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## Authors on Architecture: Crespo & Robles on Kocher

**SAH/SCC Zoom Program**

**Sunday, September 21, 2025, 1-2:30 PM Pacific**

Join SAH/SCC as we explore the work of A. Lawrence Kocher (1885-1969) as detailed in the new book *A. Lawrence Kocher: American Architect* (AR+D Publishing, 2025) by authors Luis Pancorbo Crespo and Inés Martín Robles.

The book offers a new conceptual and historical framework for the study of Kocher's body of work, resituating him as one of the main protagonists in the history of American modern architecture and revealing the profound relationship between Kocher's designs and existing American domestic traditions. Kocher's concept of the vernacular included the different residential types of Colonial and Early Republican America, as well as other kinds of transitional dwelling. This book tries to provide

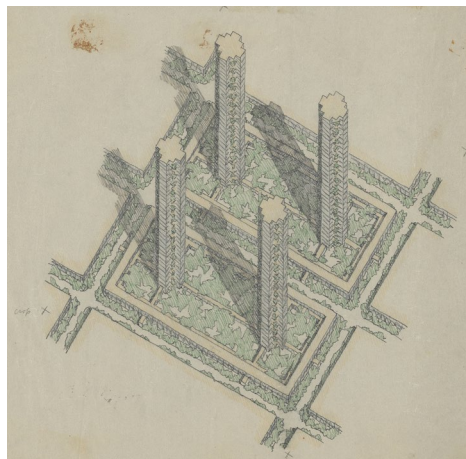
evidence about Kocher's intention of using these vernacular artifacts, alongside the concepts of prefabrication and industrialization, as a base to construct a new national architecture on which to graft the European modernist tradition.

Many SAH/SCC members will know Kocher's work from his partnership with Albert Frey, FAIA. Their most famous collaboration was the Aluminaire House from 1931, now on view in Palm Springs. Kocher's work as an independent designer has gotten very little critical attention, and this book devotes several chapters to this little-known part of Kocher's practice.

Crespo and Robles are associate professors at the School of Architecture of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Their professional practice, Pancorbo Architects, focuses on the submission of international architectural



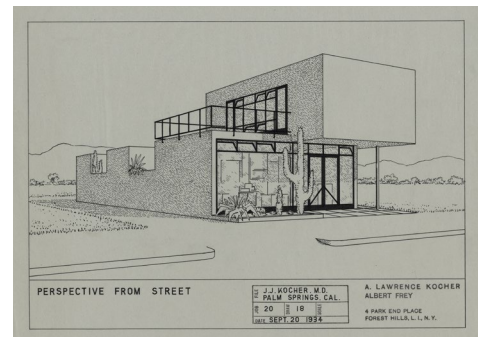
Studies Building (Kocher, 1940) at Black Mountain College in Asheville, NC.



Original sketch of unbuilt Sunlight Towers (Kocher and Ziegler, 1929).



Final perspective view of Cotton Houses (Kocher and Frey, 1934) for the Cotton Textile Institute.



Final perspective of Kocher-Samson Building (Kocher and Frey, 1934-1935) in Palm Springs.



The Rex Stout House (Kocher and Ziegler, 1929-1930) in Fairfield County, CT.

competitions. Since 2004, they've won 17 awards in different competitions and 20 awards for their built work, which has been published in more than 60 international architectural magazines.

*Crespo & Robles on Kocher—Sunday, September 21, 2025; 1-2:30 PM Pacific; \$5. Go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org), and pay via PayPal, or mail in order form on Page 6 with check; Zoom link sent upon registration.*

# SAH/SCC President's Letter

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Shelly Kappe, Hon. AIA. Last September, Victoria Lautman featured Shelly as a panelist on her "Engineering the House of Kappe" program at the Neutra Office Building in Silver Lake. (If you didn't see it, you can order the recording on Page 5.)



Shelly Kappe, Hon. AIA, in September 2024.  
Photo: Cindy Olnick

The wife of architect and educator Ray Kappe, FAIA, Shelly was a force in architectural history and education in her own right. In 1972, Shelly was an essential part of the radical educators that helped establish the Southern California School of Architecture (SCI-Arc). Prior to her death, she completed a draft of a book on the history of the school.

Shelly coordinated the Design Forum Public Lecture Series for more than a decade. She led evening program classes and curated the SCI-Arc Gallery. The online SCI-Arc library houses many fascinating and educational videos showing Shelly leading the lectures—alongside some of the most influential architects, designers, and planners in the world. Those conversations were an essential part of the SCI-Arc ethos, which promoted dialogue and a refusal to follow convention.

Shelly's own book collection was the foundation of what is now the SCI-Arc Kappe Library serving students and scholars. Her final wishes requested that those who want to honor her legacy donate to the Kappe Library [Honor With Books](#) program.

During a time when many women lived in the shadows of their famous husbands, Shelly managed the near impossible: to support him in his work and to carve her own pathway and legacy in architectural history and education. Her passing truly marks the end of an era.

—Sian Winship

## Update: Merry Ovnick Fellowship

*In our last issue, we introduced you to Luke Leuschner, the first Merry Ovnick Fellowship recipient. The Fellowship honors SAH/SCC Past President and longtime Board Member, Merry Ovnick. It provides \$1,000 annually to support graduate student travel to the SAH Annual International Conference. Luke is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. He attended the conference recently in Atlanta, GA, and sent this missive in thanks for the support.*

Despite a set of tribulations traveling there, my trip to the SAH Atlanta conference was an outstanding success. I filled every moment of the three days I was there—panels during the day, tours, museums, and local architectural/urban sights—and feel as though

I have a better sense of Atlanta and the "field" at large. This being my first academic conference, I feel altogether much less intimidated by the entire process and ready to present my own research at one. (In fact, this week I am working on submitting abstracts to two different conferences, one being next year's SAH conference in Mexico City.) In academia at large, the field of architectural history so often seems to be a niche thing—in the shadows of art history or architecture itself—and so it was most of all incredible to be surrounded by a group devoted entirely to it. I met a number of other scholars and graduate students, and, moreover, was given a chance to bond with a number of students in my own program. Even things like the book/vendor room (and its discount codes) were a delight, and I left with a reasonable book haul (but afforded the chance, I could have easily left with an unreasonable haul).

I spent much of my days attending the panel sessions, and a selection of papers were very memorable. One panel on indigenous histories focused on the Standing Rock Reservation shortly after the Dawes Act (which dispossessed many tribes of their land), examining the intersection of two socio-spatial hierarchies during negotiations between the tribal council and the American government. In a panel on the relationship between sound and architecture, another paper laid out the history of anechoic chambers (rooms that are designed to minimize all echoes), and, in particular, the use of one to record a chamber orchestra in the 1960s. In turn, this recording—which was pure sound—was used to calibrate symphony hall architecture, and thereby the vacuous negative space of the anechoic chamber was inverted to positive architectural form.

*continued on Page 6*

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

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*Bowlarama* authors Adriene Biondo and Chris Nichols.  
Photo: John Eng



Patrons parked underneath the glass-walled King's Bowl (Goodwin Steinberg, FAIA, 1960) in Millbrae, CA.  
Photo: Goodwin Steinberg, FAIA



Linbrook Bowl (Schwager, Desatoff & Henderson, 1958), in Anaheim, CA, features a oversized neon bowling pin sign that still revolves into the wee hours.  
Photo: John Eng



Structural A-frames punctuate a modern floating roof in this architectural rendering for the Starlite Bowl (Armet & Davis, 1961) in Reno, NV.

Images: Armet Davis Newlove

## Authors on Architecture: Nichols on Bowlarama

**SAH/SCC In-Person and Zoom Program**  
**Sunday, July 20, 2025, 1-2:30 PM Pacific**

Join SAH/SCC as author Chris Nichols discusses his new book, *Bowlarama: The Architecture of Mid-Century Bowling* (Angel City Press, 2024), co-written with Adriene Biondo.

*Bowlarama* takes aim at the bowling obsession that swept the post-war nation. More than just a sport or a hobby, bowling became the ultimate modern lifestyle for Americans savoring the boom years that followed World War II. Bowling alleys were modern palaces; operators were constantly trying to outdo each other, whether competing for the most spectacular architecture, the most luxurious lanes, the snazziest bowling balls, or the most exciting refreshments they could offer. *Bowlarama* brings back—in living color—all the excitement in its lavishly illustrated pages, packed with vintage photographs, exciting ephemera, and detailed hand-drawn architectural renderings that capture all the optimism, enthusiasm, and *joie de vivre* of the era.

Nichols is a longtime preservationist and senior editor at *Los Angeles* magazine. For many years he worked with the Los Angeles Conservancy Modern Committee, serving a term as chairman of the group. In addition to creating tours, exhibitions, and lectures about historic Los Angeles, Nichols has advocated for endangered buildings all over Southern California, including the Cinerama Dome and the world's oldest McDonald's in Downey. His books include *Walt Disney's Disneyland* (Taschen, 2024) and *The Leisure Architecture of Wayne McAllister* (Gibbs Smith, 2007). He writes the "Ask Chris" column in *Los Angeles* magazine and has served on the board of Hollywood Heritage.

*Bowlarama*—Sunday, July 20, 2025, 1-2:30 PM Pacific; Neutra Office Building, 2379 Glendale Blvd.; \$5. Go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org), and pay via PayPal; or mail in order form on Page 6 with check; Zoom link sent upon registration.

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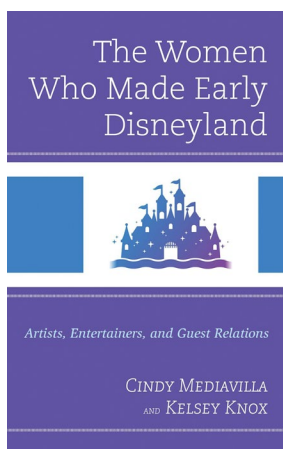
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Kelsey Knox



Cindy Mediavilla



## Authors on Architecture: Mediavilla & Knox on Women of Disneyland

### SAH/SCC Zoom Program

**Sunday, August 24, 2025, 1-2:30 PM Pacific**

Join SAH/SCC as we reclaim women's place in the early history of Disneyland! Cindy Mediavilla and Kelsey Knox discuss their book, *The Women Who Made Early Disneyland: Artists, Entertainers, and Guest Relations* (Lexington Books, 2024).

Although historians have begun to recognize the accomplishments of female animators, the women who contributed to the early success of Disneyland remain, for the most part, unacknowledged. Indeed, in celebrating the park's 10-year anniversary in 1965, Walt Disney thanked "all the boys . . . who have been a part of this thing," even though hundreds of women had also been instrumental in designing, building, and operating Disneyland since before its grand opening in July 1955.

Some—artist Mary Blair, Imagineers Harriet Burns and Alice Davis, "Slue Foot Sue" Betty Taylor, and Disneyland's first "ambassador," Julie Reihm—eventually became Disney "legends." The authors will focus on the work less-well-known talents of architect and former movie production designer Dorothea Holt Redmond and landscape architect Ruth Shellhorn, whom Walt hired four months before the park opened.

As described by former Disney Imagineering archivist Vanessa Hunt, "Cindy and Kelsey have written a book full of stories about incredible women that every Disney fan should know. Reading the stories about some of the women I was lucky enough to have met or even known brought smiles, laughter, and even some tears. While I know they all did what they did because they loved it, not to become famous, they all deserve to have the spotlight on them and their contributions. Hopefully, learning about these women will inspire some future artists, costume designers, landscape architects, and many other creatives to pursue what they are passionate about."

Longtime SAH/SCC member Mediavilla is a retired lecturer from UCLA's Department of Information Studies. Knox is university archivist at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

*Mediavilla and Knox on Women of Disneyland—Sunday, August 24, 2025; 1-2:30 PM Pacific; \$5. Go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org), and pay via PayPal; ; or mail in order form on Page 6 with check; Zoom link sent upon registration.*



Ruth Shellhorn and Walt Disney at Disneyland Western Railway station two weeks before opening day, July 2, 1955.  
Photo: Harry Kueser/©Courtesy of Kelly Comras

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tri-fold, black-and-white brochure featuring Walker's important residences in Ojai, with pictures and article by historian David Mason. \$5

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- **California Houses:** Prolific design author Michael Webb shows contemporary architecture from his book *California Houses: Creativity in Context*. \$5
- **California Modernism:** Author Todd Cronan discusses his book *Nothing Permanent: Modern Architecture in California*. \$5.
- **Canyon Country Club:** Author Steve Treinin discusses *Canyon Country Club: History and Design of Palm Springs' Garden of Eden*. \$5
- **Church of the Epiphany:** SAH/SCC President Sian Winship and preservation architects Escher GuneWardena introduce viewers to the oldest Episcopal church in LA. \$5
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- **Kappe House:** A special trio, whose roots extend back over six decades, each represent an important segment of this SoCal architecture masterpiece. \$5
- **Hugh Kaptur:** Steve Keyton, author of *The Modern Architecture of Hugh Michael Kaptur*, presents the architect's work—with a guest appearance by Kaptur himself. \$5
- **Florence Knoll:** Dr. Ana Arujo talks about her book *No Compromise: The Work of Florence Knoll*, about a leading force of modern design. \$5
- **L.A. Housing:** Multifamily housing is the topic for journalist Frances Anderton, Hon. AIA/LA. \$5.
- **David C. Martin:** Trace the history of AC Martin's third generation through the eyes of architect David C. Martin, FAIA, design principal of the iconic Los Angeles-based firm from 1984 to 2016. \$5
- **Metropolis in Latin America:** Authors Mariastella Casciato and Idurre Alonso shed light on the transformations that modified the colonial model of Iberian cities in America. \$5
- **MGM Studios:** The wide-ranging effect of MGM is proven by Hollywood historian Steven Bingen. \$5.
- **Mies van der Rohe:** Architectural historian Dietrich Neumann presents a new, critical look at architect Mies van der Rohe and the complicated, established narrative about him. \$5
- **Julia Morgan:** Architectural historian and writer Kimberly Perette, Assoc. AIA, chronicles the life of trailblazing architect Julia Morgan, FAIA. \$5
- **Movie-Made LA:** Author/educator John Trafton discusses the nexus of architecture in LA and the city's role as the home of the film industry in his book *Movie-Made Los Angeles*. \$5
- **Neutra in Latin America:** Catherine Rose Ettinger discusses her 2018 book *Richard Neutra: Encounters with Latin America*. \$5
- **New West:** SAH/SCC Life Members Wolfgang Wagener, AIA, RIBA, and Leslie Erganian explore history through hand-tinted postcards. \$5
- **Newport Cottages:** Author Michael C. Kathrens provides superb visuals of *Newport Cottages Between 1835 and 1890*. \$5
- **Palm Springs:** Prolific author Alan Hess discusses *The Palm Springs School: Desert Modernism 1934-1975*. \$5
- **John Parkinson:** Author Stephen Gee discusses the unsung genius of architect John Parkinson, designer of many LA icons. \$5
- **Jock Peters:** Historian Christopher Long relays the architect and designer's "varieties of modernism" and his work in Los Angeles. \$5
- **Alfred Preis:** Co-authors present the book *Alfred Preis DISPLACED: The Tropical Modernism of the Austrian Emigrant and Architect of the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor*. \$5.
- **Preserving Los Angeles:** Author Ken Bernstein and photographer Stephen Schafer reveal how LA's preservation programs saved architectural and cultural jewels of the city. \$5
- **Will Price:** Author George E. Thomas makes the case for Will Price as an early modern architect working in Philadelphia. \$5
- **Public Housing:** Scholar Nicole Krup Oest shares her thesis-turned-book, *Photography and Modern Public Housing in Los Angeles*. \$5
- **Rebuilding Cities:** Author Andrew Demshuk looks at *Three Cities After Hitler: Redemptive Reconstruction*. \$5
- **David Wyn Roberts:** Architect, author, and SAH/SCC Member Cory Buckner provides a rare and very personal look at the work of Cambridge modernist David Wyn Roberts. \$5
- **Aline & Eero Saarinen:** Author Eva Hagberg relays the architectural love story from her book *When Eero Met His Match: Aline Loucheim Saarinen and the Making of an Architect*. \$5
- **Santa Barbara:** Author Doug Woods shows how people make their home in the coastal "paradise". \$5
- **Santa Monica Pier:** Author James Harris conveys the rich history of the Santa Monica Pier, a beloved, internationally recognized icon. \$5
- **Millard Sheets:** Author Adam Arenson discusses the work of Millard Sheets and his association with Home Savings and Loan. \$5
- **Sprawl:** Author, historian and critic Robert Brueggemann presents "20 (More...) Years of SPRAWL". \$5
- **The Stepwells of India:** Author Victoria Lautman conducts a personal tour of the mysterious and magnificent stepwells in India. \$5
- **Louis Sullivan:** Author Patrick F. Cannon presents the work of the Chicago architect. \$5
- **Sun, Space, Self:** Historian Daniel Paul gives the first Merry Ovnick Fellowship Fundraiser Lecture. \$5
- **Wayne Thom:** Author and SAH/SCC Member Emily Bills examines the architectural photography of Wayne Thom, who documented SoCal modern architecture. \$5
- **Unlikely Modernism:** SAH/SCC Board Member David Coffey reveals Bakersfield's hidden legacy of modern architecture. \$5
- **Warner Bros.:** Former Warner Bros. archivist Steven Bingen takes you behind the gates at the famed studio. \$5
- **Water & Sacred Architecture:** Anat Geva, PhD, Assoc. AIA, examines architectural representations that tie water, as a physical and symbolic property, to the sacred. \$5
- **Jean Welz:** Author/filmmaker Peter Wyeth uncovers the little-known architecture career of perhaps the leading South African painter. \$5
- **Jean Welz, Part 2:** Peter Wyeth provides insight and perspective about the little-known architect Jean Welz and the demolition of his seminal masterpiece Maison Zilveli. \$5.
- **Paul R. Williams, FAIA:** Author Stephen Gee, realtor Bret Parsons, and architect Marc Appleton, AIA, discuss the early residential work of the noted "architect to the stars." \$5
- **Russel and Mary Wright:** Author Jennifer Golub's special look at Dragon Rock at Manitoga, the home of the famed industrial designers. \$5
- **X202:** Author Peter Wyeth explores the work of British industrial designer James Leonard and the mystery of Leonard's X202 chair. \$5



# SAH/SCC MEMBERSHIP FORM

SAH/SCC is a 501c 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing its members with opportunities to learn about and experience the rich architectural heritage of Southern California and beyond. Our volunteer board members create tours, lectures, travel tours, and other events that explore the ideas behind the architecture as well as the buildings that result from them. From modern to craftsman, from Spanish Colonial to contemporary, our programs are the best-kept secrets in Southern California!

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## Update: Merry Ovnick Fellowship

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While these two papers represented an area outside of my immediate area of research (but no less interesting), there were also a selection I found relevant and thought-provoking to my own research interests. In a panel on the Green Book, one paper documented Green Book sites in the American Southwest, a region that few would associate with the Green Book, but one that figures in its history nonetheless. Finally, on the last day of the conference, one historian linked the rise of the right-wing talk show (pioneered by Reagan in Orange County) to larger trends in California's postwar suburbanization and industrial design. Per the paper, commutes became longer, cars became quieter, and the radio became an instrument of conservatism. While I learned a specific set of histories from these papers, attending the panels was a learning experience in a general sense. They presented a sample of successful (and at times, not so successful lectures) and it was formative to glean the more methodological, pedagogical aspects of panels.

Finally, outside of the time spent in the conference, I took every chance to explore the architecture of Atlanta, a city that I have never visited. I visited works such as Marcel Breuer's Atlanta Central Library (1977), Isamu Noguchi's Playscape (1975), the High Museum (Richard Meier, 1983; Renzo Piano, 2005), and the incredible Atlanta Beltline, which seems to be one of the most vital and revitalized urban spaces in the entire country. A few hours before my flight, I even visited the fabled Coca-Cola World (and dragged two PhD students from my cohort), which was an amazing gesamtkunstwerk of American consumerism. (Who doesn't love sugary beverages and abstract feeling of happiness?) Most memorable, as one might expect, was the selection of John Portman buildings scattered throughout downtown Atlanta. I stayed at Portman's Marriott Marquis (1985) which was, in my opinion, the greatest of his works, appearing as a sort-of urban organism as one looks up (or down) at the elevators whirring along a vertebrae of concrete. I also made a point of visiting, at times through Portman's labyrinth of elevated walkways, the Hyatt Regency (1967), the Westin Peachtree Plaza (1976), and a number of other projects through an SAH walking tour. The exuberance of his work—that feeling of a sublime architectural vertigo—is unrivaled and exciting, even if it lacks the more mature qualities of a sleek, developed modernism.

In any event, I would like to thank SAH/SCC once again for the opportunity and the funding to attend the Atlanta conference, which was a robust learning experience all around, from the individual papers and buildings to the more tacit knowledge. *Thank you.*