

Architecture of the 1970s and 1980s

-searching for a new direction beyond the repetitive abstracted white-boxes and glass-boxes of modern architecture

Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1950)

Mies van der Rohe

Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1950)

plan

Mies van der Rohe

Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1950), floor plan

Mies van der Rohe

Seagram Building (1954-1958)

New York, New York

Mies van der Rohe

Lever House (1951-1952)

New York, New York

Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill

Union Carbide Building (1957-1960)

New York, New York

Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill

Minoru Yamasaki (1912-1986), Pruitt-Igoe Housing, St. Louis, Missouri, 1958
-award-winning low-cost housing

Minoru Yamasaki (1912-1986), Pruitt-Igoe Housing, St. Louis, Missouri, 1958, being dynamited in 1972

-Curtis sees this as a monumental moment in which the planning techniques of the involved architects failed to understand true human needs

Robert Venturi and the Architecture of the (American) Everyday

“I like elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure,’ compromising rather than ‘clean,’ distorted rather than ‘straightforward,’ ambiguous rather than ‘articulated,’ perverse as well as impersonal . . . “

Robert Venturi in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966)

Robert Venturi and the Architecture of the (American) Everyday

-a student of Kahn

-but opposed to Kahn's spiritual emphasis and clarity of geometrical forms

-He was also opposed to "orthodox modern architecture" such as the one by Mies Van der Rohe

-the author of *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966)

-A phrase he attacked in particular was: "Less is more"

-"Less is a bore"

-He did not mean to embellish buildings with decorations

-He meant to accept tensions, ambiguities and collisions in the process of architectural design

-He saw Mies and other modern architects as simplifying and thereby distorting the complexity of architectural and urban problems

-in its best sense, what he sought was the logic of tolerance, "A and not-A," not the logic of exclusion, "either A or not-A"

-not a hierarchy of excluding lower layers, but parallelism that juxtaposes and intermingles different layers

-yet, on the negative side, Venturi's architecture turns to be merely of formalism or of mannerism

Robert Venturi, Mother House, Philadelphia (1963)

- a classical pediment with a chimney at the center
- yet, it is broken at the center and the chimney is asymmetrical
- the placement of the windows are also asymmetrical
- the expression of asymmetrical demands in the inside

Robert Venturi, Mother House, Philadelphia (1963)

- more meaningful gestures of Venturi's architectural philosophy is found in the plan of the house
- the collision among the entrance, the fireplace and the stairway

Robert Venturi, Guild House, Philadelphia (1961)

- the bold adoption of the sign
- the placement of a cylindrical pier at the center of the house that divides the entrance into two separate doors
- the pier is transferred to the section of a slim wall crowned by an arch
- the prominent central presence of the TV antennas
- this reflects the relationship between the elderly and TV in American daily life

Learning from Las Vegas (1973)

-co-authored with Denise Scott Brown and Steve Izenour

-Discovery of the American vernacular along the way to, and in, Las Vegas

-This vernacular landscape and architecture was an area “despised by elitist planners with European pretensions”

- “popular and reassuring images” and signboards along American roads
- Behind the images and signboards stands rectangular boxes
- this was the logic of American vernacular architecture
- This logic was nicknamed “Decorated Shed”

-In contrast with “Decorated Shed,” he criticized what he called “Duck”
-”Duck” was a building in which the whole body was turned into a
sculptural play

Emergence of Critical Regionalism and architecture of the non-Anglo Saxon world

- The term "Critical Regionalism" was coined by two Greek scholars in 1981
- Kenneth Frampton picked it up and developed it into a major architectural theory
- Frampton wrote a piece entitled "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", in *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture* edited by Hal Foster (1983).

Critical Regionalism

-combination bt. “critical” and “regionalism”

-what does “critical” mean here?

-In general, critical regionalism appears to be against

1. vernacular architecture for its antiquarian nature
2. Technocratic futurism that emphasizes universal benefits of modern technology
3. scenographic architecture for its shallow and superficial plasticity
4. aestheticism.

-According to Frampton, one cannot avoid adopting techniques mostly from the Western Europe and America

-Yet, one has to be careful in his or her practice to use the techniques in such a way that they still keep the cultural identity of a region

-Critical regionalism must be neither retrogressive, nor progressive

Reevaluation of Alvar Aalto

Alvar Aalto (1898-1976)

- He started his career in Neo-classical tradition and accepted the International Modern movement
- but, he eventually developed his own language rooted in the regional identity of Finland and the Scandinavian peninsula
- His works shows free spirit in the planning by allowing differences, rather than regulating them
- He often adopted curvilinear elements which people interpret as relating to the landscape of Finland with many a lake and a forest
- He was highly sensitivity to tactile effects of different materials

Alvar Aalto
Paimio Sanatorium, Paimio, 1929-33
Ground and first-floor plans

- a modernist scheme
- division of different zones
- rendered smooth white
- hygiene sheathed with white paint
- efficient repetitive stacking of units
- the program of the building was also a sort of modern program in curing patients with tuberculosis
- the balconies for sun light (next slide)

- Views from the rooftop sundeck and dramatically cantilevered balconies
- Spectacular views over the surrounding countryside
- Their orientation south was determined by a dedication to the supposed healing powers of the sun

-The plan was meant to be functionally zoned and biodynamically aligned to the compass so that the direction of each wing was defined according to its requirements for sunshine and view

-Patients' wards, rest terraces

-Common Rooms

-Technical Service rooms

-Garages

-Doctor's houses

-Employee's houses

- yet, the placement of the wings are not formalistic or mechanical
- An assembly of wings to engage with the surrounding landscape
- The plan also broke away from the strict principles of rationalism, grouping various building lengths in a non-geometrical way
- Their placement is defined in reference not only to functional efficiency but also to the topography and landscape

- Aalto paid attention to furniture design in consideration of the humane relationship between patients and the setting
- This is observed in his design of the sink in the patient's room

- furniture design for tactile softness for the patients
- “paimio-Chair”: not using any tubular steel, which became a popular furniture material among avant-garde architects
- the back and seat are supported by a laminated wood frame that provides both arm supporters and legs

Alvar Aalto, Villa Mairea (1937-1939), Noormarkku, Finland

- built for the entrepreneurs Harry and Maire Gullichsen
- The clients asked Aalto to think of the project as “an experiment”
- there is an indication of modernism in the portion that is finished white with plaster
- Yet, in its whole, the house is not a white box, but an amalgam of different sizes, shapes, volumes
- the white portion of the house is wrapped around by different parts that express their tactile qualities
- At one corner, taut, curved walls faced with wood sidings are contrasted with sharp-edged brick walls painted white

- the plan is a modification of an L-shaped house
- at the point where two major wings meet in a perpendicular relationship, Aalto puts a dining area projected towards the garden
- with the addition of another L shape rubble wall, the house creates an intimate garden
- the flat roof of the dining room is extended to create a terrace
- As a result, on one side, there is a semi-enclosed private garden with a pool and a sauna
- the flat roof of the dining room is extended to create a terrace (next slide)

Villa Mairea, aerial of backyard (1937-1939)

Noormarkku, Finland

-while using the Corbusian structural frame of the Domino system, he avoided using a rigid grid and varied materials of the columns with steel tubes, concrete

The interiors of the Villa Mairea are richly articulated in wood, stone, plaster and brick

- “this interior shows the screen protecting the staircase, which mimics the larch forest surrounding the house”
- fireplace at the corner grabs the attention of a visitor, formulating the sense of warmth suitable for the living room
- Behind the fireplace is the pool, joining fire and water together
- Aalto’s careful attention to tactility is also expressed in the treatment of the column in its middle section
- In the living room, screens of wooden poles in random clusters, like the trees of the forest visible through the wall-to-wall plate-glass windows (a synthesis of modern technology, artisanship and nature)

-Ceilings are divided into different zones with different materials and finishes

Saynatsalo Town Hall

(1949-1952)

Saynatsalo, Finland

- A small civic center for an industrial town sitting on a raised flat land
- Characterized by a semi-enclosed courtyard reminiscent of vernacular farm buildings and materially by the extensive use of hand-made brick and clear-varnished wood
- The sense of community
- the front wing on the left includes shops at the basement facing the street

Alvar Aalto
Saynatsalo Town Hall, Saynatsalo, 1949-52

Barragan in Mexico
Saynatsalo Town Hall, Saynatsalo, 1949-52

- from the street, the house looks like any other
- typical of Latin American architecture with plaster and pastel colors
- In this case, the wall was made out of concrete and then was finished with plaster
- there is an indication of intimacy in the inside, as the exterior appears with a minimum number of openings punctured out of thick walls

-1,161 m²

-A studio for Barragan's professional activity and his private residence

-It has a ground floor and two upper storeys, as well as a small private garden.

-The entrance is directly from the street on the east side.

-The garden opens towards the west.

-The studio takes the northern part of the building, with an entrance directly from the street; the rest is Barragán's private residential quarters.

- The separate dining room is reached from the hall and the living room, next to which there is a small breakfast room and the kitchen.
- All these spaces open towards the garden.
- On the first floor are the master bedroom and a guest room, as well as an 'afternoon room'.
- On the second floor, there are service spaces and a roof terrace.
- The upper storeys are accessed via narrow stairs without railings.
- The levels of the different floors are not regularly placed, but are designed so as to allow spaces of different heights.
- Thus, the living room is double height.

- in the inside, walls are made without any ornament
- They are painted with primary colors
- A space defined by yellow is led to a space of pink
- A hint at a space is given through articulation of different colors
- The walls create sensational effects as they interact with light
- An artificial light is set hidden to illuminate the wall indirectly

- Contrast with this adoption of bold colors were the textual qualities of the wooden bench and stone-covered passage way

- At the breakfast room, the walls are given much subdued colors
- probably for the garden perceived through a floor-to-ceiling window
- Barragan indeed considered him a landscape architect
- walls are extended further into the outside, creating a frame
- lively natural light gives changes to the room
- a space of gathering, even though Barragan lived a life of a bachelor

-Sometimes walls are white. Then,
paintings are given primary colors
-stairway whose width is intentionally fit
for an individual

- a dramatic roof terrace
- It is defined by bare walls with rough finish
- The walls mask the view to the surrounding
- Instead, they invite the presence of the sky
- And, shadow and light

- Relationship bt. Barragan's architecture and modernism
- duality of the wall
 - the unadorned wall is a feature of modernism
 - Yet, it is also typical in the tradition of Latin American architecture
 - the wall is a thick wall without smooth finish
- criticism of modernism on one hand, and on the other is still part of modernism

Tadao Ando

-boxer, self-taught architect

-“the first born of twin boys” “from ages 10 to 17 Ando spent most of his time making models of ships, airplanes, and moulds, learning the craft from a carpenter whose shop was across the street from his home

-educated in a professional high school majoring architecture (usually end up becoming a draftsman or service man for master architect with university education)

-Between 1962 to 1969, in his twenties, Ando decided to embark on a self-directed course of architectural study that took him throughout Japan to visit temples, shrine, and tea houses, to Europe, Africa, India, America and Latin America. Among those who inspired him were Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Luis Barragan

-Returning from this trip at the age of 28, he opened his own studio in Osaka

Tadao Ando, Azuma House, 1976, Osaka, Japan

Tadao Ando, Time's I, Kyoto, Japan

Tadao Ando, Church of the Light, Osaka, Japan (1989)

Ando and Concrete

Tange Kenzo, St. Mary's Cathedral, Toyko

Le Corbusier, La Tourette, France, 1957-60

- he was dissatisfied with seemingly rough-hewn exposed concrete by Le Corbusier.
- Le Corbusier's exposed concrete was introduced and adopted by Kenzo Tange and Kunio Maekawa

Le Corbusier, La Tourette, France, 1957-60

Daisetsu T. Suzuki

“The cross is the symbol of cruelty and inhumanity.”

Liang K'ai, *Śākyamuni* Descending the Mountain
(from Shinichi Hisamatsu, *Zen and the Fine Arts*,
1963)

Nirvana, 12th century, restored by Ryusen Miyahara (from *Buddhist Paintings: Japanese National Treasures*, 1989)

Tadao Ando, Church of the Light, 1989

“. . . What comes to my mind when I think about architecture that addresses human conditions is, for instance, Gunnar Asplund’s architecture of funeral space. The cremation scenes on the banks of the Ganges which I saw during my trip to Varanasi, India, also come to mind. Fujiwara Shinya’s *Memento-mori* records these scenes solemnly. Architecture should be a place where we live and die, where we think about life and death, and the world of this life and of nirvana (*nehan*). Through architecture, we remember those who died and awaken to the fact that we die. Symbolic architecture should emerge from the struggles with these human conditions.”