Authors on Architecture: Hess on the Ranch

SAH/SCC Lecture and Book Signing

Saturday, March 19th, 2-4 PM

Authors on Architecture celebrates the return to Southern California of author Alan Hess with a discussion of his latest book, The Ranch House (Harry N. Abrams, 2004, $45). Join Hess at Hennessey & Ingalls in Santa Monica on Saturday, March 19th, 2-4PM, for a talk and book signing. The event is free, and open to SAH/SCC members and the public.


In The Ranch House, he and photographer Noah Sheldon have tapped into both nostalgia and the current trend. Although acknowledging that this suburban archetype can be found across America, the author concentrates on specimens in California, Arizona, and Texas. As well, several architects, such as Cliff May, Ed Fickett, Lutah Maria Riggs, and Harwell Hamilton Harris, will be familiar to SAH/SCC tour-goers.

Before a color-photographic tour of current ranch houses, Hess weaves the story of what he calls "realistic modernism" through history and archival photographs and documents. A chapter on the Ranch House's antecedents looks at actual working ranches, the Prairie and Craftsman movements, and R.M. Schindler's iconic Kings Road House. "Before the Boom" chapter investigates the invention of the suburban home and the acceptance of the Western vernacular. A discussion of the post-war building boom shows that Ranch was not just a style, but a lifestyle disseminated in women's magazines and on television. It was a time when developers were on the rise and tract houses spread across the land.

Join us for an in-depth discussion of this housing phenomenon, and of Hess's book, which completes the story of post-war housing. Hennessey & Ingalls is located at 214 Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica, 310.458.3074.
SAH/SCC

President’s Letter

There are two great pleasures that come with being involved in this organization. The first, of course, is learning about architecture, being exposed to ideas and experiences that are not typically accessible in our everyday lives. The second is making new friends and sharing their stories. They were obviously and justifiably proud to have their work shown since they were first built. It’s due in no small part to the enthusiasm of these young homeowners that a renaissance is coming for the man Andreas calls “Mr K.”

Tony Denzer

Letter to the Editor

I enjoy receiving the SAH/SCC News, but in reading the January/February 2005 issue I noticed something that seems very incorrect. In his “President’s Letter,” Tony Denzer claims “Los Angeles is a desert.” This is a presumptuous and harmful myth. Los Angeles is not a desert, and in making such an assertion, Mr. Denzer does harm, in the context of his remarks, to the perception of the city and its architectural history. Our annual average rainfall of between 12 and 20 inches immediately disqualifies the city as a desert, as does our ecosystem. Los Angeles is part of a coastal chaparral and scrub ecosystem, which is typically described as a “Mediterranean Clime,” not a desert one. Furthermore, Mr. Denzer’s claim that in 1923 “the climate was fairly severe” is also fallacious. The historic trend for 1921–22 was 18.68 inches, compared to the months of January, February, and March of 1822 saw temperatures ranging from lows in the 30s to highs in the 80s, much like today. The city is not “20 degrees cooler than it used to be.” A booklet on Los Angeles issued in 1928 by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce states “only one-tenth of the time is the temperature at Los Angeles above 89 degrees or below 40 degrees,” hardly “severe.” So, in understanding the true history of Los Angeles’ climate, Mr. Denzer might want to reassess his interpretation of one source, “how to have imagination to take it to the Mojave” misinforms the students not only about the origins of the Schindler House, but also about Los Angeles itself.

Victoria Dailey

SAH/SCC News

Tour and Event Information: 1.800.9SAHSCC: info@sahscce.org

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
Assistant Editor: Anne Dickhoff
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Administration: Article Chambers

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

Issue Deadline:
May/June 2005
April 10, 2005

Please send all ads, materials of notices, events, exhibitions and news to the attention of the editor.

Julie D. Taylor, Editor
SAH/SCC News
2370 W. 6th St., Box 68476
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

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President’s Response

To accurately compare the region’s climate between 1922 and today, one would want to look only at the climate and temperature, but the relative humidity and availability of shade as well. Of course 98 years of widespread planting and watering and shading the ground will make a region feel cooler. This is what Esther McCoy meant when she wrote: “The cooling of the climate throughout Southern California has made the sleeping porch obsolete.”

Still, the issue at hand is not the weather itself, but Schindler’s perception of it. Perhaps I should have clarified that I used terms such as “desert” and “severe” not for their meteorological accuracy, but to convey the architect’s impressions. After living in Vienna and experienced Schindler’s method of understanding the desert-like, and the sunshine severe. His architecture responded to that perception. Students visiting today (particularly in the winter) find it difficult to see the house as it was: a celebration of hot weather and an attempt to provide some relief.

Tony Denzer
1. Tuesday
Hospitality Lighting and the Design Environment.
Presentation on lighting for mood and ambiance with lighting designer Babu Shankar. IALD. Designers Lighting Forum, 8PM. 316.526.0106. diffra.org.

2. Wednesday
SCI-Arc and Downtown Los Angeles Arts District.
Walking tour. Neighborhood Place Project, SCI-Arc, 350 Merrick St., LA; 1-PM. $10. 626.967.3332.

3. Thursday
Hani Rashid.

4. Friday
Pardee House.

5. Saturday
2xMotion.
Opening reception for exhibition "2xMotion" of student work. AIA/LA, A+D Museum, 855 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; 6-8PM. 310.692.2445. aplud.org.

6, 12, 13.
Saturday, Sunday
"Theme Park: Past, Present, and Future of Downtown Los Angeles.
Driving and walking tour comparing downtown LA to Disneyland with Charles Phoenix. Union Station, 800 N. Alameda St., LA; 12:30PM or 5:30PM, $90; res. req. 323.689.8876. godubesamerica.com.

7. Monday
Michael Maltzan.

8. Tuesday
Dress and identity in Asia.

9. Wednesday
High Performance Interiors.

9. Wednesday
Where Are We on the Road to Sustainability?

9. Wednesday
Fine Living: Creating the Loft Life.

9. Wednesday
Catalytic Formation.

9-10, 10-11, 10-11-12.
Wednesday-Thursday-Friday
NeoCon West.
Design event showcasing commercial and residential innovations on the West Coast. NeoCon West; LA Mart, 1933 S. Broadway, LA; 8-9:30PM. 800.657.6278. merchandisemart.com.

10. Thursday
An LA Story.
Lecture with Metropolitan editor-in-chief Susan Szenasy and designers Greg Lynn and Alex McDowell. NeoCon West; LA Mart, 1933 S. Broadway, LA; 12-1PM. 800.657.6278. merchandisemart.com.

10. Thursday
California Institute of the Arts in Valencia.
Walking tour of CalArts. Neighborhood Place Project; CalArts, 274 McLean, Valencia; 1-4PM, $10. 626.967.3332.

10. Thursday
Prefab Green.

10. Thursday
Santa Monica Design District Spring Event.
Reception in showroom of the Santa Monica Design District. NeoCon West; Santa Monica; 7-10PM. 800.657.6278. merchandisemart.com.

10. Thursday
Michael Riedijk.

10. Thursday
Lodges.

11-13. Friday-Sunday
Craftsman-Spanish Revival Weekend.
Historic home celebration with tours, lectures, and vendors. Save Our Heritage Organization; Los Angeles; 619.297.7511. sohac.org.

12. Saturday
University of Southern California.

12. Saturday
The Viennese Avant-Garde: 1900-1940.
Class with SAH/SCC Life Member Eleanor Schroder Schepe. UCLA Extension, Westwood; 10AM-1PM; $60-75; res. req. 310.825.9971. uclaextension.org.

12. Saturday
Greene and Greene.
The Art of Architecture.
Screening of a film about the lives and careers of Charles and Henry Greene. LACMA, 5885 Wilshire Blvd., LA; 2PM. 323.857.6287. lacma.org.

12. Saturday
Joseph Rosa.
Lecture with author and SFMOMA architecture curator Joseph Rosa. Palm Springs Desert Museum, 101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs; 6PM; $5-10; res. req. 760.325.4499. psmuseum.org.

14. Monday
Yloc (Heterotopic Fragments).
Lecture with Paris-based R & S principals Francois Roche and Stephanie Lavaux. SCI-Arc, 350 Merrick St., LA; 7PM. 213.613.2200. sciarc.edu.

15, Tuesday
Gavin Town Center.
Tour of Via, including the city's history museum. Neighborhood Place Project; Heritage House, 300 N. Valencia Place, Covina; 10-11AM, $10. 626.967.3332.

15. Tuesday
Steve Chase's Legacy.

16. Wednesday
Lawsuits of the Future.

19, Saturday
Claremont Colleges.
Walking Tour. Tour of the six Claremont Colleges. Claremont; 10AM-1PM; $10. 626.441.6333. padenaheritage.org.

19, Saturday
East Arroyo Neighborhood.
Tour of Pasadena's East Arroyo Neighborhood. Neighborhood Place Project, Project Blvd. and La Mesa Ave.; Pasadena; 1-4PM; $10. 626.242.3847.

19-20, Saturday-Sunday
Modern Times.
Show and sale with work from the 1920s to 1960s. Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo Rd., Glendale; 11AM-6PM Saturday; 11AM-4PM Sunday; 8-10. 621.455.2894. moderntimesla.com.

20, Sunday
Pasadena Modern Home Tour.
Tour of six homes featuring modern architecture history; Pasadena, Pasadena; 9AM-4PM; $30-40; res. req. 626.441.6333. padenaheritage.org.

20, Sunday
Emily Zaiden.
Lecture on Arts and Crafts movement with LACMA Decorative Arts Department. SCI-Arc, 350 Merrick St., LA; 7PM. 213.613.2200. sciarc.edu.

23, Wednesday
The City of Normality: Utopian Considerations on Urban Planning and Three Projects.

29, Tuesday
Architecture and Identity in the Southern Pacific.
Lecture with art history professor Ian Lochhead. The Gamble House; Neighborhood Church, 2 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena; 7:30PM; $15-20. 626.793.3334. gamblehouse.org.

30, Wednesday
Eats Meets Wots.

30-31, Wednesday-Thursday
Celebrating 30 Years of Design Excellence.

SAH/SCC EVEN.
19, Saturday
Authors on Architecture.
Lecture and book signing with author Alan Hess. See Page 1 for details.
1. Friday
Cohen-Hray House.
Tour of an 1884 Stick-Eastlake Villa.
Berkeley Architectural Heritage.
Association, Fruitvale District, Oakland.
11AM; $15; res. req. 510.641.2242.
berkeleyheritage.com.

2. Saturday
Village Walking Tour.
Tour of downtown Village area of
Claremont. Claremont Heritage.
Cohen-Bray House.
Claremont; 10AM; $5; res. req.
995.621.8848.

2. Saturday
Art Deco in America.
Lecture with SAH/SCC Life Member
Eleanor Schrader Schapa.
UCLA Extension, Westwood.
OAAM-PM; $65-75; res. req. 310.825.9971.
uclecture.org.

3. Sunday
Moveable Musical Feast.
Performance at Le Petit Trianon with
Carrico Stravagante. The Da Camera
Performance at Le Petit Trianon with
Palm Springs Desert Museum; 6PM.
Palm Springs Desert Museum; 6-8PM.
$15; res. req. 760.325.4490.
psmuseum.org.

10. Sunday
Hampton Fanusier Event.
Tour of the University Art Museum
Hampton Collection with lecture by
photographer Tina Barney.
UCLA University Art Museum, 1250
Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach.
562.965.5761. csudh.edu/uam.

11. Monday
Dan Neil.
Lecture with Los Angeles Times auto
critic Dan Neil. UCLA Department of
Architecture and Urban Design.
1302 Perforff Hall, Los Angeles; 6:30PM.
310.625.8757. ucla.edu.

12. Tuesday
Moveable Musical Feast.
Performance at Hollywood's Roosevelt
Hotel (Fisher, Lake and Traver, 1927).
The Da Camera Society, LA; lecture-
7:15PM, concert-8PM; $39-44; res. req.
213.477.2929, dacamera.org.

12. Tuesday
What Did They Hear?
The Musical Landscape of the
Early 20th Century.
Lecture with University of North
Carolina music professor Charles
McKnight. The Gamble House; Neighborhood Church, 2 Westminster
Place, Pasadena; 7:30PM; $15-20.
626.793.3334.
gamblehouse.org.

14. Thursday
House Tour Lecture.
Lecture in conjunction with the house
tour "Panoramic Hill—Living With
Nature." Berkeley Architectural
Heritage Association, Berkeley.
7:30PM; $10. 510.941.2342.
berkeleyheritage.com.

15. Friday
Simona Brick Company.
Discussion with authors Alejandro
Morales and William Devrell, and
historian Raymond Ramirez.
City of Commerce Public Library; 6-8PM.
323.722.6660, ext. 2204.
ci.commerce.ca.us/library.asp.

15. Friday
Hensman Reception.
Opening night reception in a Hensman-
designed home. AIA/Foohish, USC.
Friends of the Gamble House; 7:30PM.
310.625.3334, ext. 52.
gamblehouse.org.

16. Saturday
Hensman Tour.
Tour of six Donald Hensman homes in
Pasadena, Altadena, and Linda Vista.
AIA/Foohish, USC.
Friends of the Gamble House; 10AM-4PM.
res. req. 626.793.3334, ext. 52.
gamblehouse.org.

17. Sunday
Moveable Musical Feast.
Performance at the First Congregational
Church of Los Angeles (Allison and
Allison, 1932). The Da Camera Society,
LA; lecture-11:45AM, concert-4PM; $35-45; res. req. 213.477.2929,
dacamera.org.

19. Saturday
Olvera Street Anniversary.
Celebration of the 75th anniversary of
Olvera Street. El Pueblo Historic
Monument; 764 N. Main St., LA.
10AM-PM; $11.45-9769.

21-24, Thursday-Sunday
Society for California Archaeology.
Annual meeting. Society for California
Archaeology; Hyatt Regency,
Sacramento; res. req. 530.858.5733.
scahome.org.

23, Saturday
Michael Maltzan.
Lecture with Los Angeles-based
architect Michael Maltzan. Palm
Springs Desert Museum, 71015.
Palm Springs; 10AM.
213.485.9769.

24, Sunday
Moveable Musical Feast.
Performance at the Museum of Latin
American Art (Manuel Rosen, 2000).
The Da Camera Society, Long Beach;
4PM; $35-42; res. req. 213.477.2929,
dacamera.org.

SAH/SCC EVENT
30, Sunday
Modern Patrons.
Lecture and tour of Charles Moore
townhouse. See Page 3 for details.
Modern Patrons:
Moore in Los Angeles

AH/SCC Lecture and Tour:
saturday, April 30th

Saturday, April 30th, from 2PM to 4PM, Modern Patrons Visit the 1977 Charles Moore Triplex in West Los Angeles. This is home to SAH/SCC Advisory Board Member Claire Rogger. Tickets for this event are $10 and are reserved for SAH/SCC Patron and Life members. The event will be made available to regular membership in a first-come, first-served basis, should space become available. See back page for order form.

Charles Moore’s Townhouses

In 1976, three UCLA professors were renting apartments in Westwood and wondering how they could afford to buy a house near campus in a booming real estate market on a meager professor's salary. Sadly, they could not.

Then Claire Rogger and her husband Hans (Professor of Russian History) met Charles W. Moore, FAIA, Chair of the UCLA Department of Architecture and a recent transplant to CA from Yale. Charles was already famous for creating homes for himself and friends, Al Hofflander (UCLA professor of Economics) and his wife Betty, and Hans couldn't afford it. And neither could Charles. Then, Claire suggested to Charles that they “do” something together. Hans invited his friends, Al Hofflander (UCLA professor of Economics) and his wife Betty, to join Claire and himself, with Charles as the architect, to create three custom townhouses on one lot.

It was a bold endeavor. Could Charles create three distinct, individual residences customized to three different clients (one being himself) and bring it together into a single, cohesive architectural statement? He could, and he did. He designed and built the three-townhouse cluster, in association with Richard Chylinski, reaching completion in December 1977. Now, more than 25 years later, the Selby Avenue Townhouses remain post-modern classics rarely equaled in Los Angeles.

The trio of dwellings nestles into a steeply sloping hillside, within walking distance of UCLA. It is an urban oasis, tucked into a row of plain vanilla boxes. If you didn’t know where it was, you could drive right by and miss the surprise.

Each house was designed to fit the individual needs of its owners, while coming together to form what appears to be a single large residence. Charles solved the typical multi-family need for off-street parking with a large, semi-covered courtyard that the building bridges over. But the owners ultimately decided it was a perfect pedestrian plaza, and too charming to park in. It remains a shared entry courtyard with plants and vines framing the entry to each unit. The townhouses themselves are light-filled spatial puzzles that continue to surprise and delight their owners on a daily basis. All three units manage to have exposure on three sides with through-ventilation, private outdoor patios and a complex juxtaposition of spaces that defies description. The quality of light that enters through the three sides and the multi-faceted roof creates patterns that delight and inspire.

Beyond the context of the neighborhood, each design is imbued with Charles’ dry wit and coy sense of humor. The curved pediment in his town-house is an alter, an ecclesiastic reference to the Mormon Temple directly across the street. The fan-shaped fenestration, which he called “Falling Windows,” implies movement and was a casual reference to Frank Lloyd Wright’s masterpiece.

Claire Rogger wistfully remembers Charles as “charming, witty, and delightful.” She and Hans love the home. “It is a magical place, and a blissful place to live.”

New Board Member

SAH/SCC welcomes Adam Wheeler as its newest board member. Adam is design principal at AW Arc, a Los Angeles-based design firm that creates residential and commercial environments. Prior to launching AW Arc in 2003, Adam worked with architect Frank Gehry for six years. In 2001, he designed the exhibition installation “The Furniture of R.M. Schindler” for the MAK Center. Educated in Political Science at UCLA for his undergraduate, Adam continued on at UCLA to receive his graduate degree in architecture.

Harris in Santa Monica Canyon

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 14th, 2-5PM, for a lecture and tour of two houses by Harwell Hamilton Harris. Both houses have been sensitively restored, with minor and appropriate alterations, and show how Harris’ houses adapt to contemporary living nearly 70 years after their creation. More detailed information will be in the next issue of SAH/SCC News. The cost for this event is $35 for SAH/SCC members, and $45 for non-members. Because Harris’ houses are best experienced in a small group, ticket availability is very limited. Reserve your spot now with the order form on the back page.

Architecture Tours LA

by Laura Massino Smith.

If you haven't taken one of Laura Massino Smith’s tours of Los Angeles yet, you can take her with you in the form of this series of guidebooks sized to fit in your car’s glove compartment or seat pocket. Smith, an SAH/SCC Patron Member, offers separate 64-page books for areas of Downtown, Silver Lake, Hollywood, and West Hollywood/Beverly Hills. Each book begins with an introduction to the area, then proceeds with several mapped-out, self-guided driving tours. Tours are organized to inform and delight, pointing out architectural spots—historic, contemporary, and kitsch—with color photos (taken from street view) and historic notes. Each guidebook ends with an index of the noted architects and bibliography for further reading.

Schiffer Publishing; soft cover; 64 pages; $9.95 each.
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.

### Edward A. Killingsworth: Setting a Modern Standard
- 20-page booklet on Killingsworth's Long Beach work, featuring photos by Julius Shulman and Marvin Rand
- $9 each

### Rodney Walker: The Ojai Years
- Trifold black-and-white brochure featuring Walker's important residences in Ojai, with pictures and article by historian David Mason
- $10 each

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

### Sotano: Man of Steel
- 12-page illustrated booklet with article by Neil Jackson
- $10 each

### Palm Springs Postcards
- Seven postcards of homes visited on "Shelter Under the Sun" Tour, photographed by John Ellis
- $10 each

### Avenel Homes
- Two-told, two-color brochure from "Am on Avenel" Tour
- $2 each

### The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura
- 20-page guide
- $10 each

### Modernism For the Masses
- Three-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floorplans of Eichler homes visited on the tour to Orange County
- $10 each

### Cool Pools
- Booklet and cassette tape from "Reflections on Water Cool Pools Along Sunset Boulevard"
- $10 each

### Sarasota: 2B-page, full-color brochure of works by Sarasota school architects from "On Parallel Lines: The Sarasota Modern Movement 1948-1966"
- $10 each

### Reconsidering Lloyd Wright
- 21-page, four-color booklet from "Reconsidering Lloyd Wright House Tour"
- $10 each

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**SAH/SCC Event:**

- **Modern Patrons: Moore** — April 30th
- __________ patron member ticket(s) at $10 each = __________
- __________ non-member ticket(s) at $35 each = __________

- **Hamilton Harwell Harris** — May 14th
- __________ member ticket(s) at $35 each = __________
- __________ non-member ticket(s) at $45 each = __________

**SAH/SCC Membership Benefits:**

- Subscription to bi-monthly SAH/SCC News
- Member prices for SAH/SCC events
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### SOHO's Craftsman & Spanish Revival Weekend

**Show & Sale**
- March 11-13, 2005
- i-47 1-4th Street
- Downtown San Diego
- A benefit for Save Our Heritage Organisation

**Architectural Tours & Lectures**
- Presented by Save Our Heritage Organisation
- Vendors inquire at (619) 297-9327
- www.saveourheritage.org

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