

## EMOTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Beauty presents an invitation to savor life by allowing us to bask in the uniqueness of its essence. Respect for beauty, and its preservation, is inseparable from the health of a society and the continuance of its civilized values. Any society that turns its back on its honored traditions of celebrating beauty first tolerates, and later embraces that which is bland, ugly, or weird – weakening itself in the process. Who could deny that our country is witnessing, even abetting the erosion of our appreciation of beauty. In its place is a prevailing human ugliness that now invades our lives on virtually every level.

Regrettably, opportunities for the creation of beauty are often met with an insensitivity that says: “We don’t care what it looks like, just make it as cheaply as possible.” This way of thinking clearly explains the current lack of concern for an artistic ethos. As a result, almost everywhere we look, we’re inundated with ill-groomed people, sloppy clothing, and degrading body tattoos...along with a host of other disturbing things: offensive art, tasteless advertisements, and ugly buildings. It seems that many are unaware of how important their comfort, sense of well-being, and connection to beauty could be to them.

Fortunately, there remains a remnant of sensitive people who venerate beauty and are concerned about the current trend that seems bent on dismissing it. Among them are those who also possess the ability to offer appealing alternatives. In the field of architecture, their creations provide places of beauty and comfort...places that offer an escape, even a refuge, for those who lament what now seems to surround them. The manifestations of their passion evidence a strict adherence to the fundamental principles responsible for the creation of beauty.

The discipline of architectural design can rightly be viewed as a language. As such, the design of some structures are only able to communicate at an extremely simple level (maybe as simple as the words found in a grade school primer) revealing a very limited vocabulary of design understanding...one that’s unable to express feelings, compose complicated thoughts or offer interpretations of abstract concepts. Homes designed by an architect of this limited understanding are typically lacking in any evidence of having been designed. They usually fail, at all levels, to convey any sense of security, comfort, or aesthetic attractiveness.

Some think, and thus speak, in a confusion of unintelligible or ill-selected words... like a book written in an assortment of languages – a little English here...and there some German, French, Chinese, etc., all appearing randomly throughout the text. Such, a book would be incapable of communicating much, if any, of its intended meaning to its readers. The design of these homes presents such a confused assortment of architectural expressions as to leave an observer unsure of what it was they were viewing. The result is something confusing, even disturbing to experience.

But, there are a few whose writings are a composition of beautiful thoughts that are expressed with words carefully selected for their precise meanings. In that rare instance

when their native tongue seems to lack the necessary vocabulary to convey a complex concept, they have, within their grasp, a collection of foreign-language phrases that are able to provide an enriched expression of their ideas. The architectural language of these few is as imaginative and beautiful as the writings of a gifted poet.

And so it is with the design of homes. As we witness the various levels of architectural communication, we see the architect's goal as being the creation of a properly functioning floor plan, a living sculpture, a work of art, and an unforgettable experience to be encountered. To assist him in this process, he must be able to recognize important relationships in order to correctly differentiate between that which really matters from that which doesn't, by knowing how things should fit together, and how best to present them.

Nothing will serve this quest for understanding better than the lessons that can be learned from observing nature. There is a certain inexactness, an ingenious collection and juxtaposition of contrasts, and a certain beauty in the occurrence of decay (a concept the Japanese call *Wabi Sabi*). Though nature is full of almost similar units, it's never modular. We know that machines make straight lines. The human hand makes almost straight lines. This realization suggests that if we intend to mimic nature in our designs, absolutely straight lines (or anything machine-made and perfect) should be avoided. Thus, we need to avoid anything that speaks to a manufactured process – like wood laminates, imitation stone, corner bead, things that are veneered, hollow, or fake.

For this reason, a building that is well designed (one that's alive) will have the same balance of repetition, variety and imperfection that's found in nature. People feel "at home" in buildings that have respected the design principles taken from nature. Man's appreciation of beauty is universal because God created beauty and all the elements that contribute to it – including man's ability to appreciate the beauty in what He created. We all have an inherent ability to see loveliness, recognize it, and ultimately appreciate it. The creation of beauty is a matter of adhering to the basic rules of design which involve the incorporation of one or more of its seven governing principles: scale, proportion, symmetry, balance, rhythm, emphasis, variety, and unity. All of these principles are abundantly present in nature. Thus, structures feel good when they have been constructed in observance of the rules of nature – employing "natural" materials...put together in "natural" ways.

But there's yet another, deeper level of creative communication...that which is capable of arousing our emotions. It's a level of communication that reaches beyond our six senses. While most people only look at surfaces, a great work of art (poem, story, song, sculpture or building) reveals the hidden meaning of things. Artistic masterpieces are all capable of stirring our emotions by causing us to react at some deeper level of understanding and feeling.

Architecture that's capable of this brand of interaction with our emotions has succeeded in achieving a level of artistic understanding that surpasses all the other competing efforts that lack it. Briefly stated, a home whose creation is influenced by a design born of these convictions will be capable of producing a wide range of emotional responses, such as a sense of timelessness, a mood of pure comfort, warmth and invitation.

*In an attempt to better explain our architectural approach and how it has guided our designs, allow me to contrast it with some other popular architectural styles.*

*Many have become enamored with the styles that originated in various European countries. From the traditional English look, you'll encounter charming English Tudor homes and quaint little cottages. In France, the area of Provence has been responsible for that much sought after French-Country style. Equally popular, Italian villas offer handsome structures of wide appeal. In a different part of the world, Mexican haciendas capture the imagination of many who have traveled to Mexico. In the Eastern U.S., the Early American look has been incorporated into the design and furnishings of a great number of fine homes. Obviously, each of these styles has strong reasons for their wide spread appeal. But with each, there are certain draw backs. Beyond concerns regarding the functionality of their floor plans...these draw backs dampen their livability...like little windows, dark interiors, too much interior stone, ceilings that are too high, etc. All of those designs adhere to the dictates of their unique areas of origination.*

*But what about a style that's less well defined? Many looks fall under its label: contemporary – a label which can refer to a variety of things, but typically one thinks of something clean, crisp, dramatic and often somewhat minimalistic. Within this definition, there are some recurring components: bold primary colors, hard surfaces, hard edges, rectilinear shapes, and a preference for style over comfort.*

*In contrast to the above, the Emotional Architecture at Orofino will primarily stress the issues of timelessness, comfort, serenity and beauty. By avoiding any strict adherence to a specific design style (French, English, etc.), it will take the best from various compatible designs while eliminating their objectionable elements.*

*The minute you enter one of our homes, all that you see and feel will lure you in and convince you to stay. There's a certain softness about the entire presentation. The colors featured will be muted and selected for their ability to convey a sense of warmth. And despite their adequate strength, the materials that make up the structural elements of the house must, nevertheless, convey a feeling of softness...rounded edges with imperfect surfaces. Stone is a strong element and its use can be wonderful but it should never overwhelm things. Extremely hard materials (concrete, granite and marble) are to be avoided as they create an almost hospital-like coldness.*

*Our designs will place great emphasis on the layout of the floor plans, which will not just consist of a functional arrangement that connects spaces. Introduced will be such things as compression and expansion that can be achieved using level changes and ceiling height variations. In total, that plan will be subjected to over 140 design principles that relate to the optimum functioning of each space and important element within the home.*

*The finishing touches will be dedicated to the infusion of all the possible elements that can contribute to the beauty of the home: handmade hardware, classic doors, architectural artifacts, hand applied stucco with the desired texture achieved through the control of the trowel marks. Any stonework has the opportunity to become a work of art, make sure it is. Such things as stenciling, niches for art, and hand carved wood elements all contribute to the ultimate beauty of these homes.*

*But there's another, deeper level of creative communication...that which is capable of arousing our emotions. It's a level of communication that reaches beyond our six senses. Great paints, photography, writings, music and yes, architecture are all capable of evoking an emotional response by causing us to react from our souls. Architecture that's capable of arousing this brand of interaction with the viewer has succeeded in achieving a level of artistic understanding that surpasses all competing efforts. A home of such design influence will be capable of producing a wide range of emotional responses, such as a sense of being surrounded by beauty, timelessness, as well as a mood of pure comfort, warmth and invitation. Chacala and our tropical resort, Orofino, exude these qualities of beauty and promise to provide an emotional experience you'll want to repeat!*