Authors on Architecture: Dingbat 2.0

SAH/SCC Panel Discussion & Book Signing
Saturday, March 26, 2016, 2-4PM

SAH/SCC and the Santa Monica Public Library (Moore Ruble Yudell, 2006) are co-hosting an event that will explore one of the most misunderstood architectural phenomena in Los Angeles—the dingbat apartment.

Dingbat 2.0: The Iconic Los Angeles Apartment as Projection of a Metropolis (DoppelHouse Press, 2016) is the first critical study of the dingbat apartment, the most ubiquitous and mundane building type in Los Angeles. The dingbat grew out of Los Angeles’s rapid postwar expansion period, and for more than half a century has been vilified, praised, studied, and often misunderstood—as much for being ugly and ordinary as for being innovative, iconoclastic, and distinctly “LA.” As a housing type, the dingbat has enabled the sprawl for which Los Angeles is infamous, while simultaneously creating a consistency of urban density achieved by few other 20th-century cities.

This event will feature a moderated panel discussion with several of the book’s contributing authors and photographers, including the book’s editors, Thurman Grant and Joshua G. Stein, who will be joined by architectural historian Steven Treffers and architect Barbara Bestor, AIA.

Books will also be available for sale at the close of the program.

Dingbat 2.0—Saturday, March 26, 2016; 2-4PM; Santa Monica Central Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica; free; seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis; 310.458.8600.
SAH/SCC President’s Letter

It is time for the National SAH Conference, and this year it is in our own backyard! From April 6th to 10th, the nation’s finest architectural historians will converge in Pasadena to discuss everything from the “Architecture of Early Modern Catholicism” to “Coded Architecture and the Paradoxes of Control.”

Too academic for you? Try the session on “Reappraising California Counterculture” or “Food and Architecture.” See the full schedule of programming at http://www.sah.org.

A great way to experience the conference is to volunteer. SAH National needs people to help with everything from stuffing conference packets to staffing the registration desk, assisting with one of 42 paper sessions, checking-in tour-goers and session participants, or even working on the Saturday morning Los Angeles Seminar on “Surveying L.A.: Past, Present, Future,” presented by SAH/SCC Life Member Trudi Sandmeier. Commitments range in time from 2-3½ to 7-¾ hours. If you are free on Saturday or Sunday, you might consider assisting with one of the bus tours—you'll get to tag along for free! Use this link to sign up to be a volunteer: www.volunteersignup.org/XBQKL.

Speaking of tours, SAH/SCC will be conducting three of them. A reprise of my Bakersfield: Masters of Modernism tour will be featured, along with Jay Platt’s excellent Culver City tour of Eric Owen Moss: Conjunctive Points, as well as his Brand Library Restoration tour and panel discussion. Other weekend tours focus on the work of architects Myron Hunt, John Lautner, FAIA, Paul Revere Williams, FAIA, RM Schindler, and AIA National Gold Medalist Richard Neutra, FAIA, and neighborhoods and cities of Irvine, Chinatown, Pasadena, Boyle Heights, Frogtown, and Claremont.

Several SAH/SCC members are on panels and chairing sessions: Emily Bills presents “Imagining a Telephoned City: Bell Telephone Ads and the LA House” and Christine O’Hara presents “LA Parkways: An Ecological Study of Politics and Culture” during the session on “LA Infrastructure: Design, Aesthetics, Publics.” Life Member Michael Gibson’s paper on “Sacred Spaces for the Suburbs: Catholic Architecture in Postwar LA” is part of “Pushing the Envelope: American Mid-Century Sacred Architecture.” Life Member Volker M. Welter chairs the session “Styles, Revival Styles, California Styles.”

Already registered for the conference or plan on attending? Volunteers who complete more than six hours of volunteering are eligible to receive a 50% refund on their conference registration fee.

This will be the final conference event for SAH National President Ken Breisch, a Life Member and Advisory Board Member of SAH/SCC. So, please come out and support him this April in Pasadena.

—Sian Winship

Tour and Event Information:
1.800.972.4722
info@sahsc.org

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Brand Library (Nathaniel Dryden, 1904; Raymond Jones, 1956; Gruen Associates and Offenhauser/Mekel Architects, 2014). Photo: Nico Marques/Photekt

SAH National President Ken Breisch. Photo: University of Southern California

Pterodactyl (2015) at Conjunctive Points by Eric Owen Moss, FAIA. Photo: Tom Bannor
Authors on Architecture: Welch on Rice
SAH/SCC Lecture & Book Signing
Sunday, April 17, 2016, 2-4PM, Pasadena

Architect to some of the nation’s wealthiest achievers in the first half of the 20th century, Lilian Rice has posthumously become a controversial figure. A woman in a man’s world, she was given an unprecedented opportunity in 1923, when her employer asked her to oversee the design of Rancho Santa Fe, a master-planned community catering to the rich and famous.

In recent years, critics have depicted her as deceptive, leading her clients in Rancho Santa Fe to believe she was a licensed architect to gain their trust and lucrative commissions. Did Rice misrepresent herself on her way to architectural fame, or is she being unfairly labeled to discredit and devalue the work? Author Diane Welch’s new book, Lilian Rice: Master Architect (Schiffer, 2015), uncovers the truth about the obscure architect, introduces her clients, which include some of Hollywood’s brightest stars, and tells of the exciting times in which she lived.

Join SAH/SCC in the Donald R. Wright Auditorium at the Pasadena Central Library (Myron Hunt and H.C. Chambers, 1927) for a lecture and book signing by the author, Welch, an award-winning journalist and best-selling author based in Solana Beach, previously penned Lilian J. Rice: Master Architect of Rancho Santa Fe (Schiffer, 2010), a first-place winner in the San Diego Book Awards for Biography in 2011.

Lilian Rice—Sunday, April 17, 2016, 2-4PM; Pasadena Central Library, 285 East Walnut St., Pasadena; free; seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Lecture attendees must park in the free University of Phoenix lot at 299 Euclid Avenue (enter on Garfield); the Library parking lot is reserved for patrons only. Violators will be cited. This program is not sponsored by the Pasadena Public Library.

California Modern, Irvine Style: Campus Architecture, City Planning, and the Legacy of William Pereira
April 18-22, 2016

The legacy of William Pereira, FAIA (1909-1985), who designed the original campus of UCI Irvine, as well as many iconic buildings of Southern California, including Los Angeles County Art Museum, Los Angeles Zoo, Geisel Library at UCSD, and Theme Building at LAX, will be explored as part of UCI’s 50th anniversary celebration.

Pereira was deeply influenced by science fiction and worked on several motion pictures as an art director. The conference and accompanying exhibits and activities will examine the history of UCI’s master plan and the city of Irvine in relation to American modernism and early 1960s Utopianism. For info: bit.ly/1SRA8nD.

Symposium:
“Pereira and UCI: The View From the City” with Alan Hess, Grace Kook-Anderson, and Kevin Staniec
“Keynote” with Elizabeth Diller
“Pereira and UCI: Architectural Perspectives” with Jean-Louis Cohen and Nicholas Olsberg
“Celebratory Roundtable and Reception” with foundational faculty and the Pereira family

Talks:
“What Happened to UCI’s Centrum?” with Laura Uglean Jackson and Christine Kim
“50th Anniversary Video Interviews With William Pereira Jr. and Others” with Krystal Tribbett
“Around the Campus in 60 Seconds: Celebrating Student Films About UCI” with Peter Krapp
“Hands-On Workshop: What is Urban Planning?” with faculty from UCI’s Department of Planning, Policy, and Design
Starting with Krisel’s emphatic declaration “I am not a modern architect,” the book reveals his passion for real work for real people. His resistance to style and adherence to his philosophies refreshingly come not from ego, but from principle in service to people. He is a model architect.

Essays by many scholars familiar to SAH/SCC—including Alan Hess, Wim de Vit, Jake Gorst, SAH/SCC member Barbara Lamprecht, and our very own SAH/SCC President Sian Winship—approach the subject from various angles. Some essays are on the language of Krisel’s work and his everyday modernism, while others are about typologies or individual projects.

A new version of the butterfly-roof house, Palm Springs, 2009. Photo: Darren Bradley

“Ingredients for an Extraordinary Career” is the biographical essay tracing Krisel’s unusual international upbringing, his wartime experience, USC architecture school, early work with Victor Gruen, FAIA, and the founding of several namesake firms. Throughout, one sees how his principles emerged. Recalling his time in the military, Krisel says: “I met men from all over the USA and from all walks of life…all of which I had not previously experienced. From this experience I became more dedicated to creating well-designed modern homes for the masses.”

Krisel’s down-to-earth, populist outlook helped establish his practice as “one of the few firms in the nation that managed to bridge the worlds of architectural high design, merchant builders, and homebuyers,” writes Winship. Given Krisel’s life-long dedication to creating for the everyday person, it’s fitting that the book itself was instigated by two Krisel homeowners.

Visually, the book is replete with wonderful photos that capture the work in time, but also convey its timelessness. Plans, brochures, ads, and other ephemera are also on display. But the drawings truly captivate, and—as described by de Vit—“show a total joy of producing” and “express a feeling of excitement.”

Notes Gorst in “William Krisel, An Everyday Modernist”: “There is a movement to document the work of twentieth-century architects who worked hard and touched the lives of large populations, but who had little desire for fame. This history is being recounted with a human touch.” This book is a great step forward in documenting an architect with a particularly human touch.

Gibbs Smith; 224 pages; hardcover; $45.
—Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA/LA, Editor
SAH/SCC PUBLICATIONS

Masters of Modernism: eight-page, two-color brochure featuring works of Richard Neutra and Frank Lloyd Wright in Bakersfield. __________ at $5 each

John Parkinson, Downtown: 11”x17”, four-color brochure featuring a self-guided walking tour of Parkinson buildings in Downtown LA’s historic core and beyond. __________ at $5 each

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

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

Rodney Walker 3 30 90: 12-page brochure featuring nine homes on five sites, as well as the architect’s use of the three-foot module. __________ at $8 each

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

Greta Magnusson Grossman: 3.5” x 8” 2-page color brochure featuring two residences by Greta Grossman. __________ at $4 each

Union Station and MTA Transit Center: bi-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos. __________ at $2 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, Rios Clementi Hale Studios, and others. __________ at $8 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

Ray Kappe—Apotheosis: eight-page brochure features five Kappe Houses from 1959 to 1966 in the Royal Woods development of the San Fernando Valley. __________ at $8 each

Conjunctive Points: four-color, 11”x17” brochure featuring a 20-building walking tour of the Hayden Tract, designed by architect Eric Owen Moss and developed by Samitaur Constructs. __________ at $8 each

Designed for Learning: 11”x17” walking tour map and brochure of the University of California, Santa Barbara, campus. __________ at $4 each

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SAH/SCC is a 501c 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing its members with opportunities to learn about and experience the rich architectural heritage of Southern California and beyond. Our volunteer board members create tours, lectures, travel tours, and other events that explore the ideas behind the architecture as well as the buildings that result from them. From modern to craftsman, from Spanish Colonial to contemporary, our programs are the best-kept secrets in Southern California!

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Paul Williams Memorialized

Famed Los Angeles architect Paul Revere Williams, FAIA (1894-1980), has been honored with a memorial at the South Central Los Angeles Regional Center (SCLARC) Legacy Plaza at 1999 West Adams. The memorial, which incorporates a large bronze bas relief, celebrates Williams’s enormous contributions to the field of architecture and to the Los Angeles community. The monument was commissioned by SCLARC as part of the Legacy Plaza development, which includes the renovation of Williams’ 1949 Golden State Mutual Building.

The centerpiece of the monument is a large, 7’x9’ sculpture of Williams by local West Adams artist Georgia Hanna Toliver, who signs her work “Tolanna.” Williams is surrounded by some of his most iconic works, and the piece is flanked by large stainless-steel panels providing the history of Williams and that of Golden State Mutual Insurance Building. The monument plaza, new Legacy Building, and Golden State Mutual Building renovation are designed by AE3 Partners, Inc.

Among his many achievements, Williams was the first licensed African-American architect west of the Mississippi River. During a prolific and diverse five-decade career, Williams designed more than 3,000 buildings. Despite difficult conditions faced by African-Americans of his era, Williams rose to become the “Architect to the Stars,” designing residences for Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball, Tyrone Power, and many other Hollywood notables. Other works include the Beverly Hills Hotel (1959 remodel), LA County Hall of Administration (1956-61), First AME Church (1924), and the famous Theme Building at LAX (1960, with William Pereira, FAIA, and Welton Becket, FAIA).

The monument is open to the general public on weekdays from 9AM to 3PM, from the campus entrance off 2500 South Western Ave.