

## **History of Architecture and Culture – 5**

### **Lecture - 25**

#### **De Stijl**

It is a Dutch name. If you translate to English you will get the style. The style was also known as neoplasticism. Like any other artistic style it was also an artistic movement. It started in the year 1917 right when the World War 1 came to an end. But instead of all the usual styles found in France and Paris, Russia, Italy, mainland Europe. Whereas this style was found in Amsterdam. Really up north and very few styles of architecture have got into start from this Northern European region. This is one of the most prevalent styles which started in Northern Europe. It startup in Amsterdam it consisted of certain artists and Architects. In a narrow sense it is a body of art related work founded in in Netherlands. So it was not a style as which it was started. It was just an art, art related works, body or governing body which was started in Netherlands. Key property of de stijl advocated simple concepts. The concept was very simple. High level of abstraction pure abstraction and they advocated something called universality. Something that can be understood by lot of people across different worlds and religions. This universality made them reduce whole artistic world to essential form and color. Just like Supreme Addison just like supremacism the simplified overall visual compositions to vertical and horizontal lines only black white and primary colors. So they use straight lines just the vertical and horizontal lines and they use black white along with red, blue, and yellow which is the primary color combination. There was nothing that de stijl had in their palette for a very long time. So like All the styles we have seen so far, we will get into a place where we would research on how the name came 2 picture. We saw that de stijl literally means the style but how did this style get its name. There has been a lot of styles honestly and every style should technically be called the style. So why did this style get that name. So if we could see here de stijl is also the name of a magazine that was published by a painter who was also a designer writer and critic he was called Theo van doesburg. He started this magazine and he created a group of like-minded artist and architects who found this kind of an art which is really arousing for them. So he started this journal and this journal was called de stijl. Show the name of the journal became the name of the style in future. Apart from Theo van doesburg , the groups principle members were Piet Mondrian, vilmos huszar,bart van der leck these are the famous painters that where the very principle members of the group and the group also had Architects who supported the whole concept. Gerrit rietveld, Robert van't Hoff, J.J.P.Oud best some of the Architects who were really interested in this kind of architect. They should have support at this style. DE stijl the artistic philosophy became the underlying factor for the work that this group did it is called as neoplasticism. The word neoplasticism you just breakitdown into pieces. Neo means new we all know that and

plasticism means plastic related art. Take a look about what Mondrian wants to say about it neoplasticism. He sets forth delimitation of neoplasticism in his essay. Which is titled neoplasticism in pictorial art. He says that this plastic idea will ignore the particulars of appearance. That is To say the natural form and color of the object or whatever the artist wants to paint. On the contrary what it should expresses pure abstraction of form and color that is to say only with the help of straight lines and clearly defined primary colors. So that was plastic according to Pete Mondrian. So this group works came to be known as neoplasticism. This constraint just kind of art allows only primary colors and basic neutral colors such as black white and grays. And they also allow only straight lines which means they could only restrict themselves to squares and rectangles. The squares cannot be tilted to angles only horizontal and vertical lines where allowed. They were not allowed to use diagonal lines nor triangles to circle nothing of that sort. Pretty much what you see in the picture this what they were allowed to use. Black white red yellow blue, rectangles and squares, horizontal and vertical dimensions. That is all that they can do. Same thing in the other picture also. It is all that the group can allow. Even if you had noticed the previous slides, they had been having the same kind of composition everywhere. I will come back to this diagonal kind of presentation later. That is one of the important things that happened in later by de stijl. I will say a little later. But primarily they had a horizontal vertical lines they had red blue and yellow colors and non-colors such as white and black. So we have the fundamental geometric shapes such as straight lines squares rectangles which can be used to give composition. But the composition of de stijl was strongly asymmetrical. So they didn't believe in symmetrical progression, projections like in previous artist styles used to. What they did was they used to do strength of colors to balance themselves. If they use a large patch of red on one side of the art they used small patch of blue on other side of the art. So that the blue can manage or balance the whole picture which is getting tilted towards red side. So that is what they do. They used a symmetric with predominant use of asymmetric colors and primary colors form that gives a balance of the art. So to sum up de stijl proposed extreme simplicity and abstraction in terms of art. Like in supreme mastic style that we saw in previous episode. This style also did not advocate the reason to put objects in its true form or color. If you have to paint an Apple or Orange you cannot paint it with curves or with the usual visual regular colors that an apple has. It has to follow the geometry that is fixed by him. Even if you want to paint an apple it has to have only straight lines and it has to have only primary colors. It cannot have any other modes of representation. There formal vocabulary words very limited so what happened was one part of the group which wanted to include the diagonal lines. One part of the group said see we have been using only horizontal and vertical lines and planes and we already have very limited vocabulary. What I propose is why we don't use the diagonals lines also. So that was a very important moment in the history ode stijl because that is when a rift was formed between the two fractions of de stijl. There was one fraction which believe that

the diagonal line will spoil the whole sanctity of de stijl it was a sacrilege whereas the other group thought that the diagonal line will give a little edge or they can do different kinds of compositions or they can give better type of compositions with the help of diagonal line. They thought that the diagonal line can create some kind of energy into the picture, but the other group or the other fraction did not really agree to it. So they simply went on with whatever they had that is idea. So the Two fractions that is kind of split in the middle and 1 fraction went on to take the diagonal line and that is when you can see these kinds of compositions which uses the same geometry forms shapes and colors. But they use diagonal lines. If you see a de stijl art which has a diagonal line you can clearly see that it is later de stijl. It is not the de stijl that was in its height. Or on its high time. The picture on the slide is the 4 that was designed by jerry. It is called the red and blue chair. It is one of the very few chairs where designed and de stijl artistic movement. It is going to de stijl architecture. If you take a look at the picture, you can see that there are plain white, black, red, yellow and blue usage in this thing. And all the lines are either horizontal or vertical. There are no diagonal lines even in this composition. Except for this little circular over here and the pipes that has to be circular for obvious reasons there is no other form that has been incorporated in this particular building here. This is called the shodder house which was designed by jerry dry well. This is the only existing truly DE stijl example for an architecture well. This is 1 project which could be truly attributed to de stijl and other projects which came during that period of time we can say that it has borrowed certain elements from still architecture. But No one can claim there architecture to be hundred percent de stijl as this building. This is the model of the shudder house. Here again you can see the plane geometry and use of simple colors. This is some of the pictures of shodder house the other side the yellow side. So the Schroeder house was the only building realized completely according to the principles of de stijl. De stijl in France architecture remains constructively long after its construction. This is so true because even today you can see people designing buildings that have principles that are derived from this particular style. So the other proponents who tried to emulate I tried to incorporate de stijl architecture into their works are mees van der Roop, J.J.P. Oud, Le Corbusier and even F.L. Wright are some of his projects.

## **Bauhaus**

So the next style that we will be looking at today is the bauhaus style. More than style Bauhaus means revolution in architecture. It was an art School which was started in Germany. It progressed from being just an art School to one style to one of the most prestigious schools in the history of architecture. Many schools around the world even today use the same kind of teaching methodology or pedagogy that was designed at the Bauhaus school of Architecture. To start talking about Bauhaus it was an art School. It was started in Germany. It combined crafts fine arts and building arts. It was famous for the holistic approach to design which was followed in that school. And it was known for

its holistic approach to design which includes the crafts the building arts structural elements fine arts and modern thinking. The school operated from 1919-1933. Like all the styles that we saw earlier this was what Bauhaus literally means. It literally means a construction house in Germany. It can be understood with the meaning as house in which you can learn construction or school of building. It was founded by Walter Gropius. In spite of the name construction house or Bauhaus and in spite of the fact that the whole school was started by an architect Bauhaus did not have an architecture program during the first year of its existence. Nonetheless what Bauhaus did was they thought art as a totalitarian work in which they have to include art architecture, pottery, furniture making, set making. They could design all the products even. Industrial and typography all under one roof. This later became the most influential current in terms of modernity modern design. Modernist architecture modernism started from the one sprang in part of Bauhaus. The Bauhaus school has complete real influence on later architectural development that happened in modernism in art and graphic design product design industrial design and typography, fonts interiors and lot of other para design field. On the right hand side on the screen you will see the logo of Bauhaus. Here on the left hand side you see Bauhaus typography and here you can see profound influence of de Stijl picture. You can see black white red blue and yellow scheme totally which has been applied to Bauhaus typography. Let's take a moment to appreciate how one style evolves into another style without having to blame yourself on the style. One does not say no from today onwards I am going to start Bauhaus style or from yesterday I am going to leave de Stijl behind me. So nobody is going to say that. Style evolving from one form to another artistic form is an evolution and you can clearly see it in the picture here. So yeah the Bauhaus school operated in 3 different places inside Germany. It was at Weimar 1919-1925, it was at Dessau 1925-1932 and Berlin 1932-1933. After which there was a massive thing going on in Germany we all know that years of Wars were having a tremendous impact on art and architecture everywhere. So between 1919 I am 1928 the wars were headed by Walter Gropius himself and from 28 to 30 he invited his friend and partner Hans Meier to lead the program. And later from 30 to 33 it was Mies van der Rohe who was heading the whole program. This school was closed by its own leadership under the Nazi regime pressure because Nazi people said that the school was teaching communist intellect through architecture because there were a lot of faculty members who had come from Russia and Poland. So although the school was closed staff members that teachers who were there during the school they continued to spread the ideals of Bauhaus school. Not of the communist intellectualism but of the Bauhaus school around Germany and some of them they even left Germany and migrated to all over the world. Most of them went to USA where things were little more neutral out there rather than Nazi regime. Some of them settled in and around Europe. And some of them settled even Walter Gropius settled for a brief period of time. Industrial designs that were developed during the Bauhaus time were product designs. Nazi people told that the school was teaching communist idealism.

Gropius believed that it was completely a political that means no political affliction to the school. Most important influences of the school itself was there had been influences of some lot of people into the school. In the 19th century English designer Williams whom we have studied about in the earlier episodes he was one of the greatest inspirations for Gropius to start the school. Before we know it we had people who started emulating Bauhaus style so much that it is also known as the international style. It was marked by 1 simple thing which means there is no ornamentation in terms of design. There is completely harmony between the functionality of the object and the rationality of the design. So both of them combined to form the perfect utilitarian object or solution which means that which meant there is no stylistic afflictions. So it could be used elsewhere in the world also. This was the Bauhaus building. This building was designed by Walter Gropius. We will study more about this particular project when we are looking at Gropius himself. This was the concept of Bauhaus school where they study about a different materials they study about different tools the study about construction and representation the study about drawings they study form in basic workshop the study color composition and base theory they study nature half year 3 year and they have clearly defined program for what a person must study in architecture. At one point of time Bauhaus had faculty from all over Europe. He had Johannes item from Switzerland, he had Feininger, he had Gerhard marcks., he had Oskar schlemmer, he had Paul Klee from Switzerland , wassily Kandinsky from Russia , Theo van doesburg from Holland we just saw him . Digital style theo van doesburg was inductor. And we had El lissitzky from russian constructivist cover. And we had so many people associated with Bauhaus . And they did not try to introduce there art into Bauhaus . They all just came together to create what they called the new internationalism. This was one of the operable windows of Bauhaus. You can see the mechanism through which the topmost Windows where openable.so Bauhaus was first started in wemara as art and from there it was moved to Dessau. It was during Dessau that change of direction for the school was starting to appear. That is when Gropius started in ducting lot of people from different people. He wanted his friend Dutch architect to march stamp around the newly created architecture program. He was not able to convince him to join it that was when he gave his friend Hans Meyer the post of name the chair of architecture program. After that the school regime changed from Mayer to mees. What mees did was he first removed all the people that was favoring Mayer and his regime. He completely created a new set of rules regulations for the school. It took the school to a different direction himself and he even forced resignation from lot of people. So they at one point of time this people thought that Nazi regime was not going to allow them to continue teaching here. So Walter gropius, mArsal Breuer and moholy Nagy they all get together in Britain in mid-1930 for a project and that is when Gropius and Marsal Breuer thought that they cannot continue doing what they were doing and so they went to USA to teach at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and they work together at Harvard and even designed buildings there in

Harvard. So back here in late 1930 Mies van der Rohe started from there and he came to USA. He settled in Chicago because of the war that was going on in Europe. Philip Johnson has supported Mies van der Rohe when he re-settled in Chicago... they met Moholy-Nagy when he split from Marcel Breuer and together they all started this Illinois Institute of Technology, the school became an Institute of Design which became a part of Illinois Institute of Technology later so it was. Bauhaus school which started in Weimar and it created a lot of reschool like Harvard, School of Design Illinois Institute of Technology so it was that school basically, which channeled to the growth of all these schools all around the world. Let's take a quick look at what impact it had around the world. We can still see the Bauhaus architecture in Western Europe United States Canada and stress rail. Tel Aviv which was the capital of Israel in 2004 was added to the list of sites by the UN due to its abundance of Bauhaus architecture. Harvard school was highly influential in America in late 1920 and early 1930. It produced great students such as Philip Johnson, I.M. Pei, Lawrence Hall of Science and Paul Rudolph. And lot of other people.