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**THE GETTY PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR MUSEUM EXHIBITION  
TO SURVEY THE INNOVATION AND INFLUENCE OF  
LOS ANGELES' ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY**

***Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990***



*LAX, Theme Building*, perspective view, 1961. Architects: William Pereira and Charles Luckman. Alan E. Leib Collection. © Luckman Salas O'Brien

***Explores Los Angeles' Diverse Built Environment and  
Dispels Myths about the City's Growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center

April 9–July 21, 2013

LOS ANGELES—During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Los Angeles rapidly evolved into one of the most populous and influential industrial, economic, and creative capitals in the world. Architectural innovations of this era transformed the city's complex landscape into a vibrant laboratory for cutting-edge design. On view at the J. Paul Getty Museum from April 9 to July 21, 2013, ***Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990*** will be the first major museum exhibition to survey Los Angeles' distinct built environment.

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Organized by the **Getty Research Institute** and the **J. Paul Getty Museum**, *Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990* is part of Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A., an initiative of the Getty that comprises eleven exhibitions and accompanying programs and events in and around Los Angeles from April through July 2013.

"In much the same way as Pacific Standard Time confirmed Los Angeles as a major center of artistic accomplishment in post-World War II America, the exhibitions of Pacific Standard Time Presents will highlight Los Angeles' important role in the development of modern architecture. Our *Overdrive* exhibition lays the



*Case Study House No. 22*, Los Angeles, 1960. Architect: Pierre Koenig. Photo: Julius Shulman. The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

groundwork for what visitors will see in the other ten exhibitions around Southern California," explains Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "It is particularly fitting to have this landmark exhibition presented in an architectural setting that is itself a Los Angeles landmark."

***Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990*** will feature photographs, architectural drawings, models, films, digital displays, and contemporary art that reveal the complex and often underappreciated facets of this unique metropolis.

"The title *Overdrive* refers to the extraordinary pace, global impact and periodic setbacks resulting from L.A.'s impressive growth. It is a city that continues to grow and foster architectural exploration," states Wim de Wit, head of the Department of Architecture and Contemporary Art at the Getty Research Institute and one of the curators of the exhibition. He adds: "The exhibition will demonstrate that despite its infamous reputation as a chaotic, unplanned accident, Los Angeles has long been a laboratory for cutting-edge innovation and planning in architecture and design."

This major loan exhibition will address five themes: car culture; urban networks, including the freeways and utility systems; engines of innovation, including structures for the oil, aviation and aerospace, higher education, international commerce and media and

entertainment industries; community magnets, including projects for culture, sports, shopping and faith; and Southern California's famous residential architecture. Throughout, the exhibition will incorporate contemporary visual art that relates to the city's landscape and buildings. While aesthetically diverse, all of the structures represented in the exhibition—houses, corporate office towers, movie theaters, places of worship, shopping malls, and theme parks, among others—will reveal insights into local architects' pioneering incorporation of bold forms, advanced materials, and new technologies.

### **Car Culture**

Los Angeles's global identity is inextricably linked with the automobile. As American cars became gleaming symbols of self-expression, street-side buildings in Los Angeles evolved as well. For example, in the 50's and 60's whimsical Jet Age "Googie" coffee shops were designed to captivate car-driving consumers. Originally disparaged, Googie architecture has become a beloved dimension of L.A.'s eccentric car culture.

In the 1950s architects such as Louise Armet (American, 1914-1981), Eldon Davis (American, 1917-2011), Douglas Honnold (American, 1907-1974) and Wayne McAllister (American, 1907- 2000) redefined auto-oriented design by creating dynamic restaurants inspired by the era's automotive and aerospace technologies. These attention-grabbing designs continued through the 90's with contemporary architects such as Grinstein/Daniels Inc. (Elyse Grinstein (American, b, 1928 and Jeffrey Daniels, American, b. 1953) taking up the trope to design the unique Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant (1990) in LA's Koreatown.

This section of the exhibition also touches on the omnipresent strip malls that have defined the metropolis, as well as car designs, gas stations, car dealerships, drive-in movie theaters and even a drive-in church.

### **Urban Networks**

The expansion of Los Angeles's water and power infrastructure, the aggressive implementation of its pioneering freeway plan, and the development of major transportation hubs all fueled the metropolis's phenomenal growth. This section of the exhibition looks at the structures built for the transportation and utility systems that helped make the region a global powerhouse.

Considered the first airport of the Jet Age, the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) symbolized L.A.'s drive to become a global gateway. Anchored by the iconic, gravity-defying

arches of the Theme Building, 1961 (William L. Pereira (American, 1909-1985), Welton D. Becket (American, 1902-1965), Charles I. Luckman (American, 1909-1999), and Paul R. Williams (American, 1894-1980), the airport's experimental scheme was the earliest to use a satellite terminal system, in which passengers walked from airline ticketing areas through underground tunnels, and emerged via escalators into distinct departure pavilions adjacent to the runways.

The headquarters for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power was designed with intelligent systems that elegantly promote the utility's services. The structure is surrounded by a reflecting pool with eight splashing fountains, which circulate water used for the building's air-conditioning. Office lights were originally left on overnight, not only transforming the facility into an alluring civic lantern but also creating enough radiant heat to warm the interior. The 1973 oil crisis, however, made this method appear wasteful, forcing a more standard approach.

Characterizations of Los Angeles often feature the city's famous—or infamous—freeways. Constructed in 1949 and fully operational in 1953, "the Stack" was the world's first four-level interchange. Consisting of twenty intertwined bridges, it seamlessly links the Arroyo Seco Parkway, the Harbor Freeway, and the Hollywood and Santa Ana Freeways. In the exhibition, it and other elements of LA's complex freeway system are depicted by construction photographs, aerial photographs, ephemera, computer animation, and video.

### **Engines of Innovation**

This section of *Overdrive* looks at an array of sophisticated structures commissioned by the economic engines of oil, aerospace, higher education, international commerce, and media and entertainment. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Los Angeles' advanced industries gave designers access to innovative materials and fabrication technologies. Architects were challenged to construct dynamic new building types such as the cutting-edge IBM Aerospace Building, 1963, by Eliot Noyes (American, 1920-1977), A. Quincy Jones (American, 1913-1979), and Frederick E. Emmons (American, 1907-1999) and the world's first television studio, CBS Television City, 1952, by Gin Wong (Chinese-American, b. 1922), at that time an architect in the firm Pereira & Luckman.

In the 80s and 90s, emerging new-media clients inspired developers to transform unassuming warehouses into radically revamped work spaces. For example, Frank D. Israel (American, 1945-1996) renovated old warehouses into inventive work spaces for small film-

production companies and advertising firms, including the widely praised Propaganda Films Building, 1988, in Hollywood.

For the iconic Chiat\Day Building in Venice, 1991, Frank Gehry (Canadian-American, b. 1929) collaborated with artists Claes Oldenburg (Swedish, b. 1929) and Coosje van Bruggen (Dutch, 1942-2009) to create a playful, dynamic workspace recognized for the three-story binoculars in the center of the building's tripartite façade. The complex now serves as Google's Los Angeles headquarters.

### **Community Magnets**

Los Angeles used architecture to bolster its identity as a modern city and promote social engagement through vibrant destinations dedicated to culture, sports, consumption, and faith. With public and private funding, civic leaders built pivotal institutions such as the Music Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, as well as a number of large athletic facilities, including Dodger Stadium. The hugely influential advent of Disneyland redefined popular culture and theme-park design. On a regional scale, shopping centers augmented with movie theaters and restaurants became important recreational magnets. Neighborhood religious buildings also served as vital anchors that enhanced L.A.'s architectural landscape and fostered a sense of community.

Considering traditional elements such as Gothic windows or portals to be obsolete, modern architects developed new ways to express the function and character of sacred buildings. In his Wayfarers Chapel, 1951, overlooking the ocean, Lloyd Wright (American, 1890-1978) reconceived the conventional soaring vault motif and emphasized the relationship between man and nature through expansive walls of glass. For structures located along major urban thoroughfares, such as Sinai Temple or Saint Basil's Church, architects used sculptural designs and bold forms to impact the streetscape, draw the attention of passersby, and claim a place in the neighborhood.

### **Residential Fabric**

More than any other building type, the residence has made Los Angeles famous for innovation in modern architecture. The ideal Southern California climate and the varied natural terrain lured prospective homeowners to the West Coast, and provided architects with opportunities to rethink the configuration and aesthetics of the conventional dwelling. Unique domestic forms emerged through the implementation of new fabrication techniques and

materials, which had been rigorously tested by industrial research labs during World War II. From the tract houses of Lakewood and the towers of Park La Brea to the experimental homes of the Hollywood Hills, designers and developers employed pioneering methods to create communities to sustain L.A.'s diverse and burgeoning population.

By the 1970s, architectural critics were openly expressing both ardor and distaste for the "dingbat." This stucco, cube-like apartment-building type was fast becoming a symbol for Los Angeles's residential fusion of modern shapes, suburban sprawl, and stylized theme environments. Judy Fiskin's (American, b. 1945) small-scale, serial photographs reinforce the regularity of the ubiquitous type through their repetition of framing and composition. Yet with their deadpan humor and intimate proximity, they also reveal the nuances of each structure, drawing attention to the unexpected flourishes that differentiate the residences.

Los Angeles architects have utilized the residence as a testing ground for some of their most radical and inspired work. Uninhibited by tradition, John Lautner (American, 1911-1994) integrated a dwelling's required functions in sculptural, organic, yet technically advanced forms. In houses they fashioned for themselves, Frank Gehry and Morphosis's Thom Mayne (American, b.1944) augmented their existing, conventional homes with new layers and spaces that simultaneously conceal and reveal the original structure. Frederic Lyman was influenced by Japanese architecture to explore how the post-and-beam framework could create an open floor plan appropriate to the Southern California environment. These distinctive late-twentieth-century buildings reinterpreted and energized the domestic landscape, making L.A. an important destination for aspiring designers.

### **Artistic Interventions**

Visual artists have long been fascinated with the unique sensibility of Los Angeles urbanism. Contemporary photography, painting, film and video of, or inspired by, LA's built environment are featured throughout the exhibition, including work by Peter Alexander, William Garnett, Judy Fiskin, Ed Ruscha, and Camilo José Vergara, among others.

The exhibition is curated by Wim de Wit, Christopher James Alexander, and Rani Singh of the Department of Architecture and Contemporary Art at the Getty Research Institute.

The design of the exhibition is a collaborative project between the Getty Museum's Design department and students at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

A fully illustrated compendium is being published by Getty Publications and provides an overview of architecture in postwar Los Angeles up to 1990. Organized by the Getty Research Institute, the book includes prominent architectural historians and writers.

***Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990*** will be supported by a wide range of public programs, including lectures, curator talks, and tours.

Sponsors for the exhibition include Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Company which, during its fifty-year partnership first with J. Paul Getty and subsequently the J. Paul Getty Trust, built two of Los Angeles' most iconic public arts institutions: the Getty Villa in Malibu and the Getty Center in Brentwood, and Bank of America, which was the lead sponsor of the 2011 initiative Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980.

*Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990* will also be on view at the National Building Museum ([www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org)) in Washington D.C. from October 13, 2013 through March 2, 2014.

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**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

### Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 5 p.m. on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

**Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A.** celebrates the city's modern architectural heritage through exhibitions and programs at cultural institutions in and around L.A. starting in April 2013. Supported by grants from the Getty Foundation, Modern Architecture in L.A. is a wide-ranging look at the postwar built environment of the city as a whole, from its famous residential architecture to its vast freeway network, revealing the city's development and ongoing impact in new ways.

Additional information is available at [www.pacificstandardtimepresents.org](http://www.pacificstandardtimepresents.org).



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