

The Eclectic Legacy of Bruce Goff Lives on in Exhibition at the University of Oklahoma

Renegades: Bruce Goff and the American School of Architecture at Bizzell
presents a fascinating chapter of American architectural education

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Donald M. Price's proposal for an "Antarctican" community **Courtesy OU College of Architecture Collection**

"Do not try to remember," Bruce Goff cautioned his students at the University of Oklahoma (OU). As chairman of its school of architecture, the iconoclastic architect catalyzed a pedagogical sea change during his 1947–55 tenure, moving away from the Beaux Arts emphasis on copying precedent. Goff and his staff advocated an egalitarian, individualistic practice, rooted in a belief in personal creative potential. This disruptive

model is the focus of the exhibition [*Renegades: Bruce Goff and the American School of Architecture at Bizzell*](#), open now through July 29, 2019, at the school's Bizzell Memorial Library. In curating the show, Luca Guido, an OU visiting professor, pulled from the university's American School Archive to illustrate this narrative, showcasing wild, imaginative student renderings among other treasures from this unique period.



Bruce Goff and students in the early 1950s. Courtesy OU College of Architecture Collection

“During the ‘50s, when architects referred to a ‘modern’ way to consider architecture in the U.S., they were referring to Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and the Bauhaus legacy,” explains Guido. “Goff’s work and teaching demonstrates that another way to modern architecture was possible.” Rather than looking to European forebears, OU intended to

create an independent American vernacular, influenced by [Frank Lloyd Wright's](#) principles, according to Guido.

Populating the exhibition are OU students' otherworldly, hand-drawn renderings, like an atomic power station dreamed up by John Casper; a proposed presidential residence by Ebun Faturoti (who, later, would become a successful architect in his native Nigeria); and an elevation drawing for a Norman, OK flower shop by Ernest Burden—more circus tent than [Haus am Horn](#). All reveal the individualistic, creative styles put forth by Goff and his American School.

[Skyline Ink](#), an Oklahoma City–based animation studio, has also [re-created](#) Goff's demolished Bavinger House and his never-built Crystal Chapel using virtual reality. Taken together, Renegades presents a uniquely inventive period of American architectural education.

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