

Cultural Daily

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Organic Architecture For Sale in Joshua Tree

Rick Meghiddo · Wednesday, February 26th, 2014

[Kendrick Bangs Kellogg's](#) Doolittle Residence in Joshua Tree is not the kind of 4,643 square-foot house you may see for sale at \$3,000,000, including ten acres of land, in Los Angeles' Westside. You can't get much mileage for that in this part of town. Nor is the kind of real estate showcased in a video that you may watch on residential property listings. That may be part of today's LA's problem in valuating design quality.

Is "Organic Modern" a new real estate style definition, like "modern," "contemporary," "Spanish," "Colonial," etcetera? Let's put things into some perspective.

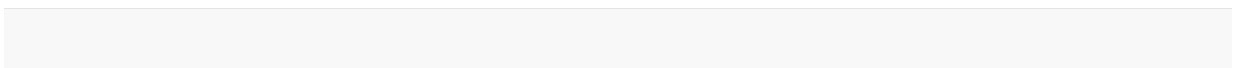
When [Frank Lloyd Wright](#) coined the term "[Organic Architecture](#)," he was defining a philosophical view of the world that had roots in Buddhism, democracy and fundamental human values imbedded in the Sacred Scriptures, as interpreted by the Unitarian Church (of which Wright was a member). Creating an Organic Architecture *style* was in total contradiction with the core of his thinking.

"There should be as many (styles) of houses as there are kinds (styles) of people and as many differentiations as there are different individuals. A man who has individuality has a right to its expression and his own environment." That was one of Wright's premises. When Kellogg met Wright in 1955. Kellogg got the message. His [biomorphic houses](#) and Charthouse restaurants became the *Kellogg style*.

Kellogg is not alone in having reinterpreted the spirit of organic architecture with curvilinear forms. [Bruce Goff](#), [Bert Prince](#) and [John Lautner](#) bring powerful examples of it. Yet it is misleading to think that "Gaudian" forms or a strong indoor-outdoor relationship is automatically *organic*. [Carlo Scarpa](#) was organic restoring old buildings; [Luigi Pellegrin](#) was organic designing prefabricated schools; and [Ray Kappe's](#) post and beam houses are some of the most organic of Los Angeles.

The richness of forms and freedom of expression in the Doolittle Residence is impressive, particularly considering that the house was completed in 1993. Yet its greatest value is in opening people's minds of what's possible in architecture.

Here is a video of Ken Kellogg's organic architecture:



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