



Migrating Modernism. The architecture of Harry Seidler

**SMAC San Marco Art Centre, Procuratie, Venice
9 May – 13 July 2025**



[Australia Square, Sydney, Australia. Architect Harry Seidler. Photo Max Dupain, 1968 © Penelope Seidler](#)

Venice, 14 April 2025 - SMAC San Marco Art Centre and the Chau Chak Wing Museum (CCWM) at the University of Sydney present *Migrating Modernism. The architecture of Harry Seidler*. The exhibition is a major retrospective of the life and work of Austrian-born Australian modern architect Harry Seidler (Vienna 1923 - Sydney 2006). As one of the most influential modern architects, Seidler was responsible for designing numerous pioneering buildings in Australia, and he also designed buildings in Mexico, Paris, Hong Kong and, by the end of his career, back in the city of his birth, Vienna.

Migrating Modernism. The architecture of Harry Seidler is curated by Ann Stephen from CCWM and Paolo Stracchi from the University's School of Architecture Design and Planning, with curatorial advisor Nikolaus Hirsch. The exhibition will consider in depth both individual projects and Seidler's collaborations with architects and artists. These include Josef Albers, Alexander Calder, Helen Frankenthaler, Frank Stella, Lin Utzon and Sol LeWitt. Seidler also collaborated with the famed Italian structural engineer Pier Luigi Nervi.

Migrating Modernism. The architecture of Harry Seidler will present materials, such as letters, drawings, and models together with personal documents and the artworks of those who either influenced him or with whom he collaborated.



[Architect Harry Seidler, Sydney, Australia 1973. Photo Max Dupain © Penelope Seidler](#)

Ann Stephen: *"Living in Sydney, we see how Harry Seidler's modern vision introduced a distinctly cosmopolitan culture to Australian cities—not only through his buildings, but also through the art he brought into public spaces."*

Paolo Stracchi: *"Beyond its refined formal language, Seidler's architecture stands as a reflection of the broader cultural, historical, and architectural conditions of its time."*

Harry Seidler escaped Nazi-ruled Vienna at the age of 15, fleeing to England before being interned as an enemy alien and later deported to further internment camps in Canada, where he, later, upon release completed his first degree in architecture and became registered as an architect.

Seidler later moved to the United States, studying and working under a remarkable lineage of masters – Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, and Marcel Breuer, and worked with Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil – before moving to Sydney at the age of 24. A decade later, he met Penelope, who became his wife, life companion and professional partner. United by a deep passion for architecture and art, they built a life enriched by collaborations with artists such as Alexander Calder, Josef Albers, Helen Frankenthaler, Frank Stella, Lin Utzon and Sol LeWitt. Seidler also collaborated with the famed Italian structural engineer Pier Luigi Nervi.

After studying in the Americas, Seidler arrived in Sydney in 1948 to design his parents a house – the Rose Seidler House. He started his private practice in 1949. In Australia, he emerged as one of the most prominent figures of the modern movement, with his work spanning radical single houses to monumental towers.



[Harry & Penelope Seidler House, Killara, Sydney, Australia. Photo Max Dupain, 1968 © Penelope Seidler](#)

Partly trained in an engineering school, Seidler's technical expertise, especially of reinforced concrete, was rare amongst his generation of designers, and set him apart from his peers. This also provided the foundation for the fluid forms he produced with Pier Luigi Nervi that characterized his work from the early 1960s. The combination of his engineering

competence

and sculptural flair meant that he was one of the few designers of his age capable of fulfilling the modernist dream of integrating art and technology.

Celebrated as one of the most influential voices of the modern movement in Australia, Seidler shaped a legacy spanning single-family houses, inventive towers, public buildings and progressive housing schemes. These were realised in cities as varied as Sydney, Acapulco, Paris, Hong Kong, and his native Vienna. Seidler's life and work trace the arc of modernism as both a personal journey and a global narrative, inviting reflection on architecture as a layered expression of society and a medium through which ideas migrate across continents and time.

As **Jørn Utzon**, architect of the Sydney Opera House once said: *"Harry is the best example of how a newcomer, a migrant, attacks the problem of getting something built. He taught others to achieve this, including myself. He was a marvellously gifted architect... showing a new way of living in the modern times."*

The exhibition opens with the launch of SMAC San Marco Art Centre, a new centre for the arts in the heart of Venice, located in the Procuratie on Saint Mark's Square, which was recently renovated by Pritzker-prize winning architect David Chipperfield. *Migrating Modernism. The architecture of Harry Seidler* coincides with the opening of the 19th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia. As part of its inaugural programme, SMAC will also present *For All That Breathes On Earth: Jung Youngsun and Collaborators*.

The Procuratie also hosts The Home of The Human Safety Net on the third floor, with the interactive exhibition *A World of Potential*, an immersive journey in which visitors are led to discover their strengths and can connect to the Foundation's programs.

[CLICK HERE FOR HIGH-RES IMAGES](#)

NOTES TO EDITORS

SMAC San Marco Art Centre
Procuratie, Piazza San Marco 105
30124 Venice

Open from Wednesday to Monday, 10am - 6pm (closed Tuesdays)

Tickets and more information at www.smac.org

About SMAC San Marco Art Centre

SMAC is a new centre for the Arts in the heart of Venice. Every year SMAC presents a dynamic and vibrant programme of exceptional exhibitions across all of visual culture. Situated in one of the most iconic locations in the world, SMAC is located on Piazza San Marco inside the Procuratie, recently restored by Pritzker-prize winning architect David Chipperfield. SMAC presents an ambitious programme across art, architecture, design,

fashion and film, offering opportunities for discovery for specialists and the general public alike. SMAC focuses on content that sheds light on the unexpected, that challenges conventions and poses rigorous questions. Through research, dialogue, and experimentation, SMAC critically examines contemporary visual culture and its relations with history, science, philosophy, and society. SMAC believes that the Arts open new possibilities for human co-existence and allow for cities and communities to thrive.

About The Procuratie

The Procuratie opened to the public in 2022 for the first time in 500 years, following a major restoration by David Chipperfield commissioned by Generali and orchestrated by Generali Real Estate. The second floor houses SMAC San Marco Art Centre. The third floor houses The Home of The Human Safety Net, a Foundation working in 26 countries to unlock the potential of those living in vulnerable conditions. The permanent exhibition '*A World of Potential*' is conceived as an experience that leads visitors to discover their unique combination of character strengths, while also enabling them to see the best qualities in the people around them.

About The Home Of The Human Safety Net

The Human Safety Net is a global movement of people helping people, whose mission is to unlock the potential of people living in vulnerable circumstances, so that they can transform the lives of their families and communities. The Human Safety Net's programmes support vulnerable families with young children (0-6 years) and integrate refugees through work and entrepreneurship. The Home of The Human Safety Net has been designed as an amplifier of its programmes through the interactive exhibition '*A World of Potential*', which guides visitors to awareness of their own potential and the right we all have to express and develop it, as well as the co-working hub, the event space, and the library dedicated to themes of social inclusion.

About Chau Chak Wing Museum

Located on Gadigal land, the Chau Chak Wing Museum is a hub for sharing the University of Sydney's extensive collections with the wider community. Officially opened in 2020, the Museum comprises three separate collections within one multidisciplinary institution. From First Nations culture, natural history collections, antiquities, and contemporary art works, the Museum's collection embodies cultural and artistic creativity at its core and welcomes all communities to engage with the collections.

About MMCA

Established in 1969, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA) has emerged as one of Korea's preeminent arts and culture institutions, sharing its history with the course of Korean modern and contemporary art.

The MMCA currently operates four venues; MMCA Gwacheon opened in 1986, MMCA Deoksugung at Seoul's Deoksugung Palace opened in 1998, MMCA Seoul opened in 2013,

and MMCA Cheongju opened in 2018.

MMCA Seoul is a multipurpose museum that houses a full range of contemporary art and serves as the face of Korean modern and contemporary art. MMCA Deoksugung specializes in modern art, focusing on Korea from the 1900s to the 1950s. MMCA Gwacheon focuses on research and family-oriented art, broadening the horizons of art history into the areas of architecture, crafts, prints, and design while also providing a full experience with its Children's Museum. MMCA Cheongju is located in a former tobacco factory that has been repurposed as "visible storage," specializing in the curatorial life cycle of its collected works and its stages of research, preservation, and exhibition.

As a leading cultural institution, the MMCA plays a pivotal role in shaping and disseminating critical discourses within the field of contemporary art, positioning itself as a dynamic site for intellectual inquiry, creative education and the cultivation of aesthetic engagement through rigorously curated exhibitions.

BIOGRAPHY Jung Youngsun

Jung Youngsun (b. 1941, Gyeongsan) is a seminal figure in Korean landscape architecture, renowned for redefining the discipline's role in urban and ecological contexts. Since founding Seo-Ahn Total Landscape in 1987, Jung has led transformative projects that bridge design, environmental stewardship, and cultural memory. Her work—spanning Seonyudo Park, Cheonggye Stream Restoration, Gwanghwamun Plaza, and Seoul Botanic Park—has been instrumental in raising public awareness about the social and ecological significance of landscape design.

A consistent advocate for ecological resilience and biodiversity, Jung has integrated native species and site-specific ecologies into her projects long before such practices became standard. Her designs prioritize the long-term vitality of landscapes through strategies rooted in contextual sensitivity, habitat preservation, and the symbiotic relationship between natural systems and urban life.

Jung's contributions have been internationally recognized with honors including the IFLA Award of Excellence, ASLA Award of Merit, and the AIA Architecture Honor Award. In 2023, she became the first Korean laureate of the IFLA Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Award, the field's highest distinction. Often referred to as the "godmother" of Korean landscape architecture, Jung continues to shape the field with a vision grounded in ecological ethics, cultural continuity, and design for the future generations.

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