ALLAN GREENBERG, "WHY CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE IS MODERN"
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CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE is the cutting edge of architecture for the twenty-first century because it is the most comprehensive and the most challenging approach to architectural design and city planning. Because it is rooted in the physiology and psychology of the individual human being, the Classical language of architecture is always modern. To be truly modern means more than responding to some unique circumstances of the moment; it means finding the optimal balance between eternal human values on the one hand and the particular demands of the present on the other. Classical architecture has a proven track record, covering nearly 3,000 years, illustrating its ability to achieve this balance. It remains the most comprehensive language of architecture for serving the diverse needs of human beings and the societies they create.

Classicism's Communication

A CLASSICAL APPROACH to design fulfils architecture's most basic responsibility: to communicate to citizens the mission of our civic, religious, and educational institutions. Classical architecture is based on a language of form capable of communicating these ethical and political ideals. This is particularly important in the United States, where our system of government is based not on ideals of blood, tribe, or land, but on the natural rights that the Declaration of Independence tells us belong to all human beings. Our government is the people.

CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE, which developed in Ancient Greece simultaneously with the ideal of democratic governments, is particularly suited to expressing democratic ideals because it is based on the belief that human beings are the measure of all things.

Human Based Elements

BECAUSE CLASSICISM IS FOUNDED ON ANTHROPOMORPHISM, human form and personality may be attributed to Classical buildings, parts of buildings, and even groups of buildings. . .

CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE IS DISTINGUISHED from all other kinds of architecture by its basic commitment to the sacred importance of each individual and to democratic republics as the ideal form of government. It is a language of architecture that facilitates rational discourse about government and architecture, an essential ingredient in a democratic society whose citizens constitute the government and participate in public affairs.

Architectural Coexistence

THE POINT I WISH TO MAKE is that Classical architecture is essentially modern. We should adopt a more comprehensive view that includes all of the 20th century's architecture. The Bauhaus' worldview has taught us that there is an unbridgeable chasm between Classical and Modern ideals; the former, irrelevant. Such ideology distorts our view of 20th-century architecture.

CLASSICISM HAS BEEN PRESENT throughout the 20th century, and we need a history that recognizes the genius of . . . Pope, Bacon, Lutyens, and others. Such a history should also explain the coexistence of their buildings with those of Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Aalto. Let's try to stand Mies on Schinkel's shoulders so that we who stand on Mies' shoulders will be able to see farther. We will learn that Mies' architecture becomes much more potent and significant when seen in the context of Classical architecture. [*]

BY RECOGNIZING THAT ALL 20TH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURE IS IMPORTANT and must be studied, that we can learn from both the Lincoln Memorial and the Villa Savoye, that both Classical and Modern architecture have produced masterpieces, that both have deficiencies and strengths, we can understand the best of both. Only then will we see that Classicism is essentially modern, and that, in its noblest elements, Modern architecture is essentially Classical.

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[*] John Russell Pope (1874-1937) and Henry Bacon (1866-1924), Amer.; Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), Eng. Mies van der Rohe articulated a debt to early-19th-c.German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841).