ZANEBENNETT CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Powerhouse: The Engaged Regionalism of Judith Chafee's Architecture

25 September 2026–25 November 2027

OPENING RECEPTION

25 September 2026, 5–7 p.m.

JUDITH CHAFEE | Ramada House, Exterior, Tucson, AZ
Photo by Bill Timmerman, courtesy of The Judith Chafee Research Project

(SANTA FE, NM) *Powerhouse*, comprising Christopher Domin and Kathyrn McGuire's *Framing the Desert*, explores Judith Chafee's Visionary Approach to Architecture, Art, and the Southwest.

Zane Bennett Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Powerhouse: The Engaged Regionalism of Judith Chafee's Architecture*, an exhibition comprising *Framing the Desert*, curated by Christopher Domin and Kathryn McGuire for the University of Arizona in 2020, and a series of public programs and lectures that situate Chafee's synthesis of art, architecture, and ecological stewardship within the broader context of the Southwest. At a time when the Southwest is faced with increasingly severe droughts and wildfires, this exhibition considers the holistic building practice of Judith Chafee as a potential methodology for constructing our future built environment while honoring the singular vision of a maverick in the male-dominated industry of architecture, demonstrating that innovation is best realized by challenging convention. As **Kathryn McGuire, architect and exhibition co-curator, writes, "Judith Chafee possessed clear intentions and regional consciousness. She expressed the power of structure with honesty and clarity, with appropriate cultural, material, and environmental resources. The forms and spaces she created give one pause, often to experience surprise and delight." *Powerhouse: The Engaged Regionalism of Judith Chafee's Architecture* opens 25 September 2026, with a reception from five to seven p.m. on the gallery's ground floor.**

Chrisopher Domin and Kathyrn McGuire's *Framing the Desert*, features architectural photography of Chafee's buildings by Bill Timmerman provided courtesy of the Judith Chafee Research Project; graphic panels that track the chronology of Chafee's practice; and three scale models for the Blackwell Residence, the Ramada House, and Viewpoint. *Powerhouse* explores Chafee's resolve, insight, and clarity of purpose as an architect through projects that carry the subtleties of her personal history as much as her sensitivity to form, function, and aesthetics. One finds in Chafee's Ramada House not only the architect's deep insight into the influence of topography on microclimates but also an embedded history of her road trips with her cousin Sunsan Bloom Lobo along the Mission Trail in the Sonoran Desert, where the pair observed the building methods of the Tohono O'odham—practices based on deep understanding of the environment developed over generations. Chafee's adaptation and use of Indigenous building practices speaks to the regional building practices of New Mexico, particularly Santa Fe, where 16th-century Spanish colonists would industrialize the centuries-old earthen construction methods of Indigenous tribes to build comfortable, functional structures whose character lends the city the idyllic charm it has become known for. *Powerhouse* illustrates an accumulation of cultural history, technological innovation, and the wisdom to learn from the insights of the people and traditions that came before.

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@zanebennettgallery.com.
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The spirit of mentorship integral to the exhibition is realized through programming devised by Dr. Glenn Robert Erikson, architect and one of Chafee's mentees. The programming includes an architectural tour with the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, and a lecture series featuring talks by Christopher Domin, Kathyrn McGuire, Anthony Guida, and others, in partnership with organizations including the Historic Santa Fe Foundation and the New Mexico Museum of Art. These events explore architecture through the myriad disciplines that comprise it, including anthropology, engineering, and art, while celebrating the life and work of Judith Chafee.

Erikson, exhibition program director, writes, "The intersections where art, architecture, history, and philosophy connect and intertwine together, and are grounded within our relationship to the environment about us, are at the core of Judith Chafee's work and have been a major influence on several generations of architects in the Southwest. This includes myself, as she was my first employer and major mentor."

This exhibition frames Chafee's work within the context of massive change in the architecture establishment and the culture at large. *Powerhouse*, which takes its title from the book co-authored by Domin and McGuire, invites viewers to imagine how to move architecture forward in times of uncertainty through sustained and mindful practice. **Chris Domin, architect, author, educator, and exhibition co-curator, writes, "Judith Chafee defined her path in architecture as an unrepentant modernist, an environmental steward, a social justice advocate, and a demanding teacher. Chafee's architecture combined sensitivity to place with an uncanny ability to employ brutalist materials with sophistication and grace."** The story of *Powerhouse* begins with Chafee's life and work but ends with the future written by those entrusted to preserve and progress Chafee's singular approach to regionalism.

This exhibition is made possible by Dr. Glenn Robert Erikson, AIA, of Integral Studios; the College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture, University of Arizona; Friends of Architecture Santa Fe; and Sandy Zane of Zane Bennett Contemporary Art.

Exhibition programs presented in partnership with AIA Santa Fe, AIA New Mexico, Friends of Architecture Santa Fe, Historic Santa Fe Foundation, Integral Studios, the New Mexico Museum of Art, and Predock Studio.

About the Architect

Judith Chafee (1932–1998) was an influential architect in both practice and representation. Her architecture practice, influenced by her parallel creative endeavors in painting and poetry, is rooted in the landscape and culture of the American Southwest. Born in Chicago and raised in Tucson, Arizona, Chafee developed a lifelong connection to the desert that would become the cornerstone of her architectural practice. She studied visual art at Bennington College before earning her architecture degree from Yale University, where she was the only woman in her graduating class.

After working with celebrated architects including Eero Saarinen, Paul Rudolph, Edward Larrabee Barnes, and Walter Gropius, Chafee returned to Tucson, Arizona, at age thirty-eight to establish her own practice. She spent the remainder of her career designing primarily private residences that respond thoughtfully to the desert environment she called home. Her Southwest buildings embrace natural light, materials, landscape, and climate to create a distinct sense of

place that challenges the norms of conventional Southwestern architecture. Her major works are based primarily in and around Tucson, AZ, and include the Merrill Residence (1969), Funking Residence (1970), Viewpoint (1974), Ramada House (1975), Hydeman Residence (1982), Centrum (1984), and Rievesch Residence (1988).

Chafee was the first woman in Arizona to be named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. She also received a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome and taught architecture at institutions including the University of Arizona, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Washington University in St. Louis.

Today, Chafee's legacy as a visionary architect is preserved in the Judith Chafee Papers at the University of Arizona, which include architectural drawings, sketches, photographs, notebooks, and writings that illuminate her creative process and enduring influence.

About the Exhibition Curators

Guest Curators: Christopher Domin and Kathryn McGuire
Exhibition Program Director: Glenn Robert Erikson, Integral Studios, AIA

Christopher Domin is an architect and educator at the University of Arizona and lectures internationally on the topic of regional modernism and technological innovation. Domin is a coauthor of the books *Powerhouse: The Life and Work of Judith Chafee* and *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses*, published by Princeton Architectural Press.

Glenn Robert Erikson is principal of Integral Studios, based in New York and New Mexico. As an alumnus of the University of Arizona whose practice began in Judith Chafee's architecture firm, Erikson is the director of all the programs related to this exhibition in Santa Fe. He has served as president of AIA New Mexico and AIA Santa Fe, and is currently in the process of developing plans for Blue Mesa Center for the Arts in Santa Fe.

Kathryn McGuire is an architect based in Arizona. She worked with Judith Chafee for over twenty years. Her independent practice specializes in desert-adapted building strategies and regional modernism research projects. McGuire is co-author of *Powerhouse: The Life and Work of Judith Chafee*.

Exhibition Programming

Exhibition Opening Reception
Friday, September 25, 2026 | 5-7 p.m.
at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art

"Framing the Desert," Lecture by Christopher Domin and Kathryn McGuire
Saturday, September 26, 2026 | 2-3 p.m.
at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art

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CODAworx Summit Reception
Tuesday, September 29, 2026 | 5-7 p.m.
at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art and Vladem Contemporary

Historic Santa Fe Foundation Reception + Architecture Tour
Talk by Sarah Rovang
Saturday, October 10, 2026 | 1 p.m.
Reception at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art

"Imagine There's No Style" Friends of Architecture Santa Fe Panel
Saturday, October 24, 2026 | 2 p.m.
at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art

"Modern Regionalism and *The Myth of Santa Fe*"
Integral Studios and Predock Panel
Saturday, November 7, 2026 | 2 p.m.
at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art

"Regionalism in the Southwest"
Christopher Domin and Christopher Mead in Conversation
Saturday, November 21, 2026 | 11 a.m.
Moderator: Devendra Narayan Contractor
at New Mexico Museum of Art, St. Francis Auditorium

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