"The beauty of the place was healing to me... [The Collegeville Institute] is a habitat for the intellectual and spiritual quests becoming one."

- Short-term resident scholar (From the Collegeville Institute website)
The Collegeville Institute is a vibrant organization providing a supportive environment for theological and ecumenical conversations, contemplation, study, and writing. From its inception in 1967, Father Kilian McDonnell sought to heighten the experience of guests through architecture and its connection with the surrounding natural landscape:

"Another defining feature of the Collegeville Institute has been a 'sense of place,' a holistic ethos and atmosphere inherited from the Abbey. When the monks of Saint John's set out to build the ecumenical center that Father Kilian envisioned and the Butlers made possible, they located it on the shores of Stumpf Lake. The cry of loons was considered a fitting, even necessary, backdrop to the work to be done. The monks situated the ground architecture of Marcel Breuer, who proceeded to enhance it with features to maximize the sense of place, the 'inwardness of nature.'"

- From the Collegeville Institute website

Marcel Breuer was by this time a prominent and internationally regarded architect, and had recently finished the nearby Saint John's Abbey. Breuer had a remarkable ability to adapt his ideas to the context and the circumstances of each site, and to develop unique and successful solutions.

From Breuer's beginnings as a student at the Bauhaus in 1919, he was inspired by the work of artists, movements, and architects of early 20th century Modernism in Europe. Influences include German architect Peter Behrens whose 1908 AEG Turbine Factory building inspired a new movement in architecture. Behrens' дома was made possible through the use of steel, the use of which expanded Breuer's horizons and allowed him to create structures that were more responsive to the site.

Breuer's bold statements in concrete at the Abbey Church and University stand in visual contrast to his early wood-framed home designs. But uniting these disparate project types was a sensitive understanding of site, and a humanistic approach to Modern architecture, making him an obvious choice for the Collegeville Institute commission.

Breuer followed his Bauhaus mentor, Walter Gropius, to the United States in 1937 for a teaching position at Harvard. Right away, Breuer and Gropius began a private architectural practice. Their early work in the US focused on residential design, with their first built projects being homes for their own families in Lincoln, Massachusetts. It was through these early commissions that Breuer explored a new, vernacularly-driven form of Modern architecture that utilized wood frame construction, employed local field stone walls, and were skinned in tongue-and-groove vertical siding painted white to relate to the surrounding colonial style of nearby homes.

For the next few years Breuer and Gropius produced several significant designs including the Haggerty House and the Chamberlain Cottage. Both of these projects show a continuing evolution of design thinking, including the use of local stone to connect the homes to their site and the use of wood and steel as a means to create a sense of place. For the Collegeville Institute, Breuer and Gropius designed the buildings to reflect the spirit of place and the 'sense of place' that the Collegeville Institute embodies.

"I wanted time set apart from the business and demands of everyday life. I wanted a view of a lake, fenced-in by maple trees. I wanted to be in a community where I felt the ease of saying: Yes, I am a writer."

- Taylor Brorby, 2014 writing workshop participant

"One of the most embarrassing problems of ours: what to choose from all that is offered. To value and to select the right things is a vital discipline. This is what I would call the direction of thought, the direction of work progress, and the direction of contemporary mentality. From many things you are supposed to reach - to select - the most purposeful, the right one, the one which is meaningful for the human existence."

- Marcel Breuer, from his lecture at the Harvard School of Design, 1950
Modernism is a philosophical, artistic, and design movement born as a response to the Industrial Revolution, the rapid growth of cities, and eventually, the horror of WW1. The traditional styles of art, architecture, design, and philosophy were less relevant in an increasingly mechanized lifestyle. This, combined with the availability of new materials and techniques, pushed designers to simplify forms, eschew ornamentation, and try to find relevance in a changing landscape.

“Modern architecture is not a style, it’s an attitude.” - Marcel Breuer

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“Modern architecture is not a style, it’s an attitude.” - Marcel Breuer
Rising from the aftermath of WWI, the Bauhaus was a school founded by Walter and Ise Gropius that merged art and industrial design. Mechanization and mass production had taken the craft out of everyday objects and their school sought to merge those ideas. The school was set up similar to the medieval guilds, with each craft appointed a master to supervise the efforts of each student. It tore down the walls between disciplines, one could practice architecture, build furniture, take photography seriously and weave in between.

Bauhaus: A school for a new thought

Bauhaus Building at Dessau, Dessau, Germany, Lucia Moholy, 1926

Walter Gropius

Bauhaus Building

Walter Gropius

Office of the Bauhaus, Weimar, Germany, 1922

Paul Klee

Architecture with Window, Weimar, Germany, 1919

Marianne Brandt

Coffee and Tea Set, Weimar, Germany, Lucia Moholy, 1924

Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds, Weimar, Germany 1922

László Moholy-Nagy

Construction Z1, Weimar, Germany 1922

Joost Schmidt

Poster for the 1923 Bauhaus Exhibition in Weimar, Weimar, Germany, 1923

Eugen Kolisch

Bauhaus Canteen, Dessau, Germany, 1930

Ivana Tomljenović

Bauhaus Canteen, Dessau, Germany, 1930

Joost Schmidt

Poster for the 1922 Bauhaus Exhibition in Weimar, Weimar, Germany, 1922

Marianne Brandt

Coffee and Tea Set, Weimar, Germany, Lucia Moholy, 1924

Lucas Moholy-Nagy

Construction 21, Weimar, Germany 1922

Joost Schmidt

Poster for the 1922 Bauhaus Exhibition in Weimar, Weimar, Germany, 1922

Walter Gropius

Diagram for Teaching at Bauhaus, Weimar, Germany, 1922

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Bauhaus:

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Marcel Breuer came to the Bauhaus in 1920 to study carpentry and apprentice under Walter Gropius in architecture. By 1925 he was appointed a junior master in the carpentry workshop—and in 1927 he began experimenting with tubular steel furniture design, creating two of his most recognizable works: the Wassily Chair and the Cesca Chair. Encouraged by his fellow masters, he also designed cabinetry and furnishings for their apartments at Dessau.
Having left the Bauhaus in 1928, along with Gropius and others, Breuer set up his own architectural practice in Berlin. During the years following World War I, architectural commissions were difficult to come by and it wasn't until 1932 that Breuer was able to realize his first architectural design for the Harnischmacher's (Breuer, Robert McCarter, Phaidon, 2016).

Bearing similarities to Le Corbusier’s Villa Stein (1927), Breuer’s design differs in its L-shaped plan layout, and how the building is set into the sloping site. The house is approached from the uphill side, the parking and entry level with the raised, second floor. Living spaces are elevated above the ground with large expanses of glass overlooking the city. The dining room and terrace in Breuer’s design sit forward of the living room, providing a dynamic thrust that foreshadows many of his later cantilevered designs.
Marcel Breuer

Breuer House, Lincoln, MA
1938-39

Breuer House Lincoln, Ezra Stoller, 1938-39

Breuer House Lincoln living room seen from mezzanine, 1938-39

Breuer House Lincoln, Marcel looking at Constance, 1938-39

Early American Work 1937-1950

Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius

Hagerty House view from shore, Cohasset, MA, George H. Davis Studio, 1938

Hagerty House Living Room, 1938

Hagerty House exterior view, rear facade, 1938

Chamberlain Cottage east elevation drawing, 1939

Marcel Breuer Chamberlain Cottage west elevation, Wayland, MA, Ezra Stoller, 1940

Chamberlain Cottage living room, 1940
Early American Work 1937-1950

Breuer:

Marcel Breuer
Main Canaan, New Canaan, CT, 1948

Marcel Breuer
Main Canaan, Living Room, New Canaan, CT, 1948

Architectural Record Cover
Marcel Breuer’s House in Connecticut, October 1948

Marcel Breuer
New Canaan I, New Canaan, CT, Robert Damora, 1948

Marcel Breuer
New Canaan I Living Room, New Canaan, CT, 1948

Breuer Patios, 1948

Marcel Breuer
New Canaan I Living Room, New Canaan, CT, Pedro Guerrero, 1948

Architectural Record Cover
Marcel Breuer’s House in Connecticut, October 1948

Marcel Breuer
Robinson House, Williamstown, MA, Robert Damora, 1947

Robinson House south elevation, Williamstown, MA, 1947

Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard
Starkey House, Duluth, MN, Peter Sieger Photography, 1955

Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard
Starkey House, Duluth, MN, Warren Reynolds, 1955

Marcel Breuer
Patio on House, Duluth, MN, Herbert Beckhard, 1955

Marcel Breuer
Robinson House south and east elevations, 1946

Marcel Breuer
Robinson House south and east elevations, 1946
Photographer(s) Unknown (1-6)

St John's Abbey Church Construction Progress Photos
Collegeville, MN, 1961

Marcel Breuer and Hamilton Smith
St John's Abbey Church, Collegeville, MN, 1961

St John's Abbey Church clasura screen at entry to monastery
Collegeville, MN, 1961

Koyama Shin, 1961

Marcel Breuer and Hamilton Smith
Interior photo of St John's Abbey Church
Collegeville, MN, 1961

Jason R. Woods

Breuer:

Marcel Breuer
Section Thru Library; Elevation of Science Hall; Section Thru Abbey Church
Collegeville, MN, 1952-1977

Koyama Shin, 1961

Marcel Breuer and Hamilton Smith
Exterior photo of St. John's Abbey Church
Collegeville, MN, 1961

Jason R. Woods

St John's Abbey 1961

Marcel Breuer
St John's Abbey Church, Collegeville, MN, 1961-1977

Marcel Breuer
St John's Abbey Church, Collegeville, MN, Koyama Shin, 1961
“Structure is not just a means to a solution. It is also a principle and a passion.”

-Marcel Breuer

"Breuer: Structure"

Structural Beam

Marcel Breuer
New Canaan II, New Canaan, CT, Ben Schnall, 1948

Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard
Starkey House, Duluth, MN, Warren Reynolds, 1955

Marcel Breuer
Collegeville Institute, Collegeville, MN, 1968

Dave Wagner

"Structure is not just a means to a solution. It is also a principle and a passion.”

-Marcel Breuer
Breuer: Form

Marcel Breuer
Hooper House, Baltimore, MD, 1957
Zuba Brouf

Marcel Breuer
Collegeville Institute, Collegeville, MN, 1968
Dave Wagner

Marcel Breuer
Chamberlain Cottage, Wayland, MA, 1940
Kevin Matthews

Marcel Breuer
Wellfleet House Drawing, 1956

Covered Entry

Marcel Breuer
Collegeville Institute, Collegeville, MN, 1968
Dave Wagner

Marcel Breuer
Chamberlain Cottage, Wayland, MA, 1940
Kevin Matthews
Fireplace as room divider

Marcel Breuer
Collegeville Institute, Collegeville, MN
1968, Dave Wagner

Marcel Breuer
Fellows’ Housing for the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ
Jeffrey Edward Tryon 1958

Marcel Breuer
Collegeville Institute, Collegeville, MN, 1968, Dave Wagner
Materiality

“I am as much interested in the smallest detail as in the whole structure.” - Marcel Breuer
GOALS

• Create an elegant space for relaxing, contemplation, and conversation.
• Promote a visual and physical connection between indoors and outdoors.
• Respond to the evolution of how we live, work, study, and relax.
• Retain existing built-in surfaces.

To achieve these goals...

• Utilize furnishings that sit up on legs, have a lightness of presence, and allow the floor plane to be as visible as possible.
• Avoid heavy, overstuffed furnishings, and keep the number of pieces at a functional minimum.
• Arrange furnishings to allow an openness of flow and circulation.
• Select and compose furnishings in response to the fireplace, which is the anchor of the living space.
• Encourage natural light flooding the space by using sheer and light window treatments.
• Use complementary textiles based on a palette of timeless neutrals, natural wood and pops of primary colors.
To achieve these goals...

• Refinishing wood and built-in cabinetry as necessary.

• Remove extraneous freestanding cabinets, and organize existing built-in cabinets.

• New countertop, sink, faucet with a modern design.

• New refrigerator, dishwasher, and slide-in electric smoothtop range.

• New refrigerator, sink, faucet with a modern design.

• New laminate round table tops.

• Reduce Breuer dining chairs (two per table), with option to add Aalto stools for more guests.

• Arrange furnishings to for openness and improved circulation.

• Encourage natural light flooding the space by using sheer and light window treatments.

• Consider purchasing new matching plates, cups, and utensils.
To achieve these goals, . . .
• Utilize furnishings that sit up on legs, have a lightness of presence, and allow the floor plane to be as visible as possible.
• Avoid heavy, overstuffed furnishings, and keep the number of pieces at a functional minimum.
• Remove extraneous cabinets and drawers.
• Arrange furnishings to allow for openness and improved circulation.
• Update bedside lighting.
• Encourage natural light flooding the space by using sheer and light window treatments.
• Use complementary textiles based on a palette of timeless neutrals, natural wood and pops of primary colors.
• Evaluate quantity, placement and type (standard duplex, USB charging) of outlets.

GOALS
• Create an elegant and functional space for retreat and recovery.
• Decrease clutter and provide a purposefulness of space.
• Respond to the evolution of how the bedrooms are occupied.
• Refresh existing built-in surfaces.

1. Ikea KOLLUND Rug
2. Ikea SELJE Nightstand in White
3. Artemide Tolomeo Micro
4. BluDot Modu-licious #4 in White and Maple
5. BluDot Modu-licious #5 White and Maple
6. Ikea PUDERVIVA Linen Duvet Cover
7. Ikea ISPIGG Pillow
8. Ikea INNEHALLSRIK Pillow
9. Room and Board Copenhagen Dresser in White with Black legs 70" W x 20" D x 30" H
10. Room and Board Copenhagen Dresser in White with Black legs 36" W x 20" D x 46" H
11. Ikea VEDBO Armchair in Gunnared Blue
12. Ikea HOPPVALS Cellular Blind in White
13. Ikea HOPPVALS Cellular Blind in White
To achieve these goals:
• Remove bathtubs and convert to walk-in tiled showers.
• Re-tile floor and sink/toilet wall.
• New sink and toilet.
• New mirrored and lighted medicine cabinet.
• Thoughtfully placed towel bars and shelves with a modern design.
• Provide useful bathroom accessories, such as toothbrush holders, shampoo shelves.
• Use complementary textiles and finishes based on a palette of timeless neutrals, natural wood and pops of primary colors.
• New lighting.

GOALS
• Create an elegant and functional space to serve the needs of guests.
• Respond to the evolution of how bathroom spaces are used.
• Update completely.
Study Space

**GOALS**

- Create a comfortable and functional space for research and writing.
- Reduce clutter and provide furnishings to meet a guest’s office needs.
- Respond to the evolution of how we live, work, study, and relax.
- One Bedroom units need special consideration to carve out space from the main living area.

To achieve these goals...

- Utilize furnishings that sit up on legs or hang from the wall, to a lightness of presence, and allow the floor planes to be as visible as possible.
- Avoid heavy, overstuffed furnishings, and keep the number of pieces at a functional minimum.
- Arrange furnishings to allow for openness and improved circulation.
- Encourage natural light flooding the space by using sheer and light window treatments.
- Use complementary materials based on a palette of timeless neutrals, natural wood and pops of primary colors.

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1. IKEA ERIK Drawer Unit in Black
2. IKEA TERTIAL Work Lamp in Yellow
3. IKEA EKET/HERMAN MILLER Wall Cabinet in WHITE FABRIC White Door
4. Blu Dot Stash Desk in Red
5. Blu Dot WonderWall 2.0 Door Cabinet in Walnut
6. Room & Board Custom Length Lamiated White Plywood Top (to be wall mounted)
7. IKEA AINA Linen Curtain in White
8. IKEA PS 2014 Secretary Desk in White Birch
9. Blu Dot WonderWall 2.0 Desk in Walnut
10. Room & Board Diffrient World Office Chair in White
11. Blu Dot Rug in Dark Blue / Light Blue
12. Room & Board Slim C-Table in Red
13. Hive Modern Artek 60 Stool
14. New Modernist Artek 60 Stool