

Postmodern Architecture

Background to Postmodernism

- Dissatisfaction with Modernism led to Postmodernism.
- Postmodernism did NOT replace Modernism.
- Several approaches to architecture also evolved during the period among them: Brutalist, Organic, Deconstructionist, and High-tech
- A key element in the rapid rise of Postmodernism was the publication in 1966 of *Complexity and Contradiction* by Robert Venturi, and the subsequent publication in 1972 of *Learning from Las Vegas*, by Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and

Characteristics of Postmodern Architecture:

1. **Eclecticism:** Postmodern architecture often incorporates elements from various historical styles and combines them in unconventional ways. It embraces historical references, decorative motifs, and cultural symbols, creating a pastiche of different architectural languages.
2. **Playfulness and Whimsy:** Postmodern architecture emphasizes playfulness, irony, and humor. Architects employ unconventional forms, exaggerated proportions, and unexpected juxtapositions to create visually striking and thought-provoking designs.
3. **Fragmentation and Collage:** Postmodern architecture rejects the modernist idea of a unified and homogeneous design. Instead, it favors fragmentation and collage, where different elements and styles combine to create a visually dynamic and diverse composition.
4. **Contextualism:** Postmodern architecture often responds to its surrounding context, whether historical, cultural, or physical. It seeks to establish a dialogue with the existing built environment, incorporating contextual references and acknowledging the local architectural heritage.
5. **Symbolism and Iconography:** Postmodern architecture employs symbolism and iconography to communicate meaning and evoke emotions. It uses architectural elements and ornamentation as symbols or metaphors, often referencing cultural, historical, or social themes.
6. **Materials and Color:** Postmodern architecture embraces a wide range of materials, including both traditional and modern, and often employs them in

unconventional ways. It also emphasizes the use of vibrant colors, contrasting hues, and bold patterns to create visual interest and make a statement.

7. Rejection of Universal Truths: Postmodernism challenges the notion of universal truths or a single dominant architectural style. It celebrates diversity, subjective interpretations, and the idea that multiple meanings can coexist within architecture.