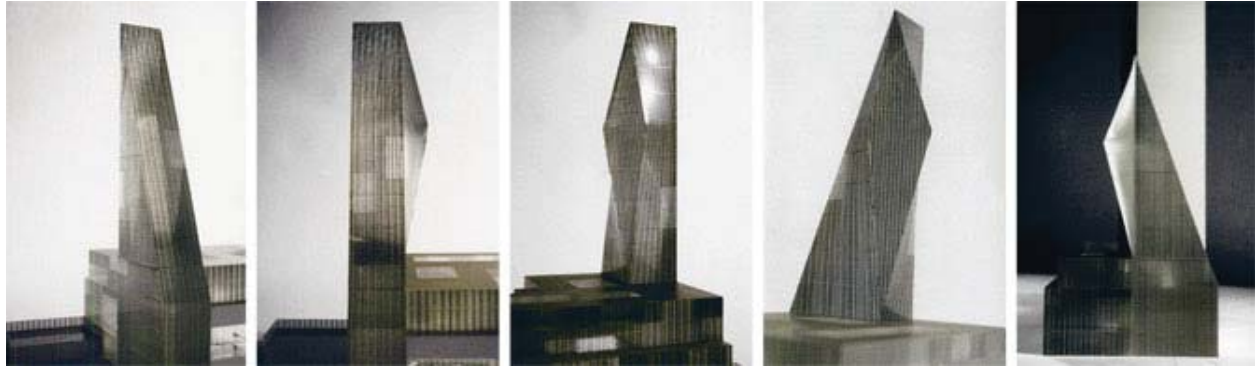


# ARC2014: Design Studio 4 – Comprehensive Building Project Winter 2023

Instructor: Christopher Cornecelli



Herzog & de Meuron, Competition for the Expansion of the MoMA, 1997.

## Poor Form

"Its form remains ambiguous, indeterminable, unknowable as an entity"

Richard Serra on the perception of his sculpture *St. John's Rotary Arc*.

The benefits of low-carbon mass-timber construction are by now thoroughly enumerated and widely accepted. Presently, we find ourselves caught within the gravitational pull of these new/old spatial structures. We therefore have the opportunity, before we reach the CLT event horizon, to interrogate the formal and material consequences of this tectonic-aesthetic inevitability. Mass timber's endlessly repeatable assemblies of prefabricated posts, beams, and slabs, share much in common with Koolhaas's Typical Plan: "It is zero-degree architecture, architecture stripped of all traces of uniqueness and specificity...the plan without qualities." It is the sculpture of Sol LeWitt writ large. The Typical Plan (read as: mass timber construction), asserts orthogonality at all costs and is 'practically immune to local variation.' Mass timber construction, coupled with Circular Economy's implicit pressure towards the standardization of parts for maximum reusability, exert an overwhelming force towards the proliferation of *the generic*.

In response, the ambition of this studio is to develop design proposals that resist the legibility of timber's totalizing tectonic, in order to search for new formal and spatial paradigms beyond the limits of the frame - to produce an architecture of the Indeterminate Figure. Polymorphic in its reception, the Indeterminate Figure generates an aberrant multiplicity of readings, privileging experience over Gestalt, temporal over instantaneous. The indeterminate has the capacity to translate the generic into the generative, and to reimagine mass timber's typical static assemblies as dynamic fields of effect.