Definition: **postmodernism** from *The Macquarie Dictionary*

1. any of a number of trends in the visual arts or literature which developed in the 1970s as a reaction to the idea of modernism with its emphasis on individual expression, evident in a range of styles, in particular a movement in architecture, painting and the decorative arts which used historical material as 'quotation' material in a playful or critical way that involves a recognition of famous images and motifs of the past as an essential part of its meaning.

**postmodernisms**

**postmodernist adjective noun**

**postmodernists**

Summary Article: **postmodernism**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

term used to designate a multitude of trends—in the arts, philosophy, religion, technology, and many other areas—that come after and deviate from the many 20th-cent. movements that constituted modernism. The term has become ubiquitous in contemporary discourse and has been employed as a catchall for various aspects of society, theory, and art. Widely debated with regard to its meaning and implications, postmodernism has also been said to relate to the culture of capitalism as it has developed since the 1960s. In general, the postmodern view is cool, ironic, and accepting of the fragmentation of contemporary existence. It tends to concentrate on surfaces rather than depths, to blur the distinctions between high and low culture, and as a whole to challenge a wide variety of traditional cultural values.

The term postmodernism is probably most specific and meaningful when used in relation to architecture, where it designates an international architectural movement that emerged in the 1960s, became prominent in the late 1970s and 80s, and remained a dominant force in the 1990s. The movement largely has been a reaction to the orthodoxy, austerity, and formal absolutism of the International Style. Postmodern architecture is characterized by the incorporation of historical details in a hybrid rather than a pure style, by the use of decorative elements, by a more personal and exaggerated style, and by references to popular modes of building.

Practitioners of postmodern architecture have tended to reemphasize elements of metaphor, symbol, and content in their credos and their work. They share an interest in mass, surface colors, and textures and frequently use unorthodox building materials. However, because postmodern architects have in common only a relatively vague ideology, the style is extremely varied. Greatly affected by the writings of Robert Venturi, postmodernism is evident in Venturi's buildings and, among others, in the work of Denise Scott Brown, Michael Graves, Robert A. M. Stern, Arata Isozaki, and the later work of Philip Johnson. Once extremely popular, postmodernism began to fall out of style in the late 1980s.
See also contemporary art.

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