THE DEGENERATION OF ARCHITECTURE IN MEXICO TODAY

by Juan O'Gorman

In Mexico today, architects are divided into two serves, the majority following the so-called international Style and a small minority in opposition.

The debates and lectures held in 1953 under the auspices of the Architects' Society, did little to clarify the issue, but the problem/stands today, as it does in all the fields of art, between two trends? The non-objective explainment, and the realistic.

In any case, it is necessary for me to say what I think in relation to the general theory of architecture, because I believe we have arrived at a critical point at which modernism is practically exhausted. It has nothing to offer for the future except a repetition of the same formulas which make up what we know as modern architecture.

In Mexico at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries architecture was limited to the imitation of the styles of the past, especially of the late Renaissance and the Neo-Classic. This servile attitude came about through the influence of the Beaux Arts are Paris upon the world, and their efforts to bring about the restoration of Classicism. It is still common today to confuse Classicism with Academism.

At that period we find the same type of academic training for architects of all countries, with few exceptions, and as a

tations of the decadent operation grand-finale Farisian interpretations of the decadent operation grand-finale Farisian interpretations of the late Renaissance. This bastard architecture, authoritied in the Grand Frix de Rome, was the "International Style" of that period. The great art historian of that period. The great art historian and style in the one somewer: "In art, academic thinking is nourished by everything that has already passed through the digestive tube of humanity."

In this same period there existed in Mexico, on a small, scale, an equally academic school, which copied the architecture of the buildings and monuments of the Spanish Colonial period. This represented a forward step, for at least we looked for "inplaration in our own country and turned away from the influence of Europe. This tendency to copy the Colonial style persists today in a diluted form. The ones who can accept the repetition of this architecture are those gentlemen for whom the Colonial period represents the yearnings of lost feudal privileges.

After the Mexican Revolution (1910-1914) the outstanding architects began to interest themselves in the popular architecture of Mexico. Bopular meaning the architecture/built exclusively by the people without the intervention of engineers or architects. The interest in this architecture was provoked in part by the popularity in the United States, at that time, of the Mexican Ranch Style, introduced by a group of California architects and derived from Mexican folklore architecture, of the poer. The indigenous house of Mexico was processed into one acceptable

in the West. By way of """ magazines and architectural reviews, hexico's popular house's and brought home canned. Upon its return it appeared novel, even revolutionary, while it was in fact only an feater interpretation of the popular taste. The academy accepted it as a rich family does a poor relative. It's trip abroad gaused it to be elevated to the ranks of architecture.

It is mene theless necessary to note, that this architectural tendency of the Colonial California Style (1918-1926) is the expression of the first Constitutional Government of the Revolutionary ranchers who came with Carranza into power, and in spite of its being a picturesque-academic conception of architecture, it initiates for the first time in our country the desire to express Mexico in its popular aspect. This trend was soon abandoned, with the loss of what it implied ideologically to the theory of architecture. In the same way, and in a parallel manner, most of the popular vindications of the Agrarian Revolution have also been lost.

After the first World War, and as a consequence of the necessity of reconstructing the devasted areas in Europe, the European architects of greater ingenuity developed an architecture which came to be known as functional. Its theory derived from purely technological principles, based on the mechalical axiom of "maximum efficiency for minimum effort," and the first way architecture was transplanted into the field of engineering.

Functional architecture appeared to be especially important and useful in poor countries where economic conditions made impers

where the most efficient use of natural resources and the reduction of hours of of work, here. Functionalism was as maintain in structural planning as in liberating the the floor plan, or in the composition of the facades, that is to say in the total architectural problem. Functionalism proposed to apply the same principles that had up to then of Le Corbuster's, "The hours is a machine to the phrase of Le Corbuster's, "The hours is a machine to Addition" explains the theoretical bases of this form of architecture, which is not to be confused with structural engineering, which deals only with the problems of construction in buildings. Includibles the architecture?

Functionalism destroyed the narrow, academic frames into which architecture had been set and ended the era of "eternal truths," which were the foundation and reason for copying and re-copying the styles of the past. Functionalism put at end to this chaselon, and the blind faith in all the sacred academic notions, was ended.

Functionalism almo opened the door to greater possibilities which the plan and gave technical bases for mechanical development, which

methods of construction invented by the distribution in the distribution in the distribution is the distribution in the distribution in the distribution is the distribution of the distribution in the distribution of the distribution is the distribution of the distri

characteristic relations to the temperature of the destrict the form programs in order to solve the problems of utilization of space, adaptation folimate senters, and the various human needs of a building in a reasonable manner and in accordance with the strictly mechanical function of each part as well as of the total building. Today, looking at this phenomena from a distance, and comparing the architecture, the functional f

we appreciate the importantance of functionalism as a basis for objective understanding of any form that modern architecture might take.

What was lost with functionalism?

The mechanical and technical character of functionalism ignored the necessity of esthetic pleasure, one of the most important bases of any real architecture. Functionalism reduced the building to the mechanical necessities of a shelter for man, and by doing so it denied one of the most vital of his needs, the pleasure produced by the form and color of the place in which he lives.

In synthesis, functionalism in architecture is mechanically reasonable and humanly illogical because man is not a machine.

were applied with more or less success by a small group of young years 1925 and thanks to social conditions, of our "marvelous civilization," that lamentations delivered from their thrones, tribunes and pulpits. the principle of "maximum efficiency for mimimum cost" was transpublic, with intuitive logic, rejected this architecture and called architects, one of them myself. The venerable academicians did formed into "maximum rents for mimimum inventment." Between the their best to "square boxes with square holes." of this, functionalism was finally imposed. of the inevitable stop the new movement, with sermons and grand 1935 in Mexico the lessons of European functionalism consequences of functionalism was that The general

The imposition of this functional architecture In Mexico was due in part to the fact that it was a product of European importation

into a country of poor technical resources, and the admiration of modern technology, (which approaches techno-idolotry) is a phenomena frequent in backward countries, especially amongs certain intellectuals who remanticize the economic independence of their semi-colonial countries.

0

What has happened to architecture in the last twenty years in fexico?

To this period belongs the glory of the simple thee, which can be described as the formalization of functionalism." Fractically all the work done today in modern architecture; which I take the liberty of calling "modernistic," has the aspect of functionalism without being functional. This modernistic architecture has taken the siements of functionalism and employed them for decorative effects. From the point of view of mechanical function, this modernistic architecture is a degeneration of functionalism. In functionalism the reason for a form is found in its mechanical use, either as an element of structure or as an element of shelter. In modernistic architecture the principal reason for using the forms derived from functionalism is to produce effects, and use or cost are of secondary importance.

In functional Is form is a consequence of function, and in modernism form only appears to be functional.

In modernism form only appears to be functional.

Modernistic architecture formers and property to and reflects the period of modernistic architecture formers. It is an adventise to and reflects the period of modernistic and property.

Modernistic architecture formers to and property.

To make matters worse, this modernistic architecture of the so-called international Style in Mexico, is not even original. Its greatest asset is to reproduce **Mexico** is not even original. Its greatest any other period who becomes fashionable in Saries. To arrive at a property of the so-called architecture of the so-called saries international "Style", these copies of European architecture are purificated and processed, for their consercial, use in the alembic

the coca-cola culture

00

One of the mmminumm of the International Style is the prismatic \mathcal{M}_{NA} when two of its long sides in glass and the two lateral ones closed with walls. This architectural specimen was originated by Le Corbusier in the house of the Swiss students in the University of Faris, mmm later used by him in the housing project in Marseilles and again in Brazil in the Secretariat of Fublic Instruction. In Mexico we have the towers of Science and of Philosohical Investigation at University Gity, and many other such $\frac{byildings}{btractures}$ used for offices and apartments.

Is the building of the Secretariat of the United Nations, son of a French father and a North American corporation. Another mode of modernism is the prism of glass taken more or less directly from Mies van der Rohe. Here no walls seem to be needed. When structures structures these glass ammaniment, face the south, east or west they become hothouses during the day when they receive the sun's rays and mamin hothouses after the sun leaves them. When they face borth they are permanently ice boxes.

In a lecture given last year by the director of the Faculty of Architecture, he suggested that venetian blinds were sufficient to counteract the heat of the sun's rays in these edifices. It is lament able that in practice this remedy is no remedy at all, for as any knows we can get away from the direct sun's rays the area, with the sun rays, that repe entering through the large glass areas with the sun rays, that strikingthe venetion blinds.

Of course there is a remedy for this nuisance, not only very good but also very expensive air-conditioning. Now we have a complete picture of the architectural adaptation to the climate of

Mexico. First the largest possible windows are used, which raises the price of the facade. Second, in order to escape the sun's rays the largest venetian blinds are necessary, which also add to the expense. Third, costly air-conditioning must be added in order to make the building habitable. If we examine the advantages of this architecture we find that everything goes to make it as expensive as possible, without the smallest advantage, the manual except to the bank accounts of architects and contractors.

Yof course there is the artistic consideration. If one believes that the beauty of these prisms of glass compensate for the expenditures necessary to make "he" habitable, then everything is fine. As I do not believe in window wall and cardex esthetics, I pronounce myself against such absolute lack of logic and common sense.

Another of the recipes of the International Style is the horizontal window band the entire length of the facade. These windows are used indiscriminately, without relating the size to the rooms to be lighted. Like other architectural usages which have a glib esthetic reason. As fare as I can make out, all the have a glib esthetic reason. As fare as I can make out, all the illogical planning vaces to make up what they call modernity. The supplies of such international has been pompously called "the amount of functionalism or modernity - which is what the amount of functionalism of modernity - which is what the amount of such faces and such faces of functionalism of functionalism - which is what the amount of the such faces of the such faces of the such faces of functionalism - which is what of the such faces of t

In buildings two or three stories high we frequently find the

simply shows the absolute lack of understanding of the simplest modern materials, such as vinelite or sillicon, can the modern painter modern painting and arrive at a modern style. All this babbling the painter D. Alfaro Siqueiros, who tells us that only with one of the most important bases of realism in architecture of construction should be reached by the most favorable of technology, because naturally the solution to these theories about modernity are similar to the thesis the exonomic possibilities of each region. This is prein each case studied in accordance with the reality

structures, but I de pronounce myself against their employment of modern methods of construction, but in order to use them when in a formalistic, anti-functional and anti-realistic manner. be stupid to deny the usefulness of reinforced concrete and steel their employment is indicated, possible and necessary. It would want to make it clear that I do not deny the great value

2-MeWindows resemble glass store fromts. This indicates that the employment in combinations and juxtopositions of the box form. today in respect to its form 450, the following: - The systematic characteristics which defines the modernistic architecture

> box, used for packing commodities, because its form is the most International Style in architecture expresses the equivalent of the

TO

cully that society is one based on the form of a boxe, and continue the commodity has breakless, the special sections that propresents most

Buildable for

This the enclose, the windows are the show cases for commodities.

sholter men!

pencils. Thus the architecture of the international style. architecture cannot accept the International Style because it is contrary to the human additionation aspirations of the collectivity. the people. Of course the people without understanding extart or exercised by the class which has imposed this architecture upon the conditions that correspond was an truncation of the dominion reflects Therefore that architecture assa manifestation of art, expresses is arrived at in the same way as the dimensions are determined What is called in architectural planning the necessary space a close menner the dominion of the commodity over man-

conditioned by their own tradition. That tradition is the only ance, art is an emotion perceived only through the expressions as well say that inertia accustoms people to misery and hunger. One must not forget that for the people, in spite of their ignorbox architecture. Nothing can be more false or stupid. One might that the people, by a sort of inertia, in the become accustomed to One of the medular arguments used in defense of modernism is

12.

many possibilities of forms enf expression within a determined region. These form what is known as the culture of a people.

his surroundings, that is to say, when the production of art developedin time (this gives them their dynamic dimension) by relationship in harmony, or one might say, in dynamic equilibrium of his species, and it implies a constant struggle to keep this precept, it is a material need in man's struggle for the survival tive necessity of expressing the harmony between men, al character. And when the art production responds to the collecresponds to the objective necessity of expressing the harmony art implies a constant revaluation of the adjustment of dition and at the same time formed it. When the production of imposed by between man and the earth, it acquires what is called its regionthe constant increment of work that has always actualized trawhat is called style. The human need for harmony is not a moral everything that exists. peculiar the transformations that are verified in time and in and special forms of and art of quality have been it acquires

Art, if it is to be an expression of life, that is to say if it is to be mmotional, the requires a constant transformation that can be achieved only through the means of invention. These inventions are the increments that are added to the tradition and the permanent transformations suffered in positive by man and his environment.

Art has here a permanent and constant value throughout history and pre-history because it expresses the struggle of the human species for survival through all periods of its existence. This is the reason why any work of art, from the most ancient to the most recent, in any period of history and from any part of the world, produces emotion in a human being with sensibility.

To the degree that man's efforts to survive have been more intense, to that same degree the art expressing his/conditions should have intense capacity of a emotion. This implies that man carries in his unconsious the experiences of his species, and that the actualization of tradition through the means of original invention is the only way in which he can link this collective, unconscious with present reality and to produce an art of popular acceptance.

It is also becessary to say that invention within a tradition has all the poetic possibilities of the human imagination, in
the the expendence for growth of other in spring and space.
the same manner that the engines development of a tree has many

In popular art, also called folk-lore art, the actualization of tradition is always realized, because it can be produced in no there way except out of the material which is in the people's unconscious. But these who have been educated in schools or art scademies, or who have in any way suffered the process of esthetic education or appreciation, have formed in their consciousness a series of authoriteria which impede creation of art. Only talent or genius can aurmount these repressive conditions. This does not mean to say that all appreciation of art. On the contrary. It is necessary, but only

14.

when the estimation and knowledge of tradition becomes the limiting barriers of the academic implies a great vitality, which creative work, and which is trajectory 0 + possible development. an expression of the pleasure of the means and To

roots and where it can develop, for a purpose human purpose. a part of the process of man's adaptation to reality and serve as an to the process of man's adaptation to reality and serve as an instrument of harmony to the darker min that five in the same region instrument of harmony to the darker of the earth where it had its tion of his inventiveness and the application of the technology of his especially the architect, a material to start from, so that the combina where to the necessities and problems of his time, produces a modern work of art within his own tradition. Only in this way can art form The knowledge of the traditional forms in art gives the artist, and

mined region of the earth. species, or in the language of art, to a determined style of a detercollective, within the organic body of a tradition of any region of earth are like the new cells hecessary to produces them in order to live, and they correspond to a determined the original inventions, whether they be individual or the organism; the organ-

We can so there, we man in Mexico, since the beginning of Colonial days to our own time, there have exited two currents of art. The first one of production and exchange construct historical period. Aid Schick it is produce is of Mexican character and style, 45 the work of the people, and is impressed upon it by the contraditions inherent in the economic forms known as popular art; this has maintained itself within the ancient has always reflected the social conditions, acquires the character the human relations of * society divided into classes. Art, which But the cultural process has been conditioned, or deformed

> Actrice of the same of the sam current of art that the artists of mum talent and genius who have they had not kept alive their traditions and culture. / To this said with reason that the Mexican people could never have survived aspirations and preserves its regional characters. It has been Mexican pre-hispanic tradition. This art expresses the popular the brutalities of the conquest and exploitation of centuries

schieving its own national aconomic independence, and therefore and suling out the configuration of the substitution of the su ert on the people. Up to now this class has been incapable of eall it oultured art; It represents servitude and submission and reflects the position of to class in power which has imposed this other current of art imitates what is foreign to Mexico.

Selling.

models which he copies and imitates.

cut to the ground, but its deep roots remained flourished in Anahuac, center of the culture of America, was brutally International Style. Mexican people have kept producing pead culture of manage has not died out The extraordinary artithat incredible exploitation suffered by the popular messes of Mexico, theer In spite of the berritying episode of the Conquest, and the spite of Coca-cola, the Colonial period, juke the Independence and the. boxes and and still the produce architecture of the in the earth, and all their own art --Revolution, the

needs of their inhabitants, and in spite of the miserable condisions These houses are always adapted to the climate and to the elementary own hands, and with the absolute minimum of mechanical elements. their own houses with the earth that they pick up with their poverty-stricken prophe of Mexico, who are in the great majority,

under which they are built, they maintain their traditions in the of the architecture, which is always, proportions and are perfectly integrated with the landscape that appropriate the perfectly integrated with the landscape that appropriate. These houses show a perfect adaptation to the region because the people who built them have not lost their come culture. The same is true of their flestas, their dress, their pottery, etc. It is important to note that the popular art section of the Mexican Art Exhibition in Paris, London and Stockholm in 1953 was the one thing that caused a great sensation emong the ultresensitive intellectuals of Europe.) The ceramics maintain recently by by Pablo Ficasso, -- one plate we priced at 50,000 francs, would be undistinguished if placed among the polychromed pottery selling for twngty-five cents, in a Mexican market.

But the architects of Mexico have no eye for the country where they live and that feeds them. They prefer to separate themselves from everything that is truly Mexican, copying and imitating the architecture that is fashionable in New York or Faris. These second-rate and expensive copies have nothing to do with Mexico, neither with the climate nor the pampham needs and tastes of the people. (They are an expension of human interiority and show clearly the servility and spacety) of the intelligations.

reason) is non-objective in its approach to reality.

expresses and helps to maniant the factories own power and maintenance conditions of life. negative requisites of a world incapable of bettering non-objective art and architecture become in the popular believe in its cosmopolitan superiority. and this way this class cohesive expressing the aspirations or desires of the people. it is negative in solving the problems of a functional shelter or of section through the forms of expression of this architecture, which Style serves the class in power as a disguise to make the people in time these artifices become ineffective its privileges. Logically, because these forms of The International the material

This non-objective art and architecture substants everything contrary to popular winds and will finally will signify to the popular labor. In a similar fashion thousands of tons of commodities are yearly thrown into the sea, millions of pounds of butter are stored until rancid so that prices of these commodities can be kept high on the international markets. This architecture and this non-objective art have already begin to smell, although they maintain their prestige as expensive commodities.

ommon regulating the Colonial Beriod. clevical country, which ear be interpreted as the architectural expression of of the country Reform. This take howars possibly the one that the state in power that that come closest to the popular taste of Mexico. of the Oatholic churches to make it more seceptable to the popular tasts its profusion of form and Churrigera, and in general the Mexican Baroque, has a wide appeal art of our days application of sculpture and bainting, when it is applied to the altars art of Mexico. Independence is in a certain way made more decorative, with the It is interesting to compare this antiseptic and de-humanized Even the neo-Classic anchitecture of the period of the to its first anththesis, the Bar oque of the color, also characteristic of the ancient This was due to the fact that the popular taste of Mexico,

18.

become the foundation have nothing more to offer the people except hunger and misery. plastic art of Mexico. of real Mexican character. An architecture which will mecessanily trend are finghoung momentum the first buds of a modern architecture Today the architects of the International, non-objective, European everything which is negati-ve and foreign to the people of Mexico. human necessity, this architecture has become the expression of Without any relation to our tradition and without any roots in and with the , and with the International "esthetics," the architecgeneral traits which can synthesize the Mexican manner of expression. pyramidal form of the composition; an exaggerated emphasis on the and all the purely subjective vart of our times, can only indicate to the people, the society a society than degeneration of a posts feelvinist puritanism within an historical is because the principal characters of Mexcian art are; first the period in which this positivist reformisms of Sir John Maynard Keynes But the modernistic architecture, with its abhorance of decoration, tri-dimensional volume; the dynamic asymmetry of the axis; the A The Swiss puritanism of the architecture of Le Corbusier ture of today has become the formal antithesis of Mexican realism. surrounding landscape of the region. Then in the popular art of complex variety of decoration; the richness of form and color, represents the exact antithesis of the plastic art of Mexico. This today we find these characteristics, which in my estimation are the With the direst influence of the abstract schools of Europe supreme manner in which the building harmonizes with the blind to tor the establishment of a unity among the We shall go on fighting to free will-be different from thee weed at the istics Mexico from

Tencehithen, edge but the principles are the same. The Bettle of the Conquest is not ever and there will be victorious "Noche Eriste" which will become abright day for all who have any love for Mexico.

shows the importance given always to the fulfillment of in human need, is to see explainted in form and octors with sculpture and painting. ic integrally in Ankor-vet or the Cathedral of Chartres, but never-the-less it All through the history of mankind, from the most ancient cultures of Anahuac or the Medicyranean and from the most archael Anahuac, the state and the most archael America up to the time of periods beauty architecture was always accompanied by painting Naturally this the integration of the plastic arts comparable the narrow limitations of academic transits typical of that time. employment of sculpture, and sometimes painting was also done within used bas-reliefs to adorn the walls and statuary to humanize its purifar and scupture. Sometimes these arts were an integral part of archietc., as decorative elements more sculptural than architectural, and Century, and beginning of the 20th, architecture persisted in the Roman art, the columns, pilasters, cornices, pediments, balustrades tecture, and at others they decorations during posed to architecture. tecture is another of the achievements of our *modern civilization.* the Nep-Classic period architecture employs, as did the ancient The total absence of sculpture and painting as parts of archi-Even in the most academic period of the end of the 19th

We therefore have to agamma conclude that the systemic elimination of sculpture and painting from architecture is typical of modern times and of our occidental civilization. This architecture without sculpture or painting reflects the decadent priod of the Industrial

Revolution, where the human being has no place and where the mechanical achievements of this great historical movement are the entroxly positional materials.

In this period of history the great humber of have been eight converted into simplish hours of specialized labor, and they no longer count, not even as spectators in the cultural processes of our times. Also architecture in this historical product of specialized work, in which the architect has no more connection with painting and sculpture, and has become a sort of manager of production of buildings, which are usually constructed for the purpose of investment.

Fainting and scupiture are executed by artists who are also specialized understanding or connection with the donstruction of buildings.

In spite of these unfavorable conditions, and pacisely because they exist to such a critical degree, it is necessary to be inflexible in our criticism and to make an effort to bring about a regeneration in architecture and a unification of the plastic arts.

It has been our luck in Mexico to initiate the movement to incorporate again on a large scale painting and sculpture into architecture. This has been possible the transfer only because of the important development in Mexico of the months more more mental mural painting.

With the exception of the architecture of the Olympic Stadium at University City, which is an expression of Mexico, and which also harmonizes with the region where it is built, all other cases in which integration of the plastic arts has been attempted have been only the superimposing or the application of sculpture or painting, (mosaics) which are Mexican in character, upon the face of a foreign

51queiros has made of the Library at Univeristy City in this are lost the work of art also loses its relation to tradition, and attempted, because the moment the regional and national character less objective and more incomprehensible to esthetics of architecture. This would make the whole expression painting and a sculpture which corresponds to the International say that in order to be in tune with modernism we must produce a respect is correct, in my estimation. But this does not mean to board pictures advertising commodities. the Auto-Mex building is an attempt to produce realism in architecture of International Style. The criticism that the painter the form of International Style. my understanding, the polychromed sculpture of Siqueiros subject it depicts is understood. Such is expression becomes sterreotyped even when thetheme or Only through ignorance can such a thing be the popular majority. the case of bill-

Invoking famim St. Augustine, to give weight to arguments which are more of less metaphysical, one of our illustrious architects, defender of the faith of the International Style, with tears of emotion in his eyes) and tried to make the public believe that we live today a drama which annuls and subordinates the individual to the inert limitations of our epoch, etc. etc, only to prove that it is fatally impossible to do anything outside the International Style, and that the decorations that have been done with mosaics and sculpture on recent buildings are nothing more nor less than infantiae essays having no meaning to the individual subordinated to these inert limitations of our epoch, etc. etc.

All these scare words and phrases mean nothing. One example should be enough to show our Piggly-Wiggly critic end pelemist the stupidity of his arguments. In spite of the invocations to

with the ortginal baroque, creating an architecture which immem the (1890-1910) or by the architects who build churches in the International Their churches resemble style. that the international or/they of modern architecture. From Alls very first works of wright very rare in this mercantile world of traders who, in spite of are pale academic imitations in reinforced concrete of some church for these who live in hunger and misery. This lesson in religious tecture came about, in a period of approximately forty years. threw them out of the Temple, that they now throw Him out of theirs. churches. It is perhaps by way of vengeance against Christ, who themselves, build market places when they try to build modern This example also shows us that the truly Christian position is of genius, Don Antonio Gaudi y Cornet, is an exceptional tic modern forms, ere integrated with the medieval Gothic tradition Temple of the Sacred Family in Barcelona, in which the most authenthe modern world, according to Thomas of Aquinas, therecan be no Christian dignity architecture has not been learned either by the Catholic clergy and painting. truly Christian spirit, and faces the drama of a world in which, Augustine this example is a Catholic Church; the Expiatory is now necessary to explain how the degeneration of archiof an imaginative integration of we find the basic and fundamental elements of the archto understand that Frank Lloyd Wright is the inventor Certainly andhis engine hamanaughmba showsus the possithe architectured of architecture, sculpture this forgotten man

itecture which was later developed in Europe from 1919 on. But it is necessary to understand that the elements of the erchitecture of Wright, which formed an organic unit, were separated, (as branches taken from a tree) and systematized into different schools in Europe. Later these systems became the more or less extensive wanuals and scure material for the architecture which is done commercially everywhere.

X

Originally Wright was influenced by the work of Louis Sullivan and Henry H. Richardson, the two greatest/architects of the 19th Century. Sullivan was one of the theorists and inventors of functionalism, and his phrase "Form must follow function" shows that he was fifty years ahead of the Europeans who turned function-alism into a system of architecture in the 20th Century. In any case, in the course of twenty years (1890-1910) Wright produced a radical change in domestic architecture. He was the first to reject the basement-cellars and attics under the pitched roofs which had been brought to America from Europe/ He apply Sullivan's principle of form-follows-function to an authentic American architecture.

Wright was one of the first architects who grouped the windows horizontally to produce a mode even lighting inside the house; he also used wide overhangs on the roofs to protect the house from rain and snow as well as the interiors from excessive sun. He handled these elements not only from a strictly functional standpoint, but he applied his genius to them in order to obtain great dramatic effects in the form and proportions.

To obtain greater architectural unity between the exterior and interior, Wright was the first to use aimulbeneously the mater-

desert or the practice end where architecture becomes the vehicle interior are the architectural protongetion of the forest, the forms a part of the landscape surrounding 1t, where exterior and believe that he fulfills his great creativeness in thinking of Lincoln and America finds its immediate antededants in the revolutionary gives architectural expression to the movement of the reincorof harmony between man and the region where he lives. ials and for exterior and interior walls. In synthesis, Wright popularized the free air romances and the virtues and pleasof rural and pastoral life. To and nature, which at the end of the 19th Cenof the naturalist Thoreau. His mad love for the earth of the house which And I chartely

space, without the barriers of unnecessary walls dividing companies of functional planning watches to an hermonious rethe house that is organizally related in its fluency of the interior various rooms. Such a house was described by Thoreau in a poetic letion to matural environment. Wright builds for the first time in "Walden" Wright invented organia erchitecture, which to me means, the 88 the ideal house for America

walls to form the room space. structural and exonomical reasons it was necessary to acquired in Wright's hands a since 1880 in in his extraordinary prairie houses The horizontal window which was had been used by Sullivan of the landscape. minimize the boxy appearance in those cases in the application of his form-follows-function principle Wright was the first to use human and poetic value when he employed By doing this he also achieved a to accentuate the use parallel the horizontal which for

greater unity of interior and exterior. wanding

24.

inclination of the walls, are characteristic of the ancient archuse of wood superstructures built over stone, and the pyramidal asymmetry of the axis, which implies a dynamic composition. His the structure to the earth. midal sense of tradition means to modern realistic architecture. Since his early itecture of America before any of the influences efter the European conquests. houses, we find in his work the proportions of workifectural elements senspation of heaviness, accentuating Wright was the first architect of our times to understand what the masses, which give to his architecture the We also find %1% his later work the the force of grity, linking

elements of Japanese classicism. He used the most modern materials not mean to say that Wright copied the form of the archeological general character and of its interrelational proportions. This does sbandoned every preconceived idea of art and started by studying the classical Japanese architecture to find the synthesis of its forms of construction to conceive the modern Japanese architecof our times. When Wright went to Japan to build the Imperial Hotel, he

from the dead and boring "fin de siecle" copies of Beaux Arts because academic training has always confused an original expression of a living and vigorous art. This aspect of Wright's architecture is very little understood invention archeology, and the Frank Llayd Wright's architecture, 18 the one actualization of thing that the academy the tradition tradition 20th Century cannot tolerate

26,

architecture of Wright signifies the passing from the servile veneration of European stupidity to the confidence in the creative capacity of America. Paradoxically, it was in Europe that Wright's work was first fully appreciated, and after its greater representation and influence there, it returned later from Europe to the United in the form of distinct, states at the States at the States at the States at America.

the fanctional principles of Sulliven, which form the bese of Asangente nature. It is true that in some instances that wright
descrifices the mechanical function to the expressive form, but in
any case, if we compare his work with that produced in Europe up
to 1910, we find that Wright is outstanding events in the mechanical
solutions of the problems of structure and space distribution.
Between 1910 and 1924x the most outstanding erchitects in Eu-

Between 1910 and 1924x the mest outstanding srchitects in Europe understood the great importance of Wright's work. It But is -necessary to understand today, that the elements of the architecture of Wright, which formed an organic unit, were separated. Whike branches taken from a tree sand using each branches a complete system, and systematized into the different schools of architecture in Europe. Later these systems became the more or less extensive manuals and recipes for the rachitecture which is done commercially everywhere.

the three most substanting seculturate in European architeccan be considered an approximate synthesis of the European architectural thinking of the 20th Century.)

The Work of medam) Gropius, Van der Rohe and Le Corbusier are without doubt

To understand what is called modern architecture, it is necessary to look into the process each of them followed through the last 30 years, but whit is still ere important is to understand their point of departure, which certainly was not in the tradition of their countries.

We find in the street work of Grophus, from 1919 to 1924, the street application of the technical method of mechanical functional ism. Later on the influence of the painter Doesburg and of the Stijl group of abstract Dutch artists, to which Gropius belonged, appeared in his work, expecially in the compositions of the facades which have the charaker of the non-objective paintings of this particular school of European art. The direct influence of painting in general, and expecially non-objective painting, on the form of architecture, implies a subordination of architecture to the point of architecture to produce tion, because it proves the incapacity of architecture to produce emotion with its own great resources.

In all the great periods of art, architecture has been the matrix which determines and conditions the other plastic arts, because architecture is the only space where pentiting and scuppture can exist and become the complement of architecture, and to help give greater force of expression to the whole plastic unity.

Functionalists of Europe in the 20th Century, was Wright's enganto see that droplus's point of departury, was Wright's engants see that Gropius's lack of understanding of organic architecture is evident in as much as he followed the exact opposite trend to organic realism when he became a non-objective architect of the Stijl group.

Mes van der Rohe can also be considered one of the eminent

Mies van der Rohe can also be considered one of the eminent functionalists of Europe in the period of the construction of the groups of apartment houses in Stuttgart, this first projects of glass

In the organic architecture of Wright the idea of harmonizing the edifice with the forms and materials of the landscape and the nature surrounding it, have been interpreted by Mies Van der Rohe in such a way that passing from exterior to interior of the house is almost imperceptible, and this be such a degree that and does not feel the difference between interior and extension of the Barcqiona Exposition of 1927. But the influence of the Dutch abstract painter, Mondrian, in Van der Rohe's work carries, him to the systematic and exclusive use of cubesy right angles and straight lines, which determine the volumes and space voids of his construction!

Here also the pictorial conception of the Dutch Neo-plasticis dominates the architectural conception. Therefore We can only say, that the architecture of Miés van der Rohe has points of departure

-some of the conceptions of

200

in the erchitecture of Wright and in functionalism, but it is deformed because it finds/refuge in maximum the abstractionism of the non-objectave painting which was the fashion in Europe at that time and which preceded Van der Rohe. We can therefore also say from the point of view of realism, his architecture suffers a degenerative process.

super-esthete of the steel structure-right-angle-glass-box-hothous architecture. The Mexico the fashionable architects have just discovered this super-elegant expensive and distinguished mannerism and have already begun to substitute the Le Corbusier on-stilts architecture Fer this new commercial modernism.

Van der Rohe wrote in 1940 the following, which I transcribe (QUOTE HERE).

here because it is relevant to my thesis. (No other European architect has put his reputation at stake with a similar declaration, and the recognition of thesefacts show the superior human quality of Van der Rohe, and thereby he merits our most sincere respect.

years of 1926 and 1935 I worked actively for the implantation of functionalism in Mexico, taking as a model for my own work the architecture of Le Corbusier. This proves on the one hand the lack of any real orientation of the academic teachings of the University of Mexico, and on the other hand the lack of any personal talent, because I had at my reach and in the very continent where I live, the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, who was

them, as he remains today, the modern expression of our own tradition. I understood my error in 1935, at which time I left architecture to work in painting, which in Mexico has developed in the traditional and reslistic direction. Already in 1935 we could clearly see the degenerative result which logically follows mechanical functionalism where purely technological engineering forms takens the place of architecture.

In his book "Vers une sponitecture," published in 1924,

Le Corbusier explains his theoretical position in architecture,
which can be similarisum may explain in two, simpansish sentences.

First: "The house is a manine to live in." Second "Architecture
is the wise, and magnificent play of the volumes under the action
of light."

In the first sentence Le Corbusier is the avant-garde functionalist. The phrase has even became a slogan of the extreme some of functionalism. This was the trend followed in Mexico between 1925 and 1935. The second phrase has also become a slogan for the modernists, and t places Le Corbusier as a non-objective or abstract artist of the School of Faris.

in 1919 founded the Furist school of art and the painter ozenfant in 1919 founded the Furist school of art and declaring themselves the reformers of cubism, the principle object of the natheolems to reduce subism to what was believed to be its pure essence. To my understanding, this esthetic and anth-septic pure wax essence, was ant of decorative geometric patterns taken from cubism with the taste of tooth paste. Apart from being the part of the taste of tooth paste.

Century should incorporate what Le Corbusier called the lesson and the esthetics of the machine to obtain purity of line, impersonal elegance, precision of motive, etc., etc. This typical modernist romanticism of a technical character assimilates.

Furism and the architecture of Le Corbusier with Futurism.

The theory of Futurism was clearly expressed in Marinetti's manifesto; "An automobile in movement is incomparably more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace." As we all know, Futurism later on became the esthetic theory of Italian Fascism.

In general, mechine esthetics supposes that the man of the 20th Gentury has acquired an efficient mechine mentality, that is to say, efficient in work and incapable of revoit against the super-man who doeseverything necessary to make society function with mechanical precision and order.

Furism pretended to/xmkmxtkaxamktwatdwnmmf sterilized Gubism with Futurism, and the brain child born of this mating was the International Style -- a species of puritanism of a Fascist character.

In reforming functionalism, be Corbuster with the esthetic theory of the machine, "purifies" architecture into an expression of the Corporate State. The infantile argument which is visually as decisive, is that for civilized man today the machine is international, and therefore the architecture of our machine age for this civilized man should also be International!

It is interesting to note that all the Occidental European architecture of our time has derived its esthetic content from

of the imagination can change the interterentiate ifact that remarked that Le Corbusier should be reminded that no efforts facades of the same building. This is why Frank Lloyd Wright architectural volume is sacrificed. Le Corbusier has gone to great frequency in modernist architecture that the different two-dimensional abstract pictures, as they would be seen on the drawing board, sand with the result that the sensation of content has adhered to the initial functionalism. We see with abstract and non-objective painting, and that this esthetic façades of the same building are treated as independent architecture has three dimensions in space the extreme of giving a different color to the different

Fear Esther:

Also, please change aunthing that you find in the active that whold be changed. It closely a reduce the light at it. Thanks so a million for all the trouble of Typing and essenging with which I would never have get this done. to much work on you. It was wonderful having a you stay with us and we mis you were much. We also lope that you glass arrived in order, and however. Town sending you my which which Islan believes should be ent down in the repotation that the president admin (To much about class in passes etc). To much endure on the prelitied side. I believe them is right, but I clost see my way in entiring out and what what should be ent out. I do hope you would do this for me and I hope Jum not impoint should be ent out. I do hope you would do this for me and I hope Jum not impoint. It me know what I can do for you in the way of getting photos etecte. which you may reed or that you forget to do in Mexico. Love from in both, wit lope to hear from you soon.

The Degeneration of Architecture in Mexico Today by Juan O'Gorman

the majority following the so-called International Style and small majority in opposition. In Mexico today, architects are divided into two groups,

between two trends: the non-objective and the realistic. but architecture stands today, as do all the fields of art, the Architects' Society did little to clarify the issue, The debates and lectures held in 1953 under the auspices

is practically exhausted. It has nothing more to offer for believe we have arrived at a critical point at which modernism in relation to the general theory of architecture, because I the future except a repetition of the same formulas. In any case, it is necessary for me to say what I think

Neo-Classic. This servile attitude came about through the instyles of the past, especially of the late Renaissance and the 20th Centuries, architecture was limited to the imitation of its efforts to bring about the restoration of Classicism. fluence of the Beaux Arts School of Paris upon the world, and still common today to confuse Classicism with Academism. Mexico at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the

same unimaginative replicas or disguised imitations of the archCitects all over the world and, as a result, we had the At that period there was the same type of academic training

grand-finale Parisian opera interpretations of the late Renaissance. This academic architecture, glorified in the Grand Prix de Rome, was the International Style of that period. The great art historian Elie Faure gives us a definition of academic art in one sentence: "In art academic thinking is nourished by everything that has already passed through the digestive tube of humanity."

In this same period there existed in Mexico, on a small scale, an equally academic school, which copied the architecture of the buildings and monuments of the Spanish Colonial period. This represented a forward step, for at least we looked for inspiration in our own country and turned away from the influence of Europe. This tendency to copy the Colonial style persists today in a diluted form. But the only ones who can accept the repetition of this architecture are those gentlemen for whom the Colonial period represents the yearnings of lost feudal privileges.

processed engineers or Spanish cultural tradition.) (California's indigenous architecture was part of the Mexicantecture of Mexico, popular architecture meaning that which is architects began to interest themselves in the popular archi-After the Mexican Revolution (1910-1914) the outstanding exclusively by the the Mexican in into and part architects. The interest in this architecture was one derived ру acceptable Ranch the from Mexican folklore architecture. popularity in people without the intervention Style, The indigenous house of Mexico was to introduced by the rich the United and "decent" who came California States at

> home tecture. from the East to play ranchers in the West. architectural reviews, Mexico's popular house was brought canned. it Was abroad caused it to be elevated accepted it as a rich in Upon its return it appeared novel, even revolutionary, fact only an interpretation of the popular taste. family to does a poor relative. By way of magazines the ranks of archi-

of the popular vindications of the Agrarian Revolution have also being a picturesque-academic conception of architecture been lost. architecture. initiates for ranchers who came with Carranza into power, the First Constitutional Government of the revolutionary the Colonial California Style (1918-1926) is the loss is necessary to note that this architectural tendency in its the of what it popular nI the same way, and in a parallel manner, most first time in aspect. implied ideologically to This trend was our country the desire and in spite of its soon abandoned, the expression the theory of to express

necessity of reconstructing the tecture was After the first World War, and as a consequence of architects of greater ingenuity developed an architecture "maximum to transplanted technological 9d known as efficiency into functional. principles, for minimum the devastated areas of Europe, field of engineering based Its theory was derived effort." on the mechanical Thus archiof the

Functional architecture appeared then to be most important and useful in poor countries where the economic conditions justified the most efficient use of natural resources and the

v

principles that up composition of the facades, that is to say, in the total archistructural planning as in liberating the floor plan, or in saving of hours of work. Functionalism was as valuable which deals only with the problems of construction in buildings. tectural problem. This is not to be confused with structural engineering machine a habiter," of architecture, which should be called edifice engineerbuildings. Functionalism proposed to to then The had phrase explains the theoretical basis of been used only in of Le Corbusier's, "La maison apply the same factories

the blind faith in all the sacred academic notions. re-copying the which architecture had been set and Functionalism destroyed styles of the past. were the foundation the narrow, academic and reason Functionalism ended the for copying era of "eternal frames put an end to

What was gained with functionalism in architecture?

Functionalism opened the door to greater planning possibilities and gave technical bases for mechanical development, which made evid_ent the need to apply to building the diverse methods of construction invented by engineering.

comparing functional Functionalism, Today, looking at these phenomena from a distance, and to function of each part, as well as of the total buildclimate, manner to furthermore, obliged architecture with that being produced now, solve the and and in the accordance with the strictly problems of utilization various human needs of a building the architects ot. to

we appreciate the importance of functionalism as a basis for objective understanding of any form that modern architecture might take.

What was lost with functionalism?

and by the building to the mechanical necessities of a shelter for man, which he lives. the pleasure produced important doing so it denied one of the most vital of its needs, mechanical bases of necessity any real architecture. and technical by the form and color of the place in of esthetic pleasure, character of functionalism Functionalism reduced one of the most

In synthesis, functionalism in architecture is mechanically reasonable and humanly illogical because man is not a machine.

One of the inevitable consequences of functionalism was that, due to social conditions, the principle of "maximum efficiency for minimum cost" was transformed into "maximum rents for minimum investment."

European functionalism were applied with more or less success rejected this architecture and venerable academicians did their best to stop the new a small group of young architects, one of them myself. Between the years 1925 and 1935 in Mexico, the lessons sermons imposed. and pulpits. lamentations delivered The general uI spite public, with intuitive logic, called it "square boxes with of this, from functionalism movement,

The imposition of this functional architecture upon Mexico was due in part to the fact that it was a product of European importation into a country of poor technical resources. The

admiration of modern technology (which approaches techno-idolatry) is a phenomenen frequent in backward countries, especially among certain intellectuals who romanticize and think idealistically about possibilities of economic independence in their semi-colonial countries.

What has happened to architecture in the last twenty years in Mexico?

take the liberty of calling "modernistic," has the aspect cal function, tecture has taken the elements of functionalism functionalism without being functional. This modernistic archically all the for decorative effects. period 88 work done today in modern architecture, which I this modernistic architecture is a degeneration "the belongs the glory formalization of functionalism." From the point of view of mechaniof decadence, which and employed

In functionalism the reason for a form is found in its mechanical use, either as an element of structure or as an element of shelter. In modernistic architecture the principal reason for using the forms derived from functionalism is to produce esthetic effects, and use or cost are of secondary importance.

In functionalism the form is aconsequence of function, and in the modernistic, form only appears to be functional.

One of the cliches of the International Style is the prismatic tower. Usually two of its long sides are in glass and the two lateral ones closed with walls. This architectural specimen

City, and many apartments. towers of Science and of Philosophical Investigation at University was originated the Secretariat or the housing other such buildings used for offices and by Le Corbusier project Public of in Marseilles, and again in Brazil Instruction. Paris, in the house for the the form In Mexico we have the later

The most magnificent example of this architectonic stereotype is the building of the Secretariat of the United Nations in New York, son of a French father and a North American corporation.

Another mode of modernism is the prism of glass taken more or less directly from Mies van der Rohe. Here no walls seem to be needed. In Mexico when these glass structures face south or west they become hothouses during the hours they receive the sun's rays and ice boxes after the sun leaves them. When they face north they are permanently ice boxes.

In a lecture given last year by the director of the Faculty of Architecture, he recommended venetian blinds to counteract the heat of the sun's rays in these edifices. It is lamentable that in practice this remedy is no remedy at all, for as everyone knows, we can get away from the direct sun's rays but not from the heat that enters through the large glass areas when the sun's rays strike the venetian blinds.

Of course there is a remedy for this nuisance, not only very good but also very expensive: air-conditioning. Now we have a complete picture of the architectural adaptation to the climate of Mexico. First, the largest possible windows are used which raises the price of the facade. Second, in order

which also add to the expense. Third, costly air-conditioning must be added to make the building habitable. If we examine the advantages of this architecture, we find that all the elements combine to make it as expensive as possible, without the smallest gain — except to the bank accounts of architects and contractors

believes pronounce myself expenditures necessary course, there is the artistic consideration! that the beauty of these prisms of As against this absolute lack of logic I do not to believe in make them window wall esthetics, habitable, glass compensate then everyand

Another of the recipes of the International Style is the horizontal window band the entire length of the facade. These windows are used indiscriminately, without relating their size to the rooms to be lighted. Like other architectural usages which make no sense but have a semblance of functionalism, architects have a glib esthetic reason.

As far as I can make out, illogical planning and misconception of architecture go to make up what we call "modernity."

purpose of using continuous unnecessary use of reinforced concrete skeletons. Apart making buildings two or three stories high we frequently find look the building on stilts without of modernity Of more expensive, this is done for the glass on to the any reason or now considered old-fashioned building. the facade, or of lifting cause, The lack

and which do not come within the category of modernity, out the architect off from many of the solutions to the problems of popular and especially peasant architecture.

accordance with reality and with the economic possibilities modern materials, such as vinglite or cillicon, can the modern bases of realism in architecture. understanding of painter the painter D. Alfaro Siqueiros, who tells us that only with Today's theories about modernity are similar region. This is, precisely, one of the most important most arrive at a modern style! favorable methods and, to any problem of the elements of technology, because naturally construction This simply shows a lack of in each case studied, in should to the thesis

the usefulness of reinforced concrete and steel anti-functional indicated, possible and necessary. modern want to make it clear that I do not deny methods of myself and against their anti-realistic construction and often their employment is employment manner. It would be in a the stupid structures, formalistic, great value to

International in characte_ristic which defines modernistic architecture respect juxtapositions of employed for to its form is the systematic use packing in architecture the xod commodities. form. expresses the equivalent This indicates ni

What is called in architectural planning the necessary space is determined in the same way as the dimensions of a box required for packing oranges or shoes or pencils. Thus architecture of the International Style reflects the dominion of the commodity

These constitute what is known as the culture of a people. sibilities of forms of expression within a determined region. pressions conditioned by their own tradition. that has been absorbed such matters, art is an emotion perceived solely through forget that for the people, in spite of their ignorance that inertia accustoms people to misery and hunger. One must language or the conspicuous arguments used in defense of modernism people, a series of they understand. Nothing can be more false. by a sort and conditions, selected of inertia, become accustomed Tradition from among the many which in time represent all implies a succession One might as well That tradition -Bod the exto

acquires what is called style. The human need for harmony is collective necessity of expressing the harmony between men, regional character. production a moral precept, harmony between man and the earth, always actualized tradition developed in this relationship in harmony, or peculiar and special forms of any art in history production of Of 0 5 man art responds to the objective necessity of expressing his species, and it time by the constant increment of work which to of And his it is a material need in man's struggle for art when the surroundings, implies a constant and art production responds to the implies a constant at the same time shaped it. it acquires what is called that one might say, in dynamic 18 evaluation of to вау, when the vigilance it

Art, if it is to be an expression of life—if it is to be an emotional experience, requires a constant transformation which can be achieved only through the means of invention. These inventions are the increments that develop the course of tradition

in accordance with the permanent transformations suffered by man and his environment.

Art has permanent and constant value throughout history and pre-history because it expresses the human species through all periods of its existence. This is why any work of art, from the most ancient to the most recent, and from any part of the world, produces emotion in a human being with sensibility.

carries in his unconscious the experiences of his species, more intense capacity of To the degree that man's efforts to survive have been more to that same degree the art expressing these conditions invention, actualization of tradition, through acceptance. unconscious with present reality to 18 the only emotion. way in which This implies that man he can the means produce link art

It is also necessary to say that invention within a tradition has all the poetic possibilities of the human imagination, like the organic development or growth of a tree in time and space

TOP criteria which appreciation, have formed in their consciousness a series of tradition is always realized, because it can be produced that all appreciation of the art of the past is a hindrance surmount these repressive conditions. This does not only when the way except out of popular art, also called folk lore art, the actualization production of or who But not impede the creation of art. Only talent or genius estimation and knowledge have in those who have been the art. end the material which is in the any way suffered of on the contrary, it is necessary, trajectory educated in the process of esthetic of of tradition possible schools or mean

Dec 11

went. To surmount the limiting barriers of the academic implies a great vitality, which shows in creative work, and which is an expression of the pleasure of living.

The knowledge of the traditional forms in art gives the artist, and especially the architect, a material to start from, so that through his inventiveness applied to the necessities and problems of his time, he can produce a modern work of art within his own tradition. Only in this way can art form a part of the process of man's adaptation to reality and serve as an instrument of harmony, and an example to others who live in the same region where it had its roots.

and the Revolution, the Mexican to the ground by the Conquistadores, but its roots remained in in Anahuac, center of the culture of America, was brutally cut traditions and culture. The extraordinary art that flourished the exploitation of centuries if they had not kept alive their could never people, and is known as popular art; this has maintained itself days to our own time, there have existed two currents of art. The first one is of Mexican character and style, the work of the earth, and all through the Colonial period, the Independence As we can see in Mexico, since the beginning of the Colonial the ancient Mexican pre-hispanic tradition. the have survived the It. popular aspirations and preserves its regional been said with brutalities of the Conquest and people continued to produce reason that the Mexican This people

The poverty-stricken people of Mexico, who are in the grea majority, build their houses with the earth they pick up with

material conditions of life.

churches, rendering it more acceptable to the popular taste. application of profusion of form and color and also typical of the ancient period. closest counter-Reform. and, in Independence is in a certain of Mexico. general, the Mexican Baroque, were characterized by to the popular taste of Mexico during the Colonial Its wide appeal was due to the fact that the Churrigersagne which interesting to compare the antiseptic and de-humanized days painting and sculpture to the altars of the was the architectural expression of the clerical Even the Neo-Classic architecture of the period This art was possibly the one which came to its antithesis, the Baroque of way made more decorative by the the

narmonizes with the represents the exact antithesis of the plastic art of Mexico expression. today we find these characteristics which, in my estimation, the axis; the gegneral The Swiss puritanism of the architecture of Le Corbusier because the principal characteristics of Mexican art and color; and the pyramidal form of the composition; an exaggerated no the tri-dimensional the traits which synthesize complex landscape. variety of superb manner in which the building Even in the popular architecture volume; the dynamic decoration; the Mexican manner the

The total absence of sculpture and painting as part of architecture is one of the achievements of our modern civilization. Throughout the history of mankind, from the most ancient cultures of the Anahuac or the Mediterranean, up to the beginning of the 20th Century, architecture was always accompanied

by painting and sculpture. Sometimes these arts were an plastic arts is not comparable to the integration of typical of that time. Naturally this juxtaposition executed within the narrow limitations of the academic manner 88 columns, pilasters, cornices, pediments, balustrades, decorations attached to architecture. In the Neo-Classic shows the importance placed upon the human need to decorate persisted in the employment of sculpture and sometimes painting the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th, architecture period, architecture employs, as did the ancient Roman art, integral part of architecture and, at other times, only Ankor-vat decorative elements more bas-reliefs or the Cathedral of Chartes, but nevertheless it Even in to adorn the walls, and statuary to humanize the most academic period of the end of sculptural than architectural, and of etc.,

We therefore have to conclude that the systematic elimination of sculpture and painting from architecture is typical of modern times and of our occidental civilization.

have no understanding of or connection with the construction of has become a sort of manager of production of buildings. Paintarchitect, having no connection with painting or sculpture, spectators in buildings ing and sculpture are executed by artists who are also specialized their work, and who are competing with one another. They our period of history the majority of people have been today to specialized labor, and they no longer count, as is a the cultural product of processes of our times. specialized work in which the Also archi-

It has been our luck in Mexico to initiate the movement to incorporate again, on a large scale, painting and sculpture into architecture. This has been possible only because of the important development in Mexico of monumental mural painting.

With the exception of the architecture of the Olympic Stadium at University City, which is an expression of Mexico, and which also harmonizes with the landscape, all other cases, in which integration of the plastic arts has been attempted, have been only the superimposing or the application of sculpture or painting (mosaics), which are Mexican in character, upon the face of a foreign architecture of the International Style.

University City offered a great opportunity to reunite the arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture but little was done with it.

Nevertheless there is today in Mexico the first buds of a modern architecture of real Mexican character — an architecture which will some day become a foundation upon which to establish the unity of the plastic arts of Mexico.

All through the history of Mexico, since the Spanish colony up to our time, we find two currents of art. One is the expression of the people of America, also called popular art, that follows the pre-hispanic tradition of the ancient culture of Anahuac, which has survived inspite of the brutal destruction done by the colonizers and the flerce exploitation of the pesantry that followed the conquest up to the flerce exploitation of the registry that followed the conquest up to the flerce exploitation of the registry that followed the conquest up to the flerce firm. The other current of art, has allways been imported from Europe, first from Spain and later from Faris. It is the colonizers, of the medione and petty mexican psudo-aristocracy and of the nouveaux-rich half breeds, which despite every thing that is indigenous of Mexico, and who copy the xxxxxxxxiixx the way of life of the cosmopolitan ziixx bourgeds.

of "current instead

In the architecture of,

Enothe University City of Mexico we find these two categories: The first is represented by the great Olimpic Stedium, the sport fields and the ball (fronton) courts. These buildings are harmoniously incorporated to the marvelous landscape of the lave bed that surrounds them and also belong to our great the lave bed that surrounds them are also belong to our great the experience of modern Mexican architecture and have become the examples of realism that runs parallel to the principles of the organic architecture praxitamized founded and practiced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The second current of art in the architecture of the U. G. of Mexico, is represented by ell the other buildings. These are more or less the bastard copies of the purist architecture of Le Corbusier or of Mies van der Rohe. In any case, these buildings represent the "abstract", non-objective school that belongs to the so called International Style. This implies the use of a series of Cilches and barring formulas to schieve the modernistic, bill_board, no-academic architecture, that has become congroid every where and which is unfunctional but warry expensive. This architecture represents every thing that is contrary to the taste and the interests of the Wedmen's people of Mexico.

The Institute of Science+ the schools of: Philosophy, Law, Econbmy and Congree are explant examples of an architectural sickness which we can call Le Corbusitis, and the new affice building, of the University City offices is a case of Mies van der Resis.

One of the principal engine of the U.C. of Mexico was to build high "skycrapers" (12 to 16 stories high) when land was available every were and when low buildings are much more mut suited to their function and to the landscape. This was done in order to impress every one with the importance of Mexico as a "reel" cosmopolitan Mation and to play upon the inferiority of the Mexican who admires the foreign forms of life and who feels satisfaction in the fact that we maximum and to envisite great nations of the world. This error is especially remarkations and stitus greatly advantageous for the offices to be encounted without eleptanning it functionally and the general effect from the campus Would have been more monumental than with this narrow tall building that which campus would the campus would be an affixed, compercial office building in the center of down town. Small

is absurd in this case, because there is absolutly no logical reason to have these separate units and xixxaxxixxaxy which make it encecessive to walk in the open to go from these work shops to anyxaxixax the class rooms or to any other part of the school. Apart from the fact that these pawilions look like so many motels, in a very ordinary glassed brick box "style", the cost is higher that texthexplanning. The lagrangement in this school had been planned in asxans and manity in one building.

The library, for which I am partly responsable, also falls into the category of the xxxxxxxxxx architecture which does not belong to our Mexican tradition. Never-the-less is is, to my understanding, a more functional building. It is one of the edifices of the U.C. which cost least per cubic metre of construction, lighted of the fact that the concrete structure had to be done for the heavy book loads. The closed stacks are located in ten stories over the reading rooms and form a large box shape which is a barbarous architectural conception and does not in any way fit into the landscape. The mosaics of %ix natural colored stones, for which I am totally responsable, aleviate to a degree this rather brutal architectural conception. These mosaics which give the building a modern baroque director are, the mosaics which give the building a modern baroque director are, thought the mosaic which the metallition and the %ixxx maximum attribution in their composition, within the Mexican tradition and the %ixxx maximum attribution, stone, used landscape. I would say that the library is foreign in its architecture and Mexican in the mosaic and bas-relief decoration, like a curopean that would use an indigenous dress, or a mask to make believe the a flesta.

ic. 1954.

Hear Enther: Sam sending you the while you arked for on the D. C. of Mr. Sam smeet is to long, but in any ease it is seasing to cut down them to what . So make the way you find most subable. So make the stronged to make it as cuiticable as possible, because the much grains about the D. C. and rectification must be one of our goals or else nothing moses on.

We both hope you and your husband are alright and sure heart your matteries. Chear allight have and have been grain matteries. I here I here were the do miss you must be one much. I here