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Alejandro Olávarri, 2023

SEEKING ZOHN

Saturday, April 1, 2023 — Sunday, July 23, 2023

Schindler House, 835 North Kings Road, West Hollywood, CA 90069

Public Opening Reception: Saturday, April 01, 2023, 06:00 PM — 08:00 PM

The MAK Center for Art and Architecture is pleased to present *Seeking Zohn*, an exhibition of works by Mexican-Austrian architect and engineer Alejandro Zohn (1930-2000) through contemporary photography and design. The exhibition takes as subject Zohn's robust civic and commercial

architecture built in Guadalajara from the 1950s to the 1990s, with an interest in how the city's social, cultural, and material histories are interwoven with his structures.

Commissioned photography and video by artists **Adam Wiseman, Lake Vereea, Onnis Luque, Sonia Madrigal, and Zara Pfeifer** veer from the documentary conceit of architectural photography toward the subjective. This work is decidedly interpretive, seeking out the many narratives contained within parks, markets, collective housing, malls, and bureaucratic buildings. Zohn, a Jewish emigre who fled Vienna during World War II at the age of 8, dedicated his career to creating a modern Guadalajara. Through these photographs—acts of investigation and translation—we find glimpses of his utopian desire amidst the chaos, beauty, and violence of everyday life.

Seeking Zohn is the first presentation of Zohn's architecture in Los Angeles. The transposition of his work to L.A. places it in dialogue with R.M. Schindler's designs. As both architects are Jewish émigrés, a parallel exists between the Austrian-Mexican and the Austrian-Angelino's experiences. The installation at the MAK Center creates a resonant triangulation between three cities: Vienna, Guadalajara, and Los Angeles. Billboards placed in the garden navigate between the urban scale of Zohn's buildings and the intimacy of the Schindler House. Household objects designed by **Studio Fabien Cappello** and fabricated by artisans in Guadalajara build a bridge between the civic and domestic realms.

As a practitioner, Zohn is a lesser-known figure outside of Mexico, and his work has yet to be widely published or exhibited in the United States. A generation after fellow Guadalajara-born architect Luis Barragán and Mexican-Spanish architect Félix Candela, much of Zohn's architecture aligns with late modernism, a period that's recently come under re-evaluation. With this consideration comes an expansion of the conventional parallels drawn between Los Angeles and Mexico, which often focuses on designs and actors associated with midcentury modernism. While Zohn's early career shows the influence of Candela's thin-shell concrete arches, which he called "cascarones," his later designs are marked by expressive structural gestures, forming a singular geometric vocabulary that carries from project to project and a sensitivity to the social conditions of the urban fabric.

Notable projects in *Seeking Zohn* include his most famous building, Mercado Libertad–San Juan de Dios (1958-9), an indoor public market first proposed as his thesis project; the bandshell Concha Acústica (1958) in Parque Agua Azul; Unidad Deportiva Adolfo López Mateos (1956-59) sports center; the mall and parking garage Edificio Mulbar (1973-74); CTM-Atemajac (1977-79), a collective housing project; and one of his final works, Archivo del Estado de Jalisco (1985-91), a state office building and archive. Artists were each assigned a site for photographic inquiry, and the results suggest an architecture bound to the stories and conditions of an evolving city. These works are accompanied by select images, publications, and artifacts from Zohn's archive, courtesy of his daughter, Diana Zohn Cevallos.

Seeking Zohn is curated by Los Angeles-based critic and curator **Mimi Zeiger** and Mexico City-based collaborative practice **Tony Macarena: Lorena Canales and Alejandro Olívarri**.

Seeking Zohn is made possible, in part, with generous support from the City of West Hollywood, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the Pasadena Art Alliance, the Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs, Ago Projects, the Austrian Consulate General Los Angeles, Plant Material, and University of East London Production Support. MAK Center programs and exhibitions are also supported by the MAK Center Board of Directors, the Centennial Council, donors, and members. We'd also like to thank Tequila Tepozán.



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Los Angeles



About the MAK Center for Art & Architecture

The MAK Center for Art and Architecture is a multidisciplinary, experimental center for art and architecture that operates from a constellation of historic architectural sites and contemporary exhibition spaces. Founded in 1994, the MAK Center is a Los Angeles-based 501(c)3 non-profit organization and the California satellite of the MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna. The MAK Center encourages exploration of practical and theoretical ideas in art and architecture by engaging the center's places, spaces, and histories. Its programming includes exhibitions, lectures, symposia, discussions, performances, music series, publication projects, salons, architecture tours, and new work commissions. The MAK Center is headquartered in the landmark Schindler House (R.M. Schindler, 1922) in West Hollywood; operates the MAK Artists and Architects-in-Residence Program at the Mackey Apartments (R.M. Schindler, 1939) and runs more intimate programming at the Fitzpatrick-Leland House (R.M. Schindler, 1936) in Los Angeles. Offering a year-round schedule of exhibitions, events, and residencies, the MAK Center presents programming that challenges conventional notions of architectural space and relationships between the creative arts. The MAK Center works in collaboration with the Friends of the Schindler House (FoSH), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and maintain Schindler's Kings Road house in West Hollywood.

Accessibility Notes

The Schindler House is MAK Center's headquarters and exhibitions center. The house is accessible by wheelchair. The entire property sits on the ground floor, accessible by a compact dirt driveway from the streetside. The main entry into the house is arrived at through a break in the hedge, with four pavers leading up to the front door. Most wheelchairs will not have an issue rolling over the pavers, but please let us know if you need assistance. The terrain inside and outside the house varies between compact dirt, grass, and concrete, with approximately 1" lift from one surface to the next. All areas are accessible by wheelchair. All entries and corridors in the house measure 30" in width or wider. For doorways that are under 30", an alternate point of entry and access is always available. Bathrooms are not available for public use. We do not have designated parking areas, but visitors with accessibility needs can use the driveway for passenger loading and unloading.

For More Information

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