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# ICYMI: The Architecture of Apocalypse

**SAH/SCC Lecture**  
**Saturday, August 15, 2020, 1PM**

Almost one year to the day, SAH/SCC re-welcomes author Stuart W. Leslie, PhD, to encore his talk on "The Architecture of Apocalypse: Thinking About the Unthinkable in Style" for our new "In Case You Missed It" series that offers popular SAH/SCC programs live online.



Autonetics in Laguna Niguel by William L. Pereira Associates, Architects (1971).



Institute of Robotics in St. Petersburg, Russia, by B.I. Artushin and S.V. Savin (1968).

Leslie bases the talk on his contribution to *Laboratory Lifestyles: The Construction of Scientific Fictions* (edited by Sandra Kaji-O'Grady, Chris L. Smith, and Russell Hughes; MIT Press, 2019), a book on how advancements in lab design affect the work of scientists. His essay on the aerospace and think tank architecture of the Cold War explores the architectural legacy of local institutions, such as the Rand Corporation and Hughes Research Lab.

A professor at Johns Hopkins University and the author of *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (Columbia University Press, 1993), Leslie is a dynamic speaker who makes

the history of modern science, as told through architecture, accessible to everyone.

In February 2018, Leslie dazzled SAH/SCC with his presentation "The Romance of Water and Power: Architecture as Advertisement," an exploration of the commercial and industrial buildings of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power—from neo-Grecian temples to luminescent Art Deco showrooms—and their role in the community.

*ICYMI—Leslie: August 15, 2020; 1PM; free; reservations required—email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.*



Rand Corporation in Santa Monica by H. Roy Kelley (1953-1954, 1956) and Alison & Ribbe (1961).

Photos: courtesy Stuart W. Leslie, PhD

# SAH/SCC President's Letter

The tragic deaths of George Floyd and so many others at the hands of authorities have opened our eyes to the role we all play in the systems that govern our lives and to the realization that inequities can no longer remain unquestioned. The peaceful mass protests are a step in that direction; violence and destruction are not only heartbreaking but serve as distractions from our personal and collective responsibilities to work toward a better future, even as we celebrate the best of our past.

I've been reminded of a personal experience. In 1992, after the police were acquitted of the beating of Rodney King, Los Angeles erupted in violence. For six days, the city struggled. The mayor imposed a curfew. Businesses closed. Events were cancelled. And everyone tried to find his or her way through the tumult.

It just so happened that the unrest of 1992 coincided with a planned "Neutra 100" celebration, commemorating the centennial of the birth of architect Richard J. Neutra, FAIA. Among the scheduled events was an exclusive evening salon at the Lovell Health House (1927-9). It was a pricey E-ticket of more than \$100 and a friend and I had each ponied up the money for the event. When we received word that, despite the stay-at-home order, the event would not be cancelled nor money refunded, we weighed our options. My friend and I decided we might never have the opportunity to see the Lovell Health House again and decided to break curfew to attend.

My first memory of the evening is of how little traffic there was. Much like one could during the COVID-19 lockdown, we sailed along the freeways toward the Hollywood Hills. That was the first time that the Los Angeles freeway system actually fulfilled its promise of getting motorists anywhere in 15 minutes.

The entire evening was a tribute to Neutra and to the Lovells. About a dozen people attended. Caterers recreated the healthy recipes that naturopath Dr. Philip Lovell advocated for in his columns in the *Los Angeles Times*. I cannot remember exactly what we ate, but I think it was the first time I had ever had quinoa. Upon reflection, comfort food might have been a better choice, but it supported the thematic experience.

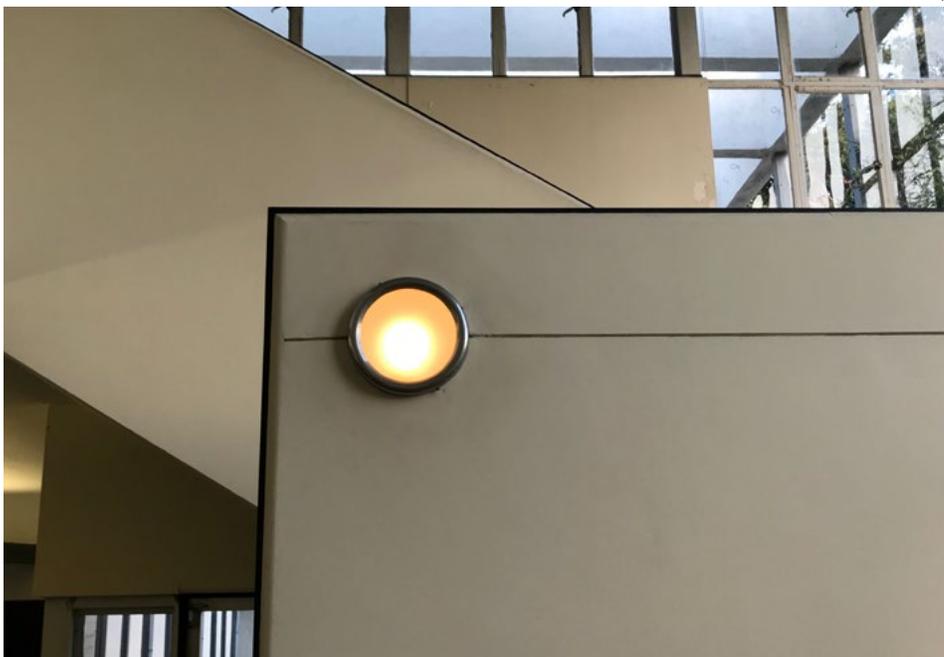
The son of the original owners, Gary Lovell, shared his memories of his parents, growing up in the house, and of Neutra bringing potential clients to the house seemingly unannounced. Gary's stories imbued the iconic house with a warmth and humanity that can only come from calling a place "home."

The contrast between the experience of the house and the context of the city was surreal. The steel framing system expressed the future-forward possibilities of using materials in new ways. The rigor of the architectural language was both beautiful and evocative of a utopian vision. Walls of glass offered a clear view of the Los Angeles basin with Henry Hancock's lighted grid of boulevards and major thoroughfares on full display. In the distance, however, fires were visible, and the reality was that the city was far from delivering on its utopian promise.

Nearly 30 years have passed since that night. I am saddened by how far we have not come. How did we get here? It is a question I have asked myself too many times in 2020. I asked it when I sewed my first masks. I asked it when I disinfected my groceries. And I asked it last week when I watched those sworn to protect and serve, do neither.

I still believe in the possibilities of Los Angeles and the optimism expressed by the architects who came here with a vision. Let each one of us contribute to making it a better, more just, place.

—Sian Winship



Lovell Health House by Richard J. Neutra, FAIA (1927-9).

Photo: Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA

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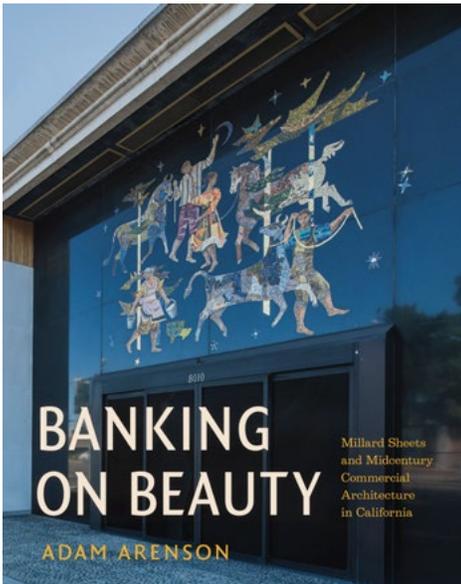
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## ICYMI: Adam Arenson on Millard Sheets

**SAH/SCC Lecture**  
**Sunday, July 19, 2020, 1PM**

Adam Arenson re-visits *Banking on Beauty: Millard Sheets and Midcentury Modern Design in California* (University of Texas Press, 2018), his beautiful, detailed book on the architecture of Home Savings and its foremost designer Millard Sheets (1907-1989), during this online lecture.

For more than three decades, Sheets and his studio of artists designed Home Savings and Loan branches throughout California, studding their iconic projects with mosaics, murals, stained glass, and sculptures that celebrated both family life and the history of the Golden

State. The collaboration between the Millard Sheets Studio and Howard Ahmanson (1906-1968), Home Savings' executive, resulted in more than 40 branches designed and built between the completion of the first collaboration in 1955 and Ahmanson's death. It set the course for more than 100 additional branches that bore the Home Savings name until the institution was sold to Washington Mutual in 1998.

Arenson, an associate professor of history and the director of Urban Studies at Manhattan College in the Bronx, NY, has created a richly illustrated book that is a landmark in business history and the distinctive style of architecture and art that graced 60 communities around Southern California.



Burbank Branch (1964).  
Photo: courtesy Ahmanson Foundation Archives

Combining private investment and public art, and championing historical themes in a period of dramatic cultural and political change, the Home Savings and Loan buildings are signature structures of mid-century modern architecture, and their story deserves to be known before it is too late to save these remarkable works.

*ICYMI—Arenson Lecture: July 19, 2020; 1PM; free; reservations required—email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.*



Hollywood Branch (1968).

Photo: courtesy of Carolyn Sheets Owen-Towle

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Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Furness & Hewitt, 1871-6).  
Photo: George E. Thomas

## ICYMI: George E. Thomas on Frank Furness

**SAH/SCC Lecture**  
**Saturday, August 1, 2020, 1PM**

Author George E. Thomas reprises his talk on Philadelphia-based architect Frank Furness (1839-1912), discussing insights from his book *Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).



Misunderstood and reviled in the traditional architectural centers of New York and Boston, Furness was often commissioned by the progressive industrialists of the new machine age. He intentionally broke with the historical styles of the past

to work in a modern way—from utilizing principles based on logistical planning to incorporating new industrial materials.

In his assessment of Furness as an architect of the machine age, Thomas grounds him in Philadelphia, a city led by engineers, industrialists, and businessmen who commissioned the buildings that extended modern design to Chicago, Glasgow, and Berlin. Thomas examines the multiple facets of Victorian Philadelphia's modernity, looking to its eager embrace of innovations in engineering, transportation, technology, and building, and argues that Furness, working for a particular cohort of clients, played a central role in shaping this context.

*ICYMI—Thomas Lecture: August 1, 2020; 1PM; free; reservations required—email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.*

## The Automobile Is Architecture

**SAH/SCC Lecture**  
**Saturday, August 29, 2020, 1PM**

Longtime SAH/SCC Member and vintage car collector Richard Stanley will discuss the life and contributions of influential industrial designer—and Hollywood native—Harley Earl (1893-1969). Developing his flash on the West Coast, Earl then took it East to Detroit. He literally invented the modern design studio that made General Motors so dominant. At the time of his retirement in 1958, nearly half of all cars built in America were designed under Earl's aegis.



He is rightfully credited for bringing design and style to every echelon of the automotive market, putting fancy East Coast custom shops out of business. One of the ways Earl accomplished this feat was by hiring architects to replace engineers as automotive designers. Among the design innovations he directed: erasing running boards; lowering a square, upright conveyance into a long, low rectangular one; famously putting fins and wraparound windshields on hardtops. More than anything, Harley Earl and his patron, GM CEO Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., knew that a car was not just a means of transportation—it was a fashion accessory. Before the presentation, take a look at this short and amusing GM Motorama film, *Design for Dreaming*.

*Stanley Lecture: August 29, 2020; 1PM; free; reservations required—email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.*



Photos: courtesy Richard Stanley

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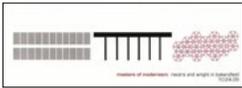
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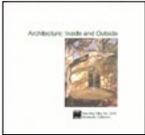
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# SAH/SCC PUBLICATIONS



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$5 each

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



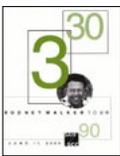
\_\_\_\_\_ at \$3 each

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



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$6 each

**Irving Gill: Los Angeles:** 10-page booklet featuring photos and articles on Gill and three residential projects in LA.



\_\_\_\_\_ 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.



\_\_\_\_\_ \$4 each

**Greta Magnusson Grossman:** 3.5" x 8" 2-page color brochure featuring two residences by Greta Grossman.



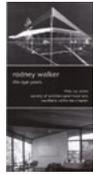
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**Space and Learning:** eight-page, four-color brochure on the historical and contemporary legacy of LA school architecture, featuring projects by Richard Neutra, Thom Mayne, Rios Clementi Hale Studios, and others.



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$5 each

**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

**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.



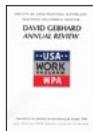
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**Union Station and MTA Transit Center:** bi-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos.



\_\_\_\_\_ 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 \$5 each

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



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$10 each

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



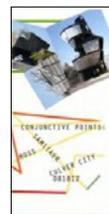
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**Killingsworth: A Master Plan for Learning:** 11"x17", four-color walking tour brochure of the Cal State Long Beach campus features history of master plan development by architect Edward A. Killingsworth, FAIA.



\_\_\_\_\_ 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.



\_\_\_\_\_ 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 \$4 each

**Designed for Learning:** 11"x17" walking tour map and brochure of the University of California, Santa Barbara, campus.

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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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## SAH/SCC Members' Forum

Welcome to the new feature, "SAH/SCC Members' Forum," where we invite members to share their news, writing, and projects. In this inaugural installment, Life Member Leslie J. Erganian offers an excerpt from "Acquiring a Profession," a chapter of "Modern Maverick: Raphael S. Soriano," which she wrote for *100 Years of Sephardic Los Angeles, A Project of the UCLA Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies*. The complete essay may be read [here](#). If you'd like to contribute, please contact me at [info@taylor-pr.com](mailto:info@taylor-pr.com).

—Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA, Editor, SAH/SCC News



Portraits of the architect as a young man.

Photos: courtesy of the Wagener-Erganian collection

As Soriano's architectural beliefs began to diverge from USC's curriculum offerings, he began to seek inspiration elsewhere. A friend suggested that he attend a double lecture given by Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra at the downtown Philharmonic Auditorium. There, in the embrace of a space whose walls were imbued with music, he was introduced to the charisma of Wright's personality and the clarity of Neutra's ideas. Whether this lecture precipitated his Beaux Arts rebellion, or simply offered him support for the direction his progressive mind had already chosen, Soriano must have left the auditorium that night strengthened by the knowledge that he was not alone in his desire to create new forms for architecture beyond the traditions of the past.

Within the next two years, two important modern architecture exhibits were held in Los Angeles: an exhibit focused exclusively on modern architecture held at UCLA in 1932 and, in 1933, the Museum of Modern Art's pivotal International Style exhibit held at the Bullock's Wilshire department store. During this same period, Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler—both Austrian-born Jews who, like Soriano, settled in Los Angeles in the 1920s—collaborated in a series of modern architecture lectures given at UCLA. All around Soriano, there were increasing signs that it was time for architecture to shake loose the past and to deliver entirely innovative solutions. In order to find these, Soriano would have to continue to map out his own progressive course of acquiring knowledge.

By his third academic year at USC, his fellow students had come to recognize not only the vigor and boldness of Soriano's personality but his unusual strength in engineering. This, coupled with his excellent drafting abilities, made him an ideal candidate for an internship with an established architectural practice. No architect's views had impressed him more than those of Neutra. Believing him to be the first great American rationalist, Soriano came to him and asked for work in the summer of 1932. Impressed by Soriano's drawings, Neutra asked him to come work at his Douglas Street studio without pay and accompanied by his own supply of India ink. Soriano seized the opportunity, later avowing that Neutra exerted a "great influence on me," admiring everything from the clarity and quality of Neutra's designs to his tremendous sensitivity to colors and textures.

During Soriano's fifth and final year at USC, Schindler came to campus in the hopes of discovering a talented young assistant for himself. Soriano's thesis project inspired Schindler to offer him a job for a dollar a day. Much to Neutra's dismay, Soriano went to work for Schindler. After two months, not even the pay could entice Soriano to remain. Raphael found Schindler's drawings to be confused, lacking clarity of vision, and so he returned to Neutra's office, where he continued to refine his own vision outside the classroom, in an atmosphere that stimulated him even without pay.