

The Ernest R. Graham Study Center for Architectural Drawings
Department of Architecture

BRUCE A. GOFF COLLECTION

62 flatfile drawers
38 boxes
and oversize material

INTRODUCTION

The Bruce A. Goff Collection in the Department of Architecture at The Art Institute of Chicago was founded in 1990 with the donation of materials from Goff's estate through the Shin'enKan Foundation and Joe D. Price, Goff's executor and longtime friend. Prior to its arrival in Chicago, the herculean task of arranging and describing the collection was undertaken by the noted Goff scholar, David De Long. Since 1990, additional architectural drawings have been donated by Mrs. Walter D. Innis, David Jameson, the estate of Claude Oakland, Thomas Rogers, and Joseph Henry Wythe. The Art Institute of Chicago continues to actively solicit materials that will further enrich the collection. Many of the architectural drawings and compositions were included in the 1995 exhibition and catalog at The Art Institute of Chicago titled "Bruce Goff, 1904-1982: Design for the Continuous Present."

In 1999, the Ernest R. Graham Study Center for Architectural Drawings in the Department of Architecture received an 18-month grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission, with additional support from Joe D. Price and Sidney Robinson, to fund the processing, rehousing, and selected photography of Bruce Goff's architectural drawings, in keeping with the original organization established by David De Long.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bruce Alonzo Goff (1904-1982) was a prolific architect, artist, composer, and educator. Though born in Alton, Kansas, Goff's family spent most of his childhood travelling the Midwest. His family finally settled in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when Goff was eleven. Young Goff expressed an interest in drawing, and his father, taking note of his son's talent, apprenticed him at the age of twelve to the architectural firm of Rush, Endacott & Rush. Upon graduation from high school, Goff began to work for the firm full-time and was ultimately made partner in 1929. By age twenty-two, Goff had completed almost thirty projects, including the massive Boston Avenue Methodist-Episcopal Church in Tulsa, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Goff was introduced to the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he much admired, during his employment with Rush, Endacott & Rush. He also greatly esteemed the works of Louis Sullivan. Goff corresponded with and sought advice from both men and their influence is present in his early designs. Goff was also influenced by artists such as Maxfield Parrish, Erté, and Gustav Klimt. Though he believed that "nothing in art is strictly and completely original with its creator," Goff's style did evolve into his own unique vision, a complex intersection of architecture, art, music, and nature.

In 1934, Goff moved to Chicago, Illinois, and was initially employed by Alfonso Iannelli. Unfortunately, he found his new position less than stimulating. While doing freelance work, Goff accepted a part-time teaching position at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. Goff's interest in composing music peaked in Chicago and his "piano music of a radically different order" found an appreciative audience. While in Chicago, Goff also found employment with Libbey-Owens-Ford in

the Vitrolite division and was independently commissioned to design several residences in Chicago and surrounding suburbs.

Goff left Chicago in 1942 to enlist in the U.S. Navy, where he had several opportunities to refine his architectural style, designing both military structures and residences for his colleagues. After his release from service, Goff reestablished his architectural practice in Berkeley, California, where he remained until December 1946.

Goff left California to accept a teaching position with the School of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. He was a popular and influential professor, becoming chairman of the school in only one year. During his nine-year tenure at OU, Goff's architectural projects attracted a great deal of attention and his services were highly sought after. It was this during this period that he produced some of his most famous designs, including the Ruth Ford house in Aurora, Illinois, the Gene and Nancy Bavinger house near Norman, Oklahoma, and the first of several major projects for Joe Price's property, Shin'enKan, near Bartlesville, Oklahoma. In 1955, Bruce Goff left the university and relocated his practice to Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and began to concentrate specifically on architectural projects. Although he was no longer formally a teacher, Goff continued to encourage young people to apprentice under him in order to develop their own creative approaches to architectural design.

During the 1960s, Goff's work became known internationally. His homes were featured in publications such as *Progressive Architecture*, *Art in America*, and *Architectural Forum*. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Goff lectured extensively at colleges and universities throughout the United States, Southeast Asia, Japan, Germany, Belgium, France, and Spain. In 1970, Bruce Goff settled in Tyler, Texas, where he lived until his death. His last major commission, the Pavilion for Japanese Art for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art—the museum to house Joe Price's Shin'enKan collection—was taken over by his student, Bart Prince, after Goff died on August 4, 1982.

Bruce Goff's architectural genius was grounded in his notion of "free architecture," his rejection of convention, his iconoclastic experiments in art, music and architecture, and his innovative use of such diverse materials as glass cullet, Quonset ribs, mosaic tiles, plywood, and found objects. Since his death, Goff's life and work continue to attract the interest of architects, students, and scholars, his buildings are frequently visited, and his drawings exhibited and published internationally.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection of architectural drawings includes original and reproduction drawings for 519 identified projects—and a small number of unidentified projects—designed by Goff for sites throughout the United States and delineated by Goff, his assistants, students, and apprentices. In addition, the collection contains as a small number of original and reproduction drawings by other architects for buildings with alterations later proposed by Goff and by Goff's students and apprentices for their own design projects.

Lastly, the collection also holds four hundred and fifty original painted and mixed-media compositions primarily created by Goff but also including a small number created by Goff's students and apprentices.

ORGANIZATION AND DESCRIPTION

Each identified architectural project designed by Bruce Goff is organized in alphabetical order by building name, with alternate project names noted. All projects are designed by Goff under his own name, unless noted; those projects designed by Goff while employed in other architectural offices are thusly noted. Geographical locations, project dates and all associated delineators, architects, engineers, and landscape architects are noted where known. Each project is also identified by a

unique job number, assigned by David De Long, where the numbers to the left of the decimal point indicate the year of a project's commission and the numbers to the right of the decimal point indicate the project's position within an alphabetical listing of projects commissioned during that year. The type and number of drawings are noted for each project. Projects designed by other architects, students, and apprentices are listed separately in alphabetical order by the designer's name.

The collection of compositions by Bruce Goff, his students, and apprentices has not yet been fully catalogued. Most compositions are untitled and undated; all have been mounted for exhibition.

ACCESS

The architectural drawings and compositions in the Bruce Goff Collection are available to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information about using the collection, please contact Luigi Mumford in the Department of Architecture at (312) 443-3949.

Many of the drawings and compositions in the Bruce Goff Collection have been photographed by the Department of Imaging at The Art Institute of Chicago. Copies of these existing negatives may be ordered and requests for new photography may be placed through the Department of Imaging. For more information, please consult the Department of Imaging's web page:
<http://www.artic.edu/aic/rights/>

In addition to the Departments of Architecture's holdings of architectural drawings and compositions, Goff's extensive personal and professional papers and other ephemera are housed in the Ryerson and Burnham Archives in the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries at the Art Institute. Also at the Art Institute, the Department of Asian Art houses Goff's Japanese wood block prints, the Department of African and Amerindian Art houses Goff's collection of Native American art, and the Department of Prints and Drawings houses a drawing by Gustav Klimt from Goff's estate.

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SUBJECT ACCESS

Architects -- United States -- Archives.
Architecture, Modern -- 20th century -- Illinois.
Architecture, Modern -- 20th century -- Oklahoma.
Architecture, Modern -- 20th century -- Texas.
Architecture -- United States -- 20th century -- Sources.
Goff, Bruce, 1904-1982 -- Archives.
Iannelli, Alfonso, 1888-1965.
Organic architecture.
Price, Joe D.
Prince, Bart, 1947-
Rush, Endacott and Rush.
Schools of architecture -- Oklahoma -- Norman -- History -- Sources.
Tsui, Eugene.
University of Oklahoma. College of Architecture -- Faculty -- Archives.
University of Oklahoma. College of Architecture -- History -- Sources.