

Modern and Postmodern Architecture

By Mert Cengiz

Throughout history, people have constructed buildings for their needs. Unlike many other needs, construction, or more specifically architecture, is considered as an art form. Generally, needs appear only for us to survive; however, architecture differs from the other needs as it has an artistic and aesthetic aspect. Buildings reveal the conditions of their construction and years views of life.



*A building in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey built for government use. The construction of this building was a necessity just as every building.

Modern and postmodern architectures are two different movements and the former follows the latter. Being an art movement, they emerged with modern and post-modern philosophical movements simultaneously. That's why a connection between these two areas –philosophy and art- can be formed. Due to the fact that architecture is an art form, the connection is also valid there.

Modern Architecture

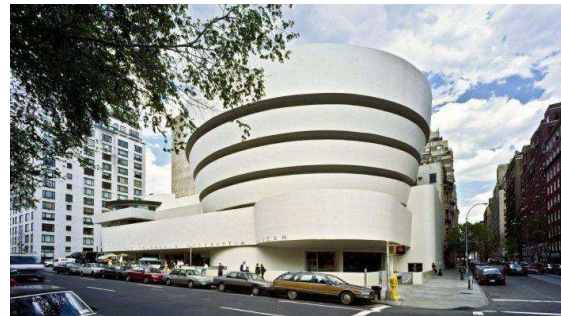
The roots of modern architecture go back until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. In 1893, an architect called Louis Sullivan founded the first design of a modern building. Architects such as Le Corbusier, Staatliches Bauhaus, and Frank Lloyd Wright followed Sullivan. It is important to mention that modern architecture is totally different from contemporary architecture; modern architecture appeared at the same time with the art movement called modernism, yet contemporary architecture is only 60 years old.

Key features of the modern architecture are clean and minimal lines, broad roof overhangs, walls of glass and large windows, open and well-defined floorplans, modern and traditional building materials, relationship to the outside equipment, and asymmetrical designs. It focuses on functionalism rather than complexity.

Some examples of modern architecture are Barcelona Pavilion by Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe in Barcelona, Spain, 1929, The Guggenheim Museum by Frank Lloyd Wright in New York, USA, 1959, Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier in Paris, France, 1931, Glass House by Philip Johnson in New Canaan, Connecticut, USA, 1949, The Fallingwater House by Frank Lloyd Wright in Mill Run, Pennsylvania, USA, 1935, and David S. Ingalls Skating Rink by Eero Saarinen, Connecticut, USA, 1958.



*Barcelona Pavilion



*The Guggenheim Museum



*Villa Savoye



*Glass House



*The Fallingwater House



*David S. Ingalls Skating Rink

Postmodern Architecture

Postmodern architecture was born with the postmodern philosophy at the same time, in the mid-20th century. Consequently, the architecture possesses some ideas of philosophy such as complexity, irony, and contradiction. Postmodern architecture is a reaction for the modern one. Like the philosophy, post-modern architects believe that modern architecture is not successful for their utopian ideas.

Key characteristics of post-modern architecture are mishmash of architectural styles and periods, sculptural forms, frequent embrace of bright colour, liberal use of classical ornamental details, use of abstraction, use of trompe l'oeil (an art method using realistic imagery to create optic illusion), and idiosyncratic rule-breaking forms that defied the dogmatic codes of Modernism. In general, post-modern architecture is considered playful, whimsy, humorous, and ironic.

Some important postmodern buildings are Vanna Venturi House by Robert Venturi in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, USA, 1964, Portland Building by Michael Graves in Portland, Oregon, USA, 1982, Neue Staatsgalerie by James Stirling in Stuttgart, Germany, 1984, the Sydney Opera House by Jørn Utzon in Sydney Australia, 1973, Petronas Towers by César Pelli in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1999, and Casinò di Campione by Mario Botta in Lombardy, Italy, 2007.



*Vanna Venturi House



*The Portland Building



*Neue Staatsgalerie



*Sydney Opera House



*Petronas Towers



*Casinò di Campione

Reactionary Modernism in Weimar Republic and the Third Reich

The term reactionary modernism can be defined as “the refusal of Enlightenment and the values of liberal democracy even if there is an enthusiasm for modern technology.” During the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich eras, this movement was the dominant one in Germany. It is very rational; futurists’ fetishization of machinery is refused by most German artists. They call modern, abstract, non-representational views degenerate, which also Hitler, who was an artist before being a politician, hated.

As a conclusion, different styles of construction have been used for more than a century. These differences derive from the view of artists, not from the progress of architecture. It is not correct to claim that modern architecture is “better” than the post-modern one, or vice versa. Such revolutions are quite natural, and are possible to occur in the future. [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#) [\(3\)](#) [\(4\)](#) [\(5\)](#) [\(6\)](#) [\(7\)](#) [\(8\)](#)