Eichler, was going to far more effort than was required to sell houses. Modernist attempts at housing have rarely been tried in the U.S. because developers know they are unlikely to be popular. Yet, contrary to the popular wisdom of the time, Joseph Eichler hired a group of progressive California architects — A. Quincy Jones, Frederick Emmons, Robert Anshen, Steven Allen, and Claude Oakland — to design house prototypes from which he built nearly twelve thousand unabashedly Modernist homes and several boldly progressive apartment buildings. For nearly 20 years the Eichler Homes Company was successful, gaining national and international acclaim. By the time of Eichler's death in 1974 ideas about modest Modernism had begun to give way to the popular desire for tradition and luxury, and (unfortunately) the concept of a popular Modernism died with him."

Our afternoon visiting in Orange County will let us experience the idea of modern architectural relevance, as well as the evolution of the Eichler "way of life" through the thoughts and feelings of a remarkable individual.



Picture from Eichler Homes Company
Promotional Brochure

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President's Letter

Those of us who harbor a passion for Southern California's modern architecture have been reminded that passion includes joy and suffering. Following the shocking losses of Schindler's Packard House and his Wolfe House, which I reported in the past two issues of this newsletter, we have been searching for answers, and struggling to find a way to move forward constructively.

Now, in the midst of our introspection, comes a clearing blow to the gut. Richard Neutra's Maslon House (Rancho Mirage, 1962) was unexpectedly demolished in late March.

The Maslon House, which was located at the Tamarisk Country Club, was one of three houses Neutra designed in the Palm Springs area. The others were the 1946 Kaufmann House and the 1937 Miller House.

Peter Moruzzi, the chairman of the Palm Springs Modern Committee, informs me that the Maslon house had recently sold for \$2.45 million, closing escrow February 28th. The buyers were Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Rotenberg of Hopkins, Minnesota. The real estate agent, Deirdre Coit, allegedly conducted the transaction with the knowledge the house would be destroyed. The buyers were granted a demolition permit by the City of Rancho Mirage on Thursday March 21st. Demolitions in that city require no review and are issued the same day, over the counter.

Mr. Moruzzi said: "Even in 2002, the iconic work of a world-renowned architect such as Richard Neutra can be destroyed through an over-the-counter action in many American cities. No public comment. No public review. This is an outrage that must be corrected."

Without proper governmental reviews, what is the preservationist community to do? Stake out each permit office, inspecting each transaction? Set up remote cameras at each threatened site, monitored at some kind of "modern architecture command control"? Chase bulldozers?

Ridiculous! After all, this is supposed to be an enlightened society. We depend on the responsible agencies—local governments—to be educated and responsive to the public interest. Apparently, in Rancho Mirage, San Marino, and Avalon, the public interest is controlled by apathy.

Michael J. Lewis in the New York Times put it this way: "For pedestrian cities like New York, architecture has always had a civic dimension, and been part of public life. But in desert cities like Rancho Mirage, where the Maslon house stood—or in the artificial deserts of America's newest suburban tracts—the laissez-faire tradition survives unchallenged. A man's home remains his castle, which includes, for the time being, the right to knock it into the moat."

In my last column, I questioned the reticence of the Los Angeles Times and the Los Angeles Conservancy in their responses to losses of the Schindler houses. Since then, I have had excellent conversations with both Nicolai Ouroussoff, the Times' architectural critic, and Ken Bernstein, Director of Preservation Issues at the Conservancy. Mr. Bernstein requested to clarify his position in a letter to our readers, and it is printed below.

Although the SAH/SCC is not primarily dedicated to preservation, we are convinced that these mounting losses warrant a larger public discussion. Rather than assigning blame, or throwing our hands in the air, we want to act constructively. In this spirit, we are organizing a "Preservation Summit," a kind of town-hall meeting to discuss the current state of preservation efforts in Southern California. We are planning this event for the summer—July or August—to be held in the lobby of the historic Herald-Examiner building. I would like to invite Mr. Moruzzi, Mr. Ouroussoff, and Mr. Bernstein to participate. We would also welcome suggestions, as well as organizational help, from our members.

Anthony Denzer

Letter to the Members

The past two issues of the SAH/SCC News have contained a "President's Letter" criticizing the Los Angeles Conservancy's perceived silence over the destruction of two significant Modern houses by R.M. Schindler: the Packard House in San Marino and the Wolfe House in Avalon on Catalina Island. Since the Conservancy has been every bit as outraged about these demolitions, I wanted to take the opportunity to inform you of what we've learned about these events.

The Conservancy works to monitor thousands of historic resources not only in the sprawling City of Los Angeles, but also in the 88 separate municipalities of Los Angeles County. We therefore must rely heavily on our members and local residents to let us know when buildings are threatened. Usually, we do receive warnings and tips about such threats in time to take constructive action. But in these two cases, the demolitions occurred, incredibly, without anyone notifying the Conservancy's office.

Many months earlier, we had been monitoring the Wolfe House, as a Conservancy member had heard that the home was for sale. However, the real estate broker handling the transaction reported back that the home had been sold to preservation-minded buyers; indeed, he said, the new buyers had even obtained the house's original plans to guide their impending full restoration.

Since the home's future appeared to be secure, we were shocked when Schindler scholar Judith Sheine told us last fall that she'd heard of the home's demolition. The new buyers had changed their minds and decided to build a new home "in the spirit of Schindler," demolishing the prominently visible Wolfe House during the peak of tourist season last summer.

SAH/SCC NEWS is published bi-monthly by the Society of Architectural Historians / Southern California Chapter. Subscription is a benefit of membership and provides members with one of the most comprehensive calendars of architectural events in Southern California and advance notice of exclusive SAH/SCC architectural events and tours.

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Please send all ad materials, notices of events, exhibitions and news to the attention of the editor:

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Because nothing could undo the demolitions, the Conservancy has focused on using these events as an opportunity to educate local governments on their responsibilities to safeguard historic properties. We informed Avalon's planners that they had approved demolition without properly applying the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prior to demolition. To help ensure that this does not happen again, the Conservancy has also sent letters to all local governments that have works of Schindler and Neutra in their municipalities, citing these recent demolitions and urging them to treat these buildings as potential historical resources under CEQA should they become threatened.

These shocking demolitions are also a poignant reminder that all of us—SAH/SCC members, Conservancy members, and concerned local residents—need to remain vigilant and work together closely to keep each other informed of potential preservation threats. Before it is too late.

Ken Bernstein
Director of Preservation Issues, Los Angeles Conservancy

1, Wednesday

Post-War and Contemporary Art.
Lecture hosted by Christie's.
Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave.,
LA; 10AM; res. req. 310.657.0800.
p-d-c.com.

1, Wednesday

Fracturing Perspectives.
Short films exploring alternative
approaches to standard perspective
problems by Andy Warhol, Marcel
Duchamp, and Ernie Gehr. The J. Paul
Getty Museum, 1200 Getty Center Dr., LA;
5PM; res. req. 310.440.7300. getty.edu.

2, Thursday

**Reflections on Anamorphosis:
The Space in/of the Mirror.**
Lecture with Northwestern University
art history professor Lyle Massey.
The J. Paul Getty Museum,
1200 Getty Center Dr., LA. 4PM;
res. req. 310.440.7300. getty.edu.

2, Thursday

**Building Green: Towards
Sustainable Architecture.**
Lecture with architect Robert Rees and
Green Map developer Isabelle Duvivier.
Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd.,
SM; 8PM. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

2, 30, Thursday; 5, Sunday

Artist at Work Demonstrations.
Demonstration of marquetry by artist
Ebeniste Patrick Edwards. J. Paul Getty
Museum, 1200 Getty Center Dr., LA;
1-3PM; res. req. 310.440.7300. getty.edu.

3, Friday

**Post-War Operations: Critical
Studies Symposium.**
Day-long program. UCLA Department of
Architecture and Urban Design,
1302 Perloff Hall, UCLA; 10AM-6PM.
310.825.7857. uclanews.ucla.edu.

3, Friday

Painting With Light or With Geometry?
Looking Into David Hockney's Secret
Knowledge. Lecture with University of
Oxford art history professor Martin
Kemp. J. Paul Getty Museum, 1200
Getty Center Dr., LA. 7:30PM;
res. req. 310.440.7300. getty.edu.

3-5, Friday-Sunday

Oakland at 150 Years.
History walkabout with Gary L. Holland.
California Historical Society; 10AM and
2PM; \$15-20; res. req. 415.357.1848.
californiahistoricalsociety.org.

4, Saturday

Venice Garden Tour.
Self-guided tour of Venice gardens,
homes, and canals, to benefit The
Neighborhood Youth Association.
Jay Griffith Studio, 717 California Ave.,
Venice; 10AM-5PM; \$50; res. req.
310.390.6641. venicegardentour.org.

4, Saturday

Historic Oakland.
Lecture with author Abby Wasserman.
The Oakland Museum of California,
Oak and 10th Sts., Oakland; 3PM; \$4-6;
510.238.2200. museumca.org.

4, Saturday

An Evening in Tuscany.
Lecture with author Frances Mayes
followed by Tuscan-inspired dinner.
San Diego Museum of Art; 4PM; \$150;
res. req. 619.220.8497. sdmart.org.

5, Sunday

Brentwood Garden Tour.
Five gardens and plant sale. Brentwood
Historical Society; 11820 San Vicente
Blvd., Brentwood; 1-5PM; \$20-25;
res. req. 310.820.5070.

5, Sunday

BAHA House Tour.
Annual spring House Tour featuring
houses designed by Julia Morgan and
others. Berkeley Architectural Heritage
Association; res. req. 510.841.2242.
berkeleyheritage.com

5, Sunday

**Chamber Music in Historic Sites:
Vega String Quartet.**
Music at Harvey Aluminum House,
designed by John Lautner (1950). The
Da Camera Society; Harvey Aluminum
House, LA; 2PM and 3:30PM; \$70;
res. req. 213.477.2929

5, 11, Sunday, Saturday

Introduction to Planting Materials.
Workshop on softscape with Charlotte
Chen. Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico
Blvd., SM; 9AM-2PM; \$40; res. req.
310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

6, Monday

Preston Scott Cohen Studio Work.
Opening reception for exhibition. UCLA
Department of Architecture and Urban
Design, 1318 Perloff Gallery, UCLA;
6-8PM. res. req. 310.825.7857.
uclanews.ucla.edu.

6, Monday

Beatriz Colomina.
Lecture with Princeton University
architectural history and theory professor.
UCLA Department of Architecture and
Urban Design, 1302 Perloff Hall, UCLA;
6:30PM. 310.825.7857.
uclanews.ucla.edu.

6, Monday

Light Dining.
Program on restaurant lighting design.
Designers Lighting Forum; 7PM.
310.535.0105. dlfla.org.

6, Monday

Ayşe Birsel.
Lecture with industrial designer. SFMOMA;
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
Theater, 700 Howard St., SF; 7:30PM;
\$15-20. 415.978.2787. sfmoma.org.

7, Tuesday

**Rancho San Miguel: A San
Francisco Neighborhood History.**
Lecture with writer and San Francisco
Historical Society founding director,
Mae Silver. California Historical
Society, 678 Mission St., SF; 5:30-7PM.
415.357.1848, x 24. calhist.org

7, Tuesday

Albert Solon: Clayworker Extraordinaire.
Lecture with tile collector and historian
Riley Doty. California Heritage
Museum, 2612 Main St., SM; 7PM;
\$5-10; res. req. 310.392.8537.

8, Wednesday

Good Design/ Good Business.
Presentation at an architectural office.
AIA/LA; res. req. Maryam Arguello
Belli, 310.395.9080. aialosangeles.org.

9, Thursday

**The Evolution of the Book: Societal
Forces and Technological Advances.**
Lecture with California Center for the
Book director, Dr. Sidney Berger. San

Diego Museum of Art, 1450 El Prado,
Balboa Park; 5:30PM; res. req.
619.696.1956. sdmart.org.

10, Friday

Point of View: Sacred Spaces.
Discussion with painter and designer of
37 tapestries for the Cathedral of Our
Lady of the Angels, John Nava. J. Paul
Getty Museum, 1200 Getty Center Dr.,
LA. 6PM and 7:30PM; res. req.
310.440.7300. getty.edu.

11, Saturday

A Day in Florence.
Lecture with art gallery director Irini
Vallera-Rickerson. UCLA Extension,
Westwood; 9AM-4PM; \$75-50; res.
req. 310.825.9971. uclaextension.org.

11, Saturday

**From Bauhaus to Our House:
A Legacy of Modern Design.**
Lecture with Santa Monica College art
and architectural history professor
Eleanor Schrader Schapa. UCLA
Extension, Westwood; 10AM-1PM;
\$35-50; res. req. 310.825.9971.
uclaextension.org.

**SAH/SCC
EVENT****18, Saturday**

Modern Patrons
A visit to the Walker residence in
Ojai designed by Rodney Walker.
2-4:30 PM
res. req. 800.9SAHSCC.
See Page 1 for details

11, Saturday

Symposium on the Coachella Valley.
Coachella Valley Archaeological
Society; Palm Springs Desert Museum,
101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs;
10AM-4:30PM. 760.773.2277.
psmuseum.org.

11, Saturday

**How to Choose and Work
With an Interior Designer.**
Class with Dollie Chapman. Santa
Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd., SM;
1-4PM; \$50; res. req. 310.434.3400.
events.smc.edu.

13, Monday

Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos.
Lecture with architects from Unstudio.
UCLA Department of Architecture and
Urban Design, 1302 Perloff Hall, UCLA;
6:30PM. 310.825.7857.
uclanews.ucla.edu.

14, Tuesday

Gardens Paradiso.
Tiburon Garden tour includes historic
Farr Cottages and the China Cabin.
San Francisco Yacht Club, Belvedere.
415.380.2183.

15, Wednesday

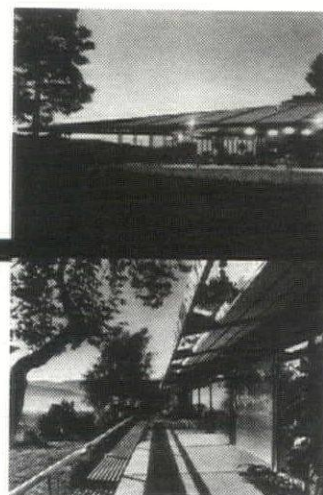
**Closing Skills for the Design
Professional.**
Panel with designers and moderator
Barbara Summer; co-sponsored by
ASID Industry Partners. Pacific Design
Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., LA; 4:30PM;
res. req. 310.657.0800. p-d-c.com.

15, Wednesday

SFMOMA Fundraising Auction Gala.
Works on paper, photographs, travel
packages, wine, and furniture from
Wendall Castle, Chapel Hill, and
Therien Studio Workshops. SFMOMA,
151 Third St., SF; 6PM; \$175-300.
415.357.4127.

16, Thursday

**Fallingwater: Preserving a
20th-Century Icon.**
Lecture with Fallingwater executive
director Lynda S. Waggoner, and
structural engineer Robert Silman.
J. Paul Getty Museum, 1200 Getty
Center Dr., LA; 7PM;
res. req. 310.440.7300.
getty.edu/condervation/activities.

**16, Thursday**

Building Sustainable Cities.
Lecture with former Santa Monica
mayor Denny Zane and urban planners
Marvin Martinez and Julian Camacho.
Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd.,
SM; 8PM. 310.434.3400.
events.smc.edu.

17-19, Friday-Sunday

San Diego Modernism.
Weekend of tours and lectures on
historic and contemporary Modernist
sites, with architect Leo Marmol and
Palm Springs Historic Site Foundation
vice president Tony Merchell. MAK
Center for Art and Architecture;
res. req. 323.651.1510.

17-19, Friday-Sunday

Sydneytown.
History walkabout of Australian
neighborhood with Gary L. Holland.
California Historical Society; 10AM and
2PM; \$15-20; res. req. 415.357.1848.
californiahistoricalsociety.org.

18, Saturday

Restored Berryessa Adobe.
Tour of historic adobe. Santa Clara.
408.615.2210

may continues

18, Saturday

We Are Aqui: A Search for Regional Identity.

Slide talk with architect and urban designer Hector Reyes. Friends of San Diego Architecture; Newschool of Architecture, 1249 F St., SD; 9:30-11:30AM; \$3. 619.235.4100.

18, Saturday

Visualizing California: Historic Maps of the Golden State.

Lecture by historian David Rumsey, author Glen McLaughlin, Bancroft Library curator Walter Brem, and historian Warren Heckrotte. California Historical Society; The Faculty Club, UC Berkeley, Berkeley; 9:30AM-4PM; \$45-52; res. req. 415.357.1848 x22. californiahistoricalociety.org

18, Saturday

Downtown LA: Where Design Hits the Road.

Downtown celebration of architecture with tours, block party, authors' talks, exhibits, children's activities, silent auction. LA Architect Magazine; Traction Ave. between 3rd and Merrick Sts., park at SCI-Arc; 11AM-5PM. 818.551.1073.

19, Sunday

AIA/Los Angeles Home Tour.

AIA/LA; res. req. 310.639.0777. aialosangeles.org.

19, Sunday

Downtown Public Art Tour.

Walking and metro tour with Gayle Gale. Santa Monica College; MOCA, 250 S. Grand, LA; 10:30AM-4:30PM; \$30; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

19, Sunday

Santa Barbara Style.

Historic homes tour. Pearl Chase Society, Santa Barbara; 11AM-4PM; \$35; res. req. 805.961.3938.

19, Sunday

Life in the Past Lane Festival.

Annual festival of Arroyo Seco Museums: The Gamble House, Heritage Square, Lumis Home and Garden, the Pasadena Historical, and Southwest Museum. 11AM-5PM. 213.740.8687.

19, Sunday

Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Los Angeles Guitar Quartet.

Eclectic program at Farmers and Merchants Bank, designed by Morgan and Walls (1904). The Da Camera Society; Farmers and Merchants Bank, LA; 3PM; \$35-41; res. req. 213.477.2929.

20, Monday

Ross Lovegrove.

Lecture with furniture designer. UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design, 1302 Perloff Hall, UCLA; 6:30PM. 310.825.7857. uclanews.ucla.edu.

20, Monday

Jelly Helm, Advertising Guru.

Lecture with former creative director of advertising firms Wieden and Kennedy and The Martin Agency. David "Jelly" Helm. SFMOMA; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, 700 Howard St., SF; 7:30PM; \$15-20. 415.978.2787. sfmoma.org.

21, Tuesday

Introduction to Feng Shui.

Class with Katar Diamond. Santa Monica College; John Adams Middle School, SM; 6:30-9:30PM; \$45; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

23, Thursday

Beyond Persion Rugs.

Lecture with rug experts on design, weave, and purchasing. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., LA; 11AM; res. req. 310.657.0800. p-d-c.com.

23, Thursday

Master of Architecture Lecture: Peter Pran.

Sponsored by AIA/LA and LACMA. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905

Wilshire Blvd., LA; 3:30PM; \$5-12; res. req. 323.857.6010. aialosangeles.org.

23, Thursday

Making Santa Monica a More Sustainable City.

Lecture with Santa Monica city environmental staff. Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd., SM; 8PM. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

28, Tuesday

Art City.

West coast premiere and filmmakers discussion of the cinematic portrait of artists by Chris Maybach and Peter Gardner. Santa Monica Museum of Art, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., SM; 7PM. 310.586.6488. smmoa.org.

30, Thursday

Radiant Panes: Alameda Windows From the Victoria Era to the Time of Arts & Crafts.

Lecture by glass artist Ken Matthias. Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Ave., Alameda; 7PM; \$5. 510.748.0796.

31, Friday

The Western Works of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Lecture with art historian Eleanor Schrader Schapa. Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd., SM; 8PM; \$10; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

1, Saturday

Ennis-Brown House.

Tour of Frank Lloyd Wright house. Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd., SM; 10AM; \$15; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

1, Saturday

Historical and Architectural Home Tour.

Tour of early 1900 homes. Redondo Beach Historical Society; 10AM-4PM; \$12.50-15; res. req. 310.372.0197.

3, Monday

Camilo Vergara.

Lecture with photographer and architectural historian. SFMOMA; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, 700 Howard St., SF; 7:30PM; \$15-20. 415.978.2787. sfmoma.org.

4, Tuesday

Victorian Glory in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

Lecture with author, interior designer, and San Francisco resident Paul Duchscherer. California Historical Society, 678 Mission St., SF; 5:30-7PM. 415.357.1848, x 24. calhist.org.

5, Wednesday

Innovative Product and Design Through Digital Printing.

Lecture with World Wide Print. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., LA; 10AM; res. req. 310.657.0800. p-d-c.com.

6, Thursday

Can Neighborhoods Save LA and Santa Monica?

Lecture with former Santa Monica Mayor Jim Conn and Pico Improvement chair Jim Stebinger. Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd., SM; 8PM. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

8, Saturday

A. Quincy Jones.

Book signing by author and architect Cory Buckner. Form Zero Architectural Books + Gallery, 811 Traction Ave., LA; 2-4PM. 213.745.4900. formzero.com.

8, Saturday

From Modest to Masterpiece: The Architecture of Sylvanus Marston (1883-1946).

Bus tour of more than 30 buildings, including interior visits to private residences. Pasadena Heritage; \$35-40; res. req. 626.441.6333. pasadenaheritage.org.

9, Sunday

Metro Art Tour: Hollywood and More.

On-site tour from Hollywood to Downtown with Gayle Gale. Santa Monica College; Hollywood/Vine Station; 10:30AM-4:30PM; \$30; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

10, Monday

Light as Art.

Program at the Museum of Neon Art. Designers Lighting Forum; 7PM. 310.535.0105. dlfla.org.

SAH/SCC TOUR

15, Saturday

Modern Patrons

A visit to an Eichler Home in Orange. 2-4:30 PM, res. req. 800.9SAHSCC. See Page 1 for details

10, Monday

Charles Anderson.

Lecture with graphic designer. SFMOMA; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, 700 Howard St., SF; 7:30PM; \$15-20. 415.978.2787. sfmoma.org.

15, Saturday

Russian California.

Bus tour of Russian neighborhoods in Marin, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties with Gary L. Holloway. California Historical Society, SF; 8AM; \$95-115; res. req. 415.357.1848. californiahistoricalociety.org.

15, Saturday

Creating "Blueprints" for a Successful Presentation.

Lecture with Leonard Lipton. UCLA Extension, Westwood; 9AM-4PM; \$100; res. req. 310.825.9971. uclaextension.org.

15, Saturday

Silent Film Benefit.

Film showing in historic Art Deco Avalon Theatre. Catalina Island Museum; \$10-12; res. req. 310.510.2414.

21-23, Friday-Sunday

Laurel Heights.

History walkabout with Gary L. Holland. California Historical Society; SF; 10AM and 2PM; \$15-20; res. req. 415.357.1848. californiahistoricalociety.org.

23, Sunday

Painting with Light.

The Stained Glass Art of the Judson Studios. Lecture with Jane Apostol. The Los Angeles City Historical Society; Riordan Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium; 2PM; 213.228.7400.

27, Thursday

England's Green and Pleasant Land: Recent Experiments to Link Building Conservation With the Wider Field of Environmental Sustainability.

Lecture with English Heritage U.K.'s head of Building Conservation and Research. J. Paul Getty Museum, 1200 Getty Center Dr., LA; 7PM; res. req. 310.440.7300. getty.edu



Architects in Their Own Words

Editor's Note:

This is the first in an occasional series of articles featuring architect's reflections on the practice, history, and art of architecture in Southern California. This will also be the theme of an upcoming SAH/SCC lecture series. We welcome your thoughts and submissions.

Neutra's Survival

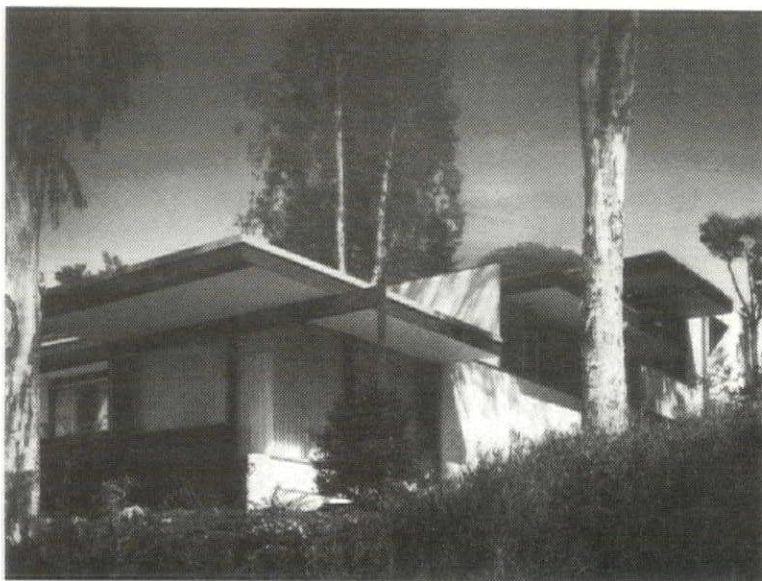
By John A. Blanton, AIA

The double meaning of the title refers to the up and down reputation of the late Richard J. Neutra, as well as to the vital ideas in his book *Survival Through Design*. There is a third matter I wish to explore more thoroughly. It is the way he used his sensitive readings of his own physiological responses to produce emotionally satisfying environments for his cherished clients.

While I was a first-year apprentice, Neutra and I read and discussed passages from his manuscript of *Survival Through Design*. He was interested in checking the clarity of his meanings. In spite of this, it is a difficult book for me, but it needs to be gleaned for the multitude of ideas and meanings flowing from his effusive mind. The prevailing concept of a creative person is one who spews constant ideas, only a few of which are good ones. Neutra seemed to have an early warning device for bad ideas. He could focus and instantly see implications. Thus he was at his best as a creative integrator, and he used this ability to the fullest. This valuable trait could be fostered today by a better "press" for it.

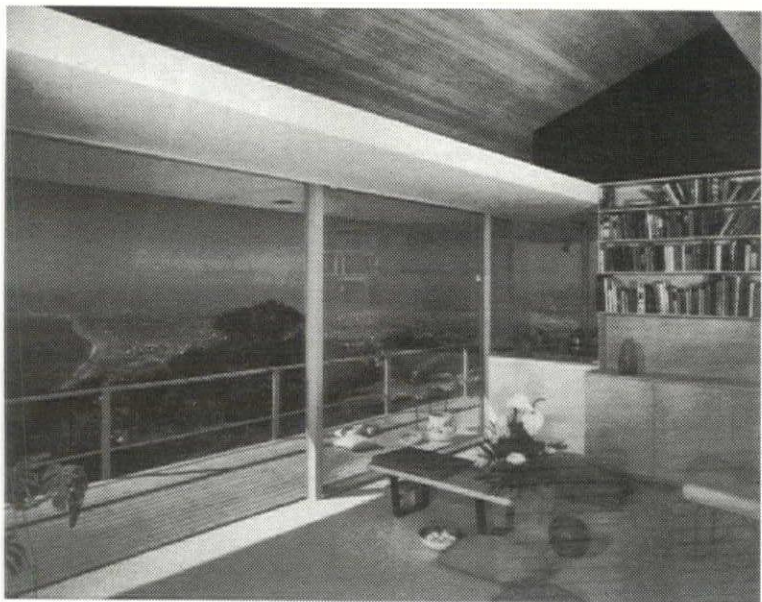
Briefly, the larger meaning of the book is that we know that stress kills; we constantly change our environment to one we are not adaptable to; and this added stress can destroy individuals and even our own species in unforeseen ways.

I have long called serenity the essence of his buildings. I knew it had to do with an emotional balance. Yet it is only since we know about neurotransmitters in the brain that there are some working explanations of its nature. Today he would have scientific backing for his intuition, which he based on observing his own



The counterposed roof projections of the Ohara House create directional movement for the eyes.

Photo: Julius Shulman



Since a pitched roof was mandated for the Kilbury house in Paols Verdes, the interior makes use of it. One's attention to the view and the scale are maintained by the "Neutra brown" above the bookcase (imagine it in white).

Photo: Julius Shulman

balancing act. He knew adrenaline well and said that rage can make one's intelligence instantly unavailable.

He was always aware of the latest scientific findings, especially those concerning humans. He would now be able to say that communing with nature raises one's serotonin level. As I understand it, a balance of serotonin with norepinephrine allows us to use the latter to see stress as adventure instead of anxiety, and it helps prevent the bad side of adrenaline. Is this perhaps the state of maximum creativity?

The impact of the environments he designed did not come from a static quality of symmetry, grids, or fenestration that is all the same. Rather, they had a subtle stimulating dynamic through eye movements and directionality, producing a quiet exhilaration to balance and interact with the serenity. Clients would report that even the memory of their home could bring a sense of peace.

In his residences, the family and social areas and as many other rooms as possible opened to nature. When there was no view these rooms would open to a garden. The neighbors were promptly "planted out" with small dense and fast growing eucalyptus compacta. The dark silhouette of any telephone pole was essentially obscured by a clean willow lemon eucalyptus or two. The result was one's own Eden. It is strange that the desire for this is popularly under fire. Such a personal environment was never symbolic nor a metaphor. In an urban row house situation, often only the rooftop was available for the feeling of freedom. He was rightly convinced that he was

not adding to stress, but was reducing it within a household or a work environment. It is not frivolous to seek as much real comfort as possible, because it can be life conserving. To feed a mere esthetic through the mind was insufficient for Neutra.

He went far beyond embracing nature in being easy on the eyes and "soul." His particular design elements and detailing toward an effect all contributed. They were derived from his acute awareness of his own involuntary responses. His results seemed inevitable. When experienced without prejudice, they were often called transcendent and sublime. After the inevitable cycle of generational disinterest this is now being experienced directly by new generations.

Neutra was of a different kind, who had his own intentions, often at odds with other modernists. He faithfully implemented his insights. Not only his artistry has potential for personal discovery, but also the purposes the artistry served. Discovering for oneself can be the best kind of art appreciation. ■

John Blanton started his architectural career apprenticing for Richard Neutra in 1950, and grew to the title of Collaborator on such projects as Eagle Rock Community Building, Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, and Gemological Institute in Brentwood, among many others. He started his own firm in 1964 and has received numerous awards and publication for his work. Among the institutions where he has presented and taught are the Monterey Design Conference, UCLA Extension, and the LA Conservancy.

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For those of you who missed out on recent SAH/SCC tours, or would like more information for your reference, here's an opportunity to get your hands on the publications printed especially for SAH/SCC events. Don't let another chance pass you by.

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Cool Pools: Booklet and cassette tape from "Reflections on Water: Cool Pools Along Sunset Boulevard."
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Sarasota: 26-page, full-color brochure of works by Sarasota school architects from "On Parallel Lines: The Sarasota Modern Movement 1948-1966."
_____ at \$10 each

Reconsidering Lloyd Wright: 21-page, four color booklet from "Reconsidering Lloyd Wright House Tour."
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Union Station and MTA Transit Center: A two-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos.
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Spanish Romance: Tour brochure of San Marino and Pasadena, visiting historic landmarks such as the Mission San Gabriel ArcAngel, El Molino Viejo, Mrs. Ethel Guthrie's House, and Mrs. Grace A. Ohlmond's House.
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Eagle Rock — LA's Home Town: 17-page handbook with history and self-guided tour of Eagle Rock, by Jeff Samudio.
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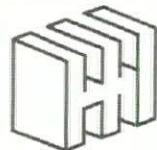
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