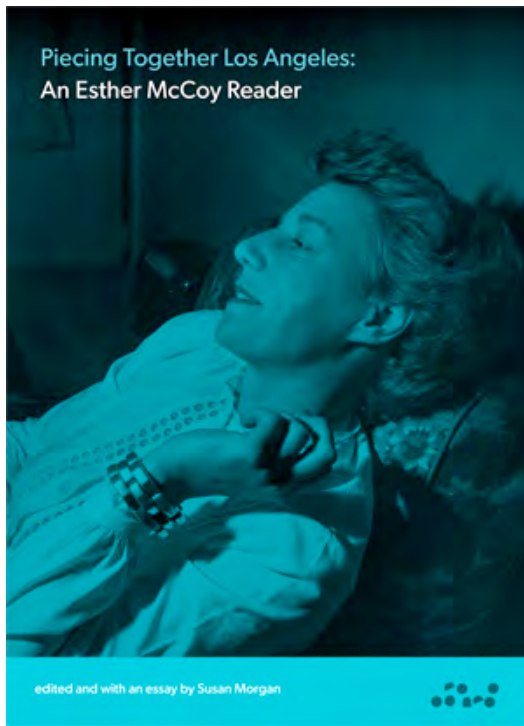


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CalArts launches East of Borneo Books with debut title *Piecing Together Los Angeles: An Esther McCoy Reader*

"No one can write about architecture in California without acknowledging her as the mother of us all." --Reyner Banham

East of Borneo Books announces the release of *Piecing Together Los Angeles: An Esther McCoy Reader*. Edited and with an introductory essay by Susan Morgan, the anthology is the first collection of writings by **Esther McCoy** (1904-89), the groundbreaking architectural historian who articulated the concepts and vibrant character of West Coast modernism as it was being created. This much-anticipated volume coincides with a significant McCoy revival, sparked by a recent exhibition (co-curated by Morgan) at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture that was characterized by critics as a highlight of the Getty's *Pacific Standard Time: Art in Los Angeles 1945-1980* initiative. Published by East of Borneo Books, an imprint of the online art magazine *East of Borneo*, the book is available now and can be purchased online at <http://www.eastofborneo.org/books>.

Esther McCoy's impressive writing life spanned sixty years and charted the progressive territory of American idealism from the collective utopian spirit of jazz-age Greenwich

Village, through the Depression and WWII to the design-driven optimism of postwar Los Angeles. Her short stories were awarded numerous prizes, featured in publications ranging from *The New Yorker* to *The California Quarterly*, and adapted for radio and television. After completing a wartime stint as an engineering draftsman at Douglas Aircraft, she went to work as an architectural draftsman for R. M. Schindler and, by 1945, her attentive writing had turned significantly to architecture and design. Throughout *Arts & Architecture's* legendary Case Study House program, she chronicled midcentury modernism. Her essays also appeared regularly in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Zodiac*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *Architectural Forum*. In 1960, McCoy published *Five California Architects*, her groundbreaking book that remains a seminal volume on California architecture. As historians Robert Winter and David Gebhard noted in *A Guide to Architecture in Southern California* (1965): "Our present awareness of Southern California architectural heritage has been due almost to a one-woman crusade upon the part of the critic and historian Esther McCoy."

Piecing Together Los Angeles: An Esther McCoy Reader is the first collection of her writing. This essential volume includes out-of-print essays, articles, and short stories, as well as hitherto unpublished lectures, correspondence, and memoirs that together illuminate the breadth and complexity of McCoy's groundbreaking work. An introductory essay by editor Susan Morgan provides a lucid conceptual framework for understanding the development and diversity of McCoy's writing and the region that inspired it.

About Esther McCoy:

Esther McCoy (1904–89) was born in Arkansas, raised in Kansas, and educated in the Midwest. During the 1920s, she landed in Greenwich Village to pursue her vocation as a writer and apprenticed with novelist Theodore Dreiser. In 1932, McCoy moved to Los Angeles, where she wrote for literary journals, popular magazines, and progressive broadsheets. Over the next fifty years, McCoy worked variously as an author, editorial scout, lecturer, and exhibition curator. Her final essay, commissioned for the exhibition *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* (MOCA, Los Angeles), was published one month before her death in 1989.

About Susan Morgan (editor):

Susan Morgan is a Los Angeles-based writer and contributing editor at *Aperture*. With Kimberli Meyer, she co-curated the 2011 exhibition *Sympathetic Seeing: Esther McCoy and the Heart of American Modernist Architecture and Design* (MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, at the Schindler House). Her extensive research into the life and work of Esther McCoy has received support from the Graham Foundation for the Advancement of Art and Architecture, the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, and the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

About East of Borneo and CalArts:

Launched in October 2010, *East of Borneo* is a collaborative online magazine of contemporary art and its history as seen from Los Angeles. Published by the California Institute of the Arts and edited by Thomas Lawson, it is a new type of publication that rethinks the way that we conceptualize, preserve and present the various histories of contemporary art. The introduction of East of Borneo Books sees the extension of this mission into print. In the coming years the imprint will seek to draw new attention to the best writing on the visual culture of Los Angeles, through monographic anthologies like the present volume, and with others collected around a specific theme or body of work. East of Borneo is supported in part by grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts and The Getty Foundation. www.eastofborneo.org

CalArts is unique in its multidisciplinary approach to studying the arts through its six related schools: Art, Critical Studies, Dance, Film/Video, Music and Theatre. CalArts encourages students to recognize and explore the complexity of the aesthetic, social and political aspects of the arts. It is supported by its distinguished faculty of practicing artists and provides its BFA and MFA students with both the hands-on training and the engagement with the cultural community necessary for artists' growth. CalArts was founded in 1961—and opened in 1969—as the first institution of higher learning in the U.S. specifically for students interested in pursuing degrees in all areas of the visual and performing arts. www.calarts.edu

Further Reading:**An Esther McCoy Revival Tells the Story of L.A.'s Modern Architecture**

Los Angeles Times, December 18, 2011.

<http://lat.ms/sZx4qa>

One Woman Crusade

The Architect's Newspaper, November 1, 2011.

<http://bit.ly/ucZUHH>

Mother Modern

The New York Times, September 28, 2011.

<http://nyti.ms/puXAHc>