

Hollywood Hills House
Winter 2015

Within the horizon of Los Angeles architectural style, the Mediterranean revival genre seems to have garnered less attention than the concomitant modernist achievements. Although researched since its inception in Southern California in the early 20th century, the Mediterranean revival genre has been to a large extent understood as a regionalist tendency disconnected to the broader history inaugurated by the Western architectural rationalism.

As one of the most prominent figures of North American Arts and Crafts architecture, Elmer Grey was key to the development of Los Angeles in providing infrastructure for the cinema industry and housing for its burgeoning elite via his distillations of LA's early obsessions. Driven by what William McClung referenced as the imagined "lost civilization of harmony between human being, their crafts and arts and nature", the Hollywood Hill House Elmer Grey built in the Hollywood Hills in 1926 mirrors the city's early identity.

The invitation of collector and gallerist, Shirley Morales, to organize an exhibition in the Hollywood Hill House, is a compelling opportunity to address areas that intersect with the contemporary genesis of Los Angeles and its transition from an agricultural town to a "laboratory of experiments"¹. Despite heterogeneous grounds and motives, numerous economical diaspora and cultural imports have coalesced within a shared idealization of nature. This pastoral ethos has been the central concern of many communities that have articulated their thinking around ecological concerns.

In that regard, the Arts and Crafts movement, the German "Lebensreform" philosophy and the constitution of various theosophist circles, such as those founded by Max Heindel or Annie Besant, have had an instrumental influence on not only the idiosyncratic development of cults in Los Angeles, but also community based systems, ecology and the hygienist culture. As discussed by Robert Gottlieb in *Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City*, Los Angeles invented itself on the premise that the environment was a central scenic resource.

Departing from the Spanish revival style of the villa and its idealization of the Mediterranean lifestyle, this exhibition will open the house to several artistic practices from the iconic utopian eco-architecture of Yves Klein to Elysia Crampton's performance.

Pierre-Alexandre Mateos & Charles Teyssou

Artists: Yves Klein, Peter Fend, Elysia Crampton, Adam Cruces, Stephan Dillemath, Cédric Fargues, Puppies Puppies & Jose Rojas Performances by: Elysia Crampton, Amanda Yates Garcia and Joseph Mosconi

¹ McWilliams, Carey, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, Peregrine Smith, 2001