

FREDERICK KIESLER, “THE BEST-KNOWN NON-BUILDING ARCHITECT OF OUR TIME.” – PHILIP JOHNSON

THE DRAWING CENTER ANNOUNCES

*Frederick Kiesler:
Co-Realities*

April 18 – July 24, 2008

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 17, 6–8 pm

Gallery Talk: Wednesday, June 11, 6:30 pm

Main Gallery, 35 Wooster Street

New York, March 6, 2008 – The Drawing Center is pleased to present *Frederick Kiesler: Co-Realities* on view in the Main Gallery from April 18 through July 24, 2008. The first New York exhibition of Kiesler’s work in nearly two decades, *Frederick Kiesler: Co-Realities* will explore the pivotal role of drawing in the work of this visionary Austro-American architect, artist, designer, and theoretician. The exhibition will be designed by nARCHITECTS, an award winning firm based in New York. *Frederick Kiesler: Co-Realities* is organized by The Drawing Center, New York in collaboration with the Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna, and curated by Dieter Bogner and João Ribas.



FREDERICK KIESLER, *The Unity of Architecture, the Plastic Arts and the Spectator*, 1947. Study for exhibition design, *Bloodflames* 1947, Hugo Gallery, New York. Tempera on cardboard, 14 1/4 x 10 3/8 inches. © Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna. Source: Archive of the Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.

This historical exhibition will trace Kiesler’s interest in the expressive and conceptual possibilities of drawing through key projects from the 1930s to the 1960s and will include never-before-seen drawings on loan from the Kiesler Foundation, Vienna. *Frederick Kiesler: Co-Realities* will present over 30 drawings related to Kiesler’s decades-long investigation into the correlation between man, nature, and technology, embodied in his iconic *Endless House* structure. Also featured will be Kiesler’s pioneering exhibition design drawings, including those for Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century gallery in New York (1942), as well as works related to Kiesler’s drawing-based study of human perception.

Kiesler’s work highlights the role of drawing as a central activity within the practice of architecture. Kiesler used drawing to define his ideas of continuity—spatial, creative, and ideational—as well as to discover and develop the signature biomorphic forms that would redefine the language of modern architecture. As so few of his designs were ever realized, Kiesler’s drawings are essential to understanding his significant

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Frederick Kiesler: *Co-Realities* exhibition design rendering by nARCHITECTS.

contribution to 20th-century architectural history.

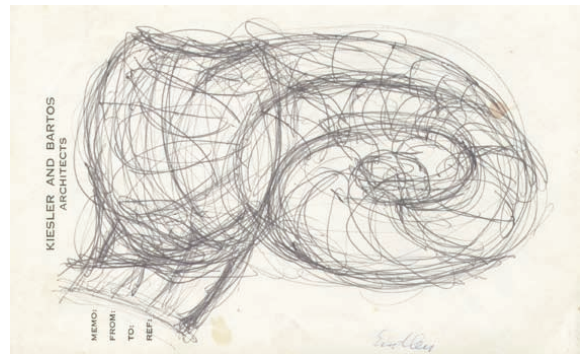
EXHIBITION DESIGN

nARCHITECTS was selected to develop the exhibition design for their deep understanding of Kiesler's theories and their ability to synthesize his complex ideas into a cohesive design scheme. Their design will present the curatorial thesis as a progressive and accumulative experience of Kiesler's ideas on Correalism, Perception, Endless Architecture, and Exhibition Design. The works, organized thematically, will be installed in a series of curvilinear vitrines that forms an endless band throughout the space.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Frederick Kiesler was born in 1890 in Czernowitz, Bukovina (a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now part of Ukraine). From 1908–1909, Kiesler studied architecture, painting, and printmaking at the Vienna University of Technology and at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. During the 1920s in Vienna and Berlin, Kiesler became well known for scenic and exhibition designs. He emigrated to New York City in 1926 where he resided until his death in 1965, and where he became associated with the Surrealists and Dadaists, including Marcel Duchamp and Jean Arp.

While largely overlooked today, Kiesler was a central figure in the cultural life of New York for over four decades. From 1937–41, Kiesler was the director of the Laboratory for Design Correlation in the Department of Architecture at Columbia University. Kiesler was a champion of the American avant-garde of the 1940s and 1950s—linked to artists such as Andy Warhol, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Rauschenberg—and has long been considered by scholars as a key figure in the development of modern architectural theory. In 1965, the Shrine of the Book (the wing of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, that houses the Dead Sea Scrolls) was completed in collaboration with Armand Bartos, and remains one of his only built architectural projects.



FREDERICK KIESLER, Study for model of *Endless House*, c. 1959. Pen on paper, 5 x 8 inches. © Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna. Source: Archive of the Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.

PUBLICATION

Accompanying the exhibition will be *Drawing Papers 77*, an edition in The Drawing Center's ongoing publication series. Featuring essays by curators **Dieter Bogner** and **João Ribas** as well as Princeton University architectural historian and theoretician **Beatriz Colomina**, the 32-page publication will include images of artworks in the exhibition, many of which have never been reproduced.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Drawing Center will present *Drawing as Architecture: Frederick Kiesler and Architectural Representation* on **Monday, May 5, 2008 from 7:00–9:00 pm** featuring experts in the fields of architecture, art, and design. Through a discussion of the theories and work of Frederick Kiesler, the relationship between drawing and building in contemporary architecture will be explored by panelists including: **Deborah Gans**, Principal, Gans Studio and Associate Professor, Pratt Institute's School of Architecture; **Len Pitkowsky**, architectural historian and studio assistant to Frederick Kiesler; **Craig Schwitter**, Principal, Buro Happold Engineers, Ltd.; **Marjorie Welish**, artist/critic; and moderated by **João Ribas**, Curator, The Drawing Center. The panel will take place at the **Austrian Cultural Forum New York, 11 East 52nd Street**. Admission is free.

João Ribas will lead a **free tour of the exhibition** on **Wednesday, June 11 at 6:30 pm**. This event takes place during **SoHo Night**, an evening of special programming and extended hours by not-for-profit visual arts institutions located in SoHo: apexart, Art in General, Artists Space, The Drawing Center, Location One, Storefront for Art and Architecture, and the Swiss Institute.

On **Saturday, May 3 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm**, The Drawing Center will offer a free **Family Program** for **children ages 5 to 8** accompanied by an adult. Museum Educator **Wan Ling Fahrner** will lead a discussion followed by a hands-on workshop where participants can share ideas and create art based on the concepts proposed by Frederick Kiesler. Reservations are requested. For further information or to make a reservation, please call 212-219-2166 x119 by Friday, May 2.

CREDITS

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency. Additional support is provided by the David L. Klein Jr. Foundation, Austrian Cultural Forum New York, Jason McCoy Inc., RZB Group, Hester Diamond, and the LEF Foundation.

HOURS AND LOCATION

Gallery Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm (closed Sundays and Mondays). The Drawing Center is wheelchair accessible.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Drawing Center is the only not-for-profit fine arts institution in the county to focus solely on the exhibition of drawings, both historical and contemporary. It was established in 1977 to provide opportunities for emerging and under-recognized artists; to demonstrate the significance and diversity of drawings throughout history; and to stimulate public dialogue on issues of art and culture.

www.drawingcenter.org

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