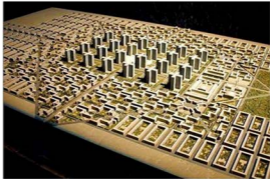


AFTER MODERNISM
(POSTMODERNISM?)
(LATE MODERNISM?)

Introduction to Architectural History
Eugene Han
Spring 2021, 7.15 – 8.30pm
Remote



- This is where we left off, the Modernist conception of the city and its aesthetic
- Promise of better living by identifying, engineering, perfection in design
 - Like a mathematician – architecture as science



- The height of this thinking around 30's to 50's (though this thinking persists today)
- But as we get to the end of this period, the failures, or misguided attitudes of the Modernist project became more apparent



Jane Jacobs

American / Canadian; 1916 - 2006

1. Urban activist
 - o Started with writing – *Architectural Forum*
 - o For the major part of her professional career, resident of NYC – Greenwich Village
2. Not formally trained in architecture, nor practiced as such
 - o Largely a writer/activist more so than a designer, nevertheless, important for architecture.
 - o Great example as a counter to Modernism
3. Major concern was to provide a voice for urban planning
4. Argued for the casual, intimate scale of the neighborhood

4 Conditions For the City

1. Neighborhood-driven approach



4 Conditions For the City

1. Mixed Primary Use

- MIXED PRIMARY USE

1. Rationalist (Modernist) models don't consider the value of DIVERSITY
 - Parks/museums/schools/hospitals/dwellings/offices
 - Neighborhoods have to have strangers
 - It's good when strangers pass by
 - Many types of people coming together
 - Can't have a thriving neighborhood if all dictated by same aims
 - Must be a collection



4 Conditions For the City

1. Mixed Primary Use
2. Short Blocks rather than large blocks

- SHORT BLOCKS
 - With short blocks, pedestrians can carve out new routes



4 Conditions For the City

1. Mixed Primary Use
2. Short Blocks rather than large blocks
3. Allow for the aging of building

- AGING BUILDING
 - Aesthetic and pragmatic considerations
 - Lower classes could afford older buildings



4 Conditions For the City

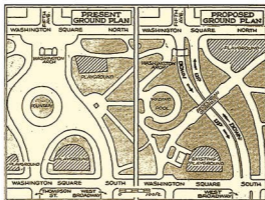
1. Mixed Primary Use
2. Short Blocks rather than large blocks
3. Allow for the aging of building
4. Acceptance of population density

- POPULATION DENSITY
 - Concentration of people to allow for diversity, street-level life



Washington Square Park, NYC

1. Washington Square Park
 1. Greenwich Village, Lower Manhattan



Right: Robert Moses, infrastructural proposal for Washington Square Park (1955)

1. Washington Square Park

- Plan to run lowered roads through the park, effectively cutting it in half, with an elevated pedestrian walkway for connection
- For Jacobs, this design would fundamentally prevent the park's capacity for congregation, for community activities



1. Movie clip: *Citizen Jane: Battle for the City* (2016)

THE DEATH
AND LIFE
OF GREAT
AMERICAN
CITIES

JANE JACOBS

“As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge.”

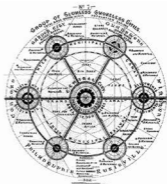
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)

THE DEATH
AND LIFE
OF GREAT
AMERICAN
CITIES

JANE JACOBS

This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding. It is also, and mostly, an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding, different and even opposite from those now taught in everything from schools of architecture and planning to Sunday supplements and women's magazines. My attack is not based on quibbles about rebuilding methods or hair-splitting about fashions in design. **It is an attack, rather, on the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding**

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)



Ebenezer Howard, 'The Garden City' (1898)

1. In *The Death and Life* – targets a number of architects/urban planners
2. Ebenezer Howard – a British planner that create 'The Garden City concept'
 - o Stated that Howard was against cities to begin with, so makes no sense that he should then structure cities.



Plan Voisin, Paris (1925)

- Major target, quintessential Modernist
- 'Pure design' – unrealistic, too removed from reality

“There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is **the dishonest mask of pretended order**, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served.”

Jacobs' priorities for design

1. "think about processes"
2. "work inductively, reasoning from particulars to the general"
3. "seek for 'unaverage' clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more 'average' quantities are operating."

1. Jacobs' prescription

- 1. **"To think about processes"**
 - The buildings that make up a city are part of a collective process – they don't stand alone, but are part of complex systems
 - So when we act for change, we are participating in larger processes, rather than reductive relations
- 2. **"To work inductively, reasoning from particulars to the general, rather than the reverse"**
 - Bottom-up
 - Recognize the actual activities that take place
 - Deductive planning is the norm, and relies on rules and theories rather than what can be seen by the ordinary citizen
- 3. **"To seek for "unaverage" clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more "average" quantities are operating."**
 - A recognition of the complex
 - The complex may not have direct solutions
 - To reiterate that a city is complex, manifold, and cannot be comprehended at once nor by any individual.
 - The "unaverage" can be physical, appearance, economic, cultural, etc.

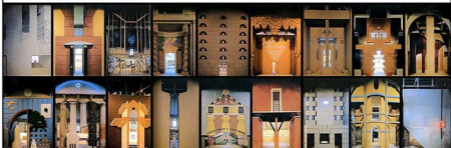
POSTMODERNISM

- While there's no universal consensus on the terminology, we can understand Postmodernism as a kind of reaction (i.e. 'after') against Modernist approaches.



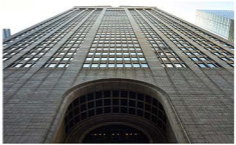
Stadio Novissimo, Venice Biennale, 1980

1. There's no official 'beginning' of Postmodernism, but many see the Venice Biennale of 1980 as an important announcement of a new attitude in architecture.



Strada Novissima, Venice Biennale, 1980

1. In 1980, there was an important exhibition, called *La Strada Novissima* ('The New Street').
 - a. It was exhibited as a virtual street, as set design, of various architectural facades, and each designed by a different architect.
 - b. The theme of the exhibition regarded 'the presence of the past,' and so the street was a kind of pastiche of different styles



Philip Johnson, 550 Madison Ave (AT&T Building)
New York City, NY (1984)

1. Starting with one of the more tame examples, we have Philip Johnson's AT&T Building of 1984.
 - a. Instantly recognized skyscraper in Manhattan, mainly due to its 'gable' (pitched roof).
 - b. Johnson wanted to play with architectural convention. In a field of Miesian glass-and-steel skyscrapers throughout the city, we have a stone-clad tower that appropriates from traditional/residential architecture to the big city... a perfect example of Postmodernism's flagrant violation of conventions.



James Stirling, No. 1 Poultry
London, UK (1994)



Charles Moore, *Piazza d'Italia*
New Orleans (1978)

1. Charles Moore's *Piazza d'Italia*, which was built to recognize the Italian American community in New Orleans.
 - a. Can be thought of as a public plaza with a stepped water feature.
2. Clearly classical motifs, but in intentionally broken up, fragmented pieces



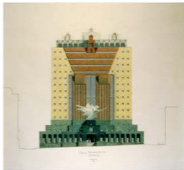
Charles Moore, Piazza d'Italia
New Orleans (1978)

1. Again, clear references to history (spitting fountains), Corinthian capitals... with metallic Tuscan and Corinthian capitals
 - a. Keep in mind that the misuse of classical tropes was to emphasize that we are living in the history of architecture, we needn't follow its previous manifestations to employ their effect in modern (not Modern) buildings.



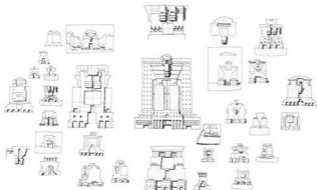
Michael Graves
Left: Denver Central Library (1983)
Tea kettle 9093 for Alessi (1984 – updated version with dragon above)

1. One of the most prolific and respected architects during the peak of Postmodernism was Michael Graves.
 - a. Designed a number of buildings as well as home furnishings.
 - b. Both iconic works, Denver Central Library and Tea kettle 9093
 - c. Like other Postmodernist works, look for masses of contrasting colors and materials, with classical elements and/or silhouettes.



Michael Graves, Portland Building
Portland, OR (1982)

1. Graves' Portland Building of 1982 – an example that seems to bridge between Art Deco and early Postmodernism.
2. contrast to more 'serious' styled neighboring buildings, oftentimes in equally 'serious' business and financial districts.



Michael Graves, Portland Building
Portland, OR (1982)

1. Graves' sketches developing variations of facades.
 - a. This treatment of composition as both referential to Classical precedents



Michael Graves, Portland Building
Portland, OR (1982)
Left: Giambattista Piranesi, illustration

1. Comparison with Piranesi
 - a. Not just about style, but the attitude towards the style – that opposition breeds creation, and that the architect's role is to use the past by challenging it, not simply repeating it.



Michael Graves, Walt Disney Studios
Burbank, CA (1990)

1. For Walt Disney Studios in Burbank CA, if it wasn't for the 7 dwarfs and the loud coloration, we could imagine this building through highly Classical orders.



Michael Graves, Walt Disney Studios
Burbank, CA (1990)

1. Direct reference to the Erechtheion in Acropolis in Greece.
 - a. In place of caryatids, we have dwarfs.
 - b. Perfect example of Postmodernism's use of 'inside jokes' and architectural references to its own history.



John Outram, *Isle of Dogs Pumping Station*
London, UK (1985 – 88)

1. A pumping station designed to deal with water run-off from neighboring streets in the area.
 - a. Outram believed that decoration was not mere applique, but a means to communicate through architecture, to make the banal theatrical.



John Outram, *Isle of Dogs Pumping Station*
London, UK (1985–88)

1. Looking at the capitals, we can see the lines of the acanthus leaves, though highly abstracted.
 - a. In place of a rosette, we have a circular protrusion reminiscent of a turbine used in water pumping.



John Outram, *Isle of Dogs Pumping Station*
London, UK (1985 – 88)
Right: Francesco Poccianti, *Cisternone*

- This elevation of a building of 'mere' utility towards a work of architecture reminds us of the Cisternone in Neoclassical Italy (Neo-Classicism Italy).



Robert Venturi

American; 1925 - 2018

Denise Scott Brown

American; 1931 -

- Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. Up until quite recently, they were both still practicing together, though Scott Brown is still active.

“Orthodox Modern architects have tended to recognize complexity insufficiently or inconsistently. In their attempt to break with tradition and start all over again, **they idealized the primitive and elementary at the expense of the diverse and the sophisticated.**” [16]

1. <Quote> Summarizes perfectly their attitude against Modernism.
 - a. They believed the severity of Modernism equated to understanding the built environment in far too reductive terms.
 - b. In the Modernists' goal to engineer society through building, but simplified the richness of culture.
 - c. So instead, VSB (Venturi Scott Brown) found inspiration in styles that didn't at first complement each other, in diversity, and projects that challenged rather simplified buildings, neighborhoods, and cities.



Robert Venturi
Private Residence, New Castle, Delaware (1978)

1. An early work by Venturi, a private residence in Delaware.



Marcel Breuer, Club Chair (The Wassily Chair) [1925-26]

1. Contrast with High-Modernist Chair



Queen Anne Chair
1980s

Marcel Breuer, Club Chair (The Wassily Chair) [1925-26]

1. Contrast with High-Modernist Chair



Queen Anne Chair
1980s

1. Extending their ideas into furniture, they produced the *Queen Anne Chair*, like their buildings, intended to learn from vernacular, from the visual language provided by everyday objects (as opposed to universal types formulated by Modernists).

DIRECTIONAL SPACE

	SPACE · SCALE	SPEED	SYMBOL <small>(representing 100% ratio)</small>
EASTERN BAZAAR		3 MPH	
MEDIEVAL STREET		3 MPH	
MAIN STREET		3 MPH 25 MPH	W
COMMERCIAL STRIP		30 MPH	
THE STRIP		30 MPH	
SHOPPING CENTER		2 MPH 50 MPH	

- Another lesson from their research on Las Vegas was the interrelationships between speed, the scale of buildings, and the immediacy of visual communication through symbols and signage.

VAST SPACE



SPACE-SCALE

VERSAILLES



ENGLISH GARDEN



BRIGADIERE CITY
LEVITTOWN



WILE RABEVEN



HIGHWAY
INTERCHANGE



THE STRIP



SPACE · SCALE · SPEED · SYMBOL

1. Example provided – Versailles.

VAST SPACE



SPACE-SCALE

VERSAILLES



ENGLISH GARDEN



BRIDGEMORE CITY



WILLE RABEVEK



HIGHWAY



THE STRIP



SPACE · SCALE · SPEED · SYMBOL

- English Garden
- Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire

VAST SPACE



SPACE-SCALE

VERSAILLES



ENGLISH GARDEN



BROADACRE CITY
LEVITRONS



WILE RABEVEK



HIGHWAY
INTERCHANGE



THE STRIP



SPACE · SCALE · SPEED · SYMBOL

1. Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City* (notice the tower).

VAST SPACE



SPACE-SCALE

VERSAILLES

ENGLISH GARDEN

BROADWAY CITY
LEWISTOWN

VILLE RADIEUSE

HIGHWAY
INTERCHANGE

THE STRIP



SPACE · SCALE · SPEED · SYMBOL

1. Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*... VSB's clear distaste for Modernism – look at the massive scale and distance of the towers in VSB's section.

VAST SPACE



SPACE-SCALE

VERMILLES



ENGLISH GARDEN



BRIDGEGADE CITY



WILE RABEVEK



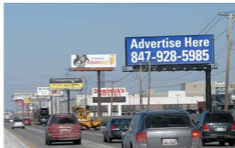
HIGHWAY



THE STRIP



SPACE · SCALE · SPEED · SYMBOL



1. Highway Interchange – the importance of large signs, given the speed of vehicles.

VAST SPACE



SPACE-SCALE

VERSAILLES

ENGLISH GARDEN

BROADWAY CITY LEVITTE'S

WILE RABEVEN

HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

THE STRIP



SPACE · SCALE · SPEED · SYMBOL

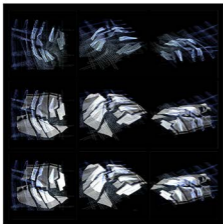
1. The Strip – heavy use of both signs (words) and symbols (think of the Duck).



"learning from popular culture does not remove the architect from his or her status in high culture. But it may **alter high culture to make it more sympathetic to current needs and issues.**" [161]

- Las Vegas Strip
- Old Europe is great, but we have other means of analyzing architecture and the city

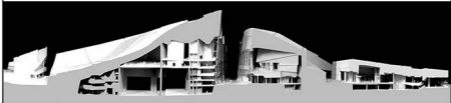
ARCHITECTURE TODAY



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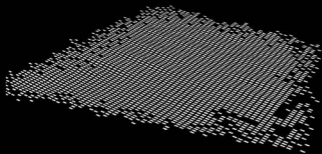


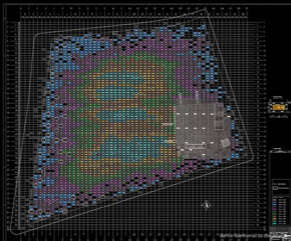
City of Culture, Galdakao, Spain (2011)

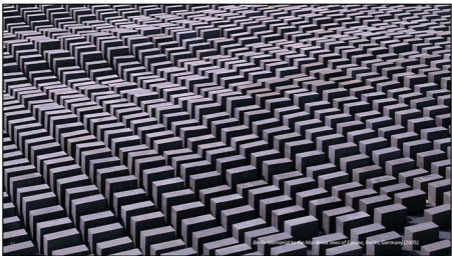




City of Culture, Galicia, Spain (2011)







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Berlin, Germany (2009)



Norman Foster, 30 St. Mary Axe, London, UK (2003)



Norman Foster, 30 St. Mary Axe, London, UK (2003)



Norman Foster, 30 St. Mary Axe, London, UK (2003)



© Getty Images; Dancing House (aka "Frel and Ginger"), Prague, Czech Republic (1996)



Frank Gehry, Supersonics, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025







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Zaha Hadid (w/ Patrick Schumacher), Bridge Pavilion, Zaragoia, Spain (2008)











MAD Architects, Absolut Tower, Mississauga, Canada (2012)



MAD Architects, Harbin Opera House, Harbin, China (2015)



MAD Architects, Harbin Opera House, Harbin, China (2015)



MAD Architects, Chaoyang Park Plaza, Beijing, China (2017)