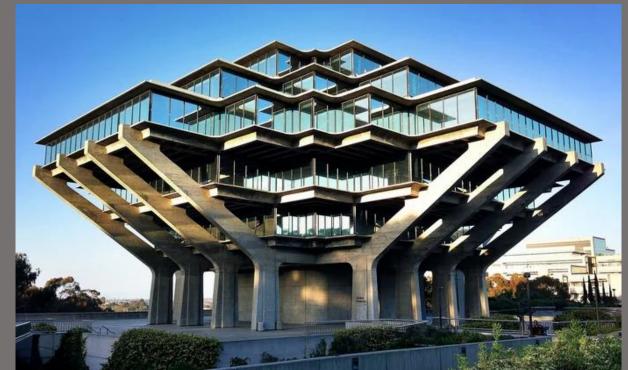
Brutalism:
Masterpieces
or
Monstrosities



A Smithsonian
Lecture Presented
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December 12, 2023
12, 2023



What is Brutalism

- Origin of the term
- As a reaction to formality of modernism
- Millions of buildings damaged or destroyed during the World War II
- Housing needs especially critical
- Brutalism was a low-cost option
- Both Europe and the United States experienced a population boom in the 1950's and 60's

Elements of Brutalism

- Extensive use of concrete
- Other materials also common:
 brick, glass, steel, and rough-hewn stone
- Forthright geometric forms
- Massive monolithic and blocky appearance
- Rough and unfinished surfaces
- Minimized decorative features
- Modular elements
- Honesty in use of materials
- Both form and function revealed by design

Attributes of Concrete

- Concrete offered huge benefits: standardization, prefabrication and rapid construction
- Concrete overused, particularly by governments and national institutions
- Concrete can degrade over time
- Concrete makes changes to structure and mechanical elements difficult with solid concrete walls, ceilings, and floors