

# Mindsapes in Contemporary Architecture - Colors of Creativity

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**Abstract:** “Style is knowing what you are, what you want to say, and not giving a damn”-Gore Vidal The paper attempts to define the various mindscapes in Contemporary architecture and design. What is style? Who are the icons who patronized it? This paper aims to create a chronological journey using the visual medium to establish the position of color in design. Color has subtly played an essential role in defining style by the use of it; the absence of it; or simply by its inherent existence in the material usage. A journey through Contemporary Architecture and design highlights moments of hi-style, where icons created fashion statements, sometimes colorful, sometimes colorless, but nonetheless of impact. The following aims to inspire and initiate some creative cycles that endorse more Style Statements.

**Index Terms:** architectural, between, colors, style

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. A passage through Contemporary styles and individuals who established definite trends.

2. A visual collage of colorful ideas that give voice to a building, space and object.

“Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space” The words of stalwart architect Mies Van der Rohe, corroborates the fact that ‘architecture can never be defined it can perhaps be encompassed in words, color, concept and creativity’. The constant evolution of these three C’s over the ages has traced the progressive stance of Architecture and Design.

Illustrious architects have been known ubiquitously for their distinctive concepts and creativity. Architecture today has reached a platform where architects don’t define buildings any longer. On the contrary, it is the narrative style elements and symbolic representation of buildings, which characterize the architect. In terms of concept, style, and color, architecture has spawned different styles from times immemorial.

<sup>1</sup>The architect’s acceptance of color has been diverse all along. Whereas predominantly color was just an asset in decoration and presentation, the last few decades have altered the definition of color in perceptual architecture. Today colors add to the representation of the form. Master architect Ram Koolhass states in his book, “Color”- “The nature of color should change- no longer just a thin layer of change, but something that genuinely alters perception”. It’s never been a run of the mill job to comprehend the complexities of color. In its native form, it still stays elusive.

Hence, style is specified by the icon who shaped it, and architecture cannot be seen independent from its artists-architects who by their own pioneering styles, proved a

paradigm to emulate and paved the road ahead for the splendid profession architecture today is all about.

## II. ART FOR ARCHITECTURE’S SAKE

Art has always been the glamorous first cousin to Architecture as its scale and semantics allow more adventure. Among the multitude of artists who stamped the 20<sup>th</sup> century to inspire the architecture practices, Picasso and Andy Warhol have been considered the most influential. Picasso’s innovations gave rise to a lot of art movements including Futurism in Italy, and other movements as well as early work of the Surrealists and Abstract Expressionists.

Andy Warhol was able to change the visual construction of the world we live in. Warhol erased the lines between Fine and commercial art, and compelled the world to think in a newer dimension. His perception, meddling and researching in the field of Visual Arts are exceptional.

Art references in time and place paved way for architectural styles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



## III. MODERNISM

The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw myriad cultural movements rooted in changes overcoming the Western Society. It was an era to create, impoverish and reshape the environment. Embracing this change, the need of the hour were some thinkers, who believed that the traditional art forms and architecture were obsolete, and it was time to confront the socio economic and political conditions of an emerging fully industrialized world.

Nicknamed as the father of modernism, Alvar Alto’s concepts were particularly distinguished for their utilization of texture, style, structure and complex forms (a depart from the existing symmetrical designs).

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“Architecture”, he said must have charm; it is a factor of beauty in society. But real beauty is not a conception of form..it is a result of harmony between several intrinsic factors, not at least the social. His concepts in tandem with the site, material, and form showed dynamism refining modern architecture.

“Form follows Function” was the dictum of the creator of the modern skyscraper, Louis Henri Sullivan. He created buildings which emphasized on verticality. Also, the semicircular arch became prominent with his designs. The Falling Water House by F.L.Wright has been labeled as the epitome of a house built to nature’s specifications and colored by changing seasons. He brought in use, alternative building materials and construction technology like precast concrete blocks and glass bricks. He also gave glass a new meaning by designing intricate windows which went on to become some of architecture’s most integral ornamentations.



Mies van der Rohe showcased building materials as a form of ornamentation with the use of glass and steel skyscraper. These have been apparent in Seagram Building and Lake Shore Drive Apartments. His buildings were planned on a grid system. Walter Gropius was responsible for introducing a screen wall system, the floors were supported by structural steel frames, also which facilitated no obstruction for the external glass walls to continue. His works of the Fagus Factory exemplify this concept.

Le Corbusier promoted the revisiting of color in architecture, In the words of the master, “Color should not be used as a decorative element, and also not to overlay spaces, but it should be a part of the whole”. The architect’s Villa Savoye stands the testimony to his five bullets of architecture-pilotis, free, skin of the building, open floor plan, long horizontal windows and roof garden. His innovation of the Modular has been used in the design of many of his buildings. And each epitomizes the use of color inherently within the explanation of these drawings.

An influence of the 1920’s, Italian Modernism was also seen in the works of Also Rossi. Extremely complex in content and meaning, his works have simultaneously been appreciated for their simplicity and originality too. His influence in shaping the European architectural thinking is

much remembered. He also was the founder of the Neo Rationalist Movement.



### IV. THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE

The formative decades of Modernism have generally been referred to as the International Style. The revival of the International Style by Luis Barragan as a colorful opulent genre of Mexican Modernism gave a novel version to Modernism. His application of vivid colors and textures added effervescence to the existing architectural scene. Known for creating vast amount of life and illumination in buildings, he nevertheless proved himself an equally influential landscape architect and an urban planner. In his words, “Any work of architecture which does not express serenity is a mistake”.

The architecture of Louis Khan dwelled into the use of brick and concrete masonry, simple, platonic, monumental and monolithic buildings. Though his ideas were in the International Style, his architecture was a merge of his Beaux Arts education and an aesthetic impulse that he developed upon to create his own architectural forms.

Oscar Niemeyer has been credited with the pioneering in the constructive possibilities of reinforced concrete. Hailed as the symbol of Brazil, he is best known for the plan of city of Brasilia and the United Nations Headquarters in New York. His exploration of concrete gave way to creating curve forms which were light and unique use of straight lines. His endeavor of the connecting the baroque vocabulary with modern architecture set a whole new stage for architecture.



### V. POST MODERNISM

Superseding modernism, post modernism crept in encompassing re-emerging of surface ornamentation, reference to the neighborhood in urban context, historical references in decorative forms, and

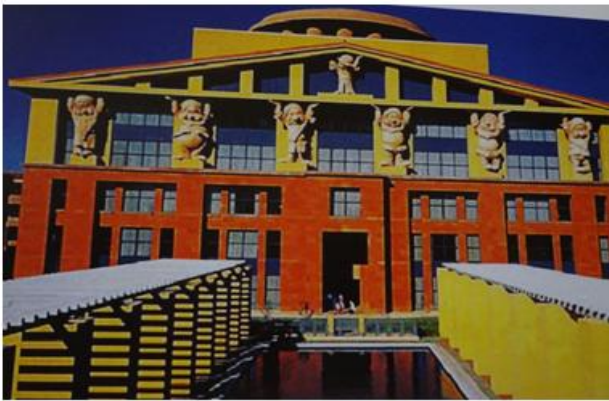




non-orthogonal angles. Michael Graves has shown a vision of Classicism in which his buildings have huge mass and order. His works encompasses upon drawing from all methods, forms, colors and materials available rather than just being perfect and adhering to pure methods.

Philip Johnson's work saw the poise between the serious movement of minimalism and populist movement of Pop Art. He will always be remembered for his Glass House. A masterpiece in transparency and reflection, the building came forth as a vital contribution in modern architecture. His AT&T building in Manhattan has been termed by many critics as the first modernist statement.

Among contemporary architects, Alvaro Siza's projects have shown a rare spirit of introspection. These works of the greatest living Portuguese architect are notable for a delicate weave of allusions to specific regions and cultural figures and a permanent absence of inflated rhetoric.



## VI. METABOLIST MOVEMENT

A radical Japanese avant-garde movement pursuing the amalgamation and recycling of architecture styles within an Asian context, called the Metabolist Movement was co-founded by architect Kisho Kurokawa in 1960. The designs of this movement heavily relied on technological advancements and consisted of adaptable plug in mega structures.

Kurukowa's architecture, evolved from the Japanese tradition, focused on keeping traditional concepts like materiality, impermanence, receptivity and detail invisible. He confessed, "This attention to detail is also an important key to understand my own architecture. The belief in the importance of detail also suggests the new hierarchy".



## VII. MINIMALISM

In the late 1960's and 1970's, experienced a movement called Minimalism- work which was reduced to its most necessary elements. Architect Mies van der Rohe's motto of 'Less is More', was successful in creating an inkling of extreme simplicity of enlisting every element and detail to serve both aesthetical and functional purposes. While modernist reflected highly on minimalism, this movement implied the Zen Movement.

For master architect Tado Anto, light stays an important facet in all his works as walls which he terms as as the basic element of architecture. His works have explored an exemplary craftsmanship in cast-in-site concrete. The creative use of natural light and the complex three dimensional circulation paths have been hugely propounded by Anto. The buildings of Peter Zumothar, a legendary architect explore different illusionary qualities in spaces still giving it a minimalist feel. Zumothar's work is largely unpublished in part because of his belief that architecture must be experienced firsthand.



## VIII. DECONSTRUCTION

Post Modernism in the 1980's, the quest for rational and new paths, away from the norm led to deconstruction. Driven by thoughts of fragmentation, an interest in contriving ideas of a structure's facade or skin led to buildings whose visual appearance was characterized by stimulating unpredictability and controlled chaos. The work of Peter Eisenman represents a continued attempt to liberate form from all meaning. Bernard Tschumi believes that there is no space without event. Tschumi's design research invites a wide range of descriptions and ambience to emerge and to self-organize.

Frank Gehry, measured as modern architectural icon is associated with the Vitra design museum and Guggenheim at Bilbao. He is famous for deconstructing his forms and space, using geometries reminiscent of Cubism and abstract Expressionism. Rem Koolhaas has meticulously collated architecture and urban design with global metamorphosis. His work endeavours to bridge the valley between technology and progress.

The Austrian firm Coop Himmelb(l)au strives to create open planned, open ended and open minded designs, made up of complex undefined spaces, and is known as unsymmetrical structures that really require for liberty



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from the constrained formalism of a given style. ZahaHadid has demarked a radically new way to architecture by making buildings with large number of perspective points and fragmented geometry to evoke the tumult of modern life.



### STYLE STATEMENTS

1. IDENTITY: Free form, Personal Trademarks, Ancestry and Luminous Luxury
2. ENERGY: Digital, Drive to excel, Endorphin rush
3. BALANCE: Configuration, Merged activities, Art of diplomacy, Multi-cultural Weave
4. WELLBEING: Detox get-aways, Nature indoors, Vital Nutrients
5. SOLACE: Secure connections, Comfort foods, Spa relaxation

### IDENTITY

An icon is a sacred image. When the term is applied to architecture, it usually means a building with a symbolic role and distinguished forms. Some buildings therefore are icons; most buildings make the natural fabric spacity.



Quality is achieved by the actual design of the product and not by the testion and control in the production process.



### ENERGY

Of these recent German buildings, BMW Welt, is the most blatant as corporate self-promotion and the most exhilarating architecture.



For style, I test, test ad test again. And this test is experimentation. When we test, we might arrive at something.



### BALANCE

Design is S, M, L, XL. Design is what you do when you don't yet know what you are doing.





Design is inhibitant in everything we make, but it's also between those things, It's a mix of craft, science, storytelling, propaganda and philosophy.



#### WELLBEING

So you could say, my final aim probably is the beautiful form I may find in some colorful icon, and sometimes in still life.



Nature is the most radical and shocking palette in color and

shapes. No magazines or books can inspire. When I eat, I get inspiration, things like that stimulate creative curiosity.



#### SOLACE

We want to wake our audiences up and force them to take a fresh look at their surroundings, we do with color and creativity.



Design is the opportunity to enjoy the challenges of experimenting. Design means, how to make materials even more interesting and the same goes for color too.



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### IX. CONCLUSION

“An icon is 1% himself and 99% of what others make him to be”- Anonymous Although some people perceive digital art as a threat to the traditional art, practical observations show that digital art is a branch of traditional art and not its rival. With the passage of time the definition of art has been expanding and art is not only restricted to paintings, drawings or sculptures; the gamut of art has been increased due to computer generated designs and graphics. High speed computer processors and cutting-edge softwares have provided an exceptional strength to the art in the new millennium and the outcome is visible in the growth of digital art. In fact, technology has revived the art and presented a new concept to the art world. This new expression of art comprises computer graphics, animations, virtual and interactive art that are being produced because of the invention of digital technology.

The avenues of research identified above demonstrate the rich potential in a field of endeavor that hopes to inspire and promote further research in the future.

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