

# Los Angeles River

El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río Porciúncula

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## Introduction

### River

009	Maps
013	Historic images
021	1938 flood
027	Water control channel
041	Building a "Water Freeway"

### Words

059	The Myth of Megalopolis
105	Ecology III: The Plains of Id
125	Ecology IV: Autopia
137	Taking Los Angeles Apart
167	Los Angeles Freeways
181	Los Angeles: Suburban Metropolis
211	The Hammer and the Rock
265	The Empty Quarter
285	Chinatown Revisited?
317	A City Called Heaven: Black Enchantment and Despair in Los Angeles
345	Latino Los Angeles: Reframing Boundaries/Borders
371	From Global to Local: The Rise of Homelessness in Los Angeles During the 1980's

### Houses

407	Schindler House
417	Storer House
425	Ennis House
433	Samuel Freeman House
439	Lovell Beach House
447	Lovell House
459	Wolfe House
467	Aluminaire House
473	Neutra VDL Studio and Residences
479	George Sturges House
487	Kaufmann Desert House
497	Bubble House
511	Case Study House Program
513	Eames House
523	Entenza House
531	Frey House I

Salzman House I	539
Bailey House	549
Fields House	555
Bass House	565
Chemosphere	573
Triad #23a	579
Triad #23b	587
Triad #23c	595
Alexander Steel Houses	603
Frank House	611
Garcia House	619
Fleming Drefeld House	625
Sheats Goldstein Residence	631
Rosen House	639
Frey House II	649
Stahl House	655
Danziger Studio and Residence	663
Platform Houses	669
Erold House	677
Silvertop	683
Schulitz House	691
Gehry Residence	697
2 - 4 - 6 - 8 House	707
Spiller House	715
708 House	723
Petal House	729
Norton House	735
Lawrence Residence	743
Venice III	751
Hollywood House	759
Topanga Ranch	765
Pittman Dowell Residence	771
Steel House	777
Vault House	783
Hill House	791

## References



Operating at the intersection of architecture, infrastructure, and landscape, the 2018/19 design studio of the Chair of Professor Marc Angélil will focus on the Los Angeles River – a water control channel in concrete (approximately 80 km in length) erected after major floods by the Army Corps of Engineering from the late 1930s to mid-1950s – and its potential revitalization as green corridor and integration within the urban fabric, or what historian and architectural critic Reyner Banham called in the early 1970s “the Plains of Id” in his book *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*.

Acknowledging that the dry riverbed of the Los Angeles River has been repeatedly used as a backdrop for a number of Hollywood movies, including *Chinatown* (1974), *Grease 2* (1982), *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985), *Terminator 2* (1991), *Gone in 60 Seconds* (2000), and *The Italian Job* (2003), to mention just a few, all contributing in part to the myth of Los Angeles

as an out-of-the-ordinary place that transcends the everyday (by the way, a myth to which also Reyner Banham succumbed when exclaiming “I love Los Angeles”), the design studio exercise will focus on the ordinariness of everyday life, foregrounding reality as experienced by those living in the city day in and day out.

While addressing the role of a piece of infrastructure within city, one incidentally rarely perceived when traversing the urban terrain, the design studio intends to particularly address how architecture as a discipline can and must engage in framing and reframing the future of Los Angeles’s ‘architecture of the city’; in so doing, the studio will engage in a discourse on the relation between design method and design outcome, that is, between process and product, particularly considering that techniques deployed in any undertaking always have a determining effect on what is produced, constructed, fabricated, or made.