Modern Architecture

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Have you noticed how many modern (or contemporary) homes are being built in Acadiana recently? And, how many times have you heard someone say “None of those glass boxes or chicken coops for me... I want a house that looks like a house.”

The truth is, that not many of us really like modern architecture. It baffles us. We don’t understand it. Why is this?

For some reason, which the psychologists could explain better than I, our instinctive resistance to things new, applies to buildings and sculpture and painting, but is curiously absent in our reaction to other art forms, such as music, automobiles and clothes.

From childhood, most of us have been taught that a bank looks like a Greek temple; a church looks like a Gothic cathedral, no matter how small; and a house, naturally, looks do at all with archaeology.

They concluded that esthetic effect result from proportion and scale, rather than a blind adaptation of classical details. When we consider that all the great architectural styles of history developed in exactly the same way, we see that modern architecture is, in reality, more traditional than architecture that we call traditional.

Schizoid

One writer has asked if there isn’t something a little schizoid in the spectacle of an otherwise, sensible, modern young American couple spending good money for the very finest woodwork and masonry obtainable; then beating it up with keys or chains, ice picking it full of worm holes and smudging it with soot and shoe polish until the once beautiful woodwork and masonry is not longer recognizable as such. I think he may be right.

The reason our buildings look boxy is because the materials of today — concrete and steel — frequently produce boxy buildings. Our columns are pipes or wood posts or plain brick piers, because we no longer build them of papyrus reeds, bound together, and we haven’t for two thousand years.

Our houses are smaller because we have fewer servants to take care of them. Most of us like to view the out-of-doors and step outside directly. The old 2’6” x 4’6” double-hung window, two to a room, doesn’t permit this.

Want Convenience

We like our air conditioning. We insist on elevators. We want