

ARCHITECTURE, BEST QUOTES ON

The surest test of the civilization of a people—at least, as sure as any—afforded by mechanical art is to be found in their architecture, which presents so noble a field for the display of the grand and the beautiful, and which, at the same time, is so intimately connected with the essential comforts of life.

--William Hickling
Prescott

It does not much matter that an individual loses two or three hundred pounds in buying a bad picture, but it is to be regretted that a nation should lose two or three hundred thousand in raising a ridiculous building.

—John Ruskin

Architecture is a very dangerous job. If a writer makes a bad book, eh, people don't read it. But if you make bad architecture, you impose ugliness on a place for a hundred years.

—Renzo Piano

The mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

You can put down a bad book; you can avoid listening to bad music; but you cannot miss the ugly tower block opposite your house.

—Renzo Piano

Great buildings that move the spirit have always been rare. In every case they are unique, poetic, products of the heart.

—Arthur Erickson

Architecture is really about well-being. I think that people want to feel good in a space... On the one hand it's about shelter, but it's also about pleasure.

—Zaha Hadid

I believe very strongly, and have fought since many years ago—at least over 30 years ago—to get architecture not just within schools, but architecture talked about under history, geography, science, technology, art.

—Richard Rogers

The aesthetic of architecture has to be rooted in a broader idea about human activities like walking, relaxing and communicating. Architecture thinks about how these activities can be given added value.

—Thom Mayne

There's a snobbery at work in architecture. The subject is too often treated as a fine art, delicately wrapped in mumbo-jumbo. In reality, it's an all-embracing discipline taking in science, art, maths, engineering, climate, nature, politics, economics.

—Norman Foster

The only way to enjoy architecture is not just to look at it but to move around it and through it.

—Kenneth Bayes

All buildings have a psychological as well as a purely visual effect on the landscape.

—Elisabeth Beazley

The ideal architect should be a man of letters, a skillful draftsman, a mathematician, familiar with historical studies, a diligent student of philosophy, acquainted with music, not ignorant of medicine, learned in the responses of jurisconsults, familiar with astronomy and astronomical calculations.

—Vitruvius

Good architecture lets nature in.

--Mario Pei

A doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his client to plant vines.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

We all see more of architecture than of any other art. Every street is a gallery of architects' work, and in most streets, whatever their age, there is good work and bad. Through these amusing shows many of us walk unperceivingly all our days, like illiterates in a library, so richly does the fashionable education provide us with blind sides.

--C. E. Montague

Architecture is inhabited sculpture.

--Constantin Brancusi

Imagination has brought mankind through the dark ages to its present state of civilization. Imagination led Columbus to discover America. Imagination led Franklin to discover electricity. Imagination has given us the steam engine, the telephone, the talking-machine, the automobile, for these things had to be dreamed of before they became realities. So I believe that dreams—daydreams, you know, with our eyes wide open and your brain machinery whizzing—are likely to lead to the betterment of the world. The imaginative child will become the imaginative man or woman most apt to invent, and therefore to foster, civilization.

—L. Frank Baum

There are three forms of visual art: Painting is art to look at, sculpture is art you can walk around, and architecture is art you can walk through.

--Dan Rice

We need to stop looking to politicians to make our world better. Politicians don't make the world a better place. Everything that's ever made the world a better place has come from inventors, engineers, scientists, teachers, artists, builders, philosophers, healers, and people that choose love over hate.

—Don Freeman

It is not the beauty of a building you should look at; its the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of time.

—David Allan Coe

I see architecture not as Gropius did, as a moral venture, as truth, but as invention, in the same way that poetry or music or painting is invention.

—Michael Graves

Architecture is a science arising out of many other sciences, and adorned with much and varied learning; by the help of which a judgment is formed of those works which are the result of other arts.

—Marcus V. Pollio

In architecture the pride of man, his triumph over gravitation, his will to power, assume a visible form. Architecture is a sort of oratory of power by means of forms.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Every man's work, whether it be literature or music or pictures or architecture or anything else, is always a portrait of himself, and the more he tries to conceal himself the more clearly will his character appear in spite of him.

--Samuel Butler

I call architecture 'petrified music.' Really there is something in this; the tone of mind produced by architecture approaches the effect of music.

--Johann von Goethe

No person who is not a great sculptor or painter can be an architect. If he is not a sculptor or painter, he can only be a builder.

--John Ruskin

The building which was fitted accurately to answer its end would turn out to be beautiful, though beauty had not been intended.

--Georg Möller

Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry, may truly be called the efflorescence of civilized life.

--Herbert Spencer

Greek architecture is the flowering of geometry.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man, that the sight of them may contribute to his mental health, power, and pleasure.

--John Ruskin

Architecture is a continuing dialogue between generations which creates an environment across time.

--Vincent Scully

To be an architect is to possess an individual voice speaking a generally understood language of form.

--Robert A. M. Stern

Society needs a good image of itself. That is the job of the architect.

--Walter Gropius

Architecture aims at Eternity.

--Sir Christopher Wren

Architecture is the art that has the greatest power to alter decisively and tangibly how we live and to modify steadily how we feel.

--John Fraser

Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last.

--John Ruskin

Architecture is the purest of the plastic arts, for it does not reproduce scenes from nature and it does not borrow any literary interest by representing subjects. It stands by itself on its own ground.

--C. Anstruther-Thomson

Architecture is the printing-press of all ages, and gives a history of the state of the society in which it was erected.

--Sydney, Lady Morgan

Architecture should be working on improving the environment of people in their homes, in their places of work, and their places of recreation. It should be functional and pleasant, not just in the image of the architect's ego.

--Norma Merrick Sklarek

The architect should strive continually to simplify; the ensemble of the rooms should then be carefully considered that comfort and utility may go hand in hand with beauty.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

Every great architect is - necessarily - a great poet. He must be a great original interpreter of his time, his day, his age.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

Architecture should be dedicated to keeping the outside out and the inside in.

--Leonard Baskin

A pile of rocks ceases to be a rock when somebody contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral in mind.

--Antoine de
Saint-Exupery

Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space.

—Ludwig Mies van der
Rohe

The principle of the Gothic architecture is infinity made imaginable.

—Samuel Taylor
Coleridge

The texts of man's achievements are not written exclusively in words. They are written, as well, in architecture, paintings, sculpture, drawing, photography, and in urban, graphic, landscape, and industrial design.

—J. Carter Brown

The center of Western culture is Greece, and we have never lost our ties with the architectural concepts of that ancient civilization.

—Stephen Gardiner

Architecture begins where engineering ends.

—Walter Gropius

Engineering, medicine, business, architecture and painting are concerned not with the necessary but with the contingent - not with how things are but with how they might be - in short, with design.

—Herbert Simon

When I was working in my first job engineering construction, what I liked the most was working with architects and making buildings that had this creative side coming from the architect and that were making them a big success.

—Bernard Arnault

The form a city assumes as it evolves over time owes more to large-scale works of civil engineering - what we now call infrastructure - than almost any other factor save topography.

—Martin Filler

There is nothing in machinery, there is nothing in embankments and railways and iron bridges and engineering devices to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection.

—H. G. Wells

Leonardo Da Vinci combined art and science and aesthetics and engineering; that kind of unity is needed once again.

—Ben Shneiderman

I love doing it. Every building is like a person. Single and unrepeatable.

—Ayn Rand

Indeed, ‘brute force’ solutions are often characteristic of advanced cultures, not primitive ones. The Romans and their predecessors spent a long time figuring out how to build arches... and virtually all our buildings today use post-and-lintel construction, precisely what the arch was devised to replace. We have better materials and more money, and given that, arches are usually not worth the extra complexity.

—Henry Spencer

The reason for the difference between the architectural and engineering ‘climate’, so to speak, is very complex. It is partly a matter of terminology, partly a matter of historical accident, and the consequent training of architects and engineers, and mostly a matter of what is commonly supposed to be the difference in content or context - architecture being concerned with producing works of art; engineering with utility structures.

—Yanni Alexander
Loukissas

Aldus Barnes, a structural engineer by training and member of the Advanced Geometry Unit (AGU) at Arup, has formed many successful collaborations and earned a prominent place for himself in architecture by adopting the language and skills of architects. ‘Talk in terms of texture and density, instead of torsion and shear. That way they don’t think you are just another nerd,’ Barnes advises the young members of his team.

—Yanni Alexander
Loukissas

It seems to be saying perpetually; ‘I am the end of the nineteenth century; I am glad they built me of iron; let me rust.’ ... It is like a passing fool in a crowd of the University, a buffoon in the hall; for all the things in Paris has made, it alone has neither wits nor soul.

[About the Eiffel Tower.]

—Hilaire Belloc

The Golden Gate Bridge is a giant moving math problem.

—John van der Zee

We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us.

—Winston Churchill

Bridges are America's cathedrals.

—Unknown

Architects and engineers are among the most fortunate of men since they build their own monuments with public consent, public approval and often public money.

—John Prebble

The sight of such a monument is like continual and stationary music which one hears for one's good as one approaches it.

—Anne Louise Germaine
de Staël

An arch never sleeps.

—J. Fergusson

Cheops' Law: Nothing ever gets built on schedule or within budget.

—Robert A. Heinlein

When they first built the University of California at Irvine they just put the buildings in. They did not put any sidewalks, they just planted grass. The next year, they came back and put the sidewalks where the trails were in the grass.

—Larry Wall

Eiffel saw his Tower in the form of a serious object, rational, useful; men return it to him in the form of a great baroque dream which quite naturally touches on the borders of the irrational ... architecture is always dream and function, expression of a utopia and instrument of a convenience.

—Roland Barthes

Forests were the first temples of God and in forests men grasped their first idea of architecture.

—James C. Snyder

Today, when so much seems to conspire to reduce life and feeling to the most deprived and demeaning bottom line, it is more important than ever that we receive that extra dimension of dignity or delight and the elevated sense of self that the art of building can provide through the nature of the places where we live and work. What counts more than style is whether architecture improves our experience of the built world; whether it makes us wonder why we never noticed places in quite this way before.

—Ada Louise Huxtable

Chicago has so much excellent architecture that they feel obliged to tear some of it down now and then and erect terrible buildings just to help us all appreciate the good stuff.

—Audrey Niffenegger

Architecture should have little to do with problem solving - rather it should create desirable conditions and opportunities hitherto thought impossible.

—Cedric Price

A greater awareness in architects and planners of their real value to society could, at the present, result in that rare occurrence, namely, the improvement of the quality of life as a result of architectural endeavour.

—Cedric Price

Architecture is the very mirror of life. You only have to cast your eyes on buildings to feel the presence of the past, the spirit of a place; they are the reflection of society.

—I. M. Pei

At the beginning, I thought the best Islamic work was in Spain - the mosque in Cordoba, the Alhambra in Granada. But as I learned more, my ideas shifted. I traveled to Egypt, and to the Middle East many times. I found the most wonderful examples of Islamic work in Cairo, it turns out. I'd visited mosques there before, but I didn't see them with the same eye as I did this time. They truly said something to me about Islamic architecture.

—I. M. Pei

When the great sixteenth-century Ottoman architect Sinan would start building a new mosque, he would make sure both the design and the project were in harmony with the city's history and the city's spirit.

—Catie Marron

Construction is the art of making a meaningful whole out of many parts. Buildings are witnesses to the human ability to construct concrete things. I believe that the real core of all architectural work lies in the act of construction. At the point in time concrete materials are assembled and erected, the architecture we have been looking for becomes part of the real world.

—Peter Zumthor

Old buildings whisper to us in the creaking of floorboards and rattling of window-panes.

—Fennel Hudson

Architecture has its own realm. It has a special physical relationship with life. I do not think of it primarily as either a message or a symbol, but as an envelope and background for life which goes on in and around it, a sensitive container for the rhythm of footsteps on the floor, for the concentration of work, for the silence of sleep.

—Peter Zumthor

When friends come to Rome in early summer to visit me I like to take them to the Pantheon during thunderstorms and stand them beneath the opening of the feathery, perfectly proportioned dome as rain falls through the open roof against the marble floor and lightning scissors through the wild and roiled skies. The emperor Hadrian rebuilt the temple to honor gods no longer worshiped, but you can feel the brute passion in that ardor in the Pantheon's grand and harmonious shape. I think gods have rarely been worshiped so well.

—Pat Conroy

If a work of architecture consists of forms and contents that combine to create a strong fundamental mood powerful enough to affect us, it may possess the qualities of a work of art. This art has, however, nothing to do with interesting configurations or originality. It is concerned with insights and understanding, and above all truth. Perhaps poetry is unexpected truth. It lives in stillness. Architecture's artistic task is to give this still expectancy a form. The building itself is never poetic. At most, it may possess subtle qualities, which, at certain moments, permit us to understand something that we were never able to understand in quite this way before.

—Peter Zumthor

Cubism is a part of the daily life in Spain, it is in Spanish architecture. The architecture of other countries always follows the line of the landscape . . . but Spanish architecture always cuts the lines of the landscape.

—Gertrude Stein

When experiencing a work of art, a curious exchange takes place; the work projects its aura, and we project our own emotions and precepts on the work. The melancholy in Michelangelo's architecture is fundamentally the viewer's sense of his/her own melancholy enticed by the authority of the work. Enigmatically, we encounter ourselves in the work.

—Juhani Pallasmaa

There is a truism in the world of architecture that design creates culture.
—Tilar J. Mazzeo

The need to house the dead was the first impulse of architecture.
—Michael Hecht

A city is not an accident but the result of coherent visions and aims.
—Leon Krier

It is not the beauty of a building you should look at; its the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of time.
—David Allan Coe

Architecture is a visual art, and the buildings speak for themselves.
—Julia Morgan

Great buildings that move the spirit have always been rare. In every case they are unique, poetic, products of the heart.
—Arthur Erickson

Of course I believe imaginative architecture can make a difference to people's lives, but I wish it was possible to divert some of the effort we put into ambitious museums and galleries into the basic architectural building blocks of society.
—Zaha Hadid

If you look at the Earth without architecture, it's sometimes a little bit unpleasant. So there is this basic human need to do shelter in the broadest sense of the word, whether it's a movie theater or a simple log cabin in the mountains. This is the core of architecture: To provide a space for human beings.
—Peter Zumthor

Form follows function.
—Louis Sullivan

I don't think that architecture is only about shelter, is only about a very simple enclosure. It should be able to excite you, to calm you, to make you think.
—Zaha Hadid

Architecture is an art when one consciously or unconsciously creates aesthetic emotion in the atmosphere and when this environment produces well being.
—Luis Barragan

Cities are the greatest creations of humanity.

—Daniel Libeskind

Every great architect is - necessarily - a great poet. He must be a great original interpreter of his time, his day, his age.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

Every time a student walks past a really urgent, expressive piece of architecture that belongs to his college, it can help reassure him that he does have that mind, does have that soul.

—Louis Kahn

Architecture is particularly difficult for women; there's no reason for it to be. I don't want to blame men or society, but I think it was for a long time, the clients were men, the building industry is all male.

—Zaha Hadid

I'm not a religious person. But, when I look at a beautiful cathedral, what brings awe, what induces awe is the idea that architecture, you know, a beautiful cathedral, a beautiful building.

—Jason Silva

All architecture is shelter, all great architecture is the design of space that contains, cuddles, exalts, or stimulates the persons in that space.

—Philip Johnson

The dialogue between client and architect is about as intimate as any conversation you can have, because when you're talking about building a house, you're talking about dreams.

—Robert A. M. Stern

When you look at Japanese traditional architecture, you have to look at Japanese culture and its relationship with nature. You can actually live in a harmonious, close contact with nature—this very unique to Japan.

—Tadao Ando

A man of eighty has outlived probably three new schools of painting, two of architecture and poetry and a hundred in dress.

—Lord Byron

Architecture is definitely a political act.

—Peter Eisenman

The ultimate goal of the architect...is to create a paradise. Every house, every product of architecture... should be a fruit of our endeavour to build an earthly paradise for people.

—Alvar Aalto

Concrete you can mold, you can press it into - after all, you haven't any straight lines in your body. Why should we have straight lines in our architecture? You'd be surprised when you go into a room that has no straight line—how marvelous it is that you can feel the walls talking back to you, as it were.

—Philip Johnson

Washington, D.C., has everything that Rome, Paris and London have in the way of great architecture—great power bases. Washington has obelisks and pyramids and underground tunnels and great art and a whole shadow world that we really don't see.

—Dan Brown

The Romans were not inventors of the supporting arch, but its extended use in vaults and intersecting barrel shapes and domes is theirs.

—Harry Seidler

Architecture is basically the design of interiors, the art of organizing interior space.

—Philip Johnson

The ancient Romans built their greatest masterpieces of architecture, their amphitheaters, for wild beasts to fight in.

—Voltaire

To me, a building—if it's beautiful—is the love of one man, he's made it out of his love for space, materials, things like that.

—Martha Graham

But I absolutely believe that architecture is a social activity that has to do with some sort of communication or places of interaction, and that to change the environment is to change behaviour.

—Thom Mayne

I don't divide architecture, landscape and gardening; to me they are one.
—Luis Barragan

Any architectural project we do takes at least four or five years, so increasingly there is a discrepancy between the acceleration of culture and the continuing slowness of architecture.

—Rem Koolhaas

I search for surprise in my architecture. A work of art should cause the emotion of newness.

—Oscar Niemeyer

Infrastructure is much more important than architecture.

—Rem Koolhaas

If you think you can't make the world a better place with your work, at least make sure you don't make it worse.

—Herman Hertzberger

Quebec City is the most European of any city in North America; they speak French all the time. There is a part of town called Old Quebec which is really like being in France. The architecture is just gorgeous, food, shopping. I'd say Quebec City is the most beautiful city in North America I've seen.

—Sebastian Bach

The principle of the Gothic architecture is infinity made imaginable.

—Samuel Taylor
Coleridge

In the big picture, architecture is the art and science of making sure that our cities and buildings fit with the way we want to live our lives.

—Bjarke Ingels

Architecture is art, nothing else.

—Philip Johnson

Bridges are perhaps the most invisible form of public architecture.

—Bruce Jackson

A building has integrity just like a man. And just as seldom.

—Ayn Rand

Landscape architecture is basically geodesign; it's designing geography. And yet geodesign is not only done by landscape architects, it's done by some of the world's largest corporations.

—Jack Dangermond

Architecture is not a profession for the faint-hearted, the weak-willed, or the short-lived.

—Martin Filler

Good architecture should be a projection of life itself, and that implies an intimate knowledge of biological, social, technical, and artistic problems.

—Walter Gropius

I believe that the way people live can be directed a little by architecture.

—Tadao Ando

I think it's important to approach a house in a way that's reflective of the original environment. Maybe I'm a sentimentalist, but I think that certain geographies call out for certain architecture. I like residences that reflect their place.

—Kelsey Grammer

Every one who has a heart, however ignorant of architecture he may be, feels the transcendent beauty and poetry of the mediaeval churches.

—Goldwin Smith

As architects we are often involved in the concrete-steel-and-glass aspect of it, but cities are social structures, and to be involved in imagining the future of cities and the type of relationships and the types of places that we're making is something that intrigues me very much.

—Michael Arad

The essence of architecture is form and space, and light is the essential element to the key to architectural design, probably more important than anything. Technology and materials are secondary.

—I. M. Pei

Theater publicly reveals the human condition through appealing to both intellect and emotion. Architecture, whether lowly or exalted, can do the same.

—Hugh Hardy

The best engineer a few decades ago was someone who could create the most beautiful beam or structure; today it's to do a structure you cannot see or understand how it's done. It disappears and you can talk only about color, symbols, and light. It's an aesthetic of miracle.

—Jean Nouvel

A world which sees art and engineering as divided is not seeing the world as a whole.

—Professor Sir Edmund
Happold

I am particularly fond of concrete, symbol of the construction progress of a whole century, submissive and strong as an elephant, monumental like stone, humble like brick.

—Carlos Villanueva

Architecture is the constant fight between man and nature, the fight to overwhelm nature, to possess it. The first act of architecture is to put a stone on the ground. That act transforms a condition of nature into a condition of culture; it's a holy act.

—Mario Botta

Beware of overconfidence; especially in matters of structure.

—Cass Gilbert

I think buildings should imitate ecological systems.

—Ken Yeang

Architecture is not based on concrete and steel and the elements of the soil. It's based on wonder.

—Daniel Libeskind

Any work of architecture which does not express serenity is a mistake.

—Luis Barragan

The door handle is the handshake of the building.

—Juhani Pallasmaa

A room is not a room without natural light.

—Louis Kahn

Less is a bore.

—Robert Venturi

Practice safe design: Use a concept.

—Petrula Vrontikis

Ah, to build, to build!
That is the noblest art of all the arts.
Painting and sculpture are but images,
Are merely shadows cast by outward things
On stone or canvas, having in themselves
No separate existence. Architecture,
Existing in itself, and not in seeming
A something it is not, surpasses them
As substance shadow.

—Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow

Architecture is the triumph of human imagination over materials, methods, and men, to put man into possession of his own Earth. It is at least the geometric pattern of things, of life, of the human and social world. It is at best that magic framework of reality that we sometimes touch upon when we use the word order.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

Most buildings are drawings filled in by engineers.

— Thomas Heatherwick

Architects and engineers are among the most fortunate of men since they build their own monuments with public consent, public approval and often public money.

—John Prebble

Architecture exhibits the greatest extent of the difference from nature which may exist in works of art. It involves all the powers of design, and is sculpture and painting inclusively. It shows the greatness of man, and should at the same time teach him humility.

—Samuel Taylor
Coleridge

Greek architecture is the perfect flowering of geometry.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Frank Lloyd Wright... his things were beautiful but not very functional.
—David Byrne

Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, then names the streets after them.

--Bill Vaughan

Switzerland is a small, steep country, much more up and down than sideways, and is all stuck over with large brown hotels built on the cuckoo clock style of architecture.

—Ernest Hemingway

I loved buildings that had grown silently with the centuries, catching the best of each generation while time curbed the artist's pride and the philistine's vulgarity and repaired the clumsiness of the dull workman.

—Evelyn Waugh

Most people are blind. If you get too subtle about architecture, people come in and walk through it and never notice the difference.

—Eero Saarinen

An architect's most useful tools are an eraser at the drafting board, and a wrecking bar at the site.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

What I learned from architectural drafting is that everything has to have a plan to work. You just can't wing it. I can't get all the materials I need for a house and just start building....you have to plan it out.

—Ice Cube

God created paper for the purpose of drawing architecture on it. Everything else is, at least for me, an abuse of paper.

—Alvar Aalto

The public is more familiar with bad design than good design. It is, in effect, conditioned to prefer bad design, because that is what it lives with. The new becomes threatening, the old reassuring.

—Paul Rand

You can have an art experience in front of a Rembrandt... or in front of a piece of graphic design.

—Stefan Sagmeister

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will themselves not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die.

--Daniel Burnham

Regard it as just as desirable to build a chicken house as to build a cathedral. The size of the project means little in art, beyond the money matter. It is the quality of character that really counts. Character may be large in the little or little in the large.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

When I'm working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.

—R. Buckminster Fuller

The level of detail and craft is something that's inscribed within the original design concept. And so when I begin to draw, I know what kind of detailing I want the building to have.

—Tadao Ando

A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.

—Antoine de
Saint-Exupéry

I believe that artistic activities change people. You do affect change. I see architecture as a political, social and cultural act—that is its primary role.

—Thom Mayne

The life of a designer is a life of fight. Fight against the ugliness. Just like a doctor fights against disease. For us, the visual disease is what we have around, and what we try to do is cure it somehow with design.

—Massimo Vignelli

Everything is designed. Few things are designed well.

—Brian Reed

Design is intelligence made visible.

—Alina Wheeler

Nail the basics first. Detail the details later.

—Chris Anderson

When you are stuck, walk away from the computer and draw. It will teach you how to see.

—Gerard Huerta

Computers are to design as microwaves are to cooking.

—Milton Glaser

It is not enough that we build products that function, that are understandable and usable, we also need to build products that bring joy and excitement, pleasure and fun, and, yes, beauty to people's lives.

—Don Norman

If you do it right, it will last forever.

—Massimo Vignelli

No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

There is little in the architecture of a city that is more beautifully designed than a tree.

—Jaime Lerner

Starting around the 17th Century was the Baroque era. It is my view that it is one of the architectural peak periods in western civilization.

—Harry Seidler

The logic of Palladian architecture presented an aesthetic formula which could be applied universally.

—Stephen Gardiner

The structural engineers who employ math and science to make the architectural form a reality are 'invisibles'—hidden behind the walls and ceilings—unknown professionals to most of society. When an individual asks me the difference between an architect and structural engineer, the elevator speech goes like this: 'Architects create the form and the experience, and engineers make it stand up!'

—Carol A. Post

It's my goal to make a building as immaterial as possible. Architecture is a very material thing. It takes a lot of resources, so why not eliminate what you don't need as long as you're able to achieve the same result?

—Helmut Jahn

Literature, although it stands apart by reason of the great destiny and general use of its medium in the affairs of men, is yet an art like other arts. Of these we may distinguish two great classes: those arts, like sculpture, painting, acting, which are representative, or as used to be said very clumsily, imitative; and those, like architecture, music, and the dance, which are self-sufficient, and merely presentative.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

I mean, certainly writing, painting, photography, dance, architecture, there is an aspect of almost every art form that is useful and that merges into film in some way.

—Sydney Pollack

Although we've been building with trees since prehistoric times, they are having a moment, architecturally. Wooden structures...have recently been built in Sweden, Finland, in the U.K., and a 24-story wooden building is under way in Vienna. Architects are even dreaming up wooden skyscrapers, such as a 35-story tower proposed for Paris by Michael Green Architecture, a Canadian firm that designed an eight story timber office building in British Columbia and a seven-story one in Minneapolis.

—Amanda Kolson Hurley

Architecture in general is frozen music.

—Friedrich von Schelling

The problem of architecture as I see it is the problem of all art—the elimination of the human element from the consideration of the form.

--Evelyn Waugh

Standing before costly objects of technological beauty, we may be tempted to reject the possibility of awe, for fear that we could grow stupid through admiration. We may feel at risk of becoming overimpressed by architecture and engineering, of being dumbstruck by the Bombardier trains that progress driverlessly between satellites or by the General Electric GE90 engines that hang lightly off the composite wings of a Boeing 777 bound for Seoul. And yet to refuse to be awed at all might in the end be merely another kind of foolishness.

—Alain de Botton

It may well be that what we have hitherto understood as architecture, and what we are beginning to understand of technology, are incompatible disciplines. The architect who proposes to run with technology knows now that he will be in fast company, and that in order to keep up he may have to discard his whole cultural load, including the professional garments by which he is recognized as an architect. If, on the other hand, he decides not to do this, he may find that a technological culture has decided to go on without him.

--Renner Banham

An architect should live as little in cities as a painter. Send him to our hills, and let him study there what nature understands by a buttress, and what by a dome.

—John Ruskin

Modern architecture only becomes modern with its engagement with the media.

--Beatriz Colomina

In the 1890s, [Thomas] Edison developed rock-crushing machinery for retrieving iron ore. That business failed, but the machinery proved well suited to producing cement, a key ingredient of concrete. In 1907, a time when New York City was rife with overcrowded tenements, Edison announced plans for low-cost, healthful concrete houses, and he later patented a method for building them. In a single pour into an iron mold...concrete would form the walls and roof— and the stairs, floors, even bathtubs. Edison offered the use of that patent free, and an investor built prototypes in New Jersey, some of which still stand. But this business also failed: the molds were costly, the houses weren't very attractive, and potential buyers were put off by the stigma of a home labeled 'the salvation of the unwashed masses.'

—Paul Lalonde

Architects cover their mistakes with ivy, doctors with sod, and brides with mayonnaise.

—George Heister

An architect suggested Gothic style for a new building on the University of Chicago campus. 'Let's write and ask the people at Oxford what they have to say on the subject,' suggested a member of the committee. Back came a letter from an Oxford don: 'I'm sorry to inform you we have not used Gothic at this University for the past 600 years!'

—Bennett Cerf

From the heights of these pyramids, forty centuries look down on us.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

In Japanese houses the interior melts into the gardens of the outside world.

—Stephen Gardiner

Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.

—Daniel Burnham

A building is hard to judge. It takes many years to find out whether it works. It's not as simple as asking the people in the office whether they like it.

—Helmut Jahn

If Nature had been comfortable, mankind would never have invented architecture.

—Oscar Wilde

First, there is the bare beauty of the logs themselves with their long lines and firm curves. Then there is the open charm felt of the structural features which are not hidden under plaster and ornament, but are clearly revealed, a charm felt in Japanese architecture.

—Gustav Stickley

The Sagrada Família basilica, in Barcelona...was designed by Antoni Gaudí in the late 19th century. Still under construction, it is a magnificent realization of his surrealist vision that transcends the architectural conventions of its time.

—Michael J. Van Essen

Symmetry was very important to the Greeks and Greek architects went to pains to work out correct ratios and proportions. Greek architecture is usually divided into 3 styles called orders. They are Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. The most important temples had colonnades (rows of columns) in one of the three styles. Doric columns were relatively short and broad. Their height was six times the diameter of their base. They were also quite plain and simple although they did have fluting (vertical indentations) for decoration. Ionic and Corinthian columns were 9 times the diameter of their base in height. Both had tops called capitals. Ionic columns had capitals carved like scrolls while Corinthian columns had capitals carved like leaves. The most famous work of Greek architecture is the Parthenon, a temple in Athens. Building began in 447 BC and it was completed in 438 BC.

—Tim Lambert

Leon Battista Alberti, the 15th century architectural theorist, said, ‘Errors accumulate in the sketch and compound in the model.’ But better an imperfect dome in Florence than cathedrals in the clouds.

—Twyla Tharp

Linguists, historians, etymologists and other scholars have studied the changes in language usage, vocabulary, rhetoric, and writing style as it is related to intellectual history, uncovering startling revelations about the way language has influenced thought throughout history....Architectural historians and theorists have yet to look with similar depth at the history of architectural drawing as a medium of thought.

—Mark Hewitt

Our eyes were made for seeing forms in light; shadow and light reveal forms; cubes, cones, spheres, cylinders, and pyramids are the great primary forms that light reveals well; the image is clear and tangible for us, without ambiguity. That is why these are beautiful forms, the most beautiful forms. Everyone is in agreement about this.

—Le Corbusier

The difference between the drawing of the painter and those of the architect is this: the former takes pains to emphasize the relief of objects in paintings with shading and diminishing lines and angles; the architect rejects shading, but take his projections from the ground-plan and, without altering the lines and by maintaining the true angles, reveals the extent and shape of each elevation and side—he is the one who desires his work to be judged not by deceptive appearances but according to certain calculated standards.

—Leon Battista Alberti

Precisely because of their less expensive and flexible application, facade graffiti and frescoes allowed house owners to upgrade their residences and to enhance the otherwise whitewashed walls with an almost ostentatious neo-antique veneer. Only a few owners managed to have these ideas dressed in stone—and even they usually did little more than cover the house front.

—Kurt W. Forster

Naval architects and mechanical engineers do not, when they make a ship or a locomotive, seek to recall the forms of a sailing ship of Louis XIV’s time or those of a stage coach...they obey blindly the new principles given to them, and produce works which possess their own character and their own style.

—Viollet-le-Duc

Most architects who design skyscrapers focus on two aesthetic problems. How to meet the ground and how to meet the sky—the bottom and the top, in other words.

—Paul Goldberger

We may not be able to command good, or beautiful, or inventive architecture; but we can command an honest architecture. The meagerness of poverty may be pardoned, the sternness of utility respected; but what is there but scorn for the meanness of deception?

—John Ruskin

To make a plan is to clarify, to fix ideas.

It is to have had ideas.

It is ordering these ideas such that they become intelligible, feasible, and transmissible....

[At the *École des Beaux-Arts* the plan] has become a sheet of paper on which black marks that are walls and lines that are axes play at being mosaics and decorative panels, make diagrams with dazzling stars, create optical illusions. The most beautiful star becomes the *Prix de Rome*. But the plan is the generator, ‘the plan determines everything; it is an austere abstraction, an algebrization dry to the eye.’ It is a plan of battle. The battle ensues, and that is the great moment. The battle consists of the clash of volumes in space and the morale of the troops is the bundle of preexisting ideas and the driving intention. Without a good plan nothing exists, everything is fragile and does not last, everything is poor even under a clutter of opulence.

—Le Corbusier

...architects have traditionally been very slow to understand that culture has been turned upside-down, all by itself. When we have science fiction movies, the people from Mars come down, and they speak in mathematical terms. They speak in mathematical terms because it’s a universal language. This house, in a sense, speaks in mathematical terms that Martians could understand. What that is saying is that you don’t have to be from the elite of society, you don’t have to know architectural history, cultural history, social history, you just have to come and experience the house. This is a house that any man could understand and be sensitive to because it speaks in universal terms....That’s what I am talking about. It doesn’t speak in the classical conventions that only the learned and the elite understand. It is a house for everyman. That’s exactly what I am saying. And it speaks to the America of today not the patrician America of two centuries ago.

—Peter Eisenman

With the arrival of spring and the advance of summer, American life shifts toward the porch—at least for those lucky enough to have a sheltered outdoor space, preferably attached to the front or back of one’s home. That all people seem to love a porch and the conversations and activities that transpire there, it’s a wonder that anyone ever bothers to build a dwelling without one. Architects, hang your heads.

—Kathleen Parker

Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.

—Steve Jobs

If you think good design is expensive, you should look at the cost of bad design.

—Dr. Ralf Speth

We often catch our first glimpse of a cathedral from a distance. Our next reaction, as we come closer, is often confusion. It’s a bit like the first time you hear a Beethoven symphony. There are so many melodies, rhythms, instruments and harmonies that at first you can’t grasp how they are linked and interrelated. A cathedral, like a symphony, has a coherent plan; its windows and arches form rhythms, its decorations have themes and tell stories, but the whole thing is so rich that at first it overwhelms us.

—Ken Follett

Cathedrals have always been full of tourists. In the Middle Ages they were not called tourists, they were pilgrims. But they traveled for many of the same reasons: to see the world and its marvels, to broaden their minds, to educate themselves, and perhaps to come in touch with something miraculous.

Our encounters with cathedrals are emotional. When we walk around we are enraptured by their grace and light. When we sit quietly we are possessed by a sense of peace.

—Ken Follett

In his 72-year career as an architect and egotist, [Frank Lloyd] Wright managed to design more than 1,100 things, a staggering number by any artistic measurement. They were churches, schools, offices, banks, museums, hotels, medical clinics, an automobile showroom, a synagogue, a mile-high-skyscraper—and one exotic-looking Phillips 66 gas station in Cloquet, Minnesota.

—Paul Hendrickson

One of [Frank Lloyd] Wright's nearly lifelong dictums was that his buildings were like shrubs and trees, growing upward, in effect from the inside out, emerging spanking-wet and blinking their eyes to the world....It was all part of his gospel of 'organic architecture.'

—Paul Hendrickson

Shelters for mankind—from the almost impossibly grand to the utilitarian bare and spare and functional, and all the more beautiful for such simplicity and environmental purity. (He [Frank Lloyd Wright] had a term for this latter kind of house... 'Usonian.') The interior of a Frank Lloyd Wright house...is always about many things, but at the center of each one is the intertwined idea of openness and flow. No matter what else he did with the design of a house in his nearly three-quarters of a century as a revolutionary architect, whether hanging it on the lip of a waterfall in Pennsylvania or sticking it mirage-like in the middle of a desert in Arizona, he was out to 'break the box,' to destroy forever those tight, draped, dark, horsehair, closed-off Victorian rooms of our 19th-century forbears. He wanted to let light in and space in, air in, life in.

—Paul Hendrickson

He [Frank Lloyd Wright] really did feel that America, as this new democratic country...needed a new architectural expression...that was horizontal, open in plan, open across the landscape, a sense somehow that it was connecting to the great open American land....He saw that American landscape, the openness of it, the sense that it was always moving across the land, pushing westward.

—Paul Golberger

To say the house planted by myself on the good earth of the Chicago prairie as early as 1900, or earlier, was the first truly democratic expression of our democracy in Architecture would start a controversy with professional addicts who believe Architecture has no political (therefore no social) significance. So, let's say that the spirit of democracy—freedom of the individual as an individual—took hold of the house as it then was, took off the attic and the porch, pulled out the basement, and made single spacious, harmonious unit of living room, dining room and kitchen, with appropriate entry convenience.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

In his 1962 study of architects, the psychologist Donald W. MacKinnon...found that the families of more creative architects had moved around a lot when they were kids, which appeared 'to have resulted frequently in some estrangement of the family from its immediate neighborhood,' he said. Not surprisingly, many the more creative architects said they'd felt isolated as children.

—Olga Khazan