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Transcendence and permanence

You can never learn anything that is not a part of yourself.
Louis Kahn, “Silence and Light”, 1969

The Mediterranean is full of wonder and beauty. The parts I saw around Italy I shall never forget.
Louis Kahn letter to Anne Tyng, 1953

Louis I. Kahn fascinate us all with his passion for Mediterranean culture. Precisely at the moment when the centre of the dominant culture moved from Europe to North America, he was able to immerse himself in the Roman brick structures of the great classical buildings, interpreting the timeless forms of antiquity. When the glass curtain of the bureaucratic International Style became trivialized, he turned to the archaic sources of architecture to discover light, matter and desire, in the pyramids of Gisé or in the ruins of the Caracalla Baths. Kahn is a unique case in the history of 20th-century architecture: he introduced the question of monumentality, a matter heretical to the Modern Movement, and emphasized the value of permanence, and the tectonic character and materiality of constructive elements. He was able to read History creatively, interpreting the permanent value of the monuments for the community and rescuing their public sense of place. Posing questions such as “what do you want, brick?” or “does the inside of a column contain a promise?”, he produced an impressive body of work and a doctrine with originality; often appearing philosophical, poetic or even mystical. Moving away from dogmas, but never losing the functional and constructive sense of modulation, he broke the systematic use of fluid space and reintroduced a sense of ritual and the value of solemnity, while achieving the most suggestive syntheses between modernity and tradition, as Otávio Paz recognized, between the use of technique and memory.

Louis Isadore Kahn was born on 1901 on the Baltic island of Osel which, at that time, was part of Russia (now Saarema, Estonia). He grew up in the bosom of a Jewish family of Osel which, at that time, was part of Russia (now Saarema, Estonia). He grew up in the bosom of a Jewish family context. Kahn chose to be a painter, but his fascination for architectural history led him to enrol in architecture. In 1928, 4 years after graduating, he travelled for a year in Europe, drawing the temples of Antiquity. In 1935 he returned to Italy, beginning what would become a new cycle in his life: the period of growing glory that nurtured him until 1974, the year of his death. In fact, he had lived for 50 years and worked for about 25 when he finally found fame, with the Yale Center for British Art. This DJ reveals the cross-section of subjects that restoration raises in Kahn works. From houses to facilities, from public authorities to private owners, from America to Israel or India, written contributions demonstrate how his buildings have proven their resilience and character.

I wish to thank David Fixler for being such a dedicated and committed guest editor, the authors for having shared their remarkable experiences in the restoration work, and William Whitaker and David Brownlee for the interviews that complete this Journal with their unique insights. Very special thanks must be given to the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania, for having gracefully shared precious iconography and, in that context, once again to William Whitaker who daily “watches over” the Louis I. Kahn Collection, with more than 200 projects, 6,363 drawings, 29,813 working drawings, 100 models, 12,140 photographs, correspondence, a personal library and awards. In fact, the essential revision of Kahn’s work and theories was made two decades ago, when the investigation carried out from this monumental archive resulted in the exhibition that travelled between 1991 and 1994 to 7 museums in America, Europe and Asia, and the magnificent In the Realm of Architecture that constitutes the work of reference to understand the work and the man, that has been completed since then (see exhibitions and book reviews section). Finally, a special thanks to GCI, for their support to this journal, to Yale Center for British Art directors’ Amy Meyers and Cecie Clement, and to docomomo US/Philadelphia and friends who conducted visits on Kahn buildings: Bianca Storni, Bryn Mawr, Charles Firmin-Didot, Dan Macey, Larry Korman, Maureen Ward and Paul Savidge.

After more than a half-century of use, it is deeply gratifying to remember his knowledge and built heritage, renovated by some of the most skilled architectural offices, and can still rediscover the intensity of its poetics, where the transcendence of architecture is perpetuated with power, beauty and plenitude.

References

Kahn's Modernism and its Renewal

BY DAVID N. FIXLER

The late architect and historian Stanford Anderson once remarked that authenticity is the third rail of architectural debate — a place to venture at one's peril. Notwithstanding, any architectural intervention demands that we engage and understand what is essential — authentic — in the original to its creator, those for whom it was created and all those all who experience it — to ensure fidelity to the character and integrity of the original work. Louis I. Kahn was one of a handful of truly significant architects of the last 75 years, and arguably the one who (with Le Corbusier) will have the most lasting effect upon architecture over time. As we now assess his legacy and develop interventions for renewal, it is instructive to contemplate how our understanding of Kahn’s aesthetic of authenticity — buildings as "instrument[s] that exaggerate, and so heighten one’s awareness of nature’s infinite variations" — should affect our approach to their conservation, adaptation and renewal.

Kahn had an inordinate interest in creating works whose material authenticity and spatial definition would be evident both autonomously and as component parts of a larger ensemble, thereby clarifying both the tectonic logic of the work and the relationship of these materials to their cultural context. This was both a reaction to the material and spatial ambiguity of the International Style and a nod toward Wright and the post-war Le Corbusier, but at a more fundamental level it was about a desire to reify its expression; to connect the material reality of the dressing of the joint and its masterful juxtaposition with refinements of its making, the almost decorative possibilities of the dressing of the joint and its masterful juxtaposition with other materials such as brick and wood, rather than the more raw, sculptural concrete architecture that would come to be known as Brutalism. Kahn’s evocation of history in fact reflects a modernist’s search to more deeply integrate the principles he saw as the essence of the power of archaic, particularly antique architecture in its ruined state — into an ethos of human-centered placemaking in service of uplifting the human condition. He achieves this through a methodology that combines an essential understanding of the evocative power of architectural form as it has been used throughout history with an understanding of contingent present circumstance — which includes a rigorous commitment to formal abstraction.

Renewal without disrupting the aura that Kahn generated in his best work is both art and an exacting science. As the essays within this volume affirm, the successful conservation and in some cases transformation of Kahn’s work demands rigorous scholarship, design and technical precision and a strong dose of both creative restraint and emotional detachment. More perhaps than any architect of the 20th century, Kahn is viewed as a sage whose aphorisms contributed to his reputation as a quasi-mystical figure. While these sayings have meaning and have undoubtedly contributed to Kahn’s exalted stature they can also be mis-read when taken out of context and contribute to a hagiographic interpretation of his work that can inhibit the intellectual autonomy necessary to formulate optimal rehabilitation scenarios.

Which brings us to the work at hand. Most of the essays in this volume directly address the rehabilitation of a representative cross-section of Kahn’s mature works through strategies of conservation, restoration and adaptive reuse. The earliest of these — the Yale Art Gallery, was also the first of Kahn’s buildings to undergo a comprehensive rehabilitation. Lloyd DesBrise’s essay focuses not merely on the renovation, but instead poses the question, through comparison of the rigorous approach undertaken to the Yale project to the neglect of a now demolished structure by Kahn, the Coward Shoe store in Central Philadelphia, as to the validity of the relative heritage values of different building types (commercial vs. institutional) within the panoply of modern resources.

Anne Weber and Michael Mills discuss the meticulous process undertaken to stabilize and restore Kahn’s seminal Trenton...
Bath House, raising questions familiar to those who work with ancient structures and ruins as to how much of the evidence of wear and decay should be left as a testament to the building’s change over time — particularly as in this case it was at least to some degree the architects original intent create a work that would wear its age in this fashion — and what kinds of measures are appropriate to design into the intervention to arrest further deterioration.

My own essay on the Richards Lab renovations describes the implementation of adaptive reuse and energy enhancement strategies necessary to enable Richards to continue to serve a useful function. Richards is a classic example of an iconic but chronically dysfunctional work that required robust technical and programmatic intervention to ensure its survival. Here is where addressing the notion as to what makes these works genuine — what defines the underlying authenticity of the resource — becomes important as part of the art of meshing conservation with creative interpretation of character definition to achieve optimal technical and aesthetic results.

As work that is now part of a larger conservation management planning process, Kyle Normandin and Sara Lardinois present a glimpse into the exhaustive project to restore the teak wood paneling system at the Salk Institute — highlighting an effort that seeks to maximize retention of original fabric, while at the same time optimally balancing the client’s desire for a consistent appearance with Kahn’s original intent to allow the teak to weather to a natural gray finish, which could not occur due to the presence of fungal spores from the Eucalyptus trees present on the site.

The topic of wood conservation is pursued further by Andrew Fearon in an essay describing the history and ongoing conservation efforts at several of Kahn’s houses, all of which utilize various species of wood cladding and fenestration. Once again, the efforts are geared to executing durable solutions that still enable the acquisition of patina, and the considerable effort — both in the rehabilitation and in ongoing and future maintenance — that is necessary to strike that optimum balance. In both this and the Salk essays, it is important to note that the authors are careful to place their efforts in the larger context of these buildings as representative works of Kahn, and how their efforts in renewing these character-defining materials must continue to mesh with and represent the full range of values inherent in each resource.

In the early 2000s, The Yale Center for British Art was the first of Kahn’s buildings to undertake a comprehensive conservation management plan, and this work in turn set the tone for an exemplary rehabilitation project that was completed in 2016. Renovation architect George Knight describes the process by which interventions were undertaken to upgrade systems, restore or replace worn finishes, and in several areas, to undertake changes that enable the realization of more of Kahn’s original design intent — particularly the opening of the long gallery. While these kinds of interventions inevitably invite questions as to the legitimacy — and authenticity — of implementing unexecuted ideas after the fact, in this case the change can be justified through strong programmatic or practical technical reasons. Brinda Somaya tackles serious material conservation issues as well as programmatic updates in her work on renovations to portions of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. The problems relating to the conservation of deteriorating brick masonry and reinforcement in the typical exterior wall systems are ongoing (and to some degree intractable) issues that particularly highlight the importance of adhering to strict conservation protocols for cleaning and maintenance in order to prolong rather than shorten the material service life. She also touches on how technology and changes in pedagogy have altered the function of the library and how these alterations were managed in a way that respects the original idea and fabric to the greatest degree possible.

The final contribution is a documentary essay by Jeremie Hoffman and Hadas Nevo-Goldberst on Kahn’s only executed work in Israel, the Wolfson School of Mechanical Engineering at Tel Aviv University, which was not completed until 1982, six years after his death. This is a large, complex but relatively little-known work outside of Israel, and while this paper presents foundational knowledge about the building and its genesis, as a lesser known and largely posthumous project of Kahn’s, this is a work that will benefit from further future research.

The renewal of Kahn’s legacy simultaneously reinforces traditional conservation methodologies, while demanding that we confront — at Kahn’s behest — the authenticity of the well-used and weathered artifact with Ruskinian skepticism as to the ultimate wisdom of what one is to undertake in managing its long-term stewardship. Kahn clearly believed his buildings should last and display the marks of their age, regarding this as positive affirmation that his work expresses essential truths about the relationship of humankind to the built environment, and through it to nature.

Thus, to renew is not to make new; rather it is to stabilize and regenerate, acknowledging the effects of both the passage of time and the evolution of function on the structure; carefully interweaving repairs and new elements in ways that balance their newness against the rich, patinated qualities of the original material. The precision and quality of Kahn’s architecture demands that these issues be confronted and addressed head on — though they will be met with often withering scrutiny. The project case studies herein illustrate the struggle to achieve this “authentic” balance, and it is our hope that they will contribute to the rich dialogue that has emerged within docomomo and the broader design and conservation communities on how to sustain, renew, enhance — and thereby assure the survival of — both the legacy of Kahn and by extension the rich and diverse heritage of Modernism.

David Fixler

Faia. Fapt. Architect specializing in conservation and adaptive reuse, with focus on modern properties; lecturer at Harvard gsd. His projects include Alvar Aalto’s Baker House and Eero Saarinen’s Krsge Auditorium and Chapel at mit, Kahn’s Richards Labs at University of Pennsylvania and the United Nations Headquarters in New York. He has taught and lectured around the world, and his many articles have been published internationally. He has guest edited scholarly journals, and co-edited Aalto and America from Yale University Press. A Peer Review Architect for the United States General Services Administration, he plays a leadership role in conservation organizations including aPT, as co-founder and former Chair of the Technical Committee on Modern Heritage, the SaH, and docomomo, where he has served internationally on the isc/registers, and as co-founder and current president of docomomo-US/New England.

Notes
1 Sarah Goldhagen. Louis Kahn’s Situated Modernism, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2001, 158.
What Decides “Heritage”?
Lessons from a Comparison of Louis Kahn’s Commercial and Institutional Projects

BY LLOYD L. DESBRISAY

In the quest to save recent-past, mid-century modern buildings, it is important to recognize how symbolic and commercial considerations influence the likelihood that some buildings are preserved while other buildings are demolished. Simply put, why does one building survive and another not? This article compares two of Louis I. Kahn’s projects — one a commercial building and the other institutional. The comparison examines how various dynamics facilitate or hinder the preservation of modern buildings. Further analysis considers steps that preservation-minded individuals and organizations might consider to retain and restore more modern buildings.

Introduction

This article reflects on the issue of the longevity of recent-past mid-century modern buildings and the dynamics — symbolic, economic, and political — behind why some buildings are preserved while others are demolished. It will compare two of Louis I. Kahn’s earliest buildings — the 1949 Coward Shoe Store (Coward) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (figure 01) and the 1953 Yale University Art Gallery (yuag) in New Haven, Connecticut (figure 02) — to examine how the dynamics cited above resulted in the very different outcomes for these contemporaneous buildings. While the Coward building was demolished in 2014 — the last of Kahn’s commercial buildings to be demolished — the YUAG, an institutional building that is regarded as one of his first great works, was painstakingly and expertly rehabilitated between 2001 and 2006.

This comparison might strike the reader as unexpected given the lack of public recognition for the shoe store and the global renown of the museum. However, it is an instructive comparison given the similarity in Kahn’s experimental use of materials, in both cases, and given the differences in use and ownership of the buildings. The comparison thereby allows us to ask questions about how the dynamics cited above facilitate or hinder the preservation of modern buildings. How does the way cultural institutions are given more symbolic value than commercial buildings affect preservation efforts? How do economic pressures unique to the commercial sector influence preservation consideration? How do local political dynamics, including difficulties of building constituencies for historic preservation, shape preservation outcomes? I was drawn to this comparison as I reviewed recent writings on Kahn’s work because both buildings were built within four years of each other and because Coward appears to me, based on my observations from my three-year experience renovating YUAG as project architect for the construction phase, to be a testing ground for ideas later used at YUAG (in proportions, detailing approaches and the use of large expanses of glass which were not thereafter a Kahn staple).

Through the comparison, this article argues that there are symbolic and economic considerations — which are, of course, grounded in political realities — that explain why some buildings are saved and some buildings are not saved. Therefore, we need to reconsider how we as preservationists make calculations about what constitutes our built “heritage” and develop more effective strategies to save buildings. This is crucial if we are to preserve not just what is left of Kahn’s legacy but also endangered mid-century modern buildings in general. While the last decades have seen an increase in the push to preserve modern buildings that are well-recognized masterpieces, many lesser-known buildings, including commercial buildings, are also worthy of our preservation efforts. Our calculations must identify ways to better protect and restore buildings of less renown as well as those considered part of the modernist “canon.”

Problem

Preservationists have pointed out that modern buildings are seen, by many, as not as worthy of preservation efforts as other more typical restoration subjects that date further back into the past, and that are made of more popularly symbolic “historic” materials such as brick masonry or stone. This tends to be either because of the mid-century buildings’ relatively recent history and/or because the materials used by their architects...
The Trenton Bath House Restoration: Challenges in Sustainability

BY MICHAEL MILLS AND ANNE WEBER

The Trenton Bath House complex holds an important place in Louis I. Kahn’s œuvre. As he stated: “The world discovered me after I designed the Richards Laboratories building, but I discovered myself after designing that little concrete bath house in Trenton”1. Given its significance, a thoughtful restoration that allowed the buildings to remain in active use was imperative. Because the complex embodies in miniature many of the theoretical and practical considerations that accompany the work of Kahn and other modern-era architects, the process, outcome, and projected future of the restoration effort are instructive.

Project background
Louis I. Kahn was hired by the Trenton Jewish Community Center (JCC) in 1954 to design a new community and recreation complex for the organization, which was relocating from an urban site. The first plans were produced in February 1955. The design and program for the Bath House evolved through the spring of 1955 and included changing rooms for men and women with showers and toilets; a place for patrons to store belongings; and a snack bar. The Bath House and the adjoining pool were the first portions to be built (figure 02), and opened for use on Sunday, July 31, 1955, without their roofs, which were then constructed by October 1955.

The JCC operated a summer day camp program to provide structured recreational activities for the children of its members as part of its mission. The Day Camp Pavilions were conceived and constructed within an extremely short period of time: an early drawing is dated 1957, and construction was completed by August of the same year. The day camp program continues today under the auspices of the Ewing Township Recreation department, and is extremely popular. Ultimately, the Community Center, the largest component of the complex, was not designed by Kahn, but rather by the firm of Kelly and Gruzen and completed in 1962. This building serves today as a Senior Center for Ewing Township.

The Bath House and Pavilions reflect an important advancement in the way modern principles were infused with lessons from the past. The Bath House comprises five square, concrete block “rooms” arranged in a Greek cross plan (figure 06). Four of the rooms are covered by wood-framed roofs with black asphalt shingles; the fifth is an open courtyard. The roofs, which appear to float, are pyramidal in shape and rest lightly on large concrete block “columns” with concrete caps. These columns generate the narrow servant zones for the primary served zones, a device that Kahn developed further in the Richards Labs and other major works. The four Day Camp Pavilions are centered on a small courtyard and each is set at a slight angle to the next, their arrangement recalling Kahn’s sketches of the classical temples at Corinth (figure 07). The Bath House and Pavilions were listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 1984, prior to reaching 50 years of age, reflecting their high level of significance.

In 1997, the Bath House and Day Camp were included on Preservation New Jersey’s 10 Most Endangered list when the JCC applied for a demolition permit for two of the Day Camp Pavilions. There was international outcry about the possible destruction of any of Kahn’s design which led to a series of meetings between the JCC, AIA Historic Resources Committee, the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, the Ewing Township Historic Preservation Commission, and Preservation New Jersey. The JCC was advised about the availability of capital grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust and the need to prepare a Historic Preservation Plan as a prerequisite.

Although the JCC had long performed routine maintenance, and little physical change had occurred, there was not a full understanding of the vulnerability and ongoing needs of the historic fabric. Both the Bath House and the Day Camp had suffered from continual exposure to the elements, magnified by the temporality of the materials and original design features, including: freestanding block walls with no copings, no gutters at the roof edge, and inadequate drainage of both the building and site. When asked if Kahn had ever considered gutters, project architect Anne Tyng said they had not. She reported that they liked the poetic effect of water running over the masonry as if it were a ruin and did not want to interrupt that pattern. Unfortunately, the materiality of the complex was not resilient enough to resist deterioration in the freeze/thaw weather cycles of New Jersey. And with the lack of resiliency, this monumental complex based on classical design principles fell into extreme disrepair.
Managing Expectations
– Contemporary Design Culture, Conservation and the Transformation of The Richards Laboratories

BY DAVID FIXLER

Architectural culture in the 1950s was widely perceived by many architects and scholars as having largely become dominated by formulaic responses to the demands of the commercial market and the embrace of the economic expediencies of curtain wall technology by the construction industry. Reactions to this trend ranged from the “New Formalist” explorations of architects such as Edward Durrell Stone (1902–1978) and Minoru Yamasaki (1912–1986) to the highly diverse geometric explorations of Eero Saarinen (1910–1961), but perhaps the most critical and complex response to these soft intellectual paths came in the deliberate search by Louis I. Kahn for an architecture that would speak directly to its own material and function.

Designed in 1957–58 and with construction substantially complete in 1961, the Alfred Newton Richards Bio-Medical Research Laboratories at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia signal an epochal statement in Kahn’s maturation as a designer and more fundamentally, in the direction of architectural discourse in post-WWII America. Two essential principles are particularly in evidence: 1) the laboratories are perhaps the quintessential example in Kahn’s oeuvre of the careful treatment of materials to reflect and celebrate their fundamental nature through their tectonic and honorific role in the structure, and 2) no other building of Kahn’s (with the possible exception of the Salk Laboratories) more lucidly expresses Kahn’s signature concept of the separation of primary use and service functions within the buildings into “servant” and “served” spaces and volumes.

The Richards Building was immediately recognized and widely heralded as signaling a new direction both in American architecture and the trajectory of Modernism. Scholars such as Vincent Scully (1920–2017) proclaimed its genius, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York mounted an entire show on Richards alone in 1961 — prior to its final completion. Curator Wilder Green stated in the exhibition catalog that Richards is “considered by many authorities here and abroad as possibly the most significant example of post-war architecture in the United States... [and] as individually authoritative an act of architecture as exists in this country today”.

It is perhaps fitting that unqualified praise of this magnitude could only be stated prior to Richards becoming fully operational, as the flaws in its functional logic (some pointed out by Reyner Banham) soon became apparent. Kahn at this moment in his career imagined the way in which the scientists would want to work to be analogous to that of the architect — in open, relatively partition free studio spaces. He is alleged to have commented on his design for the lab floors as follows: “No space you can devise can satisfy these requirements. I thought what they should have was a corner for thought, in a word, a studio instead of slices of
Louis Kahn, Salk Institute, La Jolla, California, USA, 1959–1965. Overall view, looking southeast across the plaza, following completion of project.
Conserving the Teak Window Wall Assemblies
at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies

BY SARA LARDINOIS AND KYLE NORMANDIN

In 2013 the Salk Institute for Biological Studies partnered with the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) to commence development of a conservation program for the long-term care of the teak window walls. Phase 1 of the program included preliminary historic research and an assessment of significance, surveys and investigative inspection openings, wood and fungus identification, and analyses of past surface treatments. Guidelines were then developed based on three treatment approaches, ranging from in situ cleaning and treatment, to selective repairs, and finally in-kind replacement of teak wood. In Phase 2 of the work, the GCI and Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) developed a trial mock-up program to assess the protocols of the three treatments. This article will review the overarching goal of the treatment approaches, integrating conservation and repair needs with select modifications to the window detailing to improve long-term performance, including surface treatments to protect the teak wood and retard fungal growth and weathering over time.

Introduction
Situated on a Southern California bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies (the Salk Institute, 1965) is one of architect Louis I. Kahn’s finest works. Among the major architectural elements of the complex are just over 200 prefabricated teak window wall assemblies, set within openings in the concrete walls of the studies and offices that flank the Institute’s iconic plaza (figure 01). After 50 years in an exposed marine environment, the window assemblies were deteriorated, weathered, and in need of repair. The Salk Institute embarked upon a conservation-based repair program from 2013 to 2017 to address the deterioration of the window walls; the aim was to develop a conservation program in which the original window assemblies could be retained, as they are a critical part of the site’s cultural significance. This article provides a brief overview of the history and design of the Salk Institute and then discusses the significance of the window wall assemblies, the approach taken to conserving them, and some of the key challenges of the work.

History and significance
The Salk Institute was founded in 1959 by Jonas Salk, the creator of the first successful polio vaccine. His goal was to establish an institute where biologists and scientists from other specializations would explore questions about the basic principles of life and, through their collaborative work, consider the wider implications of their discoveries for the future of humanity. Over 50 years later, the Institute is home to internationally renowned and award-winning scientists whose main areas of study and research include the neurosciences, genetics, immunology, and plant biology.

The buildings that would house Dr. Salk’s institute were a key part of his vision as a place of collaborative science and individual contemplation. For their creation, he turned to architect Kahn. Dr. Salk first met and visited Kahn in Philadelphia in December 1959, where they discussed the relationship of science and the humanities. Given the desired design program to build a laboratory complex, Dr. Salk visited Kahn’s work at Richards Medical Research Laboratories at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The visit marked the beginning of their work together on the Salk Institute, as well as a friendship and collaboration between the two men that was to last until Kahn’s death in 1974. Dr. Salk was an involved client and both men regarded one another favorably throughout their collaboration on the project, with Kahn calling Dr. Salk “my most trusted critic”.

The City of San Diego made a gift of a 27-acre parcel of land in La Jolla, north of San Diego, to establish the Institute. Initial design work began in 1959; the first concrete was poured in 1962; and construction was completed in 1965. Kahn originally conceived of a tripartite design for the campus complex, consisting of laboratories, meeting places, and living places; however, only the laboratory complex was constructed. It consists of two nearly identical wings of laboratory space, free-standing study towers,
ESSAYS

With the Help of Nature: Kahn, the Wood House and the Culture of Stewardship

BY ANDREW FEARON

Louis I. Kahn’s attitude toward materials was expressed in his documented preference to allow exterior wood siding to be left unfinished and weather to a silver grey. Influenced by vernacular architecture of the American rural landscape, this natural treatment has proved a challenge for stewards, as exposure to the elements is gradually destructive. Like many works of the Modern Movement that retain their original siding, Kahn’s wood-clad structures stand at a critical crossroads where the architect’s intent and retention of fabric converge. A selected group of Kahn’s residential works are examined with respect to the architect’s employment of wood, the inherent conditions of each and the conservation efforts that are evolving in response.

Introduction

It’s the beauty of what you create – that you honor the material for what it really is.

As Louis I. Kahn remains a central figure in post-war American Modernism, the extent of his contributions to the history of architecture are still being explored and understood. Influential on generations of architects for monumental works such as the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California (1959-67) and the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut (1969-77), Kahn’s highly organized spaces continue to resonate today both conceptually and materially. Although best known for his institutional and civic structures, nine of his private house designs were built between 1941 and 1974, all in the Philadelphia area where Kahn lived and worked. Experimental with concepts of planning, structure and order, they together represent the architect’s regional connection as a significant typology within modern heritage. Recent scholarship evaluating these residential works brings a group of Kahn’s wood-clad structures into focus. From the still growing reverence for his legacy extends a new interest in the conservation of his houses as a natural progression.

In contrast to the forceful drama of his institutional commissions in concrete, the houses of Kahn reveal a gentler framework for the human experience relying more heavily on the familiar elements of wood and local stone. Kahn’s material vocabulary on a domestic scale references a consistent attitude toward traditional examples, often drawing from experiences of the rural and coastal landscapes of New England and Canada’s Maritime Provinces. Like the weathered siding of an old barn, this commonality with vernacular forms transcends conventional historicism as an evolutionary thread that connects ancient worlds to the modern era. His philosophy dictating the application of natural materials is fully expressed in his documented preference to allow the exterior wood of these structures to weather naturally to a silver grey.

“Natural wood as it greys is so marvelous. I think a yellow house and green leaves looks awful, but a grey house and green leaves looks absolutely marvelous. We have to ask nature to help us out”.

Among this group of designs for houses with exterior wood are the following, these include a list of specifications for finishing that are consistent with the architect’s documented comments on the subject of weathered wood:

Genel House (1948-1951)
Exterior millwork and trim: clear Tidewater red cypress
Finish: one coat of boiled linseed oil

Fisher House (1960-1967)
Exterior siding: t & g joint Tidewater cypress siding
Finish: two coats of natural (no color) wood sealer, Rez or equivalent

Honickman Residence (1973), unbuilt
Exterior siding: 1 x 1 in. T & G cypress
Finish: none except for doors and shutters (two coats of colorless varnish-matte finish)

Korman House (1973)
1 x 3 in. T & G cypress
Finish: none except on doors and shutters (two coats of colorless varnish-matte finish)

Kahn’s intent for finishing can be described as minimal or natural in the case of the Genel House (figure 01), employing one coat of linseed oil, then later with the Fisher House, in
The Yale Center for British Art: a Building Conservation

BY GEORGE KNIGHT

The Yale Center for British Art was designed by acclaimed American architect Louis I. Kahn to house a collection of British art on the campus of Yale University. The Center, Kahn’s third and final museum building, was designed between 1970 and 1974 and opened its doors to the public in 1977. By 2002 it was evident that the building was fast approaching a crossroads: finishes had reached the end of their lives, program space was in desperate demand, patron amenities and life safety measures no longer met contemporary standards and, worst of all, infrastructural systems strained to sustain the environments demanded to protect the collections. The integrity of Kahn’s architecture was in jeopardy.

What follows is the story of what came next: how the building was painstakingly researched and analyzed, and how a series of projects ensued to re-equip the Center to present and protect its collection for decades to come.

Conserving Louis I. Kahn: the Yale Center for British Art renewed

In 1966 Paul Mellon, son of an Englishwoman and lifelong anglophile, set forth a vision for a center for the study of British culture in America at his alma mater, Yale University. Mellon provided funds to acquire a property at the edge of the university’s central campus in New Haven; to construct a building; to fill it with his extraordinary collection of paintings, drawings, prints, rare books, manuscripts, and sculpture; and to endow it with resources for maintenance and growth. The resulting Yale Center for British Art holds the foremost collection of British art outside of the United Kingdom and hosts visitors and scholars from around the world. It is also one of the most celebrated buildings of the 20th century and is forever associated with its acclaimed architect, Kahn.

An incontestably brilliant architect and artist, Kahn was nonetheless best known as an educator and theoretician for most of his early career which began in earnest when he was hired to teach at the Yale School of Architecture in 1947. It was not until 1951 when he won the commission to design the expansion of the Yale Art Gallery (completed in 1953) largely due to the endorsement of the Chair of the Architecture Department at Yale, George Howe, that Kahn’s career as an architect was launched. He subsequently produced such noteworthy buildings as the Richards Medical Research Laboratories at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Assembly Building in Dhaka, the Phillips Exeter Academy Library, the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, and posthumously, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park in New York, constituting one of the most important architectural legacies of the 20th century.

While the Yale Art Gallery, the university’s first modernist building and Kahn’s first large scale commission, had been largely successful, it was not without some controversy and, as it came time to select an architect for Mellon’s bequest, Kahn was among a group of architects that included Philip Johnson, Robert Venturi, and I. M. Pei. Pei had recently been commissioned to design both the Mellon-supported East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C and the Paul Mellon Arts Center at nearby Choate Rosemary Hall and appeared to have a distinct advantage. However, despite this formidable competition, Kahn was selected on the strength of his recently completed Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California (completed in 1963) and the still under-construction Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

With the design process beginning in 1970, the building site itself was immediately controversial. Never before had Yale, still affected by the civil unrest that beset New Haven two years prior, built its core campus across Chapel Street, New Haven’s historic boundary between town and gown. Ironically, this decision would foster some of the more deft and innovative measures in the design such as the inclusion of storefronts along the commercial street, the restrained massing which reinforces the street wall, and the inclusion of a public plaza at the building’s western edge. By late 1971, the design of the current building was largely resolved and approved for development by the Yale Corporation at the end of that year. The design details were completed in Kahn’s Philadelphia office and contract drawings were released in 1972 with construction beginning later that fall. Alas, Kahn would die in New York City in March of 1974 with the building structure reaching only the second floor. The firm of Pellecchia and Meyers, comprised of two
In February 2018, Ana Tostões interviewed David Brownlee, pioneer researcher on Louis I. Kahn and an historian of modern architecture and professor of the history of art at the University of Pennsylvania, in order to debate Kahn’s realm of ideas and their contemporary significance.

David Brownlee was guest curator of the exhibition Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture [Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1992], and is co-author of the homonymous book (with David G. De Long, New York, 1991, translated into four other languages) that stands as the first worldwide comprehensive publication on Louis I. Kahn.

Ana Tostões What have moved you to approach Louis I. Kahn and to edit, with David De Long, the book Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture (1991)?

David Brownlee I was interested in Kahn for three converging reasons: 1) Having been born and grown up in Philadelphia, I was always acutely aware of that distinctive and relatively underappreciated architectural character, 2) When I graduated from college, in 1973, Kahn was still alive and he was the great hero of the time, representing a new future for modern architecture, representing a change. We had to sort of look ahead of the text book to see beyond Le Corbusier which is where my first teacher in modern architecture tended to stop, 3) In 1986, when I finished my PhD, I got a job at the University of Pennsylvania. The university had just recently received the deposit there all the papers from the office of Kahn. They were uncatalogued and not ready to study. So, suddenly I was there, 29 years old, with this great mountain of material from Kahn, arguably the most important architect in the world after WWII. The former Dean of the School of Design at Penn, G. Holmes Perkins, mostly known as Dean Perkins, hired Julia Moore Converse to be the curator of the architectural archives – which was a hypothetical one, because there was no archive: there was a pile of boxes, the Friedhich Weinbrenner drawings and a scattering of other things that Holmes had purchased. Julia and I recognized that our moral responsibility was to undertake the study of the Kahn papers. When we were beginning, there was no institutional establishment for this, so the first thing we decided to do was a small project which could earn credibility for the architectural archives so we could do something bigger. That’s why we chose to work on Friedrich Weinbrenner, and we managed, in fact, to win a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, establishing the architectural archives as a professional organization. Then David De Long came to Penn, from Columbia University, to be the head of the historic preservation program, and we quickly became friends.

Soon we decided that we needed to work with Julia Converse to organize the papers of Kahn and try to understand this most important American architect. Even if, up until this time, I had worked mostly in the 19th century and on European architecture, being a Philadelphian in Philadelphia, I recognized almost a moral importance of accepting this responsibility. Then, David and I started holding, for a number of years, seminars in which our students began to look at the materials. We spent several years teaching and trying to begin establishing, with the students, a timeline and a chronology. This was fundamental, because no one knew him before the Yale Art Gallery. Like the invisible man, Kahn suddenly became apparent in 1951. Then, there was also the myth of him as being a hopelessly mystical, impossibly impractical man, whose greatest achievements were in seducing a lot of women. We were determined to be as objective and scholarly as we could possibly be. Recognizing the vastness of the work, we realized that we needed to work with a team of other scholars, now graduated students in Historic Preservation and in Art History, some of them extremely important. Julia Converse, along the way, got Garland Press interested in joining the team, as they believed it would be valuable to publish all the drawings of Kahn. And they did it. This enormous series of volumes was created from all the tiny, faint drawings of Kahn. Then Richard Koshalek, the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, who was very interested in architecture, conceived the idea of a Kahn exhibition. Like David and me, he recognized the great opportunity for a complete presentation on Kahn at that time, so he and his assistant director, Sherri Geldin, started to work on it. To work on Kahn, they naturally had to come to Penn, where they found David and me, who became the guest curators of the exhibition. The exhibition offered the opportunity to create the book that became “the” book you were speaking of. It has essays by David, me, and by our students who went on to be now well-established and quite famous architecture historians in their own right. That book was produced for the exhibition that Richard Koshalek agreed to open in Philadelphia, even though it was organized in Los Angeles. It was an exhibition designed by the architect Arato Isozaki with an attention to detail that I had never seen. Every wall had an elevation drawing showing where every object and every label would. All new color photography was commissioned from a Californian photographer, Grant Mumford, and we experimented with things like having video in the exhibition: amazing, moving objects!

AT There were videos with films of Kahn?

DB No. In a sense we were trying to depersonalize it a little bit because of the myth and the cult around his personality. We were trying to be objective art historians, which means, at first, to look at the objects and to analyze the data. Besides, we were also trying to deconstruct the dogma at that time, which was that Kahn had been the father of Postmodernism. There were people who literally said “Kahn was great, if he’d just gone all the way and put a real temple portico on his buildings, if he’d just gotten over his inhibitions and really made a building that looked genuinely Romanesque”, that he was timid, and “it took brave younger architects like Robert Venturi and Bob Stern to go all the way to classical architecture”. It’s certainly the case that Kahn embraced history and, in that respect, he was, I guess we could say, a sort of forefather of the Postmodernism. But one of the results of our frankness was that, when we put the show up, it was not very popular. When we mounted the show in the early 1990s, Kahn was sort of out of fashion and there was a prevailing notion that “well, what is really happening now is Postmodernism, and Kahn just really didn’t get all the way there. And so, there was this global kind of criticism, perceptible in a lot of reviews. Kahn’s importance is recognized more today than it was then. In a way, I think we could say that at the time, the historical narrative was that the future was Postmodernism, that Modernism was dead, and that Kahn was still a modernist. This is sort of interesting, but it is an historical dead-end, and that I think we’ve seen on the last 30 years is that Modernism has had enormous staying power, an enormous vitality and an ability to reinvent itself, and I think Kahn was really among the first to do this, to see that within Modernism there were ideas that could be continuously refreshed – probably because in some respects they were not really modern: they were ancient ideas about timeless things.

AT I was not aware of the debate on Kahn being considered a post-modern architect here. I always understood his importance within the Modern Movement as a work in progress through 20th century and even 21st century. Contrary to some other modern architects, understanding architecture within a global scope, he was able to make the link with memory, with no prejudice. But he was certainly not in the postmodern line.
We are in the Krouz Gallery at the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania. These archives are the driving force for supporting the preservation of the unique legacy of Louis I. Kahn. Bill, you have done fantastic work here, not just in the conservation of the papers in literal terms, but also in connecting people. This is an incredible positive sign for the future.

**William Whitaker** Yes. This is an archive that is valuable beyond the academy and museum. It is integral with maintaining built heritage and to understanding Kahn’s ideas and intent. And that’s inspiring. It’s exciting to understand the level of thinking that went into his work and, later, to witnessing the thoughtful engagement of those responsible for conserving these buildings with his legacy. We’ve seen that demonstrated at places like the Yale Center for British Art, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, and the Toby and Steven Korman House, among others. Great art demands a high level of thinking and understanding for its endurance. We can testify to that and recognize our role in it.

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**Ana Tostões** Congratulations for that, Bill. The Archives have quite a diverse collection, is that correct?

**William Whitaker** Absolutely. We are more than the Louis I. Kahn Collection. The Architectural Archives were established in 1978 and quickly grew to more than 100 collections. Our holdings range from models and drawings – some tiny and others as large as a table — to papers, photographs, material samples and fragments, as well as film and video. One of our largest objects is an ornamental screen designed by Robert Venturi for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Today, our collections include the vast archive of Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, and a range of over 400 others dating from the 17th century to the present. We are particularly proud of the many collections that add depth to our core holdings: those of Kahn in particular.

**Ana Tostões** So, when you acquired the Kahn collection in 1978, we may say that the Archives got more value in a way, because it was a “round collection”, including drawings, writings, and all kinds of different sources.

**William Whitaker** It is a “rounded” archive in the sense that it contains everything that was in Kahn’s office at the time he died – from business records and correspondence from his day-to-day practice to the over 36,000 drawings covering the full development of many of his greatest works, but not all of them. Somehow, not everything was saved or preserved. It has been said that Kahn did not realize or appreciate the value of his drawings until Arthur Drexler put them on view at MoMA in 1961. Other records were kept by clients. Fortunately, many of his clients have seen the value in donating their holdings to the Architectural Archives.

**Ana Tostões** In your daily work, you are in contact with people close to Kahn’s work, collecting stories and other elements necessary to understand and enrich the Archives.

**William Whitaker** Yes, that’s true. We started with the idea of beginning a collection – that will, obviously, never be truly complete – and then seeking out the many layers that can add meaning and depth to the collection. The network of people is fundamental: there are collaborators who run projects (and payroll too) who have material in the personal possession; there are those who were working out in the field overseeing construction (and who bring you the story of living in Bangladesh while sorting out how to actually build the Capital complex at Dhaka and their interactions with that country’s culture and climate); there are the collaborators outside the office, specifically engineers or landscape architects, who worked as consultants and played important roles (such as August Komendant or Harriet Pattison. Both worked closely with Kahn on several major works and donated their collections to the Archives). We recognized that the collections of clients are important. The houses are a central part of Kahn’s built legacy in the Philadelphia region. Clients have knowledge and insight into Kahn’s working process and, because of the relatively small scale of a house commission, allow a closer understanding of his creativity.

**Ana Tostões** So, your work at the Archives is not just to organize things, it is done through creative and interpretive research. Your book, *The Houses of Louis Kahn* (with George Marcus, Yale, 2013), seems to me to act as the fulfillment of your research and contact with Kahn’s clients, staff, etc.

**William Whitaker** The organizing part is incredibly important.

**Ana Tostões** Of course! But when you are organizing, you are studying, and then you start your process of interpretation.

**William Whitaker** Sure. It is fundamentally a process to gain intellectual control of a group of items of historical significance. The discipline of that is incredibly important so that others can get it too. But implicit to that is the sense of why you are saving this material, why it is of value, why it matters, and how it can engage with audiences today.

**Ana Tostões** And you connect that with a kind of social or educational mission too.

**William Whitaker** Yes, because we are talking about the artist’s imagination. This is what we have as evidence of a vital thinking process that occurred, that played out and resulted in buildings like the Kimbell Art Museum. To have the chance of understanding even a fragment of what happened is inspiring and an incredible learning tool.

**Ana Tostões** To be able to understand how the vaults of the Kimbell were done, and how that light was achieved, might be something absolutely extraordinary.

**William Whitaker** Or simply to understand the way that nature reveals itself in a building. Archives can reveal insights into this in wonderful ways. Architects get paid to do a particular commission, but they also do a lot of things they don’t get paid for: they collect books, they travel and record their experiences in sketchbooks and journals, they take photographs, they “waste” their time and money in many different ways and places, because they can’t stop themselves from doing so! This is something at the very heart of creativity, a glimpse into what the artist needs to fuel the spirit. Take for example the architect’s notebooks. It is common to find a name and address written in the front of the book along with the line, “if found please return to” – a kind of confirmation that it is a thing of value. Kahn, however, never put his name in his sketchbooks. He misplaced some and “borrowed” volumes from others (their handwriting sometimes mistaken by some...
Preservation, Restoration and Upgrade of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, India

BY BRINDA SOMAYA

Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIMA), is under an ongoing conservation project to preserve, restore and upgrade the built fabric of the iconic and modern heritage structures designed by Louis I. Kahn, in India. These include eighteen dormitory buildings and the main complex (the school) housing four faculty blocks, the classroom complex and the Vikram Sarabhai library building. The project entails carrying out a detailed study of the cultural significance of the buildings, conducting surveys for preparation of as-built drawings, building condition mapping and assessment, preparation and execution of a detailed conservation plan and strategies for restoration, retrofitting and upgrading the built fabric along with its spatial expression, with due consideration to both its preparation and execution of a detailed conservation plan and strategies for restoration, retrofitting and upgrading the built fabric along with its spatial expression, with due consideration to both its status as a significant work of 20th century monumental architecture and as a premier management institute of the country.

Somaya & Kalappa Consultants (SKN) were appointed as the conservation architects for the project of preservation, restoration and upgrade of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIMA), in 2014. The first step was to understand the story of evolution of IIMA campus and the cultural significance of its buildings; not only with respect to Louis I. Kahn’s design but also its contribution as modern built heritage from India’s post-independence period.

The IIMA and Louis Kahn

Modern India

The introduction of Modern Movement ideas within Indian architecture was brought by European schools of thought, in particular the practices introduced by the British during its colonial rule. In Indian society, the idea of being “modern” was considered as an overall approach towards life, an inventive and progressive way of living with better standards and adopting modern technology, including the ideas of futuristic minds like Jawahar Lal Nehru (1889-1964). This was particularly evident in 1911, when the capital of British India shifted from Calcutta to New Delhi and a new form of modern architecture was introduced: a blend of European style with Indian elements, by Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) and Herbert Baker (1862-1946), defining the new and progressive India.

However, after the Independence (1947), Chandigarh, the “dream city” of India’s first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru (1947–1964), planned by Le Corbusier (1887–1965), became the modern symbol of newly independent India. In the 1950s, Le Corbusier was invited to design the Mill Owners’ Association Building and Villa Sarabhai, in Ahmedabad. The architect Balkrishna Doshi (1927–) — who had worked for Le Corbusier in Paris (1951–1954) — invited Kahn to execute a master plan for the nascent IIMA. Thus, Kahn became the next significant architect for India. His buildings, combining a pure expression of material and monumentality with regional elements, went beyond the mere concepts of functionality, giving rise to a new dimension to Indian modern architectural design.

A IIMA in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad was chosen as the capital of Gujarat state after the bifurcation of the Bombay state on 1 May 1960. With classical and colonial European styled buildings dotting the city’s streetscapes, Ahmedabad became a metropolis, and a center of higher education, science and technology, through the establishment of many educational and research institutions. In 1961, at a time when professional management was a little-known concept, Vikram Sarabhai (1919–1971) and Shri Kasturbhai Lalbhai (1894–1980), with the support of the then-Chief Minister of Gujarat, Jivraj Mehta (1887–1978), and a group of enlightened individuals, founded and established the IIMA.

In a true spirit of public private partnership, the IIMA was set up through a coalition of central and state governments, local industrialists, the Ford Foundation and the Harvard Business School. The founders wanted the IIMA to generate knowledge that would be applied for development, and every move made towards its establishment strove for excellence.

Despite the founders having initially offered the commission for IIMA to architect Balkrishna Doshi, Doshi recommended Louis Kahn for the project, arranging the commission so that the architecture students at the National Institute of Design would have the opportunity to work with him. Kahn translated this educational philosophy into infrastructure by designing spaces that supported and promoted easy personal interaction and provided inspiration. He achieved what every architect strives to achieve: the embodiment of a philosophy in a timeless structure.

Introducing Kahn’s architecture

Architecture has to have the element of time. How can you judge a work today, let’s say a work by anyone among these well-known architects that is exciting and wonderful? And then what happens to it 20, 50 years later? That’s the measure. That is why the Salk Institute will always be as perfect as it was conceived. The teak wood may fade away... probably did or has... but the spirituality of that project will remain. Now that building will withstand the test of time, no question about it.

Monumentality, timeless and spirituality are elements that formed a part of the legacy of Kahn. IIMA demonstrates the poetry of light and the creation of monumental architecture beyond the human scale. Encouraged by the appreciation of the traditional city fabric and inspired by its ruins, Kahn absorbed relevant experiences of Indian architecture — the medieval Mughal monuments, the 20th century buildings of Lutyens in New Delhi and Le Corbusier in Chandigarh — to concept the building. Kahn conceived the IIMA with four functions: the school, dormitories, faculty housing and staff housing.

The school and the dormitories are a unit, like a monastery. Corridors are avoided by having deep porches, off all the dormitory rooms, where tea is served and things are discussed. The school is around a court which has in it an amphitheater. Everything here is planned around the idea of meeting.

He referred to institutes as “houses for inspiration”, places that were defined by the need to shelter learning within a supportive community through a combination of collective and individual activity. This, combined with his interest in exhibiting the idea of...
Louis Kahn in Tel-Aviv

BY JEREMIE HOFFMANN AND HADAS NEVO-GOLDBERST

This paper surveys the historical urban infrastructure and architecture of the School of Mechanical Engineering at Tel-Aviv University, designed by one of the greatest architects of the 20th century, Louis I. Kahn. The paper describes the monumental architecture of the building, which hints subtly to the qualities and complexity of the internal spaces. The structure is the only building ever erected in Israel by Kahn, and became an architectural icon, presenting the best in the Brutalist architectural style to be found in Tel-Aviv-Yafo, alongside other outstanding structures from the same period.

At the top of Tel-Aviv’s only hill stands a sizeable gray building that, from afar, looks like the two tablets of stone given on Mount Sinai. Few, if any, know that the building was designed by a Jewish architect who was one of the greatest architects of the 20th century: Louis I. Kahn.

For those not physically standing inside Tel-Aviv University’s campus, the sole clue to the building’s existence is visible only from the Ayalon Highway, a major transportation artery crossing the length of the city. From there, one can spot upon the hilltop two curved, symmetrical façades of exposed concrete, at the tip of a half cylinder, each resembling a loaf of sliced bread, facing eastwards. This glimpse is merely a hint to the complex, large-scale structure that is the Wolfson School of Mechanical Engineering.

To understand the broad historical context of this building’s construction, we must return to 1948 and the UN resolution on the founding of the State of Israel. The decision to end the British Mandate in Palestine, and to establish two new national entities in the congested landscape of the Land of Israel, transformed Tel-Aviv overnight from a peaceful, hedonistic city of white utopian Bauhaus architecture into a refuge city for Jewish immigration on an unprecedented scale.

The waves of immigration from countries all over the world, along with the corresponding need to rapidly throw together an infrastructure for the State created overnight, resulted in the most significant construction project in the history of the State, known today as “The Israeli Project”. Hundreds of thousands of new housing units, settlements, and public institutions were established throughout the country as a speedy response to a largely impoverished population of arrivals without economic means. Tel-Aviv served as a cultural and strategic center; as such, within a few short years, three hundred buildings in the Brutalist architecture style had been erected. Their purpose was to strengthen the city’s role as the seat of most of the new Israeli government and cultural institutions. These include the Cultural Center (Heichal HaTaharut), the Histadrut Trade Union Building, the Jewish Agency Building, the Farmers’ House, the Journalists’ House, and more.

One municipal enterprise spearheading the strengthening of national educational infrastructures was the founding of the Tel-Aviv University campus in 1955. The campus was established to aggregate a number of research and higher education institutions active at that time in the city but dispersed throughout several buildings. The decision was made in those years to establish the university’s permanent site on land which, prior to the War of Independence, had housed the Arab village of Sheikh Munis. The campus master plan was designed by architects Werner Joseph Wittkower and Erich Baumann, with later collaboration with architects Dov Karmi, Nahum Salkind, and Uriel Schiller, and landscape architects Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zut. The campus was inaugurated on November 4, 1964.

The university’s master plan was integrated into the overall planning of the nearby neighborhood of Rama-Aviv, which was designed as a green residential neighborhood. The central idea informing the campus’s planning was the model of a “university park” and autonomous faculty buildings in verdant surroundings, with each building one of a kind. In terms of its urban environment, the university’s monumental entrance axis is a direct continuation of the boulevards branching off the sea, and it leads to the university’s main plaza, surrounded by general university buildings. The campus edifices were designed in a Brutalist architecture style by the top architects of the time, revealing the genuineness of the material and the building technology. The architect Kahn was invited by the university to design the School of Mechanical Engineering, which at its completion became an architectural icon in Tel-Aviv.

The building is located in the southeastern part of the campus, stretching along the campus’s central inner promenade. Its main façade facing the promenade is surprising in its monumental scale and restraint in design: it is a large exposed concrete wall with no windows. The only hint to the existence of a structure behind the walls is a series of vertical slots that indicate the presence of a modest entrance. The entrance and exit of the building create a powerful experience which arises due to the integration of the built-up

01 Tel Aviv University from Southeast, Israel, 1964. Aerial view of the university and the neighborhoods. © Tel Aviv University Archives. Department of Photography, 1988.
Post-War Modern Architecture in Tunisia

BY ELISA PEGORIN AND LUCA EULA

At the end of the spring of 1943, the German forces were finally defeated in Northern Tunisia and had to leave the country. This allowed the French protectorate to take power and in the years that followed, thanks to massive American economic aid, undertake a very important project of architectural construction and reconstruction. All of Tunisia was involved but the four main cities (Tunis, Bizerte, Sousse and Sfax), whose populations were expanding, saw entire parts of themselves reconstructed. Today, a unique experience of modernity still remains in the issue of all these cities, but with big issues of conservation.

Tunisia, 1943

La Tunisie est le seul des trois pays d’Afrique du nord qui doit être considéré, après la guerre, comme un territoire sinistré. Les opérations militaires qui se sont déroulées dans les Régences et les destructions systématiques auxquelles elles ont donné lieu avaient durement atteint les installations de toues sortes: les habitations, le matériel et les divers moyens dont disposait la Tunisie avant la guerre.

With these words starts the 1948 special issue of the famous review L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui dedicated to Tunisia, clearly outlining the difficult circumstances in which the country found itself at the end of the WWII. Allies in fact landed in Morocco in 1942 (during the so-called Operation Torch) while General Rommel lost the battle in El-Alamein in Egypt and retreated to Tunisia, fortifying the southern part near Gabes. In May of 1943 the Allied forces, through a heavy bombing campaign, broke the defenses of the axis and hunted the Nazis at the decisive battle of Cap Bon. They would move on to Sicily within the next year, but in the meantime what they had before their eyes was a disheartening picture: about 120 connecting roads, bridges and viaducts destroyed (235 km of roads and 69 bridges), the main electric stations in the country torn down, and more than 16,000 buildings bombed. For these main reasons, the four years from 1943 to 1947, following release from the Axis forces, were called the Years of Reconstruction.

Bernard Zehrfuss (1911-1996) arrived in Tunis, from Algiers, when he was 32 years old. In 1939 he had been awarded a Grand Prix de Rome and obtained an official position in the French government to assess the damage that the long war had inflicted on the Tunisian territory. His role was initially as an advisor, but almost immediately it turned into something different. His arrival coincided with the death of the Director of the Department of Architecture, for which no-one was quite prepared. Given the already critical situation, the Prefect Roger Gromand (1905-1986) immediately promoted Bernard Zehrfuss to head of the department. This was something which would fundamentally change the history of the country and the post-war reconstruction.

In a short time, Bernard Zehrfuss created a young and capable team, dividing the country into four zones and instituting pyramidal management of the territory. Every zone had its reference architect, in particular Claude Blanchevotte (1911-1996) in Tunis, Jean Le Couteur (1916-2012) in Bizerte, Robert Greco in Sousse, and Paul Laingui in Sfax. Then the group – directed by Bernard Zehrfuss himself – was assisted by Paul Herbe (1923-1963) (along with Jacques Marmey, the only senior architect with field experience) and Jean Drieu La Rochelle (1927-1986).

This division turned out to be remarkably important because these architects were not limited only to bureaucratic management and advisory roles, but would be the names that recurred on all major projects of the following years. They had their chance to operate in absolute freedom from centralized bureaucracies or departments due to the fact that Tunisia was never a colony, only a protectorate. As France became increasingly committed to greater efforts in Morocco and Algeria, this strategically important but enormously problematic land was left in the background.

The "Reconstruction"

The first months were spent carrying out important preliminary steps: the architects traveled all over the country familiarizing themselves with the traditional architecture and with the situation of Tunisia at the end of the WWII. They visited the menzels in Djerba and the Ksour of Medenine and Tataouine, the brick buildings typical of Tozeur (that Jean Le Couteur (1916-2012) reused in the neighborhood Les Andalous in the city of Bizerte), and the great mosques in Kairouan.

They saw the medinas and unlike the other myopic European architects before them, understood that this cluster of houses and souk was not only a traditional building, but a brilliant functional solution for climate problems of places that are very hot in the summer.

The problems of climate and sun exposure were two of the important points on which they built their thinking when it came to design. The lessons learned by those who lived there proved useful when it came to building in scorched and barren territories.

The department lasted for four years, during which the foundations were laid for a fundamental renewal for the whole country. Public infrastructure and fundamental re-housing interventions were created, in addition to the structures put to the test by the bombs. The urban projects really began only in 1945, and with the expansion of urban Bizerte (which provided for a “new town” that almost doubled the city itself on the other side of the bridge, over the vast stretch of the lake of the same name) the first problems began to arise: the large number of expropriations and other uncertainties related to the creation of Bizerte-Zarzouma gave the department a bad name. Then a few years later, Habib Bourguiba (1906-2000) led...
Lawn Road Flats (The Isokon) — A New Vision of Urban Living

BY JOHN ALLAN

So much of modern architecture’s early history depended on a handful of courageous pioneers. One of the first Modern Movement buildings in England was the achievement of an unlikely trio — a plywood salesman and his psychotherapist wife, and a Canadian part-time journalist turned architect. This article and the accompanying text by Magnus Englund tell the extraordinary story of the Lawn Road Flats in Hampstead, London — their origins and heyday, the linked program of furniture design, their declining postwar fortunes and ruination, and then their recent and remarkable rescue and restoration to become a beacon of modern heritage and the epitome of progressive 21st century urban living.

The pioneering Pritchards

Lawn Road Flats in Hampstead, north London (also known as The Isokon) stood at the cutting edge of modern architecture in Britain when the building was opened in July 1934. The project stemmed from the meeting of Jack and Rosemary (Molly) Pritchard, the clients, with the Canadian architect Wells Coates (1895-1958), to whom they had been attracted on account of his innovative work in showroom design and his inventive use of plywood. Jack Pritchard (1899-1992) had become the British marketing manager for the Estonian plywood company Venesta in 1925 and through Le Corbusier had already engaged Charlotte Perriand to design an exhibition stand for the firm at Olympia, London in 1929.

That same year Jack and Molly acquired the site in Lawn Road and initially considered building a pair of conventional detached houses. But being increasingly interested in the progressive architectural developments on the Continent they soon abandoned this idea in favor of an altogether more radical program based on the existenzminimum dwelling experiments in Germany and promoted through the international organization CIAM. In 1930 clients and architect embarked on a European study tour and visited the Weisenhoff housing exhibition in Stuttgart, a summation of the progressive architectural design on the Continent since the war which showcased works by the leading modern architects Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, J.J.P. Oud, Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut and others. At this point, apart from a few single villas in superficially modern style, there was nothing in England to compare with these European developments. As the Russian master Berthold Lubetkin (who arrived in London at this time) would later remark, “after all the energy and diversity of the Continent, England seemed about 50 years behind, as though lost in a deep provincial sleep”. It is for this reason, in addition to its unusually radical accommodation program and illustrious social associations, that the Isokon — a manifesto of progressive urban living — occupies a unique place in the history of modernism in Britain.

The detailed Lawn Road brief was largely developed by Molly Pritchard (1900-85) with Coates and eventually produced the 4-storey gallery access block we see today. Formed in monolithic reinforced concrete the building contained 22 single flats, 4 double flats, 3 studio flats, staff quarters, kitchens and a large garage. The Pritchards and their children occupied the rooftop penthouses. Services included shoe cleaning, laundry, bed-making and meal deliveries from a staff kitchen sent up by a dumb waiter in the core of the building. Wells Coates’ parallel interest in boat building and product design is evident in the intricate fit outting of the interiors, which aimed to cater for young professionals with a mobile lifestyle. The studio units are only 25 m² in area but include a kitchen, a dressing room and a bathroom alongside the main living/sleeping space. The importance of the dressing room with its built-in storage was particularly stressed as a key factor that distinguished the Isokon units from the average student bedsitter with clothes and clutter typically strewn over the furniture or crammed into a clumsy wardrobe. The experiment showed that existenzminimum could be elegant as well as economical. Advance lettings were stimulated by exhibiting a showflat mock-up in 1933, and the building was successfully occupied soon after completion in 1934. By this time refugees from the political developments in Europe were beginning to arrive in England, distinguished émigrés including Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy all of whom were taken in by Pritchard — Gropius and his wife Ise on a rent-free basis. Traveling light with minimal possessions, such residents proved fortuitously to be the demographic for whom the Isokon was ideally suited.

The Isobar — a social hub

In 1937 the staff kitchen, originally situated on the ground floor but insufficiently used, was
Isokon Furniture – Modernist Dreams in Plywood

BY MAGNUS ENGLUND

The Isokon Furniture Company was never commercially successful, yet its legacy has stubbornly refused to die and disappear. Even today, this radical collection of plywood furniture is manufactured and used. The main reason is of course the names associated with it: Jack Pritchard, Wells Coates, Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius, László Moholy-Nagy and – more recently – Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby. The genius little Isokon Penguin Donkey, first designed by the Austrian émigré architect Egon Riss in 1939 and marketed by publisher Allen Lane’s then new imprint Penguin Books, is particularly popular with younger generations of design students.

Jack Pritchard (1899-1992) was an upper middle-class Brit whose father had briefly been the Mayor of the London suburb of Hampstead around the time of Queen Victoria’s death (1901). After his education at Pembroke College in Cambridge, he ended up in 1925 as the marketing manager of Venesta (short for Veneer Estonia), the British subsidiary of A. M. Luther, based in Tallinn. The company had been formed in the 1880s by two Luther brothers, hailing from German immigrants to Estonia, who claimed to be direct descendants of Martin Luther, the religious reformer. The firm was possibly the biggest manufacturer of items made from plywood in the interwar years, and had offices in London, Paris, Berlin, Milan and Madrid as well as Calcutta, India. Their plywood tea chests made Britain their biggest export market, having invented a glue that made the chest waterproof, which kept the tea leaves shipped from India to Britain dry. Besides an office in London, Venesta also had its own wharf and factory at Silvertown, located by the river Thames in East London. The company made furniture, hatboxes, suitcases and even food containers for the British army, all in plywood. A. M. Luther had manufacturing sites in Finland, Estonia and Lithuania, and the preferred wood was Baltic birch, even though it also used other, more exotic woods from around the world.

Jack Pritchard first came into contact with Wells Coates (1895-1958) when the self-taught architect worked on the new BBC head office in Portland Place in central London. Wells Coates used Venesta plywood both for furniture and wall coverings, including the radio recording studios. He had visited the Paris World Fair of 1925 as a journalist and seen the groundbreaking pavilion by Le Corbusier (1887-1965). Another visitor to Paris was Philip Morton-Shand (1888-1962), food and wine critic as well as writer for the Architectural Review. Philip Morton-Shand later went to visit the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930, where he met the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898-1976), who after designing some tubular steel furniture had turned to birch plywood as his preferred material. Philip Morton-Shand decided to set up a company to import and distribute Alvar Aalto furniture in Britain and around the British Empire and named it Finnmar (short for Finnish Marketing). The breakthrough came with an exhibition in November 1933 at Fortnum & Mason, a London department store that is nowadays solely known for its fine food, but then also sold clothing and furniture. Jack Pritchard, who was a decade younger than Philip Morton-Shand, was impressed by the bon vivant with his knowledge of fine French wines and food, as well as modern design, and later went on to employ Philip Morton-Shand’s fourth wife Sybil Mary Sissons as his private secretary.

Jack Pritchard and Wells Coates had formed a joint company in the early 1930s, first called Wells Coates & Partners but later named the Isokon Furniture Company. The name was Wells Coates’ idea and was short for Isometric Construction. By replacing the C with a K, it also alluded to Russian Constructivism. The first products were basic desks and shelving by Wells Coates, as well as a stool made and designed at A. M. Luther but sold under the Isokon name. Wells Coates was not new to furniture design; he had already made tubular steel furniture for Peil, a British company inspired by Thonet in Germany and its designs by Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) and Mart Stam (1899-1986). There was also a small bookshelf with wooden shelves and metal uprights, which was made in Germany but sold by Isokon in Britain.

With the building of Lawn Road Flats in 1933-34, Jack Pritchard and Wells Coates gradually fell out. The main reason was not Wells Coates’ romance with Jack Pritchard’s wife Molly, as one might think, but chiefly Jack Pritchard’s inability to secure enough money to finish the building to the high standard that Wells Coates had been promised. The idea had been that Wells Coates would work with a reduced architect fee against being able to use the project for marketing, “a sort of back-scratching operation” as Jack Pritchard would later call it. By the time the
Conservation or Change for Works of the Modern Movement

BY JAMES DUNNETT

The Modern Movement in architecture, in so far as any such movement can be defined, was predicated on the idea that architecture had to change to reflect the radical technological advances that had occurred during the century preceding its formulation, and also to reflect the changing social needs that those advances had generated. Architecture, it was felt, had ossified and lost vitality as a result of not recognizing those changes. A century has now passed since the Modern Movement first formulated this program, and technical advances and the social changes they induce have of course by no means ceased, rather they have accelerated. So, it seems legitimate to say that a technologically – and socially – determined architecture should reflect these further advances and changes. The evolution continues. But does that mean that each Modern Movement building created at a particular point in that evolution has in itself to continue to change in order to “catch up” with the evolution subsequent to its creation? It is a question that has importance when it comes to considering the conservation of Modern Movement architecture. It is an assertion that would ignore the formal element in architecture.

In each generation there are a number of buildings created that we seek to conserve, for various reasons but most frequently because they embody high architectural values. Their creators have managed to bring together the functional demands of the brief and the technology available at that time to create something that resonates in our minds, something in which the form and detail and material cohere as an expressive unity, embody a sense of harmony, and evoke in us a powerful reaction. They have created a work of art.

It is arguable that in a building of the Classical or Renaissance style, where there is a powerful formal architectural language superimposed on the structure, functional details, such as window frames for example, are not a significant contributor to the architectural expression and could be changed without harm to its status as a work of art. The Banqueting House in Whitehall in London, for example, designed by Inigo Jones in 1619, originally had leaded casement windows, but these were changed at an early stage to the technologically more advanced sliding sash windows that we still see and take for granted. The published engraved elevations of classical buildings from the 18th century generally show the windows just as dark rectangles, omitting any detail of the window joinery, which was evidently considered unimportant. Yet conservators today would be very keen to conserve the original joinery in such buildings if it survived. Similarly, the importance would be recognized of conserving the joinery in a cottage of the same period, where there is no superimposed classical order and details such as window joinery become more prominent.

A building of the Modern Movement, generally without an emphatic superimposed architectural language, is more in the position of the cottage described. The details of the windows can become the dominant design element of the façade and, from an internal viewpoint, they mold the relationship between the interior and exterior that was so important a part of Modern Movement spatial aspiration. The very blankness of the windows of an early house by Adolf Loos, for example, is evidently an important part of the thematic suppression of detail in the design as a whole. In the case of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Falling Water the steel windows are clearly critical to the character of the building, to allowing the architectural planes to float free – including the points where the glass is set straight into the masonry without any frame at all. In the case of Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House the windows almost are the architecture, and in Le Corbusier’s Maisons Jaoul the inventive design of the window joinery contributes very importantly to their architectural expression. In the case of the Unité d’Habitation at Marseilles Le Corbusier was so distressed by the design of the window joinery produced by his office while he was away in New York dealing with the United Nations Headquarters that, by his own account, he was forced to impose on the façades their powerful polychromy to distract the eyes of onlookers from noticing the windows.

Of course, some might argue that in all these cases “time must move on” – the original windows were inefficient in terms of minimizing heat loss and use of energy, and the original architect would certainly have used some other technology now available had he had that choice, so we should change these windows accordingly now. Few would agree in the case in the very iconic modern buildings mentioned – it would be recognized by most that any such change would seriously detract from the architectural value of the building concerned. But it is an argument that is influential in the case of many other valuable elements in our Modern Movement heritage.
BOOK REVIEWS

**Louis I. Kahn: Exposed Concrete and Hollow Stones 1949–1959**

Author: Roberto Gargiani  
Publisher: Epfl Press. Distributed by Routledge.  
ISBN: 978-2-940222-76-6  
Language: English  
Year: 2014

The first volume *Exposed Concrete and Hollow Stones* focuses on the first 12-year period of Kahn's research on concrete. Moving through the many construction systems experienced by Kahn, from the discovery of exposed concrete in the form of béton brut at the Yale Art Gallery, to the precast and poured-in-place techniques, to the values of joint, growth and ornament, the essay culminates in the reconstruction of the artistic and technical characteristics of two great worksites, the Richards Laboratories and the First Unitarian Church and School.

The second volume *Towards the Zero Degree of Concrete* covers the following 14 years and leads the reader along Kahn's path to the true "nature of concrete", focusing on his main techniques and poetic discoveries such as the "liquid stone" of the Salk Institute, the "smooth finish" at Bryn Mawr, the expression of "growth" at the Dhaka Parliament and the concept of the "monolithic" at the Yale Center for British Art.

From the Publisher.

**Louis I. Kahn: Towards the Zero Degree of Concrete 1960–1974**

Author: Anna Rosellini  
Publisher: Epfl Press. Distributed by Routledge.  
ISBN: 978-2-940222-77-3  
Language: English  
Year: 2014

Through sheer determination and courage, Kahn has researched the nature of concrete in the form of precast, cast in place or blocks. Each of his renowned works in exposed concrete, such as the Yale Art Gallery, the Richards Laboratories, the Bath House, the Salk Institute, the National Assembly, the Kimbell Museum, the Exeter Library and the Yale Center of British Art, is an important chapter in the history of architecture for the exploration into concrete's formal expression, beyond the lesson of Le Corbusier.

Kahn's obsession with concrete fabrication processes, on the formwork and the mix-design, is systematically examined in two volumes. They illustrate Kahn's vision with documents that have never been revealed in other essays, drawing heavily from original sketches, plans, specifications, worksite photographs, and correspondences with collaborators, engineers, technicians and contractors.

**Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn**

Author: John Lobell  
Publisher: Shambala Publications  
ISBN: 978-1-59030-624-8  
Language: English  
Year: 2008 [1979]

While a plethora of books is now available on Kahn, this volume published just five years after his death still offers a unique perspective. Author John Lobell focuses on the manifestation, in Kahn's buildings and teachings, of the architect's belief "that there are realms that transcend our material lives, and that we can have access to these realms through architecture".

In the first part of the book, the author concludes with a short biography.

**Between Silence and Light** is an accessible introduction to Kahn's wisdom and oeuvre, and the 2008 edition benefits from a new preface from Lobell as well as a list of additional resources. In a sea of publications arising in the 45 years since Kahn's passing, this "dialogue" between the modern master and his student Lobell remains a definitive work.

Laura Phelps

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**Kahn**

Authors: David B. Brownlee and David G. De Long  
Publisher: Universe Publishing  
ISBN: 978-0-7893-0099-7  
Language: English  
Year: 1997 [1991]

This condensed edition of *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture* is a definitive and richly illustrated volume that presents the oeuvre of one of this century's most influential practitioners, teachers, and thinkers in architecture. Here is the detailed account of the architecture and philosophy of Louis Kahn, whose buildings have become the very signature of the modernist aesthetic and whose vision permanently changed the direction of American architecture.

Kahn's career is documented here with meticulous attention to all aspects of his work—from his own fascinating biography to the unique philosophy that underlies his buildings to the structures themselves. The stunning range of Kahn's architectural vision becomes fully apparent: his structures are at once solemn and resonant, elemental and musical. Extraordinary, exclusively commissioned color photographs of his masterworks—the Yale Center for British Art, the National Assembly complex at Dhaka,
Bangladesh, the Kimbell Art Museum, the Indian Institute of Management, the Salk Institute – exquisitely demonstrate how Kahn’s architecture wholly reinvents space and light. In all, more than two hundred illustrations, including numerous drawings and floor plans, accompany the painstakingly researched text.

This volume – published in association with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and with the exclusive participation of the Louis I. Kahn Collection – contains six principal essays that critically address different dimensions and periods of Kahn’s architecture. The essays and photography are accompanied by succinct notes and captions, as well as a complete list of buildings and projects and an index, making this book the preeminent scholarly and illustrative source for Kahn’s architecture.

Laura Phelps

From the Publisher.

You Say to Brick: The Life of Louis Kahn

Author: Wendy Lesser
Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
ISBN: 978-0-374-27997-4
Language: English
Year: 2017

Wendy Lesser’s acclaimed biography of Kahn, published last year, has achieved a near-impossible feat: bringing serious writing on an architect and their work to a mass audience. Although there is much in You Say to Brick to appeal to those in the field, Lesser writes about the man and his masterpieces with universal appeal, avoiding a chronological account and allowing the recurrent themes of his personal and professional lives to emerge.

The author conducted extensive original research, including interviewing Kahn’s descendants, colleagues and students, to produce an account of his life that still has the capacity to surprise. This is interwoven with shorter essays on the buildings considered to be Kahn’s “big five”: the Salk Institute, Kimbell Art Museum, Phillips Exeter Library, the National Assembly of Bangladesh and Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. Lesser made visits to each and presents their specifications but their stories. It is made clear, through her engaging prose that highlights visual and human details, that they could only have come from the incomparable mind of Kahn.

Though You Say to Brick is portable, affordable, and emphatic Kahn’s humanity – he famously anthropomorphized the material by asking how it would like to be used – the book also adds to a growing body of scholarly work on the beauty, but also the “contradictions and paradoxes” of the architect’s feted structures. More of its ilk would be welcome.

Laura Phelps

Louis Kahn
The Power of Architecture

Editors: Mateo Kries, Jochen Eisenbrand, Stanislaus von Moos
Publisher: Vitra Design Museum
ISBN: 978-3-931936-92-1; 978-3-931936-91-4
Language: English; German
Year: 2013

This catalogue was published on the occasion of Louis Kahn – The Power of Architecture, an exhibition of the Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, in cooperation with the Architectural Archives of The University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and the Netherlands Architectuurinstituut, Rotterdam.

The American architect Louis Kahn (1901–1974) is regarded as one of the great master builders of the twentieth century. With complex spatial compositions, an elemental formal vocabulary and a choreographic mastery of light, Kahn created buildings of archaic beauty.

As the first comprehensive publication on this architect in 22 years, the book Louis Kahn – The Power of Architecture presents all of his important projects. It includes essays by prominent Kahn experts and an expansive illustrated biography with many new facts and insights about Kahn’s life and work. In a number of interviews, leading architects such as Frank Gehry, Renzo Piano, Peter Zumthor and Sou Fujimoto underline Kahn’s significance in today’s architectural discourse. An extensive catalogue of works features original drawings and architectural models from the Kahn archive. The compendium is further augmented by a portfolio of Kahn’s travel drawings as well as photographs by Thomas Fiscus, which offer completely new views of the Salk Institute and the Indian Institute of Management.

From the Publisher.

To know more about the exhibition, read the news section of this issue.

Louis Kahn Drawing to Find Out: The Dominican Motherhouse and the Patient Search for Architecture

Author: Michael Merrill
Publisher: Lars Müller Publishers
ISBN: 978-3-03778-221-7
Language: English
Year: 2010

Drawing to Find Out is a treasure trove of more than 200 documents and drawings produced by Kahn in the late 1960s, as he worked on his designs for the Dominican Motherhouse in Philadelphia. Although the convent was never built, his sketches – laid out chronologically, and summarized diagrammatically at the end of the text – offer a profound insight into Kahn’s preoccupations and methods. While they are arranged here to provide a narrative, with commentary from author Michael Merrill alongside each, in many cases the illustrations are also objects of beauty in their own right.

The book recounts a four-year journey, beginning with the architect’s first meetings with the sisters and ending with their rejection of his final scheme on financial and other grounds. En route we see the individual elements of Kahn’s concept, delicately drawn and collaged, combine in iteration after iteration as Kahn scales back plans to meet the sisters’ needs. The result is a fascinating glimpse into the mind of a man at the peak of his creative powers, or as Merrill calls it, “an intimate biography of an architectural idea”.

Laura Phelps
Peter Inskip and Stephen Gee describe the de-
stincts of stewardship of the building in order to preserve
architects offer a plan to ensure the proper
study centers finds expression in its remarkable
experience developing conservation plans for
conservation into the future.
propose a series of policies for the Center's
concrete, glass, white oak, and travertine); and
analyze the materials that comprise it (steel,
assess its cultural significance;
through his iconic work of the 1960s and
the architect's thinking, which began and
matured through his design of houses and
their interiors, a process inspired by his inter-
actions with clients and his admiration for vernacular building traditions.
Richly illustrated with new and period
photographs and original drawings, as well as
previously unpublished materials from per-
sonal interviews, archives, and Kahn's own
writings, The Houses of Louis Kahn shows how
his ideas about domestic spaces challenged
conventions, much like his major public
commissions, and were developed into one
of the most remarkable expressions of the
American house.

From the Publisher.

Louis I. Kahn (1901–1974), one of the most
important architects of the postwar period,
is widely admired for his great monumental
works, including the Kimbell Art Museum,
the Salk Institute, and the National Assembly
Complex in Bangladesh. However, the
importance of his houses has been largely
overlooked. This beautiful book is the first
to look at Kahn's nine major private houses.
Beginning with his earliest encounters with
Modernism in the late 1920s and continuing
through his iconic work of the 1960s and
1970s, the authors trace the evolution of
the architect's thinking, which began and
matured through his design of houses and
their interiors, a process inspired by his inter-
actions with clients and his admiration for vernacular building traditions.

From the Publisher.

This publication has the institutional support
do momo International, including a
preface from the chair, Ana Tostões.

From the Publisher.

Building Bacardi:
Architecture, Art & Identity
Author: Allan T. Shulman
Publisher: Rizzoli
isbn: 978-0-8478-4748-8
Language: English
Year: 2016

Founded in 1862, the family-owned spirits
company, Bacardi Limited, is best known
for its trademark rum and the renowned red
and black bat logo: “Any way you drink it...
Bacardi rum is the mixable one”. Parallel
to the development of the spirits and the
company’s corporate identity, it was also a
force in the development of avant-garde art
and architecture.

Exceptionally illustrated, Bacardi: Archi-
tecture, Art & Identity is the first book explor-
ing the 20th century architectural legacy
of the company. Collecting a full range of
vintage, diverse? and glamorous images, it
tells the story of the iconic brand’s interest
in high design and how it was used to assert
its corporate identity through buildings
designed by the most varied renowned
architects, from Mies van der Rohe and
Philip Johnson to Caribbean and Mexican
architects.

The story of Bacardi can’t possibly be
dissociated from the story of modern archi-
tecture, Cuban and Latin American history,
An accessible primer to the most important architectural touchstones of our time by today’s leading architects and teachers of architecture.

For this volume, over forty internationally renowned architects and educators – from Peter Eisenman and the late Zaha Hadid to Rafael Moneo and Cesar Pelli – were asked to list the top 100 twentieth-century architectural projects they would teach to students. The contributors were encouraged to select built projects where formal, spatial, technological, and organizational concepts responded to dynamic historical, cultural, social, and political circumstances. The capacity of these buildings to resist, adapt, and invent new typologies solidifies their timeless relevance to future challenges.

The result is presented here in this unique volume: a master list of the top 100 “must-know” built works of architecture designed and completed between 1900 and 2000. Ranging from houses and apartment buildings to museums and buildings for education and government, the book offers a wealth of extraordinary works of design and construction and is an essential edition for anyone with an interest in architecture and design.

From the Publisher.

This publication has the institutional support of docomomo International and the participation of the Chair, Ana Tostões, on the selection of 100 20th-century buildings.
docomomo International is a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the Modern Movement. It aims at: • Bringing the significance of the architecture of the Modern Movement to the attention of the public, the public authorities, the professionals and the educational community. • Identifying and promoting the surveying of the Modern Movement’s works. • Fostering and disseminating the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation. • Opposing destruction and disfigurement of significant works. • Gathering funds for documentation and conservation. • Exploring and developing knowledge of the Modern Movement.

docomomo International wishes to extend its field of actions to new territories, establish new partnerships with institutions, organizations and NGOs active in the area of modern architecture, develop and publish the international register, and enlarge the scope of its activities in the realm of research, documentation and education.