

COMPRESSED COMPLEXITY

Density - Diversity – Complexity - Unity

PART 2: ACHIEVING ELEGANCE

We continue to develop the designs for complex mixed use towers in Istanbul.

The **elegance** we are talking about is not the elegance of minimalism. Minimalist elegance thrives on simplicity. The elegance we are promoting here instead thrives on complexity. Elegance in our terms achieves a visual reduction of an underlying complexity that is thereby sublated rather than eliminated. ***Elegance articulates complexity.***

An elegant building or urban design should therefore be able to manage considerable complexity without descending into disorder.

As ordered complexity the elegant composition is ***highly differentiated***, yet this differentiation is rule-governed. It is based on a systematic set of *lawful* correlations that are defined between the differentiated elements and subsystems. These correlations integrate and (re-)establish a ***visible coherence and unity*** across the differentiated system.¹

The primary argument here is that elegance understood in this way ensures the legibility of a complex formation and facilitates orientation within a complex arrangement.

It is the sense of ***law-governed complexity*** that assimilates this work to the forms and spaces we perceive in organic as well as in inorganic ***natural systems***, where all forms are the result of lawfully interacting forces. Just like natural systems, elegant compositions are so highly integrated that they cannot be easily decomposed into independent subsystems – a major point of difference in comparison with the modern design paradigm of clear separation of functional subsystems. In fact the exploitation of natural forms like landscape formations or organic morphologies as a source domain for analogical transference into architecture makes a constructive contribution to the development of this new paradigm and language of architecture.

Elegant compositions or complexes are highly integrated formal/spatial systems that look like those highly integrated natural systems where all forms are the result of the lawful interaction of physical forces or like organic system where the forms result from a similar play of forces selected and integrated in adaptation to performance requirements. Such elegant compositions resist decomposition, just like their natural models.

A specific aspect of this overall lawful and integrated nature of elegance is the capacity of elegant compositions to adapt to complex urban contexts. ***Adaptive capacity*** or adaptation is another key ambition of the contemporary avant-garde trend that might suggest comparison

with natural organic systems. An architectural system that has an enhanced capacity to adapt to its environment will result in an intricate artifact-context ensemble that has sublated initial contradictions into a new complex synthesis that further enhances the overall sense of sophisticated elegance.

Parametric Interarticulation

Elegant inter-articulation is to be achieved with respect to the composition of the four subsystems of the tower: accommodation, navigation, stabilization and **external envelope**. Each of the subsystems should inflect and be inflected by the other two subsystems. This means building up an elaborated design complexity. This aspect of the design process should be made explicit. This might result in a complex parametric model (with scripted functions) where the variations of relevant parameters are correlated across subsystems. With respect to the context the most important task is to devise an effective mode of **interfacing the tower with the ground-plane**. Although programme, scale, massing, orientation, and formal affiliations are all relevant factors concerning the successful contextual embedding of the project, we would like to be especially inventive in the way in which *the tower lands and manipulates the ground-plane*.

INITIAL SEMESTER FOCUS:

Façade envelope filtering internal complexity and interfacing with ground-surface.

The assumption is that the internal complexity of the mixed use towers needs to be **selectively articulated** on the exterior of the building. The façade may act as a **smoothing agent** that can – to a certain extent – unify the different programme spaces without altogether obliterating the underlying differentiation. The façade will thus **reduce complexity** and **clarify** the expression of the underlying complex organisation of the interior. In the end the façade itself will be a very elegant surface. The navigation space/system should also shine through (without being made a discrete element plugged onto the outside in the manner of Richard Rogers). The façade - in connection with the navigation space - will also be the primary agent to achieve a strong and elegant mode of interfacing with the ground-surface.

End.