



Ken Kellogg at the Hoshino Chapel, Japan, 2012. Courtesy of the Kellogg Family

INTRODUCTION

As modern architecture began to spread across the major urban centers of the US at the dawn of the 20th century, a counter-establishment philosophy, rooted in Transcendentalism and the influential teachings of the architects Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), flourished in less developed areas. Inspired by the writings of Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Henry David Thoreau, this philosophy advocated for the adoption of an intuitive creative process in architectural practice, alternative to the application of imported stylistic codes, prevailing in the discipline at the time. The theory encouraged a sensitive response to the conditions of a project's site: its weather, geology, topography, and vistas, among other factors. Correspondingly, its tenets favored a fluid definition of space and the harmonious integration of all elements with each other and with the environment. Fittingly, Sullivan termed this philosophy "organic" for symbolizing nature's self-guided growth and site-specificity. Following him, Wright posited it as the means to shape a truly American architecture, divergent from the effervescence of revivalism. Despite the influence that Sullivan and Wright had on successive generations of architects, *organic* architecture was never fully embraced within the architectural canon. Its free-form shapes were deemed whimsical and distant from the boxy rigor and replicability that European modernism imposed.

Altogether, *organic* architecture propelled experimentation and problem solving at the construction site since the complex geometries that stemmed from the application of its principles could hardly be defined on paper (3D modeling software only became widely accessible at the end of the 20th century.) Along the same lines, the emphasis that *organic* architecture placed on spatial fluency, richness, and experimentation required advanced structural engineering and fostered the development of new construction techniques. Furthermore, the stress that this philosophy placed on the integration of architecture in its natural environment—which translated into the use of local materials, the employ of passive energy methods, and the incorporation of natural features within its interiors, among others—, predated the concern for sustainability that floods the architectural discipline today. Not surprisingly, the forward-thinking spirit that underlies organic principles has suited the setting of futuristic, superhero, and space-age narratives in popular media. And while disseminating the value of *organic* designs as significant expressions of creativity and

ingenuity, these media have also deepened their general appreciation as unique and exclusive. Notwithstanding, and unlike style-based schools of thought, *organic* architecture has endured the passing of time engendering peculiar architectural expressions for the past 120 years.

As we gain historical perspective over the practice of *organic* architecture throughout this period, we ask ourselves, what role has it played in defining modern and contemporary architecture in the US, and elsewhere? How has it navigated the ethical tensions between architectural advancement and general accessibility? How has art influenced the conception and development of its practice? What is the pedagogical value of this philosophy today? Does the term 'organic' suit all organic-looking expressions? What does *organic* architecture mean today? What is its future?

The gift of the archive of nature-inspired, *organic* architect Kendrick Bangs Kellogg to the Architecture and Design Collection (ADC) at the Art, Design & Architecture Museum (AD&A Museum) at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) presents the institution with the unique opportunity to delve into these questions from a fresh, alternative perspective. The architect's exceptional biography and architectural legacy, which remain largely unexplored, also enable the Museum to contribute a non-conforming perspective to the history of modern architecture and, within it, to that of the *organic* design.

KENDRICK BANGS KELLOGG

Kendrick Bangs Kellogg stands out as one of the most extraordinary, imaginative, and innovative architects worldwide, yet his contributions remain underexplored. Born in San Diego in 1934, he initially set his sights on studying astrophysics but ultimately redirected his passion towards architecture. Despite pursuing education at various institutions—including San Diego State University, University of Colorado, University of Southern California, and University of California at Berkeley—he departed before completing his degree, finding the traditional grading system a barrier to students' creativity and a promoter of architectural mediocrity. Driven by an enthusiastic and ambitious spirit, Kellogg embarked on a path of self-education in fabrication and construction. This proactive approach enabled him to build a significant number of his architectural designs, as early as in his twenties. Together with his professional autonomy, a rare trait in a discipline increasingly reliant on specialization, the otherworldly nature of his projects set him apart from his peers from the outset.

Like Frank Lloyd Wright, Kellogg was a proponent of learning by doing and pursued the foundation of the New School of Organic Architecture to implement this pedagogical approach. Similarly to the architect from Wisconsin, Kellogg subscribed to the belief that architectural practice encompassed the definition of every aspect of a building, including its furniture, cabinetry, lighting, glazing, and other aspects of interior design. In this regard, Kellogg fostered an inclusive approach to his practice, often collaborating with multifaceted artists such as James Hubbell, William Slatton, and John Vugrin. Perfectly blended with his buildings, the works of these creators contribute to blur the lines between art and architecture in Kellogg's projects, stressing their uniqueness.

As a nature-inspired, *organic* architect, Kellogg exhibited a keen concern for integrating his architectural designs into their surroundings. Such concern materialized not only in the incorporation of local materials, labor, and cultural references into their construction, but also in their optimal orientation and use of passive energy methods. These considerations, ahead of their time in addressing environmental impact, yielded projects that differed significantly from each other both in form and function. Further enhancing his visionary approach was Kellogg's steadfast commitment to high-quality construction standards, able to

ensure a building's longevity. He presented this characteristic as a means to justify his creations' often elevated cost: "The most economic architecture is organic architecture," he affirmed.

In addition to his unique architectural approach, Kellogg fervently championed the relaxation of building regulations in San Diego, particularly those imposing stylistic ordinances that, he believed, contributed to urban mediocrity. Despite encountering mixed success in this endeavor, he persevered, expanding his activism to challenge other regulatory structures. This unwavering pursuit of freedom serves as a testament to the architect's relentless drive to challenge his own genius.

GOALS AND TIMELINE

The donation of Ken Kellogg’s archive to the Architecture and Design Collection (ADC) brings about the possibility of making this relevant collection available to the general public. It also affords the AD&A Museum the opportunity to enrich its holdings with practices of underrepresented creators and generate new scholarship through an exhibition and publication, in alignment with the institution’s mission. In particular, this donation holds significant potential for advancing the Museum’s exploration of *organic* architecture’s role in shaping modern architecture in the United States. The institution took its initial steps in this direction in 2023 with the debut exhibition and publication spotlighting the career of *organic* architect Helena Arahuate, which was warmly received. Building upon the momentum *organic* architecture is garnering, the University of Oklahoma is presently curating an exhibition featuring the work of The American School of Architecture, including the work of renowned *organic* architect Bruce Goff. The inclusion of Kellogg’s archive in the ADC will bolster such momentum, further elevating scholarly appreciation for Kellogg’s work and the *organic* tradition.

To capitalize on these exciting opportunities, the AD&A Museum has structured The Kellogg Project in three phases:

Phase 1 - Shipping and Freezing - COMPLETE

Ken Kellogg’s archive was carefully wrapped in thick plastic, palletized and shipped to the AD&A Museum in April 2024. In order to eliminate the multiple pests that it presented, all the paper materials were frozen at -20F degrees for two weeks in a specialized container. Audiovisual materials, sensitive to hydrothermal variations, were treated separately. A paper conservator trained Museum staff in these operations, which proved to be successful. This phase has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the Kellogg Family; **The Palm Springs Preservation Foundation**; The Indian Wells Preservation Foundation; Karen Prinzmetal; Robin and Eryn Donaldson; and an anonymous donor.

Phase 2 - Conservation and Cataloging - ON GOING

Following the freezing process, a team of conservators begun conserving the archive, brushing and treating every single item included in it. Given the archive’s volume,

THE KENDRICK BANGS KELLOGG PROJECT – AD&A MUSEUM, UC SANTA BARBARA

conservation efforts may take two years to complete. In parallel to conservation, Museum staff is grouping contents by project and rehousing audiovisual materials and models into acid-free containers, according to best archival practices. A finding aid, listing all the materials accessioned into the collection, is being produced. This finding aid will be published on the Online Archive of California (<https://oac.cdlib.org/>) to facilitate access to the materials once conservation is complete. The Museum's objective is to make the archive accessible to the general public within the next two years.

Phase 3 - Exhibition and Publication - SCHEDULED

The AD&A Museum staff is already working on a major retrospective exhibition on Ken Kellogg, tentatively scheduled for 2026. The first monograph on the architect will be published in conjunction with this exhibition.

The Museum is utilizing this three-phased project as a platform for providing training to UCSB students in best practices for handling, conservation, cataloging, and curatorial methods. Additionally, UCSB students will be engaged in developing an innovative virtual reality experience for the exhibition.

ABOUT US

The AD&A Museum

Since its founding in 1959, the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has built an international reputation around its dynamic program of changing exhibitions and thoughtful use of its permanent holdings.

The Museum's mission is to stimulate research, support artistic practice, and generate original programming through the Museum's collections. Through rotating installations of its permanent Art, Design and Architecture collections, along with special exhibitions and programs, the AD&A Museum is both a teaching museum, committed to the development of critical thinking and visual literacy in support of the University's goals of education, research, and service, and a resource for the wider Santa Barbara community. To achieve its mission, the AD&A Museum:

- Collects, preserves and conserves architecture and design archives, primarily from Southern California, and art works representing many cultures and traditions.
- Presents exhibitions and educational programs that aim for international significance and resonate with regional audiences and concerns.
- Stimulates research and scholarship by providing free access to its collections.
- Through internships, provides opportunities to students for professional experience in museum and archive work.
- Motivates faculty across disciplines to incorporate art, architecture, and design in class curricula.
- Maintains and strengthens a vibrant network of supporters, colleagues, and collaborators, locally and internationally, to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of art and design.

Admission to the Museum, its programs and collections is always free. Currently the institution serves over 26,000 students and 11,000 faculty and staff on campus, and a growing community of visitors and scholars both onsite and online.

Art Collection

The Art Collection presents visitors with the opportunity to participate in the history of art through direct and close interaction with paintings, sculptures, works on paper, and objects which range from major works to provocative pieces. It includes the Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals, the Sedgwick Collection of Old Master Paintings, the Feitelson Collection of Old Master Drawings, the Fernand Lungren Collection of Western paintings, a unique collection of early photography media (vintage daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes), and a growing collection of contemporary artwork in all media, among other treasures.

Architecture and Design Collection

The jewel in the crown of the AD&A Museum's holdings is the Architecture and Design Collection (ADC), one of the largest and finest architecture and design archives in North America.

Comprising 290 archives (and counting) of architects, landscape architects, photographers and designers who have worked or continue to practice in Southern California, the ADC is essential for studying the built environment of the region from the late 19th-century through the present day.

Included in the collection is the work of such renowned architects as Albert Frey, Irving Gill, Cliff May, Rudolph Schindler, and Lulah Maria Riggs as well as a growing representation of the legacies of architects who identified with the *organic* creed —Sim Bruce Richards (Ken Kellogg's former employer), Frank Lloyd Wright, Lloyd Wright, and Norm Applebaum, among others.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The AD&A Museum is seeking philanthropic support to cover the estimated costs related to the phases 2 and 3, comprising the processing, cataloguing and dissemination (exhibition and publication) plans of Ken Kellogg's papers.

Your investment in this project will help to ensure the preservation of this valuable archive which will be housed in the AD&A Museum's Architecture and Design Collection (ADC) and thus be made accessible to the worldwide community.

In recognition of your gift, we would be pleased to acknowledge you in the ADC's finding aid for the Kellogg collection, as well as in promotional and educational materials related to the project.

If you would like to support this endeavor, please contact:

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It is the policy of UC Santa Barbara and the UC Santa Barbara Foundation that a modest portion of gifts and the income from gifts may be used to defray the costs of raising and administering funds. The current assessment is 6% with a cap at \$180,000 for gifts of \$3 million and above.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

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