

Module 5: "Color in Art & Design"

Lecture 15: "Modern Art in Design"

The Lecture Contains:

- Modern Art in Design
- Modern Architecture and Design
- The Bauhaus Poster Design
- Modern Furniture Design (minimalist)
- Modern Product Design (minimalist)
- Conclusion

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Plate 14. A Braque.
Le Portugais Emigrant,
1911-1912



14. B Picasso, Guiter, Collage
1912



14. C Picasso, Collage



(wood, paper, readymade)



15. A Picasso's 'Bull Head'
1943



15 B 'Readymade' Marcel Duchamp (1913-1917)



(Read more: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Readymades_of_Marcel_Duchamp ; June 3, 2012)

Introduction of collage by Picasso and Braque (plates 14 B& C) became one of the most significant movements for the future generations. By introducing readymade objects baptised machine made mass produced as art. Duchamp in 1913-17 (plate 15B) readymade art works introduced a new concept that would recognize machine manufactured mass produced products as work of art. Industrial Design products, by this time are available to the mass but remained outside the domain of art and aesthetics. Duchamp baptised those products and forced people to recognize the aesthetic beauty in Industrial Design. Hence, modern art became the source of new aesthetics that matched with the essence of industrial products (consumer products).

From now on, art was to be discussed in terms of style -- colour, line, shape, space, and composition -- conveniently ignoring or playing down whatever social, political, or progressive statements the artist had hoped to make in his or her work. Departure from the conventional thinking about art gave new philosophy that is so close to the modern design thinking. Modern Art of 20th century gave birth to a new area leading to establish The Bauhaus in Germany. The Bauhaus further enhanced the momentum and laid down the fundamentals for the future of academic institutions for Industrial Design.

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Modern Art in Design

In order to understand the relationship between art and design one needs to go through the chronological events in the history of modern art that has enormous contribution in the field of modern design profession. Unfortunately in most cases art's contribution has remained in the area of aesthetics. One has to realize the fundamental change in aesthetic appreciation that we experience today has come from a complex socio-political evolution. The revolutionary intellectual thoughts and challenges the art and architecture faced during the late 19th C AD and the early 20th C AD has led to the present state of freedom of expression. Art had challenged and demolished the orthodox and traditional societal behaviour. Art refused to accept the traditional norms that would restrict their freedom of expression. Such movement at the backdrop of Industrial Revolution, French and Russian Revolution swept through Europe giving birth to new generation creativity. Modern design has enormous debt to the movement.

The progress towards abstraction clearly shows the simplification of the subject in 'straight-line'. Industrial Design found a new concept that perfectly matches with the philosophy of 'mass production'. 'Straight-line' became the idiom of a new creativity. Straight-line could find a new horizon of aesthetic appreciation. Piet Mondrian becomes one of the fountainheads of such philosophy. Industrial Designers could perceive a new language of expression. In the process architecture took the initiative to introduce a new style of architectural construction evolving around the philosophy of minimalist approach in straight-lines.

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Modern Architecture and Design

The modern architecture became the force behind the new age Industrial Design. The spirit of liberal thinking in art and design influenced the common people around the world. While architecture adopted the style and spirit of architecture in 'straight lines' to spearhead a new kind of aesthetic expression, other consumer products flowed closely the same path.

(Ready more: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bauhaus> ; June 3, 2012)

Therefore, design professionals remained closely associated with the architecture professionals. The Bauhaus became the fountainhead of the movement. Hence, we need to understand- What is architecture?

Architecture is the conscious design of the form and appearance of a building in such a way as to provide predictable reactions in those who see or use it.

'Sculpture is the mother of architecture.'

Without aesthetic appeal, architecture will be called 'building'. Every building has to express itself beyond its structural elements, and material considerations. Hence, all architectures are building but all buildings are not architectures. Every building has to excel beyond its structural limitations to a level in order to be called as architecture.

Although architecture encloses real space, often there is an attempt to create a special effect of space in an illusionary way. Monumentality, using negative or positive space (*mass and void*), surface treatment, tactile quality, etc is some of the features that architecture can produce to create especial effect. Hence, architecture and product design shared similar philosophy and exercises.

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According to the Roman architect Vitruvius in the early 1st century AD-

- 1) Durability (Firmitas) - it should stand up robustly and remain in good condition.
- 2) Utility (Utilitas) - it should be useful and function well for the people using it
- 3) Beauty (Venustas) - it should delight people and raise their spirits

(Read more: <http://artinthepresent.blogspot.in/2007/12/sustainabilitydurability-efficiency.html> ; June 3, 2012)

The modern period gave a new look to architecture because of invention of new materials that introduced a new concept of aesthetics along with durability and efficiency. The introduction of cement concrete (RCC) benefited human beings in construction but it gradually de linked the old harmonious relationship between man and nature. Instead of maintaining the traditional relationship man gradually de-linked themselves from the nature. Original reasons for building shelter (protection and comfort) no longer hold any water. The closer relationship is cut by erecting solid walls. The vernacular of architecture evolved around the needs and the means. Material played major role in shaping the future of architecture.

A new vision of the house is designed in its natural surroundings and opening towards them by means of *terraces and cantilevered roofs*, and a new vision of the interior (space) of the house as freely intercommunicating spaces. The introduction of steel and glass skyscrapers, ***Skin & Bone***, and garden landscaping became part of the city planning since the middle of this century.



Plate16. A Nottingham, UK



Plate16. B CST Rail Station,
Mumbai, India



Plate16. C Victoria Memorial, Kolkata

(Source Plates 16: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_architecture ; June 3, 2012)

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The middle of 19th C AD to the end of 19th C AD produced architectural style that remarkably distinct with their characteristics, popularly known as Victorian Architecture. The Victorian Architecture characterises with their use of material and elaborates decorative quality that is typically Gothic. From the modern design point of view the design represented the sentiment of minute details, exclusive material use and volumes. Because of the massive grandeur of the scale in solidity the architecture of that era became burdensome for the future generation where after the WWII the traditional material became expensive compare to the invention of new technology.

The concept of multi-storeyed buildings because of the scarcity of space in urban scenario became extremely popular in the middle of 19th century in the US. Naturally 'straight-line' became the core of the new architecture solution. Industrial design and other household products are strongly influenced by the new concept. Luis Sullivan became champion the new architecture.



Plate 17 A. Luis Sullivan, Roosevelt University, Chicago, USA



Plate 17 B. Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago

(Ref. Plate 17 A: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Sullivan ; June 3, 2012)

(Ref. Plate 17 B: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Frank_Lloyd_Wright_works ; June 3, 2012)

Along with the art, architecture took a giant step toward modernism in 3-D space. Architecture spelt the concept of straight-line and aesthetics which eventually influenced the entire world of Industrial Design (consumer product). Luis Sullivan introduced a major concept of multistoried office building in Chicago. The scarcity of land for the urban development became one of the major issues in the modern town planning. The multistoried high rise architecture certainly took a major step in solving the land problem. The philosophy of straight line gave a new look to the urban skyline.



Plate 18. Frank L. Wright 'Fallingwater', PA, USA, 1936

(Ref. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallingwater> ; June 3, 2012)

Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater (Plate 18) is landmark architecture for private housing. The style of Wright has influenced around the world. Horizontal and vertical lines in space became the new visual

language. The contrast of straight-lines in nature created a new concept of aesthetics. Thus, architecture took the first step towards the new Industrial Design.

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The Bauhaus Poster Design



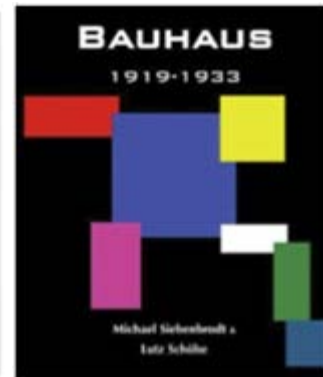
Plates19. 1923



1925



1933



1933

(Ref. Plates19 http://www.google.co.in/search?q=bauhaus+poster+design&hl=en&prmd=imvns&tbn=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=P3rLT4_ID8JrAe22dzXDg&sqj=2&ved=0CF8QsAQ&biw=1350&bih=489#hl=en&tbn=isch&sa=1&q=original+bauhaus+poster+design&oq=original+bauhaus+poster+design&aq=f&aql=&aql=&gs_l=img.12...58922.61620.0.63960.9.9.0.0.0.141.1092.0j9.9.0...0.0.IVOoNwMI2sE&bav=on.2.or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf..cf.osb&fp=25f79d2dfd93&biw=1350&bih=489 ; June 3, 2012)

Above Bauhaus Posters (plates19) are amazingly modern in term space, typography and color composition. The Bauhaus took a major step in promoting the new aesthetics of simplicity and minimalism in design. The clarity of the typography, choice of minimal color and color intensity created a new trend in 2D design.



Plates20. The Bauhaus Dessau, Germany 1919-1933

(Ref. Plates20 http://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&pg=bauhaus+poster+design&cp=37&gs_id=6&xhr=t&q=The+Bauhaus+Dessau+Germany+1919-1933&bav=on.2.or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf..cf.osb&biw=1350&bih=489&wrapid=tljp133873604134920&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbn=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=rX3LT4eILYqHrAep5ZWWhDg ; June 3, 2012)

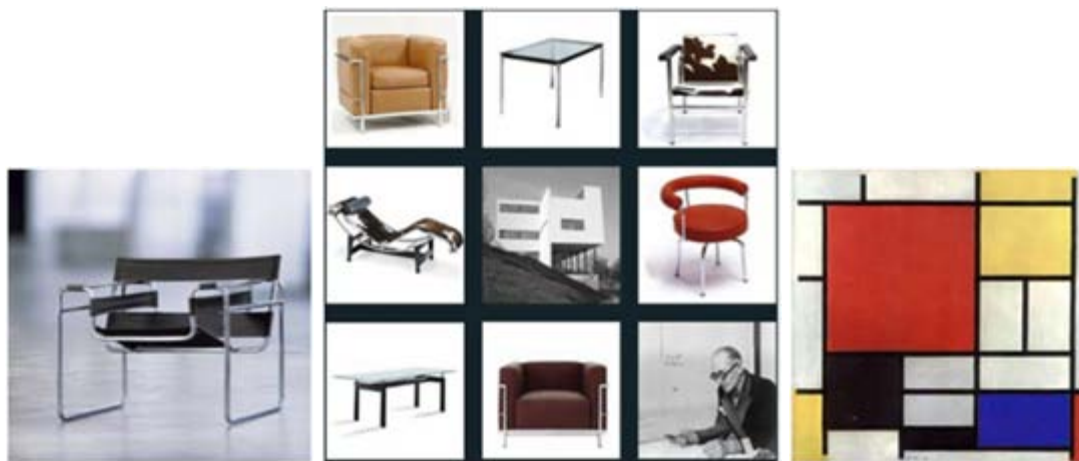
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The Bauhaus introduced the new architecture style- straight line (plates20). The horizontal and vertical line became the spirit of the new age architecture. The introduction of the new architecture became possible because new material, technology and reduction of cost. Still and Glass became the most sought after material along with the RCC structure for the concrete structures. The building became lighter with greater strength. Gothic architecture of massive stone structure is being replaced with the new material and elegance.

Interestingly along with the modern architecture, Industrial Design took step to reinvent the new concept of design with the help of the fundamentals of Design Principles and Design Elements.



Plates21. The Bauhaus Chair

The Bauhaus Furniture Shop

Piet Mondrian

(Ref.Plates21 http://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&q=the+bauhaus+furniture+design&bav=on.2.or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf..cf.osb&biw=1350&bih=489&wrapid=tlif133873713452410&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbn=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=-oHLT4nwGMuxrAf_wfi2Dg ; June 3, 2012)

Modern Industrial Design is heavily influenced by Mondrian's *Neo-Plastic Art* and The Bauhaus school of design. The *Neo-plastic* philosophy has inspired the modern art and design professionals to think and apply color with more logical and rational manner than earlier period. Earlier application of color has close relationship with societal based on tradition, rituals and ethos.

However, the *Neo-plastic* philosophy inspired designers to apply more freely for the sake of its own aesthetic beauty. The products came up with wide range of color combination in term of color its own merit- value, intensity and aesthetics. They found that the value of color and intensity could create dimension with solid colors. Modern products found the elegance of straight-lines. Architecture to consumer products appear quite differently from their earlier look. The appearance of products, manufacturing process and maintenance are all complementing each other. The Bauhaus became the source of such philosophy and inspired the entire world with a new look.



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Modern Furniture Design (minimalist)

Following are some of the furniture examples inspired by the philosophy of Bauhaus:



Gerrit Reiveld



Reiveld



Alvar Aalto



Le Corbusier



Marcel Breuer



Luwig Mies van der Rohe



Charles Eames



Charles Eames



Arne Jacobsen



Hans Wenger

Plates22 Furniture Design inspired by The Bauhaus

(Ref. <http://vintageverity.wordpress.com/category/furniture-bible/> June 3, 2012)

Most of the above product designs (Plate22) remained classic in term their usage till today. The products truly reflect the sentiment of the modern period where the choice of color, form, shape, space, material, maintenance have strong role to play. The products are no longer for decorative purpose to glorify the owner's pride. The products have become choice of the masses. The limitation of colors and simplicity of form started giving a new form of aesthetics, the aesthetics that reflects the 'minimalist' spirit which started from the initiative of The Bauhaus.

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Modern Product Design (minimalist)

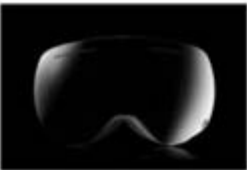
Following are some of the modern designs (Plate23) that have inherited the spirit of Bauhaus in term of form, space, color and simplicity through minimalism design. Color and arrangement of Space in Minimalist Products-



Rack



Interior Design



Plates23 Minimalist Design

(Ref. Plates22: http://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&pq=bauhaus+poster+design&cp=13&gs_id=15&xhr=t&q=minimalist+design&bav=on.2.or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf..cf.osb&biw=1350&bih=489&wrapid=tljp1338738430635424&um=1&ie=UTF8&tbn=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=DYfLT4z2EMXtrQerIdXADg#um=1&hl=en&tbn=isch&sa=1&q=minimalist+product+design&oq=minimalist+product+design&aq=0&aqi=g1&aql=&gs_l=img.1.0.0.11420.13947.0.15741.8.8.0.0.0.0.140.889.2j6.8.0...0.0.MdZHUtkDn8&bav=on.2.or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf..cf.osb&fp=25f79d2dfdc94d93&biw=1350&bih=489 ; June 3, 2012)

Conclusion

The journey of modernism started from the revolutionary thinking of 'freedom of expression' by some of the creative personality of 19th century (Manet). The color played most important role, which helped artists and designers to express their feeling. The liberation of mind used color as one of their most important vehicle of expression. Along with color slowly the form and style merged with to give a totality in art, architecture and design. The Bauhaus design school has contributed towards the modern design concepts in term of shape, form, color, etc. to express the minimalist philosophy. Is it possible today to think anything that would not reflect the spirit of minimalism? Today the modern life style has embraced the philosophy of simplicity in design that has come long way from reflecting the spirit of 'freedom' individual aspirations and desires.