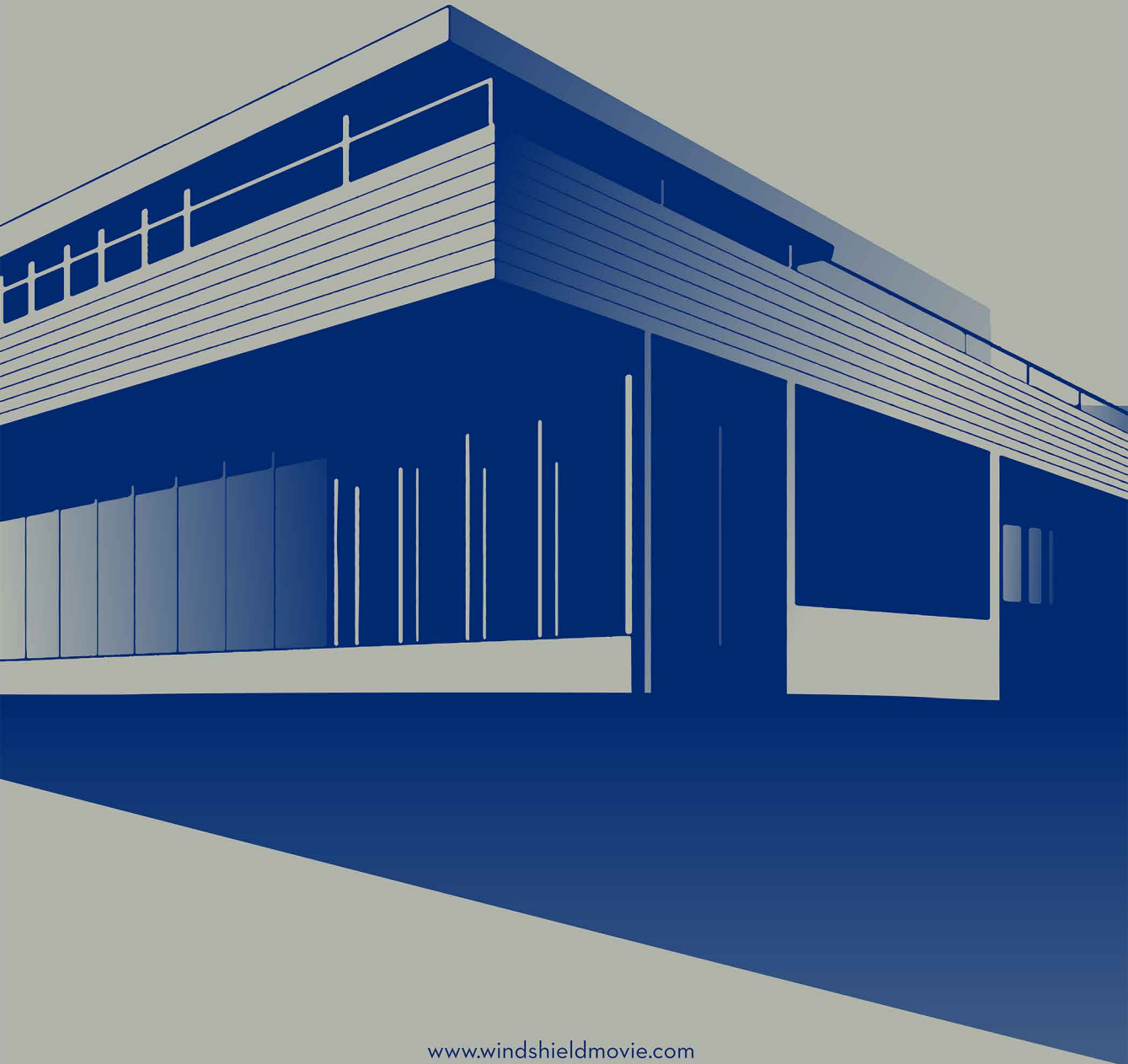


windshield

A VANISHED VISION

A film by Elissa Brown



www.windshieldmovie.com

47:00 | HD Video | 16:9 | Stereo | Color | 2016 | USA

LOGLINE:

In the mid-1930's an idealistic patron of architecture from one of New England's oldest families boldly embraces modernism and sets out to change society by commissioning Richard Neutra's first building on the East Coast.

SYNOPSIS:

"Windshield: A Vanished Vision" lands us in the 1930's to reveal an intimate portrait of a patrician couple, a leading modern architect, and the story of the ill-fated house that they create. John Nicholas Brown lives by the motto "to whom much is given much is expected" and despite a sheltered early life, finds himself deeply intrigued by the "high adventure of the new." Brown's fascination with modernism, technology and the rapidly-evolving American building scene spurs him to commission what he hopes will be a "distinguished monument in the history of architecture." Brown and his wife Anne, herself a daring and eccentric figure, select the young and ambitious Richard Neutra to build them a house that they name "Windshield." Through an enormously detailed correspondence, patron and architect discuss every detail of the house's design and together pursue cutting-edge technology, much of which has only previously been used in commercial architecture. Then, just weeks after the Browns move in, tragedy strikes when the hurricane of 1938 devastates the East Coast. "Windshield: A Vanished Vision" explores the pivotal impact of the house on Neutra's career and takes us on a journey with a couple caught between the values of their upbringings and their evolving social ideals.

Visually supported by John Nicholas Browns' evocative home movies, the film features J. Carter Brown's inspiring lecture about the summer house of his youth and voices of architectural historians such as Thomas S. Hines and Dietrich Neumann.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"To Elissa, How I wish you could have seen this house! With much love, Dada." That was the inscription in the Windshield exhibition catalogue my father gave me the last Christmas before he died. I'd grown up hearing about the house and I remember the pleasure my father found in poring over his father's home movies, but it was right around the time of his Windshield lectures that I began studying architecture in college and developed my own curiosity about the building. Years later when I began working on this film in earnest I was delighted to see how vividly my grandparents' lives came across in the footage my grandfather shot, and with each new viewing I gained an understanding of an era and of family members that were otherwise out of my reach. Listening to my dad's voice every day while editing the film and being able to co-create something with him long after his death has been a gift that I never anticipated.

Neutra probably did know the Browns as well as anyone else at that point in their lives, and the remarkable amount of materials we still have from their collaboration allows us to be voyeurs into a time, a process, and a life that is almost unfathomable today. I am particularly fascinated by the conflicts and contradictions that occurred; between my grandparents' goals for furthering modernism and their criteria for the house, between Neutra's own ideals and a commission that played beautifully into his ambitions, and between my grandfather's desire for the house to be a landmark in architectural history and his belief that he could assume equal footing with the architect. These flaws and inconsistencies give breadth to figures that might otherwise appear stiff and predictable.

For me it's obviously a very personal film, but I am also amazed by how a story from 80 years ago still resonates today. On the surface the film is about architecture and design, but it's also a revealing portrait of an unusual couple. Dreaming about a better way of life and sweeping societal changes, figuring out one's place in the world and how to make an impact are still ideas we think about in our current "modern" age. Furthermore, the emotions in the film are eminently relatable - passion, excitement, and particularly despair, when something you have worked so hard for collapses, either literally or figuratively. For both my grandparents building Windshield was one of the most meaningful undertakings of their lives, filled with tremendous highs and lows. While most of us will never be a part of an experiment on that scale, the film allows all of us a chance to be included in the adventure.





PRODUCTION NOTES

There wouldn't be a movie if there hadn't been an exhibition, a catalog and a series of lectures about Windshield. Producer Joanna Datillo left one of Carter Brown's lectures inspired to make a film about the story she had just heard, and in the years that followed conducted interviews with architectural historians, family members and others that knew the house.

Life got in the way of post-production, however, and knowing that I was a filmmaker she eventually turned over to me the materials she had collected. Even though my father died in 2002 and was never properly interviewed about Windshield, I knew intuitively that his speeches, with their personal reminiscences and theatrical flair, would make him a compelling narrator. Following his lead the film became deeply personal for me, too, and I found myself sucked in by trying to imagine the characters' motivations through the way they documented their own lives. After months of editing I finally made my first trip to Fishers Island, which helped to fill in the remaining gaps.

The last component to come together was Chad Fischer's moving score, which applies a fresh perspective as we put ourselves in the Browns' shoes. By shifting the bulk of the focus onto the clients the film aims to provide a different lens by which to view architectural history, and in the process capture viewers who might not be swept up by the architecture and design elements alone.

TEAM BIOS

ELISSA BROWN - director / producer / editor

Elissa Brown has a decade of experience in documentary film. She recently co-produced *Vessel*, which premiered at SXSW in 2014, and before that was the Associate Producer for *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama* (HBO, 2009). She has also directed and produced 35 short films for the Heinz Family Foundation since 2010. She graduated from Brown University with a degree in Urban Studies and completed post-grad coursework at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies. This is her first feature film.

JOANNA DATILLO - producer

Ms. Datillo's educational background includes a B.A. in English Literature from Boston University; Italian History and Literature - University of Perugia; Special Student - Italian Studies, Harvard University; and European and American Fine and Decorative Arts Sotheby's Institute, London. She has a history in project management, event production, marketing and public relations, organizing and producing special events, symposia and fundraisers in both the profit and non-profit sectors. Her position as co-host of a Boston cultural affairs cable show led her into the documentary world and to the creation and development of *Windshield: A Vanished Vision*. Her current documentary interest is the examination of human stories hidden in the history of modern architecture.

CHAD FISCHER - original score

After playing drums for Capitol's School of Fish in the early 90s, Chad Fischer moved on to front his own band, Lazlo Bane (ALMO/Geffen), best known for the NBC *Scrubs* theme song, *Superman*. Soon after, he was hired to score, *Garden State* (Fox/Miramax), penned and directed by *Scrubs*' star Zach Braff. This led to scoring a string of indie films including, *The Rocker* (Fox/Atomic), *Ten Year* (Anchor Bay Films), and *Chasing Mavericks* (Fox) directed by Michael Apte. Also a steady member of Shonda Rhimes' production team, Chad has completed 7 seasons of *Private Practice* (ABC), 5 seasons of the hit series, *Scandal* (ABC) and most recently *The Catch* (ABC) which was just renewed for a 2nd season.





camera: GRAHAM CHARLES
LAELA KILBOURN
colorist: SCOTT STERLING
sound re-recording mixer: JEREMIAH SLOVARP
additional music by: PAUL KOCH
3D animation by: MARCEL BOTHA and ONUR YUCE GUN

featuring:

ANNE KINSOLVING BROWN
ELISSA BROWN
J. CARTER BROWN
JOHN NICHOLAS BROWN
NICHOLAS BROWN
ANGELA BROWN FISCHER
THOMAS S. HINES
THOMAS MICHIE
DIETRICH NEUMANN
JOHN ROUSMANIERE

thanks:

JAY BROWN	DION NEUTRA
JOYCE BOTELHO	JUSTIN NEUTRA
JOHN BLANTON	MATTHEW NEUTRA
GRAHAM CHARLES	RAYMOND NEUTRA
KEN EDWARDS	BOB PARSONS
BROOKE FISCHER	GED PARSONS
CHAD FISCHER	SUSIE PARSONS
OLIVIA FISCHER FOX	PIERCE RAFFERTY
DON FREEMAN	ALICIA SAMS
JULIANNA GOODMAN	JULIUS SHULMAN
ANNE HAWLEY	BETTY TOPPER
SIMEON HUTNER	ROSEMINNA WATSON
SANDY ISENSTADT	DIANA WHITTEN
BO KELLY	RICHARD GUY WILSON
BARBARA LAMPRECHT	KRISTIN WIMBERG
JUSTIN LUBKE	