CASA - Mexico Study Abroad Program
Center for Architecture Sustainability + Art
May 26 to July 1, 2016

Located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, CASA is an educational study abroad program established by San Francisco architects, Cathi and Steven House, and affiliated with Virginia Tech’s College of Architecture and Urban Studies. The Center is a link between the past and the future of architecture and a way of making the environment a more thoughtful and sustainable place. Cathi and Steven are working diligently to instill in students a holistic view of what it truly means to be an architect, to help them gain a deep understanding of and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world. In an environment of lively debate, immersed in analytical design exercises, field trips and theoretical discourse, students will find their voices as thoughtful designers able to articulate their individual agendas to guide them toward their professional careers.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

CASA
-- Design Charrettes
-- Apprenticeships with Craftsmen
-- Sketching & Painting
-- Photography
-- Group Projects
-- Final Exhibition of Student Work

San Miguel
-- Tour of the City’s Historic Center
-- Tour of House + House Projects
-- Visit Fabrica Aurora & Artist Studios
-- Tour of the Historic Church of Atotonilco

Mexico City
-- Tour of city’s Historic Center
-- Luis Barragán Houses & Chapel
-- Pyramids of Teotihuacán
-- Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Houses
-- National Center for the Arts
-- Anthropological Museum
-- Visit Work of Ricardo Legorreta
-- Basilica of Guadalupe Church

Guanajuato
-- Diego Rivera Home & Museum
-- Teatro Juarez
-- Museo de los Momias
-- La Valenciana Mine
-- Mercado Hidalgo

PROGRAM LOCATION

San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
San Miguel de Allende has been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This beautiful town, rich in history, 17th century architecture, ornate cathedrals and charming cobblestone streets, offers the allure of a place not to be missed and never to be forgotten. Located at the geographic center of Mexico in the state of Guanajuato, this charming colonial city sits at an elevation of 6,400 feet on a vast plateau of rolling hills in the Sierra Madre mountain range. This beautifully preserved 470-year-old colonial city is considered by many to be one of the most picturesque towns in Mexico. Long known as an artists’ colony, San Miguel offers an extraordinary array of concerts, theater, and lectures as well as language and art classes. It has two famous art and language institutes, the Bellas Artes cultural center and the Instituto Allende. Other important buildings include the Biblioteca Pública, a privately funded public library, the Teatro Santa Ana showing foreign language and independent art films, and the Angela Peralta Theater hosting performances by world renowned artists, lectures, music and dance.
**Mexico City**

Perched at 7,400 feet above sea level in a dry lakebed, surrounded by magnificent mountains and flanked by two volcanoes that soar to 16,000 feet, Mexico City sits on the ruins of the ancient Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. This vibrant, elegant and charismatic city, home to more than 20 million inhabitants, is irresistible. Founded almost 700 years ago, remarkable remains of excavated pyramids, ornate colonial mansions, broad boulevards, bold public art, incomparable contemporary architecture and some of the best museums in the world are laced into parks and gardens, alive with a street life unequaled in Latin America. The vast open space of the Zocalo is said to be the second largest public square in the world. It is the city's political and religious center, bordered by the enormous Metropolitan Cathedral, the largest church in the western hemisphere, and Cortes' Palacio Nacional, still the seat of power, filled with Rivera murals. This beating heart of the city is built on the devastated remains of the magnificent temple complex of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan. As the center of power of pre-Hispanic America, the Teotihuacan, Toltec, Aztec and then the Spanish conquistadores all contributed to the city's fascinating evolution, heritage, art and architecture. The extraordinary ruins of the Templo Mayor pulse with the pounding drums of living Aztec dancers, healers offering smoke cures and organ grinders, all interspersed with bold contemporary architecture from the likes of Barragán, Norten, de Leon and Legorretta.

**PROGRAM LEADERS**

**Steven & Cathi House, House + House Architects**

For more than 30 years House + House Architects have crafted unique, magical, harmonious environments and intimate, personal architecture. Deeply sensitive to form, color, light, and movement, they create a spirit within each project, molded to the process of living. Their diverse body of work in California, Mexico, and the Caribbean reflects their passion for site specific, well-choreographed buildings. They have received over 50 design awards and have been featured in numerous publications including two monographs, "House + House Architects: Choreographing Space“ and "Houses in the Sun: light movement embrace“. Cathi and Steven have lectured extensively in the United States and Mexico.

Steven and Cathi acknowledge the profound influence their exposure to cultures around the world has had on their work. They have traveled throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America documenting vernacular architecture. Their stunning book, "Mediterranean Villages: An Architectural Journey", celebrates their investigations of Italian hilltowns, Greek islands, the Dalmatian coast, and southern Spain. In 1989 while searching for a stone quarry in Mexico, Steven and Cathi discovered the historic town of San Miguel de Allende. That was the beginning of a love affair with a place that has offered them new opportunities in the refinement of their craft. They built a home for themselves in San Miguel in 1993 and have since designed over 25 houses in Mexico.

**FACILITIES & ACOMMODATIONS**

**Center for Architecture Sustainability + Art**

Located in the historic center of San Miguel de Allende, a series of four buildings are woven into gardens, courtyards and terraces to accommodate studio space for students. The buildings and the exterior spaces are flexible to serve a wide variety of uses. With careful consideration given to the movement of the sun throughout the seasons, this sustainable building glows with natural light, warms itself in winter with cool shade in the summer.

**Casa de las Estrellas**

Filled with gardens and light this charming guesthouse is located on a quiet street in the historic center close to San Miguel’s colorful Artisan’s Market. The home’s living spaces are situated around a lush flower filled courtyard with an ancient pomegranate tree. Students share rooms with private terraces and begin their days with a delicious breakfast in the lovely dining room. The guesthouse is modern, yet saturated with the deepest of Mexican tradition.

**Mundo Joven Hostel**

In the heart of Mexico City, Mundo Joven overlooks the towers and domes of the grand Metropolitan Cathedral. Sights and sounds that have echoed through this world capital for millennia surround you. Students share simple rooms with breakfast in the restaurant at the ground floor. Their philosophy is “We believe in respect for the planet and understanding among nations and that the cultural exchange between the young will build the foundations of lasting peace.”

**PROGRAM COST & PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

The fee for the CASA program is $3,800, which includes lodging, two meals per day, entry fees and ground transportation. Air fare and travel insurance are not included.

February 28, 2016 - Receive Written Commitment and $1,000 Deposit
March 31, 2016 - Receive $2,800 Balance of CASA Fee & Signed Liability Agreement
May 26, 2016 - Fly to Mexico City to Begin the Program
July 1, 2016 - Fly Back to the US at the Conclusion of the Program
CASA Commitment - We will be making the Mexico City hotel reservations soon and need to know exactly how many students will be attending. Therefore, we would appreciate a final decision from you by the end of February.

Program Agreement - As soon as you formally commit to the program, we will send you an agreement which will need to be signed by you and your parents.

Program Fee - The program fee is $3,800, which includes lodging, two meals per day, entry fees and ground transportation. Air fare and travel insurance are not included. A $1,000 deposit will be due by February 28th to hold your place. Please make out your check to Steven House and mail it to 1499 Washington Street, San Francisco, California 94109. We would like to receive the balance of your payment along with the signed Program Agreement by March 31st.

Flight Schedule - The schedule is for all participants to fly into Mexico City on Thursday, May the 26th. Cathi and Steven House will meet you at the airport upon arrival and take you to the hotel in Mexico City. There will be a "Welcome to Mexico Dinner" that evening and then everyone will get settled in before beginning the Mexico City portion of the program on Friday morning. We can also assist you with your airline reservations if needed.

Travel Insurance - We suggest that each student take out a travel insurance policy for the duration of the program. CISI offers a very reasonable policy for students studying abroad, and here is a link to their plans: http://www.culturalinsurance.com/students/

Passports - Students attending the CASA program must have a current passport for travel to Mexico. Foreign students may need to obtain a visa. If you don't have a current passport or visa we suggest you apply for one as soon as possible.

Contact Information - If you are interested in attending we would appreciate you sending us your parents' names, mailing addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for our records.

For more information, please contact:

Steven and Cathi House
House + House Architects
1499 Washington Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
www.houseandhouse.com
415-474-2112