



Two-Shaded White Lamp designed by Greta Magnusson Grossman.
Photo: Sherry Griffin

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Getting Going for Greta Magnusson Grossman!

SAH/SCC Talk & Tour



Greta Magnusson Grossman, circa 1949.
Photo: Greta Magnusson Grossman Archives



Backus House, Bel Air Estates, 1950.
Rendering: Carlos Diniz

The Pasadena Museum of California Art (Johnson, Favaro, 2000-2002) is currently featuring the exhibition "Greta Magnusson Grossman: A Car and Some Shorts." Swedish designer Grossman is best known for her furniture. However, she was also a talented modern architect, and the exhibition features several plans and elevations from her Southern California residential commissions of the 1950s and 1960s.

Grossman was one of a handful of female designers who defined Swedish Modernism in the late 1930s. She arrived in Los Angeles in the early 1940s and designed furniture for Barker Brothers Furniture and Ralph O. Smith. Her designs (and her architecture) were featured frequently in *Arts + Architecture* magazine. Like many modernists, Grossman believed modern design was "...not a superimposed style, but an answer to present conditions—developed out of our preferences for living in a modern way."

Before the exhibition closes on February 24th, SAH/SCC is working on a combination museum visit and tour of examples of her extant residences. Watch your inbox for an upcoming announcement of this exciting new event. Space for this event will be limited.



Desk in walnut and wrought iron, 1952
Photo: Sherry Griffin

SAH/SCC President's Letter

Is what your tellin' me, you're retire'n'?

Looks like 2013 will have fewer, "gollies," "wows," and "that's amazings!" After 25+ years of taking us all over California, Huell Howser is retiring.

Love him or hate him, Howser was a groundbreaking ambassador of California, its history, and its architecture. Those of us who love exploring Los Angeles were frequent viewers of his programs "California's Gold," "Visiting," and "Road Trip." It was truly "amazing" how many obscure new (and, especially, old) places he found to visit. While some viewers found his ebullient Southern charm a bit much at times, you had to admit that Howser is a California booster in the grandest tradition.

His love of architecture and Palm Springs was a contributing factor in the renaissance of that community and the embrace of its modern heritage. If you're checking out reruns, watch for SAH/SCC Past-President Ted Wells on one of Howser's desert extravaganzas. Or, watch the Bullock's Wilshire tea room closure episode to catch an interview with the late owner of the Raphael Soriano's Lipetz Residence (1936).

One of Howser's greatest gifts was his ability to mesh people and place in an accessible way. He made history fun and California a place of great adventure. After all, he spent National Donut Day at Randy's Donuts (1954) and got paid for it. Face it, we were all a little bit jealous.

Howser follows in the footsteps of another great booster broadcaster: Ralph Story. "Ralph Story's Los Angeles" on KNXT is one of my earliest memories and I'm sure it was a contributing factor in my curiosity about Southern California history. Who will be the next one to take up the mantle?

While Howser's reason for retirement is unclear (health considerations and/or the mess that is KCET these days?), he will be greatly missed by those of us who value California's history. Tucked or untucked, Luis or Cameron, we'll miss you, Huell. Thanks for showing us what a great place California is.

—Sian Winship



Huell Howser at Carrizo Plains in the poppy fields of San Luis Obispo County.
Photo: Cameron Tucker

Tour and Event Information:
1.800.972.4722
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Cool Shul: SAH/SCC Members' Celebration At Breed Street Shul

On Sunday, November 11, 2012, SAH/SCC convened for the Members' Celebration in a sacred space steeped in architectural and cultural importance: the Breed Street Shul. Put on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, the Byzantine Revival-style synagogue is a living testament to the history of Boyle Heights and to the journey of restoring a fine piece of architecture that still retains the mission of serving its community within those hallowed walls.

We began the afternoon in the original wooden shul, a structure dating from 1915, which was moved to the rear of the property and now serves as a neighborhood social hall. Here, we watched excerpts from "Meet Me at Brooklyn and Soto" by filmmaker Ellie Kahn, who was present and spoke movingly about the people she met while filming. The film brought a sense of history and context to the conversation. We got a real feeling for the people who lived (and still live) in the neighborhood. We learned that Brooklyn Avenue (now Cesar Chavez Avenue) was a vital artery in the Jewish neighborhood, filled with kosher butchers, delis, and businesses catering to the local Jewish community. The street name change is a tangible sign of how the neighborhood transformed through the years into a primarily Latino community with a vibrant life and history of its own.

SAH/SCC Life Member Robert Chattel, AIA, shared his journey as the restoration consultant for the shul for 20 years. "Before" photos illuminated the disrepair and vandalism that occurred during the years the shul remained unoccupied. Chattel noted the remnants of graffiti on the former bema (pulpit), which restoration painters had not been able to completely disguise, but were also left in place partly so the layers of history would remain evident.

The "new" shul opened in 1923 and was built from unreinforced masonry with veneer brick and cast stone embellishments on the façade. Guided by Chattel, we learned of the building's architectural details, and the intended uses for the shul then and now. The glow of afternoon light filtered through the newly restored stained-glass windows, while the architect directed our eyes to the artwork and murals that are being brought back to life, the liturgical aspects of the space (such as the separation of men from women), and the strategy behind the restoration process that continues as funds become available.

This unique and dramatic day was made even more poignant by personal stories exchanged informally throughout the celebratory afternoon. Guest Danny Justman imparted anecdotes from attending elementary school in the shul basement and shared photos of him and his brother at a Purim Carnival. Danny's father, with tears in his eyes, recounted how he sat shiva (the traditional grieving process) at the shul for his father. SAH/SCC Board Member Rina Rubenstein's father's Bar Mitzvah was held there, as was Julius Shulman's.

An afternoon at Breed Street shul showcased how we can gain an even closer connection to our neighborhoods through understanding and preserving the buildings and structures made for everyday living. Breed Street Shul's mission is to continue the legacy of the shul as a center of arts and learning for the Boyle Heights community at large. For more info and how to help, go to <http://breedstreetshul.org/>.

John Ellis



1959 Purim Play.
Photo: courtesy Danny Justman



Photo: Danny Justman

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continues

Freud to Moore: SAH/SCC 2012 in Review

This past year, SAH/SCC Board Members created a slate of great events, several held at the Santa Monica Public Library (Moore Ruble Yudell, 2006) and others on site. See Page 5 for publications from most events. Here's a snapshot of last year's activities—which began and ended with programs featuring SAH/SCC member Volker Welter. We invite more members to share their scholarship and passions with the rest of the membership.

January 12th—Ernst L. Freud, Architect. Welter presented the work of Ernst Freud—Sigmund's son and friend of Richard Neutra. Associate UCSB History of Art and Architecture Professor and *Ernst L. Freud: The Case of the Modern Bourgeois Home* author, Welter shared the architect's modern homes and designs for psychoanalytic consulting rooms.

March 10th—Carefree California: Cliff May. Cliff May, who captured the post-WWII mystique of the West, was the subject of "Carefree California: Cliff May and the Romance of the Ranch," an exhibition at University Art Museum at UCSB. SAH/SCC member and Museum Acting Director, Jocelyn Gibbs, led a behind-the-scenes tour of the exhibition, followed by a special visit to the May collection at UCSB. A home tour rounded out the day.

April 22nd—The Frontier of Leisure. Lawrence Culver—professor of History at Utah State University—spoke about the promotion of Southern California as the playground to the world. His book, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America*, traces this history of Southern California from the late 19th through the late 20th centuries.



May 20th—Japanese Restoration at the Huntington.



McLeod surveying the Japanese House restoration.
Photo: John Ellis

The process of planning and rehabbing the 19th-century Japanese House at the Huntington Gardens was unveiled by architect Kelly Sutherlin McLeod, AIA, conservationist John Griswold, and art historian Dr. Kendall Brown. After an introductory

lecture and tour of the newly re-opened gardens and house, several attendees continued the conversation at The Rose Garden Tea Room and Café.

May 24th-26th—Ray Kappe: Apotheosis. This look at Ray Kappe, FAIA's early single-family work included a lecture by architectural historian Dana Hutt, a special Modern Patrons at the 1959 Robert Hayes Home, and self-driving tours of five early Kappe houses in Sherman Oaks. The spectacular event ended with a reception at the 1956 home Kappe designed for his

father, which now belongs to architects and SAH/SCC Life Members Mark Piaia, AIA (also on the SAH/SCC Executive Board), and Anne Zimmerman, AIA.



Phineas Kappe Residence, 1956.
Photo: Anne Zimmerman

June 9th—No Nails, No Lumber. SAH/SCC Member and author Jeffrey Head discussed his book *No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff*, about low-cost, low-labor circular, open-plan "bubble" houses by the architect better known for his Spanish Colonial Revival residences of the 1920s and 1930s.

July 22nd—Soriano: Before & After: The Glen Lukens Residence. An intimate salon celebrated the rescue and restoration of the 1940 Glen Lukens Residence by Raphael Soriano. A dialogue with the current owner and his architect Barry Milofsky illustrated how any home—despite its impressive pedigree—can fall into disrepair and almost be destroyed.

August 18th—Conjunctive Points: Samitaur, Moss, and Culver City. Working with architect Eric Owen Moss since 1986, developers Frederick and Laurie Samitaur-Smith transformed a forlorn industrial area into the now-bustling Hayden Tract. Following a discussion and self-conducted walking tour of 20+ buildings and art installations, the event concluded with a reception at the Samitaur Tower.

October 20th—Modern Patrons: Moore in LA.



More Moore at Rodes Residence.
Photo: Rina Rubenstein

The Modern Patrons series visited the Rodes Residence by Moore Ruble Yudell (1978-9). Moore is said to have drawn inspiration from "modernized 18th-Century houses in the south of France" for the West LA residence for UCLA English professor David S. Rodes.

November 11th—Sunday in Boyle Heights: Breed Street Shul. See Page 3 for a recap of the SAH/SCC Annual Members' Celebration in Boyle Heights.

December 1st—UCSB Faculty Club Study Day. A field study day of UCSB Faculty Club (1967-8) by Charles Moore was led by Welter, and included a tour of this hard-to-access building, presentations on Moore's work and post-modernism, and discussions with architects, former Moore colleagues, experts, and historians.

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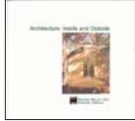
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SAH/SCC PUBLICATIONS



_____ at \$5 each

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



_____ at \$3 each

Architecture: Inside and Outside: 5"x5" folded color brochure featuring Santa Barbara's Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, and Val Verde



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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 \$3 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 \$8 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

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 \$5 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 \$2 each

Kesling Homes: bi-fold, two-color brochure from the "Kesling Modern Structures" tour



_____ at \$2 each

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



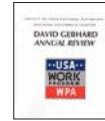
_____ at \$10 each

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

The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura: 20-page guide from Ventura tour



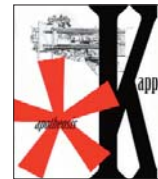
_____ at \$5 each

David Gebhard Review: essays on the Works Project Administration by Robert W. Winter, Orville O. Clarke, Jr., and Mitzi March Mogul



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On Parallel Lines: The Sarasota Modern Movement 1948-1966: 26-page brochure featuring Sarasota School architects.



_____ at \$8 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.



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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.

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Iconic Houses Website Launches

The Iconic Houses website (iconichouses.org), with its handy map interface, identifies dozens of iconic modern houses around the world. Most of them are open to visitors and some even accommodate overnight guests.

The website is the initiative of Natascha Drabbe, architectural historian and owner and curator of the Van Schijndel House in the Netherlands. She formed the Iconic Houses Network, a group of modern house museum curators (including Kimberli Meyer, director of the MAK Center at the Schindler House) dedicated to preserving significant houses and sharing knowledge and expertise.

"No resource existed before to help people locate and visit these houses," says Drabbe. "Now, if you're visiting Paris, for example, our site allows you to see that you're close to the only house Alvar Aalto built outside Finland."

Iconichouses.org lists 100 20th-century landmark houses by location, with background information on their creators and related stories. Stringent selection criteria have been developed for submissions to maintain quality. Both well-known and obscure projects are listed.

By linking travel and 20th-century houses, the Iconic Houses Network hopes that the new site will increase not only visitor numbers, but also the awareness of the difficulty of keeping these houses alive in times of scarce funding, understaffing, and even the threat of demolition.

ICONICHOUSES.ORG