

History of American Architecture: Cranbrook Visitors
Reading List and Resources

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Dear Friend of the Center,

Thank you for joining our recent *History of American Architecture: Cranbrook Visitors* lecture series. I hope you enjoyed the weekly lectures. I know I thoroughly enjoyed learning more about fifteen important architects and five past Cranbrook Architects-in-Residence, and sharing what I learned with you. The following resources will help you learn more about the architects I covered in the course.

I have included the books I found most useful or most beautiful as I prepared each lecture. This does mean it is limited to those books I owned, Cranbrook's library owned, or I ordered for the course. In many cases, there are probably more updated monographs or cheaper in-print titles than the ones I have included here, particularly for the more recent architects. I have bolded the book titles I most strongly recommend.

By the time we reach the 21st century, the books are almost all monographs—usually from the architecture firm itself—and not terribly analytical or critical, especially compared to the books I recommend for earlier architects. Instead, for a more critical understanding of contemporary architecture, I relied on newspaper and magazine articles, the best of which I have included here.

For the living architects, you can learn as much on their websites or through Google searches as you can in books. I have included websites where relevant, and most have pretty thorough archives which include the projects I discussed.

If you know someone who would enjoy watching the lecture series, I am happy to let you know that we can send out a recording of the event. The ticket price remains at \$75, and the link to view the lecture can be purchased by emailing center@cranbrook.edu. Your support of the Center allows us to continue to research, preserve, and share the many stories of Cranbrook with audiences around the world.

Thank you for joining me for the lecture series, and for the many kind words of praise and encouragement along with the helpful suggestions, personal reminiscences, and pronunciations. I always appreciate hearing from you. While I regretted not seeing you in person in the auditorium, I was thrilled the course could reach such a wide and geographically diverse audience. I hope you find this list to be of use,

—Kevin Adkisson

WAYS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CRANBROOK

Live at Five Virtual Tours

Every Tuesday on Instagram ([@CranbrookCenter](#)) and Wednesday on Facebook ([Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research](#)), I go “Live at Five” (5:00pm EST) with a tour about Cranbrook’s art, architecture, or history.

Cranbrook Kitchen Sink Blog

Each week, the Center for Collections and Research publishes the [Kitchen Sink Blog](#) on a different aspect of our rich history. The blogs I write tend to be concerned with architecture.

You can [subscribe](#) to receive the blog in your inbox every Friday!

Cranbrook Archives

Cranbrook Archives, a part of the Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research, is the repository for tens of thousands of documents, photographs, manuscripts, and ephemera on the history of Cranbrook, our architects and designers, and alumni. I relied heavily on the Archives for my research into each Cranbrook Visitor. You can see the Archives’ [finding aids here](#), and explore close to 10,000 images from Cranbrook’s past on our [digital image database](#).

Tours

Cranbrook’s Saarinen House and Wright-designed Smith House will reopen to visitors this May. If you are in the area, consider booking a ticket for a small, staff-guided [tour](#)! We will be open through Thanksgiving.

READING LIST

General Architecture

Roth, Leland, and Amanda Roth Clark, *American Architecture: A History (Second Edition)* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2016.)

I've recommended this book every architecture series, and even though it is much broader than the focused *Visitors* we studied, I am including it again for those of you who would like a broader understanding of American architecture.

Not for the faint of heart (but still addictively readable), this textbook provides a comprehensive, chronological guide to American building and planning alongside thoughtful critique and reference photography. I find this to be among the single most useful books I own. Features include: fully cited projects with architects, developers, clients, dates, history; discussions of cultural, social, political, and economic influences; 16 pages of suggested readings, a 14- page architectural terms glossary, and a glorious 28-page index.

Sykes, Krista, ed. *The Architecture Reader: Essential Writings from Vitruvius to the Present* (George Braziller Publishers, 2007).

This dense book has selections of writings from most of our *Cranbrook Visitors* (at least, those architects known for their theories and writings). If you're interested in reading from the architects themselves but aren't sure you want to invest in their books or collected essays, this is an interesting way to sample arguably the best of architectural philosophy/theory in the western world.

Week One: Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Hoglund, Joel, ed. *Wright Sites: A Guide to Frank Lloyd Wright Public Places* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2017).

This is *the* guidebook to Wright buildings you can visit! There are many editions but pick up the latest copy (2017) to take with you on your next road trip (in...2022?). Cranbrook's Smith House is featured.

Levine, Neil, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

Combining the joyous scale and glorious photographs of a coffee table book with the scholarship and biographical detail of an academic, I appreciate this book (that I found for free on a sidewalk in New Haven) for its sweeping coverage of Wright's life and work. I think if you wanted to really enmesh yourself in Wright, this is a great place to start.

Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks, *Frank Lloyd Wright, 1867-1959: Building for Democracy* (Köln: Taschen GmbH, 2004).

Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer joined the Taliesin Fellowship in 1949 and remained at Taliesin after Wright's death, eventually becoming director of the Wright Archives and publishing countless books and articles on Wright. This small book was first published in 1991 and I have three versions on my own shelves (Taschen Basics, Barnes and Noble, and a Borders imprint). Regardless of your edition, it is a very good introduction to Wright's work. It includes the very best of Wright's work arranged chronologically and with great detail and nice images.

Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Complete Works 1885-1916/1917-1942/1943-1959* (Köln: Taschen GmbH, 2009/2010/2011).

I hesitated to put this three-volume set of books on this list because they are very hard to find, very expensive if you do, and weigh approximately as much as a small elephant. But! They are the most useful books to own if you want to know *everything* Wright ever did. Although certain details in the text aren't exactly correct (re: the Smith House entry), the *breadth* of these massive books is amazing. Every known project from Wright's lifetime is included. These are probably too much for a casual fan, but they are very impressive.

Storrer, William Allin, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog Fourth Edition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

This is the best book to have handy if you're driving around the country and need to know: is there a Wright house here!? Google can only get you so far, as most Wright houses are still privately owned. This guide features every Wright building with addresses, short histories, and a photograph. Remember: don't trespass on private property, but many of the houses can be seen from public streets!

Wright, Frank Lloyd, *Autobiography* (New York: Pomegranate Press, 2005).

What a read! Part autobiography, part treatise, and part fantasy, here's the wild glimpse into Wright's feelings about architecture and life. I include it here only because it features Cranbrook throughout—referencing Wright's visits to campus, friendship with Eliel and Loja Saarinen, admiration for Carl Milles, and the wild trip to Carnival in Rio de Janeiro with the Saarinens in the 1930s. Mayhem ensues!

LE CORBUSIER

Bacon, Mardges, *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001).

This book is *the* account of Le Corbusier's visit to America. Bacon traces his relationship to America in the early 20th century and his writings on the country, gives a detailed account of how his trip was organized, and goes on a day-by-day account of his travels in the country, including a great amount of information on his Detroit and Cranbrook visit. She

also examines his impressions and later writings about our country, and looks at how his legacy influenced American architects. Really niche read, but fascinating.

Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Architectural Press, 1946).

Pick up any edition of this classic Modernist manifesto. It is exhilarating to read, and his comparisons are interesting and the writing quick and engaging. Just don't follow his mantras too closely. Who wants to live in a machine, really? The Dover edition is an architectural student's standard first year purchase—I still have my well-marked copy.

Le Corbusier, *When The Cathedrals Were White, A Journey To The Country Of Timid People* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947).

If you want to know Le Corbusier's unvarnished (but politically and professionally motivated) opinions of America, this recounting of his 1935 visit is the must-read. However, if you want to know what he *actually* did (drank a lot, was rude and bitter) and not what he *said* he did (impressed the unsophisticated, uninspired masses of America), you'll want to pair this book with Mardges Bacon's historic account, above.

Vege sack, Alexander von, *Le Corbusier: The Art of Architecture* (Weil am Reihm: Vitra Design Stiftung, 2007).

If you only want one book on Le Corbusier, here's the one. A coffee table book with incredible images, plans, and details, as well as important biographical and historical information. Beautiful publication.

ALVAR AALTO

Anderson, Stanford, Gail Fenske, and David Fixler, eds., *Aalto and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

This is a very scholarly approach to Aalto's time spent travelling, teaching, and building in America. The book is a collection of essays from leading thinkers, and while it does not include much on Cranbrook, this is the book I used to learn more about Aalto's time with the Saarinen and his thoughts on American architecture. It's very interesting, but not a coffee table book of Aalto images.

Reed, Peter. *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art/H. N. Abrams, 1998).

A good, color review of Aalto with an essay by Juhani Pallasmaa. I'll be honest: there are better (and newer) Aalto books out there, I just don't have them, the library doesn't hold them, and I did not use them for the lecture series.

Schildt, Göran, *Alvar Aalto: The Early Years; Alvar Aalto: The Decisive Years; Alvar Aalto: The Mature Years* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984; 1986; 1991).

Schildt, who was the client of multiple Aalto projects, traces the complete biography of the architect over three volumes. Frustratingly, the books aren't terribly well footnoted, but these books are an easy read and the most comprehensive story of Aalto the man and the architect. Well-illustrated.

Week Two: Minoru Yamasaki, Louis I. Kahn, and James Wines

MINORU YAMASAKI

Gyure, Dale Allen, *Minoru Yamasaki: Humanist Architecture for A Modernist World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

This is *the* definitive work on Yamasaki from Michiganander Dale Gyure. It eloquently weaves together the architect's biography with his buildings, and tells in great detail the story of each of Yama's major commissions. Included are his lesser-known buildings in Michigan for churches and schools in the mid-1950s.

Yamasaki, Minoru, *A Life in Architecture* (Weatherhill, 1979).

Yama's own biography is lavishly illustrated with photographs by Balthazar Korab. Very large, very lovely coffee table book rich in personal reflections but light on facts. Not comprehensive, by any means.

LOUIS I. KAHN

Curtis, William, *Louis Kahn: The Power of Architecture* (Vitra Design Museum, 2013).

This is the latest and greatest Louis Kahn tome. It's a beautiful book, rich with essays and with historic and contemporary images. There are a lot of Louis Kahn books, and you really can't go wrong. The architect is amazing.

Kahn, Louis I., Robert Twombly, ed. *Louis Kahn: Essential Texts* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

Though there's an earlier and more physically impressive collection of Kahn's sketches and writings by Richard Saul Wurman (1986), this little paperback *Essential Texts* is better cited and more easy to read if you want to get into Kahn's philosophies as he spoke/wrote them. It also includes helpful analysis of often very dense texts from Penn professor Richard Twombly.

Kahn, Nathaniel. *My Architect* (New Yorker Video, 2004).

A really great movie by Kahn's son, it explores the architecture and the, shall we say, *complicated* dynamics of Kahn and his three families.

JAMES WINES/SITE ARCHITECTS

Muschamp, Herbert, *SITE* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989).

Part of Rizzoli's series of great 1980s/early 1990s paperback volumes on contemporary architects, this book is accessible and interesting. It features the major projects up to the 1980s, excellent images, and an interesting conversation between Wines, co-founder of SITE Alison Sky, and critic Herbert Muschamp of the New York Times.

Wines, James, *De-Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

Here Wines lays out his philosophies of architecture in a series of well-illustrated historic essays on architecture, sculpture, community, meaning, and the contemporary condition. One of many books by Wines, *De-Architecture* does not highlight his practice but his beliefs and theories on architecture. In the manner of Le Corbusier's *Toward an Architecture* (1923) or, more similarly, Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), Wines uses historic buildings and cultural touchstones to weave an argument for the future of built space.

Wines, James, *SITE: Identity in Density (Master Architect)* (Images Publishing, 2006).

Inexplicably wildly expensive online, this is the complete *œuvre* of SITE up to 2006 and has a great collection of essays, images, details, and analysis of the work. Find it at the library if you need to know all about SITE—though the firm also maintains an excellent website (for less than \$800!).

Week Three: John Hejduk, Aldo Rossi, Stanley Tigerman

This week, Daniel Libeskind was the Architect-in-Residence that invited the Cranbrook Visitors. The books on Libeskind's time at Cranbrook are excellent: *Between Zero and Infinity: Selected Projects in Architecture* (Rizzoli, 1981) and *Daniel Libeskind: Countersign* (Rizzoli, 1992).

JOHN HEJDUK

Hays, Michael K., ed., *Hejduk's Chronotope* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

Published from a symposium at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, this collection of essays is pretty darn dense. Many of the authors are Hejduk's disciples and speak (or write) in the same convoluted, highly abstract way as their mentor. I found myself rephrasing each sentence in simpler language in my head to try and sort out what was being argued. Yet, this is one of the few books on Hejduk I ultimately found helpful.

Hejduk, John, *Mask of Medusa: Works, 1947-1983* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985).

While this is *the* book on John Hejduk, don't expect to learn a ton about him from reading it. It is as frustrating as every other book on Hejduk, in that it is wildly obtuse (or, if I'm generous, poetic) and constructed as much as an art book/installation/project as it is as a

book. It does include his projects, but good luck sorting out what is real and what is imagined, or when or where things were built or not built.

Ultimately, I thought Edward Dimendberg's book *Diller Scofidio + Renfro* (below) did the best job of any author in clearly elaborating who Hejduk was and what he believed.

ALDO ROSSI

Adimi, Morris and Karen Stein, *Aldo Rossi: Architecture, 1981-1991* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991).

Covering the period of Rossi's visits and lectures at Cranbrook, this lovely book has a nice essay by Rossi and then a project portfolio of the architect's important mid-career (and, in my opinion, best) work.

Rossi, Aldo, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982).

The clearest, most expansive English-language writing by Rossi on his *Analogous Architecture* theories, developed (in Italian) in the 1960s and 70s.

Rossi, Aldo, Vincent Scully, and Jose Rafael Moneo, *Aldo Rossi, Buildings and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985).

From the same series as the Muschamp *SITE* book (above), this has my favorite analytical essays on Rossi's *Analogous Architecture* and what made Rossi's work and theories appeal to American architects. Scully and Moneo are beyond reproach as architectural thinkers, so any chance you get to read their thoughts, take it. The images and drawings are excellent, and many early projects are included here that are missing from later monographs.

STANLEY TIGERMAN

Tigerman, Stanley and Emmanuel Petit, *Schlepping Through Ambivalence: Essays on an American Architectural Condition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

Tigerman is an excellent and clear writer, with witty and smart observations. His collected writings are not particularly dramatic or didactic, but nonetheless important to understanding his moment of late modernism and postmodernism. I really liked the chapter of Tigerman's writings on other architects, from Louis I. Kahn to Robert A.M. Stern and Philip Johnson. This book also includes unpublished essays; his writings on Judaism in his practice was particularly interesting. Plus, Emmanuel Petit was my professor in college, so what's not to love?

Tigerman, Stanley and Sarah Mollman Underhill, *Stanley Tigerman: Buildings and Projects, 1966-1989* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989).

Another great paperback monograph from Rizzoli! This covers Tigerman's biography, his theories, and his work. It's very enjoyable.

Tigerman, Stanley, *Versus: An American Architect's Alternatives* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982).

Tigerman wrote a few books that blend his theory and his buildings together, but this is the first and best. Creatively organized around understandable principles (ie, folding, splitting, historicism), Tigerman compares his projects to historic examples, and describes the theories that motivate his work. It's a nice small addition to your library.

Week Four: Juhani Pallasmaa, Elizabeth Diller & Ricardo Scofidio, Jacques Herzog & Pierre de Meuron

JUHANI PALLASMAA

Pallasmaa, Juhani, *Encounters: Architectural Essays* (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2005).

This title includes many of Pallasmaa's most important essays, including my favorite essay concerning architecture in painting. This is the essential "reader" of Pallasmaa's work, and there is a second volume (2012) for additional material. I find the essays do start to run together, so I only skimmed volume two.

Pallasmaa, Juhani, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 2005).

Pallasmaa's most famous work, this book concerns phenomenology in architecture and how we experience buildings with our bodies in time and space. A classic architecture school text, it is the conclusion of decades spent thinking and writing on the subject. I am entirely biased, but I still prefer Charles Moore and Kent Bloomer's *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (1977) on the same subject.

ELIZABETH DILLER & RICARDO SCOFIDIO

<https://dsrny.com/>

Bailey, Spencer, "For Elizabeth Diller, New York City Is Beginning to Feel Like One Big Punch List" from *Time Sensitive* Podcast, Slowdown Media LLC, April 16, 2019.

<https://timesensitive.fm/episode/elizabeth-diller-new-york-city-punch-list/>

A podcast with full transcript about Diller's upbringing, her goals in architecture and in life, and a rich discussion of New York and her firm's work in the city. Interesting listen in the architect's own distinct voice, and without the horrible degradation of the Academy Library's cassette tape with Diller's 1988 lecture.

Diller, Elizabeth and Ricardo Scofidio, *Flesh: Architectural Probes* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

This is the book I mentioned in the lecture with the architects' derriere on the cover. It is the best example of the architect's interest in film, time, surveillance, domesticity, and occasionally, architecture as intersecting, complex ideas. Don't buy it to learn about the architects but to see their work as it existed before they were starchitects: in the realm of (paper-bound) ideas.

Dimendberg, Edward, *Diller Scofidio + Renfro: Architecture after Images*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

Even if you don't love Diller Scofidio + Renfro (like me), this is one of the best written monographs of a firm's work I've ever read. It will make you reconsider the practice (I did). A film critic, Dimendberg lucidly explains the complex world (and circle of John Hejduk) that created the practice. I only discussed Diller + Scofidio to the time of her visit to Cranbrook, this book covers the firms rise to stardom (and actual buildings). It's an excellent read.

JACQUES HERZOG & PIERRE DE MEURON

<https://www.herzogdemeuron.com/index.html>

Moneo, José Rafael, *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004).

Long-serving dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design (and architect of Cranbrook's New Studios Building, 2002), these collected essays on contemporary architects developed from lectures Moneo delivered as dean. I think this book is still (16 years out) the best summation of where architecture is as a design practice today. It is clearly written, accessibly theoretical, and well-illustrated. Aldo Rossi and Herzog & de Meuron are our *Visitors* included by Moneo.

Ruff, Thomas and Steven Holl, *Architecture of Herzog & de Meuron* (New York: Swiss Institute and Peter Blum, 1995).

Lovely black and white photographs by Thomas Ruff form the basis of building "portraits." Again, there are better and more comprehensive books on Herzog & de Meuron—but as I was focused on their Cranbrook visit (and therefore, the earliest work), I am only including these select few.

Wang, Wilfried and Rafael Moneo, *Herzog & de Meuron: Projects and Buildings, 1982-1990* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990).

Another Rizzoli monograph winner! Excellent essays and interviews about and with the architects, followed by a survey of their important work of the 1980s. As most of their more famous (and glitzier) work came later, these projects don't often reappear in other monographs, making this one invaluable.

Week Five: Jeanne Gang, Gregg Pasquarelli/SHoP Architects, David Adjaye

JEANNE GANG

<https://studiogang.com/>

Gang, Jeannie, *Reveal: Studio Gang Architects* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011).

In the tradition of her mentor and former boss, Rem Koolhaas, this book is as much an art book as it is a monograph. It includes richly layered pages of texts, drawings, images, and graphics in a barrage of information. Gang presents and analyses her buildings, philosophies, and theories, as well provides helpful hints for everything from recycling, bird watching, and building your own marble puzzle curtain. This is an interesting book, and marks the beginning of the end of the early 1990s to 2010s obsession with huge, encyclopedic, and dare I say slightly unusable architect art books.

Gang, Jeannie, ed. *Studio Gang: Architecture* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2020).

The latest and greatest monograph from the studio, this is a really lovely book in design and content. The essays from Gang herself are a bit rehashed from her previous books and online writings, and the projects covered are featured in other monographs, but this is the best gathering of the firm's work to-date. It has a very beautiful cover, and if you're getting one Gang book, this is it.

Waldman, Amy, "Jeanne Gang in the Wild: An Architect's Vision for a New Kind of Aquarium" in *The New Yorker*, May 12, 2014. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/19/the-urban-wild>

A reading for your next sunny Sunday at home.

GREGG PASQUARELLI/SHOP ARCHITECTS

<https://www.shoparc.com/>

Holden, Kimberly, Gregg Pasquarelli, Christopher Sharples, Coren Sharples, and William Sharples, *SHoP: Out of Practice* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2012).

This is the firm's first monograph and formed the basis of Pasquarelli's Cranbrook lecture. The book is rich in illustrations, graphics, and essays of varying quality. If you want to learn more about SHoP, this is the book to do it; I'm not going to order this book for my own bookshelf. I'll wait for the next one.

DAVID ADJAYE

<https://www.adjaye.com/>

Adjaye, David, *Adjaye: Africa: Architecture, Compact Edition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016).

This is Adjaye's 11-year project to survey the major African metropolitan areas. He challenges the reader to think of Africa not a series of post-Colonial nations but a series of climatically related urban areas—most Africans, after all, are city dwellers. The book is full of his photographs and observations; images and research from this book are how he began his 2014 lecture at Cranbrook.

Adjaye, David and Peter Allison, *David Adjaye: Works 1995-2007: Houses, Pavilions, Installations, Buildings* (London, Thames & Hudson, 2020).

The first major monograph covering all of Adjaye's early projects, this book is the first thorough introduction of the architect's complete oeuvre.

Alexander, Lucy, "How David Adjaye Became the World's Most Beguiling Public Architect—and Its Most Subversive," in *Robb Report*, November 21, 2020.

<https://robbreport.com/lifestyle/news/architect-sir-david-adjaye-profile-1234576245/>

A very thorough and interesting profile on the architect.

Enwezor, Okwui, ed. *David Adjaye: Form, Heft, Material* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2015).

This book traces Adjaye's biography and career up to the construction of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture, a detail of which forms the cover art. His most significant projects are well illustrated in plans and photographs, and there are insightful essays throughout. Mabel O. Wilson's essay about the Smithsonian project is particularly good, and I quoted from it in the lecture.

Tomkins, Calvin, "A Sense of Place: How the architect of Washington's forthcoming African-American museum evolved a new style," in *The New Yorker*, September 16, 2013.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/09/23/a-sense-of-place>

Another sunny Sunday read from the New Yorker, tracing the long and fraught history of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture