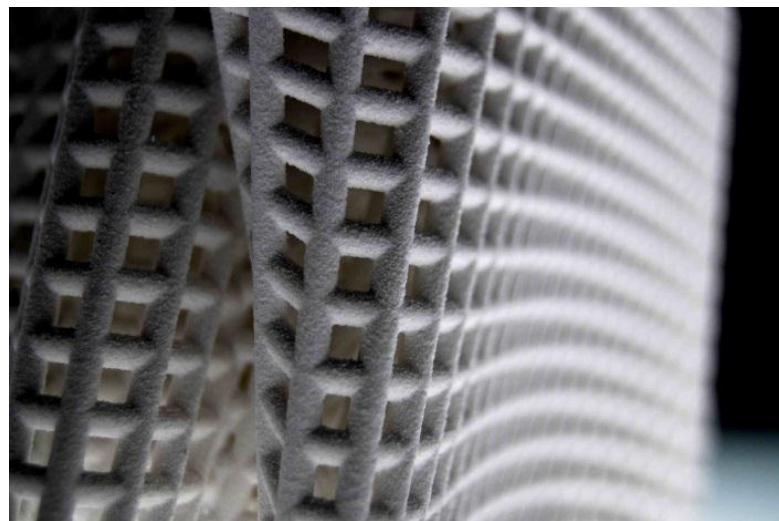


Folding in Theory and Prose
Something's of Beauty by Andrew and Rachel

Though very different in terms of representation, we find very similar sculptural concepts articulated within each piece. Both utilize the concept of folding. Rachel's work produced folds by chance, Andrew's by design. Never-the-less, the similarities occur within the folds, in the absence of matter, in the shadowy spaces of our individual dreams. These spaces are a place of revelry and point to the origin of our projections as we find our self assimilated into the context of each event. These stories incite emotional responses that bias our judgments towards them as both works of art and ultimately as works of beauty. Both are embodied in our bones and flesh and are populated by the invisible people that inhabit in our dreams. Though one is highly abstract, plastic and prototypical, the other is highly figurative unique, and irreproducible. Andrew's piece, because it is hand-held, an artifact, is experienced as an object, and felt by the senses as a product of the imagination. Rachel's piece, on the other hand, is life-size, statuesque, experienced from the inside, walked around, sat next to and viewed from afar. In both cases, the stories they evoke reside in the imagination, in the daydream of ideas and the sculpting of mental prose.

I am captivated by Andrew's object of beauty, the ingenuity, the apparent singularity. The torsional complexity allows the surfaces to be dusted with a gradient bending light. The folds, so brilliantly designed, seem natural. Not like the folded wing of a nesting bird, but like the dense compaction of matter into decay as the grid, so seamless, pure



and contorted, compressed into a distorted cube, is shattered then hacked apart. I imagine this distinctive object could be a piece of architecture. I walk through its striated corridors and brush my hand across its perfectly painted white walls. The forest of twisted grid, steel and glass, cast endless shadows within the hallways of my mind. The spaces are intimate yet intricate and grand, warped and contorted yet, interesting and exciting. Spent light caressing dark recesses of place as space convulses in upon itself. I become the architecture, its complicated patterns, its



twisted undulating net, its folded ribbon of flesh and the unfamiliar texture of its chalky dry surface. But this beautiful folded form seems more brutalized, manipulated and violated as random sharp shapes slice through them protruding from some internal explosion. In some places there is destruction, places where the mesh

is crushed and broken. There is a violence in the fragility of this object, its purity tainted by unseen forces, by chaos and tension.

In Rachel's piece, I also saw fragility - the fragility of dreams. I watched intently the folds of the gentlemen's collar, cuffs unfurled and casually resting on the bench, the light imperceptible within the shadows of his folds. And like in Andrew's piece, I was transfixed by the rolling, frolicking manner of the creases



exerting themselves upon the air, allowing the wind, and my eyes, to softly caress each undulation. I imagined the woman resting in the grass to be deft and aloof, her white skirt folded across the lawn, golden hair and raven black eyes, deep, like Lingus' fathomless ocean, reflecting the velvety red petals tersely scattered upon the ground. I imagined the skin of her neck tickled by the pleat of her dress, by the unfolding of fabric around her waste, the tautness across her chest. Her lips, I imagined, were pursed, and like for Lingus, adorned with the phenomenal, "for the sphere of lucidity, an eye, a mind", with no reason for being other than for the sake of breathing... and for kissing. Their ultimate function flawlessly existing for their own sake... for the sake of kissing. Kissing for beauties sake.

I imagined this unmoving scene with growing envy. It would be nice to be this handsome couple perhaps tired and spent from making love. I wished to be these people, to slip on their clothes and take their place in this moment, in this unfolding of time, in this being without sound. I found myself coveting this woman - wanting her in my arms and running my fingers through her



fold, the deep ivory of her imagined skin, and the golden curls of her hair. And, for a moment, I felt ashamed, as if reading poetry for the first time. I averted my gaze, briefly, but immediately collapsed back into the glow of those invisible eyes, and I realized this affair was unforeseen and perhaps not what it seems. Perhaps these lovers were strangers, or perhaps the scene was merely a

memorial for murder.

Like Scarry, enthralled by the shape and flowing of palm leaves and striped light, I too am fascinated by ribbons, by the folding and shimmering of folded bows, and the idea of the folding of time as past and future converge on the present. In that convergence, there exists a threshold, and at that threshold lies a relationship between this and that, self and other. It is a silent empty state of potentiality. A state of wonder and of romance, the state of becoming into this world.

So is the way of folding architecture. These creations are reminiscent of the organic properties of folding in nature; however, the synthetic fold is not the same as the accidental fold we find in the environment. Accidental folds are unintentionally beautiful. The manufactured fold leads us to believe in fabricated stories; it lies to us, and perhaps is the same reason Nietzsche, in a Dionysian dream, was so distrusting of science, finding it so “problematic” and “dubious”. Perhaps, Scarry’s sense of ethics applies across these sublime domains, from object to art, as it is questionable whether deceit, even for the noblest reasons, can be just. The fabricated folds remind us we must be wary of science; though it too can be beautiful, it is representational, its symbols only simulations of what they attempt to describe.

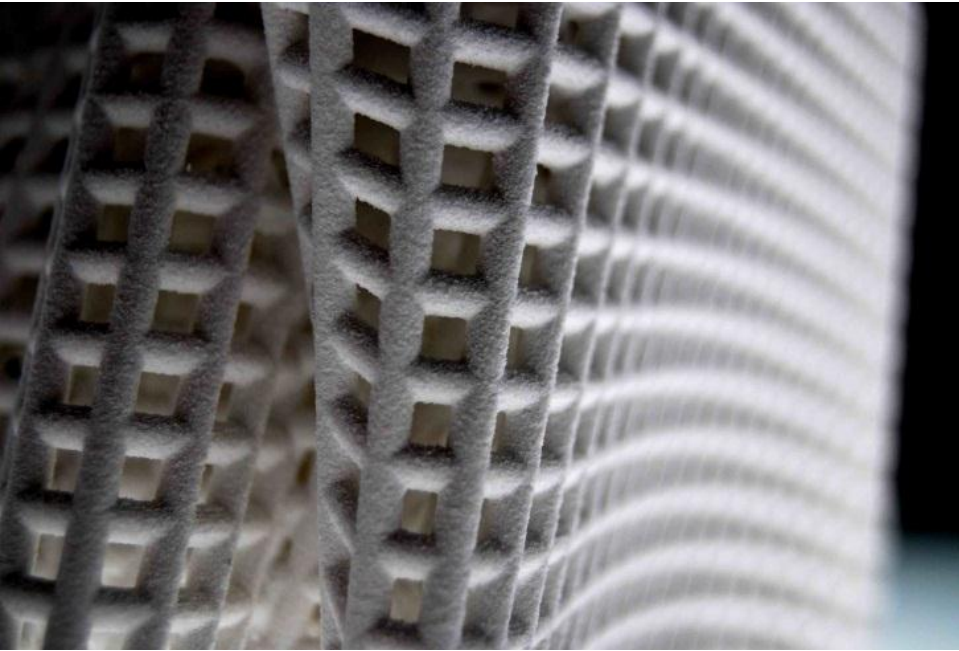
Folding in architecture is not a new concept as it indicates an advancement of modern parametric modeling that allows us to envision, replicate, and manipulate complex three-dimensional shapes and forms. Greg Lynn and Peter Eisenman were seminal leaders in the folded architecture of the 1990’s as the digital age moved architecture from orthographic to curvilinear, from gridded to topographic, and ultimately ushered in the IT revolution of the new millennium. This new tool allows us to model the complex nonlinear dynamics of folded space and time and illustrate how continuous surfaces can fold back upon themselves in a chaotic and sometimes catastrophic manner. The modeling seems more like a technique than a new strategy, exploiting new technologies to simulate real life shapes - turbulent waves, protein chains, and the wind. An

analogy might be the folding of an envelope, like Liebskind's Jewish Museum or Gehry's museum in Bilbao, the stretching and twisting of surfaces to enclose and to manipulate space. It is within this enclosure, within the undulating solids and shadowing voids that dreams manifest as projections of our fear and desire.

On-the-other-hand, we are marveled by the architectonics and structural implications of manufactured folds. They are prototypical, reproducible and preponderant. We are also astonished by the aesthetics of these synthetic shapes. It is easy to imagine touching the soft curves, of stretching our bodies out upon them. They are metaphoric for large deformations in the earth, for the topographic mapping of terrain, and the retrograde trajectory of the planets in motion. We tend to live in a world of endless undulation. Highways seem to unfold before us; our neighborhoods fold in upon each other, and our cities fold in upon themselves.

In terms of beauty, folds may be prerequisites for adoration and suspense, for seduction and rejection. Again, Scarry provides us with a key. She states that beauty incites, "even requires, the act of replication". What more is a fold than a replication, a doubling of the original, a repetitive tuck? Even in the changing of scale, there is duplication. Not only does beauty want to replicate itself, a folding object desires to be folded. It is a natural law of attraction. There is no end to this folding, as it is the multiplicity of concurrent surfaces. Things that fold are likely to unfold. Time moves slower in this act of convolution, we await the final object to reveal itself, when, in fact, it is there all along nestled in the fractal furrow of the folds.

However, this is not a new philosophy either. Gilles Deleuze traces the fold back to the Baroque period, and to the philosophy of Leibniz, stating that “the Baroque differentiates its folds in two ways, by moving along two infinities, as if infinity were composed of two stages: the pleats of



matter, and the folds of the soul”, one floor below and one above through God, and likens each stage to a labyrinth, the circuitous folding in multiples stretched out indefinitely. This eternal nature of the fold, as if it were one portion of an endless ribbon, inspires our sublime and infinite imagination.

The End