Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church, 1962. Photo: Julius Shulman.

Richard Neutra and the Psychology of the American Spectator

SYLVIA LAVIN

Two truisms underpin much of modern architecture and the discourses that have circulated through the discipline since the turn of the last century: that architecture is an inherently spatial art and that architecture is the most technological of the arts. These commonplaces have served many purposes; one of them was to establish the autonomy of the architectural condition. By furnishing architecture with an essence called "space," buildings (or at least those that claim to have achieved lift-off) were distinguished from the ill-defined and amorphous environment of the world. Modern architectural technologies further supported this autonomy-seeking mission by concentrating their effects on moments of contact between architecture and not-architecture: curtain walls that separate, mechanical systems that filter and structural systems that lift.

Technologies that acted against the spatial essentialism and autonomy of architecture, however, also constitute a theme within the modern. From trains that contorted spatial perception through speed, or glass that rendered space opaque through reflection, certain materials and machines undermined the sovereignty of the architectural object. The kind of disturbance represented by such technologies intensified wildly in the period after the second world war as proliferating cars, televisions, airplanes and space-ships further intruded on architecture's capacity for spatial isolation and identification. These popular devices increasingly entangled the pure space of the modern with uncontrollable ecologies and flooded the visual field with an unprecedented number of vantage points. Moreover, as spatial discourses were usurped by environmental paradigms, the primacy of the hard sciences of building technology gave way to an emerging dominance of the softer worlds of sociology and psychology.

Richard Neutra's Lovell (Health) House (1929) and Kaufmann (Desert) House (1946) exemplify the architectural consequences of these conflicting modernities.[1] The early house epitomizes the International Style by isolating a mathematically quantifiable space through its steel frame and

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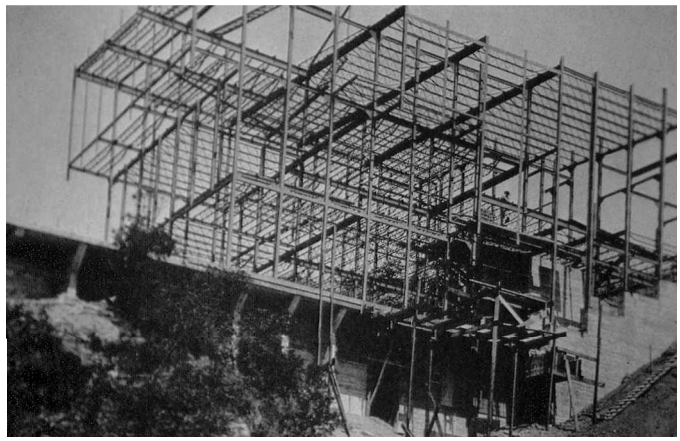
ribbon windows. The regular structural grid defines a determinate volume and establishes an immediate visual coherence that is further reinforced by the building's frontality. The gestalt of the building's image resounds through its photogenic impeccability.

Neutra's desert house, in contrast, presents no dominant fa ade or volumetric precision. Instead, the house leaks amorphously beyond its physical perimeter through expansive window-walls and seeks atmospheric continuity with its environment through indoor/outdoor heating, materials, and program. The classic photograph of the desert house by Julius Shulman further dissipates the autonomy of the object. This image is one of the most famous architectural photographs ever taken, yet it presents less a building than the ambience of an imagined way of life. Perhaps most importantly, the Shulman view no longer suggests a still image of a stable structure dominated by a single perspective. The photograph instead reveals several different, conflicting gazes looking at and through a fluid environment: the oblique view of the camera, the murky return gaze of Mrs. Kaufmann, and the transverse orientation of the furnishings.[2] Thus, buildings relinquished traditional forms of visual coherence as they orchestrated an increasing number of spectatorial positions created by the postwar world.

An even better means of exploring this development is offered by Neutra's several drive-in projects. Neutra has been praised for his early interest in the architectural accommodation of the automobile and his schemes of the 1920s and '30s for drive-in markets are considered paradigms of advanced modernism.[3] Their attention to the mechanics of the car and efficiencies of use are applauded, as is the clarity of their plans in which the spaces of the car, the shop, and the street are discretely zoned.



Neutra continued to explore the relationship between the automobile and architecture when he received a commission in the late 1950s from the Reverend Robert Schuller to design a drive-in church in Garden Grove, California.[4] Unlike Neutra's early markets, the

Top: Richard Neutra. Lovell House, 1928. Construction view.

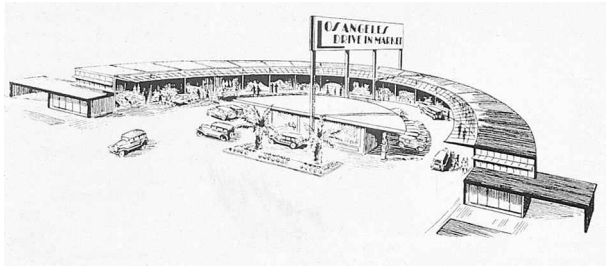
Bottom: Richard Neutra. Kaufmann (Desert) House, Palm Springs, 1947. Photo: Julius Shulman.

church is generally received with amusement and disdain. There are several reasons for this, including the programmatic irony of joining the commercial and ecclesiastical worlds so blatantly. More significantly, the need to integrate the car visually and spatially rather than accommodate its turning radius challenged the compositional standards of International Style modernism. Yet the automobile was just the initial symptom of a whole range of troubling technologies that invaded the architecture of the drive-in church. That building engaged not only the automobile, but also the movie theater, television, pop-psychology and mass culture in ways that modern autonomous space was ill equipped to handle. The result was a building that, while it lacked traditional forms of visual coherence, gave rise to thinking about architecture in relation to a range of competing and amorphous forces embedded in the psychomaterial environment.

The Reverend Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power* is one of the most successful of all modern televangelist programs.[5] The show is broadcast to more than 3.5 million homes around the world each Sunday, far exceeding the number of worshippers attending services in any single merely architectural church. Schuller also hosts a hypertheatrical Easter pageant that draws even more viewers and that rivals only contemporary theme parks in its spectacular effects. Indeed, Schuller's organization is located not far from Disneyland. The church's entanglement of virtual space and veritable structure in the service of themed beatitude derives not from geographic coincidence, however, but from an important if overlooked transformation in the psychology of the postwar American spectator.

Two things distinguish Schuller from other televangelists and link him to architectural concerns: his ministerial emphasis on emotional therapy and his strategic patronage of architecture. Indeed, the astronomical success of Schuller's combined use of psychology and architecture coincides with the rise of the discipline of environmental psychology. Neutra was a key figure in both developments. Together, Neutra and Schuller helped convert the sweep toward mental hygiene of classical modernism into a search for suburban happiness, thereby transforming the architecture of self-knowledge into a stage for a conflicted series of projections.

Most architects today would find being coupled with the populations of



Top: Richard Neutra, "Los Angeles Drive-in Market," from *Chain Store Review* (September 1928): 29.

Bottom: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church, 1962. Photo: Julius Shulman.

afternoon talk shows, tabloids, and televangelism threateningly dissonant. But the Reverend Schuller's success lies not just in the celebrity profiles that he sometimes broadcasts instead of sermons but also in his architectural acuity. Despite the fact that most of his congregants have never set foot in Garden Grove since he began preaching there in the early 1950s, Schuller has made it a point to give his church a physical setting and, moreover, to hire significant architects, including Philip Johnson, Richard Meier, and, most recently, Frank Gehry.[6] He has also managed to engage the attention of these architects at the peak of their careers: Gehry just after he earned global praise for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Meier just before the completion of the Getty Center in Los Angeles, and Johnson during what has been called his period of superstardom.[7] Schuller has also renewed his efforts to expand his campus of collected architects during the Jubilee period when ecclesiastical architecture has re-entered the discipline's consciousness after long absence.[8] Schuller's choices have never been prescient but they have been well timed. He has consistently pinpointed the architect and the architecture most symptomatically attuned with larger cultural forces.

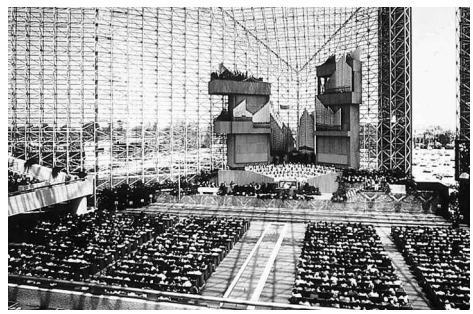
Neutra was Schuller's first architect, hired after Neutra had been featured on the cover of *Time* in 1949. Ironically, Neutra's reputation in architectural circles had by then begun to wane after the respect earned by the Lovell and Kaufmann houses. Neutra's work for Schuller is still little known.[9] On the other hand, Neutra's general popularity was at its height during the 1950s and '60s when he received an almost unprecedented number of residential commissions. This schizophrenia continues today as his postwar work becomes the object of intense nostalgic fetishization, although historians consider his work of that period derivative and uninspired.[10] Schuller's uncanny track record suggests that revisiting the architectural framework Neutra established for the *Hour of Power* might indicate neglected facets of the popular psychology of modern architecture. In fact, Neutra's work for Schuller straddles not only middle-class allure and professional scorn but also the collapse of one psychospatial paradigm and the emergence of a still-unfolding environmental condition.

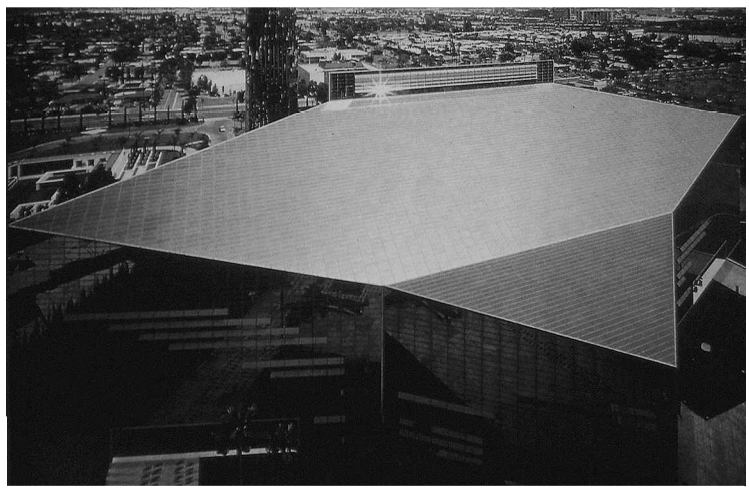
Philip Johnson's better-known Crystal Cathedral, commissioned by Schuller in 1975 to accommodate a growing congregation, has eclipsed the distinctiveness of Neutra's drive-in. Completed by Johnson and John Burgee in 1980, the Cathedral was the largest space-frame building ever constructed in the United States at the time.[11] The massive yet lightweight structure, its crystalline configuration fulfilling a promise of ecclesiastical architecture first made by the Abbot Suger in the twelfth century, is entirely

skinned in quarter-inch-thick tempered silver-colored glass. The sparkling and reflective exterior maintains the congregation's privacy from prying helicopters and the too-hot sun, while the interior seems to dissolve into a space of miraculous continuity with the outside world. A massive section of the structure moves aside like an enormous door, transforming the religious desire for pure vision into a veritably unimpeded view of the outside world.[12]

Like much of Johnson's oeuvre, the Crystal Cathedral is less innovative than it is an acute touchstone of prevailing concerns. The Cathedral reflects the many conflicting images that together constitute the modernist dream of a utopia engendered by building in glass. The free plan, the punningly light quality of the structure and building material, as well as the volumetric emphasis, were, since the nineteenth century, meant to join architecture to the Enlightenment project. By linking unobstructed spatial movement with the unimpeded gaze, architecture was to produce the fully self-knowing and hence free man.

During the twentieth century, the architectural articulation of this type of humanism came most forcefully in the context of domestic rather than church architecture. Johnson played a significant role in the domestication of this tradition through the dialogue between his Glass House (1949) and Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House (1945–51).[13] Important differences notwithstanding, both houses share the classical gaze of modern domesticity. While the transparency of these houses destroys any conventional sense of interior space, the glass walls produce an omnipotent and phenomenologically one-way gaze that contains and protects the domesticity within. At the Farnsworth House, for example, and despite much protestation from his client, Mies simply could not conceive of a reciprocal gaze penetrating from the exterior.[14] Rather than expose Edith Farnsworth, Mies meant to protect the house's interior by enclosing it within glass planes draped in representation. The glazed surfaces serve as landscape paintings, and while one can look in all directions, the view is of the recesses of an atmospheric perspective, not of the outside world.[15] Moreover, there is no one in the never-never land behind these glass canvases to look in. Through the vectored visibility of this one-way transparency, architecture used the gaze to establish a new form of security





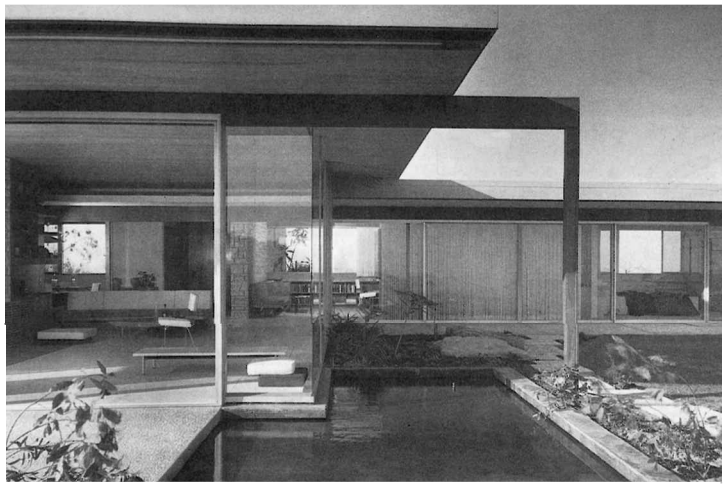
Top: Philip Johnson and John Burgee. Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, 1980. Courtesy Crystal Cathedral Archive.

Bottom: Philip Johnson and John Burgee. Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, 1980. Courtesy Crystal Cathedral Archive.

for the otherwise destroyed domestic interior.

Johnson's Glass House reinforces the simultaneous destruction and fortification of domestic space established at the Farnsworth House. The dissolution of the interior is rendered more complete through the further elimination of even interior walls, and the view out to the New Caanan estate is masterful. At the same time, the vistas controlled by the picturesque siting of the building intensify the phenomenological security of the interior that Mies sought to provide through the regulation of the gaze. The Crystal Cathedral appears to continue this model of fixed visibility established in the earlier single-volume glass buildings. The context of Orange County, as well as developments in modes of spectatorship, however, sullied the clarity of the Glass House paradigm. Every pane of glass in the Crystal Cathedral, rather than being free to receive pictorial reflections, is inscribed with the names of donors who sent in their money through a televised ad campaign. The interior does not dissolve into views of the manicured park outside or the perpetually blue Southern California sky. Instead, when lighting permits the glass to appear transparent, an all-encompassing white frame intrudes into the visual field. This web of opaque scaffolding supports the numerous and massive television screens at which—rather than through which—the congregation looks. The interior is in fact an elaborate sound stage and a monumental television stand. The building is designed to provide the most opportune camera angles for viewers at home and to integrate the many screens for the observers within. Moreover, when the glass tent opens and the visitor does look outside, the view is not of paradise or the Elysian Fields but of a parking lot for a spillover crowd, which is also looking at enormous monitors airing the televised service. The modernist fantasy of pure and omnipotent vision is here polluted by the conflicting visualities of the suburban landscape in the age of mass broadcasting, big-screen televisions and overcrowded parking lots.

While Mies and others had preceded Philip Johnson in the articulation of the original modernist fantasy, Johnson had also been preceded in his confrontation with its occlusion and transformation. In a large number of houses built from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, Neutra developed a new typology for the glass house in which the interior was neither destroyed by nor opposed to the exterior. [16] Instead, Neutra conceived of the glass house as an attempt to satisfy a psychoevolutionary need inherited from large primates. Locked in a constant state of

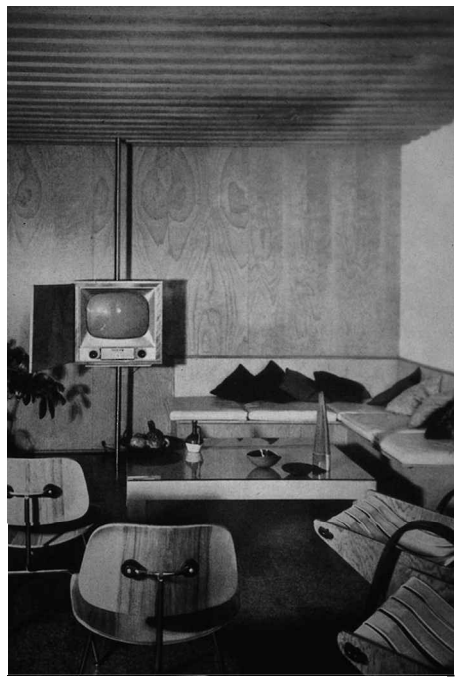


Left: Richard Neutra. Singleton House, Los Angeles, 1959. Photo: Julius Shulman.

Opposite: Richard Neutra. Goodman House, San Bernardino, 1952. Photo: Julius Shulman.

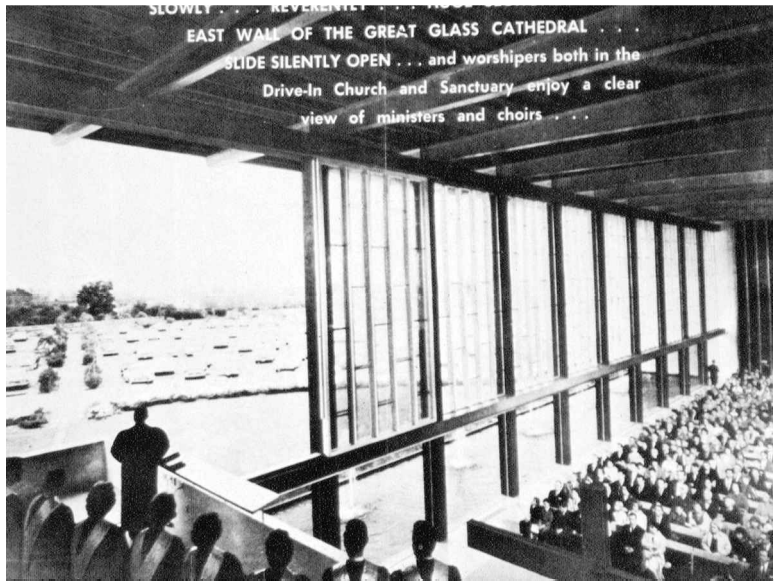
being prey and predator, observer and observed, human beings desired architecture to provide shelter and panoramic view simultaneously. [17] What Neutra called "spider legs," roof overhangs, and continuous horizontal surfaces all allow his mid-century houses to oscillate between these two conditions. Unlike Mies's landscaped surfaces, one-way cones of vision, and omnipotent gazes, varying degrees and kinds of visibilities mark Neutra's houses. Solid walls block transparent walls, corners create double vision, and mirrors and water used around openings produce a strange myopic blur. At night, strategically placed lights keep the glass from producing a pictorial surface for the representation of landscape and permit instead the eerie opportunity to look deep into the night—and to be looked at.[18] These conflicted modes of visual organization where the inside meets the outside are finally exacerbated by the possibility of real transgression. While the window had often been seized as a privileged site for demonstrating the new structures and opticality of modern architecture, Neutra integrated windows, walls and doors with an emphasis on operability and mobility. Enormous plates of glass flush with the ground and the ceiling move aside to allow the domestic interior to flood the outside while external forces penetrate within.[19] This intricate balance between openness and closure obliterates the omnipotence of the classical domestic gaze and stimulates instead what Neutra called the psychophysiological reflexes of survival: the desire for unimpeded visual access to escape routes and assault lines, as well as the need for protection and defense from enemies that attack from the rear and from the outside.[20]

Neutra's dispersal of the secure domestic regard can be best understood in relation to the kaleidoscope of conflicting visibilities that began to infect the postwar suburban landscape in the United States. While Neutra's work depends on a tradition of expanding and reformulating the use of glass in architecture, the modernist window in the first part of the century often framed private landscapes or distant skylines. Le Corbusier's ribbon windows, for example, establish distance between the occupant and the exterior world by equating the latter with the horizon.[21] But in the increasingly populated and congested context of the suburban landscape, the speculative window-wall became instead a generic feature of the American living room. Rather than afford protected views of private estates, these picture windows created opportunities for a new anxious series of regards and psychic states. The ever-expanding window no longer followed the distant horizon



but rather created visual proximity between inside and out. The potential for the transgression of privacy represented by the suburban picture window was reinforced by the rapid introduction of television, which not only permitted views of the outside world, but also produced the fear that the outside world would look in.[22] Technologically mediated and environmentally compromised, the domestic enclosure was now a terrain to be navigated rather than a line drawn in the sand. When Neutra received the commission for the Garden Grove Community Drive-In Church from the Reverend Schuller he was catapulted directly into this arena of proliferating points of view.

Robert Schuller was in 1955 a young and ambitious preacher of the Reformed Church newly arrived in California. Seeking to establish a congregation, he began preaching in what now appears to be an incongruous setting. He contrived a house of God in the Sunday morning use of a drive-in movie theater. While motivated by economic need, the coincidence of church and drive-in was more substantively meant to mutually transform the spectatorial configuration of both structures. Although increasingly popular after an initial phase of public disinterest, the drive-in movie theater was still generally considered a threatening intrusion into the visual conduct proper to the suburban landscape.[23] Schuller wrote of a visit he received from a Protestant minister: "'You really aren't planning to start a new church in a drive-in theater, are you?' he asked with a shocked stare. Glaring at me from his judgmental eyes he sermonized, 'Why that place is nothing but a passion pit.'"[24] In addition to concerns about sex in cars, there was tremendous anxiety that the screens of drive-in theaters were insufficiently controlled and enabled passersby accidentally to see what was projected onto the screen. The peripheral vision of the outsider created both economic and moral consternation. Some worried that people who had not paid admission would be able to steal a view of the screen and the film. The uncontrollable composition of the audience exacerbated the even more common concern that projected images might not be morally suitable for all viewers. Most idolatrously, community groups argued that drivers passing by might become so intoxicated by the screen that they would stop seeing the road and cause accidents or injury. The traditional movie theater, although a public space, was expected to have a private range of



Left: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church, 1962. Courtesy Crystal Cathedral Archive.

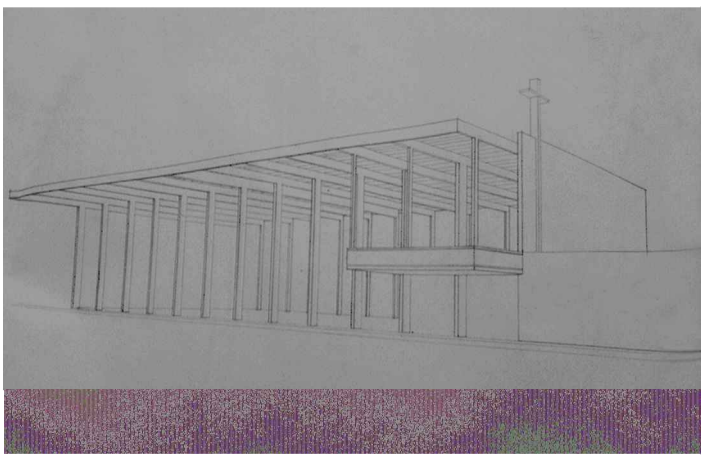
Opposite, left: Richard Neutra. Valley Community Drive-In Church, 1960. Courtesy Richard Neutra Archive.

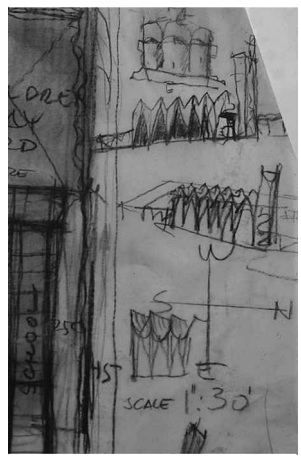
Opposite, right: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church, preliminary sketch, c. 1960. Courtesy Richard Neutra Archive.

visibility that was undermined by the visual promiscuity of the drive-in. As a result, owners of drive-in theaters sought the respectability that the use of their property by churches could provide.

As a new crusade used the techniques of mass entertainment for a holy war, churches enlarged their congregations and reconfigured the lay public into an audience not just of worship but also of religious spectacle. In 1958, for example, Rex Humbard recognized the value both of the movie theater and television to the growing interest in fundamentalism. His Calvary Temple had been meeting in a movie theater, but when permanent quarters were built and the Cathedral of Tomorrow was constructed, the building was specifically designed for television and featured a revolving stage.[25] The drive-in typology, however, offered special pleasures not available in a traditional theater, and audiences were lured with promises of playgrounds for children and snack bar treats during services. Moreover, holding religious ceremonies in the simple surrounds of the drive-in theater was actively seized on as an appropriately primitivizing symbol for the growing movement of fundamentalism.[26] Standing on top of the snack bar, the image of the humble preacher with his flock merged with the heroic movie star silhouetted in a close-up on the big screen.[27] The optical promiscuity of the drive-in was thus domesticated by the house of God while the house of God became a porous screening room for the Ten Commandments seen in Technicolor.

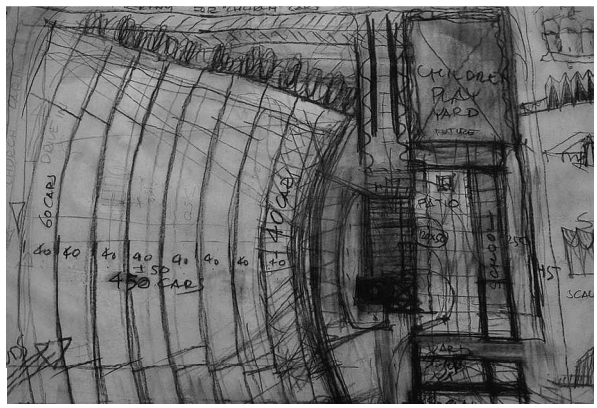
Although the idea that someone with the cultural status of Neutra designed a drive-in church provokes lamentations about the degrading popularization of modernism, Schuller turned to Neutra precisely to avoid such responses. Drive-in churches were not rare: what was unusual was to make such an arrangement permanent and to monumentalize it through the services of an architect.[28] When Schuller first had enough money for a proper church in 1958, he built a traditional chapel. But the demand for the drive-in services were so great, and had become such an essential component of his religious spectacle, that he was forced to preach several times a day, both in the chapel and at the drive-in. So when in 1959 there was even more money for a larger structure, Schuller deliberately chose to build what he called both a walk-in and drive-in church. Neutra was perhaps the only architect in California to match Schuller's ambitions and he was certainly the most famous practitioner who was skilled in indoor/outdoor structures.

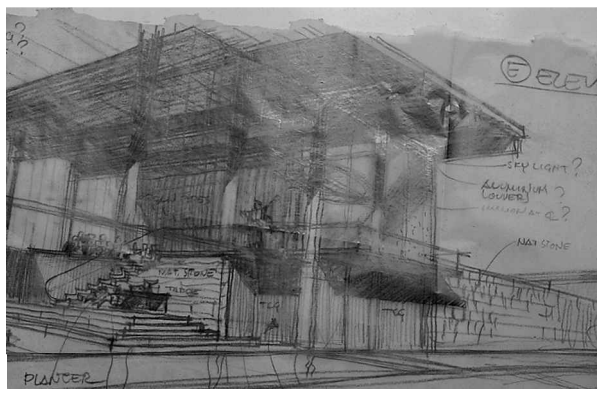




The early phases of Neutra's design are marked by a struggle over monumentality, typological regularity, and above all the architectures and visibilities of transparency. A few initial sketches show an exploration of relatively standard postwar church forms. Others show a flat-roofed columnar hall lending little more than stately formality to a space belonging to no particular building type and lacking direction or orientation. The generating idea of the first phase was to give a permanent and dignified form to the drive-in concession stand that Schuller once stood upon and used as a pulpit. As the design developed further, however, and Neutra began to understand the peculiarities of the program, these conflicts began to inform the scheme in more direct and significant ways.[29] The site plans reveal a decision to place the church building on a continuum with the semi-circular fan of the drive-in parking lot. Rather than manifest spatial privilege, the nave functions as an extra tier of parking slots rotating around the altar. Similarly, instead of serving as a focal point, the pulpit becomes a fulcrum negotiating the link between the congregation seated in traditional pews and the congregation seated in the "pews from Detroit."[30]

The pulpit is an elevated and elongated balcony that begins on the eastern side of the high altar and moves outside, wrapping around the building's exterior. In order for the pulpit to work as the visual pivot for the two audiences, Neutra made the east elevation out of large panes of transparent glass. During services, as the organ began to play, two 25-foot-wide panels slid open to allow Reverend Schuller to move from inside to out. From this terrace, Schuller preached alternatively to those within the conventional building and those watching from their cars and listening through their radios. These adjacencies produced neither a discrete nor a unified visual experience for the two audiences, but instead forced both sets of viewers into dividing their attention. For the worshippers in cars, the services fluctuated between at least three different visual channels. Initially, the religious service taking place inside the building would have been perceived as though it was a film projected on the facade of the sanctuary. When the sliding doors opened and Schuller came outside, the action transformed the visual logic of the church. Now, the automotive congregants participated in a live-action service that was





Top: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church. Plan, c. 1960. Courtesy Richard Neutra Archive.

Bottom: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church. Sketch view of pulpit, c. 1960. Courtesy Richard Neutra Archive.

Opposite: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church, 1962. Photo: Julius Shulman.

taking place in the parking lot.[31] When still ajar but after Schuller returned inside, the building became a theater. The open facade acted as a proscenium through which the audience seated in cars watched a church service taking place inside. The churchgoers within the building were the performers and the receding church interior functioned as a stage with space-producing sets. The windshield interposed between the live, the theatrical, and the filmic visual models further set the religious observants into a mediated realm of representation. Thus those in pews from Detroit used the frames of their windshields to negotiate the watching of several superimposed services occurring simultaneously in incommensurable locations.[32]

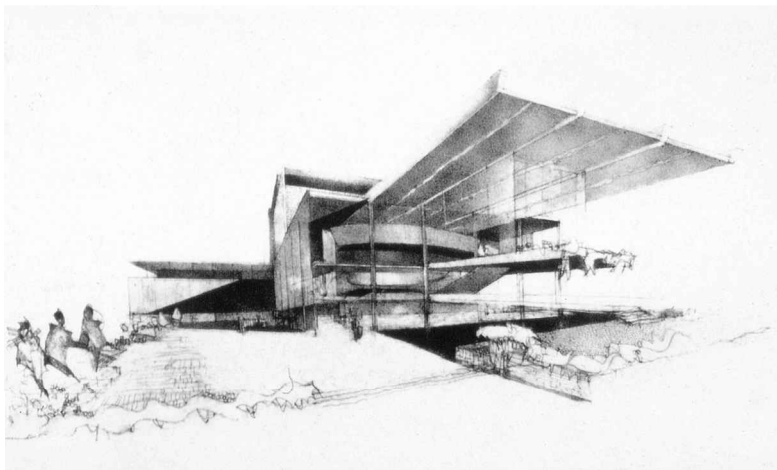
For the interior worshippers, a similar series of dislocations took place. Because the main fa ade faces the audience seated in the parking lot, the visitor on foot approaches an undistinguished elevation. Entering the building is like entering a house through the garage. This sense of disequilibrium follows the visitor inside. In order for the structure to permit the physical opening of the nave to the parking lot, an asymmetrical, cantilevered truss system was developed that draws the eye away from the normal focus on the altar and toward the open parking lot. The sacred vision through what would normally be a triumphal arch framing the altar is distracted by a peripheral vision through which the outside audience of the drive-in is observed. As Neutra wrote, "through the transparency of the wide eastern church front . . . all worshippers in the interior were at least vaguely aware of the amphitheater of worshippers in the orange grove."[33] Moreover, this peripherally viewed audience of moviegoers watched the interior worshippers watch the service. The distracted attention of the congregant inside the sanctuary inverted the concern that the screens of drive-in theaters might seduce people driving by in cars. The drive-in outside was a visual trap for those within, deflecting their focus away from the altar.[34] Whether in the church or in a car, all visitors to the Garden Grove church were met with the conflicting visualities borne of being simultaneously a spectator and spectacle.

As Neutra's design became more entangled with producing the multiple forms of spectatorship demanded by the confluence of architecture, the cinema and the automobile, the scheme lost its original monumentality. Instead, the design entered the domestic realm at a moment of significant transformation both of domesticity in general and of the purpose of the domestic gaze in particular. The Garden Grove Community Church is, above all, an assemblage of domestic and domesticating units. With respect to the church itself, and indeed to the larger complex as it developed to include offices, school spaces and other ancillary functions, Neutra

increasingly shifted the form of the buildings towards the residential spectrum. He progressively eliminated the massive and curved forms associated more with his public commissions. Neutra followed a similar process in his designs for traditional theaters, where he also used domestic forms to produce what he called visual "double directedness."[35] In his project of 1959 for the Dusseldorf Theater, which Neutra referred to as the "Spectatorio," this superfluity of visibilities was largely generated by glazing the back of the auditorium space and opening it to a large glass foyer. While the theater's interior remains monumental, Neutra used his residential vocabulary for the more public space of the foyer, including glass corners, spider legs and large roof-overhangs.[36] At Garden Grove, the domesticating architecture encompasses the whole complex of buildings and penetrates all the way to the sanctuary's interior. The asymmetrically sloped roof and ceiling with exposed beams, the rough stone at the symbolic fireplace recalling Frank Lloyd Wright, and mirror pools along the building's perimeter were the signature components of Neutra's popular residential work. The narthex is really a carport and the pulpit is the "Balcony of the Word." The church was not the house of God but was rather a cozy family room with a picture window onto "a living exterior world."[37]

The automobile was equally a domesticating factor. Schuller's slogan was "Come as you are in the family car," and Neutra described Garden Grove as a place where people could "sit in the sanctuary, but also in their cars, familiar and dear to the American as a second family home."[38] Moreover, the automobile brought with it ancillary devices that produced additional domestic associations. Drive-ins had long-since used familiar food, playgrounds and individual acoustical (and sometimes even visual) units to progressively transform parking lots into private living rooms.[39] The car was indeed so domestic that it was almost crippling: Reverend Schuller and Neutra were pleased that "sickly and disabled persons, pregnant women and paraplegic soldiers" could attend church services without being exposed to public view.[40] If the car was as good as a house in hiding the infirm, the car was better than the house in instituting and maintaining an otherwise disappearing family discipline. Neutra wrote of the drive-in church that "to many, it has become a new family experience they long for . . . everybody can sit close with his family, keep toddlers in order and hold babies on their laps, without disturbance of the other worshippers."[41]

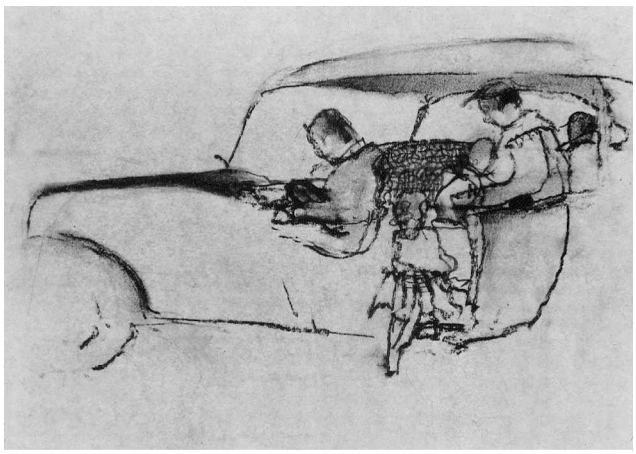
The Garden Grove Community Church combined a multitude of differently scaled, mobile



Richard Neutra. Dusseldorf Theater Competition, 1959.

and immobile domestic units affording simultaneously family privacy and public propriety, familiar pleasures and unfamiliar views. These overlapping domesticities and visual spectrums were threaded together through a chain of multiple viewing frames: the proscenium of the theater, the triumphal arch of the nave, the picture window of the living room, the drive-in movie screen, and the windshield of the car. In 1970, Schuller's services at the drive-in were televised and Neutra's building became a sound stage, adding yet another form of observation to the existing visual competition.[42] The television was the period's primary means of domesticating new technologies and the types of visuality they inaugurated, and Neutra had demonstrated a great deal of interest in how the television itself should be integrated into the postwar house. In fact, the logic of the television that conflated private viewing with public visibility by launching a virtual space of spectatorship was present long before cathode tubes replaced Schuller's physical presence on the indoor/outdoor pulpit. A machine for conflating these various real and virtual frames of vision, Neutra's design proliferates competing views and immerses the observer in an environment that while lacking the traditional security of the domestic gaze is thick with a viscous web of criss-crossing lines of sight.

The watchful eyes of Schuller and Neutra constitute a final type of visual trajectory that is active in this matrix. Both men maintained that their professional roles included providing psychological insight and oversight. Neutra believed that he watched over the private lives of his clients through his architecture, easing marital relations and helping to nurture children with design. His interest in psychology is one of the reasons that Schuller commissioned Neutra. [43] Schuller is even more direct about being a lay psychologist than Neutra. Schuller's theology is distinguished from other televangelism by its emphasis on "possibility thinking." He sees himself as a substitute super-ego and preaches not about evil or original sin but about the consequences of poor self-esteem. His ministry claims to provide spiritual salvation through psychological improvement. When he commissioned Neutra to add the Tower of Hope in 1966, the program called for a stacked series of offices for marriage, interpersonal and family therapists.[44] The top of the tower housed a twenty-four-hour-a-day telephone operated counseling service—whose phone number was "NEW HOPE." Transmitted through the telephone wires as well as the TV airwaves, what Neutra called the "living exterior world" was now saturated with the gospel of popular psychology. Together, Schuller and Neutra eased the anxieties



Left: Richard Neutra. Sketch of worshippers in car at Garden Grove Community Church. Courtesy Richard Neutra Archive.

Opposite: Richard Neutra. Garden Grove Community Church, 1966. Photo: Julius Shulman.

born in the growing suburban landscape by offering themselves as guides to domestic happiness and by psychologizing the environment itself.

One indication of the importance of Neutra's neglected interest in the American spectator is a request for assistance he received in 1965 from MIT, where a program in environmental psychology was being established under the direction of Kevin Lynch.[45] This field emerged in reaction to the collapse of modernist visual paradigms as hopes for realizing versions of the Plan Voisin or Broadacre City gave way to the murky logic of suburban development. Lynch's study of architectural perception was intended to neutralize the perceptual conflicts that were emerging particularly in America by establishing new forms of visual hierarchy. Indeed, in 1950, David Riesman had used the architect to exemplify an emerging class of professionals whose job it was to help the consumer overcome the psychic hardships wrought by too many choices and by "those overindustrialized elements in himself and his environment that constitute a threat to his humanity."[46] The architect was central in this process because the technologically mediated suburban landscape of the postwar era both undermined the protected regard of classical domestic space and extended its parameters into a terrain of mobile and multiplicitous spectatorships. Domesticity was thus deterritorialized and reterritorialized. No longer defined by interiority, spatial enclosure or privacy, no longer secured by a phenomenologically one-way gaze, domesticity had become instead an expanding system of heterogeneously confident and paranoid visual intensities.

Neutra believed his buildings could offer therapeutic resolution for what he considered to be the increasingly pathological psychology of postwar spectatorship. This utopian faith links him to classical modernism. But rather than assuage the psychological state wrought by the suburban landscape, he activated an unfolding domestic territory full of competing and slippery gazes. Neutra's interventions into this terrain have never been adequately differentiated from those glass buildings that exemplify the assured transparency of the modernist house. By regulating vision and erecting planes of representation, both the Glass House and the Farnsworth House sought to shield the observer from being observed. The images of the houses themselves, rather than solid walls, were meant to distract the attention of passersby and protect the occupants. Indeed, both houses have what Lynch called "high imageability" because they stand solidly as monuments in a field of frictionless space.[47] The church, on the other hand, like many of Neutra's mid-century houses, has low visual resolution. The drive-in gave up representation in favor of operating as a machine that produces a dispersed visual field. Suffused thus by what Neutra called constant visual oscillation and "simultaneous double cognition," the space of modern architecture became instead an environment animated by the psychologies and technologies of the new American spectator.

Notes

1. Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) remains the essential text on Neutra. Other basic sources include Esther McCoy, *Richard Neutra* (New York: Braziller, 1960) and Willy Boesinger, ed., *Richard Neutra, Buildings and Projects* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

2. On Julius Shulman, see Julius Shulman, *Architecture and Its Photography*, ed. Peter Gössel (Taschen: Cologne, 1998) and Joseph Rosa, *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994). On the photograph of the Kaufmann house in particular, see Simon Niedenthal, "'Glamourized Houses': Neutra, Photography, and the Kaufmann House," *Journal of Architectural Education* 47, no.2 (November 1993): 101–112.

3. See Thomas S. Hines, "Designing for the Motor Age: Richard Neutra and the Automobile," *Oppositions*21 (Summer 1980): 35–51 and Richard Longstreth, *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914–1941* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 63–65 and 144–147.

4. The sanctuary was completed in 1961 but the Neutra office continued to work on the campus until late in the 1960s.

5. On televangelism, see Steve Bruce, *Pray TV: Televangelism in America* (London: Routledge, 1990); A. William Bluem, *Religious Television Programs, A Study of Relevance* (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1969); Razelle Frankl, *Televangelism: The Marketing of Popular Religion* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), and Ben Armstrong, *The Electric Church* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1979). See also Donald Meyer, *The Positive Thinkers, Religion as Pop Psychology from Mary Baker Eddy to Oral Roberts* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

6. Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral will be discussed below. Richard Meier was approached in the early 1990s by Schuller to design a visitors center. A preliminary scheme has been developed in order to assist in fundraising and a large rendering of the proposal has been erected on the site. By the later 1990s Schuller had also begun discussions with Frank Gehry about plans to develop a museum.

7. See Franz Schulze, *Philip Johnson, Life and Work* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 336–342. The section of this biography that covers the period of Johnson's work for Schuller is entitled "Superstardom."

8. The Jubilee has occasioned international competitions for churches from Los Angeles to Rome and has involved many significant architects including Raphael Moneo, Frank Gehry, Peter Eisenman and Richard Meier.

9. Although Neutra won the AIA Gold Medal in 1977, the AIA had turned down his nomination in 1968. And while his Moore house also won the national AIA First Honor award in 1954, Neutra's postwar work, particularly that done with Alexander, had ceased to establish the research trajectory of the discipline.

10. Neutra has become the darling of a revival of mid-century architecture and design. Indeed, the restoration of Neutra houses, occasioned by the particularly comprehensive restoration of the Kaufmann House, has become a new form of patronage through which modernist minimalism affects a display of inconspicuous consumption. Redone Neutra houses have appeared in all the popular design magazines from the *New York Times* Home section to *Wallpaper*. On the Kaufmann house in particular, see for example, "Palm Springs Eternal: Marmol and Radziner Reclaim Richard Neutra's Kaufmann House from Decay and

Encroaching Civilization," *Interiors* 158, no. 10 (October 1999): 70–75; "A Modernist Masterpiece in the Desert Is Reborn," *Architectural Record* 187, no. 9 (September 1999): 92–98; "Desert Star," *House Beautiful* 141, no. 10 (October 1999): 140–145,166.

11. See Philip Johnson, *Architecture 1949–1965* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966); Nory Miller, *Johnson/ Burgee: Architecture; the Buildings and Projects of Philip Johnson and John Burgee* (New York: Random House, 1979); Hilary Lewis and John O'Connor *Philip Johnson: The Architect in his Own Words* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994); Franz Schulze, *Philip Johnson*.

12. The sliding door of the Crystal Cathedral derives directly from Neutra's earlier sanctuary, which is discussed below in detail.

13. On Mies, see Fritz Neumeyer, *The Artless Word: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art*, trans. Mark Jarzombek (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), and Wolf Tegethoff *Mies van der Rohe: The Villas and Country Houses*, trans. Russell M. Stockman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985). On the Glass House, see the essays collected in David Whitney and Jeffrey Kipnis, eds., *Philip Johnson: The Glass House* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

14. See Alice T. Friedman, "People Who Live in Glass Houses: Edith Farnsworth, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Philip Johnson," in *Women and the Making of the Modern House, A Social and Architectural History* (New York: Abrams, 1998), 126–159.

15. This aspect of Mies's use of glass has been most developed in the literature on the Barcelona Pavilion. See, for example, Robin Evans, "Mies van der Rohe's Paradoxical Symmetries," *AA Files* 19 (Spring 1990): 56–68 and Jose Quetglas, "Fear of Glass: The Barcelona Pavilion," in *Architecture-production* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 122–151.

16. This material is further discussed in my essays "House as Habitat: Richard Neutra's Moore Residence," *Casabella* (December 1998): 146–159, "From Architecture to Environment: Richard Neutra and the Post-War House," *Daidolos* (June 1998): 68–76, "The Avant-Garde is Not at Home: Richard Neutra and the American Psychologizing of Modernity," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America,* ed. R.E. Somol (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997), 180–198 and in my book on Neutra forthcoming from the MIT Press.

17. Neutra makes this argument in a brief unpublished essay entitled "Glass and the Wide Landscape Outside." Richard J. Neutra Archive, Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles; hereafter referred to as "Neutra Archive."

18. Neutra was quite deliberate in his combining of glass and lighting to control vision. He wrote of the Van der Leeuw Research house: "*Privacy* behind the large plate glass front was *optically insured* by the reflection of that outside illumination. I made much studied and judicious use of *indirect lighting sources*; they gave the room a greater visual calm, and also helped to *eclipse the border between inside and outside* when the first was reflected inwardly at night from the large window areas and mysteriously mingled with the light spread from the exterior roof overhang onto the greenery in open air." See Richard Neutra, *Life and Shape* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), 265–266; his emphasis.

19. Le Corbusier, for example, described how eliminating load-bearing exterior walls would permit the use of what he called window-walls and establish greater area for glazing. But his ideal scenario imagined the window-wall sealing a mechanically regulated interior. See Le Corbusier's

"Techniques Are the Very Basis of Poetry" (1929), in *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning*, trans. E. S. Aujame (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 35–66; "A Small Contribution to the Study of a Modern Window," and "Appeal to Industrialists," in *Almanach d'Architecture Moderne* (Paris: G. Cres et cie., 1925). While Neutra was interested in the technical aspects of large-scale windows, particularly in relation to temperature control and the mitered corner, environmental flow always outweighed structural considerations. His "spider legs," for example, which displace the window frame to the exterior, frequently are made of 2 x 4s assembled and painted to imitate I-beams. This dissimulation underscores rather than hides the limited structural importance of Neutra's window-walls. Similarly, while both Mies and Johnson used operable window-walls, they established discontinuity with the exterior by changes in level ranging from the two-story drop out the large window in the living room of the Tugendhat house to the brick-height step at the Glass House.

20. See Richard Neutra, *Survival Through Design* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 218–223. See also my "House as Habitat," and Neutra's manuscript essay, "Glass and the Wide Landscape Outside," Neutra Archive.

21. See Bruno Reichlin, "The Pros and Cons of Horizontal Windows: The Perret-Le Corbusier Controversy," *Daidalos* 13 (September 1984): 65–78 and Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

22. On the relation of television to post-war American domestic architecture, see Lynn Spiegel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

23. On drive-in theaters, see Kerry Segrave, *Drive-in Theaters: A History from Their Inception in 1933* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1992) and Elizabeth McKeon and Linda Everett, *Cinema Under the Stars: America's Love Affair with the Drive-in Movie Theater* (Nashville, Tenn.: Cumberland House, 1998).

24. Robert H. Schuller, *Move Ahead with Possibility Thinking* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 10.

25. Bruce, *Pray TV*, 36. Neutra, with Alexander, also designed a revolving stage for the auditorium of the Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa in 1957.

26. Although Schuller is the only minister among the successful televangelists who does not claim to be a fundamentalist, he shares with fundamentalists a proclaimed disdain for traditional forms of church hierarchy. The success of televangelical programs has depended in large measure on the degree to which direct contact between the minister and his audience at home (free from either theological or institutional intrusion) is conveyed and Schuller has been one of the most successful. Thus, the architectural and televisual settings used by Schuller have always oscillated between the desire for spectacle and for simplicity. See Andrew S. Buckser, "Sacred Airtime: American Church Structures and the Rise of Televangelism," *Human Organization* 48, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 370–376.

27. Neutra revealed his awareness of the contradiction between the aggrandizing tendency of the movie screen and the more modest traditions of Christianity when he wrote "But above all, the minister is and shall remain of human stature, he is by no means a colossal projection." Manuscript entitled "Community Church in Garden Grove California," Neutra Archive. This essay, like many in the Neutra Archive, was prepared for publicity purposes, probably by Dione Neutra and the office staff, and then edited by Neutra. This particular

essay, for example, was published almost verbatim in *Church Management* (October 1962): 16–20. For convenience, such essays will hereafter be referred to as by Neutra.

28. Neutra would receive a second commission for a drive-in church in 1962, the Valley Community Drive-in Church, that would remain unbuilt.

29. Neutra claimed that personally attending services at the drive-in altered the course of the design. "To the architect, the thought of designing a new but more traditional sanctuary for a thousand . . . was first more traditional. . . . But when he attended one or two services before assembled family cars, full of neatly dressed little ones, and patients huddled on the back seat, he suddenly understood that there are indeed infinitely manifold ways to come close to the Deity." See Neutra, "Community Church," Neutra Archive, 2–3 and *Church Management* (October 1962): 18.

30. Neutra, "Community Church," 2 and *Church Management* (October 1962): 17.

31. The mirroring and doubling effect of the complex as a whole even emerged when Schuller stood on the pulpit outside and directed himself towards the audience in the parking lot: although his image was not mechanically reproduced, the mirror pool below the pulpit was intended to replicate his likeness and integrate the minister with the twelve apostles symbolized by twelve jets of water.

32. The parking lot retained the curved profile used at drive-in movies to improve sight lines. Neutra described the blacktop paving as a "wavy lawn like a paradisiacal meadow. Cars may still be tilted to bring the wide platform of the choir visibly over the dashboard and the car in front of us, and below the top line of our windshield." See Neutra, "Community Church," 3 and *Church Management* (October 1962): 18.

33. See the manuscript essay written by Richard and Dion Neutra, "Designing an Indoor-Outdoor Church," 2, Neutra Archive.

34. Schuller was acutely aware of the visual landscape surrounding the church. For example, when the Tower of Hope was being built he learned of a high-rise development being proposed by Yamasaki for a site across the street. He was anxious that these new buildings would block the view of the church from the freeway and pleaded to Neutra that he intervene with Yamasaki and ask him to relocate his buildings. Schuller to Neutra, 20 October 1965, Neutra Archive.

35. "This wide even colossal glass opening of the foyer toward *a living exterior world*, is to Neutra not simply a pleasing decorative effect. It is a basic element of his concept of a theater's "Janus-like" double directedness: in one direction the illusion of the stage . . . and in the other direction the perennial world of reality. These two worlds in psychological fusion of never lost simultaneous double cognition, constitute the true theater experience." See the manuscript essay "Glass in the Theater Building, from Thoughts by Richard Neutra," 10 July 1961, Neutra Archive.

36. The auditorium for the Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, 1957, had fewer domestic features in its articulation. The difference may derive from the collaboration between Neutra and Alexander.

37. See "Glass in the Theater Building" and "Designing an Indoor-Outdoor Church," 2.

38. See Neutra, "Community Church," 1 and *Church Management* (October 1962): 17.

39. Over time, almost all drive-in theaters provided individual speakers for every car rather than broadcasting the soundtrack through a single set of loudspeakers. This helped give each automobile a sense of privacy. Some theaters also attempted to offer visual privacy by providing each car with an individual mini-screen. The Autoscope, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for example,

advertised itself with the slogan "[P]icture cannot be seen from surrounding areas." See Segrave, *Drive-In Theaters*, 101ff.

40. Neutra's papers, both published and unpublished, contain countless references to this aspect of the drive-in but without any sense of its peculiarity.

41. See Neutra, "Community Church," 3 and *Church Management* (October 1962): 18.

42. The televising of the services at the Neutra sanctuary anticipated by ten years the need for the Crystal Cathedral. When the sanctuary was enlarged in 1966, Richard and Dion worked very hard to win the commission that had been to their mind stolen by their collaborator, Benno Fischer.

43. Schuller claimed that his thinking had been "straightened out, quite indirectly, by the sound theology and psychology (though he never realized that's what it was) of architect Richard Neutra." Schuller claimed, moreover, that "architecture would come to the rescue of theology and psychology." See Robert Schuller, *Peace of Mind Through Possibility Thinking* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 8–10.

44. The Tower of Hope was largely the work of Richard's son, Dion Neutra.

45. Neutra's assistance was sought "in regard to a program of study and research which this department is initiating in the psychology of the urban environment. As you may know, Professor Kevin Lynch and others of us here [at MIT] have been studying how the form of the city affects the way people feel about it and how they organize their impressions of it (e.g. The Image of the City). We want to relate this work more closely to current psychological theory and research, and we also plan to expand our studies to encompass other effects of the environment on behavior and well-being." Stephen Carr of the Department of City and Regional Planning, MIT to Neutra, 16 November 1965, Neutra Archive. The letter goes on to describe the program and ask for literature and other advice.

46. David Riesman et al., *The Lonely Crowd, A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 364–367.

47. On imageability, see Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960).