

NEWS

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WALKER ART CENTER AND MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS JOINTLY PRESENT FIRST RETROSPECTIVE OF FINNISH-BORN AMERICAN ARCHITECT EERO SAARINEN

AMONG FEATURED PROJECTS ARE CHRIST CHURCH LUTHERAN IN MINNEAPOLIS AND IBM BUILDING IN ROCHESTER



Eero Saarinen
United States Jefferson National Expansion Memorial,
St. Louis, Missouri, under construction, 1965
From the Collections of Arteaga Photos Ltd.

Minneapolis, August 15, 2008— On a four-year international tour of Europe and the United States, the landmark exhibition ***Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future***—the first major museum retrospective of this Finnish-born American architect’s short but prolific career—will be jointly presented at the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts September 13–January 4. An opening-weekend lecture on Sunday, September 14, at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, with Susan Saarinen, the architect’s daughter, and a weekend symposium October 10–12, concluding at the Saarinen & Saarinen-designed Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis, one of the finest examples of modern ecclesiastical architecture, are among the related programs celebrating the exhibition. (A complete listing follows.)

Organized by the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York, the Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, and the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., with the support of the Yale University School of Architecture, *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* features never-before-seen sketches, working drawings, models, photographs, furnishings, films, and other ephemera from various archives and private collections. Exploring more than 50 of Saarinen’s built and unbuilt projects, the exhibition provides a unique opportunity to consider his innovations in the use of new materials and construction techniques within the larger context of postwar modern architecture.

In this collaborative presentation, the Walker Art Center will feature Saarinen’s furnishings and residences as well as his designs for churches

and academic and corporate campuses, while the Minneapolis Institute of Arts will present his designs for airports, memorials, and embassies as well as his early work within the context of its modernist design collection.



Eero Saarinen with A Combined Living-Dining-Room-Study project model, created for *Architectural Forum* magazine, circa 1937
Photographer unknown
Courtesy Eero Saarinen Collection. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University

From the sweeping curves of the TWA terminal JFK Airport and the soaring Gateway Arch in St. Louis to the elegant simplicity of the Pedestal Chair, Eero Saarinen created some of the most powerful and enduring expressions of modern architecture and design. Although his career was cut short by his early death at age 51 in 1961, Saarinen was one of the most celebrated architects of his time, both at home and abroad. Born in Finland in 1910, he coincidentally shared the same birth date as his famous father, architect Eliel Saarinen, who designed the buildings and grounds of the famed Cranbrook educational campus in the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Emigrating to the United States at the age of 13, Eero grew up at Cranbrook, immersed in its artistic culture, and completed his architectural studies at Yale University before eventually returning to Cranbrook to teach and practice architecture in partnership with his father on many important commissions. With the death of Eliel in 1950, Christ Church Lutheran (1947–1949) in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood would be the last completed project by Saarinen and Saarinen.

Saarinen established his own firm and enjoyed a fame that surpassed that of his father's, attracting and nurturing top talent from around the world, many of whom went on to have significant practices of their own. He achieved international acclaim while working out of a surprisingly modest office in Bloomfield Hills. An intense and immersive environment, the office operated nearly around the clock. Saarinen's practice spanned airports, embassies, national memorials, corporate and academic campuses, churches, private residences, and furniture. Some of his peers criticized him for having a different style for each job, but he shrugged off the criticism, rejecting the dogma of an orthodox modernism by letting the subject and site guide his solutions.



Eero Saarinen
IBM Manufacturing and Training Facility, Rochester, Minnesota, circa 1958
Photographer Balthazar Korab
© Balthazar Korab Ltd.

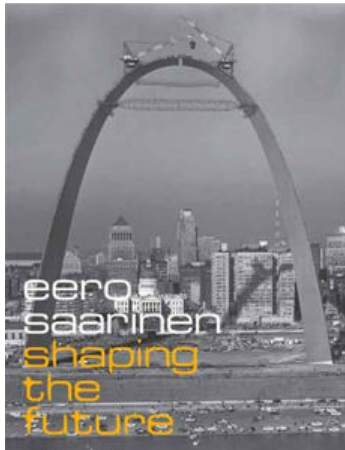
Saarinen helped create important expressions of American identity such as the United States Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, better known as St. Louis Gateway Arch, which celebrated the country's westward expansion with a simple form of monumental proportions; airports in both New York and Washington, D.C., that thrilled people with the glamour of international travel and served as an entry to the country's business and political capitals; and his pioneering development of the postwar corporate campus for such industrial giants as General Motors, Bell Telephone, and IBM, including its manufacturing and training center in Rochester, Minnesota (1956–1958). These buildings used dynamic forms and structural innovations to capture the optimism of mid-20th-century America, while their variety came to represent a national ideal of unbounded choice.

Documentary Film

Screened at both venues, *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, an 18-minute documentary film by KDN Films produced by Bill Ferehawk, Bill Kubota, and Ed Moore, chronicles the life and work of the architect, focusing not only on his buildings in their cultural context but also the collaborative, 24-hour-a-day process that produced them. Interviews with more than a dozen people tell the Saarinen story in a search to understand his genius and his little-understood, yet influential, design process. Included are personal anecdotes and commentary by key figures in Saarinen's life: intimate family friend Florence Knoll Bassett; critic Vincent Scully; and architects such as Kevin Roche, César Pelli, and Ralph Rapson.

Publication

Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue that addresses the themes and framework of the exhibition, with sections devoted to building types and the architect's milieu. An opening essay written by co-editors Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Donald Albrecht introduces the themes of the book, which is composed of two main sections, an annotated chronology, selected Saarinen writings, and appreciations by former collaborators. Included are essays by a team of researchers and scholars that situate Saarinen and his work in his social, intellectual, and artistic milieu, as well as the most complete portfolio of Saarinen projects to date presenting a chronological survey of more than 100 projects. The catalogue, published by Yale University Press, is available at the Walker Art Center Shop and the Museum Shop at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. \$65.



Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future exhibition catalogue cover
Photo courtesy Yale University Press

Web Site

eerosaarinen.net

Organization

Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future is organized by the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York, the Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, and the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., with the support of the Yale University School of Architecture. The exhibition is curated by Donald Albrecht, independent curator and Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of the City of New York.

Funding

ASSA ABLOY is the global sponsor of *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*. Additional support is provided by Autodesk, Florence Knoll Bassett, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, Elise Jaffe and Jeffrey Brown, Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, Jeffrey Klein, Earle I. Mack, the Ministry of Education, Finland, Marvin Suomi, and anonymous donors.

Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future is co-presented in Minneapolis by the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Major support for the Minneapolis presentation is provided by Judy Dayton. Media partner *Mpls.St. Paul* Magazine.



Eero Saarinen
Miller House, Columbus, Indiana, circa 1957
Photographer Ezra Stoller
© Ezra Stoller/ESTO

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RELATED EVENTS

Opening Weekend



Roma di Luna
Photo: Karen Moon

Walker After Hours Preview Party

Friday, September 12, 9 pm–12 midnight

Walker Art Center

\$35 (\$25 Walker/MIA members)

Become a new Walker member and receive one free After Hours ticket while they remain.

Celebrate the opening of the exhibition at an After Hours party featuring complimentary Wolfgang Puck appetizers, cash bars, a city building art lab activity, live music by Roma di Luna, DJ Mike the 2600 King, a screening of *The Gateway Arch: A Reflection of America*, and the always popular Party People Pictures. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 612.375.7600 or visit walkerart.org/tickets.

Lecture

Susan Saarinen and Mark Coir on Eero Saarinen: *Shaping the Future*

Sunday, September 14, 2 pm

Pillsbury Auditorium, Minneapolis Institute of Arts

\$5 (Free for MIA members)

Susan Saarinen, daughter of Eero Saarinen and a landscape architect practicing in Colorado, reflects on growing up in the artistic world created by her father and grandfather Eliel Saarinen. Mark Coir, director of Archives and Cultural Properties, Cranbrook Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, talks about the lasting influence of these two men on the institution and the broader world of architecture and design. To reserve tickets, call 612.870.6323 or register online at artsmia.org.

Eero Saarinen: Beyond the Measly ABC

Friday–Sunday, October 10–12

University of Minnesota College of Design, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Walker Art Center, and Christ Church Lutheran, Minneapolis

\$40 (\$25 Walker/MIA/AIA members)

Fee includes lunch and admission to the Walker and MIA on Saturday.

Friday and Sunday events are not ticketed.

For tickets or more information, call 612.870.6323 or visit artsmia.org.

This in-depth symposium examines the legacy of one of the modern masters of architecture. The three-day event begins with a conversation with architectural photographer Balthazar Korab and features presentations by architectural historians and curators—both local and national—on the reassessment of Saarinen’s work and its impact on contemporary design practice.



Balthazar Korab
Photo courtesy the artist

Friday, October 10

Rendezvous with the U: A Conversation with Balthazar Korab

Lecture, 7 pm

Bell Museum of Natural History Auditorium, 10 Church Street SE, Minneapolis

Reception, 8:30 pm

Ralph Rapson Hall, 89 Church Street SE, Minneapolis

Sponsored by University of Minnesota College of Design, AIA Minneapolis
Free.

For more information, call the College of Design, 612-624-4743
www.design.umn.edu.

Balthazar Korab is an architect and photographer who worked with Le Corbusier before coming to the United States in 1955 to join Eero Saarinen and Associates, where he began experimenting with the use of photography as part of the design development process. In 1964 Korab received the prestigious AIA Medal for Architectural Photography, recognizing his worldwide coverage of architects such as Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Mies van der Rohe. Korab is joined in conversation by John Comazzi, Assistant Professor of Architecture, College of Design, who is currently working on a biography of Korab.

Saturday, October 11

Morning session

Location: Minneapolis Institute of Arts

2400 Third Avenue South

Minneapolis

8:30–9 am

Registration, MIA Third Avenue Entrance

Coffee, Fountain Court

9 am

Conference sessions, Pillsbury Auditorium

Welcome

Jennifer Komar Olivarez, Associate Curator, Architecture, Design, Decorative Arts, Craft, and Sculpture, Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Introductory Remarks

Andrew Blauvelt, Design Director and Curator, Walker Art Center

9:30 am

Donald Albrecht, Curator of Architecture & Design, Museum of the City of New York, curator of *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, and co-editor of the accompanying publication *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* (Yale University Press, 2006), on the reassessment of Saarinen.

10:15 am

Jennifer Komar Olivarez, Associate Curator, Architecture, Design, Decorative Arts, Craft, and Sculpture at MIA, and essay contributor to *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* on Saarinen's architecture of sacred spaces.

10:45 am

Coffee break, Fountain Court

11 am

Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, Assistant Professor, Yale School of Architecture and co-editor of the publication *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, on Saarinen's search for form.

11:30 am

Q&A with Donald Albrecht, Jennifer Komar Olivarez, and Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, moderated by Andrew Blauvelt

11:45 am

Lunch in Reception Hall, Target Wing, MIA

Afternoon Session

Location: Walker Art Center

1750 Hennepin Avenue South, Minneapolis

1:30 pm

Nancy Miller, Center for World Heritage Studies and Adjunct Assistant Professor, College of Design, University of Minnesota, on Saarinen's corporate campuses.

2 pm

Beatriz Colomina, Professor of Architecture and Founding Director of the Program in Media and Modernity at Princeton University, on Saarinen's use of the media.

2:30 pm

Q&A with Beatriz Colomina and Nancy Miller, moderated by Andrew Blauvelt

2:45 pm

Break

3 pm

Christopher Monkhouse, Eloise W. Martin Curator and Chairman, Department of European Decorative Arts at the Art Institute of Chicago, and essay contributor to *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, on the design of the Miller House.

3:30 pm

Tom Fisher, Professor and Dean of the College of Design, University of Minnesota, on Saarinen's legacy in contemporary architecture.

3:45 pm

Q&A with Christopher Monkhouse and Tom Fisher, moderated by Andrew Blauvelt

Sunday, October 12

Christ Church Lutheran

3244 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis

612.721.6611; christchurchluth.org

2 pm

Welcome

Kristine Carlson, Pastor, Christ Church Lutheran

Ozayr Saloojee, Assistant Professor of Architecture, College of Design, University of Minnesota, presents new research on Christ Church Lutheran accompanied by an exhibition at CCL.

2:40 pm

Timo Tuomi, Head of Research at the Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, on the connections between Eliel and Eero Saarinen's work.

This program is made possible with generous support from Aaron and Carol Mack.