

Chermayeff, Serge 1900 - 1996



Serge Chermayeff was born Sergius (Sergei or Sergey) Ivanovitch Issakovitch in Grozny, Azerbaijan, on 8 October 1900. He was sent by his parents to Britain in 1910 to complete his education and subsequently became a naturalized British citizen in 1928. On leaving school he worked as a journalist for the Amalgamated Press in London from 1918 and 1923, during which time he was also editor of 'Dancing World' magazine.

Chermayeff spent the years 1922 to 1925 studying art and architecture in Germany, Austria, France and the Netherlands. From 1924 to 1927 he was chief designer for the London decorating firm E Williams Ltd., and in 1928-29 was director the Modern Art Studios of the London-based furnishing firm Waring & Gillow where he was active in promoting modern art and design.

Chermayeff qualified as an architect in 1928 and from 1930 was in private practice, first in London (in partnership with Erich Mendelsohn, from 1933 to 1936) until 1939, and then in San Francisco in 1940-41, and New York from 1942 to 1946. He was a member of the [MARS. Modern Architectural Research Group](#) from 193 to 1939.

Academic posts held by included Professor of Architecture and Chairman of the Department of Design at Brooklyn College, New York, 1942-46; President and Director of Design at the Institute of Design in Chicago, 1946-51; Professor of Architecture at Harvard Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953-64; Professor of Architecture at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut,

1962-71, and, from 1971, Emeritus Professor at Yale.

He wrote extensively on architecture, planning and design and was the author of several books including 'Colour and its Application to Modern Buildings' (1936), 'Community and Privacy: Towards a New Architecture of Humanism' (with Christopher Alexander, 1962), and 'Shape of Community: Realization of Human Potential' (with Alexander Tzonis, 1971).

Chermayeff became a naturalized US citizen in 1946. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA in 1933), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) and a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA). He died in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, on 8 May 1996.

Worked in

UK

USA

Works

Notable architectural projects by Chermayeff included the Nimmo House in Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, England (with Erich Mendelsohn, 1935); the de la Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, England (with Erich Mendelsohn, 1935); a house in Frinton Park, Essex, England (with Erich Mendelsohn, 1936); the Cohen House at 64 Old Church Street, Chelsea, London (with Erich Mendelsohn, 1936); the Chermayeff House at Bentley, near Halland, Sussex, England (1938); the Imperial Chemical Industries Research Laboratories in Blackley, Manchester, England (1938); the Walter Horn House in Richmond, California (1941); the Chermayeff Studio in Wellfleet, Massachusetts (1952); the Chermayeff House in New Haven, Connecticut (1962); and the Chermayeff Studio II in Wellfleet, Massachusetts (1972). Chermayeff also acted as a consultant on architecture and planning. In addition to his work as an architect,

Chermayeff also designed tubular furniture for Waring & Gillow, Pel and Plan (a company he owned from 1932-36), radios (including the AC 74 for Ecko, 1933), clocks, carpets (for Wilton, 1929), lighting (for Best & Lloyd, 1930s), interiors (the Cambridge Theatre, London, 1930; the S.S. 'Atlantique', with Paul Follet, 1931; Broadcasting House, London, with Wells Coates and Raymond McGrath, 1932-34 and British Railway Offices in the Rockefeller Center, New York, with Ketchum Gina & Sharpe, 1950) and exhibitions (the 'British Art in Relation to the Home' exhibition at Dorland Hall, London, 1933; and the 'Design for Use' exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1944).

Bibliography

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Contemporary Architects. Edited by Ann Lee Morgan and Collin Naylor. Chicago and London: St. James Press, 2nd edition, 1987

Cordingley, R. A. 'Building for industry: the role of the architect'. Architectural Review vol. 83, March 1938 pp. 117-126 [The laboratories at Blackley, Manchester designed by Serge Chermayeff are discussed at length]

Hussey, Christopher. 'Bentley, near Halland, Sussex'. Country Life vol. 88, 26 October 1940 pp. 368-378 [First part of a two-part article on a house designed by Serge Chermayeff in 1938]

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Links

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- The Modern House <https://www.themodernhouse.com/directory-of-architects-and-designers/serge-chermayeff/>

- Allan Powers. 'Obituary: Serge Chermayeff' Independent 14 May 1996

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- Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections. Serge Chermayeff architectural records and papers, 1909-1980

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- Architectuul <https://architectuul.com/architect/serge-chermayeff>

- Architects' Journal <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/modernist-master-serge-chermayeffs-sussex-home-given-grade-ii-listing>

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