

# ArtsPhotography



## Julius Shulman's best shot 'I have always admired my own work, because I do it so well'

I first photographed the architect Albert Frey's house in Palm Springs in 1947. After that we became good friends, and I spent a lot of time there. I took this picture around 1968. I've always admired my own work, because I do it so well. Albert is standing with a bowl of fruit in his hand, and the young lady he is addressing is my daughter Judy, who would come to Palm Springs with me to see the architecture. Behind Albert is the early-morning sunlight.

Albert thought it would be nice to have a table without legs, and, being an engineer, he realised he could just use steel cables, covered in plastic, suspended from the ceiling. It's so cleverly done that the table doesn't move, even if a person leans on it with their elbows. We had all our lunches and dinners there. It was uncanny: your feet were free under the table and there were no legs to kick. It was fascinating – and eerie, until you got used to it.

Another curious thing was that you'd view

the person sitting across the table from you through a triangle. It was very pleasant. If there was a good-looking girl opposite you, you looked at her through the triangle. It was a great conversation piece, to say the least.

The shot was not complicated. Nothing is complicated in my life. I work quietly and swiftly, always using a Sinar 4x5 camera. I didn't use only natural light. In this picture, there were three lamps, synchronised. You'll notice the ceiling has light on it from one of my lamps. And the light on my daughter's hair on the right side – that's not God, that's me.

*Interview by Leo Benedictus.*

*Julius Shulman: Modernism Rediscovered is published by Taschen. [www.taschen.com](http://www.taschen.com)*



### Curriculum vitae

**Born:** Brooklyn, New York, 1910

**Studied:** "Never did. I started taking photographs with a little Kodak breast-pocket camera and found I could do it very well."

**Inspirations:** "There's no such thing in my life. I'm a natural born photographer. It's a blessing."

**High point:** "In 1960, I photographed Pierre Koenig's Case Study House. That became the most famous architectural picture in history."

**Low point:** "There has never been one. I'm 97, and I've always been successful."

**Pet hate:** "I observe many shortcomings in other photographers. It bothers me when I see poor photographs of buildings I know."

**Dream subject:** "There is nothing left that I still want to photograph. My life has been so complete."