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Spring 1998

Review of *Goff on Goff: Conversations and Lectures* Edited by Phillip B. Welch

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Matthews, Carl, "Review of *Goff on Goff: Conversations and Lectures* Edited by Phillip B. Welch" (1998).
Great Plains Quarterly. 2006.

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Goff on Goff: Conversations and Lectures. Edited by Phillip B. Welch. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. Photographs, index. xiv + 338 pp. \$28.95.

Bruce Goff's career as an architect and educator spanned almost seven decades with some five hundred buildings designed and 147 built. In 1916, at the age of twelve, he was apprenticed to the architectural firm of Rush, Endacott & Rush in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was promoted to partner at age twenty-five. After serving in the military in the 1940s and a brief practice in Berkeley, California, Goff accepted a teaching position at the University of Oklahoma, recognized for one of the most creative programs in the country during this period, and quickly assumed the role of Department Chair. He resumed private practice in 1955, having resigned from the University as the result of a scandal caused by a case of police entrapment. Regarded as an eccentric by many in the architectural establishment, Bruce Goff avoided identification with particular trends and was sought out by highly individualistic clients.

Goff on Goff: Conversations and Lectures is a collection of twelve transcriptions from recordings of lectures conducted primarily in 1953 and 1954 while Goff taught at the University of Oklahoma. Several are devoted to his major influences: Gertrude Stein's concept of the continuous present; Frank Lloyd Wright; Japanese art; and Claude Debussy. Perhaps Goff's greatest talent was his ability to internalize ideas from various sources and translate concepts into unique built environments.

Goff's design philosophies regarding feeling, order, honesty, ideas, and geometry are presented in several lectures. He acknowledged the important aspect of "feeling" in the development of architecture: "In architecture there are no limits to forms, colors, and textures that you feel you should use. Feeling was the important thing; that you should actually feel something about your problem." The strength of Goff's designs results from his integration of "ideas" in architecture. "The idea we are talk-

ing about is what gives [architecture] unity and order and strength. It is not a matter of just one idea, but it can be working several ideas together. I think too many times our works lack the counterpoint and the interest that can be gotten through using ideas together."

Goff's philosophies are as relevant today as in the 1950s. As a companion to one of the well illustrated books dealing with his work, this new text adds depth to our understanding of the mind, talent, and personality that created a fascinating portfolio of buildings. By itself, however, *Goff on Goff* may not be meaningful to a broad audience. Appreciation of Goff's work requires seeing his architecture, and the brief section of photographs does little to inform the reader.

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