

P. O. Box 23110, St. Louis, MO 63108

Exhibition: "Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at Mid-century"

September 19 to January 5, 2009

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum

The broad cultural zeitgeist of "cool" informed the visual, graphic, and decorative arts, furniture, architecture, music and film produced in Southern California in the 1950s and early 1960s. This exhibition, organized by the Orange County Museum of Art, includes a jazz lounge; a media bar with film, animation, and television programming; a period art gallery of hard-edge abstract paintings, selections of art, architectural, and documentary photography; and an interactive timeline. Featured are artists who overlapped and interacted in Southern California at mid-century, including Chet Baker, Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, Charles and Ray Eames, John Lautner, Richard Neutra, and others who developed the iconic high modernist style.



Charles and Ray Eames, prototype plywood chairs (photograph by Charles Eames, c. 1950), Boyd Collection

The *New York Times* wrote that the exhibit portrays "not just a style but a spirit and an ethos that are in many ways diametrically opposite those of East Coast Abstract Expressionism. Angst-free, not monumental, anti-grandiose, California cool is laid back yet cleanly articulated, impersonal yet intimate, strict yet hedonistic, and seriously playful."

The Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum is open free to the public Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday 11-6, Friday 11-

Bus Tour: Mid-Century Modern in St. Louis

Sunday, October 5, 1-4 pm

Eric Mumford, PhD, associate professor of architecture in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts and author of *Modern Architecture in St. Louis*, will lead a bus tour featuring a diverse sampling of key examples of modern architecture in the area. Tour stops will include the Frank Lloyd Wright house in Ebsworth Park, the Climatron at the Missouri Botanical Garden, which incorporated key principles established by innovative architect Buckminster Fuller; the Center for Creative Arts (COCA) building, designed in 1950 by the Eric Mendelsohn; Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch and more regional examples of architecture from this era. The tour fee of \$25 includes admission costs when appropriate; \$15 members and students with valid ID. To purchase your ticket please visit or call the Edison Theatre Box Office (314.935.6543).

Talk: "New York Hot & California Cool:

Thursday, November 20, 6 pm

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum

Join Sabine Eckmann (director and chief curator, Kemper Art Museum) and Charlotte Eyerman (curator of modern and contemporary art, Saint Louis Art Museum) for an informal dialogue exploring the visual art and culture of New York and California at mid-century, as highlighted through the exhibitions at their respective institutions this fall: *Birth of the Cool* and *Action/Abstraction*. Space is limited; RSVP required, phone 314-935-4523

Exhibition: Michael Eastman:

"Grandeur Saved – The Aiken-Rhett House"

Friday, October 3 to Saturday, February 14, 2009

The Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Avenue

Michael Eastman visited Charleston, South Carolina, to photograph the Aiken-Rhett House in 2005 and 2006. One of St. Louis' best-known photographers, Eastman is a graduate the University of Wisconsin but a self-taught photographer. Combining both traditional and digital techniques, Eastman's work is the nation's leading museums and has been the subject of several books including *Horses* published by Knopf in 2003, and the recent *Vanishing America*, published by Rizzoli in 2008. Built in 1818 and expanded in the 1830s and 1850s, the Aiken-Rhett House stands as perhaps the most intact

townhouse complex showcasing urban life in antebellum Charleston, a city famous for its wealth of such buildings.

Eastman photographed the Greek Revival residence, service buildings and slaves' quarters during visits to Charleston in 2005 and 2006, after the house had been vacant for several decades and just before the Historic Charleston Foundation began a restoration that is still continuing. Printed on the scale of grand paintings, the photographs immerse the viewer in the interior of the Aiken-Rhett House. Seemingly frozen in time, these images record the fine and decorative art objects that hint at the once grand lifestyle of past residents. The house still contains much of its original furniture and decorative arts, which were purchased by Governor William Aiken Jr. and his wife Harriet during their ownership, which extended from 1833 to 1892. Their daughter Henrietta Rhett and her descendants continued to live here until 1975.



*The ballroom of the Aiken-Rhett House, Charleston.
From the Historic American Buildings Survey*

Also remarkably preserved are the living and work quarters that housed the Aikens' enslaved African-Americans, many of whom were skilled craftsmen and artisans. The yard and quarters are set behind the main house where they face inward, surrounded by a high brick wall. Gothic and symmetrical in decoration and layout, they contain two structures, a kitchen and laundry, and opposite, stables and carriage bays. The Aiken-Rhett House as an urban complex speaks powerfully about race relations, the culture of ante-bellum and post-bellum Charleston and the connections between all members of a household.



The Aiken-Rhett House, Charleston, seen from the rear, with service buildings and court. From the Historic American Buildings Survey

The Sheldon Galleries are open Tuesday and Thursday noon to 8; Wednesday and Friday Noon to 5; Saturday 10 to 2, and an hour before performances. 314-533-9900.

Exhibition: Marilyn Bradley: "St. Louis in Watercolor: The Architecture of a City"

Opening Reception Friday, November 7, 6 to 9 p.m.
Grafica Fine Art Gallery and Custom Framing
7884 Big Bend, Webster Groves

Marilyn Bradley, longtime watercolor artist, teacher, and Webster Groves historian, has collected her favorite images of St. Louis landmarks for a new book published by Reedy Press, and this exhibition of the same title features a selection of the 75 watercolors reproduced in the book. Bradley treats high art and popular culture with the same keen eye and evocative touch. She includes both existing landmarks and ones that have disappeared during her career. The exhibition will continue into December. Grafica is open 10 to 5:30 Monday through Friday and 12 to 4 Saturday. For more information, phone Lynn or Lary Bozzay at 314-961-4020 or e-mail grafica@graficafinearts.com.



Marilyn Bradley, White Castle #24, Hampton & Chippewa, closed 1982. From St. Louis in Watercolor: The Architecture of a City