Huskytalk | What is the worst thing to bring up at Thanksgiving dinner?



"The Midterm elections."

Randy Ramdin
Allied Health Sciences
Third Semester Student



"Trump."

Nevis Sejdarasi
Management
Seventh Semester Student



"How bad the cooking is."

Jayce Rodriguez
Psychology and Human Right
First Semester Student



"Family drama."

Nariah Gaither
Human Development and
Family Sciences
First Semester Student

PHOTOS BY JACOB BLACKWELL, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

EVERYTHING'S SO POINTY

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Unpleasant. Sharp angles. Pain.

Our environment should be catered to us physically. But it is not. Hostile architecture surrounds us. Modern design principles strike a balance between comfortable enough to rest for just a moment yet uncomfortable enough to not fully relax. It's not just you, and it is that deep — it's hard to find a place to unwind.

The third space is dead. There are very few places to go to meet new people or kill some time, unless you're willing to spend money. And even if you do spend that money, there is still no guarantee of relaxation. The hostile architecture of our public benches and greater environment does not exist in a vacuum. The visual language of the outside world spreads to the indoors too. Stiff and uncomfortable is the new normal. Everything is designed on a grid, from our cities and roads to our seating arrangements.

So, what's to blame for the uptick in straight-edge, 90-degree-angle design? War. After World War II, Europe needed to rebuild. Bombings had leveled cities and destroyed the ornamental designs of the past. The beauty of design seemed pointless and unnecessary. The small joys in intricate, detailed work became a thing of the past after the war. Europe was in mourning and many of its specialized and skilled laborers had died in the war, leaving behind a new generation who did not care for the little details.

From the reconstruction of Europe post-World War II emerged Brutalism, a style of design that favors concrete and raw materials. It is pragmatic and hard to relax in. It is a reminder of the loss and war and destruction that caused it. The lack of building materials after the war created the style of striped back architecture. It is made up of only the bare necessities to survive but not truly live.

Brutalism was not just a European contemporary art ideal. Along with minimalism, brutalism spread to American cities and government buildings. It was a cost-effective way of dealing with the public's growing need for spatial amenities. So the universities were built and expanded with a brutalist eye. And we were none the wiser that the style of design which stemmed from the horrors and pain of war would bleed emotional wounds into the future.

You are what you eat, you are who your friends are, and you are your environment. Brutalism makes people feel machine-like. It does not allow for a second to stop and smell the flowers, as there are no flowers nor anything remotely flowery. It is futuristic and devoid of the context of the past. Brutalist buildings give the impression that they have just landed in the space that they occupy, not that they were built by human beings. It is a depressing and imposing visual. It makes the occupant feel small and like a cog in the machine. And this soullessness makes it easy to reproduce.

During and after the spread of brutalism (the 50s-70s), corporate designers were influenced by this minimal effort principle of creativity too. The spread of brutalism's look made sure that nobody could be too comfortable, even while dining out or going to a third space. It does not give the eye something to dart between; no patterns trace to escape from the hustle and bustle. A brutalist third space is an oxymoron — it is not an escape.

Everything is pointy now. There is no place to rest. Not even for the birds. We are expected to have two spaces: work and home. And even homes are victims of brutalism. Our dorm rooms are cramped and utilitarian. High ceilings and arched doorways seem like a fantasy. But is it too much to ask for a little bit of curvature and intention in design? A home should be a home, not just a house. Millennial grey and dorm-room grey are stifling. The emotive, evocative and natural visuals of colors, curves and varied textures are necessary.

Fight brutalism. Leave the echoes of war and pain in the past. We do not have to live like being happy is an unreachable luxury. The comfort of little details makes homes and third spaces warm and inviting.



Hostile architecture is shown in New York City. Modern designs balance comfort with elements intended to deter lingering.

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