



With and Without Walls

The Southern California Institute of Architecture in the 1970s and 1980s

Benjamin J. Smith

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- **With and Without Walls** unfolds the history of the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), founded in 1972, as an alternative model for architectural education
- As the first book about SCI-Arc's history, the research relies on an abundance of previously unpublished primary source materials and includes archival research from the Getty Research Institute, SCI-Arc, and SCI-Arc's founding director, Ray Kappe, as well as original interviews conducted with Kappe and other SCI-Arc founding faculty

The institutional history, **With and Without Walls**, reveals the origins and progress of the influential Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) through the 1970s and 1980s. After separating from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 1972 amidst feelings of bureaucratic and ideological oppression, Ray Kappe, a Los Angeles-based architect and professor, proposed the formation of SCI-Arc and was the school's first director. Focusing on its early years under Kappe's leadership and the context of the social, cultural, and ecological idealism of the 1960s, the culture of the emerging school became an alternative model for training architects. Building off of the school's founding premise, that in providing freedom through self-study it would be possible to produce both architects and architecture, the book shows how SCI-Arc utilised the "college without walls" concept, a variation on a pedagogical approach popular in the 1970s. SCI-Arc's institutional culture adjusted over time, and it increasingly relied on the versatility of the institutional framework to forge its pedagogy. The principles engendered by the college without walls concept created challenges over the operation of the school and provided opportunities for the creative resolution of those challenges by empowering experimentation. In this way, SCI-Arc was, in itself, both a design problem and a solution in the field of architectural education.

Benjamin J. Smith, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota. He teaches a variety of graduate and undergraduate courses, including Master's Final Project and Design Fundamentals. Smith's research centres on the history and theory of architecture, design pedagogy, and architectural aesthetics. In his design practice, ooffcie Design, recent work includes competition entries that share explorations in ambiguity and legibility, and residential projects in Louisiana and Colorado. Prior to joining University of Minnesota, Smith taught at Tulane University, where he was an assistant professor of architecture and director of graduate architecture programs. He has also taught at SCI-Arc and University of Michigan and worked for internationally recognised firms such as Morphosis Architects and George Yu Architects in Los Angeles, California. His degrees include a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, an M.Arch from SCI-Arc, and a B.A. from St. Olaf College.