



SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

NEWS

2003
november december

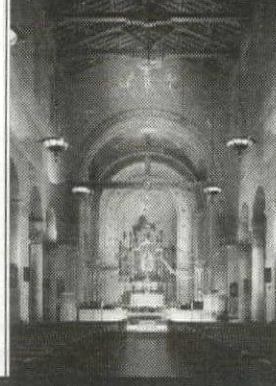


Photo: Robert Berger

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Honored Members in Sacred Spaces

SAH/SCC Annual
Members Celebration

Saturday, December 6th, 4-6PM

All SAH/SCC members are invited to come to St. John's Episcopal Church (514 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, near the corner of Adams and Figueroa) in Historic West Adams for the annual Members Celebration, Saturday, December 6th, 4-6PM. As always, the Members Celebration is a free event for SAH/SCC members in good standing; reservations are required. We encourage you to bring friends who are interested in experiencing Southern California's architectural history first-hand. Your guests may attend this event for \$10, which can be put toward a membership at any level. See reservation form on back page or call 800.9SAHSCC.

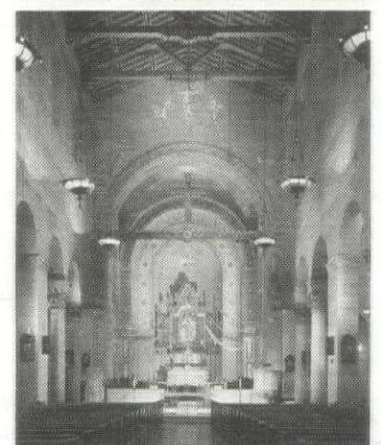
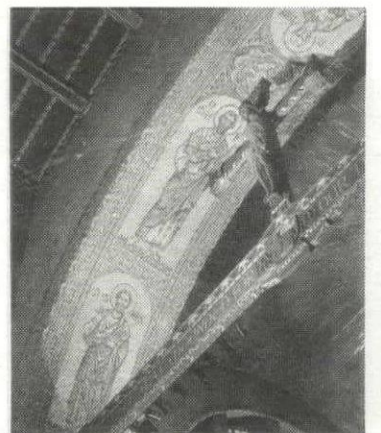
Organized by SAH/SCC Board Member John Ellis, the day is themed "Sacred Spaces," based on the new book of the same name by photographer Robert Berger, who is well known for documenting LA's aging movie houses in *The Last Remaining Seats*. *Sacred Spaces: Historic Houses of Worship in the City of Angels* (Balcony Press) will be on sale that day.

St. John's is just one of the churches chronicled in the book, which describes the building thusly: "Built to serve the most exclusive residential district in early 20th-century Los Angeles, Saint John's now stands seemingly stranded between South Figueroa Street and the Harbor Freeway. Its completion in late 1924 culminated a long period of planning and design intended to result in a monument of superior and lasting quality. In 1919, the Los Angeles firm of Montgomery & Montgomery proposed to the congregation a church along the lines of English Gothic architecture. Apparently the design did not suit, for in 1920 the congregation commissioned alternative plans from one of the country's leading neo-gothicists, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue of New York. Finally, in mid-1921, the congregation organized a limited competition among six local architectural offices. Five competitors submitted designs.

"The winning design by Davis & Davis was perceived as replicating that of Goodhue's Saint Bartholomew's church in New York, though the actual similarity between the two buildings is quite limited. Ground was broken in January 1923, and construction of the Italian Romanesque revival church in reinforced concrete continued for almost two years. The completed church has at different times been compared to the sixth-century church at Toscanella, Italy, or the 11th-century church of San Pietro in Tuscania (whose central bay the Davis & Davis facade does indeed closely resemble). A distinctive feature of its exterior is an outdoor pulpit attached to the northeast corner of the sanctuary.

"Like the rest of the ornaments of the church's tufa stone facade, it was sculpted by Salvatore Cartiano Scarpitta. The interior, seating over 1,000 people, is highly ornamented with decorations and furnishings rich in both color and iconography. Mosaics cover many of the wall surfaces, a carved wooden crucifix surmounts the rood beam spanning the chancel arch. Surmounted by a carved triptych depicting Christ in Glory, the marble altar (a gift of the Milbank family) holds bronze candlesticks and a cross set with semi-precious stones. The effect is that of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, whose overwhelming splendor reveals not only the religious devotion of the congregants of Saint John's but also the vast extent of the wealth, and hence prominence, of many of them in Los Angeles society."

Come celebrate this sacred space. See back page for reservations.



Photos: Robert Berger

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President's Letter

History in the making: Steven Holl's September lecture at SCI-Arc attracted a capacity crowd of more than 1,000 people, surprisingly confirming Holl's status as a celebrity architect in a class with Koolhaas, Gehry, and Libeskind.

However the role doesn't suit Holl well; he's an introspective personality, and his mind seems to work like a philosopher-poet rather than a public figure, although he is articulate and comfortable as a speaker. His work is difficult, in the best sense. It is conceptual, thoughtful, and for the most part subtle, which makes his emerging mass popularity all the more unexpected.

True to form, Holl's lecture at SCI-Arc was relatively opaque, and the architect himself admitted the talk was "experimental" (which he felt was appropriate given the school's reputation as a site for avant-garde thinking). Holl called the lecture "Compression," and he attempted to explain this concept through some of his own projects and by allusion to poetry and music.

As I understand it, Holl's concept of compression refers to an intellectual rigor that seeks to collapse unnecessary distinctions so that what is left is irreducible. So, for example, at his recently completed dormitory building for MIT, Holl designed a perforated reinforced-concrete facade that serves as the building's primary structural support. Structure and skin are one. Compression.



Simmons Hall,
MIT, Cambridge
Massachusetts

Holl used the MIT building as the centerpiece of the lecture because he could show quite compellingly the development of an abstract idea through the making of architecture. He is one of the rare architects who is able to move effortlessly from the academic language of conceptual architecture to the pragmatic language of concrete and #6 rebar.

As Greg Goldin explained in the LA Weekly, in one of the best pieces of local architectural journalism in recent memory, Holl probably also highlighted the MIT building in order to construct an indirect criticism of the work of Frank Gehry. Boldly, Holl launched his critique on Gehry's home turf, with the imminent opening of the Walt Disney Concert Hall and its attendant pomp and circumstance. By continually emphasizing the "compression" of structure and skin in his own work, Holl implicitly questioned the Disney Hall's treatment of structure and skin as separate entities.

Goldin also smartly pointed out some additional background: Holl and Gehry have personal issues stemming from Gehry's criticism of architects participating in the competition for the World Trade Center site in New York. Gehry commented that he didn't understand why established architects (such as Holl) would agree to work for a reduced fee. Gehry, of course, speaks from a position of authority; many professional-practice experts consider Gehry to be a brilliant innovator in the business of architecture. Holl, again without mentioning Gehry by name, simply said that he had not been compensated "a single cent" for his work on the project, and that he was proud to have participated.

The lecture took place on September 11th, and Holl used the anniversary date to reflect on the attack of 2001 and the mood in New York City afterwards. For years he has spent an hour each morning painting watercolors, and at this lecture he showed some of his paintings from the mornings immediately following that dark day. They had never been shown in public before. Without sentimentality, these moving images conveyed a mood of sorrow and redemption. The crowded lecture hall watched in silence.

In general, watercolor studies are important to Holl's working method because they attempt to capture the feeling of the space that he is designing. This may be his greatest contribution to contemporary architecture, his interest in phenomenology, and the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Here's how Holl described this breakthrough: "One of the inspirations I drew from my early readings in phenomenology, was to grasp the profound uniqueness of each specific place, its light, its air, its smell, its ambient color, its history, or, I should say, many histories. I realized that each site on earth was a different beginning point, experientially, historically, intellectually, capable of joining us together in new ways as our bodies move through it and as it, the place, moved through our bodies. This simple but deeply moving fact opened my mind to the possibility of a radical eruption in architecture."

In Holl's finest buildings, such as the Chapel of St. Ignatius in Seattle, this philosophy of phenomenology leads to an architecture of spatial richness and deep pleasure. Phenomenology reminds us that we do not "have" a body but rather, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, "we are a body." Holl's competition-winning plan for the expansion of the Natural History Museum in Exposition Park will be his first California building. We're eagerly awaiting it.

Tony Denzer

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.

Editor: Julie D. Taylor
Associate Editor: Elizabeth Meyer
Assistant Editor: Anne Dickhoff
Internet Editor: Brent Eckerman
Art Director: Svetlana Petrovic
Administration: Arline Chambers

Information and ads for the newsletter should be sent three weeks before the issue date.

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

Julie D. Taylor, Editor SAH/SCC News
 P.O. Box 56478
 Sherman Oaks,
 CA 91413
 Newsletter telephone: 310.247.1099
 Newsletter fax: 310.247.8147
 Newsletter e-mail: jtaylorpr@usa.net

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15, Saturday

Preservation in LA County.

Summit examining the state of historic preservation in LA County with former New York City Landmarks Commissioner Anthony Tung. LA Conservancy; Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., LA. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

15, 22, Saturday

Organic Architecture With Eric Lloyd Wright.

Course exploring ecological design principles of Frank Lloyd Wright and others with FLW's grandson. UCLA Extension, Westwood; Pre-Tour Lecture, 11/15: 10AM-4PM; Tour, 10/22: 9AM-5PM; \$275; res. req. 310.825.9971. uclaextension.org.

17, Monday

Anuradha Mathur.

Lecture with University of Pennsylvania assistant professor Anuradha Mathur. UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design, 1302 Perloff Hall; 6:30PM. 310.825.6540. aud.ucla.edu.

17, Monday

Luxurious and Exotic:

The Art of Indian Furniture.

Lecture with Victoria and Albert Museum Asian Art curator Dr. Amin Jaffer. LACMA Decorative Arts Council; 7PM; res. req. 323.857.6528. lacma.org.

18, Tuesday

Architecture, Dreams, and Challenges.

Lecture with architect Tadao Ando. AIA/LA Masters of Architecture; LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., LA; \$5-12; res. req. 323.857.6287. lacma.org.

18, Tuesday

The Gardens of California: Designing for People, Not Just Effect.

Lecture with landscaper, author, and SAH/SCC Member Nancy Goslee Power. Friends of the Gamble House; Neighborhood Church, 2 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena; 7:30PM; \$20; res. req. 626.793.3334, ext. 10. gamblehouse.usc.edu.

19, Wednesday

Inside/Outside: The Shape of Music in Los Angeles.

Panel discussion on the impact of the Walt Disney Concert Hall on downtown Los Angeles, world architecture, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Los Angeles Philharmonic. 213.972.0704. laphil.org.

19, Wednesday

Contracting with CALTRANS and Other Public Works Agencies in California.

One-day seminar with Ernest C. Brown, Esq., and Associated General Contractors of California executive director Tony Grasso. Lorman Education Services; Omni Hotel, 251 S. Olive St., Los Angeles; 8:30AM-4:30PM; \$289-299; res. req. 715.833.3959. lorman.com

19, Wednesday

Henry N. Cobb.

Lecture with Pei Cobb Freed & Partners' Henry N. Cobb. SCI-Arc, 960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles; 7PM. 213.613.2200. sciarc.edu.

20, Thursday

Ocean View in Modern Times.

A panel discussion on the recent history of Ocean View. The Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association and the Berkeley Historical Society; Faculty Arts and Drama Building, Black Pine Circle School, 2016 7th St.; 7:30PM; \$10; res. req. 510.841.2242. berkeleyheritage.com.

21, Friday

Hani Rashid.

Lecture with Asymptote principal Hani Rashid. UCLA Department of

Architecture and Urban Design, 1302 Perloff Hall; 6:30PM. 310.825.6540. aud.ucla.edu.

21, Friday

CPF Awards Deadline.

Entries due for the Preservation Design Awards. California Preservation Foundation, 5 Third St., SF. 415.495.0349. californiapreservation.org.

23, Sunday

The Moveable Musical Feast: Harp and Flute.

CMHS at Thorne House (Wallace Neff,

1927). The Da Camera Society; Pasadena; 2PM and 3:30PM; \$59-86; res. req. 213.477.2929. dacamera.org.

24, Monday

Rosalind Krauss.

Lecture with Columbia University professor Rosalind Krauss. UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design, 1302 Perloff Hall; 6:30PM. 310.825.6540. aud.ucla.edu.

december calendar

2, 4, 6, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

Coronado Touring.

Walking tours every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Glorietta Bay Inn; 11AM; \$8. Nancy Cobb, 619.435.5993.

3, Wednesday

The Franklin Report.

Lecture with The Franklin Report creator Elizabeth Franklin. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., Blue Conference Center, Ste. B259, West Hollywood; 10AM; res. req. 310.657.0800. pacificdesigncenter.com.

4, Thursday

AIA/LA Holiday Party and New 2004 Board Members' Installation.

Holiday party and board member installation. AIA/LA; Fox Studios, 6:30PM; res. req. 213.639.0777. aialosangeles.org.

4, Thursday

William Wegman.

Lecture with artist Wegman, known for photos of dogs. Palm Springs Desert Museum, 101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs; 8PM; \$10. 760.325.0189. psmuseum.org.

6, Saturday

Loz Feliz Home Tour.

Four homes, including Neutra's Lovell House, open for self-guided tours. First Congregational Church of LA/Pilgrim School. \$25; res. req. 213.385.1341, ext. 302. fccla.org.

6, 20, Saturday

Angelino Heights.

Walking tour of one of Los Angeles' first suburbs affluent with Victorian architecture and features the interiors of two private homes. LA Conservancy; 10AM-12:30PM; \$5-10; res. req. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

7, Sunday

The Moveable Musical Feast: Musica Humana Oxford.

CMHS at Immanuel Presbyterian Church (C. Skilling and H.M. Patterson, 1927). The Da Camera Society; Los Angeles; lecture-3:15PM, concert-4PM; \$28-42; res. req. 213.477.2929. dacamera.org.

10-21, Wednesday-Sunday

Cuba: From Colonial Splendor to Revolutionary Utopia.

Travel tour to Cuba, led by SAH/SCC Life Member Stephen Harby. National Society of Architectural Historians; res. req. 310.573.1365.

11, Thursday

Frank Gehry: Work in Progress.

Art talk on exhibition with MOCA architecture curator Brooke Hodge. MOCA at California Plaza, 250 South Grand Ave., LA; 6:30PM. 213.621.2766. moca-la.org.

12, Friday

The Art of Lita Albuquerque.

Lecture with the artist. San Diego Museum of Art, 1450 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego; 10AM; \$10. 619.696.1966. sdmaart.org.

12, Friday

Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working With Time.

Film profile of the earthworks artist. Palm Springs Desert Museum, 101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs; 11AM-12:30PM. 760.325.0189. psmuseum.org.



13, Saturday

Marble Masterpieces.

Walking tour exploring the uses of marble in the buildings of downtown's financial district. LA Conservancy; 10AM-12:30PM; \$8; res. req. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

13, Saturday

Biltmore Hotel.

Behind-the-scenes tour. LA Conservancy; 11AM-12:30PM; \$8; res. req. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

13, Saturday

San Pedro.

Tour of San Pedro waterfront and museums. Neighborhood Place Project; San Pedro; 1-4PM; \$10; res. req. 626.967.3332.

18, Thursday

Ernesto Neto.

Lecture on current exhibition with MOCA curator Alma Ruiz. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., Blue Conference Center, Ste. B259, West Hollywood; 11AM; res. req. 310.657.0800. pacificdesigncenter.com.

19, Friday

Noh Costumes.

Lecture on Japanese performance with San Diego State University professor Holly Poe Durbin. San Diego Museum of Art, 1450 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego; 10AM; \$10. 619.696.1966. sdmaart.org.

20, Saturday

Downtown's Evolving Skyline.

Walking tour exploring the post-war architecture from Bunker Hill to Sixth Street. LA Conservancy; 10AM-12:30PM; \$8; res. req. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

20, 27, Saturday

Union Station.

Tour rediscovering the last notable railway station built in the US, including the East portal area and the

SAH/SCC EVENT

6, Saturday

Sacred Spaces.

SAH/SCC Members Celebration. See Page 1 for details.

MTA Building. LA Conservancy; 10AM-12:30PM; \$8; res. req. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

21, Sunday

Hastings Ranch.

Tour of holiday decorations at Hastings Ranch and Balian House. Neighborhood Place Project; Altadena; 4-7PM; \$20; res. req. 626.967.3332.

27, Saturday

North University Park.

Tour of Chester Place neighborhood and One Institute. Neighborhood Place Project; Los Angeles; 1-4PM; \$10; res. req. 626.967.3332.

Ongoing

Architecture Tours LA.

Tours of Hollywood, Silver Lake, Hancock Park, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Pasadena, and Downtown, as well as of Frank Gehry's work, guided by SAH/SCC Member Laura Massino. Architecture Tours LA; \$60-70; res. req. 323.464.7868.

Modern Patrons: Reed in Malibu

SAH/SCC
Lecture and Tour:
Saturday,
November 15th

This November 15th, from 2PM to 4PM, the Modern Patrons program continues with the opportunity to visit with architect John Reed and his brother OP Reed in Malibu. The event is \$10 and is open to Life- and Patron-level members of SAH/SCC (the program will be available to the general membership in the event there is space available). Reservations are needed, as space is limited. Please see order form on back page.



Photo: Baron Wolman

In 1961, OP Reed commissioned his brother to design a house for his wife and three children on a hillside overlooking the Pacific. The house was published in 1968 by David Gebhard and Robert Winter in the book *Architecture in California*. In 1993, the house was completely destroyed in the devastating Malibu fire, presenting the architect a unique opportunity to re-visit his original conception, more than 30 years later. Incorporating the same measure of economy that went into the first design, the house was re-built with only minor changes to accommodate the need for better protection against the potential for future fires in this fragile area.

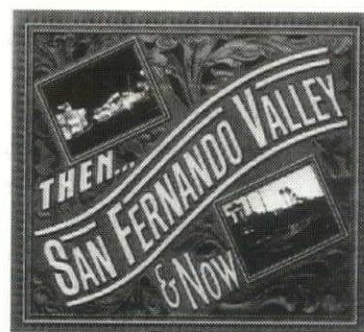
John Reed grew up in San Diego and attended the School of Architecture at USC. His first built building was a beach house done as an associate of Lloyd Roucco in 1949. After college, he worked for three years in the office Lloyd Wright, where he often visited Lloyd Wright's famous father, Frank Lloyd Wright.

John Reed is one of the founders of the Southern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians and was for five years the preservation officer for the Southern California chapter of the AIA. He was also president of the "Save The Dodge House" foundation, which was the first attempt to preserve a contemporary building (i.e., one that is fewer than 50 years old), a universally lauded Irving Gill masterpiece.

He also helped Esther McCoy with her book *Five California Architects* of 1959, acting on his interest in Gill and RM Schindler. Upon Schindler's death, Reed was asked to finish Schindler's last commission. He also had his office in Schindler's house on Kings Road for five years during the sixties.

Reed has completed several hundred buildings in southern California and beyond, including high-rises, commercial hotels, hospitals, apartments, condominiums, and many single-family residences. His practice continues into its 54th year of making architecture and has currently more than 20 commissions in progress. His grandson is also helping out in the firm and will soon become the third generation of architects in the family.

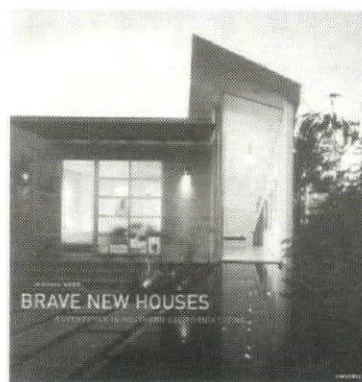
Please join us on November 15th as we explore the interesting problem of re-building from tragedy and how the process is shaped by time and circumstance. It will also be a remarkable opportunity to spend some valuable time with one of the important participants in the history of our great modern architectural legacy. Additionally, OP Reed, a noted art dealer, was responsible for helping the FLW Foundation save, catalogue, and in some instances sell Wright's extensive collection of drawings and prints. His critical role in conducting this work for the foundation was recognized by his being named an Honorary Taliesen Fellow.



Then & Now: San Fernando Valley by Jake Klein, with photography by Larry Bleidner and Kurt Wahlner.

Klein celebrates the San Fernando Valley for the wilderness it was and the clichéd picture of swimming pools, shopping malls, and freeways it has become. This light-hearted pictorial history traces the Valley's development from its 1797 birth, to its days as a quiet, middle-class community, to its explosion of traffic and sprawl. Black and white photographs of streets and buildings that have defined the Valley contrast with modern-day photographs of those same locations as Klein emphasizes the drastic—as well as the surprisingly modest—changes the Valley has undergone.

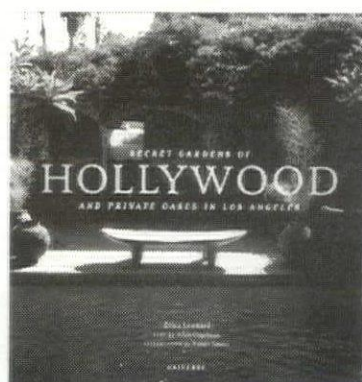
Gibbs, Smith, Publisher;
softcover, \$14.95.



Brave New Houses: Adventures in Southern California Living by Michael Webb.

LA's own Michael Webb is certainly the right person to bring together this splendid survey of contemporary homes in Southern California. With text, plans, and plenty of photos, Webb shows 30 projects, ranging from contemporary classics, such as Blades House (Morphosis), Carlson-Regis House (RoTo Architects), and Yorkin House (Moore Ruble Yudell), to more recent gems, such as Collins House (Tighe Architects) and Sander House (Sander Architects). The SoCal residential architecture landscape is divided into five themes: Shifting Geometries, Serene Volumes, Dynamic Structures, Fronting the Ocean, Engaging the Landscape, and Confined Lots. Webb also adds a chapter of Radical Visions, showing projects that are not yet built—an unusual, but welcomed, move for most books of this sort.

Rizzoli;
hardcover, \$55; softcover, \$39.95.



Secret Gardens of Hollywood and Private Oases in Los Angeles by Erica Lennard (photographs) and Adele Cygelman (text).

The lushness promised in the book occurs more in the text than in the photographs. Cygelman's engaging text encompasses the homeowner's relationship to their gardens and oases, as well as how they worked with landscape professionals. The photographs are fine—more prosaic, however, than poetic. The delightful design of the book sets them off to their best advantage. Still, the book is a peek into backyards that are otherwise inaccessible to most.

Universe Publishing;
hardcover, \$45.

SAH/scc publications order form

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.

Beyond the Bauhaus: 32-page illustrated booklet with plans, photos, and essays based on Boston tour _____ at \$10 each

Soriano: Man of Steel: 12-page illustrated booklet with article by Neil Jackson _____ at \$10 each

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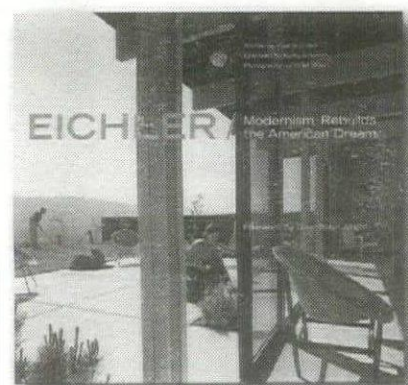
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