

History of Architecture and Culture – 6

Lecture 4

Works of Aldo Rossi

Today we will move into Aldo Rossi because we have a lot of ground to cover. Aldo Rossi was an Italian architect and designer. He accomplished unusual feats of achieving International recognition in four distinct areas- theory, drawing, and architecture and product design. He has secured International awards for prizes and recognitions in all these four areas. He was awarded the Pritzker Prize for architecture in 1990. Is the highest award in architecture ever? The Pritzker Juror, the architectural critic Adolf Loos, called him as a poet who happens to be an architect. He graduated from the Polytechnic University of Milan in 1959. And while he was studying at the University he started writing by 1959 he had become the editor of an architectural magazine, back then it was called *Casabella Continuità*. He served this post until 1964. Even though Rossi had started his professional career as an architect in 1956 but in 1963 he deviated to teaching profession and served as architecture professor different institutes including the school of urban planning in Arezzo, the institute of architecture in winners and the Polytechnic University of Milan. In 1965 the first book was published it was called *The Architecture of the City*. It turned out to be a highbrow architectural literature at that point of time. It was 1971 when his architectural career took a big turn and it started moving towards a little more mature phase. He owes this to one auto accident which made him end up in a hospital it was during that stay in the hospital that he came up with the inspiration for the competition project that he was taking part in those days double the symmetry of San Cataldo in Modena, Italy. This design that you see on the screen is the design that he made for the cemetery. The entire Campus is still unfinished. Aldo Rossi's unfinished San Cataldo cemetery considered as one of the first and foremost important postmodern buildings in the world. Rossi actually never said he was modern. He said that he cannot be a postmodern as he has never been modern the first place. Yet his symmetry for Modena displays the strong coloring bold form historically differential detailing that became highly synonymous with what postmodernist were doing at that particular point of time. So he was considered as postmodern by lot of writers including Christopher Alexander whom we study about in the previous episodes. Actually in 1971 Rossi had his eyes set on another interesting project which is going on, it is called Centre Georges Pompidou that project was eventually

backed by Richard Rogers but he could not participate in that particular project because of this serious auto accident weeks before the deadline and Rossi had to be hospitalized. It was during that hospitalization period that he worked for this Modena project. These are the certain visuals of the Modena project. Look at the use of Raw material bright color .his appropriation of elements from preceding Architectural style with the adaptation of muted blue and Terracotta color pallet which we had tried to use in this particular project. This is distinctly postmodern in approach. So he denies that he is a postmodern architect. Every other person in the world considers him as postmodern architect because it is so synonymously congruent with the other buildings of same Era. Another visual from the project. His earliest works of the 1960s mostly theoretical and displayed a simultaneous influence of Italian modernism of terracotta classist influence of Viennese architect Adolf Loos and the reflection of the painter Giorgio de Chirico. If you see his paintings you can see the influence of, Giorgio de Chirico and if you look at this particular building in the previous semester if you remember if you let your memories to remember Adolf Loos designed a very similar, project and similar building which looks very similar to this building that you see here. So the inspiration for this building had come from Adolf Loos but Adolf Loos never used this kind of color or so much of expression in his buildings. His buildings this usually flat, Aldo Rossi was famous for his writing and in his writings he openly criticized the lack of understanding the lack of city principles and the current architectural practice. He said that a city must be studied and it must be important to be studied as something that is constructed over time, time component is being missed by most Architects. It is the urban artefacts that withstand the passage of time. He went on to say that a city as such has a past or collective memory of the people who live in the City. And that we use that memory through monuments which he extends his version to say that monuments give structure to the city. He talks about emotional connective structures and not about physical structure here. He became extremely influential in the late 1970s because he wrote two important books one is the architecture of the city and the other one is a scientific autobiography. The largest of Aldo Rossi's project is the largest in terms of the size and scale was the cemetery building in Modena Italy it was started in 1971 but it is yet to be completed. Rossi called the city of the Dead. This is some of the sketches that Rossi had made. These are some of the buildings that he had designed.

Works of Jane Jacobs - 1

Let's go on to the next important architect of. Jane Jacob. Jane Jacob was born as Jane Jacobs in 1916. She was an American Canadian journalist, author, and activist who was best known for her influence on urban studies. Her very influential book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, argued that urban renewal respects the needs of most city dwellers. Through her writings she introduced sociological concepts of life on the street, social capital etc. Jane Jacob was well known for organizing grassroots efforts to protect the existing neighborhood from slum clearance and particularly her opposition to Robert Moses in his plans to overhaul the neighborhood which is Greenwich Village. She was instrumental in the eventual cancellation of lower Manhattan expressway which would have passed directly through SoHo and Little Italy, and was arrested in 1968 for inciting a crowd at a public hearing on the project. So she was an activist of sorts, she stopped a few developmental projects which would have been detrimental in value to portions of the city. She was even arrested for that. Some of the famous books that she had written are on the screen here, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is one of the most important books that she had written. *The Economy of Cities* talks about how the city works as an economy and how money comes and goes out of the city. *The Question of Separatism: Quebec and the Struggle over Sovereignty*. *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*. *System of Survival*. *The Nature of Economics*. *Dark Age Ahead*. Today in this lecture we don't have time to deal with all the 7 or 8 books that she had written but then we will look at in detail one of the books that she had written the most influential one, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. This is the book that she released in 1961 and let us see what is there in it for us. She asked in this book what makes cities work? Why some neighborhoods are full of things to do and see and why are others dull? Why does the crime rate soar in public housing developments and why some of our older neighborhoods so much more are stable, safe and congenial. Why do some neighborhoods attract interested and responsible populations while others degenerate? Are some good neighborhoods considered as slums by orthodox city planners? What alternatives are there to current city planning and rebuilding? She looks at all these 6 and 7 questions and then she tries to answer all these things on her own in her book. Purpose of this book was a clear attack on the current method of city planning, why all these famous so-called city planning principles according to her. She explains the new principle that needs to be considered during city planning. She proposes arguments for different methods from those now in use. To propose an alternative for conventional city planning. Conventional city planners which resulted in decline of cities the reason cited by them.

Blighted by too many people. The mixture of commercial industrial and residential users. Old buildings and narrow streets. Small landlords are land owners who stand in the way of large scale development. These are the problems that are cited by conventional City planners. If you look at these problems the results are three fold, they Breed apathy and crime, they discourage investment in a particular City, they contaminate areas around them. See for example if you have a city which is blighted by too many people or if you have old buildings and narrow streets you naturally discourage investment because no people and if there are very narrow streets that stop development and it is going to be very less investment that is no investment into the city it started breathing apathy and crime. So when slowly the population category changes from wealthy to middle class and from middle class to lower middle class and from lower middle class to slum areas. They contaminate the areas around them too. The solution that they proposed was to tear them down, scatter the inhabitants, layout super blocks, and rebuild the area to an integrated plan. These were the proposals that that was supposedly y given by the conventional city planners had led to the decline of cities. So then she takes influence of how this peoples had their ideas from, the city planning Idea was taken from great many individuals. So she takes up 5 great people and ideas of city planning that they had given. For example she takes Ebenezer Howard- garden City plan, Patrick Geddes- regional planning approach, Louis Mumford- culture of cities, le Corbusier- radiant City plan and finally Daniel Burnham- city beautiful movement. She takes up all these 5 people's movement and then she talks and tells us why declare idea will not work in a modern city. So the whole book is dealt with 4 different parts. Part 1 deals with the Peculiar nature of cities, she talks about the social Behavior of people in cities. She talks about safety and then she talks about the use of sidewalks, contacts in the use of side walk, assimilating children elderly people and people who need support and use of sidewalks, then she talks about city neighborhoods, neighborhood parks and neighborhood areas. So basically where ever the city meets with people she talks about those areas in this particular unit. Under safety she talks about how a city or a street can be safe from many purpose. Besides the street has to be safe for primary reason because, if the street is not just only to carry vehicle and city sidewalk is not just for people to move from one place to another. There are many other purposes besides carrying pedestrian, people or traffic. If the streets are safe from barbarism and other fear of vandalism theft robbery or even other considerations like rape .mutilation murder etc. A city becomes well used and usable if the streets of the city are safe. She says that there are three main

qualities that call for the street. Firstly there must be a clear demarcation between what public space is and what private space is. There needs to be a place where you are clearly not entering into somebody else public space and you are not entering into somebody else private space. There must be a clear demarcation which is number one. Second she talks about a policy which is called policies on the street. He says that eyes belonging to those who if you might call as natural proprietors of the street there eyes must face the street. For example if there are a lot of people looking at a particular point on the street obviously a crime is not going to happen there. because There are people looking at it. In a busy neighborhood nobody dares to make a crime there. So she calls for Eyes on the street buildings that need not Orient on the inward or the other side, the building must be oriented in such a way that there are always people are on some Windows or balconies are some portico those who are looking on the street. Number 3rd she talks about sidewalks and it must be used fairly continuously. She says that the sidewalks must be used properly by the users. If the sidewalks are not being used by people they slowly degenerate to form other kinds of para activities and even paralegal activities that decorates the image of the city. She talks about contact and then she talks about sidewalk life who live in walk people who sit on the roadside Cafe like this, people who sit on side benches who can be called as self-appointed public characters. Because if there is supposed to be some kind of a miscreant activity this people who are sitting on the cafe will be able to see it. They are these people who frequently in contact with the white circle of people. For example these people who work on this cafe this main qualification is that he has public and he talks to a lot of different people. This is the only qualification they have They could be people who are working on this store or people who manage the store or manager of the store they established the identity of the street or the entire street or the entire neighborhood. They just look out on the streets and they have so many people that they talk to on a regular basis. And they become self-appointed public characters of that particular Street and they become the life of that particular neighborhood. Everybody in the neighborhood will know him and he will know each and every person if not every person he knows each and every locality in the neighborhood. Even if someone wants to ask for an address they can ask that person. So he becomes the character of the neighborhood himself. Then she talks about children how children in the cities need a variety of places to play with and how the cities are not providing that. And they don't have lively side works that children can play on at the same time they need unspecialized home base where they can play.

So these are the sort of things that Jane Jacob talks about. Then she talks about neighborhood parks and she says that the worst problem is parks are located precisely where people do not pass by she says that when a person moves from one place to another place a park must be located on his way so that he can go to the park and spend some time there. If a park is located somewhere else and if a person does not even pass through that park how does he ever enter into the park. She says the positioning of the park must be in such a way that it must be on transit access where people pass by every day. She talks about three types of neighborhood. City as a whole is one neighborhood, street neighborhood district or sub city. She talks about in different scale and she talks about how the city neighborhoods can be developed by fostering lively and interesting streets, continuous traffic and continuous fabric of the city which has both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. She calls for using playgrounds and parks public areas and trees and inside the fabric and further it should be on the way when people move from one place to another. She talks about the functional identity of certain areas in certain districts. Part 2 of the book she talks about the conditions for city dwellers. The economic behavior of the cities. She talks about the generators of diversity the things that generate so many diverse in a city. And a city cannot have one unified condition or category of people occupation. A City cannot just survive with one major occupation. It needs to have certain diversities. It needs to be primarily mixed use fabric in such a way that different types of people go and talk to different types of people. She calls for the need of smaller blocks in such a way that people have more of public areas and more usable spaces on the street and on the road. And she says that aged old buildings should be interspersed along with new building that creates the character of the whole neighborhood.

Works of Jane Jacobs - 2

She talks about density and she talks about density in neighborhood. She says that to understand City one has to understand the combination of mixture of uses. If the city is to be working it needs to be sufficiently complex. The city should be sustainable, safety, Public contacts and cross use enormous diversity that is required of a city. These are certain ingredients that make a diverse City, this diversity that is generated by the city risk on the fact that in cities so many people are so close to each other the density is so high and so because the density is so high the diversity goes up. The diversity goes up only if there are diverse activities and some functions to perform. For Diversity Jane Jacob calls for 4 different conditions. She says that the district must

serve more than one primary function if there is only one function in a district or neighborhood there will be only one class of neighborhood. Maybe there will be few ups and downs you and there but enormously there will be only one type of people which will pull down the diversity that she is talking about. Number 2 she talks about more blocks that must be short. She talks about in a particular area if there is one big block, break it down into smaller parts and put for smaller blocks in such a way that there are spaces between the blocks which people can use as pedestrian ways, which people can use as playground parks and other usable spaces for public. She also says that the district must vary in age and condition. There should be certain dilapidated buildings, there should be some very very old buildings and there should be some buildings which have from different prehistoric time periods. And also finally 4th point She says that there must be sufficient density and diversity at different concentration and different kinds of people in the city. She takes the example of two different scenarios here. A Street bustles with activity because there are mix of small shops and there are mixed use apartment, there is an apartment and ground floor of the apartment that is a shop and there are mixed used activities over here. But in this place there is a dull homogenous block of buildings here this is drawing constant hire from Jane Jacob and she is stats that this is dull and homogenous and this is not a good way to do it. This is a much better way to do it according to her. Again she says that long blocks this is one really really big block, long blocks tend to attend only standardize store sizes whereas short numerous little side streets and shortcuts are staple of the village, the West village. If you see here there are smaller roads that have lot of shortcuts that leads to other blocks and small streets. And this attracts a very good variety of people and a variety of buildings. And she says that if we have a long block, don't like to walk across the long block, if the blocks are shorter people find it easier interesting to walk through short blocks. And then she again compares this new board development that spans the whole block. One building n1 block ensuring that all living space will be hugely priced. Here there are multiple buildings in the same area. For example if this is a new construction this could be of a higher end. And this is the older construction, this could be cheaper buildings right on the next door of this new construction. This will attract a very wide variety of people, there will be rich people, there will be poor people, there will be people working elsewhere and there will be people owning multiple number of cars. Here it attracts only 1 kind of people there is no diversity here. There is more of homogeneity here. The heterogeneity and the diversity in this place makes this space more interesting. Then she talks about the

difference between chaotic and dirty area which is actually a better way to design it because there are always people moving, there are people buying things, there is good hustle and bustle activities going on here. Instead of providing a path which nobody ever uses and all the people are very busy in their own areas, this particular area even though it is designed, it is not even being used and it is more likely to breed time than this area. Even though that area looks bad it has huge number of activities which makes it interesting and makes it less prone to crime. Even though the other building which is designed properly looks beautiful and it is not working because there are no people who will go there. It will create a reason for people to behave bad and make crime. Third part she talks about the forces of decline and regeneration. She talks about the self-destruction of diversity, curse of border vacuums the differences between unslumming and slumming. She talks about the cataclysmic money and the gradual money. In part 4 she talks about different tactics which she can use her proposals where she can talk about different things like subsidizing dwellings, erosion of cities and attrition of automobiles. She Talks about visual order limitation and possibilities of visual order. She talks about salvaging older projects, governments and planning districts. So Jane Jacob observes that the very conditions of mixed uses, dense population, old buildings, decentralized ownership create the opposite of slums, neighborhoods that re-generate themselves spontaneously, full of variety and diversity, flash number of casual visitors and responsible new residence, encourage investment, revitalize areas around them. So she takes example of these four properties which is to cricket a mixed use, density the population, use old and historic buildings and place it along with new buildings, and decentralized the ownership of the particular place. Using just These Four Points she creates a wild positive variety influence on a city.