



# MEIER

A LIFETIME OF ARCHITECTURE



## LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT

As his firm hits the half-century mark, Richard Meier proves he still thriving, with their first exhibition celebrating his 50 years of iconic architecture. The exhibition is a reflection of the continuous search and analysis of concepts that were developed throughout his career, as well as being in the Arp Museum that is open to the public that leads guests through his design process. At the age of 49 Meier was also the youngest architect to receive his professions highest accolade, the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

With fifty years behind him, a Pritzker prize, and work across the globe in places such as Germany, and China, it's a learning experience for young designers and architects to look back on his career and see where it all began. Richard Meier was born in 1934 in Newark, New Jersey, and studied at Cornell University. By 1963, only six years after his graduation and only few various jobs in New York, Meier started his own firm, and was teaching at Cooper Union in New York as well as being a visiting critic at multiple institutions. Meier's work always displayed his style of bold geometric patterns, and crisp clean lines, and worked with a lot glass and voids, which was bold for his time and really caught the eye of New York critics. By 1972 Richard Meier was known for his white buildings, and was known as a member of the unofficial group called "The New York Five" or other known as the "whites." The group was known for their white revitalized modern architecture that celebrated European International Style. By the mid 1980's Meier earned a place among the major architects of his day. Today he is grouped and compared to architects such as Frank Gehry, Frank Lloyd Wright, I.M. Pei, and Zaha Hadid.



ABOVE: RICHARD MEIER IN HIS NEW YORK OFFICE.



LEFT :SHORTLY AFTER RECEIVING THE PULITZKER, HE WAS AWARDED WHAT IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'S MOST IMPORTANT COMMISSIONS, THE DESIGN OF THE GETTY CENTER, THE LOS ANGELES ART COMPLEX FUNDED BY THE J. PAUL GETTY TRUST.



## INSPIRATION

Richard Meier in many of his interview is asked where he takes his inspirations from, and it is very interesting to learn what lead up to his series of white buildings he is famous for. One quote from Meier himself states, "We are all affected by Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Aalto, and Mies van der Rohe, but no less than Bramante, Borromini and Bernini. Architecture is a tradition, a long continuum. Whether we break with tradition or enhance it, we are still connected to the past. We evolve." This quote shows how Meier used ideas and work of other Architectures but took it and made it his own. When talking about his series of white buildings he also says that he studied a lot of Frank Lloyd Wright's works because of the beautiful landscape a lot of his earlier residential buildings were commissioned on, and decided to reject Wright's ideas of building into the earth.



ABOVE THE GIOVANNITTI HOUSE  
(THE WHITE SERIES)



ABOVE THE DOUGLAS HOUSE (THE WHITE SERIES)

"OPENESS AND CLARITY ARE CHARACTERISTICS THAT REPRESENT AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE AT ITS BEST AND THESE ARE THE PRINCIPLES I HOPE TO BRING TO EVERY DESIGN."

He claims he wants his work to stand out against the landscape and celebrate architecture by creating a distinction between indoors and outdoors. Of all of these architects Le Corbusier was in particular was one architect he was most inspired by, especially his works like the Villa Savoye and the Swiss Pavilion. Other things that inspired Meier throughout his career were one of his past times or expressionist painting, and collage. When looking at pieces of Meier's art you can see how the layering he uses in his collages, are to the visual layering he uses with shadows and voids in his buildings.

## WHITE

Meier chooses to use white of the canvas it gives, and how white effectively reflects the passing color nature. The use of white throughout his work is crucial to amplify the contrast between light and shadow, solid and void, as well as architecture and natural elements. This makes sense because of much his work uses voids in order to pass light and at the texture of shadows.

## THE SMITH HOUSE

The Smith house located in Darien, Connecticut is significant to Richard Meier's works because it is the first of Meier's Series of white buildings. The Smith house, is situated among rocka sand tress on a 1 ½ -acre site that overlooks Long Island. Built in 1967 not only does it have the same focus of void and shadow, it has a major focus on separation between public and private spaces. The private side of the house faces woods and road and contains a series of enclosed cellular spaces. These spaces are arranged behind and opaque wall that is pierced by windows. The public spaces where family gatherings and entertaining areas are, are located at the rear of the house overlooking the water. This side of the house is mostly glass held in place using mullions. The idea of zoning and having the separate spaces between private and public spaces is one that Meier took on and used in most of his residential work. The Smith house also has the strict geometry, with sharp edges and straight lines that was more common in Meier's earlier works.

## AUTHORS VIEW'S

From reading, watching online interviews, and researching Richard Meier I can honestly say I am inspired by his process and his life long career. I am amazed at how quickly he became a big name in the industry. When it comes to his work, I feel it makes complete sense as to why he puts so much focus on public and private space, and is something that as an interior designer I feel is extremely important to think about when it comes to space planning and sort of interior space. I find the way Meier focuses on light and creating voids to bring light into the entire space is something that I find particularly interesting. Lighting is so crucial to effective design, and I see how it truly transforms Meier's design style, and even why it is the main reason he uses white throughout his buildings. Not only am I inspired by Meier and his buildings, but I love and have so much respect for his philosophy on the separation between Architec-

ture and landscape. For what some people might see as an oddity amongst the nature his buildings are built on I feel his work is the perfect complement to the natural surroundings. The idea of complimenting, and being a juxtaposition against nature instead of something that is attempting to be similar or same to nature is a very smart way to design because of the different focal points it creates. The use of white is the perfect balance of standing out against the nature and yet being able to be a chameleon to it, and pick up the colors from the nature. I can only wish the best to Richard Meier and his firm in the future, and cannot wait to see what else Meier has in store the Architectural World.



ABOVE: SMITH HOUSE FIRM WEBSITE

## ARTICLE WEB SOURCES

<http://www.richardmeier.com/www/#/projects/architecture/visual/1/>

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