If the past is still alive — in us, in its relics — what can we ask of it? What can it teach us? Renée Green poses those questions in “Within Living Memory,” which caps her two years as artist in residence at Harvard’s Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts.

Green’s river of history is deep and shot through with light. She uses the Carpenter Center’s Le Corbusier-designed modernist structure as a springboard into considerations of space, movement, and modernism. Many of her videos, texts, and installations rely on artfully arranged accumulations of words, images, and ideas, rushing with odd and lovely associations.

In the breathtaking video “Americas: Veritas” she matches wheeling, curvaceous drone shots of the Carpenter Center with those of Le Corbusier’s Casa Curutchet, in Argentina. It’s a lush and lonely duet. These are the only Corbu buildings in the Americas; the architect hoped for many more.

Each text in “Selected Life Indexes” highlights the life of a figure of the modern age: Albert Einstein, W.E.B. Du Bois, Muriel Rukeyser. Green lists the cast, but doesn’t label her prose-poem indices, so we have to read deep into them to discover which subject they address. That sets up an unlikely kinship among the subjects; not knowing, we are back at the beginning with them, unsure what will unfold.

In 2015, Green spent time at the home of another great modern architect, the Rudolph Schindler House in Los Angeles. Her hypnotic video “Begin Again, Begin Again” layers archival footage with her luminous imagery, much of it underwater. A voice-over weaves Schindler’s modernist manifesto with jewel-like pieces by writers Paul Bowles and Thomas Mann, and ties Schindler’s lifeline — 1887-1953 — to Green’s, which started in 1959.

Removing history’s organizational guideposts opens up new channels in history’s river. Connections, metaphors, and bruises we never saw before are revealed, and the past appears afresh, its heart beating.