

## Culture Monster

All arts, all the time

# Getty Foundation launches effort to conserve modern architectural gems



The Sydney Opera House is one of 10 famous structures that received funding from a new Getty Foundation conservation initiative called Keeping It Modern. (Ian Waldie / Bloomberg)

By **JESSICA GELT**

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**T**he Getty Foundation has announced a major new conservation initiative for modern architecture, funding work on 10 landmark designs around the world including Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House in Australia, Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House in Chicago and the Ray and Charles Eames residence in Pacific Palisades.

The Getty campaign, called Keeping It Modern, is intended to conserve 20th century architectural gems through grants of \$50,000 to \$200,000. The other recipients are Hilario Candela's Miami Marine Stadium, Louis Kahn's Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, Alvar Aalto's Paimio

Poland, Dov Karmi's Max Liebling House in the White City of Tel Aviv, and Le Corbusier's apartment and studio in Paris.

"Modern architecture is one of the defining artistic expressions of the 20th century," said Deborah Marrow, director of the Getty Foundation, the arts grants branch of the J. Paul Getty Trust. "These buildings were made with experimental materials, using new construction techniques and innovative forms."

Since standard practices of conservation have not yet been agreed upon, the structures present unique challenges.

The goal of Keeping It Modern is twofold: maintain these historic structures and research new ways to do it. Once effective practices have been established, the results will be shared with the conservation community at large. Management will be put in place for the buildings' current and future stewards.

"These are very distinguished and beautiful buildings with interesting stories," Marrow said. "But they also have interesting conservation problems."

In the case of the Sydney Opera House, the concrete used for the ribs of the soaring, sail-like shells needs to be extensively researched. The construction of the building's roof was a challenging puzzle in the late 1950s and early '60s.

"There is insufficient knowledge about the concrete," Marrow said. "And they need to develop effective long-term conservation protocols."

Getty Foundation staff experts in conservation and art history chose which buildings received the inaugural grants, but going forward the selection will be made through juried competitions.

Keeping It Modern was created to complement the work of the Getty Conservation Institute's Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative, which has already begun work on the conservation of the Salk Institute and the Eames House.

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