

Modern architecture in California

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from our founding in 1929 to the present—is
available online. It includes exhibition catalogues,
primary documents, installation views, and an
index of participating artists.

MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN CALIFORNIA

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN CALIFORNIA ARRANGED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Committee

Philip L. Goodwin, Chairman

Professor Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr.

George Howe

Dr. Joseph Hudnut

Philip Johnson

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum

Ernestine M. Fantl, Staff Member in Charge

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11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y.

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MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN CALIFORNIA

FOREWORD

Modern architecture in California is conspicuous for two reasons: the number and variety of the influences which have shaped its expression, and the opportunities for actual construction which it has enjoyed. The peculiar ebullience of the state which has produced the E P I C movement, the Vigilantes, Hollywood, the Four Square Gospel, the Red Menace and the Yellow Peril, has resulted in the encouragement of experimental and reactionary ideas in architecture, as well as in politics, religion and entertainment. A state whose only architectural tradition is one sympathetic to contemporary design, California is friendly to imported traditions as well as to native development. As early as 1908 Irving Gill, a pioneer of modern architecture in America, was building houses whose formalization and simplification anticipated the finest contemporary architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright not only through his own buildings but also through the work of his followers contributed the principle of open planning and an early interest in prefabricated construction. Through Richard J. Neutra and R. M. Schindler the European traditions of Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos have been cordially accepted. The codified modernism of the East, the revivalism of the World's Fair, the classical tradition of the Beaux Arts, straightforward engineering, experiments in construction and modern design,-- all flourish on the Coast.

In this small exhibition the vast range of manners in California has been necessarily elided. No examples of Eastern classical nor World's Fair modernism have been included. The buildings of Gill and Wright are arche-

FOREWORD

Modern architecture in California is conspicuous for two reasons: the number and variety of the influences which have shaped its expression, and the opportunities for actual construction which it has enjoyed. The resulting influence of the state which has produced the E. F. C. movement, the Yachtmen, Hollywood, the Four Square Gospel, the Red House and the Yellow Bell, has resulted in the unconcernment of experimental and reconstructive ideas in architecture, as well as in politics, religion and entertainment. A state whose only architectural tradition is one sympathetic to contemporary design, California is friendly to imported traditions as well as to native development. An early pioneer of modern architecture in the 1890s, Irving Gill, a pioneer whose formalization and abstraction was building houses whose formalization and simplification anticipated the finest contemporary architecture; Frank Lloyd Wright not only through his own buildings but also through the work of his followers contributed the principle of open planning and an early interest in prefabricated construction. Through Richard L. Hunter and R. M. Schindler the European tradition of Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos have been cordially accepted. The modified modernism of the East, the revivalism of the West, the classical tradition of the South, the vernacular, the engineering, experiments in construction and modern design, -- all flourish on the coast.

In this small exhibition the vast range of manners in California has been necessarily omitted. No examples of Eastern classical nor Wright's Prairie School have been included. The buildings of Gill and Wright are archi-

types of the best modern tradition. The Colby house by William Wilson Wurster illustrates the transition from conservative traditionalism to conservative modernism. The airplane hangars of A. C. Z. Zimmerman express a modern industry in a contemporary vernacular and present a cogent contrast with the airport's modernistic administration building. The apartment house by Kocher and Frey is typical of the restrained ingenuity of Eastern experimentalism which in contrast with that of California seems economical and chaste.

Hollywood has played a dual role in the history of modern architecture on the Coast. It has encouraged much new building and has also exerted a not altogether healthy influence on its style. The extravagances of the motion picture center have produced an eccentric modernism which while tasteless in detail still introduces certain essential features of modern design. The Hollywood house of Cedric Gibbons, chief set designer for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and a pioneer in the introduction of modern design in the movies, has been much publicized and in spite of its allegiance to Paris '25 decorative details, has undoubtedly done much to awaken an interest in modern architecture. Of the movie sets included in the exhibition, the most interesting are those by Paul Nelson for "What a Widow" produced by United Artists. Mr. Nelson, a pupil of Le Corbusier, was brought to Hollywood especially to design these sets and they are distinguished by an architectural, rather than decorative detail. The sets for "Trouble in Paradise" and "A Bedtime Story" were designed by Hans Dreier, chief set designer for Paramount. The organization of this studio permits another department to "dress" the sets, unfortunately to their detriment. Both Mr. Gibbons' house and the sets themselves date back several years. More recently Eastern decorators have dominated the studios and movie homes, and Neo-Victorianism, adapted Regency, modern Empire and re-modelled farmhouse tastefulness have replaced modern design.

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Modern architecture on the coast finds its finest expression in the work of Richard J. Neutra and R. M. Schindler.

R. M. Schindler, although a student of Otto Wagner, has identified himself as a follower of Wright. His houses show an unusual understanding of comfortable living, even during the period of violent experimentation in form. In his Buck house, he indicates a return to the clarity of his early inspiration.

Richard J. Neutra has carried on the Wagner tradition of experimentation in new forms, materials and methods of construction. His work is distinguished by a variety of function and a consistent originality. Of his recent buildings, perhaps the most interesting is the Experimental Public School and Kindergarten, a credit not only to Neutra but to the vision of the Los Angeles Board of Education. The extent of Neutra's executed work permits him to rank as one of the foremost architects in America and, through his projects as well as through his work, he has given an impetus to the intelligent solution of new problems.

Ernestine M. Fantl

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as well as through his work, in the new movement
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Ernestine M. Lenz

CEDRIC GIBBONS

Born in Dublin. Came to America and in 1913 became art director for the Thomas A. Edison company at Bedford Park, New York. Served in the War and upon his return joined the old Goldwyn organization in New York as art director. After four years was sent to the Goldwyn company on the coast in the same capacity. In 1924 became head of the art department of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer which position he now holds. His sets for "Our Dancing Daughters" in 1928, although "modernistic" rather than modern, were the first indication in the movies of an awareness of contemporary design.

EXHIBITS

House of the architect, Santa Monica, 1931

House of the architect, view toward swimming pool, Santa Monica, 1931

EXHIBITS

A Newl Estate office and Apartment building for Dr. J. J. Zocher, Palm Springs, 1935. Exterior view.

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House of the architect, view toward swimming pool,
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A. LAWRENCE KOCHER AND ALBERT FREY

A. LAWRENCE KOCHER. Born at San José, California, 1889; graduate of Leland Stanford University. Architectural training at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Head, Department of Architecture, Pennsylvania State College 1915-1925. Head, School of Fine Arts, University of Virginia 1925-1927. Advisory Architect for Restoration of Williamsburgh, Virginia. Architectural work: Joseph Priestley Memorial, Northumberland, Pa., 1925; House for Rex Stout, Brewster, New York, in association with Gerhard Ziegler, 1929-1930; Aluminaire, Grand Central Palace 1931 and Week-End House at Northport, Long Island, in association with Albert Frey. Managing editor of The Architectural Record.

ALBERT FREY. Born in Zürich, Switzerland, 1903. Studied architecture at Technische Hochschule, Zürich; worked with Le Corbusier 1928-1930; came to America 1930. In association with A. Lawrence Kocher, designed the Aluminaire, the first prefabricated house erected in America; Darien Guild Hall, Darien, Conn; Week-End House, Northport, Long Island.

EXHIBITS

A Real Estate office and Apartment building for Dr. J. J. Kocher, Palm Springs, 1935. Exterior view.

A Real Estate office and Apartment building for Dr. J. J. Kocher, Palm Springs 1935. View from patio.

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- A Real Estate office and Apartment building for Dr. J. J. Kocher, Palm Springs 1935. View from patio.

RICHARD J. NEUTRA

Born in Vienna in 1892. Graduate of the Technische Hochschule in Vienna. Studied with Adolf Loos. Worked for a time at landscape architecture under Gustav Amman in Switzerland. Executed his first architectural commission in the Balkans during the War. For several years after the War designed commercial buildings and residences in Berlin.

In 1923 came to the United States. Worked in the offices of Holabird and Roche in Chicago; met Sullivan, and spent several months with Wright at Taliesin.

In 1925 established himself in Los Angeles. His Garden Apartments, built in 1927, and exhibited in the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932, was the first building to show a practical application in America of a consistent scheme of design based on modern methods of construction.

Through his books he has been active as both critic and interpreter to Europe of American methods of construction.

Neutra has continued to build steadily, having completed twenty-eight buildings from 1931 to 1935.

AWARDS

1st award	House Beautiful	1934	Anna Sten residence
Gold Medal	Better Homes in America	1935	Wm. Beard residence
1st award	Better Homes in America	1935	Mosk residence
2nd award	Better Homes in America	1935	Koblick residence
2nd award	General Electric Co.	1935	All electric home

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Gold Medal	Better Homes in America 1935	Wm. Beard residence
1st award	Better Homes in America 1935	Wick residence
2nd award	Better Homes in America 1935	Koblick residence
2nd award	General Electric Co.	1935 All electric home

Richard J. Neutra, cont'd

PUBLICATIONS

Wie Baut Amerika, 1926
New Building in the World
Co-author of Problems of Building
Co-author of Rational Planning Methods

EXHIBITS

Residence of Mrs. Ernest Mosk, Hollywoodland, 1931.

- a) Street facade
- b) Rear facade

V. D. L. Research House, Los Angeles, 1932.

- a) Entrance facade
- b) Interior
- c) View from lake

Residence of Mme. Galka Scheyer, Santa Monica Mountains, Hollywood, 1933. Gregory Ain, collaborator.

- a) View from southwest
- b) Interior

Farm of Mr. and Mrs. M. Koblick, San Francisco, 1933.
Co-supervision W. A. Garrahan.

Residence of Miss Anna Sten, Santa Monica, 1933.

Residence of William Beard, Altadena, 1934. Gregory Ain, collaborator.

- a) North facade
- b) Interior
- c) View from west
- d) Detail of patio

Richard J. Hunter, cont'd

PUBLICATIONS

The New America, 1938
New Building in the World
Co-author of Problems of Building
Co-author of National Planning Methods

EXHIBITS

Residence of Mrs. Ernest Hook, Hollywood, 1931.
a) Street facade
b) Rear facade

V. B. J. Research House, Los Angeles, 1933.
a) Entrance facade
b) Interior
c) View from lake

Residence of Mrs. Gaila Scheyer, Santa Monica Mountains,
Hollywood, 1933, Gregory A. Scheyer.
a) View from northwest
b) Interior

Home of Mr. and Mrs. M. Loblich, San Francisco, 1933.
Co-construction V. A. Gorman.

Residence of Miss Anna Eben, Santa Monica, 1933.

Residence of William Reed, Alhambra, 1934, Gregory
A. Scheyer.
a) North facade
b) Interior
c) View from west
d) Detail of patio

Richard J. Neutra, cont'd.

EXHIBITS

California Military Academy, Los Angeles, 1934-35

- a) Administration wing
- b) Classroom interior
- c) Classroom wing

Experimental Public School, Los Angeles, 1934-35

- a) General view

Experimental Public Kindergarten, Los Angeles, 1935

MODELS

Planetarium, Los Angeles, 1935

EXHIBITS

Residence of Mrs. J. J. Buck, Los Angeles, 1934

- a) Entrance facade
- b) View toward the patio

Oliver House, Los Angeles

- a) Exterior
- b) Interior

Sam's Restaurant, Hollywood, 1933. Interior.

Richard J. Hevly, cont'd.

EXHIBITS

California Military Academy, Los Angeles, 1934-35
a) Administration wing
b) Classroom interior
c) Classroom wing

Experimental Public School, Los Angeles, 1934-35
a) General view

Experimental Public Kindergarten, Los Angeles, 1935

MODELS

Planetarium, Los Angeles, 1935

R. M. SCHINDLER

Born in Vienna. Graduated from the Technische Hochschule and L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Vienna. Two years before he left Austria Schindler happened upon a portfolio of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and became an ardent admirer of Wright's early work. As he says, "Here was the first architect. And the timeless importance of Wright lies especially in these first houses."

Worked in Vienna until he came to this country in 1914. Worked in the Chicago office of Frank Lloyd Wright for two years and also taught at the Church School. Eventually he found his way to Los Angeles. In 1925 collaborated with R. J. Neutra on a project for the Palace of the League of Nations which was sent around Europe by the Deutscher Werkbund along with those of Le Corbusier and Hannes Meyer. Has taught at the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles, where he has been for some time in private practice.

EXHIBITS

Residence of Mrs. J. J. Buck, Los Angeles, 1934.

- a) Entrance facade
- b) View toward the patio

Oliver House, Los Angeles.

- a) Exterior
- b) Interior

Sardi's Restaurant, Hollywood, 1932. Interior.

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Residence of Mrs. J. J. Buck, Los Angeles, 1934.

- a) Entrance Terrace
- b) View toward the patio

Oliver House, Los Angeles.

- a) Exterior
- b) Interior

Gard's Restaurant, Hollywood, 1932. Interior.

WILLIAM WILSON WURSTER

Born in 1894, in Stockton, California. Began his architectural career at an early age, working summers while still in school in the office of a Stockton architect. Graduated from the University of California where he also studied marine engineering and naval architecture. After a year at sea as cadet engineer, he returned to the University to take his degree in architecture. Worked in San Francisco and Sacramento, 1919-1921. Travelled abroad, 1922. Upon his return worked two years in the office of Delano and Aldrich, New York, and in 1925 returned to California. In 1927 began private practice in San Francisco, specializing in country houses.

EXHIBITS

Residence of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Colby, Berkley, 1931.

- a) View from street
- b) Dining room terrace

EXHIBITS

Panoramic view of airplane hangars at the W.A.E. Terminal, Alhambra, California, 1934.

Air view of airplane hangars at the W.A.E. Terminal, Alhambra, 1934.

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Born in 1884, in Stockton, California. Began his architectural career at an early age, working summers while still in school in the office of a Stockton architect. Graduated from the University of California where he also studied marine engineering and naval architecture. After a year at sea as chief engineer, he returned to the University to take his degree in architecture. Worked in San Francisco and Sacramento, 1919-1921. Travelled abroad, 1922. Upon his return worked two years in the office of Deane and Aldrich, New York, and in 1925 returned to California. In 1927 began private practice in San Francisco, specializing in country houses.

EXHIBITS

Residence of Mr. and Mrs. M. B. Colby, Berkeley, 1931.
a) View from street
b) Dining room terrace

A. C. ZIMMERMAN

Born 1894. Graduated from the University of Southern California and worked with the Beaux Arts School of Design. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects and is at present practicing architecture in Los Angeles.

AWARDS

- 1923 Honor award from the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for best design for a commercial building.
- 1923 Honor award from the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for best designed school.
- 1929 First prize. Lehigh Airport Competition.

EXHIBITS

Panoramic view of airplane hangars at the W.A.E. Terminal, Alhambra, California, 1934.

Air view of airplane hangar at the W.A.E. Terminal, Alhambra, 1934.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

IRVING GILL

Banning Residence, Los Angeles, 1908

MOVIE SETS

1. Paul Nelson - What a Widow, 1930, United Artists
2. Paul Nelson - What a Widow, 1930, United Artists
3. Hans Dreier - Trouble in Paradise, 1932, Paramount
4. Hans Dreier - A Bedtime Story, 1933, Paramount
5. Hans Dreier - A Bedtime Story, 1933, Paramount
6. Hans Dreier - A Bedtime Story, 1933, Paramount

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

IRVING GILL

Residence, Los Angeles, 1908

MOVIE SETS

1. Paul Holman - What a Widow, 1930, United Artists
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3. Hans Dreier - Trouble in Paradise, 1932, Paramount
4. Hans Dreier - A Bedtime Story, 1932, Paramount
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