

SITELESS

1001 Building Forms

François Blaniak

S I T E L E S S

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François Blanciak

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been prepared in various countries: China, Denmark, the United States of America, and Japan, over the course of the last five years. Only in its final stage could I focus on this work full-time.

Hence, I have to first thank the Japanese government for subsidizing my first years in Tokyo as an independent researcher by providing me with a fellowship. It is surprising that one of the most unaffordable and supposedly chaotic cities in the world turned out to be the most stable environment for gathering and developing my ideas.

Debt is also owed to my former employers; Aaron Tan, Bjarke Ingels, Peter Eisenman, and Frank Gehry, for enabling me to develop my work on the side from different urban locations and diverse dogmatic approaches. Yet, in the serial, crafted, and *siteless* nature of this study, a greater deal of inspiration comes from the architects Iakov Chernikhov, John Hejduk, and Hermann Finsterlin.

A number of individuals have also either encouraged or questioned my work with sharp criticisms, and pushed me to enhance its quality. Among them (in no specific order): Ali Tabatabai, Napoleon Meraña, Yoram Lepair, Michael Sorkin, Aida Mirón, Masashi Nagamori, Leopoldo Sguera, Tom Russotti, Vytautas Baltus, Tynnon Chow, Amadou Tounkara, and Siri Johansen managed to formulate constructive comments. In addition, the insights of Michael Wert and André Moore Guimond have been helpful in the editing of my manuscript.

Finally, I must avow that the physical condition of Tokyo—a city that threatens to collapse at any time—is what forced me to publish this rather venturesome oeuvre without further delay.

F. B., Tokyo, January 2007

We think the more directions that architecture takes at this point, the better.

— Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi
Learning from Las Vegas, 1972

INTRODUCTION

The body of work that follows aims to fill the expanding gap between a profession that glorifies morphological originality through media exposure and a more secluded field of architectural research which, unlike its scientific counterparts, paradoxically neglects experimentation and the manipulation of form through its sole focus on writing. Proposing a creative alternative to critical academic literature, this study develops a prospective series of forms that focuses on the *nucleus* of architecture, the building as a unit (whether touched by others or left aside), and on the clarity of expression of its generative idea. As a result, in the coming chapters, *text* has radically been replaced by *form*.

In order to multiply the range of potentialities in architecture, this study accepts the physical aspect of buildings as its primary component (the periodic denial of which proving vain) and proceeds by trial and error. Rather than striving to identify a singular design method, it searches in as many directions as possible, then isolates a multitude of devices intended to differ from each other and to be open for further development. As a bank of ideas from which articles can be picked to fit particular sites and purposes, it embodies the desire to exceed the sum of concepts that come to mind when confronted with the overwhelming situation of an actual project.

The traditional sequence “program plus site equals form” is here intentionally inverted: as in ancient column orders, schemes are conceived prior to site insertion and subsequent relationships or adaptations. Yet beyond archaic dogmas, although a number of these figures constitute mere criticisms of recurrent paradigms in the discipline, most aspire to innovate and envision a more diverse future; to the point that many require construction techniques not available to date, if not different gravitational values.

In the absence of any given site, chapters are simply named after the locations from which the ideas they contain were conceived.

This chaotic sequence of places is employed to reveal a content that resists the primitive reaction of classification and thereby acknowledges the discontinuous nature of the creative process. Within a series that eventually generates its own context, scale—its a priori building material—is left to the imagination of the reader from one item to the next, with a range that can span from megastructure to cabin size.

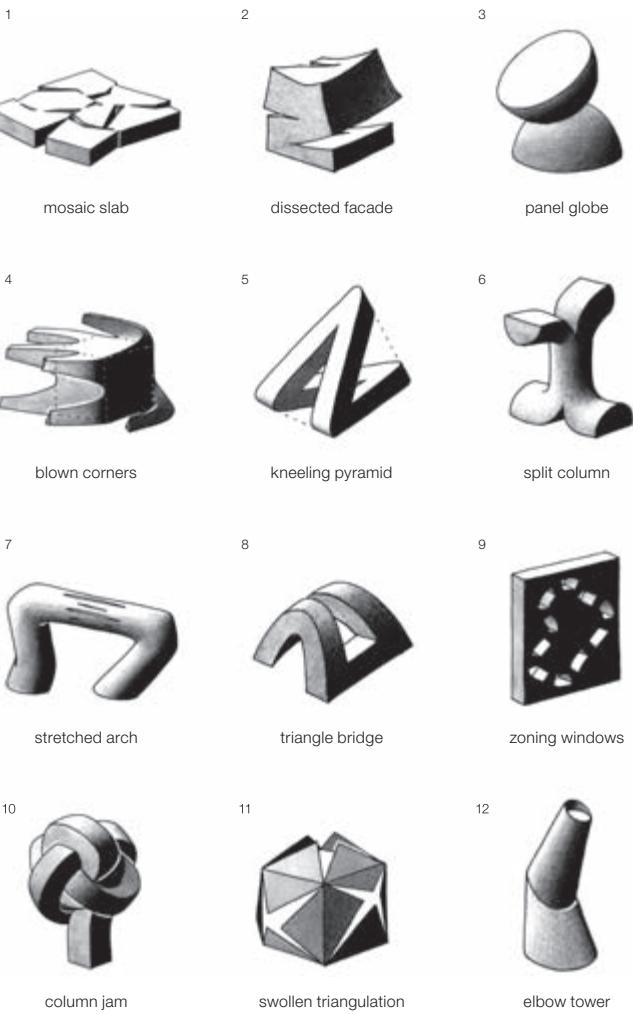
For the sake of versatility, the illustrations of this series have been drawn freehand. What could appear as a deliberate reaction to the quasi-unanimous computerization of both architectural representation and building design process is, in fact, a simple choice of convenience. Not unlike the way physical modeling materials influence form, operating systems turn out to induce software-specific shapes, to the extent that they become barriers to the production of diversity. Making room for various layouts, freehand drawings have been reduced here to their most neutral expression, in order to minimize the input of the gestural and to extract the essence of the concept in its most intelligible formulation. This abatement of representational effects is extended to the adoption of a constant viewing angle, which, in turn, enhances the perception of both peculiarities and kinships.

In its layout, the present volume reproduces the graphic framework of a language. Not unlike the way a plurality of syllabaries cross each other in Japanese writing, several levels of character complexity are here juxtaposed with a quasi-absence of punctuation. Each entry is allocated the same amount of paper space (basically a square), whether extremely complicated (like *kanji*, or Chinese ideograms), simply curvy (like *hiragana*) or bluntly straight (like *katakana*). The parallel can be stretched to the reading experience itself, which can be carried out horizontally as well as vertically, and almost invariably from left to right or the reverse. Under each element though, captions, which in many cases preceded the drawings themselves, have been added to support or complete the depiction of their respective meanings.

Like a centrifugal escape from the cycle of serial fantasy, the last chapter reconnects with the cultural realities of an existing site in Japan, and becomes a scale test. Literally rescuing this opus from art book shelves, it exploits and shows the ability of this series to morph

into proper building proportions with the outcome of a project, as the opposite of a conclusion. Selected for its median qualities in terms of size, program hosting capacities, and feasibility rather than for its demiurgical pretensions, a single scheme is released in the dense urban environment of central Tokyo to show the inherent flexibility that this set can offer. In return, this final part intends to reveal the *sitelessness* of all the other items by contrast.

CHAPTER ONE HONG KONG



13



sigma building

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packed slab

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optician building

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pixel circle

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pitched-roof dilemma

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inflatable floors

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alternate cantilever

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acoustic slab

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pebble square

22



sleeve towers

23



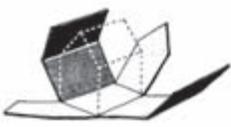
physical sketch

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windproof tower

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house arena

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pinned-down tower

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pebble tower

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stretched wire frame

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fan slab

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columnless arcades

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continuous wire frame

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fingerprint windows

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cushion landscape

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tentacle columns

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minced cantilever

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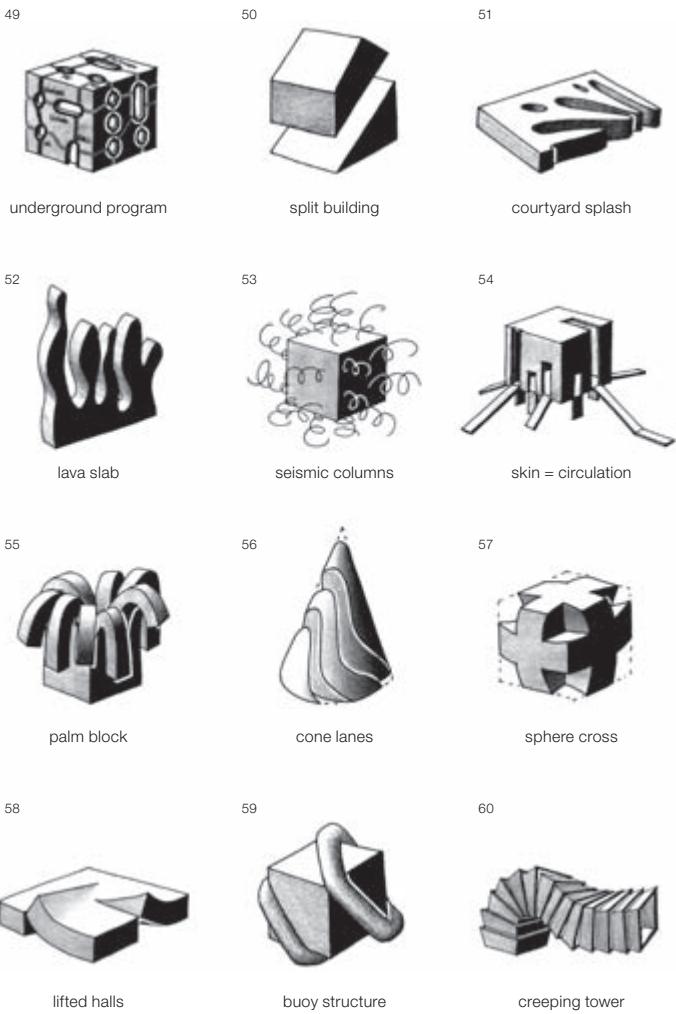


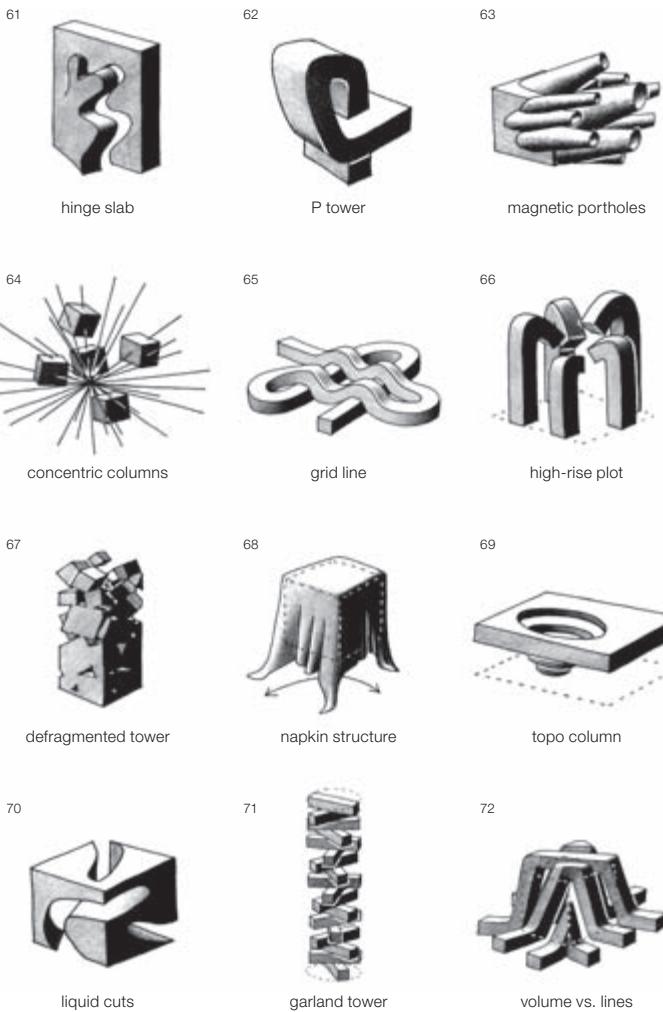
recycled yards

48



double-Y tower





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meteor facade

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cross tower

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vegetal shafts

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bubbling tower

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pillar crown

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cracked towers

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burried square

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translation block

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program falls

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infinite tower

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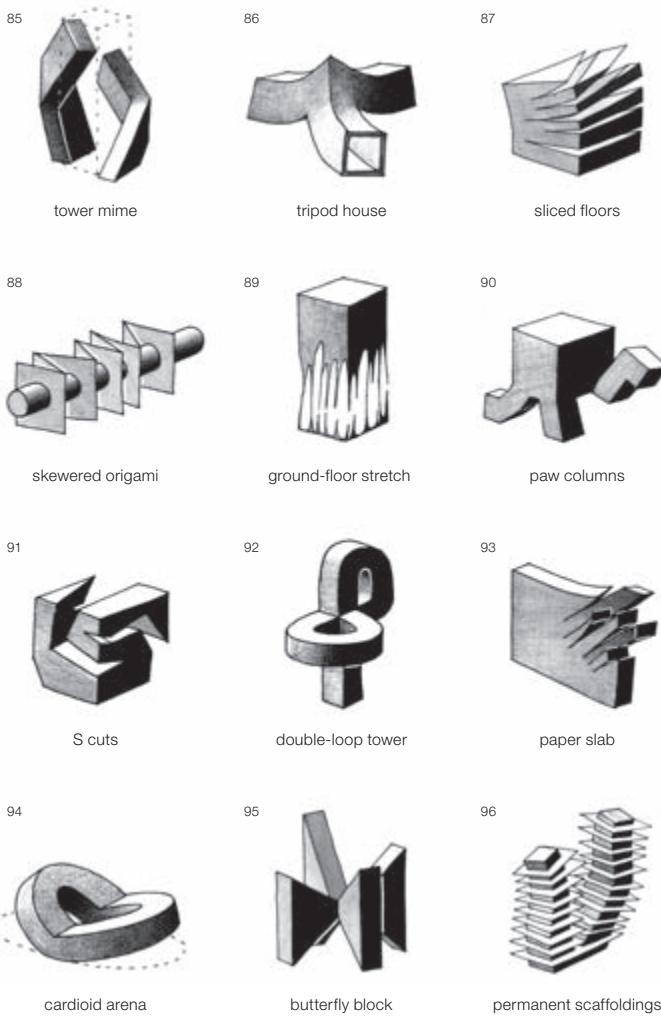


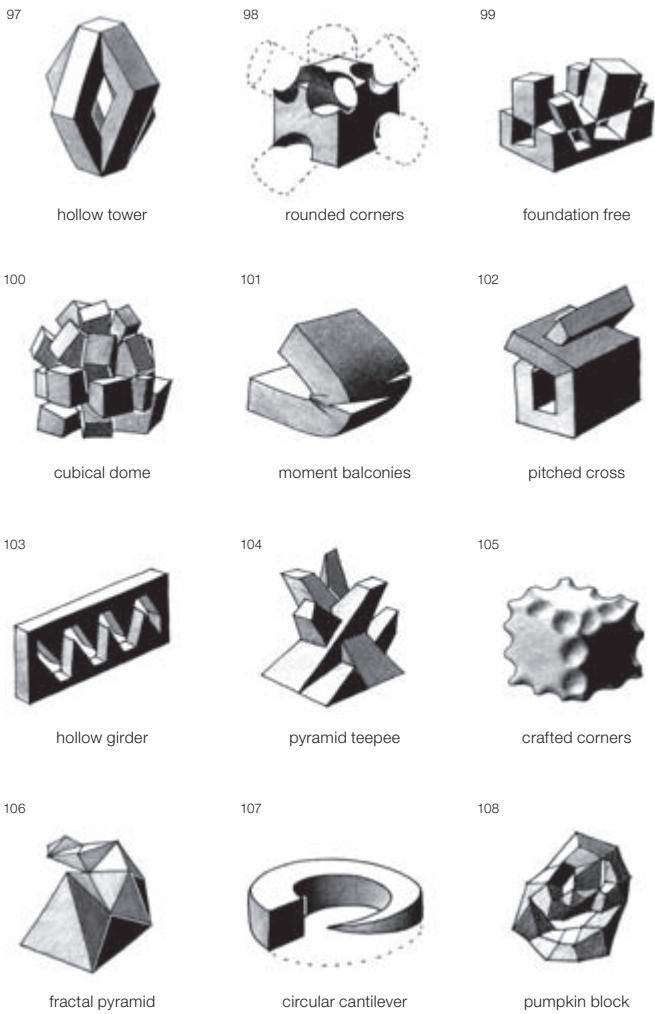
stretched referential

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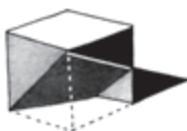
sliced balance

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oblique floors

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translated hall

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pebble facade

113



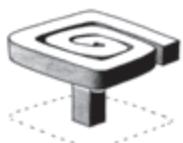
mosaic lasso

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continuous balconies

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roof column

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skin vs. volume

117



slide tower

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cubic jaws

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racquet tower

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continuous block

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global slabs

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flake slab

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milled portholes

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bipolar block

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compressed path

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locked tower

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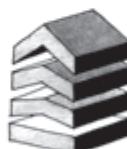
stem towers

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fiber program

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pitched floors

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hatched floors

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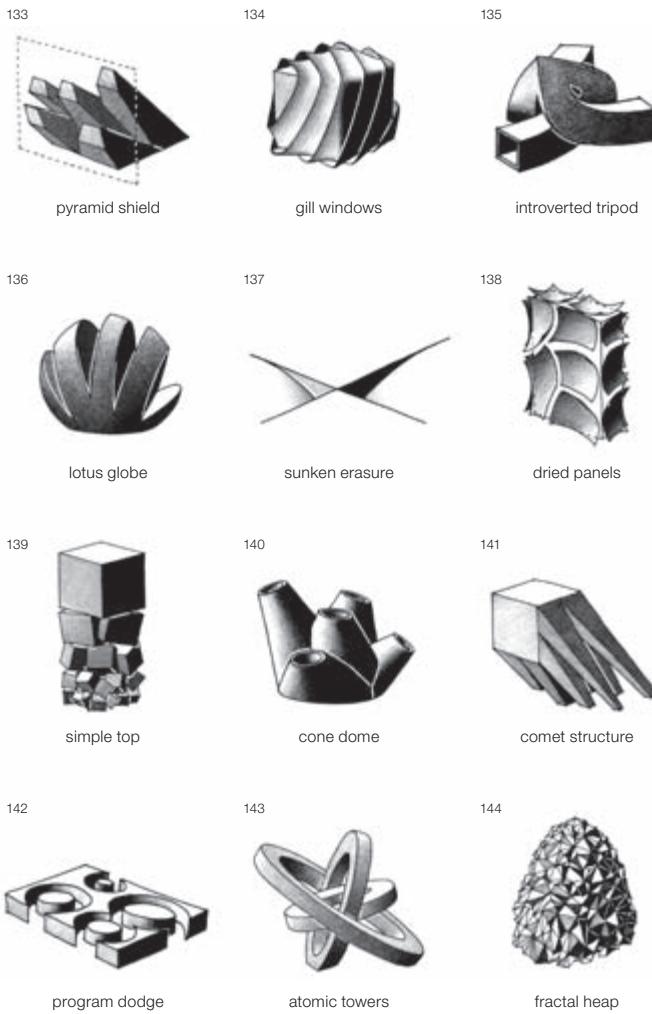


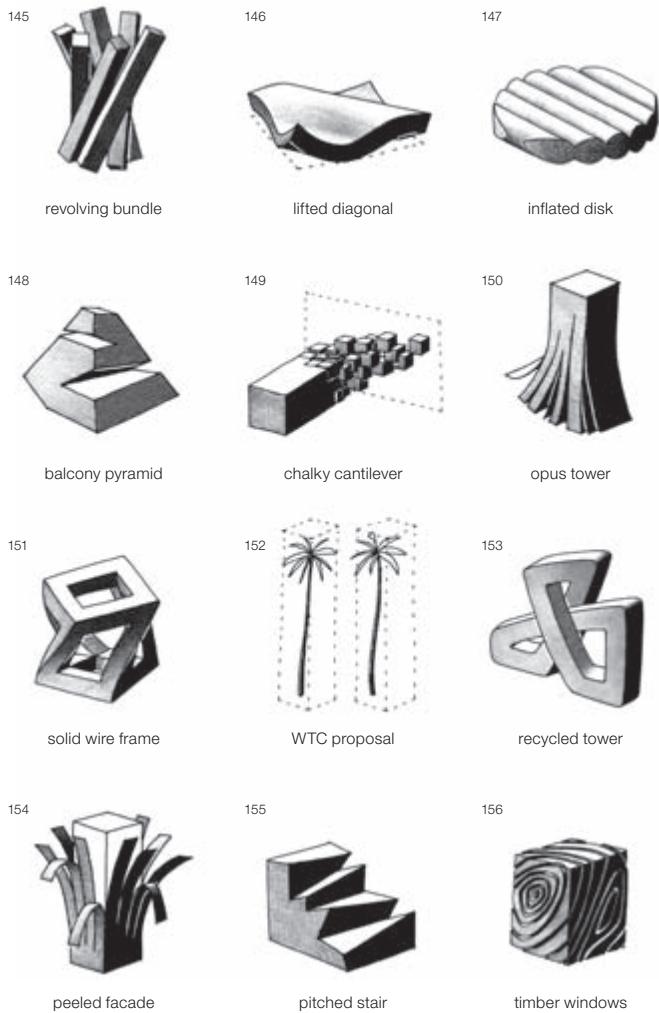
digital slab

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district tower





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limp corridors

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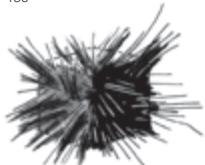
double roof

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checkered portholes

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hirsute facade

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hunched cross

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stalactite structure

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flat circus

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telescopic corner

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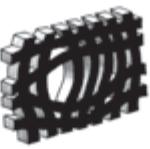
node hub

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checkered arch

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forced grid

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floor stretch

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city-block stack

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hatch building

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crumpled regulation

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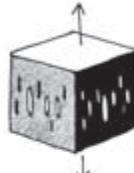
tower jet

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crawling slab

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horseshoe tower

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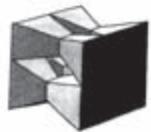
double arch

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pyramid tower

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wall projections

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armor tower

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scalped dome

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radar tower

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shrunk plot

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jiggling grid

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diagonal sphinx

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spilled structure

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floor loop

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city-block chain

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column boa

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dancing column

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cavity yard

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spool tower

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crumpled disk

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planted arena

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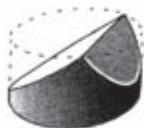
slab splits

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evaporative tower

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pitched-roof column

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mineral crop

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soundwave corner

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echo block

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square trap

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eroded program

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centrifugal columns

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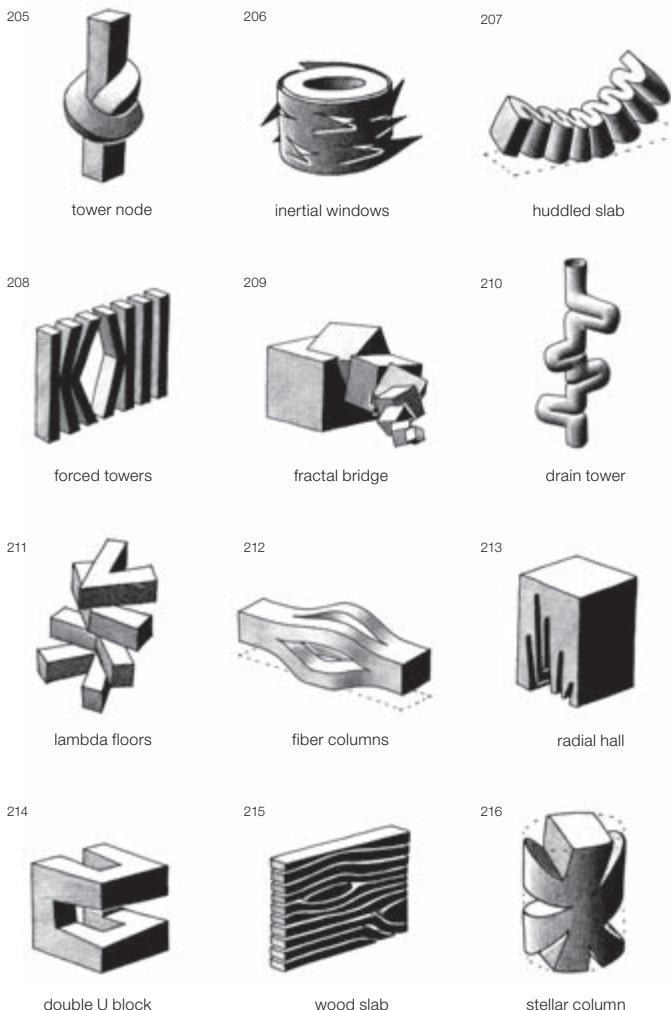


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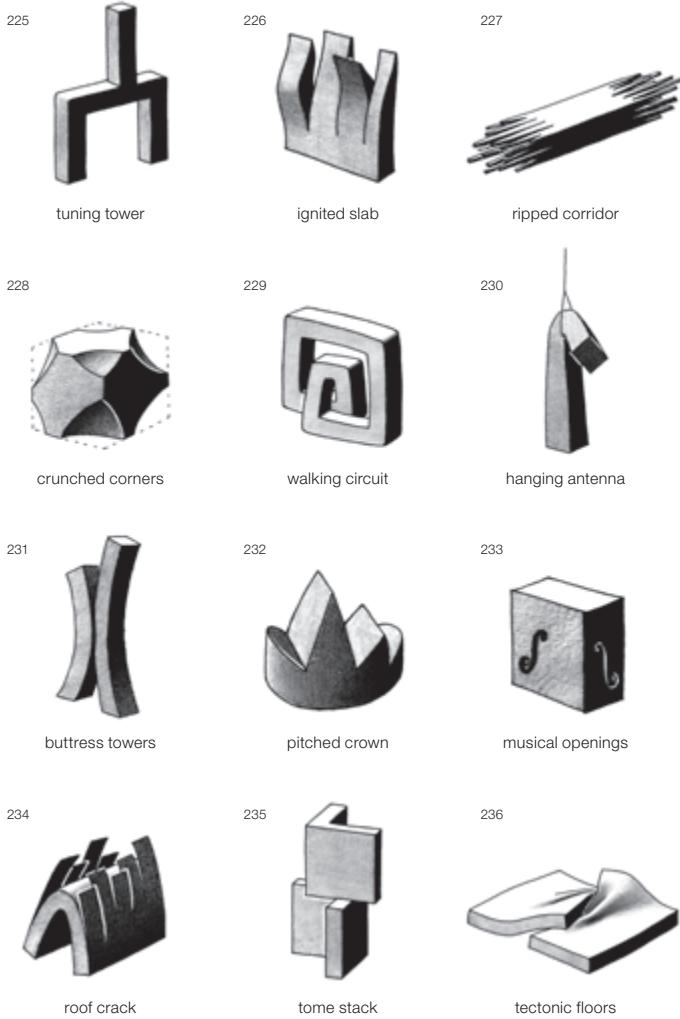


facade sheets





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globe stretch

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sparkling block

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Z building

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projected park

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structural heroism

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disk hops

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prop block

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filled outline

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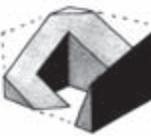
shelf building

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lying towers

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pitched corner

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cantilevered trunk

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blown pyramids

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rotary cantilever

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expansive windows

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facade surplus

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split disks

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checkered pitched roof

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corner wedges

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outlined windows

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extruded ruin

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circumventing towers

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split tower

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dotted block

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pixel meteor

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mesh building

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circulation tower

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calendar panels

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globular tower

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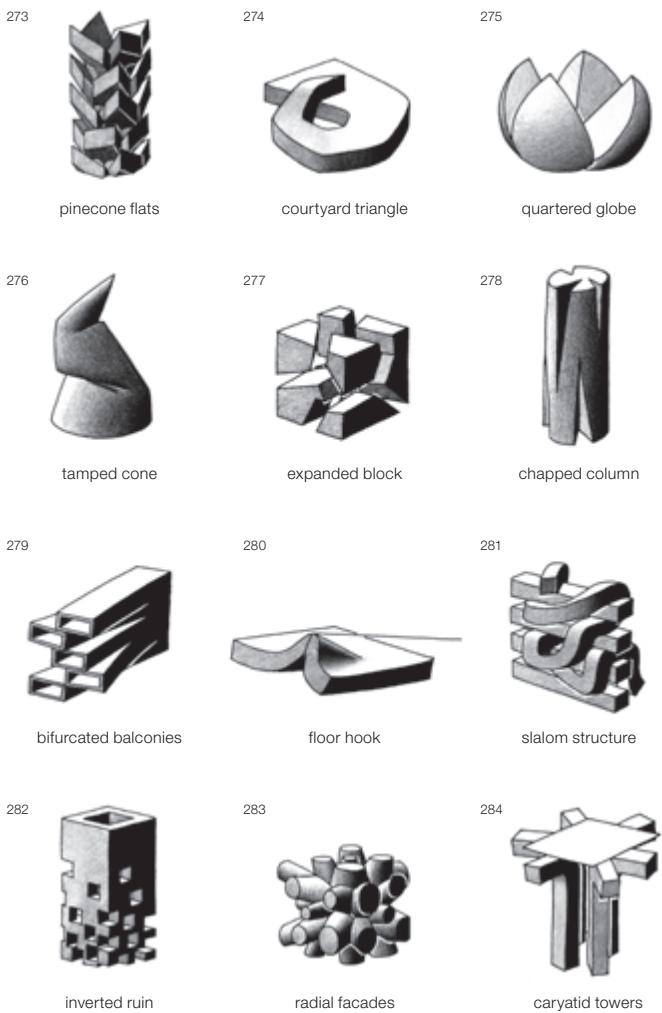
amoeba windows

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pennant slab

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lopsided stack



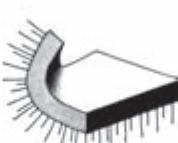
program bondage



causeway towers



structural sheet



roaring pilotis



column jaw



can flats



rolled circle



rubber facade



brushstroke building



packaging top



trimmed heap

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corner hubs

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glowing square

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dotted frame

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dotted-marks tower

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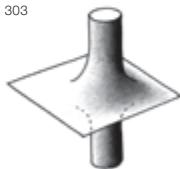
dry curtain walls

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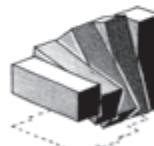
facade drag

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square vs. tower

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prop cantilever

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flat curve

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wrung city block

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floor trap

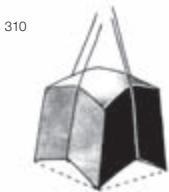
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barrel square



floor container



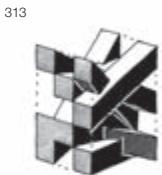
lifted ground floor



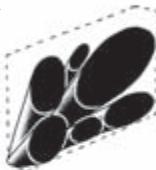
sky seizure



flat column



switchboard block



projected slab



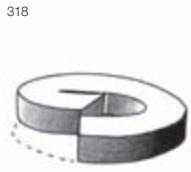
program overload



block jam



bicephalous tower



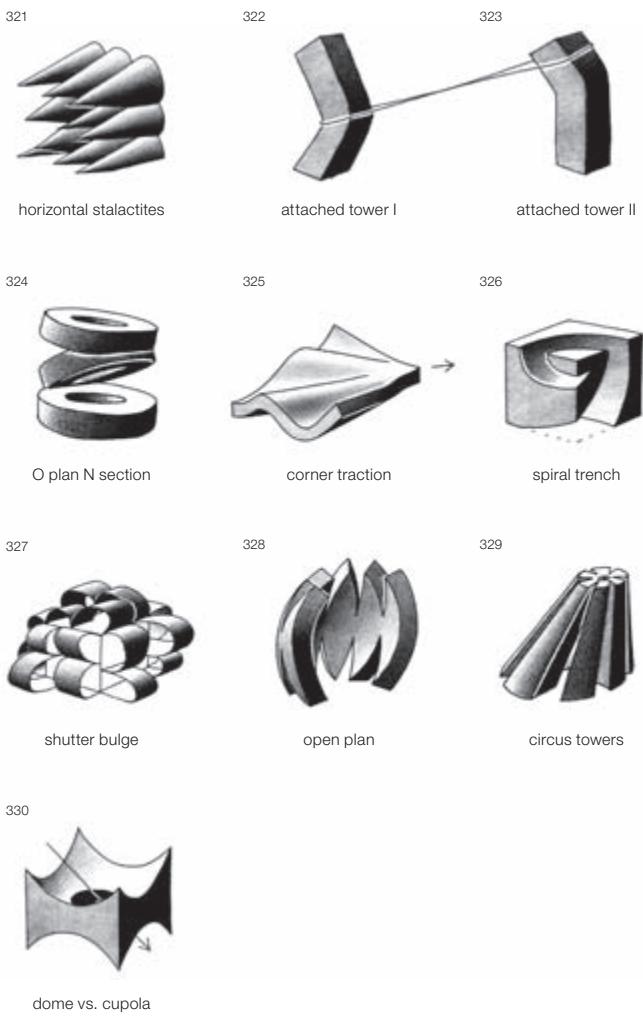
ramp ring



floor press



evanescent tower



CHAPTER THREE COPENHAGEN

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pentagon tower

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fingerprint urbanism

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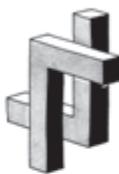
cornet slab

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oblique twist

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finger-frame towers

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foliate facades

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ramified tower

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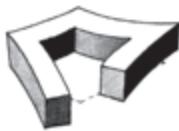
star vs. square

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volume simulacrum

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open city block

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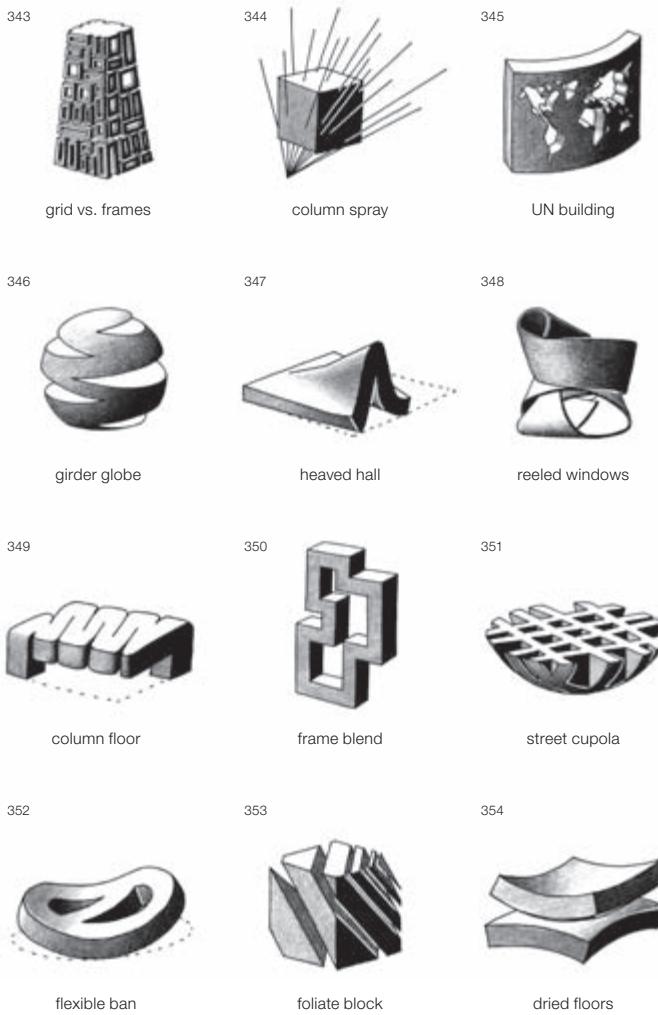


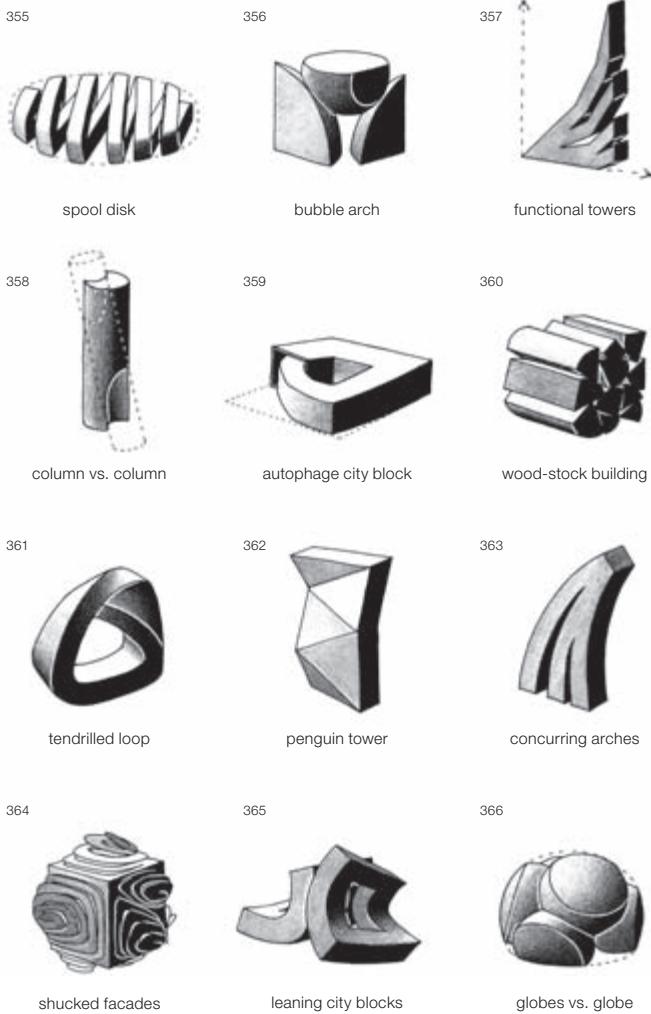
medallion slab

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XYZ megastructure







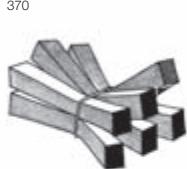
tissue hall



frame set



shinto tower



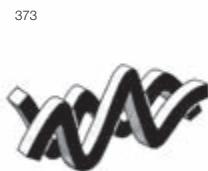
beam bundle



ascending floors



circular cubes



sinus slab



audio facades



sitting arches



program oozing



solid stages



introverted facades

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floor bud

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extruded zoning

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extruded erasure

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fourfold floor

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radius overlap

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facade tension

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underground arch

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facade towers

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homothetic square

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corner tower

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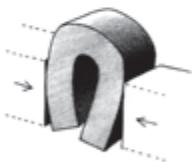
pinned column

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magic pilotis

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urban arch

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tangential globe

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dotted sequence

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score windows

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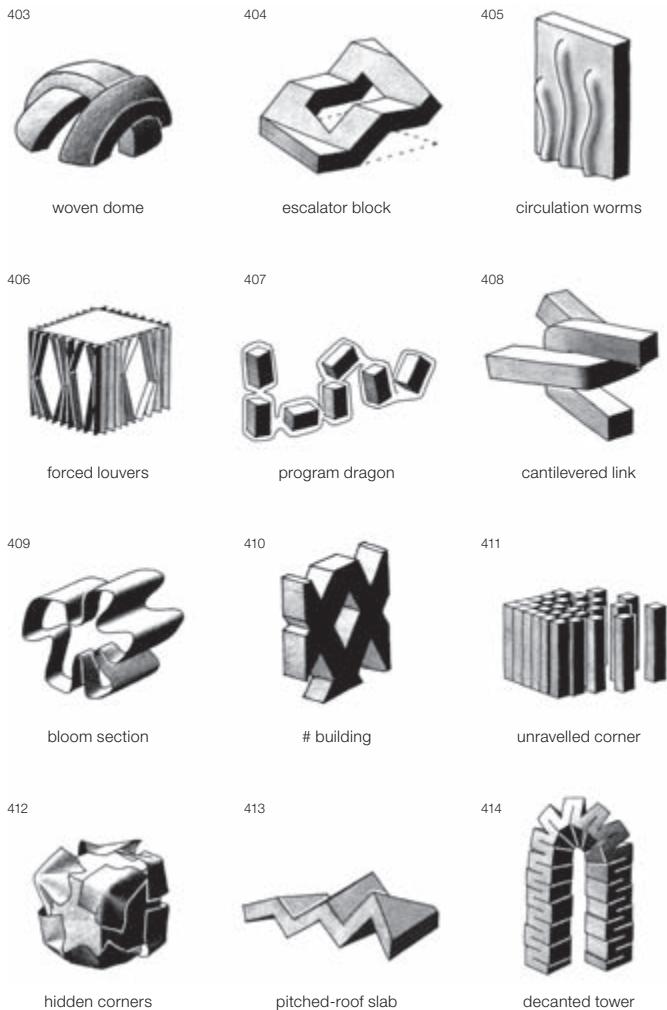


envelope building

402



canvas slab



415



concentrate gravity

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regulation wrap

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cone seal

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circle vs. cone

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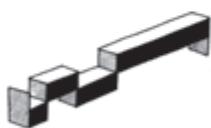
in-and-out column

420



unraveled slab

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graphic-scale building

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pitch ceiling

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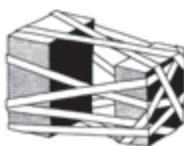
finger yards

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shelter tower

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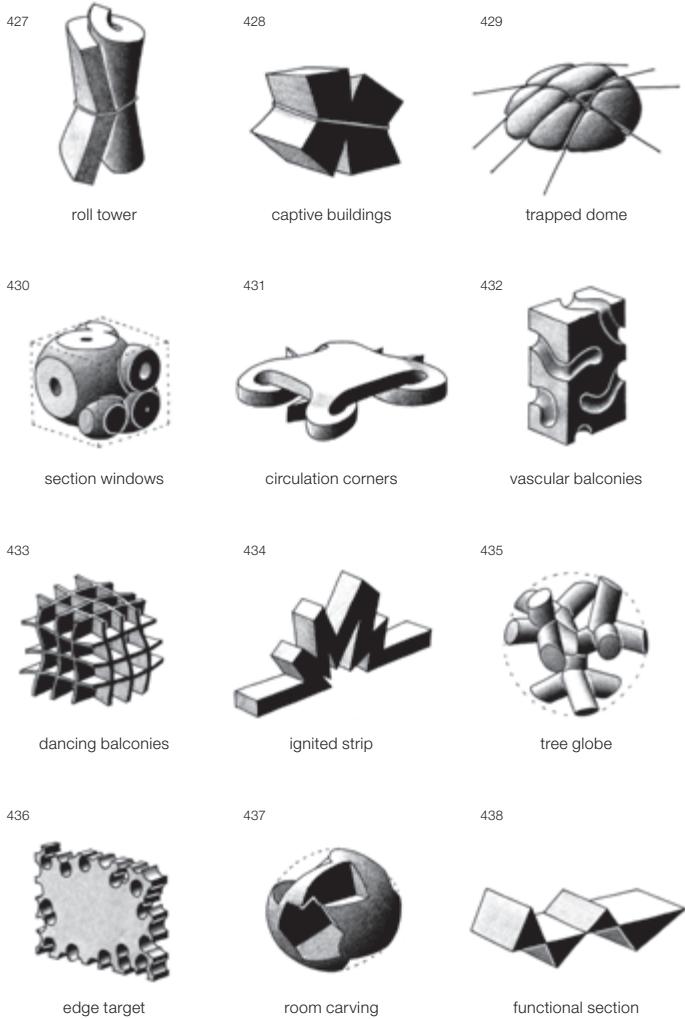


window tape

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triangle towers





lasso structure



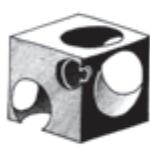
strip release



plug-in columns



confetti towers



expanded dice



liquid square



rearview windows



hatched pyramid



outlined cantilever



domino slabs



nuclear tower



fold-averse slab

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jacked-up block

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extensive corners

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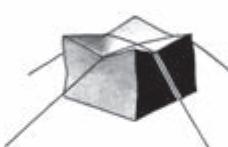
spiral cyclops

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ocular tower

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anchored block

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spring floors

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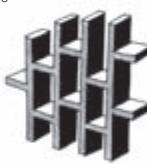
directive building

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back-to-back towers

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cement towers

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pitched-roof cube

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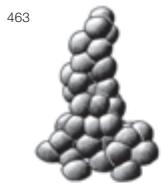


structural strata

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paper architecture



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viral tower



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walking pyramid



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swollen facades



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room chain



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prostrate tower



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moving target

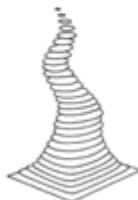


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continuous pillar

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disk roll

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tube pack

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balloon building

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linear vs. concentric

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limp tripod

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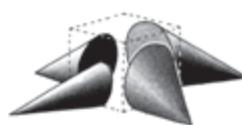
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extruded camouflage

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projected block

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wheel tower

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billboard floor

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Lobkowitz tower

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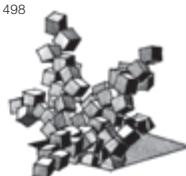
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498



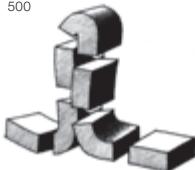
room geyser

499



mummy slab

500



dotted tower

501



corner arch

502



Goode projection plan

503



stapled slabs

504



grid shot

505



tripartite globe

506



walking circle

507



chute tower

508



bottomless tower

509



spinning rooms

510



competing towers

511



stellar weaving

512



locked slices

513



treble-clef tower

514



slab kick

515

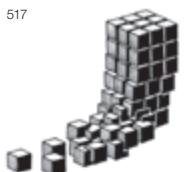


piercing structure

516



pillar takeoff



chalk tower



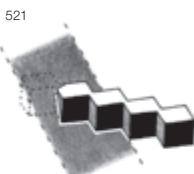
city-block hug



e-building



vitruvian circulation



checkered cantilever



structural rendering



coiled steel



wired structure



stretched city block



oblique pixel



dome stack



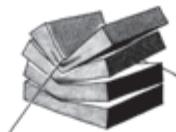
ribbon tower

529



trenched dome

530



ground-bound floors

531



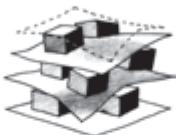
mold facade

532



spool steps

533



paper floors

534



ballast dome

535



eye slab

536



puddle pyramid

537



dancing floors

538



tube dome

539



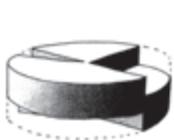
pitched-roof belt

540



viral structure

541



statistic structure

542



thick tape

543



girder cone

544



Beuys tower

545



extruded path

546



wired shading

547



globe glove

548



twofold canyon

549



puzzle facades

550



tower glass

551



napkin slab

552



city-block jam

553



ivy screen

554



tower arena

555



pillar stock

556



program glass

557



pyramid pennant

558



free Plan Voisin

559



convergent towers

560



dome plus

561



cube screw

562



log-joint building

563



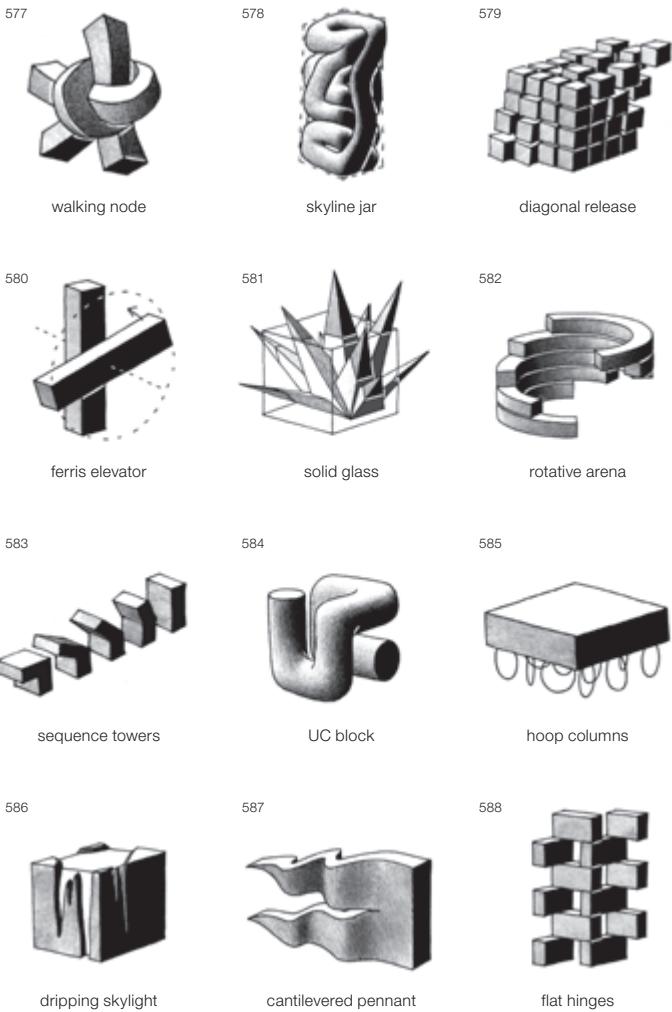
cube hug

564



garland floors





589



tower globe

590



dog-eared pyramid

591



belt structure

592



calendar cone

593



S frame

594



housing slabs

595



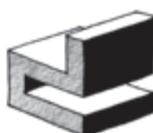
walking slab

596



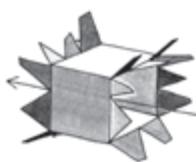
bondage columns

597



half-S section

598



forced facades

599

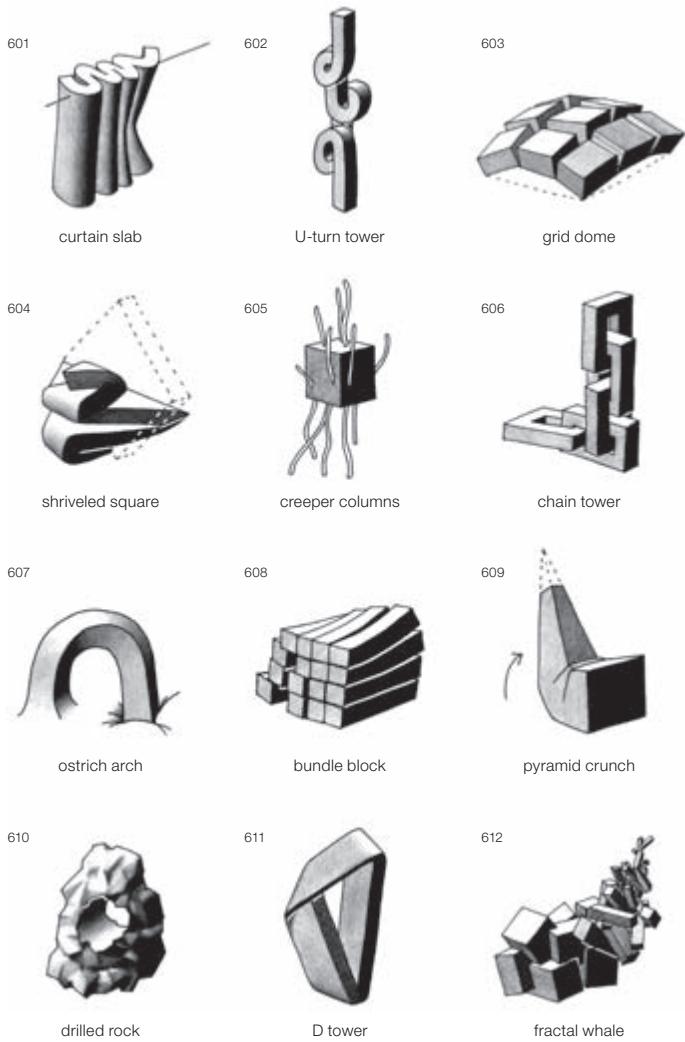


braid tower

600



roof cap



613



leproous block

614



spit towers

615



hinged flats

616



meshed slab

617



unstuck windows

618



telepathic towers

619



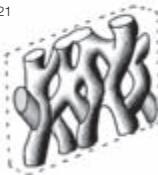
diameter axis

620



peeled ceiling

621



lattice slab

622



hoist tower

623



city-block dome

624



curly plus

64

625



coral portholes

626



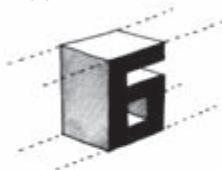
vertical Atomium

627



globe vs. dome

628



digital section

629



city-block spool

630



optional corners

631



eye slab

632



progressive grid

633



funnel wire frame

634



amplified facade

635



U-turn building

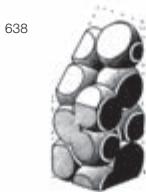
636



interface facades



global cross



collision crop



internal battle



topo facades



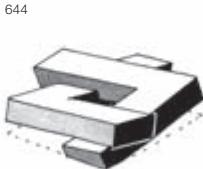
amoeba slab



pigtail towers



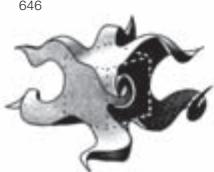
exponential balconies



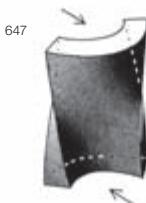
finger-frame lock



program texture



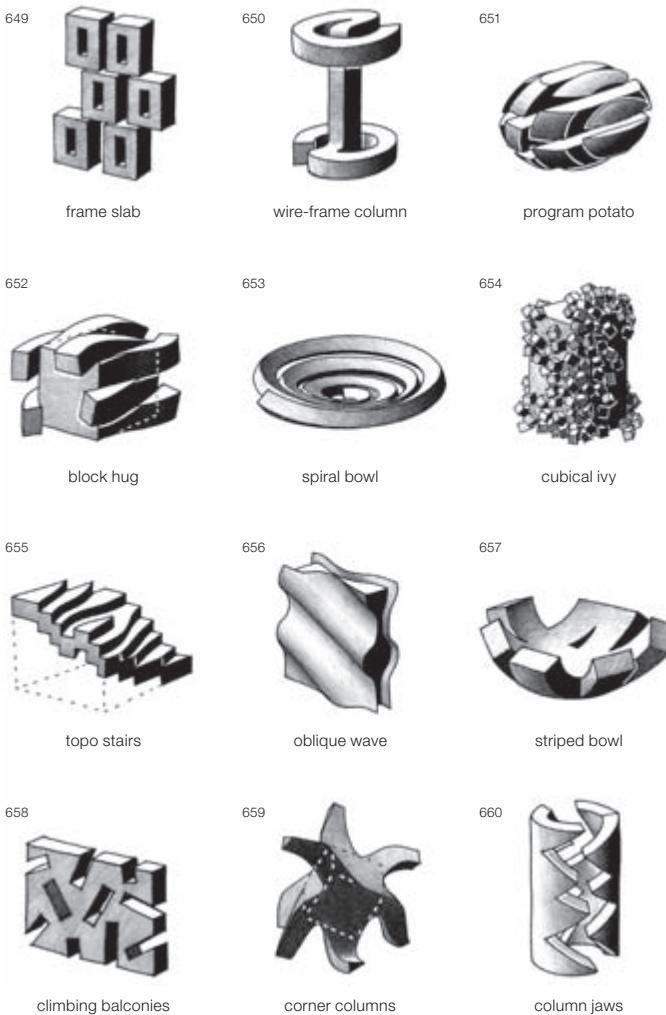
horned corners

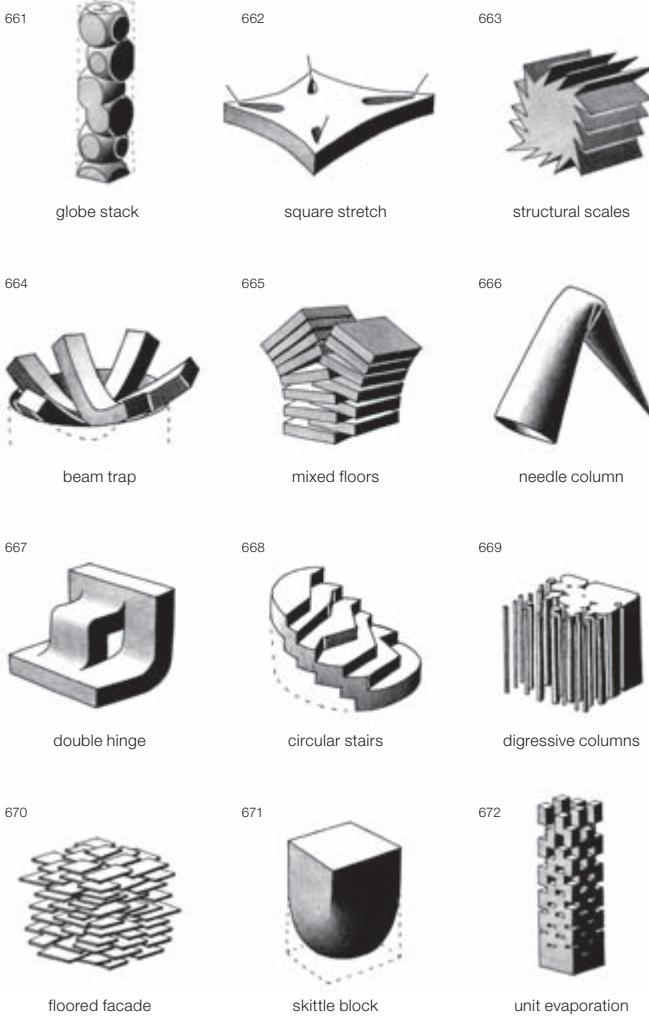


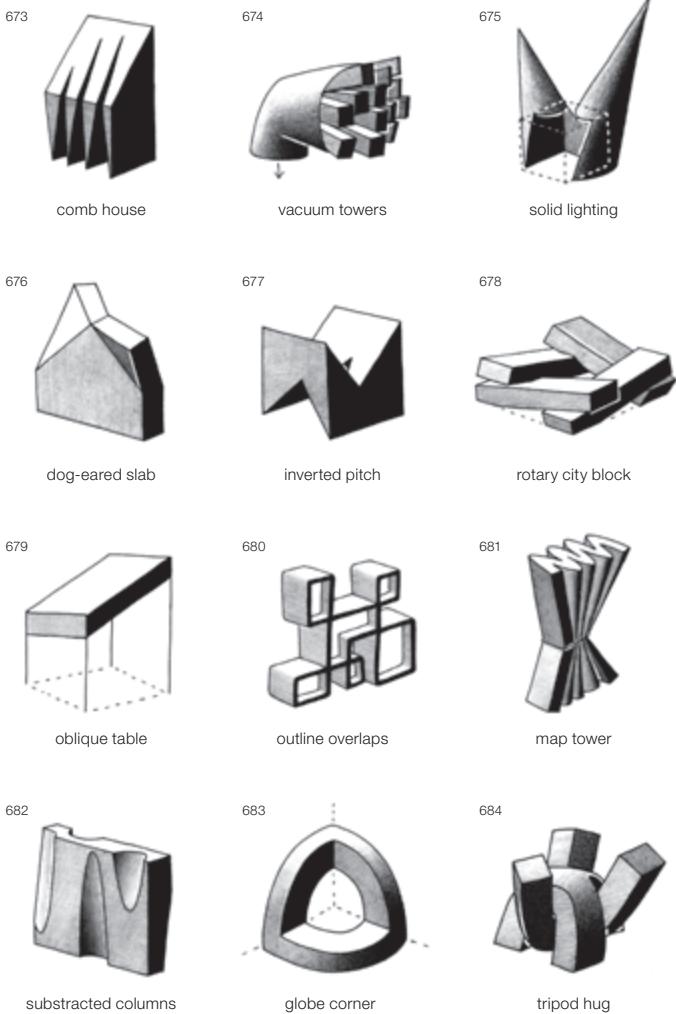
ticket tower



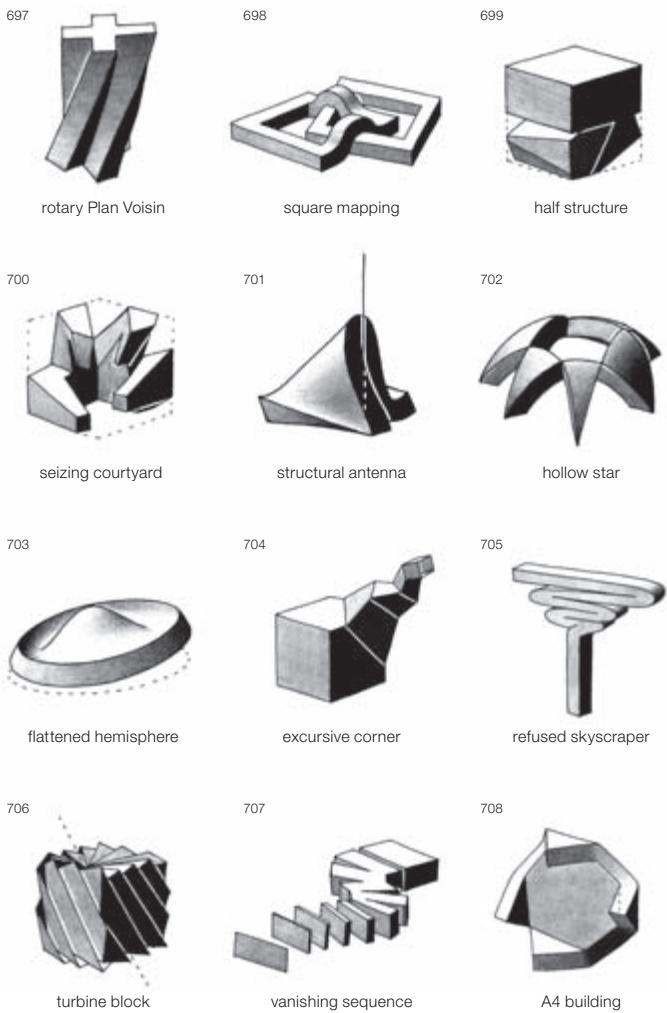
crown jaws

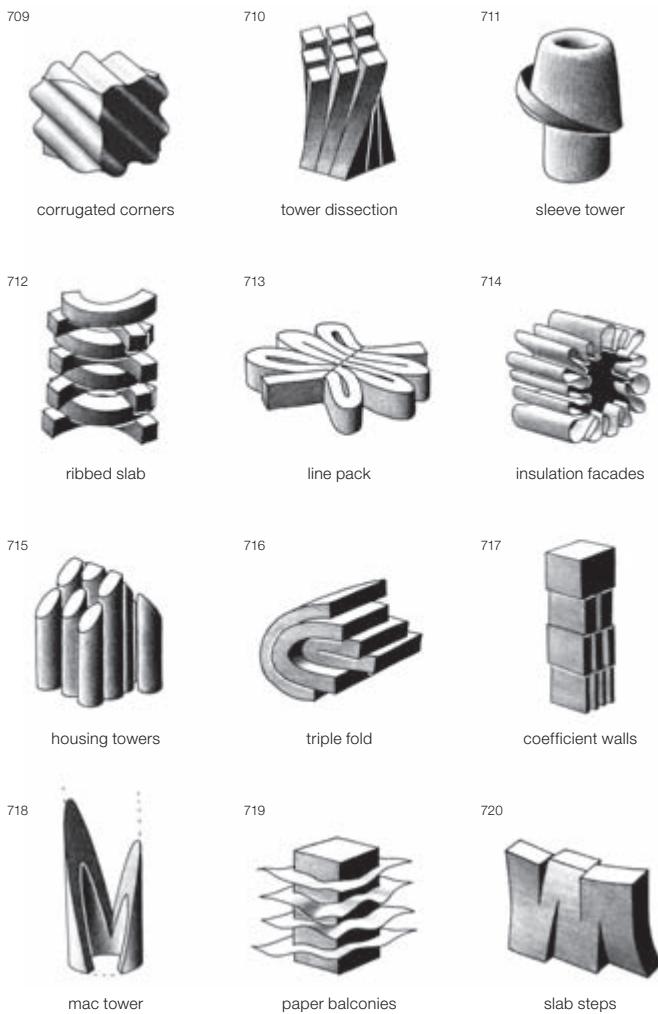












721



chamfer tower

722



structural scene

723



grid bulges

724



audio corner

725



crossed pitched roof

726



solid fishnet

727



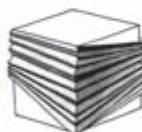
barbed-wire structure

728



dimension block

729



squeeze-box facade

730



ionic cantilever

731



stapled floors

732



split column



suburban tower



simulated sphere



quadruped slab



congested corner



stellar towers



crushed arena



sticker panels



bobbin facade



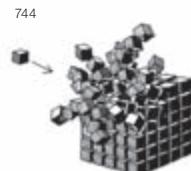
fern columns



frayed square



hurricane facade



corner impact

745



corner steps

746



revolving stripes

747



facade wrinkles

748



stretched pyramid

749



pillow structure

750



sea-horse column

751



cantilevered satellite

752



peeled sphere

753



sawtooth edges

754



flattened block

755



pyramid cube

756



crown tower

757



shaft locks

758



crown square

759



tortile wire frame

760



diamond tower

761



facade suction

762



cloud carousel

763



flint pitched roof

764



imbricated slits

765



snooker urbanism

766



peeled roll

767



corner substitutes

768



sunken windows

769



dried grid

770



stamen block

771



XXX floors

772



telescopic city block

773



landed Sputnik

774



corner cloud

775



crisscross sections

CHAPTER FIVE TOKYO

776



pixel magnets

777



clover tower

778



radar slab

779



ball-bearing floors

780



radial dome

781



dog-eared chessboard

782



incremental program

783



street-pattern tower

784



erectile cantilever

785



tube tower

786

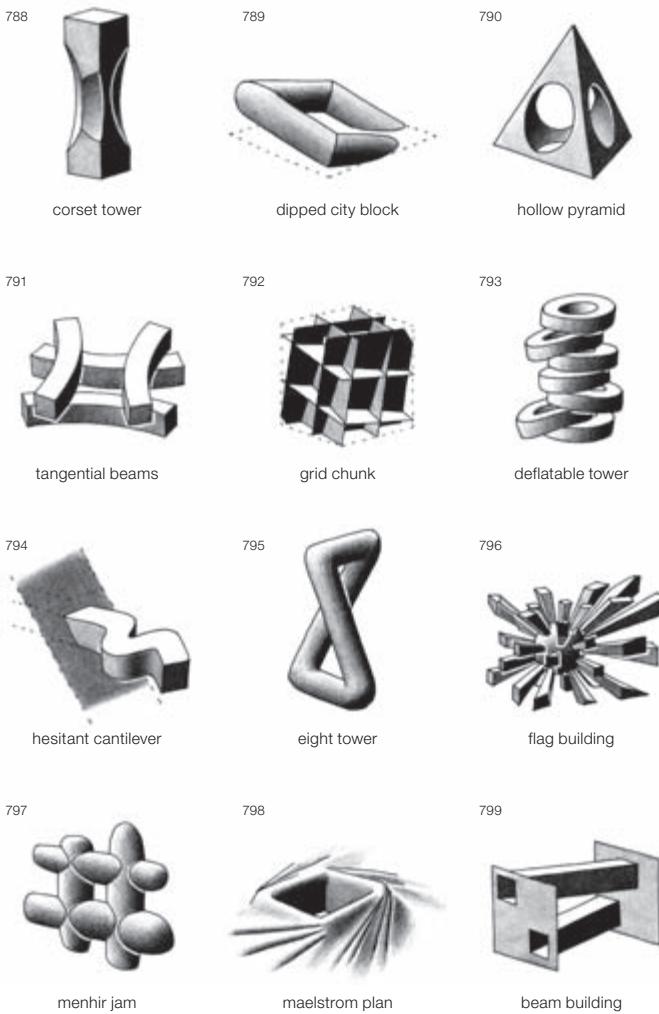


flattened globe

787



crater portholes



800



twig square

801



flaccid edges

802



stealth circle

803



bundletower

804



structural hub

805



akimbo tower

806



pyramid blimp

807



global tower

808



splash towers

809



modern buttresses

810



columnless floors

811



bumped geode

812



continuous Cerdà

813



room studs

814



sag bridge

815



can wave

816



column jaw

817



window spray

818



vying arches

819



insulation block

820



glove slab

821



triple E

822



yard tape

823



pillar facades

84

824



column spray

825



structural orbits

826



tile floors

827



underground Atomium

828



program shake

829



iconic building

830



coaxial floors

831



spiral straitjacket

832



circulation ivy

833



swollen streets

834



wrung floors

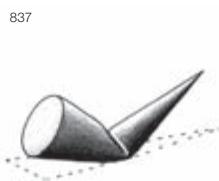
835



kanji tower



836
tower belt



837
cone rebound



838
chain-link towers



839
plunger facades



840
extra corner



841
discharge structure



842
jaw circle



843
crane towers



844
globe menhir



845
kanji plan



846
perspiring program



847
plastic atrium

848



bondage floors

849



girder building

850



wring block

851



lateral twist

852



rotary center

853



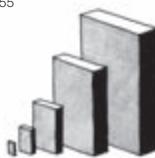
turbine sphere

854



katakana tower

855



homothetic slabs

856



curtain-wall can

857



facade spray

858



warhead facades

859



bridge block

860



polar columns

861



plunger facets

862



spring block

863



brick flats

864



symmetric tower

865



ornamental plan

866



triangle trunk

867



whirling tiles

868



iteration escape

869



concentric towers

870



suburban city block

871



organic arkhitekton

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872



spherical arkhitekton

873



moment towers

874



USB tower

875



end bundle

876



square tostada

877



spiral sets

878



slab crawl

879



drip cantilever

880



roof projection

881



slope piercing

882



shield walls

883



column star

884



shriveled pennant

885



convex floors

886



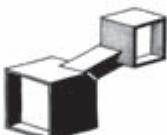
slough tower

887



hatched block

888



corner mitosis

889



capsule slab

890



solar tower

891



hive cube

892



concave floors

893



lattice globe

894



hinged slab

895



radar arch

90

896



leapfrog circle

897



cantilevered outline

898



skewer antenna

899



crawling frames

900



tripod tower

901



crumpled globe

902



post-and-beam tower

903



claw towers

904



iteration leap

905



globe chain

906



radial disk

907



omega block

908



JU tower

909



corner locks

910



girder tower

911



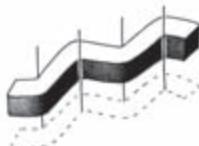
tower eruption

912



acanthus panels

913



column slalom

914



bouncing tower

915



pixel flag

916



global strata

917



soft origami

918



dried girder

919



ramp balconies

920



siamese floors

921



deep billboard

922



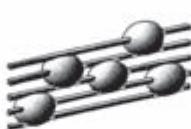
cuff circle

923



centrifugal balconies

924



score building

925



canopy slide

926



extension icicles

927



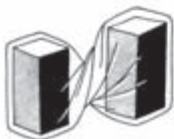
fungal balconies

928



eye beam

929



glass meiosis

930



slab lock

931



radial column

932



corner extensions

933



panel geyser

934



excavated cantilever

935



slab trail

936



grid bulge

937



fillet tower

938



panel locks

939



whirling pillars

940



continuous facade

941



bridge tower

942



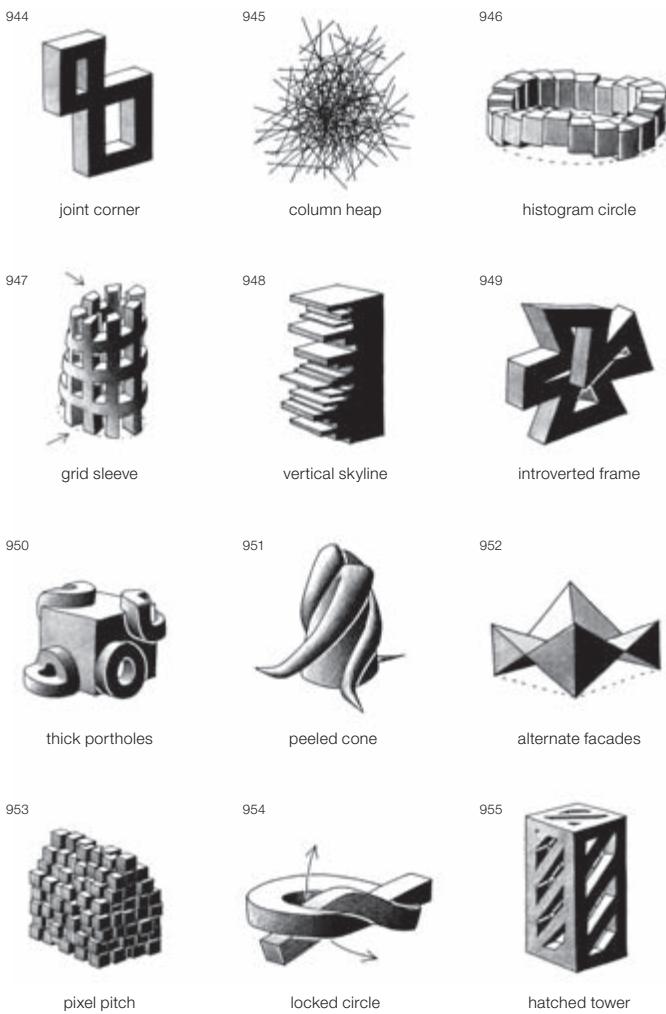
marble block

943



street settling

94





hatched curve



dancing grid



homothetic tower



tripartite column



half house



stepped cantilever



wrinkled corners



milled program



housing stack



circular wave



UV slab



ricochet tower

968



solid firework

969



clamped city block

970



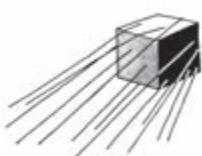
modernist pitched roof

971



armed slab

972



rake pilotis

973



tile building

974



pitched tube

975



double-C tower

976



column drip

977



square mill

978

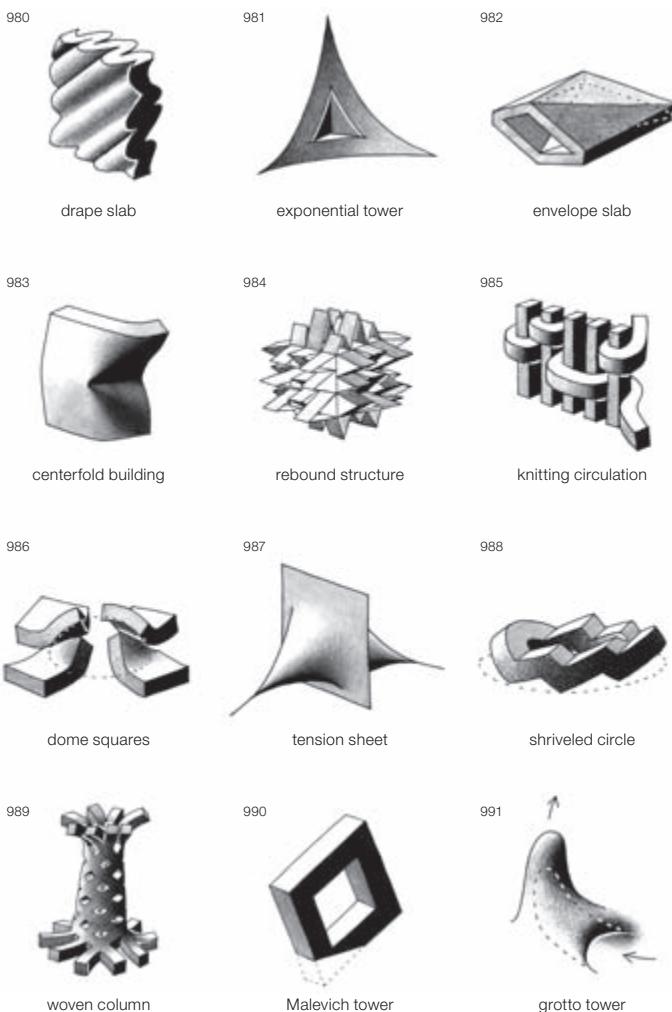


trimmed facade

979



floor round

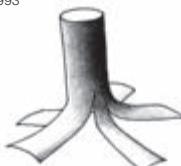


992



forced pitched roof

993



dissected hall

994



program rolls

995



circulation limbs

996



addition slab

997



stepped rhombus

998



legged loop

999



fluffed antennas

1000



frequency strip

1001



nuclear cones

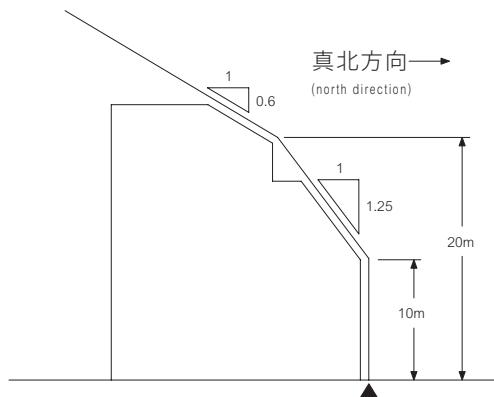
CHAPTER SIX SCALE TEST



Tokyo as testbed

A tangential leap from the fantastical into reality, this final chapter explores the possibility of implementing a single scheme from the previous series (figure 638) as a building. Formerly inspired by Tokyo's rigid regulation system, the selected concept reconnects with the actual constraints of a site in that very city, landing on a plot adjacent to Yoyogi Park. The building—a usual combination of commercial, residential, and office spaces—is the result of the collision of twenty-three spheres (coincidentally equaling the number of Tokyo wards) of identical radius, which fuse inward to differentiate various spaces by vaults rather than walls. The seemingly random stacking of these elements allows groupings to create larger rooms when appropriate or divisions into smaller ones when cut by inner floors.

The remaining outer membrane of the structure is cropped as it meets the boundary defined by city building rules, thus providing diverse diameters of openings to match the respective functions and locations of the rooms. Facades become sections, leaving the appearance of the whole as a mere by-product of a compelled site-specificity.



Zone 3 height regulation system from Shibuya City Office

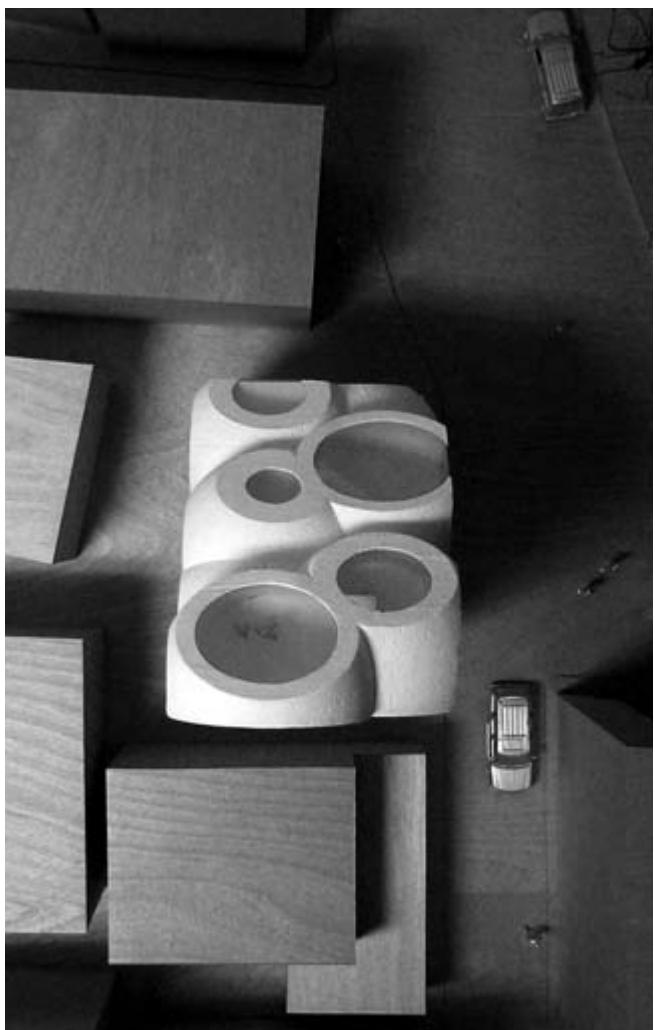


Process model

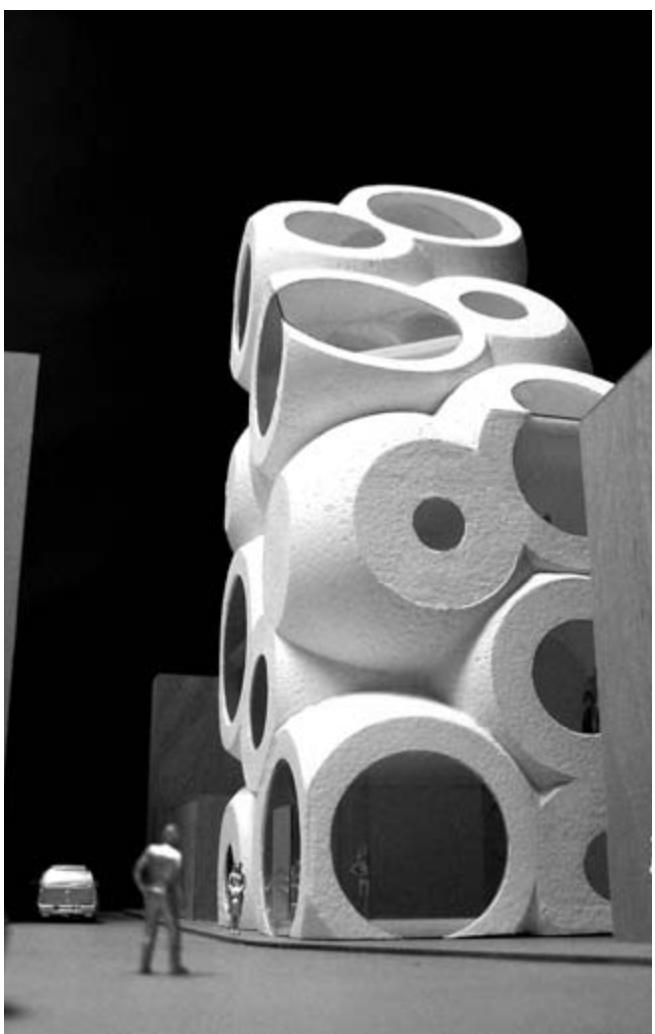


0 10 50 100m N

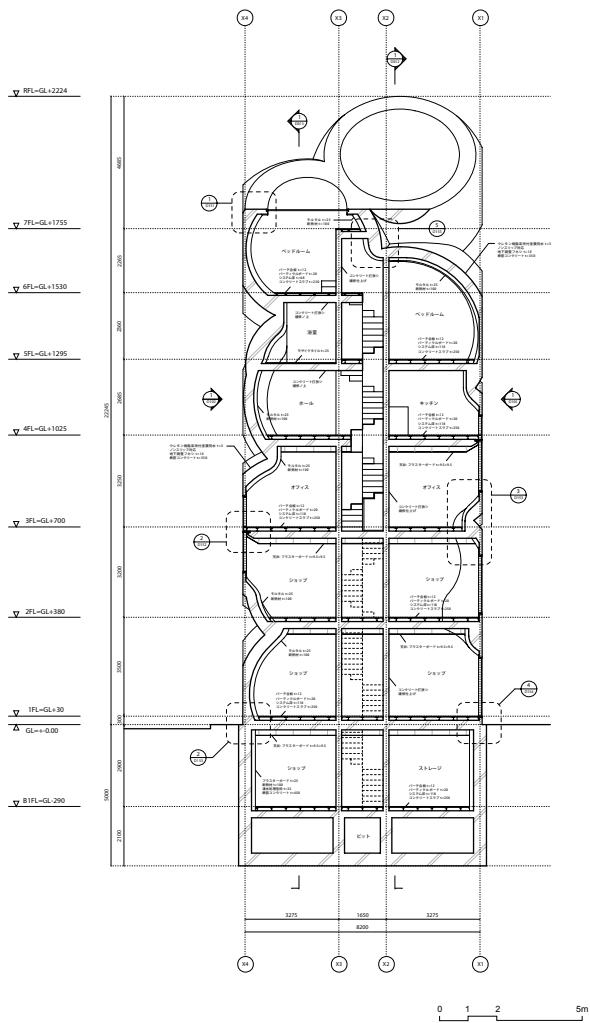
Urban situation



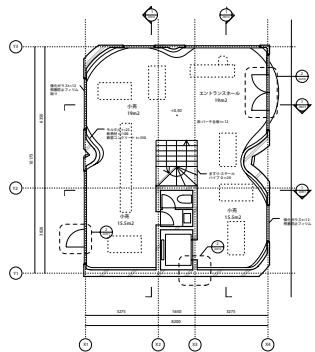
Aerial view



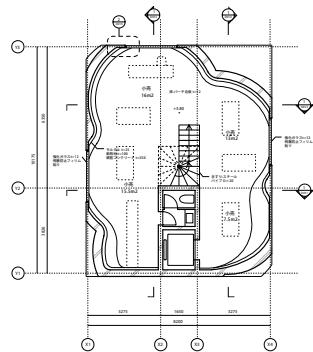
Street-level view



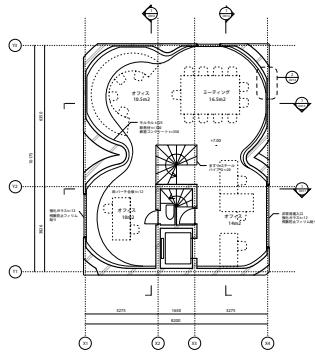
Transversal section



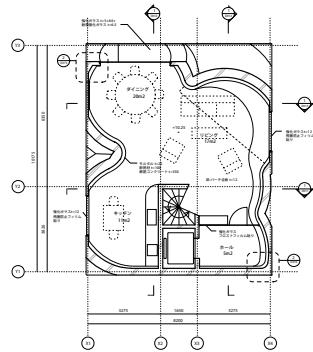
Level 1 floor plan



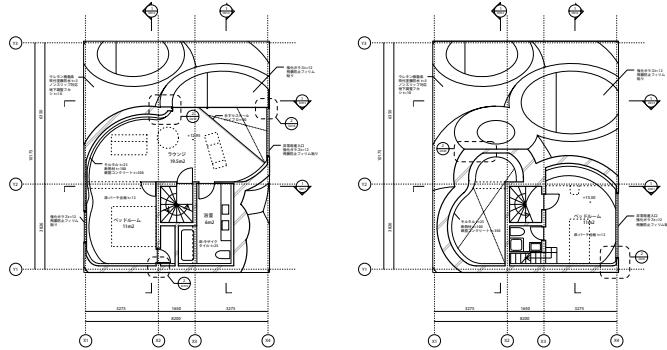
Level 2 floor plan



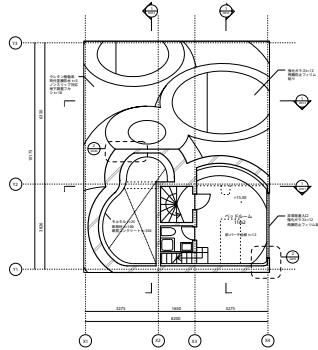
Level 3 floor plan



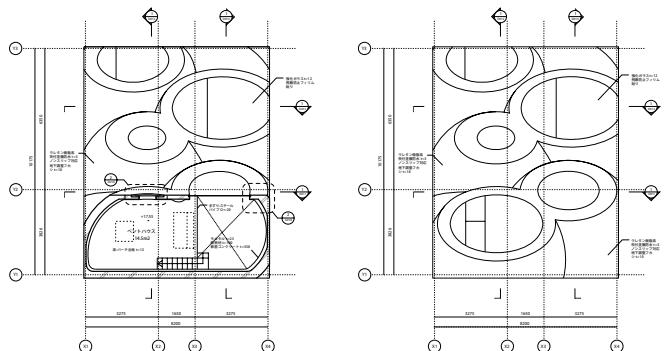
Level 4 floor plan



Level 5 floor plan

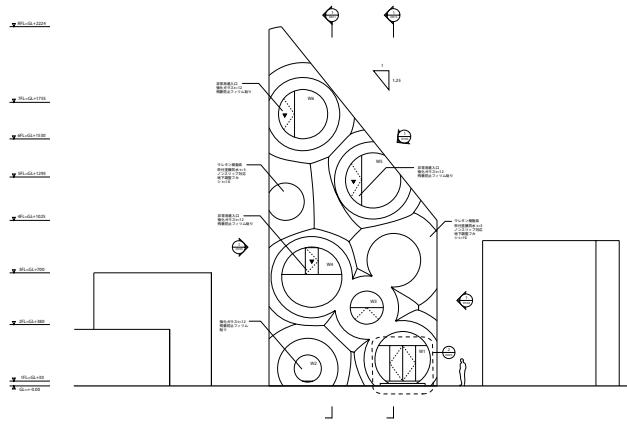


Level 6 floor plan



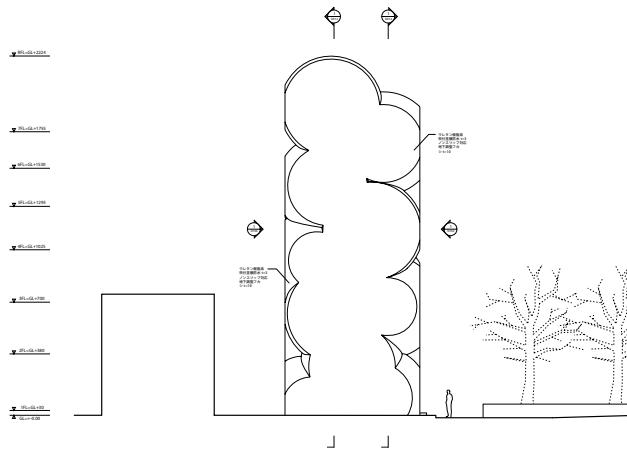
Level 7 floor plan

Roof plan

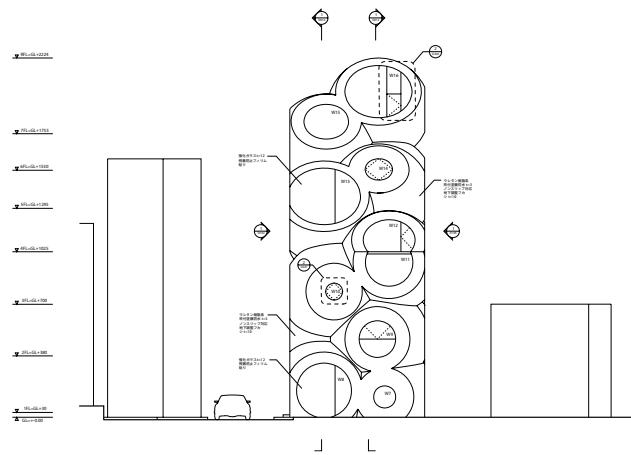


East elevation

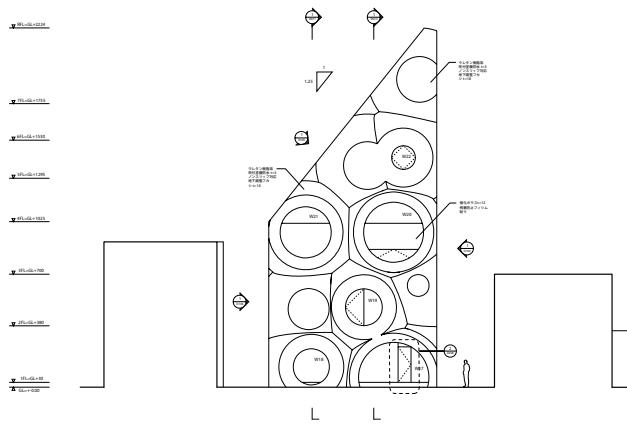
0 1 2 5m



South elevation



North elevation



West elevation



View from Odakyu Line

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