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The practice of architecture is the most delightful of all pursuits. Also, next to agriculture, it is the most necessary to man. One must eat, one must have shelter. Next to religious worship itself, it is the spiritual handmaiden of our deepest convictions. Even more important than painting and sculpture, it is the primary art of our culture.

Whenever I start a building design, three aspects - as I might call them - act as a sort of measure, aim, discipline, hope for my work:

First, the aspect of 'Footprint' - that is how space unfolds from the moment I catch a glimpse of a building until - with my feet - I have approached, entered and arrived at my goal. In a church, the aspect of the footprint is simple; the hierarchial procession to the altar itself. In a home, from the automobile, the footprints may lead to a seat by the fire; in an office building, from the street to the elevator door. In a convention center, from the entrance, through the public arena, to the center itself, the processional for most buildings - including homes - is complex and in different eras is differently complex. It is with understanding, this richness of processions in my mind, that I try to imagine buildings.

Second, the aspect of the 'Cave' - all architecture is shelter. All great architecture is the design of space that contains, cuddles, exalts or stimulates the person(s) in that space. It is the design of the cave part of a building that overrides all other design questions. Like Lao-Tse's cup, it is the emptiness within that is of the essence.

There are lots of insidiousnesses to be studied besides the obvious interiors - like Chartres Cathedral in France or the Grand Central Terminal in New York. Nowicki once said that all architecture is interior architecture - the Piazza San Marco in Venice, even the Acropolis in Athens, since walls that descend around you can hold you as securely as walls rising around you.

A plain box can hardly be an exciting cave; visit your local auto factory building. Nor does size alone count; once more, visit your local auto factory. The modulation of interior space must have complexity; the side chapels of Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito, Michelangelo's transepts in St. Peter's, the spiral walks in the Guggenheim, the aisles of a hall church in the thirteenth century, the polychrome columns of Le Corbusier's High Court in Chandigarh, the scale-shifting boulders floating in the Ryoanji Garden of Kyoto, are all tricks of molding caves to excite and thrill the observer. Spaces go in and out, up and down. They overlap, they cheat or suggest, all the time enriching the architectural experience. With all these noble paradigms in mind, I still like to try my hand at caves.

The third aspect, the most difficult, is the 'Building as a work of Sculpture' - architecture is usually thought of as different from sculpture and indeed, not much great architecture is sculpture. Pyramids - yes; Talliesen West - no; Stonehenge - perhaps; Versailles - no; The Guggenheim Museum - maybe. The Parthenon - certainly not. Frank Lloyd Wright roofs, arcades, colonnades - all speak architecture - not sculpture.

In the last few years, however, it seems to me that sculptural forms, not necessarily geometric, have become a mark of architecture, as we have become impoverished in our external architecture by the lack of the impressive decorative motifs our forerunners could use - steeples, pointed and unpointed arches, and the like - we have turned to other modes of expression. Since there are no structural limitations today like the lintels of Stonehenge or the Parthenon, we can warp or carve or tilt our buildings the way we will.

These three aspects do not, themselves give form. I must work with the site, the program, the problem to gain the ideas and an approach to solution.

I have often said, architecture is too important to be left to just the architects. I will listen to the clients as they talk about the important issues for the design; the image, their sense of strength and nobility of the system and how best to express this aspect and the accessibility of the system to all society. All must be thoroughly digested.