**Neutra**

When we speak of architecture, we usually refer to a special group of structures: buildings which do more than house a series of functions. We refer to buildings which achieve their usefulness delightfully, and which leave us with an image of how and why they were put up.

The show presently in the Hayden Library is of the architectural work of Richard Neutra, and was assembled by the University of California at Los Angeles, which has been named the guardian of Neutra’s papers and plans. Neutra, born in Vienna in 1892, studied there at the Polytechnic Institute under Otto Wagner, then travelled widely in Asia, and later was associated with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin. In 1925, Mr. Neutra settled in Los Angeles; and since then has waged a fight for Modern Architecture all along the California coast. Over the years his work has been seen in the context of Sentimental Spanish buildings; and now, Gladdled Goochie. At the start it was alone in its style, too, encomposing schools, hotels, churches, embassies, museums, colleges, and city planting projects in the U.S., Guem, Venetous, and Spain.

**His Personal Expression**

Neutra seems to have come into his own right with such commissions as the 1936 Edgar Kaufman Desert House and the 1947 Warren Terrace residence at Santa Barbara. These homes fit their sites; more than that, they use them. They utilize the latest structural and mechanical techniques imaginatively. These houses are practical, if luxurious. Above all, they are elegant images of how contemporary man might live.

Neutra’s work has been accused of being glossy, slick, and Hollywoodish. Indeed, these structures are so frictionlessly ingratiating, that one tends to overlook the great care that has been expended to make them harmoniously useful. For us, his sense of stylistic proportion, appropriate string, and artistic inspiration make his buildings nearly always wonderful. He has been concerned almost scientifically with man’s reactions and stimulations. By this concern he has achieved his consistent design approach. This approach never has been pondering or heavy-handed; it has never hindered the work of art. As with most artificers and philosophers, Neutra’s seems to be the hook he hung his inspiration on, rather than a boundary for his expression. If we imagine America as bare of buildings as it once was, and then think what has blighted that defenseless virgin vista since, we can only wish that there had been more Neutras to design buildings meaningfully, uniting earth and man with inspiration.

The show in the Hayden Library is hardly mounted; the photos themselves are very fine examples of the photographer’s art. Because Neutra is less known than some other architects, he is not less fine. Thus this comprehensive and pleasurable look at Neutra’s best designs is especially welcome. Don’t miss it.

— Howard Hershberger, ’60

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**The Tech**

An excerpt of 100 photographs concerned with architecture, and displaying the work of Richard Neutra, opened recently in the Hayden Library Gallery. Hours are 10 to 5 Monday through Friday, and 1 to 5 Saturday and Sunday. The exhibit closes March 6th.