

The International Style

Architecture

A term invented by curators in 1932, and the three rules they said it followed.

The label Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson gave European modernism in the 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibition and its accompanying book.

MOMA EXHIBITION
1932

CURATORS
Hitchcock, Johnson

- Volume rather than mass: a thin skin over space.
- Regularity rather than axial symmetry.
- No applied ornament; proportion does the work.
- Presented as a style, stripped of its social programme.
- That stripping is the main criticism of the term.
- It carried European modernism into American practice.

LOOK FOR IT

Lever House, New York, 1952, by Gordon Bunshaft of SOM, is the corporate outcome.

Against ornament and historic style. Criticised for converting a political and social argument into a marketable look.