

GETTY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES FINAL ROUND OF KEEPING IT MODERN ARCHITECTURE CONSERVATION GRANTS

The six-year initiative has reshaped modern architecture conservation around the world and given professionals new skills



Left: Orange exhibition hall at Centre International du Commerce Extérieur de Dakar. Photo: Aziza Chaoui
Right: Abraj Al-Kuwait (Kuwait Towers). Image courtesy ArkDes Collections

LOS ANGELES – Triangle-studded fairgrounds that commemorate Senegalese independence, shimmering water towers that rise from the Persian Gulf’s desert shores, a British zoo with Soviet modern flair, and a serene Benedictine monastery designed by architecturally trained monks are among [13 significant 20th-century buildings](#) that will receive \$2.2 million in Keeping It Modern grants, the Getty Foundation announced today.

This is the final year of project grants for this architectural conservation initiative, launched in 2014 to help professionals worldwide engage in the proactive research and planning needed for the long-term preservation of modern buildings.

This last round of grants solidifies Keeping It Modern’s ambitions to provide models for the conservation of modern architecture at a global scale, particularly in regions where modern buildings are plentiful but their caretakers struggle to gain access to the best techniques for preservation and maintenance.

Keeping It Modern has supported a total of 77 projects in 40 different nations around the world, with this year’s grants adding new projects in Chile, Kuwait, Nigeria, Portugal, and Senegal. The competition has also succeeded in growing international awareness about the need for research and planning before beginning conservation work, with the 2020 open call yielding a record 90 inquiries for the initiative’s largest and most geographically diverse year of applicants.

“Modern architecture, with its experimental materials and structural innovations, is a powerful cultural expression that took many forms worldwide,” said Joan Weinstein, director of the Getty Foundation. “These buildings embody human ingenuity, but many are showing their age and face irreversible damage or even demolition if we fail to act. Our Keeping It Modern grantees across the globe are working to safeguard this modern heritage for future generations, and to produce models of best practice that other stewards of modern architecture can learn from.”

The 13 buildings (full project descriptions [available here](#)) receiving funding this year include:

Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, Netherlands (architect: Gerrit Rietveld, 1963)

Swimming Pools, Leça, Portugal (architect: Álvaro Siza, 1966)

International Fairgrounds, Dakar, Senegal (architects: Jean-François Lamoureux and Jean-Louis Marin, 1974)

Kuwait Towers, Kuwait City, Kuwait (architect: Malene Bjørn, 1976)

Monasterio Benedictino de la Santísima Trinidad de las Condes, Santiago, Chile (architects: Brother Martín Correa and Gabriel Guarda OSB, 1964)

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife-Ife, Nigeria (architect: Arie Sharon, 1962-76)

White Tower, Ekaterinburg, Russia (architect: Moisei Reisher, 1929-31)

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad, India (architect: Charles Correa; structural design: Mahendra Raj, 1966)

Oberstufen-Schulzentrum Wedding (secondary school), Berlin, Germany (architects: Pysall, Jensen, Stahrenberg & Partner, 1976)

Tecton Buildings at Dudley Zoo and Castle, Dudley, West Midlands, United Kingdom (architects: Berthold Lubetkin and the Tecton Group, 1937)

The following building received a Keeping It Modern planning grant in 2019, and has received another this year for the immediate stabilization of its interior artwork:

Buzludzha Monument, Hadzhi Dimitar Peak, Bulgaria (architect: Georgi Stoilov, 1981)

The following two buildings received earlier Getty grants for conservation research and planning and are now receiving implementation grants to support treatment efforts:

First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Connecticut (architect: Wallace K. Harrison, 1958)

Gandhi Bhawan, Chandigarh, India (architect: Pierre Jeanneret, 1962)

“Before the launch of Keeping It Modern, the conservation of modern buildings often took a ‘discover as you go’ approach that could have disastrous consequences,” said Antoine Wilmering, senior program officer at the Getty Foundation who oversees the initiative. “Leaders in the field became increasingly vocal about changing this habit, so we decided our grants should promote research and planning before conservation work even begins. The Keeping It Modern projects we’ve funded give architects from Brazil to Bulgaria and beyond a catalogue of proven best practices to tackle the challenges of preserving the modern movement’s experimental building materials and innovations in engineering.”

These best practices include the creation of conservation management plans, a professionally-validated methodology that emphasizes holistic, policy-based care and conservation. Many Keeping It Modern grants support the development of these plans, which can serve as roadmaps for current and future conservation efforts. Twenty-eight conservation management plans are now housed in a free online library created by the Foundation; the library will expand as more projects are completed.

A 2019 survey of the 24 Keeping It Modern grantees who had completed their projects provided an early indication of the initiative's effectiveness. Responses revealed that 88% of grantees had already activated their conservation management plans or were set to do so in the future. Even with two-thirds of the grant projects still in progress, the results showed increased receptivity to prioritizing research and planning.

"I have seen firsthand how Keeping It Modern has not only established exemplary processes for the conservation of modern heritage across the world but has also transformed how civic leaders perceive this heritage," said Shikha Jain, an internationally-recognized expert in architectural conservation who has led grant projects and served as an advisor for the initiative. "This phenomenal impact was evident in our projects at Chandigarh [India], where stakeholders now agree that 20th-century buildings can have cultural value and have become true custodians of modern heritage."

Even though this is the last year of the grant competition, Keeping It Modern will continue for several years until projects reach completion. The Foundation will also provide support for regional grantee-led workshops for architects and decision-makers to help reinforce the need for research and planning and to introduce the methodology of conservation management plans. A first regional workshop was held at the Sidi Harazem bath complex in Morocco, with others planned in East Central Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

Keeping It Modern was developed by the Getty Foundation to complement the GCI's [Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative](#) (CMAI). CMAI will continue to pursue model field projects, offer training programs, and disseminate publications related to modern architecture conservation.

To view all current and past Keeping It Modern grantees, visit:

https://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/keeping_it_modern/index.html

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