

**OLLI @Berkeley**  
**Spring 2019**

**Architectural Expression: The Root of Design Style**  
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Syllabus

Architecture and style have long been closely associated. Architects, however, tend to talk about architectural expression when narrating their own buildings and those from the vast repository of projects produced in human history. But what is architectural expression? What do architects mean by it? And what is the difference between style and architectural expression? This class explores these central questions by revealing the innumerable manifestations of that expression in exterior and interior buildings as well as product design. Architectural expression is the culmination and resolution of a design path leading to very nature of architecture itself. In the course of these lessons, we will learn from past and recent design examples what possible answers these questions will have. We will ask prominent architects nationally recognized for their design merits, what they understand about architectural expression. We will learn to read a space through its architectural expression by engaging the writings of the masters of past, modern, and contemporary eras to apprehend what Le Corbusier called as "the fundamental joys of architecture".

**Lesson 1. ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION. A NEW VOCABULARY.**

Buildings have a design expression. Their bulk, profile, section, detail, material palette are the pieces of a large mosaic where the physical manifestation of the artifacts reaches us. Although it is a self-evident reality, architectural expression is a term that is encountered among the practicing architects that make design the center of their activity, but rarely adopted among critics, historians, and the press. So what is the lexicon tied to architectural expression as a building is illustrated in words and apprehended through history books and criticism? What are the terms that articulate in intelligible ways to the larger audience the architectural forms? This lecture illustrates with very clear built examples the complexity of describing what is at the center of architecture, but elusive to the rhetoric of the field.

**Lesson 2. ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION THROUGHOUT HISTORY.**

Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Gothic and all the other period architecture have an architectural expression. So does the non-Western Tradition architecture. Each manifestation of that architecture has its own expression that makes it uniquely identifiable. In this lecture we will learn to decode and interpret architectural expression through some landmark designs that have provided the foundation of architecture as a discipline. In this lecture two universally acclaimed designs from the Western and non-Western traditions will be critically x-rayed to reveal the structure of their architectural expression.

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**Lesson 3. FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND LE CORBUSIER: TWO MASTERS OF OPPOSITE ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSIONS.**

These two masters of Modern Architecture will be our case studies to understand the architectural expressions that each endorsed. In reviewing highlights of their long productive careers we will learn how their architectural expression changed over time as their attitude and concerns toward design transformed. The Robie House in Chicago and the Guggenheim Museum in New York are two of the most famous designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, fifty years apart from each other. Their architectural expressions are at the opposite end of the spectrum within Wright's own development. The same goes for Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in Poissy, and the Convent of La Tourette in Éveux, both in France, and thirty years apart. What happened to these two architects' architectural expression?

**Lesson 4. Guest speaker: CRAIG STEELY (<https://www.craigsteely.com/>)**

Craig Steely is a California native with a strong design signature recognized through awards and a powerful coterie of clients, a great number of them protagonists in the Silicon Valley economy. A graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, he spent part of his studies in Firenze, Italy, coming in touch with the legendary Superstudio group. Upon his return to San Francisco, he worked briefly for Jim Jennings to then open his independent practice. With two offices, one in San Francisco and the other in Hawaii, he has designed some of the most innovative residences around the whole country. A lateral thinker in all design matters, Steely will share his own architectural expression to the OLLI audience.

**Lesson 5. Guest speaker: OWEN KENNERLY (<http://kennerlyarchitecture.com/>).**

Owen Kennerly grew up in architecture. His Father, Albert Kennerly, was in the cadre of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in New York and he learned his first principles in design in the family. A Berkeley graduate, he trained in the office of David Solomon and eventually open his solo practice with his wife in early 2000. Kennerly has designed some of the most prominent housing projects in San Francisco, a notoriously difficult environment to produce meaningful designs meeting the endless requirements the City asks for. Widely published nationally and internationally, Kennerly is uniquely positioned to convey his take on architectural expression through his body of work.

**Lesson 6. ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION IN CALIFORNIA AND WORLDWIDE TODAY**

Famous designer Charles Eames said: "Details are not details. Details are the design." In this closing lecture we will learn how architectural expression has changed in California from its arts and crafts beginning to its hyperbolic modernity of today and where the rest of the world is at. While technology has changed dramatically, and continues to do so, architectural expression is a constant of any design enterprise that keeps renewing its challenges from the previous generations to the next. How are architects at present attending to this constant in the art of building? A survey of the enormous spectrum of architectural expressions around the globe will inform the perspective of the audience.