Modern Patrons: Georgescu in Beverly Hills

SAH/SCC Tour and Talk
Saturday, March 7th

SAH/SCC's Modern Patrons program is pleased to present a very special opportunity to spend the afternoon of March 7th, 4-7PM, in the Pier Pasinetti Residence, designed by Romanian architect Haralamb Georgescu for the celebrated Italian writer. This event is reserved for Patron and Life Members on a first-come first-served basis. Tickets are $25 per person; reservations will be limited and the event will only be opened up to the regular membership should space be available.

Recently featured in the home section of the January 17th edition of the Los Angeles Times, the 1957 Pasinetti house (first published in Arts & Architecture in January 1959) is a fantastic story of a remarkable house slated for demolition—only to be saved by unusual circumstances and the foresight of a unique individual leading to its ultimate rebirth through a superb rehabilitation.

Haralamb (Bubi) Georgescu (1908-1977) had established a 15-year career in Romania from 1933 to 1947 and was at one time the Chief Architect to the City of Bucharest. He designed office buildings, apartment blocks, hotels, department stores, restaurants, nightclubs, the King's Summer Palace, the Romanian Pavilion at Leipzig Fair, and the Aro Theatre, which is considered his most important work and remains a landmark of Bucharest today.

In 1947, Georgescu and his new bride stowed away on a cargo ship bound for Argentina to escape arrest by the Communists for refusing to join the party. En route he was stranded in New York City. He eventually came to Los Angeles in 1951 and briefly worked in the offices of Paul Lazlo and Kenneth Lind.

In 1957, he partnered with architect James Larson and undertook the commission to design the residence for his good friend Pier Pasinetti, a journalist and UCLA professor, who lived in the house until his death in 2008. Georgescu had an active and successful career in America and in 2008 his archives were acquired by the Getty Research Institute.

Now in the process of being designated a Cultural Historic Landmark, and probably Georgescu's most important residential work, the Pasinetti house is a simple modern design for an affirmed bachelor on a dramatic hillside setting. Our late afternoon reception (to capture the changing light) will include learning about the house from real estate developer Tim Braseth, the owner whose vision changed its fate, and Aaron Torrence of Design + Construction, the project architect who undertook the effort to revitalize this spectacular piece of residential architecture. We may even have the opportunity to learn more about the writer Pasinetti from one of his close colleagues.

See order form on Back Page.
In February, I was honored to be asked to speak at the Palm Springs Art Museum’s Architecture and Design Council Symposium, “Possessed: The Obsession of Ownership.” As an Executive Board Member of SAH/SCC for more than a decade, I’ve observed the “rediscovery” of modern architecture. I have witnessed the transition from original owners to a new generation, the resurrection and restoration of significant homes that were all but lost, and the trend toward “collecting” modern architecture by individuals and institutions.

I believe that the educational programs of SAH/SCC have contributed to a heightened awareness and appreciation of modern architecture both in our region and nationwide. Our travel tours to Boston, Sarasota, and Phoenix increased the local communities’ appreciation for the significant architecture in their own backyards. Local homeowners were excited to think that if we were coming all the way from California to see this work, it must be important.

Watching the Sarasota community rediscover its significant modern structures was especially rewarding. The first day of SAH/SCC touring in 2007 ended at the newly restored Deering Residence (1961) by Paul Rudolph. One of Rudolph’s most dynamic compositions, the Deering Residence glowed in the Gulf twilight as we celebrated the end to an inspiring day and experienced the rebirth of a residential masterpiece.

So it came as quite a shock this week to learn that since our visit, a new 10,000-square-foot McMansion has replaced the Deering Residence.

Frankly, I’ve struggled with this concept of “collecting” modern architecture. I fear that the objectification of these homes can undermine their underlying promise by stripping these residences of human habitation, and turning them into “museum homes,” rarely used and often neglected. From Le Corbusier to Richard Neutra and beyond, modern architecture intended to play an important role toward enhancing the day-to-day quality of life for its occupants. What makes modern architecture distinctive from modern art is the all-encompassing experiential component: good modern architecture transforms ordinary daily tasks into extraordinary and stimulating given this change. I’ve loved the canvas (a.k.a. beachfront land) and a steady stream of people with more money than taste.

And so it seems we need our “collectors” of modern architecture: from the elite, to the institutions, to the most important group of them all—those individuals with modest means but extraordinary vision. I realize now what wasn’t so evident then: A new generation of modern architecture has now been lost in time.

Sian Winship

Modern Patrons: Neutra in Shoshone

SAH/SCC Tour and Talk
Saturday, March 21st

Modern Patrons: Neutra in Shoshone

SAH/SCC’s exclusive SAH/SCC architectural events and tours.

Tour and Event Information: 1.800.972.4722; sahssc-info@sahssc.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, Hon. AIA/ALA
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Please send all ad materials, notices of events, and news to the attention of the editor:

Julie D. Taylor, Editor

SAH/SCC News
P.O. Box 56478
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

Volunteer Opportunities Still Available

Anyone interested in architectural history or preservation should attend this academic conference to learn about current scholarly presentations during sessions, greeting and directing guests, and registering attendees. For more information, see the conference brochure at www.sah.org, or contact volunteer coordinator Merry Ovnick at merry.ovnick@csun.edu or 818.363.9326. See you at the conference!

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Postcard From Havana: ¡Viva Moruzzi!

An oddly balmy winter’s afternoon in Santa Monica turned positively tropical during historian Peter Moruzzi’s presentation on Havana’s magnificent modern architectural heritage. The January 24th SAH/SCC Authors on Architecture event brought a full house to the Santa Monica Public Library’s King Auditorium. Peter’s slide presentation was drawn from his recent book Havana Before Castro: When Cuba Was a Tropical Nightclub, Modernism found a remarkably receptive audience for several decades before the 1959 revolution, and even during the first few years under Castro. A highlight of the presentation was Peter’s now-and-then photos showing just how intact many of these modern landmarks remain today. While some are a bit worse for wear due to neglect and the salt air, a few—especially the amazing Havana Riviera, built by Miami-based Igor Polevitsky in 1957 for mobster Meyer Lansky—are peerless time capsules of mid-century design. Marks remain today. While some are a bit worse for wear due to neglect and the salt air, a few—especially the amazing Havana Riviera, built by Miami-based Igor Polevitsky in 1957 for mobster Meyer Lansky—are peerless time capsules of mid-century design. While some are a bit worse for wear due to neglect and the salt air, a few—especially the amazing Havana Riviera, built by Miami-based Igor Polevitsky in 1957 for mobster Meyer Lansky—are peerless time capsules of mid-century design.

SAH National is Coming to Town!

The national organization of the Society of Architectural Historians is having its 62nd Annual Meeting, April 1-5, in Pasadena. There are many tours of local landmarks, along with paper presentations, and special events, several with our SAH/SCC Executive and Advisory Board Members. There are also opportunities for volunteering at the meeting (see Page 2 for details). Selected programs include:

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Colcord—Home

by Bret Parsons

Bret Parsons—a long-time communicator and marketer in real estate and interior design—has turned his passion for the estate homes of Gordon R. Colcord (1930-1984) into an equally passionate book, Colcord, known as “Hollywood’s Society Architect,” created more than 300 estates and 100 remodels between 1924 and 1984. Most featured in the book are in the Beverly Hills, Bel-Air, and Pacific Palisades areas. Parsons—who culled the Colcord archives and interviewed hundreds of homeowners—takes the reader on a chronological journey through the architect’s various styles, with a detailed analysis of his noted “Country Colonial” style. Each of the homes is chronicled with archival photos along with present-day views (shot by Mary F. Nitholz), as well as plans and elevations. Parsons also traced each home’s provenance, which makes for fascinating reading, and proves that Colcord’s homes stand the test of time for Hollywood’s society of venerated (prominent attorneys, corporate titans, and East Coast women of means) and today (Bob Newhart, Nicolas Cage, Bernie Brillstein).

Gregory Ain: The Modern Home as Social Commentary

by Anthony Denzer

Past SAH/SCC President Tony Denzer has produced his magnum opus on Gregory Ain, whose Avalon Homes were the subject of a delightful tour some years back. Denzer puts Ain in context of Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, then shows his departure toward a decidedly political aesthetic toward Modern architecture. Chronicling Ain’s work in prefabrication—for which he won a Guggenheim Fellowship—the book continues through the architect’s work with Charles and Ray Eames, and then back into his own practice in time for the post-war building boom. Ain’s work for both common and “arccommon” people, as he noted them, is beautifully illustrated in construction and project photographs, drawings, collate, and archival photos of Ain and his many collaborators and colleagues. Denzer—who is presently a professor at the University of Wyoming—ends with an assessment of Ain’s prescient legacy. Those of us who knew Tony’s deliberate dedication will not be surprised by the depth of knowledge and sentiment in this book. Noted architectural historian Thomas S. Hines, who fashions the introduction states, “In Denzer’s skillful hands, Gregory Ain finally has gotten his due.” Well done, Tony!

Postcard From Havana: ¡Viva Moruzzi!

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SAH/SCC is grateful to Peter Moruzzi for taking us to Havana, if only for an hour. Thanks also to the Santa Monica Public Library for hosting the first of what we hope are many successful educational programs at its beautiful facility. Many library patrons who were unfamiliar with SAH/SCC mingled with our members at this free event and we hope to see them again in the future.

Jay Platt
SAH/SCC order form

fill out form below and send to:
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SAH/SCC Event:

Modern Patrons—March 7th
_____ Patron/Life member ticket(s) at $25 each = $_____

Modern Patrons—March 21st
_____ Patron/Life member ticket(s) at $10 each = $_____

SAH/SCC Membership Benefits:
Subscription to bi-monthly SAH/SCC News
Member prices for SAH/SCC events
Free Members’ Celebration

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SAH/SCC Publications

Paul Tay, Architect: 4’x8’ color brochure featuring five modern ranch-style homes in Long Beach _______ at $3 each

Architecture: Inside and Outside: 5’x5’ folded color brochure featuring Santa Barbara’s Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, and Val Verde _______ at $3 each

Out of the Shadow: 24-page, two-color brochure from Phoenix travel tour featuring the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Al Beadle, Blaine Drake, Paolo Soleri, Edward B. Sawyer, Bennie Gonzales, and Will Bruder _______ at $12 each

A Block in Glendale: pocket-size fandeck of cards featuring five diverse properties—including a Paul Williams residence—plus historical background information on the Broomfield Heights subdivision _______ at $3 each

Rodney Walker’s 30 90: 12-page brochure exploring the architect’s usage of the three-foot module and features nine homes on five sites _______ at $8 each

Edward Killingsworth: Setting a Modern Standard: 20-page, black-and-white brochure featuring seven Long Beach houses and an article by the architect _______ at $8 each

Space and Learning: eight-page, four-color brochure on the historical and contemporary legacy of LA school architecture featuring projects by Richard Neutra, Thom Mayne, Pia Clementi Hale Studios, and others _______ at $8 each

Rodney Walker: The Ojai Years: tri-fold, black-and-white brochure featuring Walker’s important residences in Ojai, with pictures and article by historian David Mason _______ at $5 each

Kessling Homes: bi-fold, two-color brochure from the “Kessling Modern Structures” tour _______ at $2 each

The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura: 20-page guide from Ventura tour _______ at $10 each

Modernism for the Masses: tri-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floor plans of Eichler homes visited on the Orange County tour _______ at $10 each

Reconsidering Lloyd Wright: 21-page, four-color booklet from “Reconsidering Lloyd Wright” house tour _______ at $10 each

Union Station and MTA Transit Center: bi-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos _______ at $2 each

David Gebhard Review: essays on the Works Project Administration by Robert W. Winter, Orville O. Clarke, Jr., and Mals March-Mugel _______ at $5 each

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Questions: Call 800.9SAHSCC.
SAH/SCC EVENT

7. Saturday

Modern Patrons: Georgescu
Program at the Harlandale Georgescu Patents Residence. See Page 1 for details.

9. Monday

Architectural Networks:

10. The Architectural League of New York:
Screening of the German movie from 1990, directed by Peter Kahren. Goethe Institute/LACMA, Goethe Institute, 5750 Wilshire Blvd., LA; 7PM. 323.525.3388. goethe.de/en/los/los/er/index.htm.

11. Wednesday

Green to the Street:
The Future of Parking Spaces.
Discussion moderated by LA Times architecture critic Christopher Hawthorne with Daniel Birderman, Kathleen Bullard, Lewis MacAdams, Barry Sanders, and Doug Suijman. Library Foundation of Los Angeles, LA Central Library; 7PM; res. req. 213.228.7025. aclu.org.

12. Thursday

The Archaeological Discoveries at Sagalassos:
Discussion with Belgian professor of archaeology Marc Waelkens. Getty Villa, Malibu; 7:30PM; res. req. 310.460.7300. getty.edu.

12-15, Thursday-Sunday

Stars of Design 2009:

14. Saturday

City of the Seekers: LA's Unique Spiritual Legacy.
Tour of five historic sites related to early 20th-century LA spiritual organizations in LA, LA Conservancy; 10AM-4PM; $10-30; res req. 213.623.2489. laconservancy.org.

15. Sunday

Taxco Today: Tradition and Innovation.

18. Wednesday

The Latest and the Latest.
Lecture by architect and SCI-Arc director Eric Owen Moss. SCI-Arc, 960 E. 3rd St., LA; 7PM. 310.263.2200. sciarc.edu.

19. Thursday

A Stellar Remodel of a Los Angeles Landmark.
Discussion on the remodel of Griffith Observatory with HLB Lighting Design’s John K. Dunn. Designers Lighting Forum, product display-6PM, program-7PM; res. req. 310.525.0105. dfia.org.

21. Saturday

German-American Artistic Exchange During the Cold War.
Symposium on cultural exchange between the United States and Germany between 1945 and 1989. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., LA; 10AM-4PM; res req. 310.460.7300. getty.edu.

25, Wednesday

Innovative Transit Solutions for Los Angeles.
Public announcement of open ideas competition winners and jury discussion. SCI-Arc; 960 E. 3rd St., LA; announcement-3PM, reception-4PM. 213.613.2200. sciarc.edu.

Calendar information is supplied to SAH/SCC by the sponsoring organizations and is correct as of press time. SAH/SCC suggests you contact the sponsors prior to attending any event.
26, Thursday
The Business of Architecture.

26, Thursday
The Influence of the Design Blogger.
Panel discussion with Decorati and design bloggers including Andrew Flesch. Westweek 2009; Pacific Design Center, 8887 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; 2-3PM. 310.657.0800. pacificdesigncenter.com.

26, Thursday
Sustainable European Kitchen Design.

26, Thursday
AIA/LA 2009 Student: SHIFT Exhibit.

26, Thursday
Japanese Gardens in America.
Presentation by landscape architect Ron Herman. CSU Long Beach; Hilton Hotel, 701 W. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; 7:30PM. $20-50; res. req. 562.985.2169. csulb.edu.

27, Friday
Opinion Makers Shaping the City.

27, Friday
From Concept to Fabrication: Building Non-Cantilever Structural Systems.
Faculty talk by Hong Kong architect and Form and Structure principal Roberts Davallo. SCI-Arc, 960 E. 3rd St., LA; 1PM. 213.613.2200. sciarc.edu.

28, Saturday
PS Architecture 101: Donald Wexler.
Class taught by Bill Batler on architect Donald Wexler’s impact on the local community, followed by a visit to a Wexler-designed building. Palm Springs Art Museum; 10AM-1PM; $125. 760.322.4490. psmuseum.org.

28, Saturday
AIA/LA 2009 Annual Meeting.
Annual conference for the Society of Architectural Historians. SASH/Pasadena; 8:30-4:30PM, reception-5:30-8:30PM; $5 per garden. 888.842.2442. opendaysprogram.org.

28-29, Monday-Tuesday
Identification and Evaluation of Mid-20th Century Buildings.
Seminar on how post-World War II structures fit into today and tomorrow’s historic preservation patterns. National Preservation Institute, Sacramento; $175-375; res. req. 703.765.0100. rpi.org.

30-May 2
Thursday-Saturday
AIA annual national convention. American Institute of Architects; Misconce Center, 747 Howard St., San Francisco; $25-875; res. req. 888.842.2442. opendaysprogram.org.

1, Wednesday
Release Early, Often, and With Rap Music.
Lecture by media producer Evan Roth, also known as Rafa. SCI-Arc, 960 E. 3rd St., LA; 7PM. 213.613.2200. sciarc.edu.

1-5, Wednesday-Sunday
SAH/SCC suggests you contact the sponsors prior to attending any event.

15, Wednesday
Sunlight is Life! The Path Toward a Sustainable Future.
Lecture by Solar Design Associates founder and president Steven J. Strong. USC School of Architecture; Harris Hall, University Park Campus; 6PM. 213.740.2723. arch.usc.edu.

16-19, Thursday-Sunday

18, Saturday
Doheny Soiree.
Shanghai Quartet plays at the Doheny Mansion (Hunt and Eisen, 1899). LA Camera Society; talk-7:45PM, concert-8PM. $66-80; res. req. 213.477.2929. dacamera.org.

21, Tuesday
Krysztof Wodiczko.
Lecture by artist Krysztof Wodiczko, known for his large scale slide and video projections on architectural facades and monuments. UCLA Design/Media Arts; Broad Art Center, 6PM. 310.825.9007. dma.ucla.edu.

22, Wednesday
...featuring realities unlimited.
Lecture by Berlin-based architects and brothers Tim and Jan Edler. USC School of Architecture; Harris Hall, University Park Campus; 6PM. 213.740.2723. arch.usc.edu.

23, Thursday
Sol Madridejos.

23, Thursday

24, Friday
Opinion Makers Shaping the City.

25, Saturday
PS Architecture 101: E. Stewart Williams.
Class taught by Palm Springs Museum associate curator Sidney Williams on architect E. Stewart Williams’ impact on the local community, followed by a visit to a Williams-designed building. Palm Springs Art Museum; 10AM-1PM; $25. 760.322.4490. psmuseum.org.

25, Saturday

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Borrego Modern III.
Tour of architecturally and historically significant mid-century homes in Borrego Springs. SDHIO SoHo Design; Borrego Springs Desert Club, tour; 11AM-4PM; reception-6:30-8:30PM; $20-50. 619.297.5151. borregomodem.com.

26, Sunday
Altadena Open Day.
Tour of six gardens in Altadena. The Garden Conservancy; 9AM-5PM; $5 per garden. 888.842.2442. opendaysprogram.org.

27-28, Monday-Tuesday
The Culture of Leisure: Rethinking the California Dream.

30-May 2
Thursday-Saturday

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Opinion Makers Shaping the City.
Breakfast featuring author and op-ed writer Joel Kotkin. Brandow & Johnston; AIA/LA; 9-9:30AM; $15-30;

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