



Louis I. Kahn : Unbuilt Masterworks

By Kent Larson, Vincent Scully, William J. Mitchell

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American architect Louis I. Kahn left behind a legacy of great buildings: the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California; the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas; and the Indian Institute for Management in Ahmedabad. Yet he also left behind an equally important legacy of designs that were never realized. This exceptional volume unites those unbuilt projects with the most advanced computer-graphics technology—the first fundamentally new tool for studying space since the development of perspective in the Renaissance—to create a beautiful and poignant vision of what might have been.

Author Kent Larson has delved deep into Kahn's extensive archives to construct faithful computer models of a series of proposals the architect was not able to build: the U.S. Consulate in Luanda, Angola; the Meeting House of the Salk Institute in La Jolla; the Mikveh Israel Synagogue in Philadelphia; the Memorial to Six Million Jewish Martyrs in New York City; three proposals for the Hurva Synagogue in Jerusalem; and the Palazzo dei Congressi in Venice. The resulting computer-generated images present striking views of real buildings in real sites. Each detail is exquisitely rendered, from complex concrete textures to subtle interreflections and patterns of sunlight and shadow.

Kahn's famous statement—"I thought of wrapping ruins around buildings"—is borne out by the views of his unbuilt works; his rigorous exploration of tactility and sensation, light and form, is equally evident. Complementing the new computer images is extensive archival material—rough preliminary drawings, finely delineated plans, and beautiful travel sketches. Larson also presents fascinating documentation of each project, often including correspondence with the clients that shows not only the deep respect accorded the architect but the complicated circumstances that sometimes made it impossible to bring a design to fruition. Not only a historical study of Kahn's unbuilt works, this volume is in itself an intriguing alternative history of architecture.



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Editorial Review

Review

A stunning act of digital cyber-architecture by architect Larson . . . uncannily realistic views on a Silicon Graphics Workstation. -- *Time Magazine, Louis I. Kahn's Hurva Synagogue.*

Kent Larson used virtual reality to produce strikingly lifelike, two-dimensional pictures . . . the product is a luminous representation of daylight. -- *The Chicago Tribune*

Of applications to which the computer has been put in architecture, none is more intriguing . . . startlingly convincing. -- *The New York Times Book Review,*

Rigorous scholarship . . . an important contribution to the history of architecture in general, and a deeper understanding of Louis Kahn's genius -- *Architectural Record, December 2000*

The Hurva simulations are astonishing and utterly convincing. -- *The New York Times, A Spiritual Quest Realized, but Not in Stone, Paul Goldberger, Sunday, Arts and Leisure.*

The poetry in Larson's images comes from his artistic interpretation of Kahn. -- *OPEN: The Electronic Magazine, Redefining Creativity in the Digital Age, "Inside Virtual Walls,*

They bring us with startling fidelity into the space that Kahn wanted to make. -- *"A Virtual Landmark, Hurva Synagogue,*

From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

Kent Larson is an architect and principal research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he directs the consortium House_n: The MIT Home of the Future.

Vincent Scully is Sterling Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at Yale University and a distinguished visiting professor at the University of Miami. His many books include *The Shingle Style and Architecture: The Natural and the Man-Made*.

William J. Mitchell is academic head of the Program in Media Arts and Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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