

Balthazar Korab - 1926 to 2013

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[*Yale Hockey Rink*](#), designed by [Eero Saarinen](#), photographed by [Balthazar Korab](#).

According to the [Detroit Free Press](#) and other news outlets, noted architectural photographer [Balthazar Korab](#) has died. A posting by the [Balthazar Korab Photography](#) user on Facebook indicated that his death came "after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease."

A long-time resident of Troy, Michigan, Korab was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1926. He fled the country under cover of darkness in 1948 with his brother Antoní, and good friend [László Kollár](#). Following their escape, Korab and Kollár both went on to major in architecture and would, years later, collaborate on a well-regarded project submission for the [Sydney Opera House](#) design competition.

Upon completion of his studies at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Korab immigrated to the United States and in 1955 hired as a designer by Finnish-American architect [Eero Saarinen](#). It was in Saarinen's office that Korab's photographic career got its start. Although he began work as a designer, over time he became the in-house architectural photographer for the firm, and

Photo: Balthazar Korab, Ltd.

continued to photograph much of Saarinen's work after he founded his own photographic studio.

Korab [wrote](#) in ArchitectureWeek of his experience applying to work at Saarinen's office:

On a December day of 1955, fresh over from Paris, I walked into the small [Eero Saarinen](#) office in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, with a beat-up box of eight-by-tens of my Beaux-Arts graduation work. "Can I see Mr. Saarinen? I'm looking for a job." He did see me, and having reviewed my prints, asked whether I could start that very afternoon for \$2.75 an hour pay. I did.



[John Deere & Company Headquarters](#), in Deerfield, Michigan. Photo: Balthazar Korab
John Comazzi wrote in an ArchitectureWeek [article](#) about Korab:

Korab maintained a vibrant practice well into the first decade of the twenty-first century, documenting new projects by many of his long-term friends, clients, and collaborators while also photographing the architecture of a more recent generation of designers working to extend the Modern legacy: [Peter Eisenman](#), [Frank Gehry](#), [Richard Meier](#), [Michael Graves](#), [Steven Holl](#), [Juhani Pallasmaa](#), [Tod Williams and Billie Tsien](#), Maryann Thompson and Charles Rose, [Stanley Saitowitz](#), and [Michael Van Valkenburgh](#).

His professional images of architecture are recognized for displaying a precision befitting their

Modernist subjects, but they are often layered with the idiosyncrasies of atmosphere, weathering, and activity that confound an otherwise “disciplined” picture.



[World Trade Center](#), in New York, New York. Photo: Balthazar Korab

Along with countless exceptional photos of great works of Modernist architecture, in recent years, Korab's iconic photos of the destroyed [World Trade Center](#) towers in New York City, have contributed much to our collective memory of those lost structures. One shot in particular, taken at dusk and looking at the newly completed towers from across the East River, before other buildings had obscured the view of their base, may be of particular importance.

Balthazar Korab's entire photographic archive was recently acquired by the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division.



The [*United States Chancellery*](#), in London, England. Photo: Balthazar Korab

Balthazar continued to practice photography, in later years working alongside his son Christian, who is also a photographer.

Two great books about Balthazar Korab are:

[*Eero Saarinen: Buildings from the Balthazar Korab Archive*](#), with text by Balthazar Korab; edited by David G. DeLong and C. Ford Peatross, a Norton/ Library of Congress Visual Sourcebook, published by W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.

[*Balthazar Korab: Architect of Photography*](#), by John Comazzi, published by Princeton Architectural Press, 2012.