

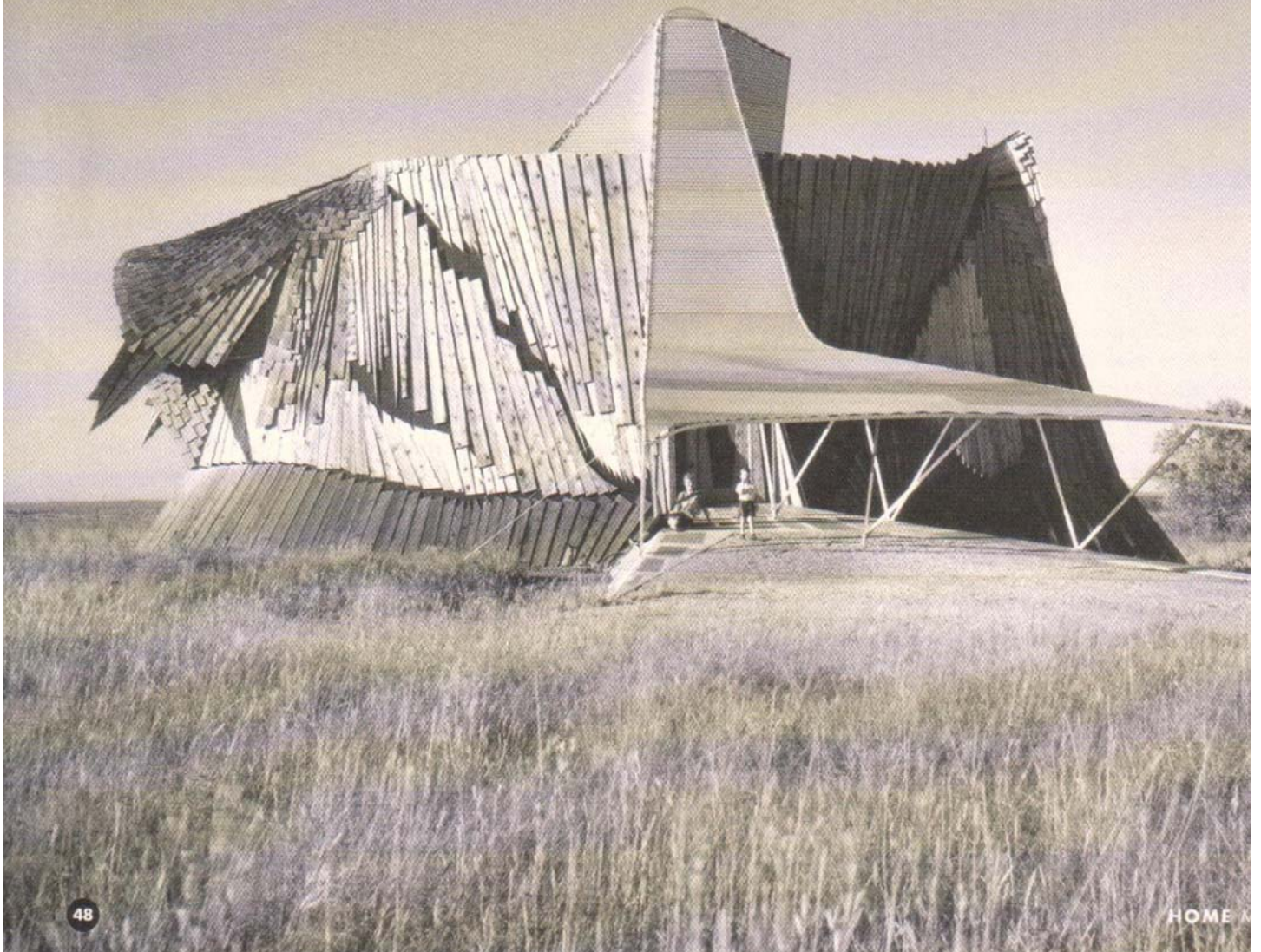
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JULIUS SHULMAN

Focusing on a Legendary Architectural Photographer

THIS MONTH, JULIUS SHULMAN – ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER extraordinaire since 1936 – turns 97, and with that comes the release of a three-volume set of large-format photographs. *Julius Shulman: Modernism Rediscovered* will surely delight lovers of modernism and remind us all of the splendid way architectural photography celebrates its forms.

Text Hilary Lewis

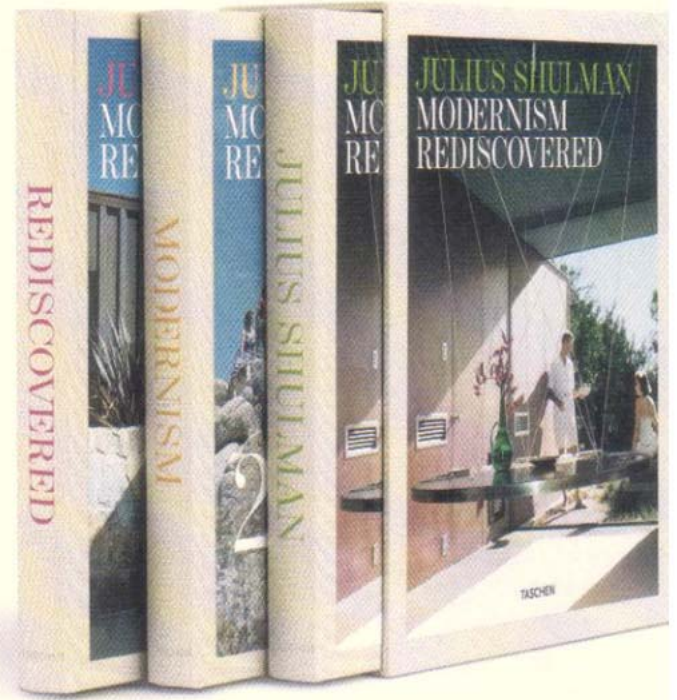


Shulman moved to Los Angeles in 1920 and still lives there – in the Hollywood Hills in a mid-century home by Ralph Soriano. In addition to the three volumes, next February, the Palm Springs Art Museum will host an exhibition of Shulman's iconic photography of that region. The renowned photographer spoke with contributing editor Hilary Lewis on his work and the architecture that his photography so well explores.

HOME MIAMI: How did this ambitious project come about?

JULIUS SHULMAN: This is the result of my archive coming to the Getty in 2004. In the past, I had maintained this myself, but I figured that 260,000 images belonged at the Getty. A year later the head of the archive, architectural historian Wim de Wit, put together a show. Wim and I see eye-to-eye on how to handle architecture. Benedikt Taschen, who has worked with me many times, was willing to go through the entirety of this archive. Can you imagine? These volumes, which exceed 1,000 pages, are the result of Taschen's very careful process of picking the best images, especially among those of less well-known projects.

HOME: It's telling that over 300 pages are devoted to the late 1950s and early 1960s.



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SHULMAN: There were some wonderful architects practicing at mid-century who understood the early ideas of modernism but then took it in new directions. They emulated the best architecture known at the time and then added their own ingenuity. Looking at the photographs now, I'm especially fascinated by the work from the American Midwest. There's a church [St. Luke's Methodist Church, 1957 by Coston-Frankfurt-Short] I photographed in Oklahoma City, which impressed me greatly. I love looking at those pictures. My work from the 1930s into the 1980s shows the evolution of 20th-century architecture.

HOME: In many ways, your photography helped define mid-century architecture, especially your images of the Case Study Houses for *Arts and Architecture*.

SHULMAN: Plenty of people know my shot of Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22. That image is in this collection, but there are many unexpected images and projects.

HOME: And you didn't even start out planning to be an architectural photographer!

SHULMAN: It happened almost by accident. I met Richard Neutra in 1936, photographed one of his houses, and he was so delighted I found myself with a career.


HOME: You came to California 87 years ago. What do you make of the growth of Los Angeles?

SHULMAN: When I came here at 10 years old, the population of Los Angeles was about 650,000. Now Southern California has over 18 million people. While the growth is somewhat frightening, especially if you take the freeways, what has happened is quite exciting. We have matured. Today, we have all the arts and a terrific array of architectural experimentation. I think, in general, people are starting to understand architecture better overall, not just in California but everywhere. I've seen marvelous work in Europe, Asia and Latin America. That's one of the reasons we included images from so many places.

HOME: You see diversity, but don't you also see similarities?

SHULMAN: The influence of Southern California at mid-century is pervasive. I visited Innsbruck, Austria and almost thought I was in Los Angeles. There was a house that looked just like a Case Study house. I guess that's the power of the media. Photography has exposed the world to local developments in architecture.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: The Greene Residence, "The Prairie Chicken House," by Herb Greene in Norman, Oklahoma, 1961 (left). A view through Philip Johnson's Seagram Building of the Lever House by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in New York City, 1959. **OPPOSITE PAGE** (clockwise from top left): The Roberts Residence by Weston, Byles & Rudolph in Malibu, California, 1953; The Woods Residence, "The Dome House," by Soleri & Mills in Cave Creek, Arizona, 1950; The Frey Residence by Albert Frey in Palm Springs, California, 1956.



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HOME: Are you concerned that there is too much replication and not enough innovation in architecture?

SHULMAN: No. What happened in California – and in Europe a generation earlier – influenced people but later spurred new designs. I see this as a question of influence, not of copying. But those days – I mean the 40s, 50s and 60s—really were influential. Architects in America looked at figures such as Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier – not to forget Frank Lloyd Wright – and then took those inspirations and went on to create something different. That's what I documented. There are examples of projects from all over the US and also other places: Mexico, Israel and Hong Kong.

HOME: Are we now in a similar period of innovation?

SHULMAN: I'd like to think so. However, I've just taken a look at a recent issue of *Architectural Record*, and I'm dismayed that there is so much focus on tall buildings. Architecture isn't about building the tallest structure, it's about making quality buildings. I like work that is productive, not sensational. The work that I present here shows a belief in humanity. Every building speaks for itself.

HOME: Perhaps your photographs have something to do with that.

SHULMAN: I try to capture the best essence of what architects have achieved. Photographs tell a story.

HOME: I think it's generally accepted that your images are classics because they so fully frame not only great architecture, but also the lifestyle each building embodies.

SHULMAN: I see things the architects don't see. ■

Julius Shulman: Modernism Rediscovered (3 volumes)

Photography by Julius Shulman

Essays by

Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, Owen Edwards, Peter Loughrey

Directed and produced by Benedikt Taschen

1008 pages in German, French and English

Published by Taschen

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Coming in November

Designing the Good Life: Norman M. Giller & The Development of Miami Modernism

By Norman M. Giller and Sarah Giller Nelson
University Press of Florida

This collaborative work by prolific architect Norman M. Giller and his art historian granddaughter, Sarah Giller Nelson, is a primer for anyone interested in learning more about South Florida and its architecture at mid-century, especially those iconic structures, such as Ocean Palm Motel and the Diplomat Hotel and Country Club, that have defined our native MiMo style.