

Beginning.

Humankind is in an eternal search for shelter.

Our age is filled with cyclical living factors; each orbit emphasizing society's waning.

In the eternal search, many have been driven to define this elusive human shelter.

The definitions, none of which are absolute, are now, for the most part, out of the hands of those most capable.

Dwelling is predicted, marketed, and directed by the forces least capable of defining that which is the most private of human habitations.

The act of living-having *sanctum* within a built environment-is no longer woven into a larger societal fabric or concern.

It is instead dictated, customized and given only by those who...understand, those who...define, and those who...name.

As a global society, we have divided ourselves into polarized worlds, claiming none holds a greater significance over the other, and yet who is the definer?

We have, for the most part, ignored the cycles and turned to our history for only those fleeting definitions that seem to please us.

History is interpreted only as it suits the needs of the moment, rather than to satisfy the quest for truth and understanding of these cycles.

Architecture, as an interpretive art and as a science, has lacked a clear definition more often than not.

This is not to say that "architecture" of true value and significance has not been conceived, imagined and built.

It is, however, a fact that architecture for the common individual did not embrace a sense of urgency until the last quarter of the 19th Century.

It was the home, the sacred shelter, that William Morris fought to redefine.

"Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

With his timeless statement and lifelong effort, the path was set for all who have followed.

To create an architecture of timelessness, one has to understand the well-established nature of history.

One must be aware not only of what one finds of interest, but also that which may not at the time seem relevant.

Through interpretation, the story must be woven into a journey that can guide into the future.

This journey, beginning as it has, is still being defined.

History, as a truth, is our guiding force; this cannot be denied.

What now defines this elusive human shelter?

First, it is a definition; that definition is of space. To dwell, one must have space.

This space is defined by elements. As builders, and creators, we have looked throughout time to nature for clues.

These clues have included the sky, the mountain, the cave, the flower, the leaf, the earth...

Using these given clues, we have discovered an interpretation. This interpretation of nature is manifested as architectural form languages that maintain a variety of meanings.

It is these abstract forms that we now use as definers for shelter.

To define shelter as only an enclosure of space is shortsighted.

After all, we are humans and the space we define must hold personal significance and meaning to us.

This meaning has during the recent past been interpreted through various sets of historic eyes.

These eyes of history have dictated to society what is truly beautiful, universal, and which abstract form language has true meaning.

Our personal understanding of meaning has not been called upon; our canvas of meaning has been painted for us.

We have continually depended upon these definers of historic meaning to determine our form definitions.

Our loss, though, is that these abstractions of the past only hold significance for a time, place, and people who no longer dwell on this earth.

In the best of circumstance, we can now only interpret these meanings. Our source for this understanding is again only a single perception, not the universal that we may seek.

To understand, and hence to develop our languages, we must acknowledge our history.

We need not reinvent it, but rather use that which has been left us to our best devices.

The 20th Century has left us not only a wealth of discovery, but also the ability to consider our world in ways previously unthinkable.

The ability to comprehend our environment has been greatly enhanced.

This improved assimilation has at times been overwhelming, beyond usefulness.

These newly discovered abilities allow humanity to interpret and create unlike previous generations.

With all of this discovery and humanity's new sight, many ideas about how we dwell have changed.
As the receivers of a variety of living ideals, we are left with different requirements for dwelling.
However, the definers of dwelling have neglected to reflect this change qualitatively.
No longer do we require the expected formal dwelling environment.
No longer do we survive on custom, tradition, and artifice.
Rather, today we have dislocated ourselves from the immediate post-war past-
Defining an existence that is highly idiosyncratic, highly personal.
Our dwelling no longer simply confines, shelters, and represent us.
Dwelling, instead, is an extension of us...
our canvas of expression.

Our requirements of space, sanctity, comfort and canvas are tremendous.
That which we quest now is that canvas, one in which the individual can envision his or her meaning.
Style is not only dead, the word must be stricken from the language.
We are inventors and yet also interpreters.
Form as we use it in architectural expression is infinite,
Yet the basis of form is primitive.
In an effort to allow meaning,
If the designer [creator] gives nothing more than the canvas,
Are we then making dwelling that much more of a personal experience?

Architecture is the art, science and craft of containing space.
Therefore, our canvases that define dwelling must be just that...space.
As creators, we must not only understand the intellectual process of building,
We must be capable of crafting.
As the 20th Century ends, not only have we forgotten the craft of architecture, we have dismissed architecture's art and science.
This must cease.
The painter does not give his brush to the canvas maker.

To allow dwelling for all of the globe's inhabitants,
We must economize,
We must recognize limitations,
We must build a canvas of material that we can renew.
We must not rely on the historic eyes to inform our languages.
We must allow and accept only form languages that set the stage for self-determined meaning.
We must design our space enclosures so as not to keep the precious earth at a distance.
We must recognize and acknowledge that we are all individuals; this richness is our greatest attribute.

In our overly-complex existence, we must have a simple canvas, one that can be nurtured with the minimum of care.
Through this effort, the eternal search will continue.
It will never be fully defined.
With proper nurturing, our efforts will continue.
Sanctum and expression will always be the architect's finest tools.