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**Research Paper:**

**Other Modernism in the Intermediate Post-World War II Years**

*During wartime, people only think about what happened, what is happening, and what is going to happen. In other words, people only think about war.*

*As those are the people thoughts architecture during this time will be in somehow related to the war.*

*World War II (often abbreviated to WWII or WW2), also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. The vast majority of the world's countries including all the great powers.*

*Modern architecture, or modernist architecture was based upon new and innovative technologies of construction, particularly the use of glass, steel and reinforced concrete; the idea that "Form should follow function" (Sullivan); an embrace of minimalism; and a rejection of ornament. It emerged in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became dominant after World War II until the 1980s, when it was gradually replaced as the principal style for institutional and corporate buildings by postmodern architecture.*

*During World War II era and Post War-era, buildings were based on standard plans for quick and inexpensive construction; time and budget were very considered because of crisis*

*resulting as consequences of the war. As part of the mobilization effort, they were constructed to serve specific wartime needs.*

*Post War houses are single-story houses, sometimes split-level homes that are boxy, brick and ordinary. Homes built after World War II were dubbed post-war, and you'll find that homes built at that time tend to come in certain styles, such as ranch or Cape Cod. A Post War house is known for being basic. These houses are more functional than fun or beautiful.*

*These structures were built at a time when the building standards of military facilities were being raised to include indoor plumbing, electricity, and central, forced-air heating, which had become the standard for most Americans. The U.S. economy was greatly impacted by the mobilization construction, which contributed to the recovery of the building industry following the Great Depression.*

*These structures were built with the expectation that they would last only 5 to 20 years. However, they have been somewhat over-designed if the objective was to erect temporary structures. President Roosevelt promised the mothers of servicemen that modern facilities and adequate shelter would be provided. It was determined that the troops would get the basic comforts that were considered to be a standard among average American citizens by 1940 - no less and no more. This required substantial improvement in the way facilities were built. This is also, why the buildings were painted at the cost of millions of dollars in spite of the concept that they were only meant to last a few years. The painting and other improvements were done on the urging of Eleanor Roosevelt, who argued that it made a big difference to the morale of the soldiers.*

*These "temporary" buildings were built to house the troops with a standard of health and comfort previously unknown by U.S. troops during wartime. A typical barrack could accommodate half a company, or 63 men. There are presently only eight of these left in contrast to 33 that existed on Fort Douglas in 1946. In 1940, the Surgeon General set the minimum space requirements at 700 cubic feet per person in order to ensure good health sanitation. This was quite a change from the 400 cubic feet in 1916. In meeting this goal of a higher standard of living, the objective of impermanence was lost.*

*The designing of these buildings was guided by the following five principles: speed, simplicity, conservation of materials, flexibility and safety.*

*They are also significant for the way they influenced the building industry.*

### **Key Elements**

- ✚ One of many similar-sized houses in the neighborhood. A post-war house is probably in a large neighborhood with a modest-sized, half-acre or less backyard.*
  - ✚ Small living space. Of course, there are exceptions, but frequently, these are homes with four to six rooms and less than 1,000 square feet of living space.*
  - ✚ Picture windows. A picture window at the front of the home provides a view of the front street.*
  - ✚ Kitchen facing the backyard. The kitchen typically has a window allowing for a view of the backyard, and usually a back door.*
  - ✚ Pitched roof. The Cape Cod version of the post-war home often had a pitched roof, which meant there was space for an upstairs attic space.*
  - ✚ Garages. By the post-war years, the car was a firmly established member of the family. While houses before World War II might come without a garage that was not the case for the post-war home.*
  - ✚ Amenities. In New York City real estate, post-war buildings offer residents amenities for a community fee, such as doorman service, elevator or laundry facilities.*
- An interesting feature on many of the 700 Series buildings was the skirt roof, which continued around all four sides just above the ground story windows. These eyebrows or canopies, officially referred to as aquamedia, also extended the eave line on the gable ends to span the width of the building on both single-story and two-story structures. Their purpose was to allow the window sash to remain open for ventilation even during inclement weather. This feature was discontinued due to the possible occurrence of leaks where the stub rafters were framed into the wall and because it did not shield against blowing rain.*

## ***Post-War Modernism in the United States (1945-1985):***

*The international Style of architecture had appeared in Europe, particularly in the Bauhaus movement, in the late 1920s. In 1932 it was recognized and given a name at an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City organized by Architect Philip Johnson and Architectural Critic Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Between 1937 and 1941, following the rise Hitler and the Nazis in Germany, most of the leaders of the German Bauhaus movement found a new home in the United States, and played an important part in the development of American modern architecture.*

***Frank Lloyd Wright** was eighty years old in 1947; he had been present at the beginning of American modernism, and though he refused to accept that he belonged to any movement, continued to play a leading role almost to its end. One of his most original late projects was the campus of Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, begun in 1941 and completed in 1943.*

***Walter Gropius**, the founder of the Bauhaus, moved to England in 1934 and spent three years there before being invited to the United States by Walter Hudnut of the Harvard Graduate School of Design; Gropius became the head of the architecture faculty. **Marcel Breuer**, who had worked with him at the Bauhaus, joined him and opened an office in Cambridge.*

***Ludwig Mies van der Rohe** described his architecture with the famous saying, "Less is more" (Mies van der Rohe). As the Director of the School of Architecture of what is now called the Illinois Institute of Technology from 1939 to 1956, Mies (as he was commonly known) made Chicago the leading city for American modernism in the postwar years.*

*Influential residential architects in the new style in the United States included **Richard Neutra and Charles and Ray Eames**. The most celebrated work of the Eames was Eames House in Pacific Palisades, California, (1949) Charles Eames in collaboration with Eero Saarinen. It is composed of two structures, an architect residence and his studio, joined in the form of an L.*

*The firm of **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** was founded in Chicago in 1936 by Louis Skidmore and Nathaniel Owings, and joined in 1939 by engineer John Merrill; it soon went under the name of SOM. Its first big project was Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge,*

Tennessee, the gigantic government installation that produced plutonium for the first nuclear weapons.

**Wallace Harrison** played a major part in the modern architectural history of New York; as the architectural advisor of the Rockefeller Family, he helped design Rockefeller Center, the major Art Deco architectural project of the 1930s.

**Philip Johnson** (1906-2005) was one of the youngest and last major figures in American modern architecture. He trained at Harvard with Walter Gropius, and then was director of the department of architecture and modern design at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1946 to 1954. In 1947, he published a book about Mies van der Rohe, and in 1953 designed his own residence, the Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut in a style modeled after Mies's Farnsworth House.

**Eero Saarinen** (1910–1961) was the son of Eliel Saarinen, the most famous Finnish architect of the Art Nouveau period, who emigrated to the United States in 1923, when Eero was thirteen. He studied art and sculpture at the academy where his father taught, and then at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière Academy in Paris before studying architecture at Yale University.

**Louis Kahn** (1901–74) was another American Architect who moved away from the Mies van der Rohe model of the glass box, and other dogmas of the prevailing international style. He borrowed from a wide variety of styles, and idioms, including neoclassicism. He was professor of architecture at Yale University from 1947 to 1957, where his students included Eero Saarinen.

**I. M. Pei** (born 1917) is a major figure in late modernism and the debut of Post-modern architecture. He was born in China and educated in the United States, studying architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### **Postwar modernism in Europe (1945–1975)**

In France, **Le Corbusier** remained the most prominent architect, though he built few buildings there. His most prominent late work was the convent of Sainte Marie de La Tourette in Evreux-sur-l'Arbresle.

*In Britain, the major figures in modernism included **James Stirling** (1926–1992) and **Denys Lasdun** (1914–2001). Lasdun's best-known work is the Royal National Theatre (1967–1976) on the south bank of the Thames.*

*In Belgium, a major figure was **Charles Vandenhove** (born 1927) who constructed an important series of buildings for the University Hospital Center in Liege.*

*In Finland, the most influential architect was **Alvar Aalto**, who adapted his version of modernism to the Nordic landscape, light, and materials, particularly the use of wood.*

*In Italy, the most prominent modernist was **Gio Ponti**, who worked often with the Structural Engineer **Pier Luigi Nervi**, a specialist in reinforced concrete. Nervi created concrete beams of exceptional length, twenty-five meters, which allowed greater flexibility in forms and greater heights.*

*The most famous Spanish modernist was the Catalan Architect **Josep Lluís Sert**, who worked with great success in Spain, France and the United States. In his early career he worked for a time under Le Corbusier, and designed the Spanish pavilion for the 1937 Paris Exposition.*

*Notable German modernists included **Johannes Krahn**, who played an important part in rebuilding German cities after World War II, and built several important museums and churches, notably St. Martin, Idstein, which artfully combined stone masonry, concrete and glass.*

### **Preservation**

*Several works or collections of modern architecture have been designated by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. In addition to the early experiments associated with Art Nouveau, these include a number of the structures: the Rietveld Schröder House in Utrecht, the Bauhaus structures in Weimar and Dessau, the Berlin Modernism Housing Estates, the White City of Tel Aviv, the city of Asmara, the city of Brasilia, the Ciudad Universitaria of UNAM in Mexico City and the University City of Caracas in Venezuela, and the Sydney Opera House.*

*Private organizations such as Docomomo International, the World Monuments Fund, and the Recent Past Preservation Network are working to safeguard and document imperiled modern architecture. In 2006, the World Monuments Fund launched Modernism at Risk, an advocacy and conservation program.*

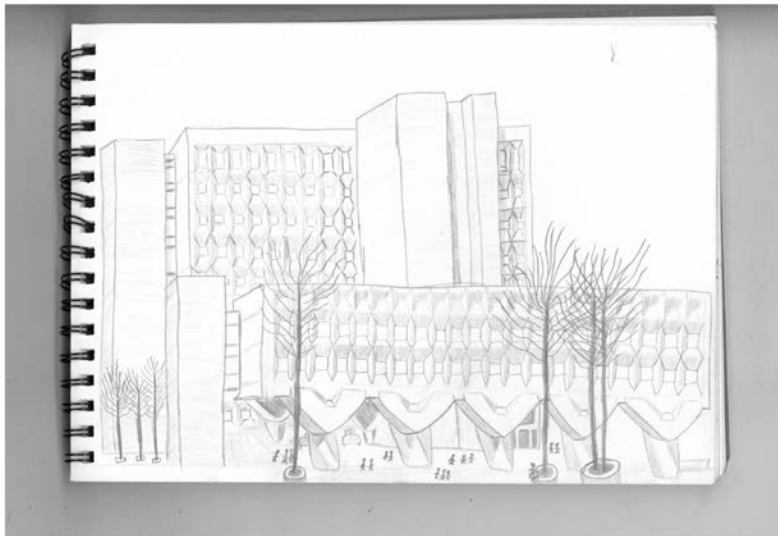
## ***Examples of buildings during the Post-World War II***

*Unite d'Habitation, by Le Corbusier (1947-1952).*



*Fig. 1. Dalbera, Jean-Pierre, picture, [Wikimedia Commons](#) November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011.*

*Building Technology I & II, now called Maister Hall by Marcel Breuer (1972).*



*Fig. 2. López C, Francisco Constantino, sketch.*

*Solomon Guggenheim Museum, by Frank Lloyd Wright (1946–1959).*

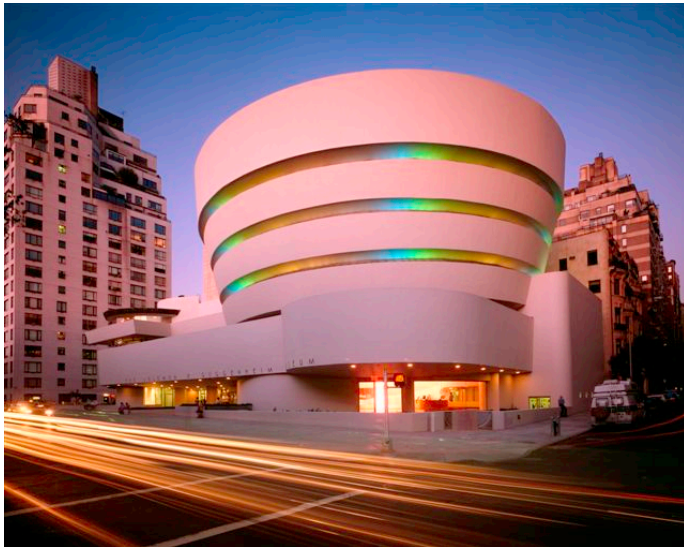


Fig. 3. Picture, Pictify.

*Young Israel, or Young Israel of the Concourse, now called Bronx Museum of the Arts, by Simon B. Zelnick, Castro-Blanco, Piscioneri & Feder (1959-1961), expanded in (1988).*

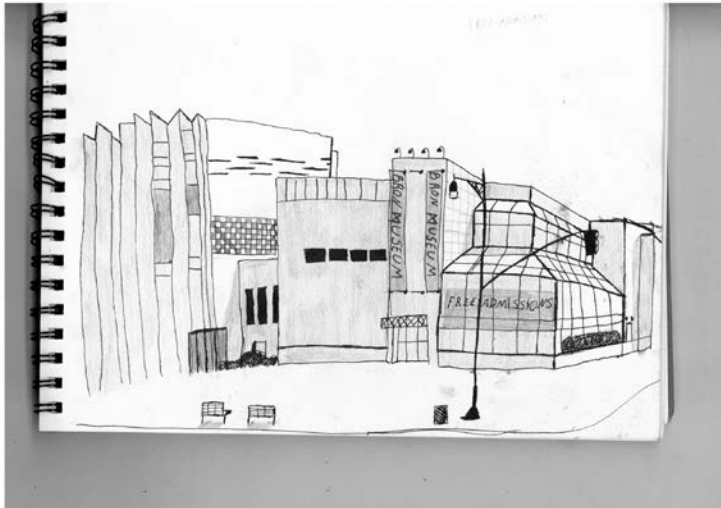


Fig. 4. López C, Francisco Constantino, sketch.



*Barcelona Pavilion, by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1929)*



Fig. 5. Stott, Rory, picture, *Arch Daily* March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

*In contrast, the similarities between those buildings are the material, they were built out of concrete, reinforced concrete, and some of them included glass and steel. As pointed on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> paragraphs, those buildings were built in an era when even though the war was already over, people still was thinking about war, and the crisis it brought. For that reason those buildings were built using the same criteria which was considering time of construction, conservation of material, and budget, as the phrase expressed “Less is more” (Mies van der Rohe). When talking about the program spaces, they were very basic.*

*However, it does not mean they are all the same, as the architect could probably try to do something different to make people think different in respect to war, as it could be the intention of Le Corbusier, for example, when he built the Unite d’Habitation in which we can see he used different live colors in the façade. Frank Lloyd Wright also incorporated color lights in the Solomon Guggenheim Museum. In addition, Mies van der Rohe used sculpture and a touch of transparency on his building Barcelona Pavilion.*

*they also can vary depending on the use of the building as usually buildings built for federal used could differ from buildings built for the public use, as the case of the Meister Hall by Marcel Breuer and the Bronx Museum of the Arts by Simon B. Zelnick, Castro-Blanco, Piscioneri & Feder or the Salomon Guggenheim Museum.*

*Now a question is are those buildings going to remain over the time? The buildings built during the war were built to last 5-20 years as it is pointed in the 9<sup>th</sup> paragraph, but not all of them and the Post-War buildings are taken down to give place to a new building, even*

*architecture has been changing giving place to other different styles, instead some of them just get expanded or modified as it is the case of the Bronx Museum of the Arts. Also some of them which represent icons or in somehow a necessity for the public as libraries or other museums, as buildings for federal use, they receive the appropriate maintenance to remain in time. There are also private organizations in charge of protect and safeguard modern architecture, and programs in charge of their advocacy and conservation, as it pointed in the Preservation part, in the 39<sup>th</sup> paragraph.*

*Now that we understand better why some buildings have that type of boring façade, and that they actually belong to the same era of other buildings built out of the same material but, with a more notable characteristic, is how we understand the importance behind the phrase “Less is more” (Mies van der Rohe).*

## **Work Cited**

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