

## FAQs

### **1. Write a brief about Alvar Aalto's early life and career.**

Hugo Alvar Henrik Aalto (1898 –1976) was a Finnish architect, designer, as well as a sculptor and painter. His work includes architecture, furniture, textiles and glassware. Aalto's early career runs in parallel with the rapid economic growth and industrialization of Finland.

Although his early work borrowed from the Neoclassic movement, he eventually adapted the symbolism and functionalism of the Modern Movement to generate his plans and forms.

Aalto's mature work embodies a unique functionalist/expressionist and humane style, successfully applied to libraries, civic centers, churches, housing, etc. Many of his clients were industrialists.

A synthesis of rational with intuitive design principles allowed Aalto to create a long series of functional yet non-reductionist buildings. Alvar Aalto generated a style of functionalism which avoided romantic excess and neoclassical monotony. Although Aalto borrowed from the International Style, he utilized texture, color, and structure in creative new ways.

He refined the generic examples of modern architecture that existed in most of Europe and recreated them into a new Finnish architecture. Aalto's designs were particularly significant because of their response to site, material and form.

### **2. Brief on the Alvar Aalto's House of Culture**

Kulttuuritalo (Finnish for The House of Culture), is a building in Alppila, Helsinki. The building was designed by Alvar Aalto, and is considered to be one of his main works.

The building combines a concert hall, an office building and a

lecture-theatre block connecting the two. Uniting the whole, along the street frontage, is a 60-metre canopy.

The House of Culture was originally built for Finnish Communist cultural organizations. Aalto designed the building pro bono and was given complete artistic freedom; the construction work was done largely by volunteers. Work began in 1955, and the building was opened in 1958.

The free asymmetrical form of the hall entailed the development of a new facing element, a wedge-shaped brick, with which all the curves of the irregular exterior could be realized."

The office part has five storeys with 110 offices, meeting rooms and two flats. In the lecture and conference room section (in the middle of a U-shaped complex) are a lecture hall, study rooms, discussion rooms, a library and a records room.

The concert and congress hall is the main feature of the group. The hall, with 1500 seats and a stage 200 sq m, is primarily intended for concerts, but is also used for lectures.

The various parts of the building are linked together along the street by a canopy 60m long, under which are the main entrances.

### **3. Brief on the Alvar Aalto's Mount Angel Library.**

The library is located at the hilltop Mount Angel Benedictine Monastery. The simple single story inner facade in pale brick demurely continues the courtyard edge, blending with the traditional buildings on either side.

Only after entering this facade and passing the circulation center is the visitor struck with the power and spirit of the plunging, uplifting arc of the central space, calmly palpable with light from above.

"Aalto works with light, with the route, with massing and modeling of the building form. These are classic architectural references.

His range is formidable in that he appears able to handle an extraordinarily wide spectrum of architectural problems. He handles the urban and the rural, the large, medium and small building. He is able to absorb virtually every building material, be concrete and stucco, glass, copper, marble, brick, ceramics or timber."

The back of the fan shape features large clearestory windows and, high above, the central space is ringed by skylights. These let in a soft, pleasing light which permeates the library.

Aalto uses the techniques of Modernist architecture and the International Style, but they're given a very organic, personal touch throughout.

The lobby will be instantly familiar to anyone who's been in a modern building, but directly adjacent to that is a sensual, wave-shaped, wooden auditorium that could hardly contrast with it more.

#### **4. Brief on the post WWII developments in agriculture.**

In agriculture, the post WW II period saw the widespread introduction of the following:

- Chemical fertilizers
- Tractors
- Combine harvesters
- High yield crop varieties of the Green revolution
- Pesticides

#### **5. List down the pioneer practitioners of the international style.**

Pioneer practitioners of the International Style included a group of brilliant and original architects in the 1920s who went on to achieve enormous influence in their field.

#### **These figures included:**

Walter Gropius (1883-1969) in Germany,

J.J.P. Oud (1890-1963) in Holland,  
Le Corbusier (1887-1965) in France, and  
Richard Neutra (1892-1970),  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), and  
Philip Johnson (1906-2005) in the United States.