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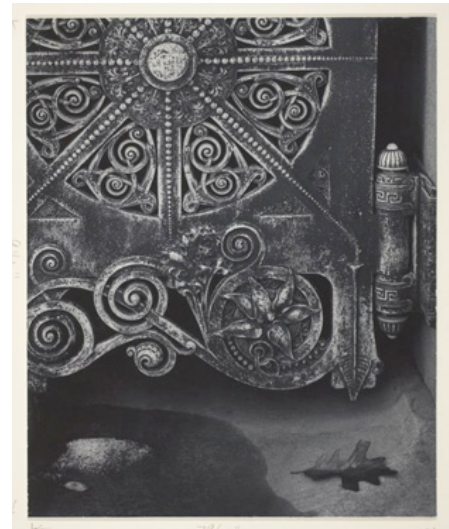
**ART INSTITUTE EXHIBITION REVEALS FACETS OF LOUIS SULLIVAN'S ARCHITECTURE**

**Photographs by John Szarkowski, Aaron Siskind, and Richard Nickel**

**Displayed Alongside Original Sullivan Drawings, Fragments**

**Looking After Louis Sullivan on View June 19–December 12, 2010**

The Art Institute of Chicago, home of one of the most comprehensive architecture archives and photography collections in the United States, has organized an innovative exhibition that explores the work of **Louis Sullivan** through the lenses of legendary photographers **John Szarkowski**, **Aaron Siskind**, and **Richard Nickel**. These photographers employed their cameras to document and interpret Louis Sullivan's architecture and, in the process, helped shape his legacy. Showcasing more than 60 photographs, 20 Sullivan drawings and sketches, and terracotta and metal architectural fragments, ***Looking After Louis Sullivan: Photographs, Drawings, and Fragments***—on view in **Photography Galleries 1 and 2 and Architecture Gallery 24 from June 19 to December 12, 2010**—provides a rare opportunity to examine Sullivan's structures and ornamental programs across a variety of media.



Since photography's beginnings in the 19th century, architecture has proven an ideal and compelling subject for the camera. In the 1950s, photographers John Szarkowski, Aaron Siskind, and Richard Nickel embarked separately on in-depth photographic explorations of structures designed by the renowned architect Louis Sullivan, whose commercial buildings and theaters of

the 1880s and early 1890s broke with historical precedents by displaying a radical, organic fusion of formal and functional elements. Attracted to Sullivan's renegade American spirit and uncompromising values, Szarkowski, Siskind, and Nickel also found inspiration in the play of light over his ornamented facades and the dynamism of his buildings within the bustling city of Chicago. The interest of these photographers came at a critical moment; many of Sullivan's most important structures were being threatened with demolition in the service of urban renewal, and these photographic projects illustrated the fragile existence of his architecture, provided new impetus for its preservation, and recast Sullivan's reputation in the annals of architecture.

During his lifetime, Sullivan was known as the father of the skyscraper and served as an important mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright and other members of the Prairie school. His work had largely fallen into obscurity by the 1930s, when a small group of historians began to identify the structural transparency and horizontal expanses of glass in his commercial building as early American manifestations of the International Style that was gaining in popularity worldwide. In order to fit Sullivan's work into the triumphal narrative of modern architecture, scholars had to dramatically edit his oeuvre, marginalizing his writings and residential projects, and most importantly, disavowing his use of ornament. When photographers in the 1950s began taking pictures that focused on the sensuous, abstract, and even strange beauty of the architect's façades, they reconstructed Sullivan's project and demonstrated just how selective previous generations of scholars had been. The photographers put ornament back at the center of Sullivan's production and drew new attention to it as the locus of art, intellect, and the freedom of man's creative powers—as Sullivan had originally intended it to be.

John Szarkowski, who would later become a renowned curator at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, found a kindred spirit in Sullivan and spent five years photographing his buildings. He published these photographs in his 1956 book, *The Idea of Louis Sullivan*, which sought to reanimate the concepts fundamental to Sullivan's work by integrating photography with contemporary interviews and excerpts from the architect's writings. Independently, in fall 1952, Aaron Siskind, a teacher at Chicago's legendary Institute of Design, began leading student workshops patterned after his experiences with the Feature Group projects of the Photo League in New York. Siskind directed a photographic archive of Sullivan buildings in and around Chicago, engaging a team of students eager to participate in what would come to be known as the Sullivan Project. One of these students was Richard Nickel, who intensively researched and documented Sullivan's structures for his master's thesis, discovering many that had been previously unknown.

Nickel ultimately made the photography—and later, as more buildings were slated for demolition, the preservation—of Sullivan’s buildings his life’s work. Nickel died while trying to rescue ornament from Sullivan’s Stock Exchange Building.

*Looking After Louis Sullivan: Photographs, Drawings, and Fragments* is unique in its insistence on showcasing the work of these photographers within the context of primary Sullivan material, including here fragments from destroyed Sullivan buildings and sketches from Sullivan’s own hand. The exhibition is drawn from the permanent collections of the Department of Photography and the Department of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute, and the works in the exhibition reflect a shared concern with the human experience of architecture and the integrity of artistic expression.

*Looking After Louis Sullivan: Photographs, Drawings, and Fragments* is curated by Elizabeth Siegel, Associate Curator of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago, and Alison Fisher, the Schiff Assistant Curator of Architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago.

*Looking After Louis Sullivan: Photographs, Drawings, and Fragments* is planned in concert with a major exhibition of Sullivan’s work at the **Chicago Cultural Center, *Louis Sullivan’s Idea***, on view **June 26 through November 28, 2010**. Chicago artist Chris Ware and cultural historian Tim Samuelson present an installation of photographs, drawings, documents, and artifacts that will portray Sullivan’s life, writings, and architectural works in the context of his time and original creative intent. Additionally, on **October 8, 2010**, there will be a **symposium** in the Art Institute’s Fullerton Hall from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the exhibition. For more details please see our website calendar.

**Image Credit:** John Szarkowski. *The Getty Tomb, Graceland Cemetery, Chicago*, 1890. Mary and Leigh Block Endowment. © The Estate of John Szarkowski. Courtesy the Estate of John Szarkowski and Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York.

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**MUSEUM HOURS**

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday, Friday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

**TARGET FREE THURSDAY EVENINGS AFTER 5:00 pm**

**FREE FEBRUARY 1 TO 28**

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

**ADMISSION**

Adults \$18.00 Includes all special exhibitions

Children 14 and over, students, and seniors \$12.00 Includes all special exhibitions

Chicago residents receive a \$2.00 discount with proof of residency

**Children under 14 always free**

**Members always free**

**Free Evenings are free to all. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.**

**The Art Institute of Chicago is a museum in Chicago's Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park. Visitors can enter the museum via the Michigan Avenue entrance or the Millennium Park entrance on Monroe Street.**