

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

NEWS:

Miami Gets Its Own Design Hub

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December 11, 2013



Photo courtesy Shulman + Associates

Miami Center for Architecture & Design (MCAD) opened last week with an exhibition of 105 renderings, *Drawn From Miami*. For MCAD's home, Shulman + Associates designed the renovation of 5,000 square feet in a 100-year-old post office.

Proof that Miami is a hotbed of architectural experimentation resides less in its collection of gimmicky new condo towers than in the work on display at the Miami Center for Architecture & Design, which opened last week with an exhibition of 105 renderings, *Drawn From Miami* (through February 7, 2014). Together, the renderings show that Miami had been a magnet for design talent long before the current starchitect explosion.

The new center, known as MCAD, is modeled on the Center for Architecture in Manhattan and similar architecture hubs in major U.S. cities. Two years ago, the Miami chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), in an effort to increase visibility, decided to move from its longtime home, Coral Gables, to downtown Miami, where it would be reachable by public transportation and part of that neighborhood's revitalization. (A new branch of the Wolfsonian-FIU Museum is just a block away.)



SLIDE SHOW
Photo courtesy Wikipedia Creative Commons
MCAD is located in a 100-year-old former post office and court house (Kiehnel and Elliott and Oscar Wenderoth) at 100 Northeast 1st Ave. in Miami.

The chapter leased 5,000 square feet in a 100-year old former post office, with eagle-festooned beaux-arts facades and high-ceilinged interiors. Architect Allan Shulman, the president of the chapter, designed the renovation—something he said he wasn't planning to do himself until time constraints made it the wisest course. The ground floor, where ripping out acoustical tile revealed a spectacular vaulted ceiling, is now a gallery space; the second floor contains conference and "crit" rooms. The upstairs areas are windowless, a choice that helped make the rent affordable. The two floors are linked by a handsome stairway designed by Shulman + Associates of thick steel plates normally seen on torn-up roadways. The contrast between those plates, which meet at right angles, and the delicate, curved vaults is striking.

The renderings in MCAD's inaugural show, some loaned by architects and others borrowed from museums and archives, depict a range of approaches to South Florida architecture. Some show little-known urban schemes of the 1970s and 80s, including a plan by Aldo Rossi for the University of Miami. Others reveal efforts—in the form of renderings by the nonpareil Hugh Ferriss—to mount a Miami world's fair, called Interama, in the 1950s. Drawings by Roberto Burle Marx, Leon Krier, and Morris Lapidus share walls with some much more

recent but non-computer-generated works. "We wanted to show that hand-drawing is a continuous and contemporary practice," Shulman said.

Keywords: [Design Miami](#); [MCAD](#); [Allan Shulman](#); [Shulman + Associates](#); [Miami](#); [Florida](#); [Miami Center for Architecture and Design](#)