



"Driftwood Village—Community," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 6, 1968. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966-1971
September 19, 2014—December 13, 2014

Chicago, September 4, 2014—The Graham Foundation is pleased to announce its fall exhibition, *Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966-1971*, opening September 19, 2014. In the late 1960s, renowned American landscape architect Lawrence Halprin and avant-garde dance pioneer Anna Halprin organized a series of experimental, cross-disciplinary workshops in Northern California that brought dancers, architects, environmental designers, and artists together in a process designed to facilitate collaboration and group creativity through new approaches to environmental awareness.

The Halprins' early workshops served as a testing ground for the development of *RSVP Cycles*—a multi-disciplinary method of visualizing and guiding creative group work. The four main components of *RSVP Cycles*—"Resources," "Scores," "Valuaction," and "Performance"—could be used interchangeably to create an iterative process driven by awareness and assessment of existing resources, planning, participation, and critical feedback. While both Halprins employed process-based workshops in their separate professional practices, their collaborative workshops from the late 1960s were unique, open-ended experiments that emphasized personal and inferred enrichment over specific application. Dismantling aesthetic hierarchies that traditionally separate creative fields, these early workshops reveal

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both the possibilities and challenges of working collectively across differences and re-imagining new frameworks for shaping the creative process.

Held over the course of several weeks, the Halprins' collaborative workshops were staged between the urban context of San Francisco; the dance deck and surrounding wooded areas of the Halprins' Kentfield home (Lawrence Halprin and William Wurster, 1951-54); and the Halprins' cabin (Charles Moore, Lawrence Halprin, and William Turnbull, 1965-66) at Sea Ranch—a coastal community for which Lawrence Halprin designed the master plan (1962-67). From movement sessions on the Halprins' dance deck, blindfolded awareness walks through the landscape, collective building projects using driftwood, and choreographed journeys diagramming everyday use and experience of urban plazas, parks, and rail cars, participants engaged in a series of multi-sensory activities in alternating environments according to loosely-structured, written guidelines in the form of open "scores."

Workshop participants were comprised of professional and student architects, planners, environmental designers, dancers, and other artists from the U.S. and Europe who were interested in exploring new approaches to creative group work. Notable faculty included psychologist Paul Baum, architect and educator Charles Moore, geographer Richard Reynolds, lighting specialist Patrick Hickey, cinematographer Joe Ereth, graphic designer Barbara Stauffacher, composer Morton Subotnick, and dancer Norma Leistiko.

Named after the Halprins' first cross-disciplinary workshop in 1966, *Experiments in Environment* presents to the public for the first time original photographs, films, drawings, scores, and other archival documentation of the workshops. Of note is a pair of experimental films from the 1971 workshops by filmmaker Connie Beeson. Additionally, the exhibition includes plans, drawings, and original photographs of the architectural sites at Kentfield and Sea Ranch, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Organized with The Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania, *Experiments in Environment* will be exhibited in the first and second-floor galleries of the Graham Foundation's turn-of-the-century Prairie-style Madlener House. Influenced by the Halprin workshops, contemporary artist Fritz Haeg will conduct a workshop in California in conjunction with the exhibition.

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was a leading figure in American landscape architecture, urban design, and environmental planning during the second-half of the twentieth century. Halprin's best known works include *Lovejoy Plaza*, Portland, Oregon (1961-67); *Ghirardelli Square*, San Francisco (1962-68); *Sea Ranch*, Sonoma County, California (1962-67); *Skyline Park*, Denver, Colorado (1970-74); the *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial*, Washington, D.C. (1976-1997); and *Lower Yosemite Falls* (2005), among others. He was awarded the AIA Medal for Allied Professions (1964); a presidential appointment to the first National Council on the Arts (1966); the ASLA Gold Medal (1978); and the National Medal of the Arts (2002), among others. Halprin's publications include *Cities* (1963); *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment* (1969); *Notebooks: 1959-1971* (1972); *Taking Part: A Workshop Approach to Collective Creativity* (with Jim Burns, 1974); and *A Life Spent Changing Place* (2011), among others. Lawrence Halprin's archives are located at The Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania, and his work is included in the collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

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Anna Halprin (1920-present) is a dancer, choreographer, and pioneer of avant-garde dance. She founded the San Francisco Dancer's Workshop in 1955 and the Tamalpa Institute in 1978. Anna has created 150 full-length performance works, including *Trance Dance, City Dance* (1965-78); *Parades and Changes* (1965-67); *Circle the Earth* (1981); and *Planetary Dance: A Call for Peace* (1987). She is the author of three books on her own work and contributed to *Taking Part: A Workshop Approach to Collective Creativity* (1975) and *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment* (1969). She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Arts (1970); the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award (1997); a National Endowment for the Arts "American Masterpieces" award (2008); and the Doris Duke Impact Award (2014), among others. Halprin's work was featured in the 2011 exhibition, *West of Center: Art and the Countercultural Experiment, 1965-1977*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, Colorado. In 2014, she performed *Festival d'Automne à Paris* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France. Her work is included in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Performance and Design.

RELATED EVENTS

Opening Reception with William Whitaker, Curator and Collections Manager of the University of Pennsylvania's Architectural Archives
September 19, 6-8PM

TALKS

All talks are free and open to the public and begin at 6PM. For more information or to RSVP, click [here](#).

CHIP LORD
September 25

CORNELIA HAHN OBERLANDER
November 19

ALISON HIRSCH AND EVA JESSICA FRIEDBERG
December 4

WORKSHOP

FRITZ HAEG
November 4-9

ABOUT THE GRAHAM FOUNDATION

Founded in 1956, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts makes project-based grants to individuals and organizations, and produces programming designed to foster the development and exchange of diverse and challenging ideas about architecture and its role in the arts, culture, and society.

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MADLENER HOUSE

Since 1963, the Graham Foundation has been located in the Madlener House, a turn-of-the-century Prairie-style mansion, designed by Richard E. Schmidt and Hugh M. Gardner (1901-02) and renovated by prominent modern architect Daniel Brenner. The 9,000 square-foot historic home now houses galleries, a bookstore, an outdoor collection of architectural fragments, an extensive non-lending library of grantee publications, and a ballroom where the foundation hosts a robust schedule of public programs.

BOOKSHOP

The Graham Foundation's bookshop, designed by Ania Jaworska, offers a selection of new, historically significant, and hard-to-find publications on architecture, art, and design, many of which have been supported by grants from the Graham Foundation.

GALLERY HOURS AND VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission to the galleries and bookshop are free and open to the public Wednesday through Saturday from 11AM–6PM. Group tours are available by request.

ACCESSIBILITY

The second floor galleries and third floor ballroom where events are held are only accessible by stairs. The first floor galleries and bookshop are accessible via outdoor lift. Please call ahead to make arrangements.

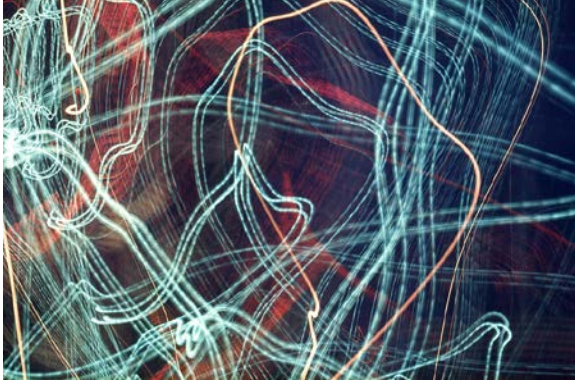
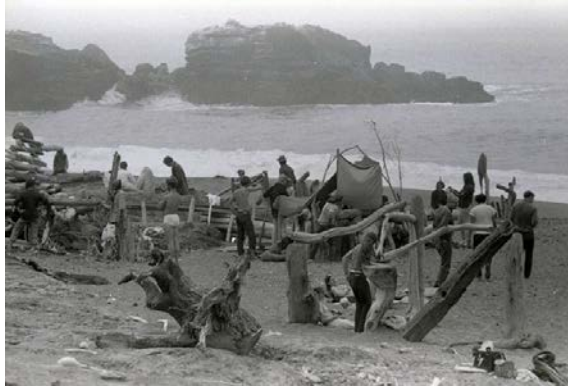
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High-resolution digital images are available on the press section of our website; email Mia Khimm at mkhimm@grahamfoundation.org for the press login or additional information. Press tours welcome by appointment.

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Images: (from top, left to right). All images courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

- 1) "Driftwood City Discussion," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 5, 1966.
- 2) "Driftwood City," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 4, 1966.
- 3) "Blindfold Walk," Kentfield, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 2, 1968.
- 4) "Driftwood City," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 4, 1966. Pictured (left to right) Lawrence Halprin, Anna Halprin, and architect Charles Moore.
- 5) "Driftwood City," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 4, 1966.
- 6) "Driftwood City," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 4, 1966.
- 7) "Men's Dance," Kentfield, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 7, 1966.
- 8) "Patric's Lighting Event—Simple Light Source," San Francisco, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, June 28, 1966.
- 9) "Skyscraper Event," San Francisco, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 19, 1968.
- 10) "Market Street Walk," San Francisco, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 8, 1966. Photo by Joe Ehreth.