



Insider's Guide to the Film Festival

Schindler's Houses

Heinz Emigholz
(99', Germany)



The latest in German avant-gardist cinematic meditations on contemporary architecture, *Schindler's Houses* documents 40 buildings in and around Los Angeles that were designed by Austro-American architect Rudolf Schindler. Aside from a brief but illuminating introduction, the film eschews narration, its soundtrack built instead from the surprisingly soft murmur of the city: traffic, the breeze through bamboo groves, the occasional ring of a telephone. The houses and apartment buildings depicted are largely unpopulated (in one notable exception, filmmaker Thom Andersen occupies centre stage, at his desk in his Schindler-built home) and entirely serene—Schindler was obsessed with ensuring his built environments coexisted with the natural one. Emigholz's stationary camera captures several views of these boxy houses with their Japanese- and Pueblo-style details, and the result is a portrait of an urban landscape that's as soothing and deceptively simple as it is captivating. (JM)

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