

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY OF JULIUS SHULMAN

The legendary image-maker talks
about the Case Study Houses
and the real roots of green design.

Photography by
**Julius
Shulman**

by
**Paul
Makovsky**

On the eve of his 97th birthday, Julius Shulman—the éminence grise of architectural photography—is excited about *Modernism Rediscovered*, his new three-volume set from Taschen featuring more than 400 architectural projects shot over a seven-decade career. Think of any significant Modern building in Southern California and chances are that Shulman has documented it at one stage in his career. His photograph of Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22, the one with the two girls looking over the Hollywood Hills, has arguably become the most widely published image in the history of architecture. Ask him about an iconic house and he's not likely to talk about its aesthetics—the way most midcentury Modern architecture is fetishized today—but to focus instead on its innate connection between indoors and out. “The reason why this architecture photographs so beautifully is the environmental consideration exercised by the architects,” Shulman says. “It was the sense that here we have beautiful canyons, hillsides, views of the ocean. Everyone loves these photographs because the houses are environmentally involved, and this was before the emphasis on what everyone is calling green.”

Shulman began his career in 1936 when he photographed a Richard Neutra house with a vest-pocket camera. He quickly moved on to shoot the work of many prominent architects who later became friends: Rudolf Schindler, Raphael Soriano, Gregory Ain, to name just a few. Shulman remains enthusiastic about architecture (Leo Marmol and Steve Ehrlich are just two of his contemporary favorites), but he's a little perplexed by the current mania for all things sustainable. “We've always had green—those of us who are concerned with the environment,” he says. “So why should we suddenly discover that green is good?” When asked why Koenig never talked about his architecture as sustainable, Shulman says, “In the fifties and sixties it was done automatically. The term green meant you related to the environment. That's all green means: you are the environment.”

Shulman is seen here in his Hollywood Hills home. The photographer's new three-volume set is drawn from his extensive archive, which contains