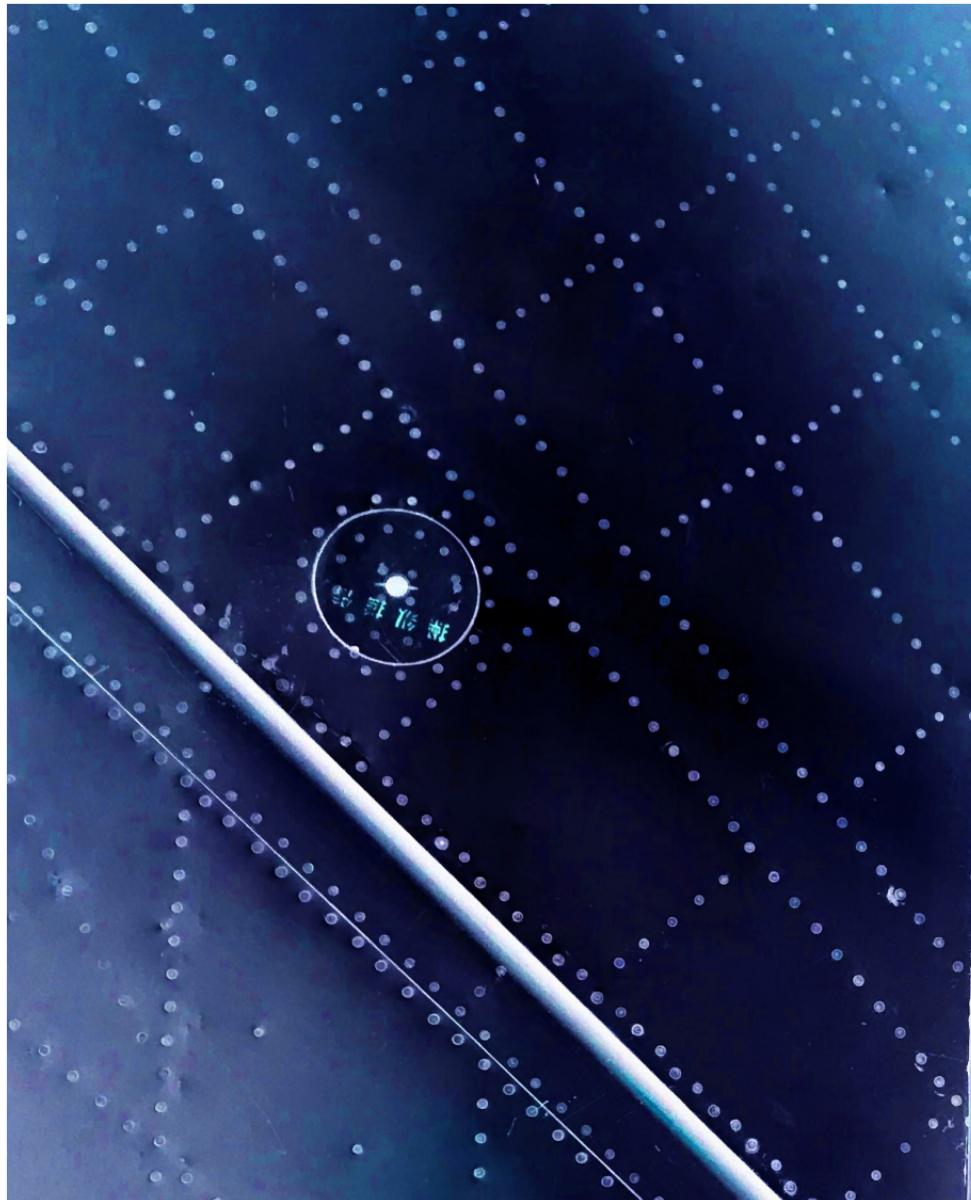


# TYP.



# abstract

In the words of the identically named Reddit thread, “we live in a boring dystopia.” How can this condition of monotony be transfigured into one of possibility?

We can work with, not against, the realities of uniformity by transforming the banal into the beautiful: by using cheap and industrial materials to generate the unfamiliar.

A study of the work of architects and artists who have sought to inspire wonder and awe reveals six categories of formal and structural techniques that can be used to create a sense of wonder and vastness.

This thesis will work within the condition of boring dystopia to make work that inspires wonder from what is ordinary: to cheaply and economically create a sense of wonder in a school today.

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I

# a boring dystopia

In the words of the identically named Reddit thread, today “we live in a boring dystopia.” We are surrounded by skyscrapers, parking lots, ports, trash, big-box stores, and housing developments — all of which are symptomatic of environmental degradation, bland urbanism, and cultural monotony. How can this condition of monotony be transformed into a condition of possibility?



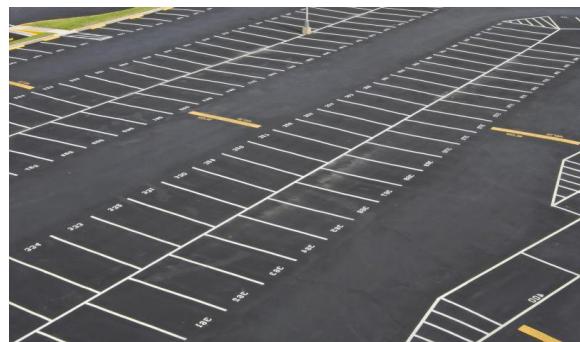
Still from "Koyaanisqatsi," R. Fricke (Cinematography), G. Reggio (Director), P. Glass (Score)



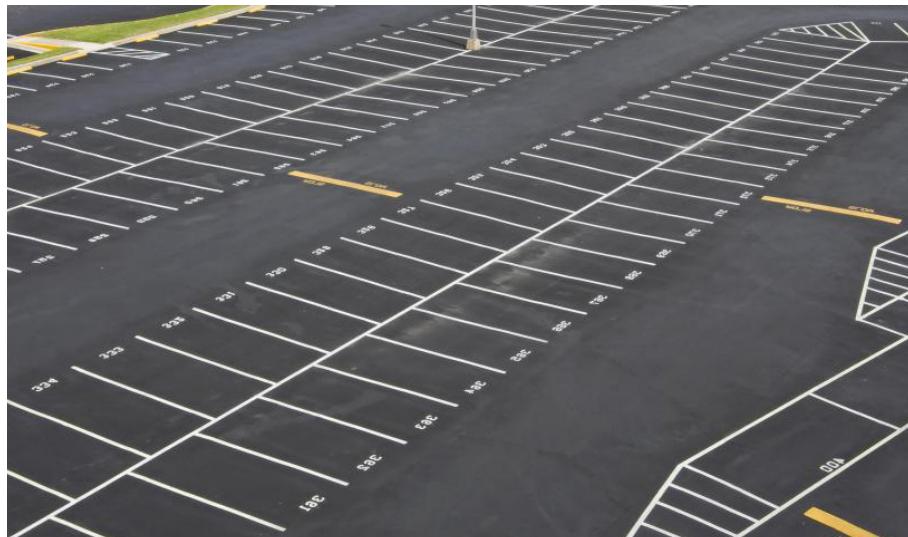
Alex Maclean, "Housing Development, Arizona" 2005



Andreas Gursky, "99 Cent Store II"



Parking lots, stock photo



Parking lots, textiles of asphalt and line, stock photo from google



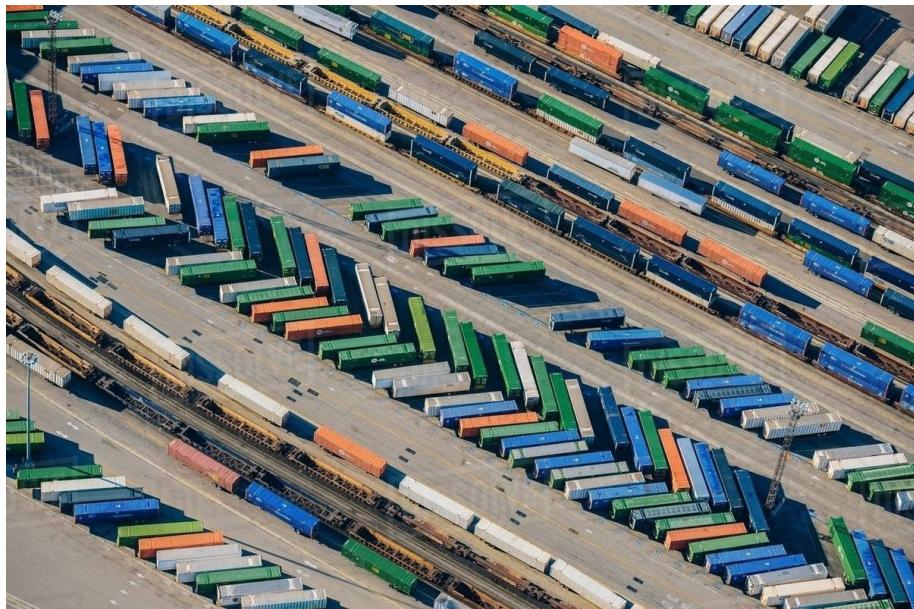
Landscape of solar panels, Andreas Gursky, "Les Mees"



Litter of infrastructure, Edward Burtynsky, "Carrara marble quarries # 24" 1993



A cathedral of removal, the space of the quarry, stock photo



Lattice of shipping containers, stock photo



Stacks of colored confetti of plastics, stock photo



Stock Image, Lockers



Hypnotizing and alluring landscapes of consumption, Andreas Gursky, "99 Cent Store II"

## II

# cheap materials, unfamiliar details

The categories identified and explained here extend  
the examples catalogued in the second booklet  
*Cheap Materials, Unfamiliar Details.*

How is it possible to work with this reality? We can  
transform the banal into the beautiful by using cheap  
materials to create unfamiliarity.

## cheapness

rough materials, elegant details  
ornamental infrastructures  
incremental costs  
leveraged flaws  
minimal treatments

## unfamiliarity

abstractions  
foreigners  
distortions  
novel forms that perform  
paradoxes

# cheapness

## rough materials, elegant details

An inexpensive material that is typically understood to be “cheap,” or low in quality and used for prosaic applications, is treated or detailed in a way that makes it feel elegant. Cheap materials that look nice are often slightly shiny, quite matte, or have a level of texture, detail, or craft. **Hazards** of this category are high costs of labor or effort that might be necessary to make the detailing of the “cheap” element elegant.



El Anatsui, *When I Last Wrote to You*

The scale, extents, and method of installation of the pieces makes us see the framants as a regal printed tapestry, not as trash. One obvious requirement of this work is ample labor to stitch many pieces together. This gives us a clue about the economic context that supports the creation of this kind of work: there must be many people available to help with the laborious stitching required and that labor must have a relatively low economic value that makes it financially feasible to produce such a work. How could this level of care and complexity be achieved in a different context?



Tom de Paor, *Galway Cinema*

Sheets of galvanized metal act as louvers that become a designed and elegant element of jewlery on the facade instead of an off-the-shelf product. The depiction of these robust elements with beautiful trees enhances the reading of these elements as fancy even though they are made from “cheap” material.



ELEX, *Chris Marker Housing*

The use of silvery bitumen not only protects the wall from moisture but gives elegance and gleam to a surface that might seem relentless if it were kept as raw concrete. The gousy impression of the overlapped bitumen rolls is embraced.



Frida Escobedo, *Installation in El Eco*

The sawtoothed diagonal arrangement of the CMU blocks gives elegance to the overall scheme that persists even as blocks are subtracted and the arrangement becomes more anarchic. (Compare to Jan de Vyler's pavillion which strives to look like it just came off the back of the truck with no additional labor).

# cheapness

## ornamental infrastructures

An element that is essential to the function of the building is used as ornament (therefore incremental cost is only the “price” of the planning or relocating of this element). **Hazards** of this category include (1) interfering with the function of the infrastructure by making it ornament and (2) becoming involved in an uphill battle of effort to control the design of an element driven by other factors.



Sigurd Lewerentz, *Flower Shop*

The use of electrical conduit as an expressive element, a doodle on the wall, is a tradition continued by Enric Miralles, Tom de Paor, and Eric Lapierre. There is a slight increase in the cost of electrical labor, but the used of a prosaic element for added formal or syntactical benefit or ornament justifies itself.



Tom de Paor, *N3*

The celebration of the rubber band that holds the bundles of Irish peat block together creates bright stitches that are important to the overall quality of the form and the interior space. An element that serves a practical and infrastructural purpose—to hold together the block—becomes a distinctive visual element of the whole.



Herzog and de Meuron, *Signal Tower*

The use of copper strips to make the facade creates a Faraday cage for a signal tower that allows it to perform its function better by preventing ambient signals from interfering with cell signal transmission.



Manthey Kula, *Rest Stop Bathroom*

Both the steel stiffener and the structural element holding the mirror to the wall are used to express a diagonal that also acts as bracing.

# cheapness

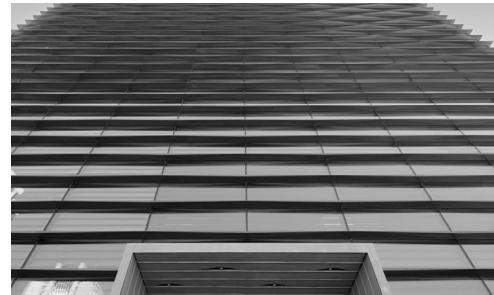
## incremental costs

The modification or design of an element integral to a system that is essential to its functioning. The cost of this element is then only the “price” of modifying or customizing the essential system. **Hazards** of this category occur when the incremental cost becomes so large or the benefits become so unconvincing that it then evident it is an “add-on” and not essential to the functioning of the building.



Rogerio Salmona, *University Cultural Center*

The detailing of the formwork for a cylindrical space requires only an incremental cost in labor because formwork and a way of breaking a planimetric circle into straight panels is already required. The resulting solution is to evenly fan rectangular board form clusters around the cylinder, creating the radial geometry and using the means by which this is done to add ornament.



Anmahian Winton, *Tower in Jakarta*

The shaping of horizontal sill cap modifies a component of the curtain wall that would be required but makes it more sculptural. These horizontal fins then shade the tower when multiplied along its height. This is a manipulation made to a necessary component of a system that then becomes sculptural; thus it adds only an incremental cost. However, there may have been more reasonable way to modify this element than creating a bent metal fin which is probably expensive.



Frank Lloyd Wright, *Beth Shalom Synagogue*

The metal snow-guard and gutter are functionally necessary, so making them slightly more decorative by stamping the metal instead of using plain flashing adds only an incremental cost of manufacture to the overall work.



Irma Boom, *Shelia Hicks Monograph*

Typically the pages of a book are trimmed to make them orthogonal, but Boom makes the decision to have them trimmed with a circular saw: no additional steps or material need to be added to achieve this. The decision to modify one part of the process to make a change not integral to the function of the book then results in a form that resonates perfectly with the subject of the monograph.

# cheapness leveraged flaws

The “cheap” qualities of a material are celebrated such that they become a formative and dignified condition. These projects work with inevitable processes and exacerbate and harness them to make them formative. Hazards of this category are the risks that a lack of control on the part of the designer means the detail just ends up looking cheap, or that it conveys a certain elitism that the person who owns or made the thing can afford to allow its condition to be permanently flawed.



Alvar Aalto, *Finlandia Concert Hall*

In the harsh climate of Finland the rain-screen of thin marble shinks and expands in reaction to the extreme changes in temperature and begins to slump and peel from the substructure. The shadow lines unintentionally created by the use of this material in this climate create shadow lines that make the “damaged” surface more beautiful than it would be if they were flush.



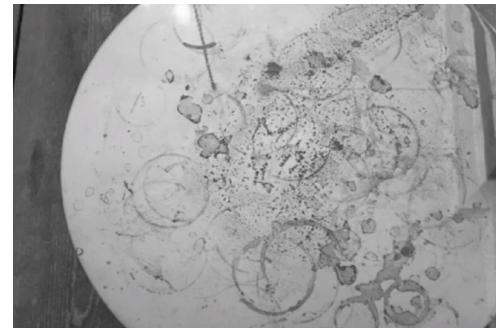
Alejandro Aravena, *Venice Biennale Pavilion '16*

Here the quality of scrap boards: that they will never perfectly fit together, is harnessed in order to make a porous wall and shelves.



Noam Saragost & Juhce Park, *Thesis Detail*

The idea of casting a tilt-up panel onto uneven ground instead of the floor slab makes so much sense as a way to make a much more beautiful and scuff-resistant warehouse. It does not interfere with use or durability and it actually eliminates a requirement of the process that the tilt-up panel be cast onto the flat slab.



de Vyler Vinck Talieu, *Table*

Leaving the metal “unscaled” allows a table to have an imprint of everything that has happened there before. For this to look nice and not like a mistake, it must become a formative condition for the entire table in the way that the staining becomes the condition of the Remy Zaugg studio. However, this still has the connotation of elitism: who can afford to buy a table that then is going to look shitty after it is used?

# cheapness

## minimal treatments

A material is left raw or minimally finished, making it “cheap” because less money has been put into its treatment or finishing. These projects are good when they support other functionalities. **Hazards** to watch out for are the wealth and elitism implied by not having to concern oneself with a material’s durability or endurance because the tendency to spend money on something that is “not nice-looking,” “not durable,” or “looks cheap” is more likely to be celebrated by those who can afford to buy or build the opposite. To be good, these projects must have spillover benefits besides novelty; examples include saving time, money, material; supporting re-use; supporting flexibilities of use; or resonating with context in a profound way.



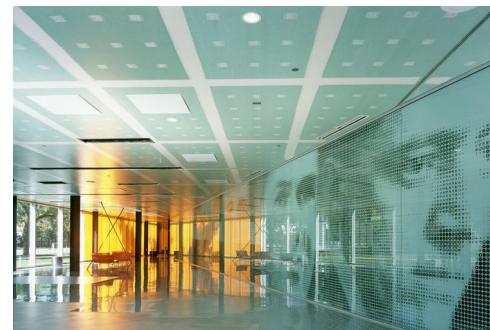
Enric Miralles, *Casa en La Clota*

The use of ladrillo perforado on the exterior of a house exposes a material that would conventionally be hidden by rendered plaster. The use of plaster at the edges and in an intermittent patch indicates that this material is what would ordinarily be covered.



Herzog & de Meuron, *Remy Zaugg Studio*

We typically see rust staining in only bits and pieces, but here it is used to color a wall which makes it not only unfamiliar but also suited to the brief of a painter's studio.



OMA, *IIT Student Center*

The use of standard gypsum-board construction instead of a ceiling grid is out of place in institutional construction, but cheeky in the context of a Miesian campus where a grid informs the design of the whole. (Compare to de Vylder Vinck Tallieu table with many stains of cup rims)



ELEX, *Economy of Means* Exhibition Stands

The use of stacks of GWB and foam as model stands saves time, effort, money, and material but still looks good. The boards were borrowed from a manufacturer and given back to the manufacturer after the show. Because they were not cut or altered, they can be easily reused. (Compare to Frida Escobedo installation in El Eco, compare to de Vylder Vinck Tallieu stack pavilion, which pours mortar into the stacks rendering them unusable for other purposes).

Comes with Functional Benefits

Comes with Aesthetic Benefits Only

# level of unfamiliarity v. efficiencies of cost

increasing expense of construction or manufacture ↑

PRICEY BUT "WORTH THE EXIST": CHEAP MAT'L, EXPENSIVE LABOR



TOO EXQUISITE: EXPENSIVE MAT'L, EXPENSIVE LABOR



SMART AND EFFICIENT: CHEAP MAT'L, CHEAP INSTALL



VERGING ON BOUGIE: EXPENSIVE MAT'L, CHEAP LABOR



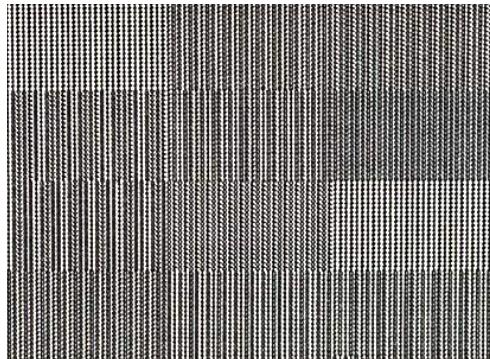
# unfamiliarity

## abstractions (through repetition or reduction)

The multiplication and repetition of the material, or the suppression of its module, makes us read it differently when there is a lot of it. Granular things are multiplied enough to become surfaces, or big surfaces that would ordinarily be covered in expansion joints are left unmarked.

Two subcategories exist: abstraction through repetition, and abstraction through reduction. The first is the same operative principle that makes us wonder when we spell a word too many times or look at it for too long whether or not we have actually spelled it correctly; somehow our over-exposure to the word makes it look foreign to us.

The way in which this makes objects simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar to us can inspire disbelief and wonder.



Carl Andre, *Poems, Cover Image*

The multiplication of letters of text makes them appear not as individual letters but as a texture or textile.



Alvaro Siza, *Expo '98 Portuguese National Pavilion*

The lifted canopy is so large and thin compared with its span and its supports that it appears more like a piece of fabric than a piece of concrete. This creates a similar effect of softness in a material that we know must be hard because of the span (along the lines of what Leong Leong wanted to do with their facade). But the reason for doing this is then to make a generous public space underneath. It is also significant that this pavilion is made for an Expo, which has associations of temporality.



Alvaro Siza, *Capela do Monte*

Only the subtle tapering and cutting of wood in an abstract shape that recalls a figure on the cross are necessary to make the altar sculpture in this Siza shape.



El Anatsui, *When I Last Wrote to You*

The scale, extents, and method of installation on the wall make us see the fragments of can more like a tapestry than like trash

# unfamiliarity foreigners

An element that is typically used in one way is used in a foreign context or application. It is crucial that this context then gives the element a new significance or makes us see something we couldn't discern before.



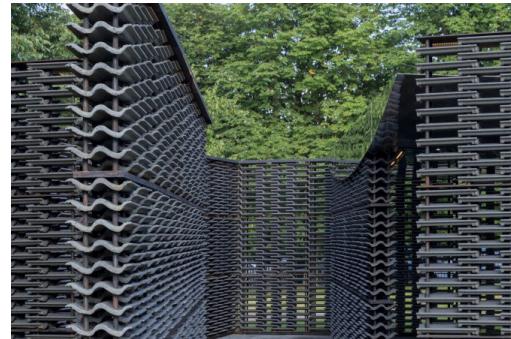
Mary Corse, *Untitled (White Multiband)*

The use of road-marking paint in Mary Corse's paintings means that they appear and disappear as you move around them and they reveal themselves only as you move through the room. In comparison to the field paintings of Mark Rothko, Corse's paintings use an exotic material in the context of the gallery.



Doris Saulcedo, *Disremembered*

The knitting together of pins, something we usually see in isolation, creates a completely new and surprising affect of delicacy and shimmer. The use of pins to make the familiar domestic object of the blouse is more significant than if the pins were used to make a blanket because the object of the garment we understand as something we wear and are fully trapped by that sometimes gives us protection and comfort even while its composition is violent or dangerous.



Frida Escobedo, *Serpentine Pavillion*

Roofing tiles, which usually create a surface that will be impermeable to water, are used to make a porous pavilion with a reflecting pool. The clay roof tile is not typically used as a wall nor is it typically used in the context of British architecture. But the use of a black tile (as opposed to a red tile) relates the pavilion to the context even while the element itself is unfamiliar.



OMA, *IIT Student Center*

The use of standard gypsum-board construction instead of a ceiling grid is out of place in institutional construction, but cheeky in the context of a Mexican campus where a grid informs the design of the whole.



H Arquitectes, *Owl's House*

The use of metal decking on the ceiling in a house helps to brighten the room and set up resemblances to the stair but also uses a material in the residential context that would typically be associated with an industrial or office context.

# unfamiliarity

## rescalings/distortions

The shape or proportion of an element is manipulated to create new opportunities for use and perception. These projects are best when they open up new flexibilities of function and new opportunities for noticing.



Go Hasegawa, *Sakuradi House*

A wooden horizontal surface is raised above the level of the surrounding rooms and deployed at the scale of an entire room. Is it a work surface or a room? Taking a desk and scaling it to an entire room gives it an unfamiliar proportion that in the most conservative case will generate a sense of unfamiliar proportions and in the most extreme case will generate novel scenarios of use. Is this more or less flexible than a desk?



Tom de Paor, *Clontarf Road*

A louver is sold out of the box as an orthogonal frame and object. Instead of using the orthogonal object which would look prosaic or accidental against a slanted edge, this louver is slightly distorted to follow the line of the building, making it seem just a bit off.



Alvaro Siza, *Igreja de Santa Maria*

A giant door looks strange and feels sacred or grand. In comparison to the strange Steven Holl Door at St. Ignatius., which is made strange by exquisite handles and openings, the currency of Siza's strange door is only its proportion and thus it does not require added elements of strangeness as Steven Holl's does.



Go Hasegawa, *House in Gotanda*

Hasegawa uses the strangeness of the proportions of a giant door but to create two states; one where a house is open to the street and another where it is closed to the street. The large door, in addition to being strange, then generates two states of use and two readings of the building's massing form.

# unfamiliarity

## novel forms that perform

The shape or proportion of the sub-elements that make up an element are manipulated to make it interesting and noticeable. These examples are mutually exclusive from the “unfamiliarity of proportion” examples which require the element to register as formally normal so that its scalar strangeness can be seen, but they can also be “ornamental infrastructures.” Instead of reversing dominant qualities to create unfamiliarity, they work within these intrinsic qualities to make new forms.



*Manthey Kula, Akkarvik Roadside Rest Room*

The web of an I-beam is twisted such that it becomes a kind of structural ornament. The novelty of the form is clear, but this must be evaluated against the additional cost of manufacturing this custom-I beam (essentially a fussy plate girder) and how the form performs (maybe this increases the rigidity or it may get light into a space than a deep web?).



*Santiago Calatrava, Ernsting Factory Doors*

Instead of making rolling doors segmented horizontally that disappear into the interior on a track, Calatrava flips the segmentation of the door to the vertical axis and uses it to create a sculptural segmented curve displayed to the exterior when the door is up. Each door becomes an individual sculpture (Compare to the E2A facade where the sculpture is the overall effect of the many repeated instances of the window).

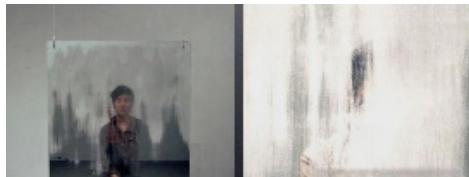


*Frank Lloyd Wright, Beth Shalom Synagogue*

The stamped metal snow-guard and gutter serve their original purposes but have a form that makes them less prosaic than a typical gutter or snow guard would be. This adds time and cost to the process of stamping but also becomes an opportunity for ornament.

# unfamiliar paradoxes

A quality we take for granted, a fundamental or defining property of something (e.g. that mirrors are reflective, pins are prickly, or windows have a fixed place on the facade) is reversed in a way that makes us remember that there might be other ways of making and being.



Roger Tran, *Untitled*

Sanding the reflective coating of a mirror reverses the quality of mirrors that we take for granted: that they will reflect our image. Looking at the sanded mirror creates an image of ourselves that dissolves.



Doris Salcedo, *Disremembered*

Pins imply sharpness, violence, and injury, but instead of being used to convey this in an obvious or typical way, they render a delicate and complicated version of violence that is wearable: they make us wonder if the pin's defining feature is its sharpness or its delicacy and grace (in addition to making us wonder if injury is wearable and if a delicate garment can be dangerous).



E2A Architects, *Tower Deaconry Bethanien*

This facade reverses one of our basic assumptions about windows: that they make static patterns on a facade and do not move or shift. The combination of a hyper-regular Swiss Rossi-like facade with the mechanism of the sliding window makes it abundantly clear that this building questions the assumption that windows have a fixed place on the facade.



Frida Escobedo, *Civic Stage*

Reverses the most basic assumption, that the ground or a stage or gathering place should be stable. The intended result of this is to then create community between the group standing on the platform who share the condition of instability, its



Anne Holtrop, *Model for Maison Margielia*

The model reverses the quality of rigidity that we take for granted as a fundamental to a wall by using felt to show its fragility. This is also appropriate as a rethinking of fabric for the boutiques of a fashion designer.

# unfamiliar v. gimmicky

## avoiding the one-liner

### gimmicky (1):

an obvious detail that takes a material and puts it in an unfamiliar context such that it becomes obvious instead of strange, as well as ignorant of its implications

(2)

a detail that seems to ignore the tectonic realities of a material instead of using them as fuel for beauty

(3)

a detail that is too obvious and literal

(4)

a detail that is too weird to be related to the conditions in a meaningful way

Incremental Cost of Constr. Labor

Incremental Cost of Manufacture

Incremental Cost of Material

No Additional Costs

# level of unfamiliarity v. efficiencies of cost

cost of required additional labor/material/manufacture

NOT "WORTH THE EXIST": NOT UNFAMILIAR, EXPENSIVE



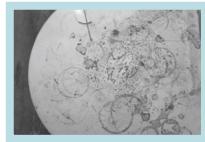
JUSTIFIED SPLURGE: VERY UNFAMILIAR, VERY EXPENSIVE



HARMLESS ADDS: NOT UNFAMILIAR, NOT EXPENSIVE



STRANGE AND EFFICIENT: UNFAMILIAR, NOT EXPENSIVE



increasing level of unfamiliarity

# III

# wonder in architecture

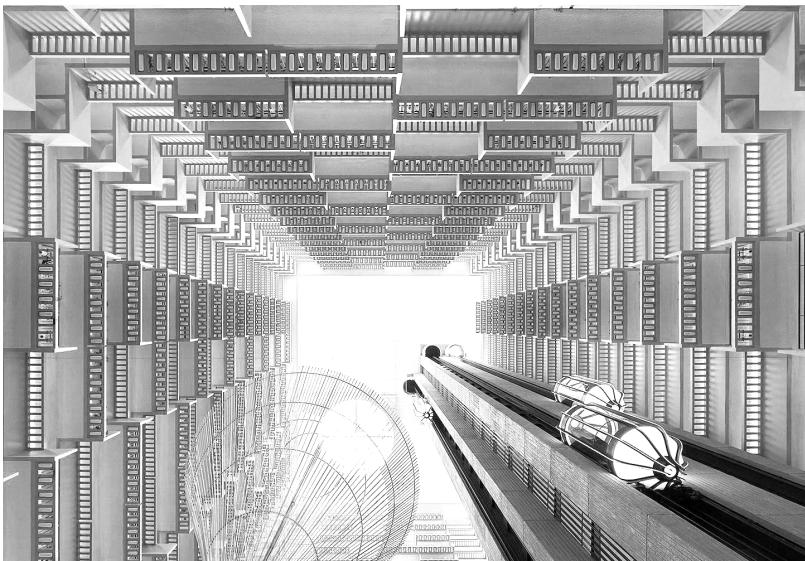
Architects and artists in the past have used these six formal techniques to create a sense of wonder and vastness:

replication  
expansion  
diffusion  
proliferation  
recursion  
combination

# replication (axial)

The repetition of the similar elements along a single axis that have only slight variation. Replication creates, for the viewer who looks down this axis, an impression that space expands or dissolves to a limit of infinity.

Structural systems that produce this category include **one way frames, shells, folded plates, and vaults**.



*John Portman, Hyatt Regency Hotel*

Replication of perforated planter elements that pop out at the level of each floor create a rhythm within a rhythm of repetition



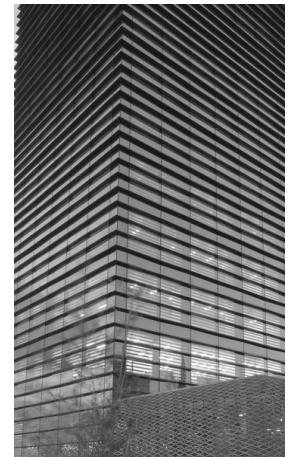
*Raphael Moncada, Museum in Merida*

Repetition of the Roman arch along a linear axis emphasizes repetition and replicates experience



*S. Golden, The Meat Grinder...*

Mirrors below and beside multiply a subdivided level to create an infinite space



*Anmahian Winton, Jakarta*

Replication of a fluted horizontal sill creates the impression of a tower much taller than it is



*John Portman, Hyatt Regency Hotel*

Replication of the solid handrail and alternating planters in an atrium accentuate its scale and vastness

# expansion

(monolithic)

The suppression of all markers of material and scale, or the suppression of one dimension in order to make another dimension appear giant. Expansion uses complete abstraction to produce a sense of vastness: no joint or module is left visible to measure scale.

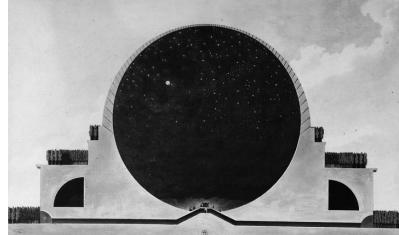
This is easy to achieve on paper or in architecture school, but difficult to detail and construct; its successful execution depends on the expertise of the architect and the craft of the construction crew.

The expression of structure is minimal in this type, but systems that can generate this type of infinity include **vaults, domes, and walls**.



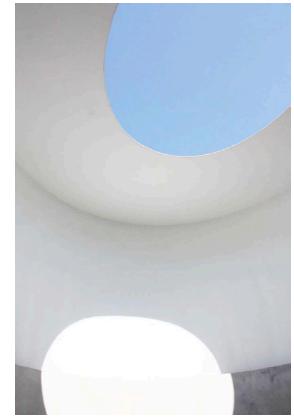
Alvaro Siza, Giovanni Nardi, *Portuguese National Pavilion*

The thinness of the canopy relative to its span produces an expansion of surface that makes the plaza below vast and awe-inspiring



Etienne Boullée, *Cenotaph for Newton*

The fantastic depiction of the universe held by a building achieves expansion through abstraction: the absence of any marker that relates it to the architectural scale makes the world within seem vast.



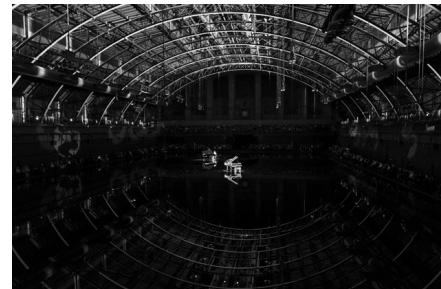
James Turrell, *Skyspace*

Extreme thinness of the edge allows for an expansion of the surface and a portal to the sky



Junya Ishigami, *Visitor Center at Park Vijversburg*

Foreground expansion occurs as a corollary to the extreme contraction of space beyond



Douglas Gordon, Helene Grimaud, ARUP, *InS*

Expansion accomplished through the reflection produced by a thin layer of water, a surface with no joints

# diffusion

(field)

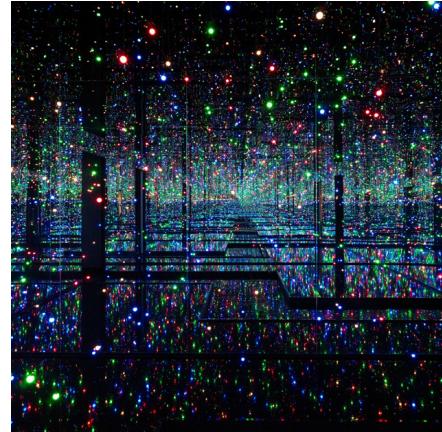
The even distribution of atomized particles to fill a spatial field, amplify the qualities of the particle, and multiply it to create the impression of vastness. Diffusion creates a spatial evenness that must be delicately manipulated to fulfill functional demands. Gradient distributions

Structural systems that suit this category include the **one way frame, shells, folded plates, and vaults**.



*The Great Mosque-Cathedral at Cordoba*

Even diffusion of the column matter through the space, diffusion also of the marble color through the column



*Yayoi Kusama, "Mirror Room"*

Diffusion of glowing dots into a mirrored room expands space and creating a dizzying sense of wonder



*Junya Ishigami, Kanagawa Institute of Tech*

Diffusion of the column creates and defines local fields of space



*Walter de Maria, Lightning Field*

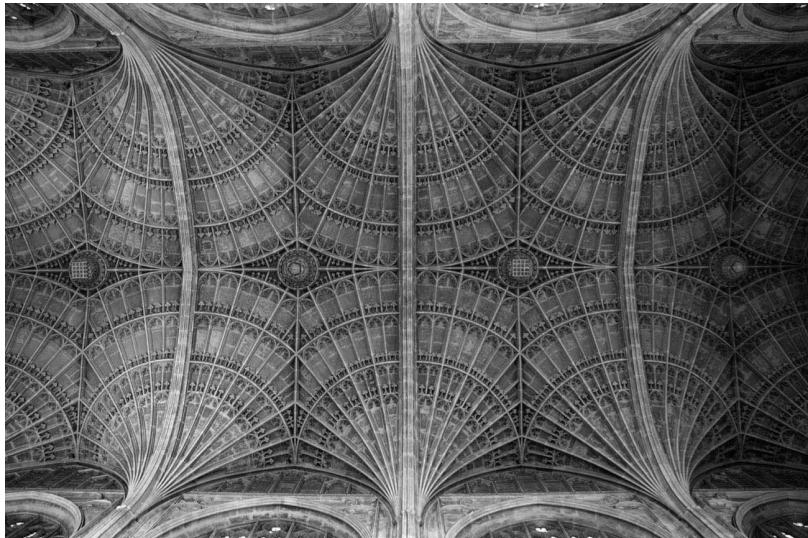
Diffusion of a rod into a landscape creates an even distribution that can then host the intensity of the lightning bolt

# proliferation

(field with clumps)

Copying or replication in order to achieve local difference and accumulative intensities. Similar to diffusion, but with more clumping, a higher degree of recognizable differentiation and more evident singularities.

The expression of structure is often suppressed in this type, but systems that can fit into this category include smooth **vaults, domes, and walls**.



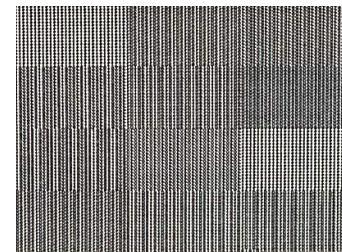
Irish Fan Vaulting in Canterbury Cathedral

Ornament proliferates from ornament where the geometric order of the fans grows over the geometric order of the groin vaults



El Anatsui, "When I Last Wrote to You..."

Local difference produced in colors and shapes of cans and crumpling of surface



Carl Andre, "Poems"

Local difference proliferates from the evenness of a patchwork of fields of text



Andreas Gursky "99 Cent II"

Proliferating patchwork of local difference produced within a landscape of sameness by the variety of capitalism and the order of the supermarket



Muqarnas in the Alhambra, Hall of the Two Sisters

Proliferating local difference produced by the geometric structure of the dome and the overlaid geometric order of the muqarnas

# recursion

## (concentric)

The nesting of parent and child elements that share the same form to create the continuing discovery of sameness. The key to this category is in the perceived relationship between the nested elements. Is there difference between the layers? If the elements are identical, how does the strategy for layering create differentiation that allows the whole to work as architecture?

Generates a sense of “deja-vu” or an acknowledgement of the cyclical.

This type can be achieved through structural or spatial systems that are nestable or compatible with concentric geometric logics: this includes

**muqarnas, Kar Bandi domes, and stacked domes.**



Robert Irwin, *Homage to the Square*

The scrim creates a concentric nesting of spaces and an experience of recursion: a visitor wonders if he/she has already been there



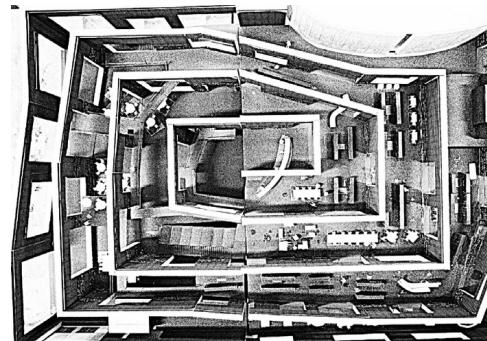
Jasper Johns, *Three Flags*

One thing inside another inside, the visual field vibrates, nesting implies vastness



Sou Fujimoto, *House N*

Nested spaces conflate interior and exterior environments, perceptually expanding a house beyond its walls



Sou Fujimoto, *Musashino Art University Library*

The spaces of the library are defined by the walls of shelves which are defined by sub-shelves, the wrapping of this one element creates the spatial condition of nesting with a consistent unit

# combination

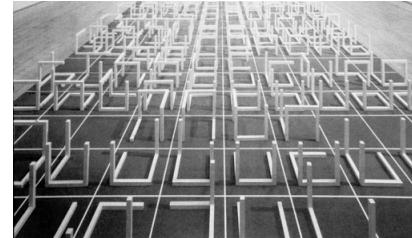
(field that changes)

A mutable set of parts out of which an infinite number of unique combinations can be generated. The parts, and the assembly of the parts, preserves the possibility for change within the set. A vast set comprises the many combinations; wonder inspired by a sense of infinite possibilities.



*E2A Architects Tower Deaconry Bethanien*

Sliding of the window generates a mutable facade pattern; many combinations that create the sense of a vast set of possibilities



*Sol LeWitt, Incomplete Open Cubes*

Idiosyncratic permutations produced from the same set described by the same property of incompleteness



*Pezo von Ellrichshausen, 120 Doors Pavilion*

Combinations of the position of the doors creates infinite variation.



*Anne Holtrop, More than Double Wall*

The use of the wall as an element that can be deployed and varied



*Lacaton & Vassal, Nantes School of Architecture*

Selection of a generic structural scheme allows for the variation and flexibility of larger space over time; combinations of smaller elements within them generate a vast set of possibilities

IV  
**brief**

This thesis will work within the condition of boring dystopia and draw on the formal techniques of others who have sought to inspire wonder and a sense of vastness in order to cheaply and economically create a sense of wonder out of the ordinary in architecture today.

program  
pedagogy  
material system  
site selection  
research questions

# program

(the spaces of the school)

A growing middle and/or high school with roughly 500 students that is expected to expand. The school experience is defined by boredom, by the pressure to conform, and thus the program for the thesis is the opportunity to create wonder out of the potential moments for boredom that define the school experience.

#### PLANNING AREAS

1000 sf ea.	CLASSROOMS
4000 sf	LIBRARY
80sf/student	LUNCHROOM
6000 sf	GYM
8000sf	AUDITORIUM
20 percent	CIRCULATION SPACE
8000 sf	SITE RECREATION

60-80,000 sf TOTAL ESTIMATED AREA



## pedagogy

(criteria for selection)

The thesis will pick an existing public school for middle or high-school aged kids in a district that expects growth over the next 15 years.

The thesis will use the pedagogy of the existing school as a springboard for a proposal which has two parts: the first will be a component of moderate intervention in its existing buildings and the second will be the construction of a new building to provide classroom and recreation spaces for the growing body of students.

## material system

(criteria for selection)

The material system of the proposal should read as familiar to the construction of a school in order for its ultimate unfamiliarity to be registered against the index of the familiar.

## site selection

(criteria for selection)

The site itself should be in a “boring” area that provides monotony as part of the existing urban condition to be transformed.

The selection of the school in a growing area will inform the site.

## research questions

(next steps)

Questions for further research to begin to generate ideas about the spatial system of the project:

### SPATIAL SYSTEM

- 1 Which scales, orientations, qualities are nice in educational spaces?
- 2 What are the typ. typological schemes of schools?
- 3 What can I come up with if I consider the typological material first?
- 4 How to get light into the hallways and have an efficient plan?

### PRECEDENT

- 1 What proposals has Rossi done for schools?
- 2 How to generate abstract spatial precedents to share?
- 3 What are the site and topological plans of Kere?

### PSYCHOLOGY

- 1 What do kids need to learn, spatially and perceptually?
- 2 What kinds of ventilation? Exposure to the outdoors? Proportions?
- 3 What is the psychology of boredom? How can this generate wonder?
- 4 Is there any relevant scientific literature on boredom/wonder?