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IIT Summer Exhibition Curated By Renowned Architecture Experts

"Crombie Taylor, Aaron Siskind, and the Adler and Sullivan Project" June 12-August 3

Chicago, May 15, 2008 - Documenting and illustrating significant contributions made to architectural history in the early 1950s, the Mies van der Rohe Society at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), with the cooperation of the Richard Nickel Committee, presents, from June 12 to August 3, an exhibition created to showcase the works of architects Crombie Taylor and Louis Sullivan and photographer Aaron Siskind. The exhibit will be mounted in Mies' signature building, S. R. Crown Hall, on the IIT campus at 3360 South State St., Chicago and curated by experts in the field of architecture, John Vinci and Jeffrey Plank.

John Vinci, FAIA, a principal of Vinci Hamp Architects, Inc., has an established reputation for excellence in the restoration of historic architecture and the design of new buildings. His restoration work includes Louis Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room, Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio in Oak Park and numerous projects for the Art Institute of Chicago. His new buildings include the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, the Arts Club of Chicago and several award-winning residences. An IIT alumnus, Vinci earned a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture in 1960 and was elected to the AIA College of Fellows in 1992.

Jeffrey Plank is Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at the University of Virginia. For more than twenty years he collaborated with former IIT Institute of Design (ID) director Crombie Taylor on a wide range of architectural history projects, including restoration of Louis Sullivan's Van Allen Department Store building in Clinton, Iowa. Also an author, Plank's most recent book, *Aaron Siskind and Louis Sullivan: The Institute of Design Photo Section Project*, publishes for the first time a 1954 exhibit of photographs of Louis Sullivan buildings directed by Aaron Siskind at ID. A book signing will be held at the exhibition's opening night reception, Thursday, June 12 from 6 to 8 p.m.

"Crombie Taylor, Aaron Siskind, and the Adler and Sullivan Project" is an exhibit honoring the work of three history makers, Taylor, Sullivan and Siskind, who became connected when Taylor, the acting director of ID from 1951-54, encouraged Siskind, a photography professor, to lead an advanced class in a complete photographic documentation of Sullivan's buildings. Siskind and his students set a new direction for the visual investigation of Sullivan's architecture and the group's 1954 exhibit attracted national attention.

With a strong belief that much of Sullivan's work was consistent with the ID philosophy, both men continued to focus heavily on the architect. The same year that the Siskind project photos were exhibited, Crombie Taylor began his pioneering restoration of the Auditorium Building banquet hall (now Ganz Hall), the first restoration of a Sullivan building. From his restoration work at the Auditorium Building, Taylor went on to recreate stencil patterns from the Auditorium Building and the Garrick Building.

The historical importance of the works of these three masterminds will be showcased in the exhibition which will include a recreation of the original Siskind/Sullivan project exhibit, vintage photos of the Sullivan stencil recovery process, Taylor's recreation of Sullivan's twelve polychromatic stencils from the Auditorium Building and Garrick Theater at original scale (2 x 4 to 4 x 6 panels which have not been exhibited since the early 1960s) and examples of Taylor's modern architecture and Siskind's abstract photography from the 1950s.

One of the members of Siskind's advanced class, Richard Nickel, was inspired by his course work and continued to record historical buildings throughout his career. He photographed the work of Burnham & Root, Holabird & Roche, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, C. F. Murphy Associates, Frank Lloyd Wright and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Later, Nickel started a non-profit organization called the Richard Nickel Committee, which administers the archive for the original Siskind/Sullivan project and has printed some of the negatives to make the photographs more accessible to architecture, design and photography audiences. The efforts of the Richard Nickel Committee helped make the summer exhibition possible.

A roundtable discussion moderated by Plank and featuring additional former ID photography students who were involved in the Siskind/Sullivan project: Charles Estram, Len Gittleman and Alvin Loginsky, will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday, June 14. The discussion is free, but reservations are required. Those wishing to attend the opening night reception or the roundtable discussion can register by contacting the Mies van der Rohe Society at (312) 567-5025 or mesmembership@iit.edu.

The exhibition will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with the exception of July 4 through 6, when it will close for the 4th of July holiday. Admission is \$5. For more information about the exhibition, call 312-567-7146 or visit www.mies.iit.edu.

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