

Schlecht gepresst

Mit dem Aufkommen des elektrischen Bügeleisens wurde die Tätigkeit des Bügelns zunehmend von Mindestmaßen, ästhetischen wie ökonomischen, bestimmt. Ein Mindestmaß an Anstrengung wird darauf verwendet, das Hemd durch ein Mindestmaß ebener Flächen in eine zweidimensionale repetitive Einheit umzuformen, die ein Mindestmaß an Raum benötigt. Dieses Hemd wird ein Mindestmaß an Falten aufweisen, wenn man es trägt, vor allem in dem exponierten Bereich

zwischen den Aufschlägen des Jacketts. Die Standardmethode, ein Männerhemd zu bügeln, bringt das Hemd gewohnheitsmäßig in eine flache, rechteckige Form, die gerade in rechtwinklige Speichersysteme paßt - an der Stätte seiner Herstellung wird das fabrikgebügelte Hemd in rechteckige Kartons gestapelt und verpackt, die als kubische Volumen auf Lastwagen verladen und in Einzelhandelsgeschäfte befördert werden, wo die rechteckige Form des Hemdes in rechtwinkligen Schaukästen hervorgehoben und dann, nach seinem Erwerb, zuhause in Schrankfächern oder Kommodenschubladen und schließlich, wenn man verreist, in Koffern bewahrt wird. In jedem Stadium ist das

Hemd dazu angehalten, sich nach einem unausgesprochenen sozialen Kontrakt zu richten.

Beim Tragen wird das Residuum der rechtwinkligen Logik der Effizienz auf der Körperoberfläche registriert. Die parallelen Falten und scharfen, quadratischen Ecken eines sauberen, gebügelten Hemdes sind zu begehrten Emblemen der Kultiviertheit geworden. Aus dem Abfallprodukt der Effizienz ist ein neues Objekt ihrer Begierde geworden.

Was aber, wenn die Tätigkeit des Bügelns sich ganz und gar von der Ästhetik der Effizienz befreien würde? Vielleicht könnten die Auswirkungen des Bügelns den postindustriellen Körper angemessener repräsentieren, indem sie das Bild des Funktionalen gegen das des Disfunktionalen eintauschen.

Die Falte ist eine nützliche Metapher für den poststrukturalistischen Architekturdiskurs, weil sie Ambivalenzen, wie etwa Oberfläche und Struktur, Figur und Organisation,

verstärkt. Außerdem impliziert die Falte Umkehrbarkeit - wenn etwas gefaltet werden kann, kann es auch entfaltet und neu gefaltet werden.

Der Knick ist eine zwingendere Metapher, weil er einen gewissen Widerstand gegen Transformation aufweist. Der Knick hat ein länger zurückreichendes Gedächtnis als die Falte, und er hat als Einschreibung repräsentativen Wert. Der Knick ist schwerer zu entfernen. Seine Spuren bestimmen ihre fortwährende Bekräftigung - bis eine neue Ordnung eingeschrieben ist, mit der Illusion von Permanenz.

Elizabeth Diller und Ricardo Scofidio

Übersetzung aus dem Amerikanischen:
Almut Carstens





Bad Press

With the advent of the electric iron, the task of ironing became progressively governed by minimums, both aesthetic and economic. A minimum of effort is used to reshape the shirt through a minimum of flat facets into a two-dimensional, repetitive unit which will consume a minimum of space. This shirt will exhibit a minimum of creases when worn, particularly in the exposed area between the

lapels of the jacket. The standardized ironing pattern of a man's shirt habitually returns the shirt to a flat, rectangular shape which fits economically into orthogonal systems of storage – at the site of manufacture, the factory-pressed shirt is stacked and packed into rectangular cartons which are loaded as cubic volume onto trucks and transported to retail space where the shirt's rectangular form is reinforced in orthogonal display cases and then, after purchase, sustained in the home on closet shelves or in dresser drawers, and finally, on trips away from

home, in suitcases. The shirt is disciplined at every stage to conform to an unspoken social contract.

When worn, the residue of the orthogonal logic of efficiency is registered on the surface of the body. The parallel creases and crisp, square corners of a clean, pressed shirt have become sought after emblems of refinement. The by-product of efficiency has become a new object of its desire.

But what if the task of ironing would free itself from the

aesthetics of efficiency altogether? Perhaps the effects of ironing could more aptly represent the postindustrial body by trading the image of the functional for that of the dysfunctional.

The fold has been a useful metaphor for the discourse of post-structuralist architecture, because it consolidates ambiguities, such as surface and structure, figure and

organization. One of the prime attributes of the fold is that it is non-representational. The fold also implies reversibility – if something can be folded, it can be unfolded and refolded.

The crease is a more compelling metaphor because it presents a resistance to transformation. The crease has a longer memory than the fold and it has representational value, in the nature of an inscription. The crease is harder to get out. Its traces guide their continual confirmation – until a new order is inscribed, with the illusion of permanence.

Summary

InFormation

Folding in Architecture

Joachim Krause in conversation with
Nikolaus Kuhnert and Angelika Schnell
p. 12

ARCH⁺: Architectural Design's special issue on 'Folding in Architecture' provoked a strong interest in the fold among architects. For the last three years, magazines, symposiums and students have been inundated with architecture that is literally 'folded'. This is unsettling, because at first glance, it appears to be based on a trend instigated primarily by American architects who, having few if any opportunities to build, are not necessarily concerned with the social, ethical or political aspects of the profession. This common European prejudice against the North American 'show(wo)men' should not, however, obstruct one's view of the fact that the idea of folding has not been taken up without reason. The debate is based largely on Gilles Deleuze's book 'The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque.' The concept which Deleuze develops does not present folding as a mere formal construct. Even independent of Deleuze, folding seems to be more a spatial problem than a formal one, since it implies a breakdown of interior and exterior. The interior is presented as exterior, and vice versa.

Joachim Krause: The real question is: What relevance does the idea of the fold have in architecture? It provides a model for theories of metamorphosis and 'Bekleidung' (Gottfried Semper). Folds are maneuverable borders which separate an interior from the exterior, yet also create an interior within the exterior and an exterior within the interior. Considered abstractly, it is only the type of bend - concave or convex - that determines inside and outside, meaning the gender of the space. In this unfixed state, the fold provides a model for metamorphosis. Transformation - even temporary transformation - requires veils or costumes. For example, the plastic covering used for practical reasons on buildings that are being restored or renovated has a strong aesthetic appeal which finished buildings lack. This stems from the culturally deep-rooted motif of metamorphosis which is unconsciously signaled by the folds of clothing. The extraordinary effect of Christo's Reichstag wrapping derives from this: at the right moment, he gave the aesthetic signal of a transformation actually taking place.

The fold refers to the theory of architecture as a third skin - after the first skin (immediate) and the second skin (clothing)?

In contrast to the fold in clothing, the idea of the fold in architecture is concerned not only with the fall of the fold, but rather it points towards the possibility of spatial formation and transformation of (curved) surface areas through movement. These movements are a kind of energy supply, an input which results in distortion. The distortion has set stages and the stages, set properties. The first distortion, due to energy supply, is a kind of wave form. The second distortion, the result of an even higher energy supply is

the crease, an interesting transitional stage. The third is a break. Conceived as repeated sequences of foldings, the fold as a border takes on the character of an interim or transitional zone - a zone of overlapping and condensed information. This information defines itself as a way or process of directional changes. Once unfolded, this information is preserved only if the folds are marked by creases. Those creases turn the changing continuum into a structure with discrete elements. This change from continuous to discontinuous is the most interesting moment - it is described above as the second distortion, the crease. It is here that something essential becomes clear: the metamorphic potential of the fold. Because the fold is more than sheer surface, it creates space and provides information. There are two things to consider at this point: the external influence (energy supply), and the behavior of a system (dress, paper, tent, umbrella etc.) which will distort in a set way. For example, an umbrella has two states: closed, whereby the fabric is densely folded and made up of discrete parts, and open, whereby the fabric is unfolded and appears as a continuum. However, even when the umbrella is open, the discrete parts are discernable in the form of the frame, since the frame marks (informs) the fabric with the exact spacing of the creases. In other words, the character of the fold is that it protects this information. Unfolding means that the continuum is established again, yet the information is still preserved. The same is also true of a creased piece of paper: the energy supply and specific distances result in a certain static behavior, meaning, the piece of paper is informed - it is stable. Because something undifferentiated is transformed into something differentiated, a folding truss is always the carrier and container of information. Furthermore, foldings in these stage are always straight, finite and discrete. A jump in the continuum, which makes it possible to bring something from a small scale into a larger one, without changing the character of the information. Once in the third stage it is no longer possible to restore the continuum.

The transformations of the fold undermine the classical oppositions - figure/ground, inside/outside etc. - which still dominate architecture. These transformations produce ambiguous ways of reading, because they point towards the image of metamorphosis and at the same time metamorphose themselves. They produce zones of superimposition. This would mean that the idea of folding is much more universal and does not necessarily imply literal folding. The facades of Herzog & de Meuron have such zones of superimposition and cannot be described as sharply demarcated borders. Light modulation and jumps in scale produce different zones of perception which partly begin even before the building. They are information, and have an abstract as well as a sensual quality.

If the conventional separation of information from information carrier - represented through classical oppositions - is abolished or relativized, for instance with the fold, then a transitional zone emerges which can be described as a dissociated field between visual information and information of other

kinds, for instance tactile information. That often depends on the question of light-absorption or reflection. If you touch a wall, you know where the border is. But this is not necessarily true with visual perception. Often patterns create an effect whereby they seem to lie on another plane. That is especially true of translucent materials. Multiple zones of visual perception emerge. When interestingly handled, these zones produce a kind of informational depth and the possibility of activating the surface beyond the given form.

There are also examples of formal disjunction - often with baroque facades. For example, in the Altstädter Ring in Prague there once stood a huge medieval city hall which was damaged during the war and later removed. Today the space is empty. In the 18th century, a church was built about 10 meters away from the city hall, facing one of its sides (St. Niklas, Kilian Ignaz Dietzenhofer). A very small alley divided the main view of the church and side view of the city hall. Originally, one could see the facade of the church frontally from a maximal distance of 10 meters or at an angle. Today the facade can be seen from the entire space where the city hall once stood. This creates an interesting effect. From a distance, almost the entire length of the space, the facade appears relatively boring and flat. A box-shaped, white plastered building with relief-like columns in front of the facade and black stone sculptures. But coming closer to the facade, it begins to vibrate, becomes dynamic. The white columns and the black figures contract into complex configurations, because suddenly only fragments, sections or 'assemblages' of actually separate parts are perceptible. Standing directly in front of it, the facade is no longer recognizable as a compositional whole. In this case, the different zones of information are formed in front of the building.

The anamorphic experience of mannerism was realized architecturally for the first time in the Baroque. The rigidity of perspective is dissolved through movement. Displacements away from the axis of view began because of the realization that a facade or image could be seen from relatively close up or at a sharp angle. In other words, it became apparent that axial and frontal view was not the only one possible and that other perspectives and qualities had to be considered. Of course, these first movement phenomena were realized within the perspectival world view. It has therefore been known for a long time that facades could create zones, namely dense zones of information, through the use of relief-like and sculptural elements. Facades can be seen as pictorial or sculptural. Furthermore, structural transformations or inversions are decisive when it comes to ambiguities. A glove is turned inside out, but the elements remain the same: topologically, it is a unit. The arcades in Bologna, for example, were developed through inversion. They developed out of the crossing and bending passages of the many cloisters there. These interior atriums were inverted outward, producing the arcade system that distinguishes Bologna today. This inverted folding process from inside to outside and its systemization into an urban communication