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Multiple Moderns: Climate, Community, Creativity

19th International Docomomo Conference Overview



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
ORGANIZATION	2
HOST INSTITUTION	4
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WORKSHOP	8
SCHEDULE	9
VENUES	11
TOURS	12
OTHER RESOURCES	22
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	23



Sheats Goldstein House, John Lautner, 1963
Photograph by Elizabeth Daniels

Multiple Moderns: Climate, Community, Creativity

Using Los Angeles as inspiration for its theme, the 19th International Docomomo Conference will explore the pluralistic nature of the global modern movement of the twentieth century, examining how climate, community, and creativity shaped and continues to shape the built environment. In 2004, Docomomo US hosted the 8th International Docomomo Conference in New York with the theme “Import-Export: Postwar Modernism in an Expanding World, 1945-1975.” The 2026 Los Angeles conference theme will open new avenues for the exploration of different themes, modernisms, and urban forms. In addition to exploring topics related to early and postwar modernism, this conference will push beyond where the New York conference left off to explore modernism from 1976 to the end of the twentieth century. It will highlight the enduring spirit of creativity that spawned late twentieth century architectural movements such as deconstructivism, neo-Corbusianism, and postmodernism. It will also investigate the everyday, ordinary modern architecture that is so common in communities around the world.

The greater Los Angeles region is a car-centric, decentralized megacity comprising dozens of municipalities and communities with diverse schools of regional modernism. It has an increasingly hot climate and faces issues of climate resiliency—drought, wildfire, erosion, and sea-level rise—common to many communities worldwide. This conference will look at the transportation infrastructure, housing blocks, industrial sites, and sprawl that characterize the modern city. It will investigate how buildings and landscapes designed to be responsive to climate must adapt to new climate criteria and conditions.

And it will look at how diverse communities use and reshape modern architecture to serve their current and future needs. The conference themes may include:

- **Late Twentieth-Century Modernism**—exploring the changing modernisms of the late twentieth century, including late modernism, postmodernism, and deconstructivism in their many regional expressions
- **Mobility and Sprawl**—examining the twentieth century, non-traditional, automobile-oriented city, its suburban development, and how to adapt it to twenty-first-century demands
- **Modernism in the Sun**—acknowledging modernism’s original regional responses to hot, sunny climates and investigating sustainable solutions that adapt these to our changing climate
- **Community Adaptation and Repurposing**—exploring the role diverse, marginalized, and underrecognized communities have played in reshaping their own modern environments
- **Creativity and Collaboration**—exploring how collaborations between architects, interior designers, furniture designers, artists, landscape architects, graphic designers, and others shaped modern traditions and how new collaborations have contributed to their continued preservation

Organization

Docomomo US will host the 19th International Docomomo Conference in Los Angeles, March 17–21, 2026, at the University of Southern California (USC), where the theme “Multiple Moderns: Climate, Community, Creativity” will be explored.

The conference will be organized with the direct support of:

- **Docomomo US / Southern California Chapter**
- **University of Southern California, School of Architecture**
- **Getty**



Bonaventure, John Portman, 1977
USC Wayne Thom Photography Collection
Photograph by Wayne Thom

Host Institution

Docomomo US

Founded in 1995, Docomomo US is the United States working party of Docomomo International. Headquartered in New York City and led by a national board of directors and three full-time staff, Docomomo US represents a union of twenty-one regional chapters and five partner organizations that share its members' knowledge of and enthusiasm for modern architecture and design. Its membership (now in the thousands) consists of a diverse array of architects, preservation professionals, academics, realtors, homeowners, students, and modern enthusiasts. Docomomo US reaches more than six-thousand individuals through its curated monthly newsletter, which includes original articles and important modern news and events, and through its active social media accounts, events, and chapter activities.

Our Mission

Pushing boundaries to preserve modern architecture, landscapes, and design through principled advocacy, collaboration, and celebration.

Docomomo US achieves its mission through educational initiatives, core programming, and its advocacy for threatened sites. Core annual programs include the National Symposium, the Modernism in America Awards, and Tour Day.

The Docomomo US National Symposium is the primary event in the United States for professionals to discuss and share efforts to preserve modern architecture and meet leading practitioners and industry professionals. Docomomo US hosted its first National

Symposium in 2013 and continues to host annual symposia in cities across the US. The Modernism in America Awards, held annually since 2014, celebrate the people and projects working to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate our modern heritage sensitively and productively. US Tour Day, which began in 2008, is an annual celebration of modern architecture and design where members and the public across the country participate in a tour or event organized by regional chapters and like-minded organizations during the second weekend of October.

The Explore Modern Registry is a highlight of our documentation efforts. This extensive and easily accessible database housed on the Docomomo US website includes over 550 entries of significant modern sites. The website also offers resources on modern architectural styles and designers, all of which are regularly updated and expanded.

Advocacy for significant modern sites in the US has been a major tenet of Docomomo US' work since its founding. Docomomo US maintains an active national advocacy committee that regularly works with partners across the country on coordinated efforts to preserve modern sites. The Docomomo US advocacy committee activates its network to think critically about possible issues through the organization's annual theme. A different topic chosen each year, which targets threatened or lesser-known aspects of twentieth century design, helps shape and focus our programming and educational efforts.

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Lovell House, Richard Neutra, 1929
Photograph by Elizabeth Daniels

International Student Workshop

Docomomo US will organize an international student workshop in collaboration with the USC School of Architecture’s Heritage Conservation Program.

The student workshop will aim to put in practice the articles of the Docomomo Manifesto on Education and be advised by Docomomo ISC/Education + Training. The workshop will use Los Angeles as a laboratory and a local building or complex of buildings will be selected to serve as a case study. The topic and objectives of the workshop are still to be determined; the case study will be selected based on the focus of the workshop.

The student workshop will utilize the facilities of the USC School of Architecture and engage local students while also providing an opportunity to gather students from all over the world. Universities will be invited to nominate their students to take part.

The workshop will be held March 12–17, before the convening of the IDC. The results of the workshop will be presented at the conference.

Schedule

March 12–17 (Thursday–Tuesday)	Student Workshop
March 16–17 (Monday–Tuesday)	Tours
March 17 (Tuesday)	Registration opens. Opening plenary and reception.
March 18–20 (Wednesday–Friday)	Parallel sessions
March 18–19 (Wednesday–Thursday)	Evening tours
March 20 (Friday)	Closing plenary and reception at Getty Center
March 21–22 (Saturday–Sunday)	Tours

Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				MARCH 12 Workshop Orientation	MARCH 13 Workshop Site Visit	MARCH 14 Workshop (USC)
MARCH 15 Workshop (USC)	MARCH 16 Workshop (USC) Preconference tours	MARCH 17 Workshop Student Presentations (USC) Preconference tours Opening Plenary (Location TBD)	MARCH 18 IDC (USC)	MARCH 19 IDC (USC)	MARCH 20 IDC (USC) Closing Plenary and Reception (Getty Center)	MARCH 21 Post- conference tours
MARCH 22 Post- conference tours						

Venues

Los Angeles

Los Angeles itself is a case study in the pluralistic nature of modernism. The city was a hotbed of architectural innovation for much of the twentieth century. Its architecture reflects the trends and patterns of modernism, yet it is simultaneously local, representing a specific Southern California context. As a sprawling, primarily twentieth-century city with a population of nearly 4 million people situated within a larger metropolitan area of nearly 12.5 million, the Los Angeles region is a modern megacity. Sitting in a semi-arid, Mediterranean climate zone, much of its fragile native landscape is invisible beneath layers of development, and it confronts a future clouded by drought, wildfire, earthquakes, and rising temperatures. Los Angeles shares its challenges with other cities globally as we adjust to current conditions and demands for sustainable adaptation.

Los Angeles's legacy of modern architecture begins with American architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Irving Gill but owes a large debt to the European modernist emigres who began arriving in the 1920s, including Rudolf Schindler and Richard Neutra. As Los Angeles became the center of California's economy, its unique mix of the entertainment, oil, manufacturing, aircraft, and later aerospace industries; rampant real estate development; automobile culture; and mild weather fostered development of an architectural expression and sprawling urban form that reflects a unique mixture of traditional architectural styles, car-culture, and emerging modern forms that are distinctly twentieth century.

Established in 1781 by a mixed-race group of Spanish colonizers on land that had been inhabited for centuries by Indigenous peoples, Los Angeles was at its birth a culturally diverse place. Further populated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by migrants from other parts of the US and immigrants from around the world, Los Angeles has, since the mid-twentieth century, become increasingly diverse and is now a majority minority city. This cultural mix, though historically subjected to the forces of racism and white supremacy, created a diverse society with more opportunities for social mobility than in many other parts of the US. Architects like Paul Revere Williams and James Garrott, among the earliest African American architects to receive architecture training and licenses, created modernist works of note both within their communities and in the wider region. It is said that the film industry centered in Hollywood created



Greater LA, The Wonder City of America
Library of Congress, 1932

a city obsessed with image over substance. However, this industry attracted artists, musicians, writers, and designers of all kinds to Los Angeles, enriching the cultural life of the city, including its architecture.

The much-photographed 1950s-era mainstream modernists seemed to capture Los Angeles's optimistic and progressive spirit. Architects like Craig Ellwood, A. Quincy Jones, Welton Becket, Charles and Ray Eames, John Lautner, and many others put Los Angeles on the architectural map. After World War II, the city's architecture and sprawling urban form garnered greater notice, sharing attention with New York and Chicago in the architectural press, as well as on the international stage. At the same time, extensive suburban expansion led to construction of single-family homes on a massive scale. These residential neighborhoods were periodically interrupted by commercial structures like shopping centers, churches, schools, gas stations, diners, and bowling alleys—many of which were automobile-oriented—and connected by freeways dotted with billboards, creating a form of urbanism impossible in more compact urban environments.

By the 1970s, architects like Frank Gehry, Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, and Craig Hodgetts coalesced around the creation of a new architecture school, SCI-Arc, looking for innovative ways to express modern life during a period of cultural upheaval and change. This body of work, much of which continues to evade stylistic classification, challenged the modernist orthodoxy and was widely influential. At the same time, Charles Moore came to Los Angeles to teach in UCLA's architecture department. He also established a practice here and his work influenced how postmodernism played out in Southern California. Los Angeles's mild climate, artistic sensibilities, and relatively inexpensive land allowed for continued experimentation. By the 1980s, architects from other parts of the US—such as Richard Meier and Cesar Pelli—were eager to work in Los Angeles and made contributions to its design scene; both created monumental works that are late twentieth-century icons. Los Angeles was shaped by the twentieth century and displays its modern architecture as all young cities do—unencumbered by traditions and history, built to serve the modern world.



Gagosian Gallery, Robert Mangurian and Craig Hodgetts, 1981
Los Angeles Conservancy, photograph by Robert Mangurian



USC Watt Hall, Edward Killingsworth, 1974
University of Southern California, photograph by Gus Ruelas

USC School of Architecture's Master of Heritage Conservation Program

The 19th International Docomomo Conference will be hosted by the University of Southern California (USC) School of Architecture's Master of Heritage Conservation Program at the University Park Campus, just south of Downtown Los Angeles. Originally founded in 1880, USC's physical campus is a mix of major periods of development and growth, predominantly dating to the 1920s, 1960s, and 2000s. A 1966 master plan by eminent Los Angeles architect William Pereira resulted in a new campus plan based on the Garden City "cluster" model, and dozens of buildings designed by some of the city's most important modern architects: Pereira himself, A. Quincy Jones, Edward Killingsworth, and Edward Durell Stone.

The School of Architecture's Master of Heritage Conservation program was founded at the turn of the twenty-first century and offers a graduate degree in heritage conservation, as well as dual degrees with landscape architecture, building science, architecture, and urban planning. The Heritage Conservation Program prepares students and strengthens communities using existing places and the stories they tell. Offering the only master's degree of its kind on the West Coast of the US, the program includes training on cultural and intangible heritage, underrecognized communities, and modernism of the recent past.



USC Annenberg School of Communications, A. Quincy Jones, 1979
Photograph by Jason R Woods



Getty Center, Richard Meier, 1989-1997
Photograph by Studio Practice

The Getty Center

The closing plenary session and reception will be held at the Getty Center.

Set on a hilltop in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Getty Center offers panoramic views of Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean. It is the home of the J. Paul Getty Trust; the Getty Museum, one of LA's premier art museums; the Getty Research Institute, one of the largest art and architecture libraries and archives in the US; and the Getty Conservation Institute. Designed by architect Richard Meier and opened to the public in 1997, the Getty Center was conceived as a cultural acropolis. Meier employed his signature vocabulary of neo-Corbusian shapes and forms to create a dynamic composition of buildings and open spaces rendered in Italian travertine and painted metal panels. The landscape of the 700-acre site (238 hectares) was designed by the Olin Partnership with a sophisticated palette of California and Mediterranean trees, shrubs, and groundcover that also contains a network of water features woven through the site which reinforce the building organization and massing, enhance and define its open spaces, and soften its stark off-white walls and pavements. The complex's Central Garden was designed by American installation artist Robert Irwin.

Getty is a leading global arts organization committed to exhibiting, conserving, and understanding the world's artistic and cultural heritage. Based in Los Angeles, Getty pursues its work with partners around the world, while sharing art, knowledge, and resources with the public online, and in-person at the Getty Center and Getty Villa.

Tours

The 19th International Docomomo Conference in Los Angeles will include a diverse range of tours that will allow conference attendees to engage with the full arc of modernism in the region, from the early to late twentieth century. Tours will take into consideration the unique geographic conditions of Los Angeles. Some will be guided walking tours and others will be accessed by bus or coach arranged through the conference. Some tours will be free to conference attendees, while others will require payment in addition to conference registration. Self-guided walking and driving tours will also be offered.

Potential tours may include the following iconic modern sites, themes, and movements. Conference organizers are working to ensure tours will represent the diversity of Los Angeles, its neighborhoods, and its architects.

- **Early Moderns: Home Grown Pioneers and Emigres**
- **Progressive Approaches to Housing At Midcentury**
- **Architects and Architecture of the Case Study House Program**
- **USC's University Park Campus and the Architecture of 1960s Master Planning**
- **Deconstructivism at the Hayden Tract**
- **Local Innovations in Late Modernism and Postmodernism**
- **Modern and Postmodern Landscapes**
- **Modernism and Diverse Populations**

Tours will be made possible in part through collaboration with the following partner organizations, among others:

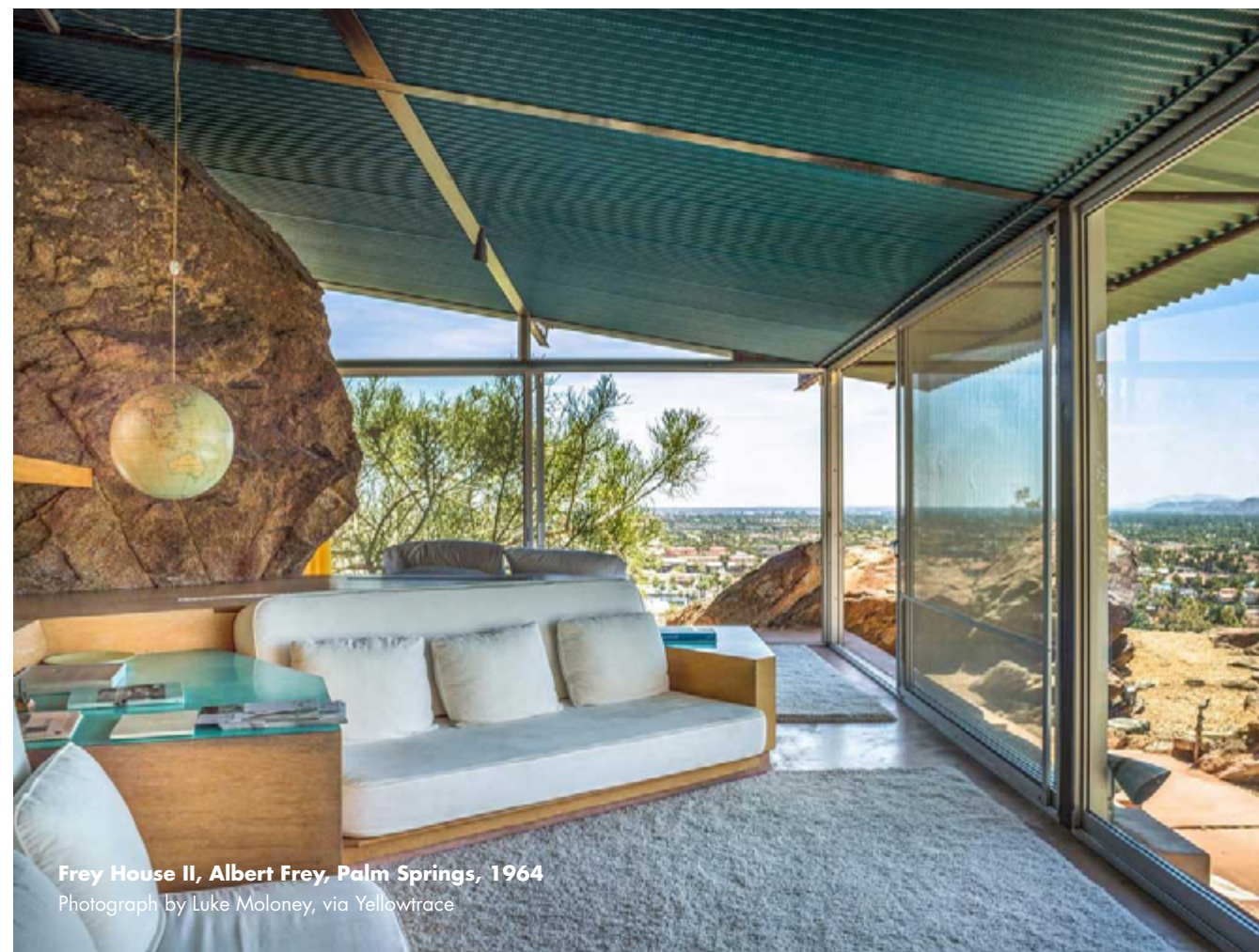
- **Friends of Residential Treasures (FORT): LA**
- **Friends of Schindler House**
- **Los Angeles Conservancy**
- **MAK Center**
- **Charles Moore Foundation**
- **Neutra Institute for Survival Through Design**
- **Society of Architectural Historians/Southern California Chapter**



Schindler House, R.M. Schindler, 1922
Photograph by Tag Christof/MAK Center for Art and Architecture.



St. Matthew's Parish Church, Moore Ruble Yudell, 1983
Moore Ruble Yudell, photograph by Colins Lozada



Frey House II, Albert Frey, Palm Springs, 1964
Photograph by Luke Moloney, via Yellowtrace

Tours may also include visits to locations outside of, but relatively near to Los Angeles, for possible overnight stays. These tours may include Palm Springs and La Jolla/San Diego, both of which are about a two-to-three-hour drive from Los Angeles and have extensive local modern traditions.



LAX Theme Building, Gin Wong, Pereira & Luckman,
Paul R. Williams, and Welton Becket, 1961
Photograph by Elizabeth Daniels

Other Resources

The Conference will have a dedicated webpage and a social network campaign for promotional purposes. There will be a list of hotels and accommodations located close to the venues and information about transportation.

Coffee and lunch will be offered during the sessions and refreshments will be offered at opening and closing events. Docomomo US offers a variety of payment options such as PayPal, credit card, and direct bank transfers. There will be registration rates for Docomomo members, nonmembers, authors, presenting authors, and students, as well as early bird registration.

The proceedings will be published in a digital format.

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