

Arch-201

Philosophy

Post-modernism

Postmodern architecture is a style emerged in the 1960s as a reaction against the austerity, formality, and lack of variety of modern architecture.

The movement was introduced by the architect and urban planner Denise Scott Brown and architectural theorist Robert Venturi in their book *Learning from Las Vegas*. The style flourished from the 1980s through the 1990s, particularly in the work of Scott Brown & Venturi, Philip Johnson, Charles Moore and Michael Graves. In the late 1990s, it divided into a multitude of new tendencies, including high-tech architecture, neo-futurism and deconstructivism.



A book published in 1966 by the American architect Robert Venturi, **Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture**, was a key influence on the development of Postmodernism. Venturi **celebrated** the **ambiguities**, **inconsistencies** and **idiosyncrasies** of the Mannerist and Baroque architecture of Rome, but also celebrated **popular culture** and the **ordinary architecture** of the American Main Street.





Fig: Piazza d'italia, Charles Moore

A later work, **Learning from Las Vegas (1972)**, deconstructed the signs and symbols of the Las Vegas strip and divided buildings into **'ducks'**, the sculptural buildings that embodied their message within the structure, and the **'decorated shed'**, which used **signs to communicate** its message. In practice, it meant the **rediscovery** of the various **meanings** contained **within** the mainly **classical architecture of the past** and **applying** them to **modern structures**. The **result** was an architecture that **embodied historical allusion** and **dashes of whimsy**.

Postmodernist movement was always a figure of conflict. For hardcore modernists, the referencing of prior styles was a disrespect to the future-facing architecture they had tried to promote. For traditionalists, the cheerful and kitschy take on classicism was an insult to the elegance of the past.

But on closer examination, post-modernism is not about contradiction, but of mixing. It combines the best of both modernism and classicism: it is pragmatic and functional, exuberant and thoughtful about the past.



Portland building, Micheal Graves

In place of the **functional doctrines** of **modernism**, Venturi **proposed** giving **emphasis** to the **façade**, incorporating **historical elements**, a **subtle** use of **unusual materials** and **historical allusions**, and the use of **fragmentation** and **modulations** to make the building **interesting**. Denise Scott Brown, accomplished architect and urban planner, and Venturi wrote *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), in which they further developed their **joint argument against modernism**. They urged architects to take into **consideration** and to **celebrate** the **existing architecture in a place**, rather than to try to **impose** a **visionary utopia** from their own fantasies.



Fig: Dolphin & Swans Hotel, Micheal Graves

This was in line with **Scott Brown's belief** that **buildings should be built for people**, and that **architecture should listen to them**. Scott Brown and Venturi argued that **ornamental and decorative elements** are "**accommodate existing needs for variety and communication**". The book was instrumental in opening readers' eyes to new ways of thinking about buildings, as it drew from the entire history of architecture—both high-style and vernacular, both historic and modern—and in response to Mies van der Rohe's famous maxim "Less is more", Venturi responded, to "**Less is a bore.**" Venturi cited the examples of Scott and his own buildings, Guild House, in Philadelphia, as examples of a new style that welcomed **variety and historical references**, without returning to academic revival of old styles.



Guild House, Scott & Venturi

Features of Post-modernist Architecture

Bright Colors

Ranging from bright pastels to neon, used internally and externally.



Fig: Chaina Warf Apartment, Campbell Zogolovitch Wilkinson & Gough

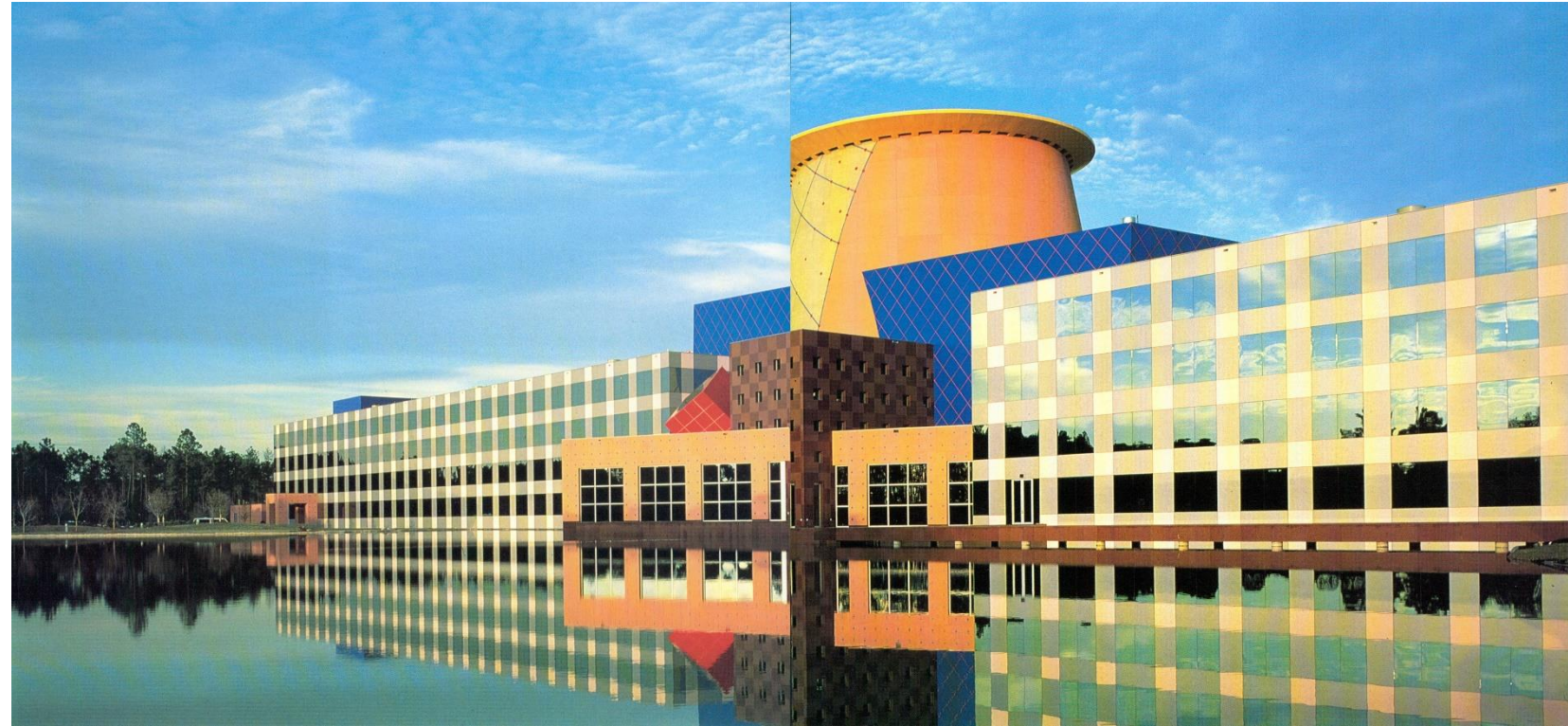


Fig: Team Disney Building, Micheal Graves

Playfulness

Creating eye-catching and whimsical buildings.



Fig: Feature Animation Building, Robert A. M. Stern Architects



Fig: M2 Building, Kengo Kuma

Classical Motifs

Using the language of classical architecture but with a modern twist to create visual jokes or themes.



Fig: Water Pumping Station, John Outram



Fig: AT&T Building, Philip Johnson & John Burgee

Variety of materials and shapes

Unusual shapes and combinations of materials to create effect.



Fig: Powell Library, University of California, Los Angeles
Hodgetts & Fung Design Associates



Fig: Scottish Parliament, EMBT Arquitectes Associats
Miralles, Enric

Thank You.