M News: NCModernist Movies Tuesday / Ellwood's Zimmerman House 2.0 / Children of Genius
From: George Smart HAIA <george@usmodernist.org>
Date: Monday, January 5, 2026

US Modernist

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Welcome, Modernist architecture fans, to the USModernist newsletter, sharing Modernist news and events since 2008. USModernist is an award-winning nonprofit 501C3 educational archive for the documentation, preservation, and promotion of Modernist architecture.

Modernist House Archives: 25,000+ Houses	Architecture Media Library: 5M+ Pages	USModernist Radio Podcast: 450+ Shows

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Editor: **Ron Gallagher** Newsletter Staff: **Virginia Faust, George Smart**
Got Modernist News? Contact **Ron Gallagher** at rpg.modernist@gmail.com

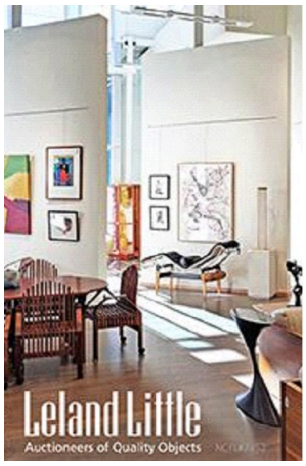
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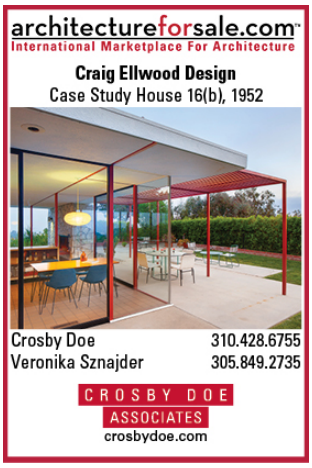
Meet the USModernist Team

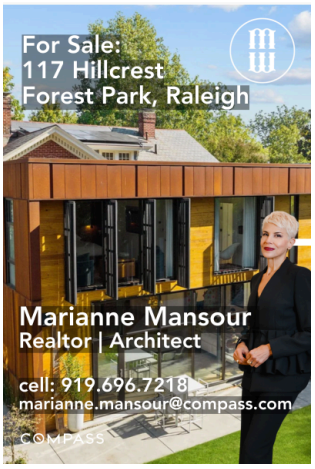
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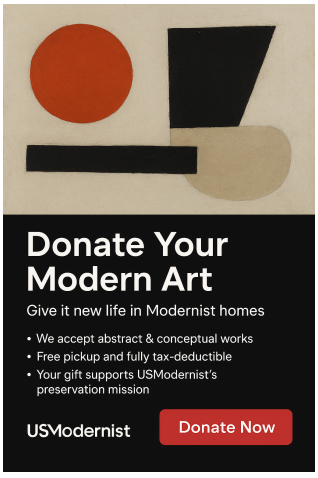
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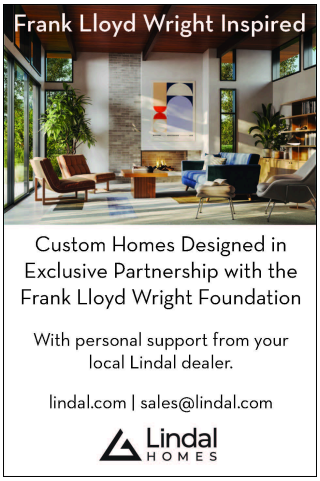








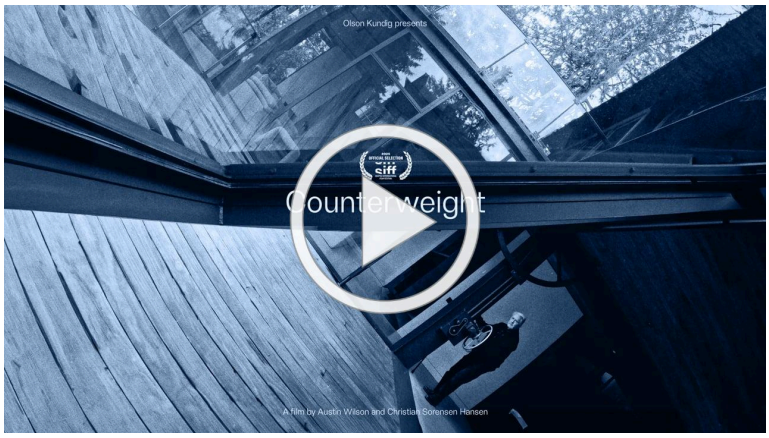




Featured Upcoming Events

NCMODERNIST MOVIE SERIES





Tomorrow - Tuesday, January 6, 7pm: Opening double feature night of the NCModernist Architecture Movie Series at the much-loved Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh NC, sponsored by **Matt Griffith** and **Zach Hoffman** at in situ studio.

The first film is *Making A Mountain*, the story of a Denmark incinerator no none wanted that turned into a ski slope loved by everyone, designed by internationally known architect Bjarke Ingels.

The second film is *Counterweight*, about the wildly creative gadgets in Tom Kundig houses.

Get tickets in advance, or at the door. Details.

MODAPALOOZA

Raleigh/Durham NC



NEW: Saturday, April 18, 8-4pm. Enjoy a great day touring eight exciting new and classic Modernist houses in Raleigh, Durham, Hillsborough, and Chapel Hill -- without the hassle of driving, parking, and finding your way around.

Modapalooza includes the delightful company of lots of Modernist architecture fans plus coffee and bagels / a USModernist tote bag with snacks / bottled water / a delicious lunch / free wifi / in our luxury restroom-equipped, air-conditioned fleet of buses.

At the houses, you'll meet most of the talented architects behind these houses, including **Heather Washburn**, **Arielle Schechter**, **Sophie Piesse**, **Notch Design**, **Phil Szostak**, **Arthur Cogswell**, **Charles Holden**, **in situ studio**, and **Raleigh Architecture**.

Discount for Mod Squad members. Sponsored by Anna Hartwell of the Hartwell Financial Group. Tickets and details.



The Frank Lloyd Wright Fallingwater+ Tour
Friday-Saturday, April 24-25 - Sold Out!

We are taking a waiting list for the next trip, Sept 11-12

Support USModernist



USModernist's documentation and preservation work consistently delivers national impact, but our future success is only possible through generous supporters. Plus there are many new and creative options in addition to direct donation, including legacy gifts. Every gift to USModernist keeps our entire digital archive free; produces engaging tours, parties, and events; and races against time to document at-risk houses.

- * A $250 donation funds the acquisition, processing, sorting, and digitization of 10 architecture and design magazines, preserving them forever and providing free access to the public
- * A $500 donation supports one month of web servers for USModernist and NCModernist
- * A $750 donation funds a video interview with a North Carolina architect
- * A $1000 donation underwrites the architect archive of your choice for year
- * A $1500 donation underwrites the cost of a bus for one of our wildly popular Modapalooza tours

Donate here.



If you have shelves of old architecture and design magazines and need that shelf space back -- we can help. Donate them to the USModernist Library, the largest open digital archive for of architecture and design magazines in the world. USModernist gives long-gone architecture and design magazines new, text-searchable, online life with free user access.

Major magazine donors include: SOM, MIT Library, Tod Williams Billie Tsien, Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo, Pei Cobb Freed, Pei Partners, Madhu Beriwal, Smithsonian Institution, UNC-Greensboro, Paul Rudolph Institute for Modern Architecture, University of Hawai'i Manoa, Atomic Ranch, AIA National,

Savannah College of Art and Design, Palm Springs Museum of Art, Cranbrook, Baltimore Museum of Art, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Robert Keil, Julie Taylor, Michael Raso, and IIT Architecture. Got some? We pay for shipping. Contact george@usmodernist.org.

Endangered Modernist Houses



Endangered: From a town known as Oyster Bay, Long Island, made famous in song by **Billy Joel**, there's a rare, long-neglected 1955 Walter Gropius house, 144 Center Island Road, for sale on 17 acres for $6.75M.

Saved: The deteriorating 1946 Booth House, 319 Pound Ridge Road, in Bedford NY is under contract with plans for restoration. This is one of the first houses designed by Philip Johnson.

Endangered? In 1980, after years of battling with the Modernist-hating Town of Southampton Architectural Review Board (ARB), **Orest Bliss** finally got to build his Norman Jaffe-designed house at 88 Meadow Lane. Fast forward 40+ years, including a non-Jaffe renovation, and Bliss wanted a demolition permit before putting the house on the market, as oceanfront properties get a better price with pre-arranged permits. After lawsuits against the ARB, Bliss got his permit and the house went on the market in August at $24M. A buyer has the green light to tear it down if they wish. Details.

Endangered: Frank Lloyd Wright's 1952 Lewis House, aka Spring House, 3117 Okeeheepkee Rd, Tallahassee FL, is for sale at $2.1M.



Know an endangered Modernist house? Through our preservation alert program, **Modernism In Danger,** USModernist calls attention to the Modernist buildings around the country at risk for deterioration, demolition, lowball auction, or inappropriate renovation (like turning your Modernist house into an Italianate villa). Tell us.

News



Try our new AI-Powered Search in the USModernist archives: In addition to the usual search keywords, you can enter entire questions, like "List all the houses designed by Craig Ellwood." Remember, AI can make mistakes, so be sure to verify any information before acting on it.

Try it out, and let us know what you think!





You'll recall that two years ago, actor **Chris Pratt** tore down a perfectly good Craig Ellwood house in Los Angeles, top photo. Ellwood fan **Evan Dyer** is bringing it back, with a new location in New York. Here's how the site work is going so far, courtesy of **Collin Spagnoli** of Lucky Leo Enterprises.



Archinect created a scorecard for you of the architects awarded the industry's top prizes last year.



It's that time of the year – the beginning – for predictions. CNN featured what it thinks will be 11 architecture projects that will "shape the world" this year.

Modernist Houses For Sale



In Altadena CA, a 1952 house that survived last year's wildfires is on the market for $3.2M.



A 1950 house that **Vincent Scully** and **Albert Reese** designed in Woodbridge CT, near where architectural historian Scully taught at Yale University, is for sale for $550,000.



Norman Jaffe's 1971 Osofsky House in Shelter Island NY has come up on the market with a listing price of just under $18M.

Upcoming Events

NCMODERNIST MOVIE SERIES

January 6, 7pm: Double Feature: Making A Mountain and Counterweight
February 3, 7pm: Prickly Mountain, Q&A with producer Allie Rood
March 3, 7pm: Googie, Q&A with producer Jake Gorst
April 7, 7pm: Curating Modernism, Q&A with producer Jake Gorst

May 5, 7pm: Double Feature: The Maslon House and The Donn of Tiki

Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh NC, sponsored by **Matt Griffith** and **Zach Hoffman** at in situ studio.

Get tickets in advance, or at the door. Details.



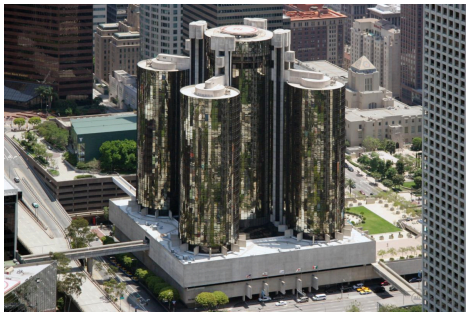
January 29, 630pm: Mayberry Modernism: North Carolina's Modernist Legacy, an entertaining and informative talk by NCModernist's George Smart at the new Durham County Library, designed by Vines Architecture. You can explore this exciting building before or after. Free, registration required.

Through February 8: At the National Building Museum, Washington DC, *Lightness of Strength: The Wave*, a 55-by-180-foot spaceframe made of recycled aluminum and constructed by Catholic University of America architecture students. Information.

February 12-22: Modernism Week 2026, Palm Springs CA. Tickets here.

HAVEN DESIGNBUILD

Thursday, February 19 - NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at Haven Design Build, 923 Broad Street, Durham NC. Free, registration required. Enter HAVEN on the form.

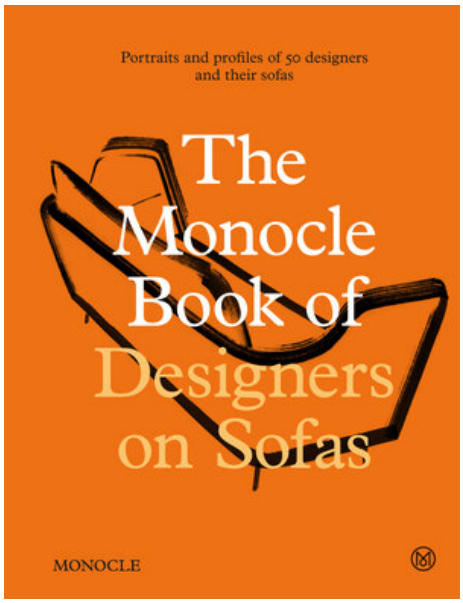


March 17-22: DOCOMOMO International Conference in Los Angeles. Join USModernist's **George Smart** for a fantastic cocktail hour on **Wednesday, March 18**, at the revolving bar atop of the Bonaventure Hotel, designed by **John Portman**, with a thrilling view of LA. Register here. You must register for the conference to attend the party.

Through March 28: The Onera Foundation, New Canaan CT's newest exhibition venue devoted to architectural preservation advocacy, presents *Treaties on De-Fences* by **Jorge Otero-Pailos**, examining the afterlife of the Saarinen-designed US Embassy in Oslo, shown alongside an exhibition on Harvard Five's Marcel Breuer and John Johansen and their Cold War–era embassies designs. Free and open to the public. Details.

Through March 29: The Art Institute of Chicago presents *Bruce Goff: Material Worlds*, at Regenstein Hall. Features architect Bruce Goff (1904–1982), best known for his groundbreaking single-family homes. Details.

New Books



Available January 27: ***The Monocle Book of Designers on Sofas,*** written by **Virginia McLeod, Nic Monisse**. A fun, informative collection of portraits and biographical interviews with fifty designers from all over the world sitting on their sofas, revealing their style, wit, personality—and sofa choices. Each of the fifty entries features a portrait of the designer on their sofa, taken at their own home or workplace, sometimes with their family, their pets, or with other possessions. In addition, a special foldout presents one hundred sofas from the last century with designs by **Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, Charlotte Perriand, Verner Panton, Cini Boeri, Zaha Hadid, John Pawson,** and many more.



Modernist Fiction Book Review, by **Bobbie Morris**

Endless Night is not **Agatha Christie's** typical whodunit murder mystery, but it is one of her best novels, with a modernist house at the center of the story and a completely unexpected plot twist at the end.

The narrator, Michael Rogers, is a young man with refined taste but little money. By chance, he meets Ellie, an American heiress, and the two marry after a whirlwind romance. Eager to please her new husband, Ellie buys Gipsy Acre, despite its troubled history and warnings that the land is cursed. The couple moves in, determined to overcome local superstition and skepticism — not to mention resistance to a modernist house in the quaint village. As this is Agatha Christie, their new modernist home becomes the site of tragedy.

In the novel and its film adaptation, it is the fictional Rudolf Santonix, an enigmatic modern architect, who promises the couple their dream house. In the 1972 film, starring Hayley Mills and Hywel Bennett, "The Homewood" stands in for the novel's promised masterpiece. Located in Esher, Surrey, England, "The Homewood" was designed by Patrick Gwynne when he was just 24 years old. Now protected by Britain's National Registry, it is open to the public.

If you're looking for a great film and an equally compelling book, *Endless Night* is an easy fix.

Latest Podcast



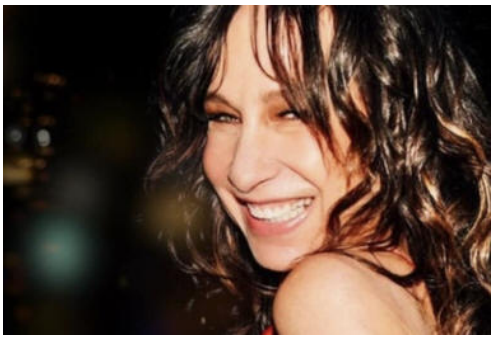
Llisa Demetrios



Rufus and Sally Nims



Gabriela Liebert



#438/Children of Genius: Llisa Demetrios + Rufus Nims with Sally and Cameron Nims + Gabriela Liebert + Musical Guest Susan Tobocman

In our continuing series, *Children of Genius*, we talk with the children of extraordinary architects. First, **Llisa Demetrios**, curator of the Eames Institute and youngest granddaughter of design legends Ray and Charles Eames. Next, **Sarah** and **Cameron Nims**, children of Florida architect Rufus Nims, and later, we'll talk with **Gabriela Liebert**, the architect reviving Nim's iconic "Jetsons House" in Miami. Then, we have the daughter of architect Irving Tobocman and also our musical guest, jazz singer **Susan Tobocman**.

US Modernist Radio is underwritten by The Brent R. Harris Charitable Trust, restorer of several Modernist houses including Richard Neutra's Kaufmann Desert House in Palm Springs, and by Diane Bald and The Budman Family, restoring significant architecture in Toronto, Los Angeles, Malibu and Palm Springs.

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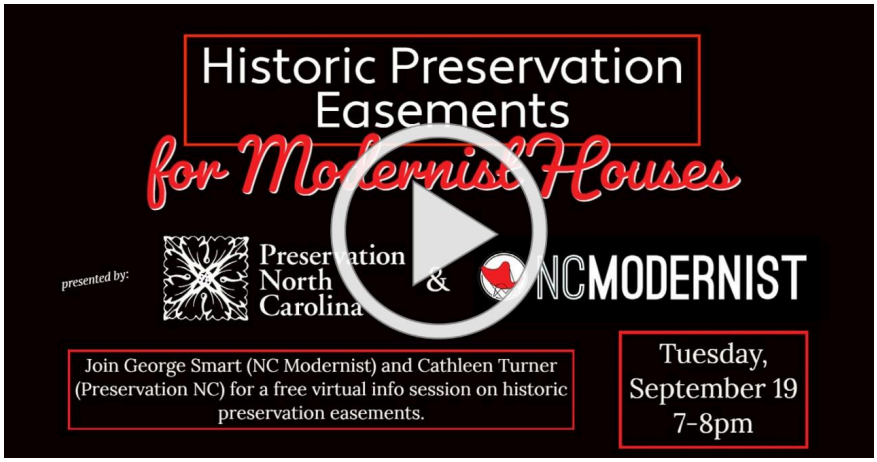
Video of the Weber House, designed by George Matsumoto and William Weber. 400 Modernist fans attended the opening last December. And now, it's an AirBnB you can rent! Many thanks to **Ormando Harris.**



Vacancy, not development, is the enemy of mid-century Modernist houses. Preserve and protect the architecture you love by notifying us when North Carolina houses go vacant or on the market.

Check out the NCModernist For Sale/Rent Database. Real estate agents and owners can list their NC Modernist houses for sale or rent for free. Submissions are subject to approval: single-family Modernist houses only, they can be old or new, the architect or designer can be from anywhere, but the house must be in North Carolina. Exclusively sponsored by:

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The **preservation easement** is one of the only legally enforceable ways to assure a Modernist house does not get destroyed by future owners. National Register status? Meaningless. Famous architect? Nope. Local historic designation? At best, a delay in demolition. And as history shows, there are plenty of smiling buyers who say, "I would never tear this down." Then after closing, it's gone. Think of the preservation easement as a homeowner's association for one house. The easement requires future owners to maintain the house in current structural condition and state of repair, or better, including necessary work to preserve its integrity. Here's a video featuring Preservation North Carolina and NCModernist, along with **Jane Levy**, who has an easement on her Greensboro Modernist home. Here's a sample preservation easement document.

There is another way, the deed restriction. Consider it "preservation easement lite." When a once-cherished residence falls into the hands of new owners, there is always the risk that it will be destroyed, despite promises to the contrary from those owners. One powerful legal tool families can use to guard against demolition is a **deed restriction**. Knowing that potential buyers can and do lie about destroying houses, a deed restriction is a legally

enforceable binding promise attached to the property title. Unlike some historic designations, a deed restriction travels with the property through changes in ownership. Even if a buyer threatens to demolish or radically alter a house, they are limited by the deed. The restriction is usually ten years, and it becomes part of the chain of title. Implementing a deed restriction before a sale immediately scares off developers (or developers-in-hiding) in an owner-value-friendly way to protect a property.

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