

\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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CALIFORNIA  
HISTORICAL  
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***Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966 - 1971***

**Thursday, January 21, 2016**  
**West Coast Exhibition Premiere**  
**Galleries of the California Historical Society, 678 Mission Street, San Francisco**  
**Time: 5:00 pm**

**Kick Off to**  
***The 1960s Revisited: A 50th Anniversary Celebration***

**San Francisco, CA – Tuesday, January 19, 2016 – The California Historical Society** opens *The 1960s Revisited: A 50th Anniversary Celebration* with the San Francisco premiere of its new exhibition, *Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966–1971*, on Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016, at the California Historical Society (678 Mission Street, San Francisco). The exhibition continues through May 1, 2016. For detailed information regarding affiliated events please download the following [PDF](#). General exhibition info can be viewed on [experiments.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibition](http://experiments.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibition).

*Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966–1971* brings the original documentation (photographs, films, drawings, performance scores) from the famed interdisciplinary workshops of landscape architect **Lawrence Halprin** (1916–2009) and postmodern dancer **Anna Halprin's** (born 1920) to San Francisco audiences 50 years after the first workshop. The exhibition is organized by the **Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts** and the **Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania**. This San Francisco presentation also includes rarely-seen items from the Halprins' personal archives and selections

from CHS's collections. The exhibition is made possible by generous donations from donors who have worked with Lawrence and Anna Halprin, including film director **George Lucas**, real estate pioneer **Gerson Bakar**, and **Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund**, **John and Marcia Goldman**, and the **Walter and Elise Haas Fund**.

"I am delighted that *Experiments in the Environment* will be coming to its home base in San Francisco, the home of radical, humanistic and participatory innovation," says Anna Halprin. "The exhibit excites me as well because it is including a new section describing my collaboration with Larry and our work beyond the Experiments. As Larry inspired me with his sensitivity to the environment, which influenced my experiments, I influenced him in my use of movement audience participation as I pioneered new forms in dance. This combined exhibition shows the impact we had on each other throughout our lives and I hope it helps people understand our work better."

In 1966, the Halprins hosted a series of experimental workshops in Northern California bringing dancers, architects, environmental designers, and artists together in a process facilitating collaboration and group creativity through new approaches to environmental awareness. Notable attendees included psychologist **Paul Baum**, architect and educator **Charles Moore**, geographer **Richard Reynolds**, lighting specialist **Patrick Hickey**, cinematographer **Joe Ereth**, graphic designer **Barbara Stauffacher**, composer **Morton Subotnick**, and dancer **Norma Leistiko**.

"We are honored to be the premier West-Coast venue for this ground-breaking exhibition," said Dr. Anthea Hartig, Executive Director & CEO, California Historical Society. "The Halprin Workshops took place at a powerful time in California history, and Anna and Lawrence exerted a profound influence on how we perceive and live in built and natural environments and public spaces. Understanding this remarkable couple, and their inter-disciplinary work, affords us valuable clues in locating our shared humanity and crafting a better future."

The workshops served as a testing ground for the development of the Halprins' *RSVP Cycles*—a multi-disciplinary method of visualizing and guiding creative group work. The four main components of *RSVP Cycles*—Resources, Scores, Valuation, and Performance—could be used interchangeably to create an iterative process driven by awareness and assessment of existing resources, planning, participation, and critical feedback. The Halprin workshops were radical and highly innovative, blurring the lines between the participants' professions and proving that artistic processes can positively influence one's perception of their own environment.

Held over the course of several weeks, the Halprin workshops were staged on the streets of San Francisco; the dance deck and surrounding wooded areas of the Halprins' Kentfield home (Lawrence Halprin and William Wurster, 1951–54); and the Halprins' cabin (Charles Moore, Lawrence Halprin, and William Turnbull, 1965–66) at **Sea Ranch**, a coastal community for which Lawrence Halprin designed the master plan (1962–67).

Celebrated figures in their own right, Lawrence and Anna Halprin were not only prominent leaders of influential Bay Area movements during the 1960s and 1970s, but at the forefront of how space and movement are interconnected. The cultural icons drew from the seemingly unrelated fields of landscape architecture and dance to create an ingenious and entirely original approach to experience public spaces. The workshops utilized multi-sensory activities such as movement sessions, blindfolded awareness walks, collective building projects, and choreographed urban journeys to break down barriers of preconceived understandings of the physical environment. As a result, the development of many public spaces including parks, plazas, business districts, and communities have benefited from the Halprins' methods for city planning.

As we commemorate the workshops' 50th anniversary, we can say that the Halprins' efforts remain as relevant today as they did in 1966. With the redevelopment of many city landscapes, and reactivation of public spaces, *Experiments in Environment* allows us to look at the role of art and artists in how we create and ultimately value public spaces.

#### **About Lawrence & Anna Halprin:**

A prominent figure in American landscape architecture, urban design, and environmental planning, Lawrence Halprin is renowned for his design of the **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial** (Washington, D.C.), **Ghirardelli Square** (San Francisco), **Sea Ranch** (Sonoma County, CA), **Stern Grove Amphitheater** (San Francisco), **Levi's Plaza** (San Francisco), **Bunker Hill Steps** (Los Angeles), and many others.

Anna Halprin founded the **San Francisco Dancers' Workshop** in 1955 and the **Tamalpa Institute** in 1978. Anna has created 150 full-length performance works. She was awarded a **Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Arts** (1970); the **Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award** (1997); a **National Endowment for the Arts "American Masterpieces"** award (2008); and the **Doris Duke Impact Award** (2014), among others. Her work is included in the collections of the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art** and the **Museum of Performance + Design**.

*Above Image: "Driftwood Village—Community," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 6, 1968. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.*

Selected images from the exhibition are below. For more information regarding *The 1960s Revisited: A 50th Anniversary Celebration*, and for general exhibition information, please visit: [experiments.californiahistoricalsociety.org](http://experiments.californiahistoricalsociety.org).





1. "Blindfold Walk," Kentfield, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 2, 1968. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
2. "Driftwood City," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 4, 1966. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
3. "Driftwood Village—Community," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 6, 1968. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
4. "Ritual Group Drawing," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 8, 1968. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
5. "Driftwood Village—Community," Sea Ranch, CA. Experiments in Environment Workshop, July 6, 1968. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
6. Participants in Halprin's "City Dance" at Lawrence Halprin's Fountain in San Francisco. Buck O'Kelly, photographer. 1979. Reproduced from a 35 mm color mounted slide, Courtesy of the Museum of Performance + Design.
7. Anna Halprin on Dance Deck. Milton Halberstadt, photographer. Circa 1940s-1950s. Reproduced from a gelatin silver print, Courtesy of the Museum of Performance + Design.
8. Anna and Lawrence Halprin. Photographer unknown, circa 1940. Reproduced from a gelatin silver print, Courtesy of Anna Halprin.
9. *Lunch, Score for a Dance by Anna Halprin*. Lawrence Halprin, illustrator, 1968. Reproduction courtesy Anna Halprin.
10. *The Ecology of Form*, from *The Sketchbooks of Lawrence Halprin*. Lawrence Halprin, 1981. Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

#### **About the California Historical Society**

Founded in 1871, the California Historical Society (CHS) is a non-profit organization with a mission to inspire and empower people to make California's richly diverse past a meaningful part of their contemporary lives. In 1979 Governor Jerry Brown designated CHS the official Historical Society of the State of California. Today, CHS enacts its mission with a wide range of library, exhibition, publication, education, and public outreach programs that explore the complex and continuing history of the State and represent the diversity of the California experience, past and present. Our treasured collection—documenting the history of the entire state from the Spanish Era to the present day—is brought to life through these innovative public history projects that expand and diversify our audience and broaden our public impact.

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