



SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

NEWS

2004
september | october

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Lutah Maria Riggs

SAH/SCC Exhibition and Tour
Saturday, October 9th, 9:45 AM



Join the SAH/SCC in Santa Barbara
on Saturday, October 9th, for a rare
opportunity to study the work of
Lutah Maria Riggs (1896-1984).



Casa del Herrero, Montecito
Photo: Jurgen Hilmer

Organized by SAH/SCC Executive Board Member Sian Winship, the day begins with an exclusive tour of the University Art Museum exhibition *Picturing Tradition: Lutah Maria Riggs Encounters Mexican Architecture*, led by architecture and design curator Kurt Helfrich.

In December 1922 and January 1923, Riggs and her employer, architect George Washington Smith (1876-1930), visited some of Mexico's most picturesque towns. Smith commissioned Riggs to sketch and photograph the local architecture and architectural details as source material for future designs in Santa Barbara and a book he hoped to publish with Riggs on Mexican architecture. The exhibition features historic drawings and Riggs' black-and-white photographs. Contemporary photographs by noted architect, artist, and SAH/SCC Life Member Stephen Harby will also be featured.

Following our visit to the exhibit, the group will be allowed private access to the University's architectural archives to study plans, drawings, and photos for the Riggs-designed estates the group will visit that afternoon in Montecito.

After an alfresco luncheon at the beautiful and historic Four Seasons Biltmore Hotel, tour-goers will visit three Montecito properties designed by Riggs, including Casa del Herrero (George Washington Smith and Lutah Maria Riggs, 1923). Originally built for the family of George Fox Steedman, an industrialist from St. Louis, the house remains in its original condition, complete with period furnishings. The gardens were designed by noted landscape architect Lockwood De Forest.

This event begins at 9:45AM at the University Art Museum at UCSB and ends back there at 5:30PM. Tour-goers are responsible for providing their own transportation to and from Santa Barbara. However, a chartered shuttle bus will provide transportation between the museum, lunch, and the residences during the event.

Space on this event is limited to 40 participants. Tour-goers must ride the shuttles. No participants will be permitted to drive themselves. Price includes all-day parking in the UCSB lot, museum admission, transportation, and lunch at the Biltmore. SAH/SCC members' price is \$139 per person. Non-members are \$150 per person. Refunds will not be issued. See the back page for the registration form.

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SAH/SCC

President's Letter

Among the many important things we do, the "Modern Patrons" series ranks among the highest in my estimation, and I want to take some time and space to explain the goals of this program and to ask for your help.

We conceived "Modern Patrons" a few years ago with the premise that, although most of Los Angeles' prominent mid-century architects have passed on, many of their clients survive and these "patrons" not only possess wonderful homes, but also important stories. The series was the original idea of SAH/SCC News Editor Julie D. Taylor. Later, SAH/SCC Board Member John Berley took it over and made it his own. It was really through John's hard work that the series blossomed and developed. So thanks to Julie and John and everyone else who has chipped in along the way.

In architectural history, you find one example after another illustrating this simple truth: great design is almost always the product of an inspired designer and an enlightened client. It usually takes two. In many cases, an architect does his or her best work when the client is strong, educated, and even a little eccentric. Think about Julia Morgan's work at San Simeon for William Randolph Hearst. She was already a great designer, and she did fine work for other people. But it was Hearst's megalomania and his passion for collecting that challenged her talents and produced a masterwork. Think of Richard Neutra, who counted among his best work the modest house for Connie Perkins, who had the temerity to sketch her own ideas on top of his plans.

By contrast, it is difficult to think of many examples where a great work of architecture came out of a situation where a passive client simply gave the architect carte blanche to work in isolation. Sometimes this happened with Mies van der Rohe, and perhaps Frank Lloyd Wright, but the exceptions simply prove the rule. As Charles Eames liked to say, design depends on constraints. The demands of a client are surely a strong constraint.

So the role of the client matters. That's the idea driving our "Modern Patrons" series. And I think we are making an important contribution to the understanding of our local environment by tapping into this great resource, the clients of modern architecture.

These "Modern Patrons" events are different from our typical tours, because rather than hopping from one spot to the next in order to get a broad view, we spend an extended period of time in one place. This kind of deep exposure is immensely educational. I recall a recent "Modern Patrons" event at the Brandow Residence in San Marino, designed by Calvin Straub. I think I was wandering around for nearly an hour before I grasped how brilliantly the house was sited in relationship to the trees and the land. This could never be conveyed by pictures in a book.

And rather than having a lecture or slideshow, we sit down with the patron and have a chat. We don't have a list of pointed questions, but we simply want to start a conversation. The informal character of these chats can really bring out great stories. I remember our visit to the Rawlins house on Balboa Island by John Lautner. Mrs. Rawlins told us that the architect insisted on including a small elevator to the second floor for the aging couple, and they disagreed but finally relented. It turned out years later to be immensely useful to them, and they could only marvel that Lautner had possessed such sensitive foresight. It was a marvelous insight, stimulated by the conversation.

The trade-off is that we can't accommodate a lot of people at these events. Many of these homes can't take the traffic; many of these owners can't imagine having hundreds of people coming through their homes. So we have to keep the attendance at each event to about 25, and in order to limit the pool we decided to restrict it to Patron and Life members. Believe me, we hate to turn our regular members away from our events. In return, we also work very hard to offer free and open events whenever we can.

We plan to keep scheduling "Modern Patrons" events every few months, and we want to continue to record them in order to maintain an archive of these forgotten stories. We hope we haven't exhausted the area's supply of modern patrons, and we're always eager to meet new ones. Do you know any modern patrons? These are people who commissioned a mid-century home by a prominent architect, and still live in it. We'd love to hear from you.

Tony Denzer



Tour and Event Information: 1.800.9SAHSCC; info@sahscc.org

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

Issue Deadline: September/October 2004 **October 10, 2004**

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

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Sunday,
September 26th,
at 2:00PM the SAH/SCC
Authors on Architecture
series continues with a
lecture and book signing
by the authors of
LA's Early Moderns at
Dawson's Books.
The event is free and
open to all SAH/SCC
members.

A Contemporary Take on LA's Early Moderns

SAH/SCC Lecture and Book Signing, Sunday, September 26th, 2:00 PM

Victoria Dailey, Natalie Shivers, and Michael Dawson will be present at Dawson's Books in Larchmont Village to speak about and sign copies of their newly published book, *LA's Early Moderns: Art, Architecture, Photography* (Balcony Press).

Hear the authors talk about how the modernist pioneers of Los Angeles art and architecture functioned as a community, as well as innovators in their own right. The book is populated by Galka Scheyer, Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Will Connell, Norman Bel Geddes, Lloyd Wright, Anais Nin, and Edward Weston, along with many others. They gathered in solidarity, met as friends and lovers, and shared excitement over their important breaks with tradition.

Victoria Dailey has been researching and writing about the art and history of Southern California for more than 20 years. Natalie Shivers, SAH/SCC Life Member, has authored several publications and curated several exhibitions on architectural history. Michael Dawson, proprietor of Dawson's Book Shop, is the third generation of Los Angeles Dawson's to helm the bookstore, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2005.

Let this gathering take you back to the gatherings of the most innovative minds of 1930s Los Angeles.

This special SAH/SCC collaboration with Dawson's Books is a free event and open to the public. Dawson's Books is located at 535 N. Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles (323) 469-2186.



A Tribute to an

Architectural Hero Edward A. Killingsworth (1917-2004)



Architect Edward A. Killingsworth once said, "It is so good to be in a space where the spirit can soar...What better goals in life could there be? To create a condition in which you can really see the spirit soar."

Best known in the United States for his involvement in the Case Study House program, Killingsworth went on to define an elegant, informal, and locally sensitive style that referenced the modernist movement's purity. Like all great architects, his projects were infused with the basic elements of light, space, and materiality. From residences such as the Frank House (Case Study House #25, 1962) to commercial structures such as the Duffield Lincoln-Mercury Agency Building, from his large-scale master plan for California State University, Long Beach, to the erection of internationally-recognized hotels such as the Halekulani, Killingsworth created spaces with meaning and purpose, spaces that evoke unrestricted living, simple grandeur, and peaceful contemplation.

Killingsworth's close relationships with key architectural figures such as Charles and Ray Eames, John Entenza, A. Quincy Jones, Pierre Koenig, Esther McCoy, Marvin Rand, and Julius Shulman, and influential clients such as Edward Frank and Conrad Hilton, played a central theme in his life and work. Of equal importance were his global travels, which he drew upon for inspiration and personal enrichment. Yet despite this worldly and fast-paced lifestyle, Killingsworth remained true to his Long Beach roots.

The architectural firm of Killingsworth, Brady & Smith (KBS) was organized as a partnership with Killingsworth, Jules Brady, and Waugh Smith in 1953, at 3833 Long Beach Boulevard in Long Beach. For the first 10 years of practice the firm focused mainly on residential work, building sensational, low-cost houses on small properties. With the completion of the Kahala Hilton in 1964, which became a Hawaiian hangout for royalty and Hollywood elites, the firm established itself as a leader in worldwide hotel design. It also expanded into other areas, such as university buildings and civic and public spaces, designing the Long Beach City Hall, Convention Center, and Performing Arts Center.

Since 1977, the firm has been known as Killingsworth, Stricker, Lindgren, Wilson & Associates (KSLW). The architectural work of KBS, KB&A, and KSLW spanned 50 years and, during this period, the firm won 51 Honor Awards from local and national AIA groups.

Killingsworth leaves behind a significant legacy in the field of architecture as one who perfectly balanced a prolific and successful international career with an enduring commitment to his local community. His spirit will be missed as an architect, mentor, teacher, friend, father, and husband.

In honor of the architecture of Edward A. Killingsworth, SAH/SCC will present a tour of his Long Beach work in February 2005. Cara Mullio and Jennifer M. Volland are co-authoring a forthcoming book on the architecture of Edward A. Killingsworth.

Cara Mullio and Jennifer M. Volland

"The Art of Historic Preservation"

The 25th anniversary of Fresno's Historic Preservation Ordinance

- Friday, October 22nd:** "Community Preservation: Reception and Buffet Dinner"
"Candlelight Tour of St. John's Neighborhood"
- Saturday, October 23rd:** "The North Meets the South in the Central San Joaquin Valley".
- 9:30-10AM Registration with printed program and coffee hour, \$10
 - 10AM-12PM Slide presentations
 - 12-1PM Buffet lunch and Chapter Meetings, \$16.50
 - 1-5PM Bus Tour: Building in Adobe, \$35 (space limited to 45)

Accommodations: A block of rooms has been reserved at La Quinta Inn, 2926 Tulare Street, near Fresno City Hall and the Santa Fe Depot (Amtrak). Rooms are available Friday, October 22nd, and Saturday, October 23rd, from \$56-62 plus tax. To book rooms call 1-800-531-5900 and use block reservation number 65045969 (SAH Fresno Planning Dept. Conference) by October 8th.

Registration for October 22nd and 23rd Events:

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Buffet Supper, October 22nd (City Hall) @ \$27 _____

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Buffet Lunch, SAH Chapters Meeting @ \$16.50 _____

Adobe Tour (includes bus, entry fees and reception) @ \$35 _____

Total enclosed: _____

Please make checks payable to "Fresno City and County Historical Society" and mail to: Historic Preservation Program, Planning and Development Department, 2600 Fresno Street, Room 3043, Fresno, California 93721. For credit card reservations, please call (559) 441-0862.

For info: (559) 621-8520. karana.hattersley-drayton@fresno.gov.

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.

- 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. _____ at \$5 each
- 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
- Palm Springs Postcards:** seven postcards of homes visited on "Shelter Under the Sun" Tour, photographed by John Ellis. _____ at \$10
- Avenel Homes:** two-fold, two-color brochure from "Ain on Avenel" Tour. _____ at \$2 each
- The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura:** 20-page guide. _____ at \$10 each
- Modernism for the Masses:** three-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floorplans of Eichler homes visited on the tour to Orange County. _____ at \$10 each
- Cool Pools:** Booklet and cassette tape from "Reflections on Water: Cool Pools Along Sunset Boulevard." _____ at \$10 each members
_____ at \$15 each non-members
- 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


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