

MAK

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EMAIL: OFFICE @ MAKCENTER.ORG  
WWW.MAKCENTER.ORG

835 N. KINGS ROAD  
WEST HOLLYWOOD  
CALIFORNIA 90069

323 651 1510  
FAX 651 2311

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Press contact  
Kristina Newhouse  
323-651-1510  
knewhouse@makcenter.org

**THE MAK URBAN FUTURE INITIATIVE (UFI)  
PUBLIC FORUM SERIES PRESENTS  
*Los Angeles + Lima: Probing the Urban Desert*  
A conversation between UFI Fellow Alexia Leon and Christian Stayner**



**Tuesday, April 7**  
**Reception at 6:30 pm**  
**Presentation begins at 7 pm**  
Event free with admission to the Schindler House

(West Hollywood, March 24, 2009) The MAK Center for Art and Architecture is pleased to announce ***Los Angeles + Lima: Probing the Urban Desert***, the fifth event in the MAK UFI Public Forum. *Los Angeles + Lima* will feature current UFI Fellow, the Peruvian architect Alexia Leon, in conversation with her research partner, Los Angeles-based architect Christian Stayner.

For the MAK UFI Public Forum, Leon and Stayner discuss their ongoing project on the "urban desert" (developed in collaboration with Peruvian art curator Jorge Villacorta). Leon and Stayner shall critically consider the role of the architect in shaping the future development of arid lands. They will also present their observations on the points of intersection between Lima and Los Angeles, both places that have sprung up from the desert. Leon and Stayner's subject will take them into issues of urban settlement, population density, social transformation, and the use of history by architects and urban planners.

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FOR ART + ARCHITECTURE, L.A.

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Also presented will be video excerpts from the research team's ever-expanding archive of interviews with a variety of practitioners, scholars, and artists about the city and surrounding arid regions, both in California and Peru. Leon and Stayner will discuss their documentary project's methodology in which the interview is adopted as a platform for generating questions rather than proving hypotheses or establishing specific architectural agendas. *Los Angeles + Lima* will be followed by a question and answer session with the audience.

### **About Alexia Leon**

Ms. Leon is an architect based in Lima, Peru. She has dedicated years of investigation to the Peruvian coastal desert. In 1996, Leon established the architecture studio, leondelima, which serves as a platform for research on desert architecture and design. Leon works as a design critic and lecturer in South America, Europe and United States. In 2007, she was a visiting professor at Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where she taught "Urban Desert Studio: Pampas de San Bartolo," a studio course focused on new urban strategies for the Lurin-Lima desert. Leon has contributed to numerous magazines, journals and books; she is currently completing a book entitled *Desert Density*, a compilation of 15 years of research on desert architecture and urban fabrics. Leon's built projects include a low-income housing community in Northern Peru. Her design for a house in Playa Bonita was selected as a finalist in the 1998 Madrid Bienal de Arquitectura e Ingeniería Civil in 1998. In 2000, Leon was a finalist for the Mies van der Rohe Prize for Latin American Architecture. Alexia Leon received her professional degree from the Department of Architecture and Urbanism at the Universidad Ricardo Palma in Lima.

### **About the MAK Urban Future Initiative**

The mission of the Urban Future Initiative Fellowship is to promote meaningful exchanges between cultural thinkers from diverse nations in order to cultivate visionary conceptions of the urban future. UFI Fellows are invited to Los Angeles for two months, where they are hosted by the MAK Center in the Fitzpatrick-Leland House, an exemplary LA Modern home designed by architect R. M. Schindler in 1936.

Responding to the challenges of urban environment both locally and globally, the MAK Center seeks out Fellows who engage in interdisciplinary practice and who are committed to forward-thinking approaches to urban issues. During their time in Los Angeles, Fellows pursue a research topic related to urban phenomena. The MAK Center works closely with Fellows, helping to connect them to the city through its architecture. Fellows are introduced to members of the many creative, scholarly, and educational communities throughout southern California and encouraged to develop dialogue with these individuals and institutions. During this focused period of deep inquiry, Fellows are challenged to consider the complexity of "the city" in its relationship to the built environment, growth and migration, economics, politics, gender, and the natural environment.

### **About the MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House**

The MAK Center is located at 835 N. Kings Road in West Hollywood. Public hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Regular admission is \$7/\$17 with the guide book, *Schindler By MAK*; students and seniors, \$6/\$16 with book; free for Friends of the Schindler House and on Fridays, 4 to 6 p.m. Parking is available at the public structure at the northeast corner of Kings Road and Santa Monica Boulevard. For further information, the public may contact [www.MAKcenter.org](http://www.MAKcenter.org) or call (323) 651-1510.

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