



Annual Report

NEUTRA INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL THROUGH DESIGN

Fiscal Year 2021-2022

INTRODUCTION

THE 2021 FISCAL YEAR WAS A DECISIVE ONE FOR THE NEUTRA INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL THROUGH DESIGN (NISTD). MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT MARKED THE TRANSFER OF THREE NEUTRA-DESIGNED PROPERTIES FROM THE DION NEUTRA TRUST TO THE INSTITUTE PERMITTING NISTD TO BEGIN THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS MISSION.

THE NISTD WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1962 BY ARCHITECT RICHARD J. NEUTRA (1892-1970) AS A VEHICLE FOR ATTRACTING FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH FOR THE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN COMMUNITY.



Dion, Raymond, Richard, Frank & Dione Neutra, c. 1950

ALTHOUGH THIS VISION WAS NEVER FULLY REALIZED, THE INSTITUTE OPERATED FOR ALMOST 50 YEARS, UNDER RICHARD NEUTRA'S ARCHITECT SON, DION NEUTRA, WITH A FOCUS ON PRESERVATION PRACTICE FOR NEUTRA-DESIGNED BUILDINGS. AS PART OF HIS ESTATE PLAN, DION BEQUEATHED THE OWNERSHIP OF THREE NEUTRA-DESIGNED PROPERTIES: THE NEUTRA OFFICE BUILDING (RICHARD NEUTRA, 1950), DION NEUTRA/REUNION HOUSE (RICHARD NEUTRA, 1950) AND TREETOPS APARTMENTS (DION NEUTRA, 1982) TO THE INSTITUTE TO USE IN FURTHERING ITS MISSION.

THE INSTITUTE'S MISSION IS TO PRESERVE AND USE THE NEUTRA LEGACY TO PROMOTE CREATIVE RESEARCH AND DESIGN THAT BENEFITS PEOPLE AND THE PLANET. THIS MISSION CONNECTS RICHARD NEUTRA'S ORIGINAL VISION FOR THE NISTD WITH DION'S PRESERVATION EFFORTS AND ENSURES ITS RELEVANCY IN THE FUTURE.

DURING THE 2021 FISCAL YEAR (APRIL 1, 2021-MARCH 31ST, 2022), THE INSTITUTE EMBARKED ON THE FIRST OF MANY PROJECTS DESIGNED TO FULFILL ITS MISSION. WHILE THE NISTD SPENT MUCH OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR LISTENING AND PLANNING, 2021 WAS A YEAR OF ACTION. THE INSTITUTE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS FELL INTO FOUR BASIC THEMES: RESTORATION, EDUCATION, CELEBRATION, AND PUBLICATION.

RESTORATION

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE NISTD TO MODEL BEST PRACTICES IN PRESERVATION STEWARDSHIP. TO THIS END, THE INSTITUTE ENGAGED BARBARA LAMPRECHT, PH.D. AND TAYLOR LOUDEN TO ADDRESS DEFERRED MAINTENANCE ISSUES AND BEGIN RESTORATION WORK IN THE UPPER APARTMENT AT THE NEUTRA OFFICE BUILDING.

GIVEN THAT THE NEUTRA OFFICE BUILDING IS DESIGNATED AS HISTORIC CULTURAL MONUMENT #676, WATER DAMAGE REPAIR WAS UNDERTAKEN GUIDED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS AND INFORMED BY HISTORIC PLANS AND PHOTOS. AS PART OF THIS WORK, ACOUSTICAL CEILING TILES WERE REPLICATED AND REPLACED IN-KIND, AND ORIGINAL INTERIOR PAINT COLORS, INCLUDING THE USE OF NEUTRA BROWN, WERE RESTORED.

ON THE EXTERIOR OF THE APARTMENT, ROTTING ORIGINAL WOODEN FACIA WAS REPLACED IN-KIND, A BALCONY PLANTER BOX REBUILT, AND NEW MANUALLY-OPERATED SUN SHADES WERE RE-INSTALLED.

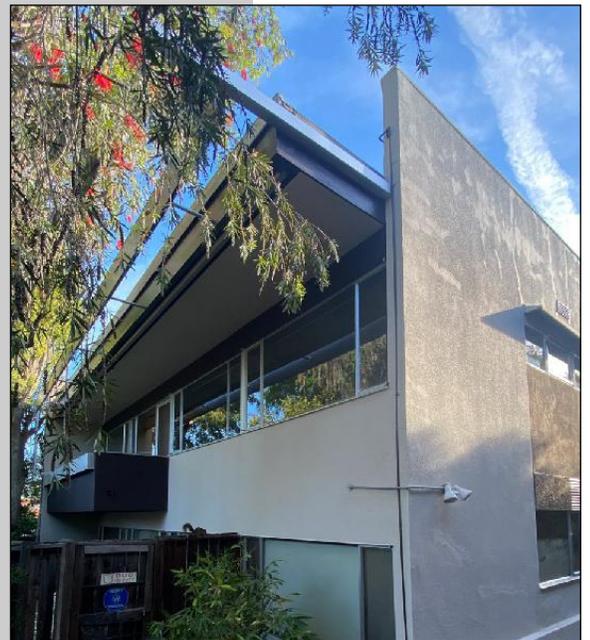
AFTER YEARS OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE, THE INSTITUTE ALSO WORKED TO REPAIR AND CLEAN UP THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING, INCLUDING RESTORATION OF THE SIGN, GRAFFITI REMOVAL, LANDSCAPE PRUNING, AND A FRESH COAT OF PAINT TO MAKE THE BUILDING A SOURCE OF PRIDE WITHIN THE SILVER LAKE COMMUNITY. THESE EFFORTS ARE THE FIRST OF MANY REPAIR AND RESTORATION PROJECTS THAT WILL BOTH PROTECT THE NEUTRA LEGACY AT THE OFFICE AND CREATE VIABLE FUTURE USES FOR THE SPACE.

TO AID IN ITS STEWARDSHIP EFFORTS, THE INSTITUTE ALSO IS WORKING WITH JOHN BERLEY, WHO VOLUNTEERS AS OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE, TO GUIDE AND COORDINATE REPAIR WORK, EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE BUILDINGS, AND TENANT RELATIONS. JOHN IS PAST-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS/SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER AND RECENTLY RETIRED FROM ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE WITH FREDERICK FISHER AND PARTNERS, ARCHITECTS (FF&P).

ADDITIONALLY, THE INSTITUTE HAS ESTABLISHED ITS FIRST "NIGHT WATCHMAN" AT REUNION HOUSE, WITH JOSH GORRELL LIVING ON THE PREMISES FULL TIME.



Restored Upper Apartment interior



Restored rear fascia, planter box and updated paint colors



Restored signage, new planting and updated paint colors

EDUCATION

DURING 2021, THE NISTD ALSO EMBARKED ON THE FIRST OF MANY PROJECTS USING THE NEUTRA BUILDINGS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

THE RESTORATION OF THE UPPER APARTMENT, AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, ENABLED THE INSTITUTE TO BEGIN THE REALIZATION OF ITS VISION TO CREATE “VIRTUAL APARTMENT MUSEUMS.” THROUGH A GENEROUS DONATION FROM CHRISTIAN & CRISTINA CIGRANG, THE INSTITUTE ENGAGED FILMMAKER JOSH GORRELL, IN COLLABORATION WITH BARBARA LAMPRECHT, TO CREATE TEN-MINUTE AND THREE-MINUTE EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF NATURAL LIGHT AND HOW IT CAN ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING. IT IS THE INSTITUTE’S INTENT TO MAKE A VIDEO FOR EACH OF THE THREE BUILDINGS IN THE INSTITUTE’S PORTFOLIO. THE NEUTRA OFFICE BUILDING CONTAINS TWO APARTMENTS, REUNION HOUSE HAS A GARAGE APARTMENT, AND TREETOPS IS A TRIPLEX OF RENTAL UNITS. THESE VIDEOS WILL BE ACCESSED BY A QR CODE ON STANCHIONS OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDINGS FOR VISITING TOURISTS AND ON THE INSTITUTE WEBSITE

NEUTRA IS CHIEFLY KNOWN FOR HIS WORK IN SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCES, BUT HIS IDEAS ARE ESSENTIAL TO OTHER PROPERTY TYPES. WITH LOS ANGELES EXPERIENCING A SHORTAGE OF RENTAL HOUSING, THE NISTD BELIEVES IT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A BROADER REGIONAL DIALOGUE THROUGH THESE EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS.

THE SECOND EDUCATIONAL PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY THE INSTITUTE IN 2021, WAS THE COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (USC) SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE’S HERITAGE CONSERVATION PROGRAM TO USE REUNION HOUSE AS THE MAJOR FIELDWORK PROJECT FOR ARCH 551: CONSERVATION METHODS AND MATERIALS. IN THIS GRADUATE-LEVEL COURSE, STUDENTS MEET AT REUNION HOUSE SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE SEMESTER TO IDENTIFY, DOCUMENT, ANALYZE, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVATION TREATMENTS TO MATERIALS AND SYSTEMS SUCH AS WOOD, ROOFING, HVAC, PLUMBING, ELECTRICAL, FLOORING, WINDOWS & DOORS, AND LANDSCAPE. THE END-PRODUCT OF THE CLASS WILL BE THE PREPARATION OF A HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT. UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF RENOWNED PRESERVATION ARCHITECT AND EDUCATOR PEYTON HALL, AREAS OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR ARE IDENTIFIED AND CATALOGUED, WITH APPROPRIATE TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS MEETING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS. REUNION HOUSE IS LOS ANGELES HISTORICAL CULTURAL MONUMENT #1229.



USC students watch lecture by Barbara Lamprecht.



USC students with plans of Reunion House.



Student documents conditions at Reunion House in February 2022.

IN ADDITION TO ARCH 551, ONE STUDENT IS ALSO PREPARING A SEMESTER PROJECT TESTING A PHONE-BASED MATTERPORT SCANNING APP USING REUNION HOUSE AS THE SUBJECT PROPERTY.

DURING THE 2021 FISCAL YEAR, THE REMAINING PLANS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND EPHEMERA DONATED BY THE DION NEUTRA TRUST TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES WERE ALSO TRANSFERRED TO THAT INSTITUTION. NISTD IS IN THE PROCESS OF CATALOGING THE REMAINING ARCHIVAL MATERIAL AND IDENTIFYING WAYS TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO SCHOLARS. THIS INCLUDES PLANS AND EPHEMERA ASSOCIATED WITH DION NEUTRA'S OWN PRACTICE.

ARTHUR L. AND KAY KOBLIK JOHNSON

As part of the Institute's ongoing outreach program, Raymond Neutra conducted an interview with the sons of Reunion House's original builder and owner, Arthur Johnson. The sons, Mark and Eric, were able to share memories of their parents including photos of their wedding at Reunion House.

Kay Koblik Johnson, their mother, was actually lucky enough to have lived in two homes by Richard J. Neutra. The first, the Koblik Residence (1937) nearby in Silver Lake was built for Kay and her first husband, Harry Koblik. According to Steven Koblik, Harry's nephew, Kay and Harry met while she was studying and he was teaching art at City College. When Harry died suddenly of a heart attack in 1949, Kay found herself widowed, with two young sons. Kay was then introduced to Art Johnson, who was building what would become Reunion House, by neighbor Mary Mocine. They were married there in June of 1952.

Kay and Art had two more boys and lived in Reunion House until Art was called back to the Midwest after his father's passing. Kay was an artist all her life, working in watercolors and textile art. The Institute hopes to honor Kay and Art through the acquisition of some of Kay's artwork for permanent display at Reunion House.

(Photos courtesy of Mark Johnson)



Wedding on the Hearth, 1952



Reception in the garden

WITH REUNION HOUSE NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF THE NISTD, THE INSTITUTE CAN BEGIN PLANNING FOR A SCHOLARS-IN-RESIDENCY PROGRAM. THE INSTITUTE'S FIRST VISITING SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE IS SCHEDULED FOR A SHORT STAY IN APRIL 2022: PROFESSOR PAUL CHAMBERLAIN, DIRECTOR OF LAB4LIVING. STRATEGIC RESEARCH CENTRE, SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY, U.K. DURING HIS STAY, HE WILL CONFER WITH OTHER LOS ANGELES ACADEMIC EXPERTS IN HOUSING FOR THE AGED.

CELEBRATION

PART OF THE INSTITUTE'S MISSION IS TO CELEBRATE CREATIVE RESEARCH AND DESIGN THAT BENEFITS PEOPLE AND THE PLANET. DURING 2021, THE NISTD FURTHERED ITS EFFORTS TO BUILD A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES (UCLA) AND PERKINS EASTMAN FOR A POST-OCCUPANCY VALUATION ON THE UNIVERSITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/CORINNE E. SEEDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (NEUTRA AND ALEXANDER, 1957).

NEUTRA'S DESIGN FOR UNIVERSITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FEATURED LARGE EXPANSES OF GLASS ENABLING INDOOR-OUTDOOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH NATURE, AND CAPITALIZING ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FAVORABLE CLIMATE. WITH CLASSROOM VENTILATION MADE MORE RELEVANT BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE INTENT OF THE POST-OCCUPANCY EVALUATION STUDY IS TO IDENTIFY HOW THE SCHOOL HAS AND WILL PERFORM IN CHANGING TIMES, INCLUDING IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE.

THE INSTITUTE IS ALSO PLEASED TO REPORT THAT IT HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (EDRA) TO CONDUCT A SYMPOSIUM AT ITS JUNE 2022 CONFERENCE ON HEALTH IN ALL DESIGN. RAYMOND NEUTRA WILL BE JOINED BY BARBARA LAMPRECHT, NISTD BOARD MEMBER JAMES WISE, AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER LISA HESHONG TO DISCUSS HOW RICHARD NEUTRA'S IDEAS ARE RELEVANT TO TODAY'S CHALLENGES. THE INTENT OF THIS PANEL IS TO ENCOURAGE MORE SCHOLARSHIP ON NEUROSCIENCE AND DESIGN THAT BENEFITS PEOPLE AND THE PLANET, AND TO DEMONSTRATE HOW RICHARD NEUTRA'S IDEAS CAN BE RELEVANT IN THESE EFFORTS.



University Elementary School, 1957
Photo by Raymond Neutra



University Elementary School, 1957
Photo by Raymond Neutra

WHAT IS "BIOREALISM" ?

"Biorealism" is a term coined by Richard Neutra to capture his recognition of "the inherent and inseparable relationship between man and nature" as well as his philosophical approach to design. By combining "bio" and "realism," Neutra was signaling the priority he gave to respecting the constraints and possibilities human biology presents for design. Biology doesn't change with fashion and he believed that it demands an evidence-based and biophilic approach to design.

Biorealism was meant to firmly separate himself from the other Modern architects that were his contemporaries. In our more intellectually fragmented 21st century, it takes at least four different intellectual disciplines to capture what he meant by it.

The first of these we today call "evidence-based design." It means that Science informs design decisions to ensure that they are made on the firmest possible grounds. The second of these is neuroscience, because Neutra believed that the evidence needed for good design could be found in the basic physiology and neural functioning of humans. The third is what now is recognized as "Biophilia," the deep connection that our physiological and neural operations have to the natural world around us. The fourth is captured in what today we call "sustainability." It means that the designs we create should support us and maintain us into a future with its own new challenges, and help us preserve all that we want to about the values we find and imbue into our lived world.

Biorealism is all that!

PUBLICATION

DURING 2021, THE NISTD FURTHERED ITS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP ON RICHARD NEUTRA. THE INSTITUTE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND PUBLICATION OF *RICHARD NEUTRA: ENCOUNTERS WITH LATIN AMERICA* – SHOWCASING THE ARCHITECT'S IMPORTANT AND UNDERSTUDIED PROJECTS AND HOW THEY INFLUENCED HIS PRACTICE. AUTHOR CATHERINE ROSE ETINGER, PHD LAUNCHED THE BOOK AT VDL HOUSE AND THE INSTITUTE COORDINATED AN AUTHORS ON ARCHITECTURE EVENT IN DECEMBER 2021 WITH THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS/SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER THAT DREW VIEWERS FROM ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE.

FURTHER, THE INSTITUTE FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED THE REISSUE OF RICHARD J. NEUTRA'S 1954 MANIFESTO, *SURVIVAL THROUGH DESIGN* (2022, ATARA PRESS), WHICH FEATURES A NEW INTRODUCTION BY BARBARA LAMPRECHT AND ANNOTATED TEXT. THE BOOK IS EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE LATER THIS YEAR.

LASTLY, A HARDCOPY VERSION OF RAYMOND NEUTRA'S BOOK, *CHEAP AND THIN: NEUTRA AND FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT* HAS NOW BEEN MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH AMAZON UNDER THE IMPRIMATUR OF THE NEUTRA INSTITUTE PRESS.

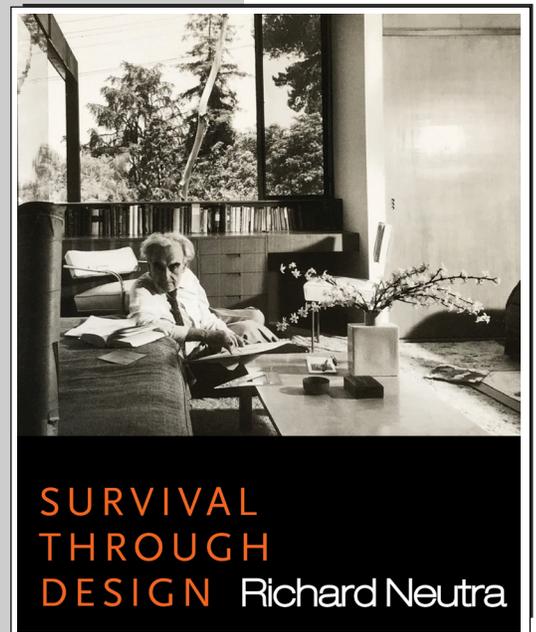
CONCLUSION

THE NEUTRA INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL THROUGH DESIGN IS DELIGHTED TO BEGIN THE STEWARDSHIP AND PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ITS MISSION. THE INSTITUTE IS MOVING SLOWLY AND THOUGHTFULLY ABOUT HOW TO USE ITS ASSETS TO PRESERVE THE NEUTRA LEGACY AND TO USE IT TO PROMOTE CREATIVE DESIGN THAT BENEFITS PEOPLE AND THE PLANET. AS NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS REVEAL THEMSELVES DURING THE COMING FISCAL YEAR, THE ORGANIZATION SEEKS TO BRING THE WORK OF RICHARD, DION, AND DIONE INTO CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND LET IT SERVE AS INSPIRATION FOR A NEW GENERATION.

DONATE!

The Neutra Institute for Survival Through Design is a nonprofit 501C3 organization.

We welcome your donations in support of our activities. Email: raymondneutra@gmail.com for more information.



THE NISTD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RAYMOND RICHARD NEUTRA, PRESIDENT

Dr. Neutra, a physician and environmental epidemiologist, is the youngest son of Richard Neutra. After a public health career in environmental medicine and epidemiology at UCLA and Harvard University, and the California Department of Public Health, he has been drawn back to the legacy of his father and brother. He has been active in the preservation of the Neutra VDL Studio and Residences and several other Neutra projects. In addition to preservation, he endorses the Neutra commitment to socially and ecologically responsible design inspired by evidence.

ROCHELLE NEUTRA, FNP, MSN, VICE-PRESIDENT

As a clinician, Rochelle has worked with low-income and underserved communities in the SF Bay Area and split her time between advocacy, direct patient care in safety-net clinics and clinical research. She served as the Medical Clinic Director at the Native American Health Center in SF and conducted NIH sponsored research at UC San Francisco and UC Berkeley. As an undergraduate, she studied Language and Cultural Studies at UC Santa Cruz and obtained a Master's degree in Nursing at UCSF.

MICHAEL J. GIBSON, TREASURER

Mike is a lawyer, architectural historian, and preservationist. He practices law in Southern California, specializing in business and real estate transactions. He serves as an officer and director of the Society of Architectural Historians and the Charnley-Persky House Museum Foundation, and as a trustee of the California Preservation Foundation. As an independent scholar, Mike's article surveying Catholic church design in post-war suburban Los Angeles was published in *Modernism and American Mid-20th Century Sacred Architecture*. Mike holds professional degrees in law from UCLA and heritage conservation from USC.

SIAN WINSHIP, MHP, SECRETARY

An architectural historian, marketing researcher, and writer, Sian specializes in modern architecture and cultural history. As President of the Society of Architectural Historians/Southern California Chapter, she curated numerous architectural tours and events. She is the author of the award-winning *Japanese American Historic Context for SurveyLA*, and a contributing author to the book *William Krisel's Palm Springs*. Sian was the recipient of the 2019-2020 Friends of Residential Treasures (FORT) Fellowship. She holds a Master's in Historic Preservation from USC.

JAMES A. WISE, PHD, MEMBER AT LARGE

Dr. James A. Wise is retired after a 40-year career as a university professor, consultant, and government scientist at a national laboratory. His Bachelor and Ph.D. degrees are in Experimental and Mathematical Psychology at the University of Washington. Jim focused his research career on issues of human-centered design. His work includes interior design to deter bank robberies, habitability in spacecraft, visualization of text documents, and fractal design enhancements for medical wards. He is widely published in academic and professional literatures, holding research awards in Industrial Design, Architecture, and Electrical Engineering. He leads the local citizen's organization, Sustainable Tri-Cities, in south-east Washington State.

MARLOW HOFFMAN, MEMBER AT LARGE

Marlow is a seasoned arts professional, content creator, and social media strategist who elevates engagement and brand awareness through storytelling. She worked at the Eames Office for ten years before joining MORE Health as the marketing associate. From 2015 to 2020, she served as a Friends of Clyfford Still steering committee member, fostering a community of like-minded ambassadors for the museum's membership. Marlow obtained a dual degree in art history and Italian language from Washington University in St. Louis and an MFA from Boise State University in visual art.

