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[New Tendencies In The Human Civilization](#)

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Freedom and liberation were the passwords of the 1960s counter-culture, and that meant freedom to act, sing, draw and design in any way one pleased. This “hippie” era saw the emergence of designers like Buckminster Fuller and Paolo Soleri as cult heroes. Free forms and bright colours were characteristic of the new Aquarian age. Form was no longer dictated by function but liberated by fashion.

In the 1970s while the Western world cowered behind economic barriers and experienced deep recession, the oil-rich states commandeered the architecture and planning principles of mature Modernism. The Arab countries produced developments (and Utopias) employing the skills of talented Western architects such as Jorn Utzon, Henning Larson, Reima Pietila, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and James Cubitt. The international promise of modern architecture became a reality in the Middle East.

In poorer developing countries sprawling squatter areas grew into monster slums and the United Nations saw fit to hold influential conferences on environmental issues, as well as setting up a number of regional environmental centres. More generally people began to view the impact of urban expansion and the new technologies on their environment and found it wanting. The narrowing of resources, the burgeoning population question, and the ever-present threat of nuclear war all caused much concern.

The self-build city Arcosanti by Soleri in Arizona (begun in 1969) and projects such as the Anthroposophical Seminary in Jarna, Sweden (begun in 1976), and the “spiritual” centres in America, Scotland and India all contributed to a new sensibility in their attempts to humanize design. They proved to be small pockets of resistance to the prevailing commercial developments and to doctrinaire Functionalism. In a sense they were also early components of the embryonic “green” movement. They also represented a new interest in “natural” design, and in organic architecture coupled with environmental betterment. Organic architecture, which derives largely from Frank Lloyd Wright, is concerned with respect for natural materials, the sympathetic siting of buildings and new spatial principles, as can be seen in Douglas Cardinal’s Canadian Museum.

In sharp contrast to this tendency is the interest in “Deconstruction”: a literary method applied to art and architecture in the work of Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman and others whose projects were featured in a Deconstructivist exhibition in New York in 1987. It relates in some ways to earlier Soviet Constructivist design with its dynamic planar emphasis, but is also redolent with new ideas.

The strongest tendency of the past decade, however, has undoubtedly been the resurgence of the technically dominated High- Tech mode of design in the history of architecture. This is seen particularly in the work of Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, Philip Cox, Norman Foster, Nicholas Grimshaw and Michael Hopkins whose influence still continues to dominate today’s architectural thinking and practice.

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