

The Museum of Modern Art

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LOUIS I. KAHN: IN THE REALM OF ARCHITECTURE

June 14 - August 18, 1992

To hear a sound is to see its space....The spaces of architecture in their light make me want to compose a kind of music, imagining a truth from the sense of a fusion of the disciplines and their orders.

-- Louis I. Kahn*

The first major retrospective devoted to the life and work of Louis Kahn (1901-1974), one of the great American architects of this century, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on June 14, 1992. **LOUIS I. KAHN: IN THE REALM OF ARCHITECTURE** shows a range of work from the architect's formative years in Philadelphia to his international contribution to the design of religious and governmental institutions, centers of learning and research, and other public spaces. The installation also illuminates the developing philosophical underpinnings of Kahn's architecture. The exhibition, which is on view through August 18, has been organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

LOUIS I. KAHN: IN THE REALM OF ARCHITECTURE has been made possible by Ford Motor Company.

The exhibition includes approximately three hundred drawings, sketches, models, and photographs of more than sixty projects, both realized and unrealized. Japanese architect Arata Isozaki has designed the installation of the exhibition, which is based on Kahn's plan of the Mikveh Israel Synagogue, Philadelphia (1961-72).

The exhibition and the accompanying publication comprise six sections, beginning with "Adventures of Unexplored Places," a review of Kahn's early years. This first section includes academic studies, travels to Western and

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Eastern Europe, and apprenticeships in various architectural offices in Philadelphia, including those of Paul Philippe Cret, a famous beaux-arts architect, and George Howe, an architect.

The second section, "The Mind Opens Realizations," presents all the projects with which Kahn established his international reputation: the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (1951-53), the Jewish Community Center, near Trenton (1954-59), and the Alfred Newton Richards Medical Research Building, Philadelphia (1957-65).

The third and fourth sections, "Assembly...a Place of Transcendence" and "The Houses of Inspirations," explore Kahn's designs for major institutional structures. Examples of such projects are Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, the Capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka (1962-83), for which Kahn received posthumously the Aga Kahn Award for Architecture (1989); the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla (1959-65), in which Kahn's ideas for using external, ruin-like walls to filter light are fully realized; and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (1962-74).

The fifth section, "The Forum of the Availabilities," represents Kahn's works involving public spaces, such as the Philadelphia Bicentennial Exposition (1971-73). The final section, "Light, the Giver of All Presences" -- through such examples as the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (1966-72), the Yale Center for British Art (1969-74), and the unrealized Memorial to the Six Million Jewish Martyrs, intended for Battery Park, New York (1966-72) -- explores the architect's developed theories of form, order, design, silence, and light.

Louis I. Kahn was born in Estonia in 1901 and came to the United States in 1906. He demonstrated his talents early, winning art contests while still

in grammar school. When Kahn graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1924, he was also awarded two second-prize medals from Philadelphia's Society of Beaux-Arts Architects. Although he opened his own office in 1935, it was the Yale University Art Gallery commission which marked his first major, independent project. Kahn's academic career also began at Yale, where he was appointed visiting critic in 1947 and subsequently became chief critic. He taught at numerous other prominent institutions, most notably the University of Pennsylvania, where he was professor of architecture from 1955 to 1974. Kahn was the recipient of numerous other prizes and honors from Yale University, the Danish Architectural Society, the American Institute of Architects, the University of Pennsylvania, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, among others. He was posthumously awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters, Columbia University (1974), and the Furness Prize, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1977).

Two films by Peter Kirby are shown continuously in the Museum's Edward John Noble Education Center. In an interview with Kahn, Vincent Scully, professor emeritus, the History of Art, Yale University, discusses aspects of the architect's philosophy and work. In *Louis Kahn: Three Buildings*, three of the architect's most significant works are presented: The First Unitarian Church, Rochester; Exeter Academy Library, New Hampshire; and the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla.

LOUIS I. KAHN: IN THE REALM OF ARCHITECTURE has been organized by Richard Koshalek, director, Sherri Geldin, associate director, and Elizabeth A.T. Smith, curator, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; with guest curators David B. Brownlee, associate professor of the History of Art, and

David G. De Long, professor of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania; and Julia Moore Converse, director of The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, and curator, Louis I. Kahn Collection, Philadelphia. It was coordinated for The Museum of Modern Art by Stuart Wrede, director, Department of Architecture and Design.

Significant additional support for the exhibition has been provided by Leslie H. Wexner and The Pew Charitable Trusts. The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Maguire Thomas Partners, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, also provided funding for the exhibition. This showing at The Museum of Modern Art has been made possible by The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc., the Yamagata Foundation, and Lily Auchincloss.

The exhibition opened last October at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and began its international tour at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Centre de Création Industrielle, Paris. After its New York showing, the exhibition travels to The Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Japan (September 26 - November 3, 1992); The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (February 28 - May 30, 1993); the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (July 3 - October 10, 1993); and the Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, Columbus (November 13, 1993 - January 23, 1994).

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***PUBLICATION** *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture.* Introductions by Vincent Scully and Sherri Geldin. Principal essays by David B. Brownlee and David G. De Long. 448 pages. 165 color and 370 black-and-white illustrations. Copublished by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Rizzoli International Publications. Hardcover (\$55.00) and paperbound (\$34.95) editions are available in The MoMA Book Store.

For further information, contact Helen Bennett, the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.