



ROMANTICISM TO RUIN: TWO LOST WORKS OF SULLIVAN & WRIGHT

***Two-Part Exhibition Explores Long-Gone Architectural Masterpieces:
Louis H. Sullivan's Garrick Theater, in Chicago, and
Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building, in Buffalo***

Opening September 24, 2021

(CHICAGO, IL — August 4, 2021) Wrightwood 659 presents *Romanticism to Ruin: Two Lost Works of Sullivan and Wright*, a dual exhibition exploring two of these architects' long-demolished masterpieces: Louis H. Sullivan's innovative Garrick Theater, in Chicago, which stood for only sixty-nine years, and Frank Lloyd Wright's unprecedented Larkin Building, in Buffalo, NY, which stood for just forty-four. The exhibition comprises two distinct presentations—*Reconstructing the Garrick: Adler & Sullivan's Lost Masterpiece* and *Reimagining the Larkin: Frank Lloyd Wright's Modern Icon*—bringing the essence of these two titans of modern American architecture to life. Comprising 3D models and digital re-creations of the original edifices; salvaged architectural ornaments and artifacts; original furniture; historical documentation of the design, construction, and demise of the buildings; archival photographs taken by noted preservationist and photographer Richard Nickel; drawings, and historical ephemera, *Romanticism to Ruin* demonstrates how these iconic designs continue to resonate and remain relevant.

Romanticism to Ruin: Two Lost Works of Sullivan and Wright is made possible by Alphawood Foundation Chicago. The exhibition will be on view through November 27, 2021. Please note, admission is by advance ticket only. Walk-ups are not permitted.

Reconstructing the Garrick: Adler & Sullivan's Lost Masterpiece

The Garrick Theater opened in 1892, a year before Chicago hosted the World's Fair, and was considered a technological marvel at the time. Housing a 1,300-seat theater—a balconied space that included a proscenium with a series of magnificent arches that were embellished with Sullivan's trademark "star-pod" ornamentation—the Garrick melded technology and creative architectural practice in completely new ways. It also included a club and rehearsal space, as well as a lavishly decorated exterior with a second-floor loggia adorned with terracotta

busts of 12 poets and composers.

Curated by a Chicago-based team led by architect and preservationist John Vinci, with cultural historian emeritus Tim Samuelson, graphic artist Chris Ware, and Urban Remains founder Eric Nordstrom, *Reconstructing the Garrick* explores Sullivan's technological innovations, including their impact on the building's use. The presentation grew out of a drawing project of Vinci's that was intended to gain better understanding of how the building's interior circulation worked, and to piece together unknown aspects of its construction. The exhibition presents these drawings, along with recent archival discoveries and a sampling of architectural ornament and fragments salvaged from the building during its demolition, as well as ephemera and other documentation that shed light on the social history of the theater and the then nascent preservation movement.

Reimagining the Larkin: Frank Lloyd Wright's Modern Icon

Founded in 1875 as a small soap company in Buffalo, NY, by the early 1900s, the Larkin Company had grown into an extremely prosperous mail-order conglomerate. This success enabled it to commission the forward-thinking Wright to design the now-iconic Larkin Headquarters building in 1906.

Curated by Jonathan D. Katz, Associate Professor of Practice, History of Art and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, University of Pennsylvania, and former Director, Doctoral Program in Visual Studies, University at Buffalo (SUNY), *Reimagining the Larkin* explores the marriage between Arts-and-Crafts ideologies and new technologies during a time of increasing industrialization. Wright understood technology as a tool for the expression of beauty, and architecture as a means of bettering the lives of those it serves. His utopian architectural ideals were matched by Larkin's views on how factories should be run. Highly progressive for its time, the Larkin Company established employee benefits, improved working conditions, and included a large percentage of women within its workforce. *Reimagining the Larkin* features original objects from the Larkin Building, including Wright-designed desks and his early modular filing systems, along with historical documentation of the design, construction, and demise of the Company Headquarters. These artifacts will be juxtaposed with original Larkin Company products, including examples of Deldare and Buffalo Pottery, along with other historical materials.

Publication

Reconstructing the Garrick: Adler & Sullivan's Lost Masterpiece is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalog of the same name, which was edited by John Vinci, with Tim Samuelson, Eric Nordstrom, and Chris Ware. It includes the first-time publication of a 70+ page reproduction of Richard Nickel's Ornament Salvage Workbook, a detailed inventory with notes and pictures of the salvaged work.

Also available during the exhibition is another volume, *Louis Sullivan's Idea*, a visual compendium of the philosophy and life of America's renowned architect, by Tim Samuelson with Chris Ware. These volumes have been made possible by Alphawood Foundation Chicago.

About Wrightwood 659

Wrightwood 659 is a private, non-collecting institution devoted to socially engaged art and to architecture. Located at 659 W. Wrightwood Avenue, in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, the intimate space officially opened on October 10, 2018, and presents two public exhibitions annually. Wrightwood 659 was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tadao Ando, who transformed the interior of a 1920s building with his signature concrete forms and poetic treatment of natural light.

Since its inauguration, Wrightwood 659 has presented a wide range of exhibitions including: *Yannis Tsarouchis: Dancing in Real Life*, May 7–August 7, 2021; *Balkrishna Doshi: Architecture for the People*, September 10–

December 12, 2020; *The Allure of Matter: Material Art from China*, February 6–May 2, 2020; *Tetsuya Ishida: Self-Portrait of Other*, October 3–December 14, 2019; *About Face: Stonewall, Revolt and New Queer Art*, May 22–August 10, 2019; *Dimensions of Citizenship: Architecture and Belonging from the Body to the Cosmos*, February 28–April 27, 2019, and *Ando and Le Corbusier: Masters of Architecture*, October 12–December 15, 2018, among others.

Hours of Operation

Fridays, 12noon – 7:30pm
Saturdays, 10am – 5:30pm

Tickets

Tickets for the exhibition will be \$15 and available online only, beginning August 16 at tickets.wrightwood659.org/events

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COVID-19 Response

For the presentation of *Romanticism to Ruin: Two Lost Works by Sullivan and Wright*, Wrightwood 659 will reduce gallery admission and capacity from pre-pandemic levels. Among other remedies and precautions, we have installed a state-of-the-art air filtration system and will continue to regularly sanitize public spaces. Out of an abundance of care for all, Wrightwood 659 plans to continue to require visitors and staff to wear masks while inside the building.

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Photo credits:

Louis H. Sullivan, Garrick Interior. Photographer unknown. Interior Garrick Theater, date unknown.

Louis H. Sullivan, Interior Garrick Theater Stage during demolition, 1952, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago. Photos by Richard Nichol.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Larkin Administration Building, 1934. Collection of The Buffalo History Museum. Larkin Company photograph collection, Picture .L37, # 1-2a.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Larkin Administration Building demolition, May 1950. Collection of The Buffalo History Museum. Larkin Company photograph collection, Picture .L37, #2-75.

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For additional information: <https://wrightwood659.org>