

Ando's Vision towards the Crisis of Modernism

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After the core modernism architecture is still in search of some new verses towards a perfect solution as the guiding principles of today's architecture. The socio-economic and the political situation of the world has been changed entirely than the era of emergence of modernism. At that time modernism was emerging out of the concepts of breaking apart individuality, individual economy and heading towards a single classless world society, the basic concepts of communism. Communism has broken apart. It is obvious that same destiny is waiting for modernism in architecture. Money in individuals' pockets will dominate architecture in a new way than the core modernism was portrayed. Here we get a glimpse of it in the writing of architect **Tadao Ando**:

"Universalization is today a worldwide phenomenon. The dissemination and advancement of civilization has undoubtedly been made possible by making the particular universal, yet universalization is another word for generalization and standardization. It is advantageous to civilization but is antagonistic to culture, since culture comes into being only in opposition to generalization and standardization. Therefore, progressive universalization endangers culture and may even force it into a state of crisis.

I believe that **architecture belongs not to civilization but to culture**. Architecture comes into existence only against a background of history, tradition, climate and other natural factors. Universalization is threatening to destroy this foundation. Behind the promotion of the universalization of architecture is the idea that functionality equals economic rationality. The principle of simple economic rationality does away with the rich, cultural aspect of architecture. Similar buildings are being constructed throughout the world, and cities are losing their individuality to become ominously monotonous.

Today, strict functionalism is being questioned in **architecture**, and there are various movements complicating the situation in terms of expression. Post-modernism, which is particularly notable among these movements, sees only one side of modernism- which is after all the most important legacy of architectural culture of the twentieth century - and capriciously rejects it. It serves no purpose to introduce ornament just because ornament was eliminated by Modernism. If Modernism had an anti-human aspect, it must have been rooted in its fundamental approach to architecture and not in the forms of Modernist architecture. To my mind, post-modernism appears to be just old wine in new bottles, with nostalgic ornamentation applied. I don't believe it provides a fundamental solution. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the best post-modernist architects are resisting the trend toward universalization.

Universalization does not allow individuality. People, with their diverse emotions and wills, are lumped together and labeled 'the masses' and are deprived of their individual character. They are reduced to units that ease analysis and manipulation. Architectural creation is

particularly individualistic work, but the trend today is to divorce production from individuals and to leave the making of things to organizations. Individualistic dreams and emotions that were once such important elements in architecture are being replaced with mediocrity and common sense. Mediocre buildings are going up in cities all over the world.

I believe that, however anachronistic it may sound, it is important to ask the fundamental question. What is architecture? The creation of architecture must surely be criticism of today's problems. It must resist existing conditions. And it is only when one squarely faces up to today's problems that one can really begin to deal with architecture.

In architecture there are certain social, economic, legal and political constraints. In today's Japan in particular, it is impossible to consider architecture in isolation from construction as an economic activity. However, it is also true that architecture is not solely a matter of dealing with such external conditions. I believe in the autonomy of the ideas of **architecture**. Architecture as an autonomous set of ideas has in fact nothing to do with the tackling of such constraints. Today, architects no longer tend to think seriously about architecture and are simply kept busy at everyday tasks, treating architecture as just an economic activity, resolving problems posed by external conditions. The organization of society leaves architecture with no time to consider an architecture of discovery; at best they can only create mistake-free architecture.

This gives rise to an undistinguished architecture.

I believe that **architecture must be individualized** once more if the standardized and monotonous cityscape is to be transformed into a place of discovery and surprise. We must give flight once again to an architectural imagination based truly on the individual."

T. Ando, London, 1986.