

NEWS RELEASE

FRED JONES JR. MUSEUM OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN
CONTACT KAYLEE KAIN, Director of Communication, (405) 325-3178, kayleekain@ou.edu
FAX: 405-325-7696
www.ou.edu/fjjma

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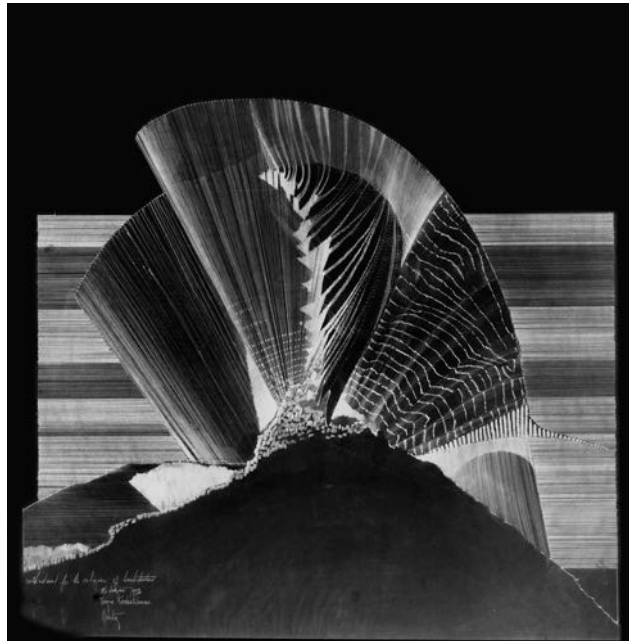
Art Museum Partners with College of Architecture for Bruce Goff Exhibition

Renegades: Bruce Goff and the American School of Architecture, a joint exhibition between the University of Oklahoma's Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the Christopher C. Gibbs School of Architecture.

Opening Reception:

Thursday, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m.

The opening night will consist of a panel discussion at 7 p.m. with exhibition curator Luca Guido, lead designer Michael Hoffner, and the College of Architecture's Director of Research Initiatives and Strategic Planning Angela Person. Following the panel, the exhibition will officially open to the public at 8 p.m. in the Nancy Johnston Records Gallery, accompanied by hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, and music.



The relationship between Bruce Goff and the University of Oklahoma is one that is not widely known, considering Goff's international acclaim as one of the foremost architects of the twentieth century. This exhibition, however, seeks to reinforce the American School as being one of university's most prestigious programs. According to Wylodean and Bill Saxon Director Mark White, "*Renegades* offers the museum an opportunity to work with OU's storied College of Architecture by examining the career and legacy of Bruce Goff. As a university museum, we are always interested in working with other disciplines to explore

the interconnectedness of culture. Many of the designs and renderings included in the exhibition also have a great deal of artistic appeal, so we were enthusiastic to collaborate.”

The American School refers to the school of design and practice that developed under the guidance of Bruce Goff, Herb Greene and others at the University of Oklahoma in the 1950s and '60s. Exhibition curator Luca Guido says the installation will focus on two important aspects of architectural education in the U.S. of the last century. “On one hand, it briefly introduces the turning point between the Beaux-Arts approach and the Bauhaus model, that represents the common path of all-American schools of architecture. On the other hand, it presents the pedagogical experiment promoted by Bruce Goff at the University of Oklahoma, that was a unique experience and little-known page of history of contemporary architecture.”

Under the leadership of Bruce Goff (1904-82), Herb Greene (b. 1929), Mendel Glickman (1895-1967), Elizabeth Bauer Mock (1911-98), and others, OU faculty developed a curriculum that emphasized individual creativity and experimentation. Students were taught to look to sources beyond the accepted canon of Western architecture and to find inspiration in everyday objects, the



natural landscape, and the designs of Native American tribes. The originality of the American School is one that resonates with students at the Gibbs College of Architecture to this day. Stephanie Z. Pilat, Director of the Division of Architecture says this about the exhibition, “The incredible

creativity on display in the *Renegades* exhibition will allow our students to understand the history of the American School and inspire each of them to carry on this legacy of resourcefulness and experimentation.”

The results of this pedagogical experiment—the fantastic environments imagined on paper and through built works—are characterized by experimental forms, attention to context, and material resourcefulness. The architects of the American School have long been characterized as renegades, iconoclasts, and apostates. These adjectives could also be applied to the creative minds behind the exhibition design as well, such as Michael Hoffner. “The key challenge to the exhibit design was to honor the characteristics of American School architecture while avoiding overt competition with exhibited works,” Hoffner explained about the gallery

design. “At the same time, attendees need to be guided through the three-part exhibit in a sequence prescribed by the curator. An early diagram of a sweeping wall arrangement solved the problems of establishing a sequence and intuitive path.” The gallery layout for the exhibition will feature a central structure inspired by the plan for the Bavinger House, which was designed by Goff in collaboration with Eugene and Nancy Bavinger and built in 1955. *Renegades* seeks to resurrect the now demolished house by centering the display around its signature spiral.

Renegades will remain on display through April 5 with a symposium, Schools of Thought: Rethinking Architectural Pedagogy, hosted by the College of Architecture scheduled for March 5 through 7 at the museum.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is located in the OU Arts District on the corner of Elm Avenue and Boyd Street, at 555 Elm Ave., on the OU Norman campus. Admission to the museum is complimentary to all visitors, thanks to support from the OU Office of the President. Further information regarding this exhibition and accommodations is available by calling (405) 325-4938 or visiting www.ou.edu.fjjma.

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Renegades: Bruce Goff and the American School of Architecture showcases the radical pedagogy and practices that emerged from Oklahoma in the mid-century. The exhibition includes over 150 drawings, documents and objects, many of which are drawn from the newly created American School Archive in the OU Libraries Western History Collection. Original drawings by students and architects of the American School highlight the creativity and originality of the innovative curriculum at OU in the postwar period. Organized into three sections, the exhibition tells the story of dramatic change in architectural education centered on individual creativity. *From Beaux-Arts to Bauhaus*, the first section, highlights the evolution in American architecture schools at the time. The second section, *Bruce Goff and the School of Architecture at OU*, showcases the curriculum and student work produced at OU as well as the work of faculty at the time. *Bruce Goff and His Legacy*, the third section, highlights the contextual, resourceful and experimental built works of American School architects around the world.

IMAGE CREDITS:

John Hurtig, *A Cathedral for the Religion of Architecture*, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1956–57. Norman Froelich, John Hurtig, and James Gardner Collection, American School Archive, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

Herb Greene, *Prairie House (Greene House)*, Norman, Oklahoma. South-West view, 1961. Robert A. Bowlby photographs, American School Archive, University of Oklahoma Libraries.