

# N O R T H A M E R I C A N B R U T A L I S M

2016

## Aims of the Research

The wider aim of my research was to concentrate on current discussions regarding the cultural significance of Brutalist architecture. This is because discussions regarding the qualities and status of Brutalist buildings continue today on a global scale, and I sought to contribute to the growing debate as these buildings face demolition or refurbishment.

As Brutalism is often considered a British movement, I wanted to assess whether International Brutalisms existed and seek clarity as to whether the USA and Canada would consider their own post war concrete architecture as Brutalist. I also wanted to assess why institutions such as universities are strongly associated with concrete architecture.

## Field Study - Methodology

My contribution to the global discourse of Brutalist Architecture began with me conducting extensive field research in the USA and Canada over the course of two months.

I travelled to **Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, New York, New Haven, Chicago & Toronto** to conduct a series of analyses on what are commonly considered to be brutalist buildings, at their respective universities.

During the course of the trip I conducted interviews with a number of academic researchers, such as Danielle Reay, and practicing architects, such as Henry Moss, to gain a greater understanding of North American Brutalism with an Institutional setting.

Speaking first hand with North American professionals allowed me to gain a greater understanding of North American Brutalism and enhanced my approach when visiting the structures and researching their architects.

## Concluding Thoughts

Following the interviews and readings that I conducted, I was persuaded that Brutalism occurs in North America. Though the architects did not consider themselves to be Brutalist architects nor did they like the association with the term that was coined by architectural historian Reyner Banham and frequently regurgitated by the press, they were greatly influenced by many of the qualities present in European Brutalism.

Whilst my research is still on going as part of my M.Arch dissertation, I did notice during the course of my field research that North American universities are in abundance with modern concrete architecture. I found that the demands created by the Second World War made an opening for theories that reconfigured universities' approaches to planning and architectural expression. This paved the way for architects to implement their modern ideologies onto campuses.

For further reading, please visit:  
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