

Postmodern Architecture

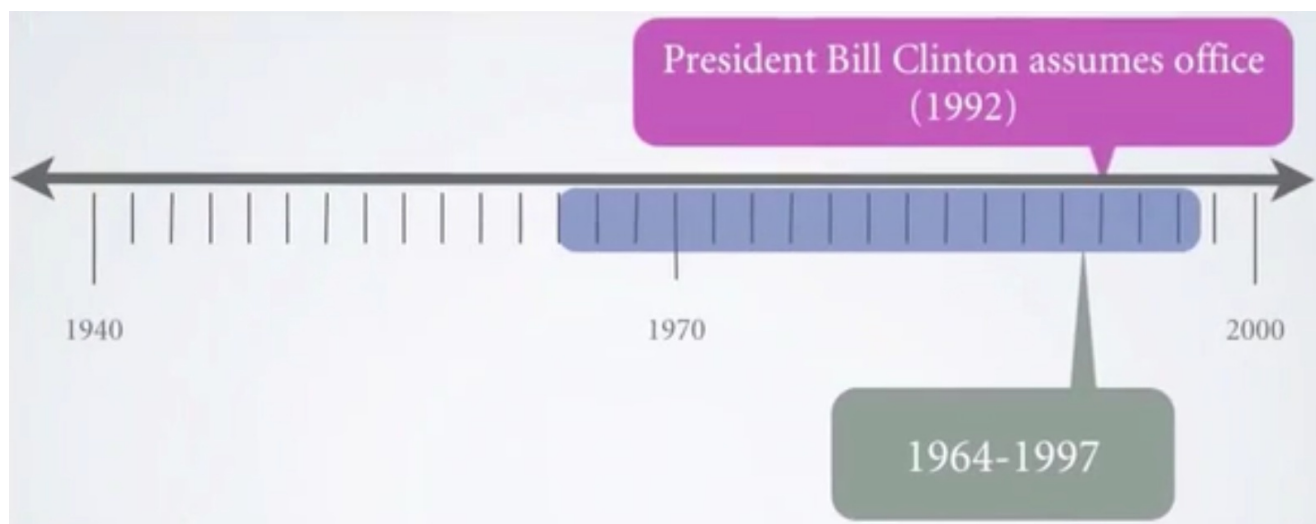
by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson is about postmodern architecture. By the end of the lesson today, you'll be able to describe the differences between Modernism and Postmodernism, and identify examples of postmodern architecture. Postmodern architecture reacts against the rigid and formal elements of Modernism and is characterized by its neo-eclectic style. You will cover:

The architecture that we'll look at today dates from between 1964 and 1997.



1. Neo-Eclectic

Postmodern architecture, in a nutshell, includes combinations of styles and aesthetics, has sculptural forms, **organic forms**, and **irony** and wit. You may recall from a previous lesson how Postmodernism often combines the old with the new and in the process creates a style that is decidedly unique.



DID YOU KNOW

One of the most characteristic qualities of Postmodernism is the idea of **neo-eclectic composition**, in which several styles are combined into one.



Vanna Venturi House by Robert Venturi

1964

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

IN CONTEXT

An agreement with Target stores saw numerous household items redesigned by the famous architect, Michael Graves, such as this tea kettle:



Tea kettle by Michael Graves

1984

He's designed numerous buildings and has built a reputation as one of the finest architects in the world. He designed the Dolphin Resort at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida:



Dolphin Resort at Walt Disney World by Michael Graves

1990

Orlando, Florida

He also designed the Portland Building in Portland, Oregon:



Portland Building by Michael Graves

1982

Portland, Oregon



BIG IDEA

Postmodern architecture reacts against the rigid and formal elements of Modernism and is characterized by its neo-eclectic style.



TERMS TO KNOW

Organic Forms

Form defined by its simulation of natural substance; not rigid or geometric.

Irony

A sarcastic humor.

Neo-Eclectic Composition

The combination of several styles in one building.

2. Sony Building

One of the big problems that postmodern architects saw with Modernism was its reliance on form following function. This was seen as a severe limitation. Architects such as Philip Johnson worked in minimalistic design. Johnson was an associate architect on the Seagram's Building by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. He responded to this issue of form following function by incorporating purely aesthetic ornamentation into their designs, like in the Sony Building, with its uniquely designed roof and cathedral-esque seven-story entryway.



Sony Building by Philip Johnson

1984

New York City, New York

3. Piazza d'Italia

Charles Moore was one of the pioneers in postmodern architecture, helping to define the genre by incorporating elements such as ornamentation, playfulness, and wit into his designs. These defining characteristics can be seen in his Piazza d'Italia, which was commissioned by Italian-American community leaders of New Orleans.



Piazza d'Italia by Charles Moore

1990

New Orleans, Louisiana

These characteristics show up in how he incorporates modern materials, such as stainless steel, and minimalist design elements to put a modern spin on a classical form of architecture.

4. Guggenheim Museum

Aside from Michael Graves, the postmodern architect that the average person has probably heard of before is Frank Gehry. His unique aesthetic is truly unlike anything you've probably seen before. His deconstructivist style can take on many forms; however, many of his most famous designs feature an exterior that has this wavy, playful, organic-looking titanium skin that completely belies the belief in form following function.



Guggenheim Museum by Frank Gehry

1997

Bilbao, Spain



SUMMARY

Now that you've seen the lesson, are you able to identify and define today's key terms? Can you describe the differences between Modernism and Postmodernism? Can you identify examples of postmodern architecture? Postmodern architecture reacts against the rigid and formal elements of Modernism and is characterized by its **neo-eclectic** style. You looked at several important examples, such as the **Sony Building**, the **Piazza d'Italia**, and the **Guggenheim Museum**.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Ian McConnell



TERMS TO KNOW

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Neo-Eclectic Composition

The combination of several styles in one building.

Organic Forms

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