



**The Richard H. Driehaus Museum to Explore Photographer Richard Nickel's Role in
Preserving Architect Louis Sullivan's Legacy**

***Capturing Louis Sullivan: What Richard Nickel Saw* will Feature Nickel's Photographs Alongside
Architectural Ornament Salvaged from Demolished Buildings Designed by Sullivan**

Chicago, IL—June 22, 2022—The Richard H. Driehaus Museum today announced that it will present a major exhibition of photographs by Richard Nickel, best known for his role in documenting and preserving the work of the modernist architect Louis Sullivan. Focusing on Adler & Sullivan's Chicago buildings of the 1880s and early 1890s, the exhibition will explore the firm's architecture through the lens of Nickel's photography, which provides a detailed record of these buildings and, in particular, Sullivan's signature ornamentation. The exhibition will highlight the integral role Nickel played in preserving Sullivan's legacy—the photographer's work is all that remains of many of Adler & Sullivan's major buildings—while ultimately losing his life in an effort to salvage artifacts during a demolition. Featuring around forty photographs as well as a selection of over a dozen architectural fragments from The Richard H. Driehaus Collection and loans from other private collectors—many initially saved by Nickel himself—*Capturing Louis Sullivan: What Richard Nickel Saw* will be on view at the Driehaus Museum from August 26 through February 19, 2023. The exhibition is curated by David A. Hanks.

"Capturing Louis Sullivan: What Richard Nickel Saw is the last project initiated by the late Richard H. Driehaus, who founded the Driehaus Museum and served as its board president for more than a decade before passing away unexpectedly last year," said Anna Musci, Executive Director of the Richard H. Driehaus Museum. "Just as Richard Nickel dedicated his life to documenting and salvaging Sullivan's architecture, Richard H. Driehaus dedicated his to preserving significant architecture and design of the past, most notably the 1883 Nickerson Mansion, a home for his beloved Chicago community to be inspired through encounters with beautiful art. Presenting this exhibition is a celebration of both Chicago's architectural legacy and those who have gone to great lengths to ensure that its beauty and cultural heritage are preserved for future generations."

Richard Nickel (1928-1972) was a Polish-American architectural photographer and preservationist. Nickel first encountered the work of Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) as a student, when photographing the architect's buildings for a project at the IIT Institute of Design. In the 1960s and 1970s, many of Sullivan's buildings began to be demolished to make way for new development—part of the "urban renewal" movement of the period—and Nickel became an activist. He picketed buildings designated for demolition, organized protests, and wrote letters to news media and politicians in the hopes of saving them from destruction. Realizing that his efforts were futile, he embarked on a mission to meticulously document the buildings in various stages of destruction. Today, Sullivan is well-known as an influential architect of the Chicago School, the "father of modernism," and as a mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright. The fact that we have a comprehensive overview of Sullivan's Chicago architecture today is largely thanks to Nickel's tireless efforts to document Sullivan's design philosophy and to preserve the architect's legacy.

Capturing Louis Sullivan: What Richard Nickel Saw will consist of four sections: residential work, commercial buildings, the Chicago Stock Exchange Building, and architectural fragments salvaged by

Nickel from buildings under demolition. The third section, focused on the iconic exterior and interior of the Chicago Stock Exchange Building, which was demolished in 1972, will also present the story of Nickel's tragic death while attempting to salvage an architectural ornament from this building. Sullivan embellished many of his buildings with ornament, often using abstract motifs that derived from nature. Nickel was particularly interested in this aspect of Sullivan's designs. This system of ornament provided the necessary emotional and meaningful expression for architecture to become art. Nickel tried to preserve it both by documenting it through his photographs and by involving workmen in removing these parts of Sullivan buildings before they were destroyed. In the fourth and final section, visitors will be able to see some of the ornaments Nickel was able to save, many of which are now part of The Richard H. Driehaus Collection. Photographs on view are from the Richard Nickel Archive at the Ryerson & Burnham Archives at the Art Institute of Chicago.

About the Richard H. Driehaus Museum

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum engages and inspires the global community through exploration and ongoing conversations in art, architecture, and design of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions are presented in an immersive experience within the restored Samuel Mayo Nickerson Mansion, completed in 1883, at the height of the Gilded Age. The Museum's collection reflects and is inspired by the collecting interests, vision, and focus of its founder, the late Richard H. Driehaus.

Richard H. Driehaus, the museum's founder and namesake, was a Chicago businessman and preservationist with a long history of supporting arts and culture, education, and historic preservation of the built and natural environments.

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