Do we not, in truth, ask the impossible of music when we expect it to express feelings, to translate dramatic situations, even to imitate nature?

Igor Stravinsky

The present environment is tending towards both extreme visual simplicity and extreme functional complexity. This double and opposite movement is eroding our emotional transaction with and comprehension of objects.

In opposition to this, adhocism makes visible the complex workings of the environment. Instead of an homogeneous surface which smooths over all distinctions and difficulties, it looks to the intractable problem as the source of supreme expression. From problems, from the confrontation of diverse subsystems, it drags an art of jagged, articulated cataclysms that shouts out the problem from every corner.

By combining diverse subsystems ad hoc, the designer shows what their previous history was, why they were put together and how they work. All this articulation is pleasing to the mind and allows an experience of a higher order.

Meaningful articulation is the goal of adhocism. Opposed to purism and exclusivist design theories, it accepts everyone as an architect and all modes of communication, whether based on nature or culture. The ideal is to provide an environment which can be as visually rich and varied as actual urban life.


Architecture Without Architects, introduces the reader to communal architecture—architecture produced not by specialists but by the spontaneous and continuing activity of a whole people with a common heritage, acting within a community of experience.

and Stravinsky, said Adorno, denies history, by consuming it through infantile regression.

Charles Russcol

Thus a system in which modular building blocks are the units of currency... No longer is the engineer or specialist needed!