

Spotlight on a Desert Maverick

A chance encounter leads to a new documentary on Desert Modernist William Cody, which makes its premiere during Modernism Week.

LAST YEAR, ONE OF THE FOREMOST advocates for 20th-century architectural preservation, Alan Hess, spoke during Modernism Week. Director-cinematographer Leo Zahn happened to be in the audience; it turned out to be a pivotal moment for him.

"He mentioned that a film about Cody was needed, and I was looking for a project," Zahn says. "I have a background as a director-cameraman in the advertising industry, as well as a degree in architectural history. I felt that

Zahn envisioned. Sweeping cinematography, deftly intertwined with Julius Shulman's period photography, showcases Cody's architectural impact on Palm Springs. Punctuated by interviews with relevant commentators — including Hess; Modernism author Adele Cygelman; Palm Springs Art Museum's Curator of Architecture and Design, Sidney Williams; Board Member and former President of the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, Ron Marshall; founder of Palm Springs Modern Committee, film producer, and

author Peter Moruzzi, and others — Cody's story springs to life.

Although Cody's career, which spanned the late 1940s to the early 1970s, was tragically cut short by a debilitating stroke, his legacy lives on in his many buildings, which are beautifully shot in Zahn's documentary.

The world premiere of *Desert Maverick* takes place Saturday, Feb. 13, 2016, at the Palm Springs Art Museum in the

Annenberg Theater with a start time of 5 p.m. and a running time of 78 minutes. Twenty-five dollars will get you a seat and an opportunity to be among the first to witness Zahn's inspired tribute to this iconic artist. —**Kay Kudukis**



I could bring my experience to the table and strive for cinematic architecture while telling the story through interviews. I had rarely seen good cinematography in architecture documentaries and considered it a creative challenge to work with simple tools for maximum effect."

Desert Maverick: The Singular Architecture of William F. Cody is the brainchild of that encounter, and the results are everything

Right: William Cody works at his desk.
Above: A postcard of the Hotel del Marcos.

