

For Immediate Release

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Film Premiere Celebrates Claremont's Unique Artistic Legacy

Design for Modern Living: Millard Sheets and the Claremont Art Community 1935-1975 will premiere at 3 p.m. Sunday, **March 22**, at Garrison Theater at Scripps College, 231 East 10th St. in Claremont. The event is sponsored by the Claremont Museum of Art and by the Clark Humanities Museum and Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College.

Two years in the making, the one-hour documentary film, produced by Paul Bockhorst in partnership with the Claremont Museum of Art, provides a vivid and illuminating account of the important art community that emerged in Claremont in the years following World War II under the leadership of Millard Sheets, with profiles of nearly two dozen artists and craftspersons.

Be among the first to see this important new chronicle of Claremont history!

The premiere event will include an introduction by filmmaker Paul Bockhorst, a Q&A session and a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception to benefit CMA programs. Advance tickets are available for \$20 online at www.claremontmuseum.org or you may make your reservation by sending a check to Claremont Museum of Art, P.O. Box 1136, Claremont CA 91711. Admission will be \$25 at the door.

DESIGN FOR MODERN LIVING

In the years following World War II, the community of Claremont in Southern California emerged as an important center for the visual arts, due in large measure to the inspired efforts of the artist and educator Millard Sheets. In Claremont, painters, sculptors, ceramists, enamel and mosaic artists, woodworkers and fiber artists devoted themselves to their creative pursuits with great imagination and energy, creating works that express the spirit of Postwar Modernism in California.

Design for Modern Living tells the story of the remarkable artistic community that took root at Scripps College and made Claremont an important center of Mid-20th Century Modern design.

“The interviews touch on all the important issues and are beautifully integrated with the historic photographs. Congratulations on a fine job extraordinarily well done!” - Harold Nelson, Curator of American Decorative Arts, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

In the film, artists who were active in Claremont in the postwar period share their memories of the time and place. They include Betty Davenport Ford, John Svenson, James Strombotne, Paul Darrow, Harrison McIntosh, Barbara Beretich, and Martha Longenecker. Other artists featured in the documentary include William Manker, Jean and Arthur Ames, Albert Stewart, Henry Lee McFee, Phil Dike, Milford Zornes, James Hueter, Jack Zajac, Karl Benjamin, Roger Kuntz, Rupert Deese, Susan Hertel, and Sam Maloof. Additional insights are provided by Tony Sheets, Carolyn Sheets Owen-

Towle, Christy Johnson, Harold Nelson, James Elliot-Bishop, and Catherine McIntosh.

The documentary was produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Paul Bockhorst, in cooperation with the Claremont Museum of Art. A veteran writer, producer, and director, Bockhorst has produced dozens of programs that have appeared on PBS, NBC, ABC, Turner Broadcasting, and the Disney Channel. He recently received an Honorary AIA Award for his many documentaries on art and architecture.

Principal funding for *Design for Modern Living* was provided by The Ahmanson Foundation and Howard and Roberta Ahmanson, The Windgate Charitable Foundation, Gerald and Bente Buck, E. Gene Crain, Marguerite and Harrison McIntosh, Tom & Carolyn Sheets Owen-Towle, and the Family of Helen Bockhorst. Additional support was provided by the Historical Collections Council of California, Peter and Gail Ochs, Robert and Nadine Hall, Jim and Perry Jamieson, Beverly Maloof, the Family of Karl Benjamin, and Betty Davenport Ford and Harold Ford.

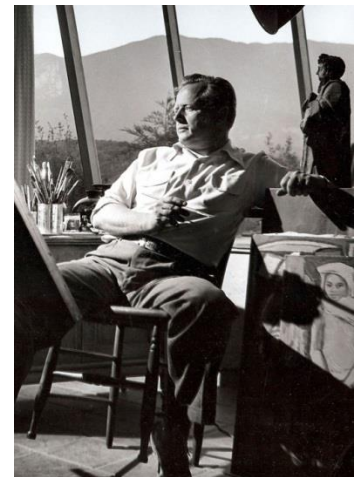
CLAREMONT: A CENTER FOR MODERN DESIGN

The three decades following the end of World War II stand out as a golden age in Claremont and the surrounding Pomona Valley. The work created in that time and place gave vibrant physical expression to Southern California's informal lifestyle, commanding both national and international attention.

American confidence was high, and so too was the desire for the good life promised in the American Dream. After fifteen long years of economic crisis and war, there was enormous pent-up demand for modern housing and well-designed home furnishings. Another important factor was the GI Bill, which allowed large numbers of returning veterans unprecedented access to higher education, including art instruction. The alignment of these factors in the late 1940s and early 1950s set the stage for an explosion in craft production in Southern California—and for Claremont's emergence as an important center for modern design.

MILLARD SHEETS: ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS

If the conditions were favorable for an artistic boom, a spark was still needed to ignite it. Millard Sheets was at once a painter, a muralist, an architectural designer, a teacher and art administrator, an entrepreneur, and an inspired cheerleader who tirelessly preached the importance of art in daily life. Handsome and energetic, daring and resourceful, he was a passionate ambassador for the arts. Sheets began by creating the art department at Scripps College and the Claremont Graduate School in the 1930-40s. He went on to develop the Art Department at the Los Angeles County Fair, planned and designed dozens of Home Savings & Loan Association branches throughout California, and became a powerful voice for the arts in the Southland.



We are pleased to premiere this film at Garrison Theater, a structure designed by Millard Sheets in 1962 featuring his distinctive mosaic murals.

Photos and interview opportunities are available upon request. Photo Caption: Millard Sheets in his Padua Hills studio in the early 1950s. Photo from the Sheets Family Archive.