

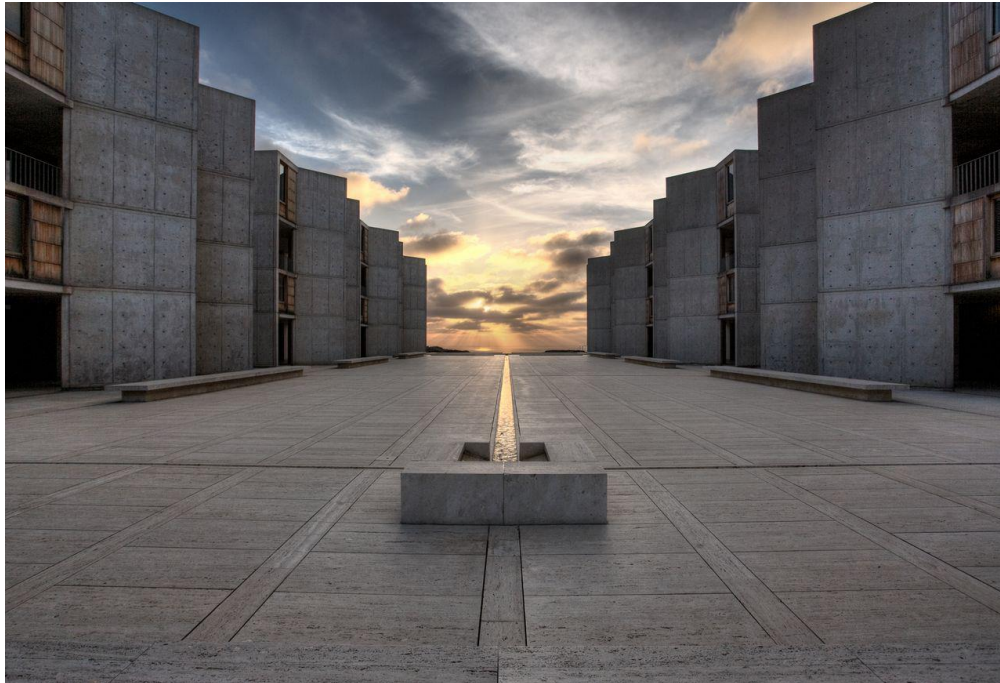


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Salk Biological Institute campus plaza in La Jolla, Calif., designed by architect Louis I. Kahn. © Salk Biological Institute

THE GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE PARTNERS WITH THE SALK INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL STUDIES TO HELP CONSERVE ICONIC LOUIS KAHN MASTERPIECE

Collaborative Project Is Part of the GCI's Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative

LOS ANGELES— Completed in 1965, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, is one of famed architect Louis I. Kahn's finest works, and an international icon of modern architecture. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the concrete and wood building is exposed to a marine environment that presents unique conservation challenges— particularly for its innovative teak “window walls,” one of the major architectural elements for which the building is famous.

As part of its [Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative](#), the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) in Los Angeles is partnering with the Salk Institute to develop careful approaches to help conserve this seminal building. The project includes the examination, investigation, and condition survey of the teak, and the development of treatment recommendations for long-term care and conservation. The methodology, techniques and findings of the project will be shared with the conservation community at large to inform

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future projects to conserve modernist buildings.

"Partnering with the Salk Institute on this conservation challenge will assist in developing new approaches for practitioners in conserving other icons of modern architecture, which makes it a terrific project for us," said Susan Macdonald, Head of Field Projects at the GCI.

"We at the Salk Institute are fortunate to work in a remarkable place, one of the masterpieces of modern architecture, and we take very seriously our charge to conserve these buildings while maintaining them as working structures," said Garry Van Gerpen, Salk's Vice President of Scientific Services, who oversees the conservation of the building. "Like GCI, Salk is an academic research institution, and we are excited to partner with their researchers to investigate how best to conserve Mr. Kahn's building for the future."

Overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Kahn's design consists of two nearly identical wings of laboratory, study, and office space mirroring each other on either side of a travertine-paved central plaza. Kahn's minimalistic palette and contrasting use of concrete and wood makes the monumental building a striking synthesis of industry and craft. The teak wood window walls include a complicated system of cladding, framed substructure, sliding windows, louvers, and shutters all set into a monolithic concrete structure.

The investigation phase of the project already is underway and is expected to last a total of about eighteen months. The results of the work undertaken by the GCI will be used by the Salk Institute to guide conservation of the teak window walls in the face of the harsh marine environment to which the wood is exposed. As well, the Salk Institute will be able to utilize the same methodology when planning for the care and maintenance of the site's other significant historic elements in the future.



Salk Biological Institute, North Wing Towers. © Getty Conservation Institute.

The conservation of modern architecture emerged as a new challenge to the conservation field in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the seminal works of the Modern Movement began to reach fifty years of age, the point at which buildings typically become eligible for heritage protection. The innovative construction methods of this period, which largely abandoned traditional detailing, together with the use of new and sometimes experimental materials, has challenged traditional conservation approaches and techniques, and in the process, raised new conservation issues.

Despite increased recognition of the cultural significance of modern architecture, there is still a dearth of information on how best to conserve it. The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) in 2012 announced the Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative, or CMAI, to add to the effort.

The CMAI identifies key research questions and issues affecting the conservation of modern architecture, and investigates and researches those concerns with relevance across a

wide range of building types and geographic areas, including technical, methodological, and implementation problems. It also aims to add to the literature on the field as a resource for practitioners tackling these challenges.

The first project of the CMAI has been a collaboration with the Eames House in Los Angeles, an iconic landmark of mid-20th century modern architecture built in 1949 by husband-and-wife design team Charles and Ray Eames, which is nearing completion.

As part of the CMAI, the GCI has undertaken the ongoing compilation of *Conserving Twentieth-Century Built Heritage: A Bibliography*, an extensive subject bibliography on the conservation of modern architectural materials. The GCI continues to seek input from professionals working in the field on the bibliography's content. To access the bibliography go to http://www.getty.edu/conservation/our_projects/field_projects/cmai/index.html .

For more information about the GCI's collaboration with the Salk Institute, CMAI, or other GCI projects, visit www.getty.edu/conservation.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

The Getty Conservation Institute works internationally to advance conservation practice in the visual arts—broadly interpreted to include objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professional conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professionals and organizations responsible for the conservation of the world's cultural heritage. To learn more, visit www.getty.edu, or subscribe to the GCI's E-Bulletin by visiting www.getty.edu/subscribe/gci_bulletin/.

About the Salk Institute for Biological Studies

The Salk Institute for Biological Studies is one of the world's preeminent basic research institutions, where internationally renowned faculty probe fundamental life science questions in a unique, collaborative and creative environment. Focused both on discovery and on mentoring future generations of researchers, Salk scientists make groundbreaking contributions to our understanding of cancer, aging, Alzheimer's, diabetes and infectious diseases by studying neuroscience, genetics, cell and plant biology, and related disciplines.

Faculty achievements have been recognized with numerous honors, including Nobel Prizes and memberships in the National Academy of Sciences. Founded in 1960 by polio vaccine pioneer Jonas Salk, MD, the Institute is an independent nonprofit organization and architectural landmark.

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