

RICHARD NEUTRA

Jonathan Marshall

- Richard Neutra was born April 8th, 1892 in Vienna, Austria.
- He studied under Adolf Loos at the Technical University of Vienna.
- In 1923, at the age of 31, Neutra moved to the United States and settled in Southern California.
- Neutra introduced the International Style to America and (newer) Los Angeles Design to Europe.
 - Briefly worked under Frank Lloyd Wright before accepting work in California.
- His innovative ideas of the time were well received in Southern California.

The Lovell House (The Health House)



- The Lovell House, built in Los Angeles in 1920, was Neutra's most influential work.
- Located on a steeply landscaped hill, it has views of the Pacific Ocean, the Santa Monica mountains, and the city of Los Angeles.

The Lovell House

The Lovell House was nicknamed the Health House because the interior is brought into harmony with nature as well as having outdoor play and recreation areas.

It was similar to that of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier's work in Europe.



Comparison

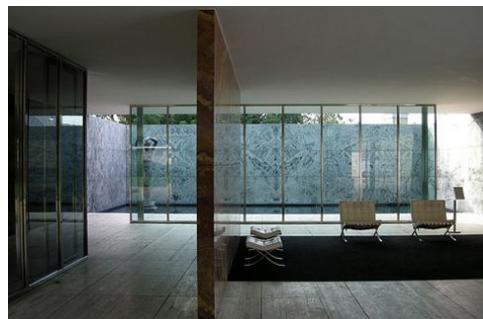
- Kaufmann Desert House.
Richard Neutra.
- -Palm Springs, CA
- Barcelona Pavilion.
Mies Van Der Rohe.
- -Barcelona, Spain



□ Richard Neutra



□ Mies van der Rohe



- Neutra believed in houses that have patios or porches that make the outdoors seem part of the house.
- He said that “architecture should be a means of bringing man back into harmony with nature”.
- “As an architect, my life has been governed by the goal of building environmental harmony, functional efficiency, and human enhancement into the experience of everyday living. These things go together, constituting the cause of architecture, and a life devoted to their realization cannot be an easy one”

Kaufmann Desert House

- The Kaufmann Desert House was completed in 1946 in Palm Springs, CA.
- This house also reflects Neutra's need for harmony with nature.



An 'aesthetic wreck' only 14 years ago, Neutra's modern masterpiece, the Kaufmann house, is now lovingly restored.

The Desert House was originally made for the occupancy of Edgar J. Kaufmann and later singer Barry Manilow.



- Richard Neutra was one of many architects in southern California and the American Southwest who adapted their ideas from the European Bauhaus movement.
- This movement became known as Desert Modernism for the flat-surfaced, industrialized look that tied itself in with its surrounding landscape.
- Although Neutra's work was highly innovative at the time, he was known for attending to the real needs of his clients as opposed to imposing his own agenda – he would sometimes use detailed questionnaires to find out their needs.

Boomerang Chair

- The Boomerang Chair highlights Neutra's desire to fulfill his patron's needs.
- The chair functions as a lounging chair in interior spaces that connect with the exterior.



The Camel Table



- This table is also made for his interior/exterior spaces
- In the morning one can use it as a coffee table and enjoy the outdoor view or entertain guests at night at the dinner table.

Von Sternberg House

This house, built in 1935 outside of Los Angeles, was home of author Ayn Rand, who wrote the 6.5 million selling novel "The Fountainhead" – a story of a man named Howard Roark (representing Frank Lloyd Wright) and his struggle for the advancement of modern architecture.



Van Leeuw Research House

- Constructed in 1966, this is one of Neutra's last works.
- He designed it with help from his son, Dion.
- Neutra died in Wuppertal, Germany in 1970.



- Neutra's company and styles live on today through his son, Dion, who kept his father's office in Silver Lake, CA (outside of LA) alive.

- It is called "Richard and Dion Neutra Architecture" and is on the National Register of Historical Places.





Frank Lloyd Wright
Brick
Illinois Landscape



Richard Neutra
Stucco finish
California Landscape

Discussion Questions



- In what area of the United States was Neutra's work most popular?

- When planning his interior spaces, Neutra strived for functionality and what else specifically?

Channel Heights-A California development designed by Neutra in 1955. Similar houses placed in separate landscapes.

Lovell House-The Health House, includes recreation areas as well as many indoor/outdoor spaces.

Desert House-made for Edgar J. Kaufmann. Later the home of Barry Manilow.

Desert Modernism-combination of the international style and influenced by the bauhaus movement. set in the southwest region of the united states.

Southern California-state that is home to Richard Neutra's most influential and innovative works.

Ayn Rand-writer of the 6.5 million selling "The Fountainhead" and occupant of Neutra's Von Sternberg House.

International Style-the style that Neutra brought to Southern California. Includes box-shaped, flat-surfaced roofs and glass filled facades.

Richard and Dion Neutra Architecture-based in Silver Lake, California. On the National Register of Historical Places.

Boomerang Chair-designed by Richard Neutra. A reclining chair made for indoor/outdoor spaces in Southern California.

Camel Table-designed by Richard Neutra. A table that converts from a coffee table to a dining table through interchanging legs.

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Questions

In what area of the United States was Neutra's work most popular?

What did Neutra's style become to be known as?

In what country was Richard Neutra born in?

Desert Modernism was inspired by what European architectural movement?

Richard Neutra was known for his integration with _____.

The _____ chair was a reclining chair used for indoor/outdoor spaces.

What architects were contemporary with Richard Neutra's work? (2 out of 3)

-Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright.

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Biography

Richard Neutra was born in Vienna Austria on April 8th, 1892. During his youth he was highly influenced by the likes of Adolf Loos and Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1918, Neutra went to Switzerland to work as a landscape architect and a city planner. Before going to the United States, Neutra also worked with Erich Mendelsohn in the design of the Business Center in Haifa, Palestine. As he became more familiar with the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and the innovation occurring in America, he came to understand that the ideals he had in mind of architecture were more suited for the United States.

Neutra, by definition, was a modernist whose ideas were more accepted in the United States, causing him to move to Southern California in 1923. In his beginning days as a professional architect in the states, he worked under Frank Lloyd Wright for a brief amount of time but received a better offer in California. He is most noted for combining indoor and outdoor spaces. His houses were very much so modern, but his main concern was fulfilling the patrons needs and desires. He provided his clients with many spaces in their home for reveling in the view and providing very open floor plans with open walls containing glass. He was separate from the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe not from style, but from intent. His intent in designing a space was completely for the client's needs. He would often provide his clients with lengthly questionnaires that would give him a sense of what the client wants and what the client did not realize what he or she wanted!

His most famous work was the Lovell House (nicknamed the Health House). It was nicknamed the Health House because it had many areas in the house where the indoors were combined with the outdoors. He used many open walls with windows and large ceiling and open spaces where patrons could relax and enjoy the outdoor California weather and landscape. I believe that although other architects like Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Frank Lloyd Wright were very influential and innovative for their time, Neutra did this in the best context. Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier were mostly presenting their ideas in Europe while Neutra was able to land work in California -- a place where innovation and new ideas are wildly accepted. Also, Neutra may not have received as much recognition as these architects because his work was less "art". Neutra was known for attending to his clients needs. These other renowned architects were more concerned with producing works that have not been done before. They were concerned with making history and getting their name out there for being innovative and remembered. This brings me to believe that Neutra may have been the better architect, he may have just been less innovative or did not have the liberty to produce such works of creative, free-thinking art.

Neutra was highly influenced by these men and the European Bauhaus movement. He was part of a movement in the western United States that came to be known as Desert Modernism. This style combined flat-surfaced roofs, stucco or plaster finish (usually white), much glass on the facade and surrounding exterior walls, an open floor plan, and the landscape of California. The high majority of Neutra's work is in California and he even built a government

sponsored housing development in San Pedro, California. He was responsible for the entire project. Each house in the development was almost exactly identical but each house was uniquely placed in its own landscape. This project came to be known as Channel Heights. Neutra was in charge of everything from the overall plan to the specific details like the redwood trim - highlighting the State Tree of California.

In 1949 as Neutra popularity was increasing to an all time high, he decided to form a partnership with Robert E. Alexander. Neutra's focus of his career was mostly on domestic, residential structures. However, with Alexander he found a need and opportunity to expand into commercial architecture. He was not necessarily only a residential architect. He was just known more for his residential works. He started to design office buildings and university libraries. His most known work of commercial architecture is a motel complex at Malibu Beach in California. Created in 1955, it overlooks the Pacific Ocean and perfectly illustrates Neutra's need to harmonize man with nature in his interior environment. I believe Neutra's most impressive work of architecture was the Kaufmann Desert House made for retail giant Edgar J. Kaufmann. This house is a perfect example of using walls and forms to connect the interior with the exterior. In this house he uses his renowned furniture pieces - the boomerang chair and the camel table. The boomerang chair is a reclining chair that is used for his indoor/outdoor spaces. The camel table is a table that can transform from a short legged coffee table to a higher legged dining table. This was vital for making his rooms as functional as possible and functional for the philosophies of design that he enacted and believed in of providing spaces to harmonize his patron with nature. Celebrities and well known "forward thinkers" of this day were fond of Neutra's work - not only because he had a modern, contemporary style, but because he tended to the needs of his clients.

Richard Neutra was an innovative thinker of his day. he understood the principles of design and knew that architecture should be a means of providing a functional space that fit in with its surrounding natural landscape. Neutra is quoted as saying "As an architect, my life has been governed by the goal of building environmental harmony, functional efficiency, and human enhancement into the experience of everyday living. These things go together, constituting the cause of architecture, and a life devoted to their realization cannot be an easy one". Neutra's work graces the California landscape and has been (and continues to be) highly influential to the forward (western) thinking, fast-paced lifestyle of Californians.