

# Guilty (?) Pleasure

Exploring and  
Challenging the  
Role of Ornament  
in Contemporary  
Architecture

Annie Axelsson  
Chalmers School of Architecture  
Examiner: Emilio Brandao  
Supervisor: Joaquim Tarraso

*Is ornament only a  
pleasure for those  
who do not know  
better?*

*Or for those, like me,  
who know that they  
should know better?*

*Or is it simply,  
just a pleasure?*

**Guilty (?) Pleasure**

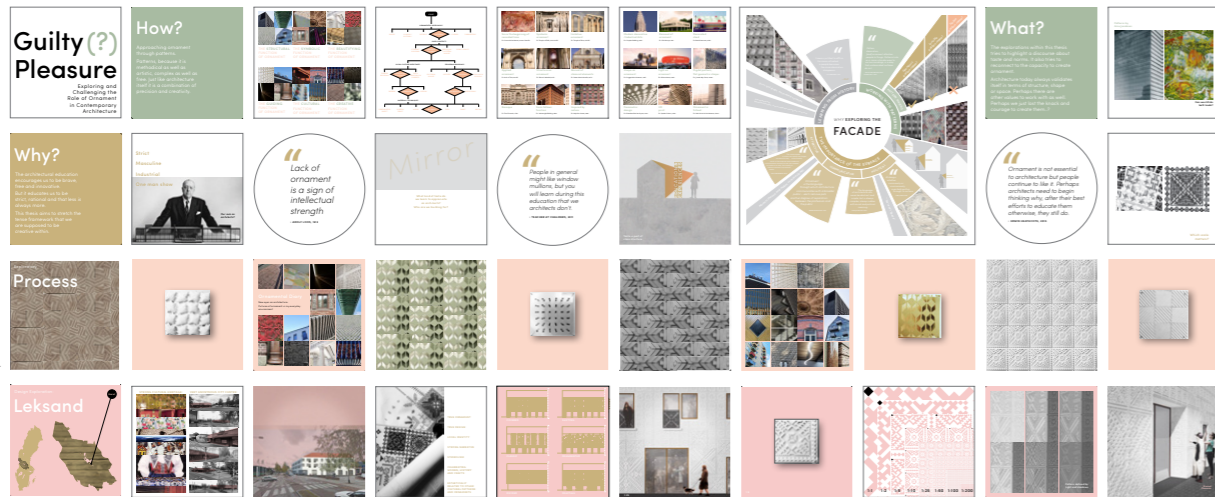
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Architecture



**CHALMERS**

Annie Axelsson, 2016  
Master Thesis in Architecture  
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Examiner: Emilio Brandao  
Supervisor: Joaquim Tarraso



Guilty (?) Pleasure  
- Exploring and Challenging the Role of  
Ornament in Contemporary Architecture

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## 0.1

### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore what ornament is within architecture today and to raise a discussion about taste and architectural norms. This discussion is important in our diverse society because all architecture possesses cultural and social values that we, as architects and designers, need to be aware of and reflect upon.

The plan has been to explore what ornament can be and how it can be used, both as a design tool and as a design outcome. My personal reasons for doing this has been to encourage my own creativity, merge my interests in architecture and graphic design and widen my own perception of architecture.

In addition to literature studies and research I have tried to work actively with practicing and finding different process methods. I have aimed to invert my process, starting from ornament and see where it takes me.

The design exploration has been a central building in Leksands Noret. Leksand, located in the heart of Dalarna, is famous for its vivid cultural heritage but at the chosen site there is today an anonymous one storey block that could be placed wherever. Designing a new building for this site, focusing on the facade, has been the case for exploring how ornament could be used within an architectural project.

The result is an illustrated process and a conceptual design proposal with focus on the influence of ornament and aesthetics. Hopefully this will encourage a discussion about taste and architectural norms and point at a new, more permissive, entry to architecture.





1.

## INTRODUCTION

## 1.1

### PURPOSE/EXPLORATION

The purpose of my thesis is to be an exercise in process, an experiment in mixing my interests in architecture and graphic design and most of all an exploration and discussion about ornament, taste and architectural norms.

The architectural education encourages us students to be brave, free and innovative. But it educates us to be strict, rational and that less *is* always more. This thesis aims to stretch the tense framework that we are supposed to be creative within.

## 1.2

### MAIN QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

What is the role of ornament within architecture today?

How can an architectural project be developed with ornament in focus?



*The architectural education encourages us students to be brave, free and innovative. But it educates us to be strict, rational and that less is always more. This thesis aims to stretch the tense framework that we are supposed to be creative within.*

## 1.3

### BACKGROUND

Looking into it, ornament is a hot topic. It has been frequently discussed over the last 100 years and is still highly debated. How can something, seeming so harmless, that has been discussed within architecture for more than a 100 years still be so difficult to approach? What is it with ornament and that appears to be so provocative?

A lot of the modernistic ideals that have been ruling during the 20th century are still present in Swedish architecture and design. During my exchange year at the design program at HDK questions about taste, norms and modernistic standards were constantly discussed and highlighted in a way that was totally new to me af-

ter four years at Chalmers Architecture. This apparent difference between these related educations sparked my interest. Of course the modernistic standards have been, and are being, questioned by different movements over the years but I've been missing the contemporary discussion during my years at architecture school. What is ornament today? What does it mean, how do we use it and what can we gain from using ornament as a tool in our projects?

1.4

METHOD

My main method has been Research by Design. I have tried to work creatively, exploring what ornament could be and how you could develop an architectural design project with ornament in focus.

In the theoretical part of the project, my method has been Research on Design. I have been using my research as a base and a stepping stone for the design exploration, but most importantly as a base for the over all discussion that I am trying to highlight with this thesis.

As an important process method and as a red thread throughout my project I have been keeping two different diaries. One Process Diary where I have been concluding each day with a sketch and one Ornamental Diary where I have been taking pictures of ornament in my everyday environment.

1.5

THEORY

An important theoretical starting point for my project is Adolf Loos' essay Ornament and Crime from 1913. It was the text that first woke my interest in ornament, and made me recognize that similar norms remain in architecture today.

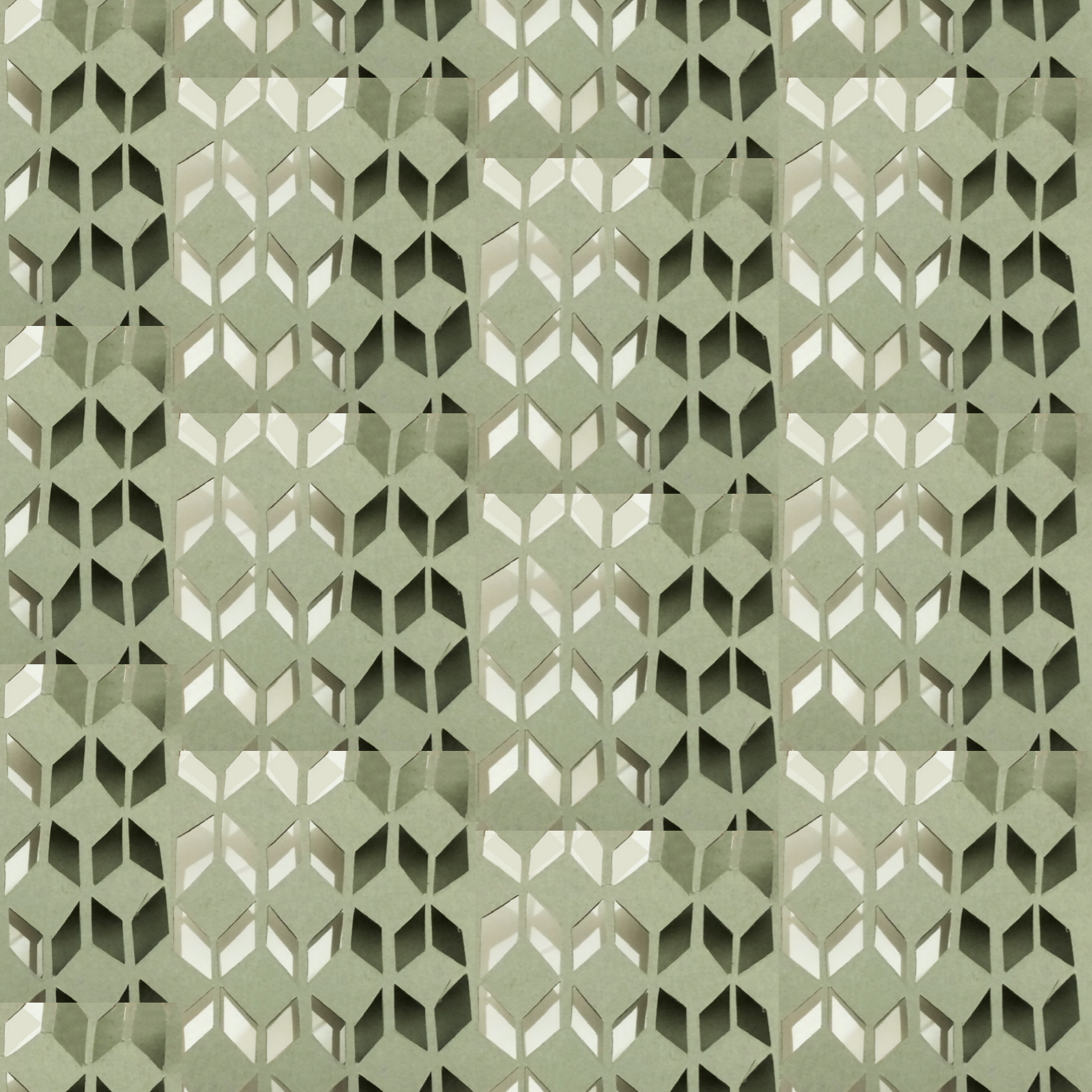
I have also been reading literature and articles by other, more contemporary, architects such as Edwin Heathcote and Sam Jacob, and by design theorists such as Penny Sparke. Their views and analyses of ornament and it's role within architecture and design in western culture has been important for the development of this project.

”

*Lack of  
ornament  
is a sign of  
intellectual  
strength*

- ADOLF LOOS, 1913





2.

ANALYSIS/THEORY

## 2.1

### WHAT IS ORNAMENT?



*Something that is primarily added or created to beautify the appearance of something else, as an integrated part of the whole.*

### 2.1.1

#### DEFINING ORNAMENT

The common understanding of ornament seems to be something with no other function than to beautify something else. Oxford Dictionary describes it as *a thing used or serving to make something look more attractive but usually having no practical purpose*. But, looking into it, defining ornament seems to be way more complex than that and there seems to be almost as many definitions as there are architects.

My own simplified definition of ornament within this thesis is *something that is primarily added or created to beautify the appearance of something else, as an integrated part of the whole*. With this definition I see it as all physical parts of architecture can be, or can be seen as, ornament. My aim with this thesis is to widen the concept of what ornament is. As I see it, architects make ornamental decisions all the time, from the use of materials, to the placement of windows and the color of details. Decisions with primarily a beautifying purpose, but often also with a practical, communicating or symbolic intent.

I believe the difference between ornament and decoration is easiest explained by seeing decoration as e.g. Christmas decorations, something that is added to an already finished object. Unlike ornament that is an intended and integrated part of the whole.

2.1.2

SOME REFERENCES FROM HISTORY

Ornament and decoration has been present in civilizations since the beginning of recorded history. According to several researchers (McNicholas, 2006) the urge to create ornament is inherent in us as human beings. Thus, the history of different styles of and approaches to ornament around the world is, to say the least, extensive.

To summarize this vast variety of expressions in just a few pages is not possible. I have chosen to illustrate a few examples of ornament from different times and places through history, in order to create at least a small overview of the evolution of ornament in western culture.



F.1

Since the Beginning of Recorded Time

EX. Cueva de las Manos, 11000–7500 BC



F.2

Symbolic Ornament

EX. Temple of Edfu, 200–50 BC



F.3

Imitative Ornament

EX. Temple of Zeus, 470 BC



F.4

Applied Ornament

EX. Arch of Titus, 80 AD



F.5

Structure as Ornament

EX. Reims Cathedral, 1275



F.6

Revival of Classical Elements

EX. Santa Maria Novella, 1470



F.7

Baroque

EX. Trevi Fountain, 1762



F.8

Form follows Function

EX. Wainwright Building, 1890



F.9

Inspired by Nature

EX. Majolica House, 1998



### Modern Decorative /Industrial Arts

EX. Chrysler Building, 1930

F.10



### Removal of Ornament

EX. Villa Savoye, 1931

F.11



### Decorated Shed

EX. Best Showroom, 1978

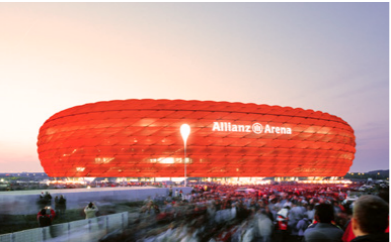
F.12



### Shape as Ornament

EX. Guggenheim Museum, 1997

F.13



### Light as Ornament

EX. Allianz Arena, 2005

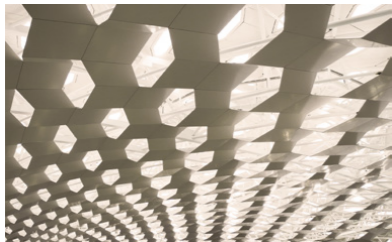
F.14



### Digital Pattern on Flat Geometric Shape

EX. J Lewis dep. Store, 2008

F.15



### Parametric Design

EX. Shenzhen Bao'an Airport, 2013

F.16



### 3D Print

EX. Quake Column, 2014

F.17



### Ornament in School

EX. Yale School of Arch, 2014–

F.18

## 2.1.3

### ORNAMENT TODAY

Ornament, as architecture in itself, originates from history. Does that mean ornament belongs in history? The revival of ornament in several recent architectural projects indicates that this is not the case. Writing architects claim that ornament, after almost a century in absence, has now returned to the scene of architecture (Pell, 2010). Grahn (2016, October) wrote in the Swedish architecture magazine *Arkitektur* that there seems to be a new wave of liberation coming. The suggested reason for this return of ornament varies. From the possibility's of new technology to the creative joy of creating it.

Yet, haven't people been saying that ornament is back since the postmodern movement 40 years ago. Is ornament really back? Has it ever been gone? And why does it still seem to be such a dividing and sensitive question?

Maybe one answer is to find in the curricula, where ornament is obviously back, at least in some schools. At Aalto University (2011) they have a studio called *Ornament In Architecture* which they describe like this: "It's time to bring ornamentation back to the architectural discourse. The forgotten - or even forbidden subject - can offer new ways in creating new architecture."

Maybe ornament being on the curricula is the proof that ornament is actually back, or at least that it will be?

FUNCTIONS OF ORNAMENT

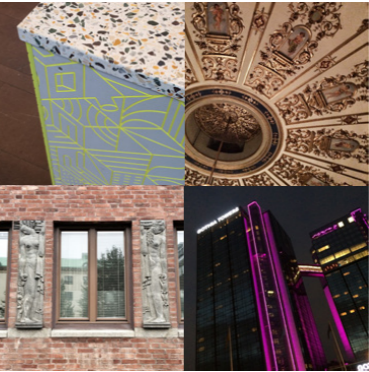
Ornament is said to be “a thing used or serving to make something look more attractive but usually having no practical purpose” (Oxford Dictionaries).

Does this mean that ornament doesn’t have a function? Except beautifying, which doesn’t count as a function? What I would like to claim in this thesis is that it does count. And that ornament possesses more functions beyond beautifying.

In this chapter I will list and discuss in short some of the functions that I found to be the most important or interesting ones.



THE STRUCTURAL  
FUNCTION  
OF ORNAMENT



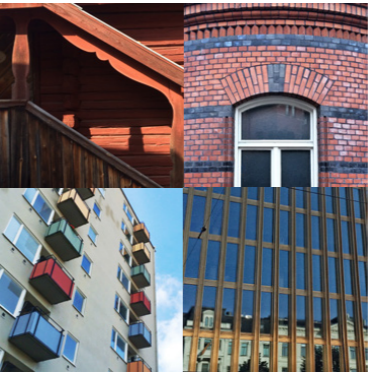
THE SYMBOLIC  
FUNCTION  
OF ORNAMENT



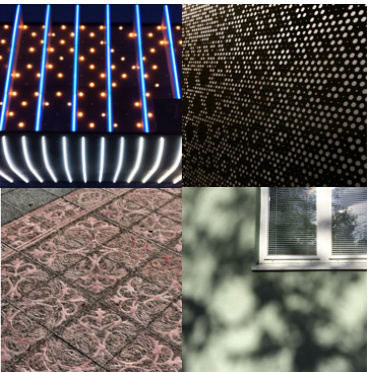
THE BEAUTIFYING  
FUNCTION  
OF ORNAMENT



THE GUIDING  
FUNCTION  
OF ORNAMENT



THE CULTURAL  
FUNCTION  
OF ORNAMENT



THE CREATIVE  
FUNCTION  
OF ORNAMENT



### 2.2.1

#### THE PRACTICAL/STRUCTURAL FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

Construction elements, structural elements, load bearing systems and so on could all also be seen as and used as ornamental elements. Historically structure and ornament was not separated parts and with parametric design and new technology this synergy is again becoming more visible (Pell, 2010).

Jacques Herzog (El Croquis, 2006) describes it like this: *“When ornament and structure become a single thing, strangely enough the result is a new feeling of freedom. Suddenly, you no longer need to explain or apologize for this or that decorative detail.”*

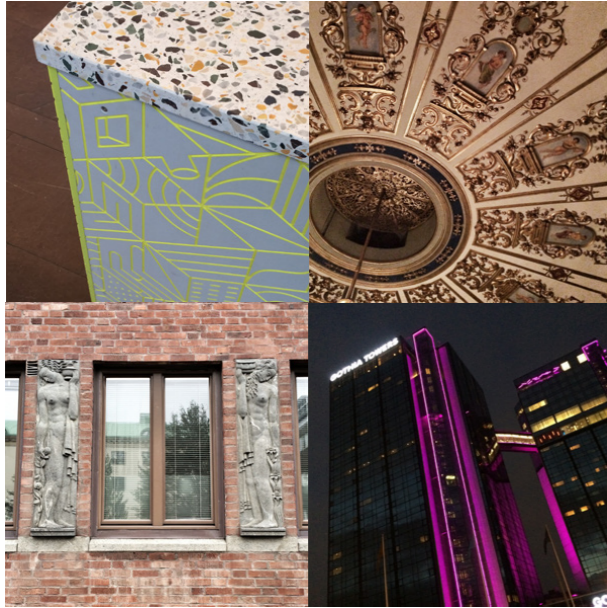


### 2.2.2

#### THE GUIDING FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

Signs, text, contrast markings: Ornament can guide people to buildings, and through buildings. It can help us find entrances and important functions and it can help us to not knock our head in glass doors or tripping in staircases.

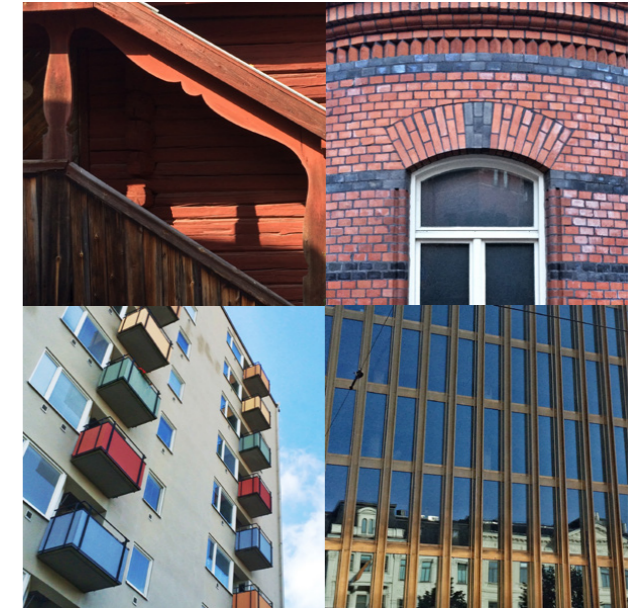
According to Robert Jensen (McNicholas, 2006) ornament also functions as a scale device. It gives people visual references against which they measure themselves, a way not to feel overpowered.



### 2.2.3

#### THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

Aesthetic solutions may symbolize structure, religion, sustainability, home, power or anything else. Historically ornament has been a way to show social value, order, status and hierarchies (Picon, 2013) and it has been a question about luxury (Heathcote, 2015). In modernistic aesthetics though, symbolics were intentionally kept to a minimum (Sparke, 2010). But still, we tend to see aesthetic expressions as symbolic in different ways. No built environments or aesthetic expressions are neutral or free from valuation (Andersson, 2015). Perhaps it is minimalism that symbolizes luxury and status in western culture today.



### 2.2.4

#### THE CULTURAL/TRADITIONAL FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

Through its historic role, ornament has a clear connection cultural heritage, and is highly associated with local traditions.

According to Thomas Hellquist (Kadmark, 2011) the ornament emerges from a need to tell a story and create references also to the world outside of architecture in order for people to recognize and understand what they see.

It is also an important way to show context and identity according to Colletti (2009): *“Ornament is a very strong semantic entity to define identity, and what I disagree with [in] modernism, with the international style, is that it wasn’t contextual.”*

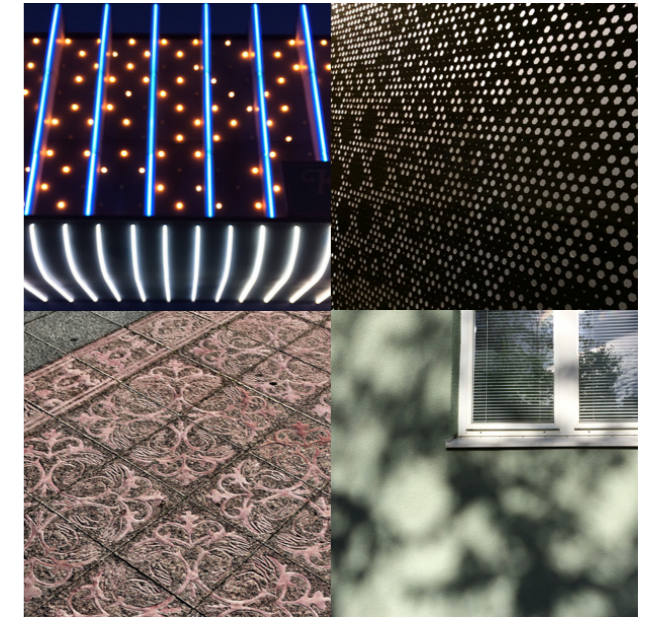


### 2.2.5

#### THE BEAUTIFYING FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

The beautifying function is probably the most well known and discussed function of ornament. I think Heathcote say it well in *Architectural Review* (2015): *“Ornament is not essential to architecture but people continue to like it.”*

According to McNicholas (2006) ornament is born from the intersection between art and structure. That sounds just like architecture itself to me.



### 2.2.6

#### THE CREATIVE FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

Ornament can be a way to inspire and trigger imagination (McNicholas, 2006). Within a creative process it may function as a design tool, and it can be joyful and playful to create.

Jacques Herzog (2006) means that ornament has helped them to overcome the obstacle of creating form, and that starting in the other end - from ornament - can be a way to help you find the form. *“The use of ornamentation allows us to avoid looking for form as such: form, whether geometrical or organic, just comes about, via the ornament.”*

## 2.3

### WHO ARE WE BUILDING FOR?



## 2.3.1

### TASTE

Taste is, among other things, something that is part of class structure. The famous French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu once did a study where he showed photographs of a sunset and a stone to different people. It turned out that academics thought the stone was the most beautiful, while the rest preferred the sunset. According to Bourdieu this shows that the sunset is the natural choice, but that academics have learned to see it as consumed and trivial. Thus, Bourdieu considers taste as a product determined by our level of cultural education and our career (Kadmark, 2011).

Unfortunately architects do not represent society as a whole in any great extent. According to recent polls by SCB, Statistics Sweden, 87 percent of new architecture students in Sweden have parents that studied at the university, that's the highest percentage among educations in Sweden (arkitekten, 2016, October). Architectural students are representing a small part of the society from the very beginning, and during the education, as is of course the case in many educations, we become more and more uniform.

According to Kadmark (2011), the taste of architects is also more similar across national borders than others, who's taste generally is more connected to the local culture. A truly "international style", it appears. But what kind of taste is it that we learn to appreciate as architects? And what kind of taste is it that we learn to reject?

“People in general might like window mullions, but you will learn during this education that we architects don't.

- TEACHER AT CHALMERS, 2011

2.3.2

IS MODERNISM MODERN?

It seems to me that there is an in apprehensive default mood within architecture today, where we tend to pick elements or principles from modernism to our projects without really questioning it or thinking about it.

According to design theorist Penny Sparke (2010) what is considered neutral and good in the western visual culture is strongly influenced by modernistic values. And, she argues, modernistic design values are highly masculine in its nature, since modernism and functionalism has their roots in the public, masculine sphere of the 19th century society. Values and aesthetic expressions connected to the modern factory, production and industrialization here pushes aside values that could be thought of as feminine, and which are linked to mass culture and the intimate sphere.

Swedish architect and scholar Katarina Bonnevier (2011) also subscribes to this, and writes about how architecture can be divided into two inseparable sides: one practical, constructive and functional side, and one aesthetic, harmonic and symbolic side, where the last mentioned is in the best scenarios are neglected, but often totally dismissed. She means that these two sides are gender coded and part of a masculine-feminine hierarchy.

Olsson and Ahl (2013) argues in their book *Svensk smak: Myter om den moderna formen* that those in power of form, today just as in the 1920s, often confuses their subjective taste with moral. That white clean surfaces with few lines and no ornament is a higher level that only can be reached by hard work.

Is this why cute is considered as bad and strict is considered as good within architecture?

Strict  
Masculine  
Industrial  
One man show



F.19

Our aim as architects?

### 2.3.3

#### WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

What I find most intriguing about the functions of ornament is the connection to values like identity, symbolism and beauty, subjective values that vary with taste, experiences and background.

Our built environment, especially when it is without ornaments, is often considered to be a neutral and objective setting for subjective human activities. But it is not neutral or without values, it reflects and reinforces societies images and relations to gender, race and class. (Bonnevier, 2013) With this in mind, I believe that it is crucial that we, as architects, designers and those in power of form, begin to discuss and reflect upon what our aesthetics are actually symbolizing, and if that is what we want them to say.

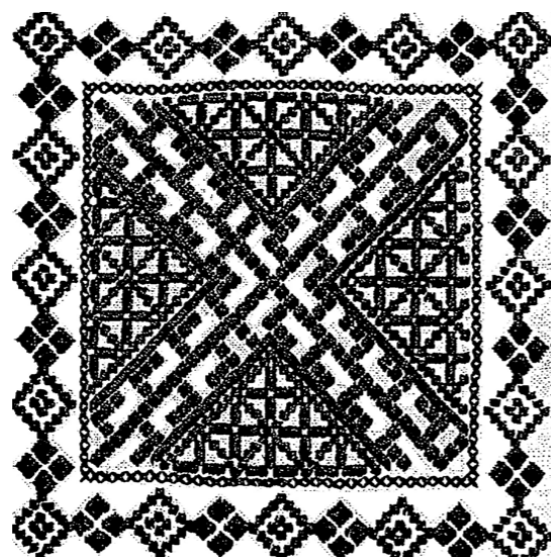
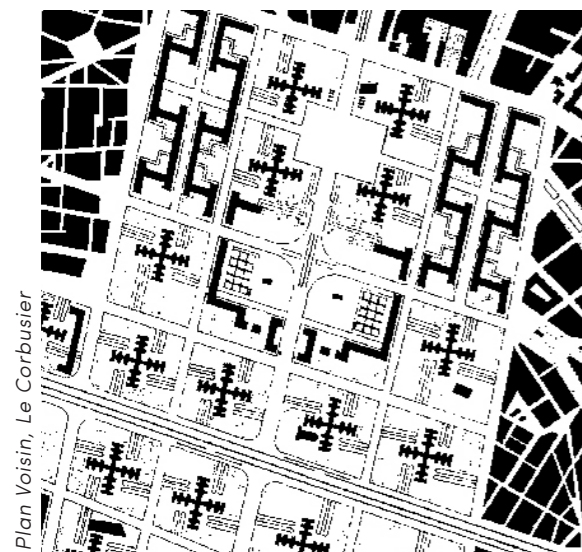
Other researchers argue that decorated and varied facades stimulates the eye and by that creates places and cities where people want to be, and that we want to take care of - in that aspect more sustainable cities.

Who are we really building for? Who do we want to appreciate what we do? Who decides what is good or bad, right or wrong?

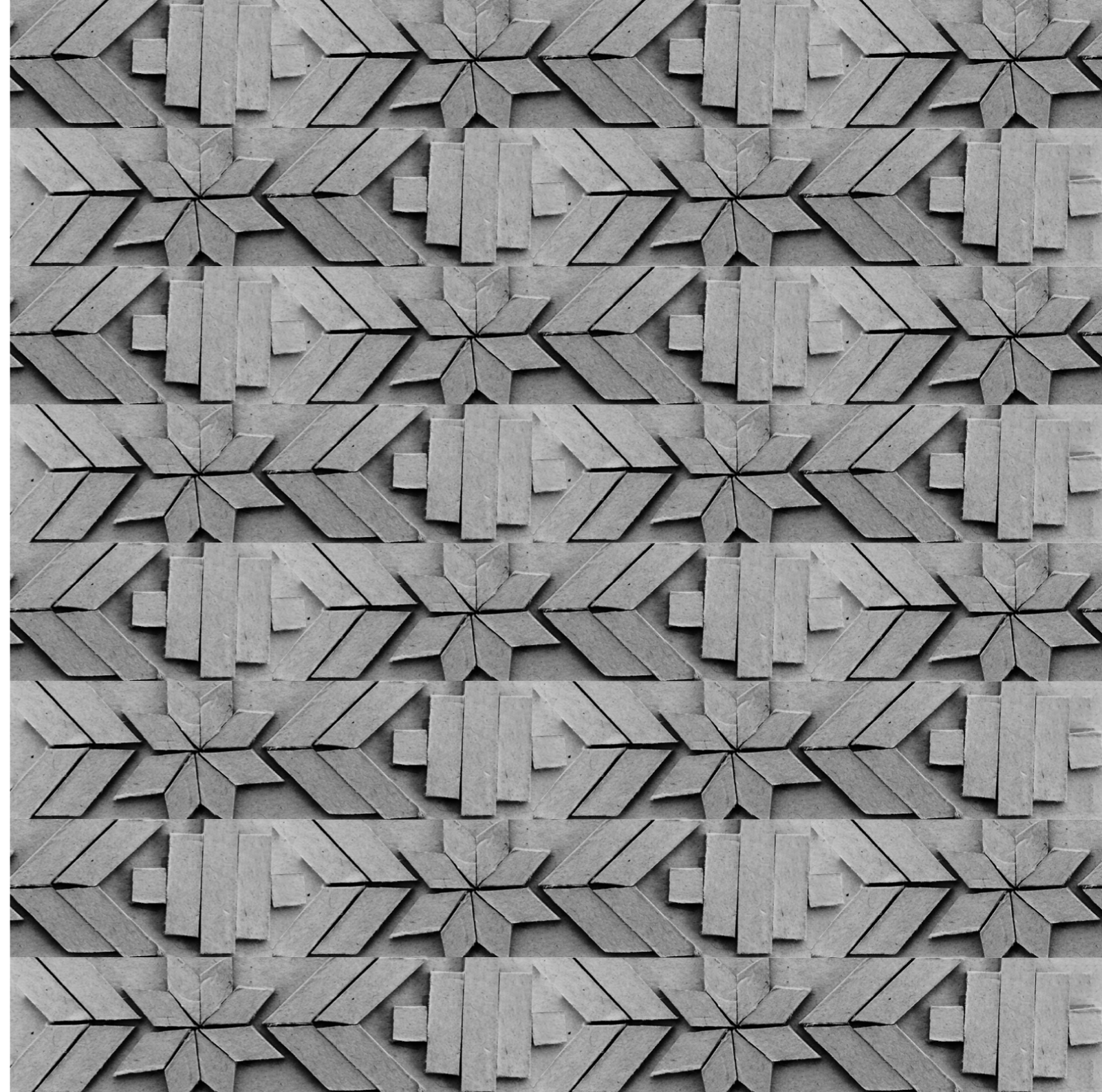
”

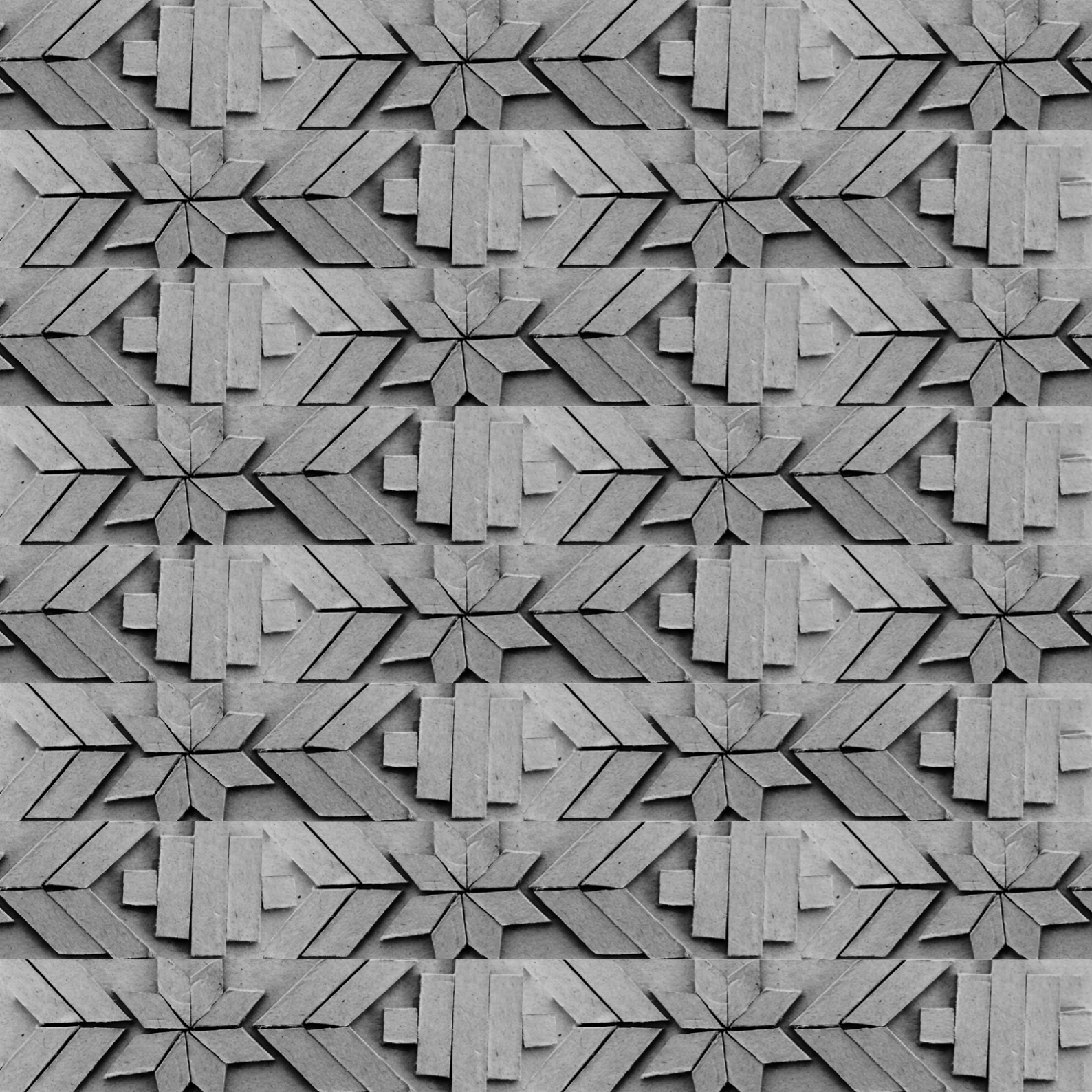
*Ornament is the language through which architecture communicates with a broader public – each remove puts another degree of separation between the profession and the public*

- EDWIN HEATHCOTE, 2015



Which scale  
matters?



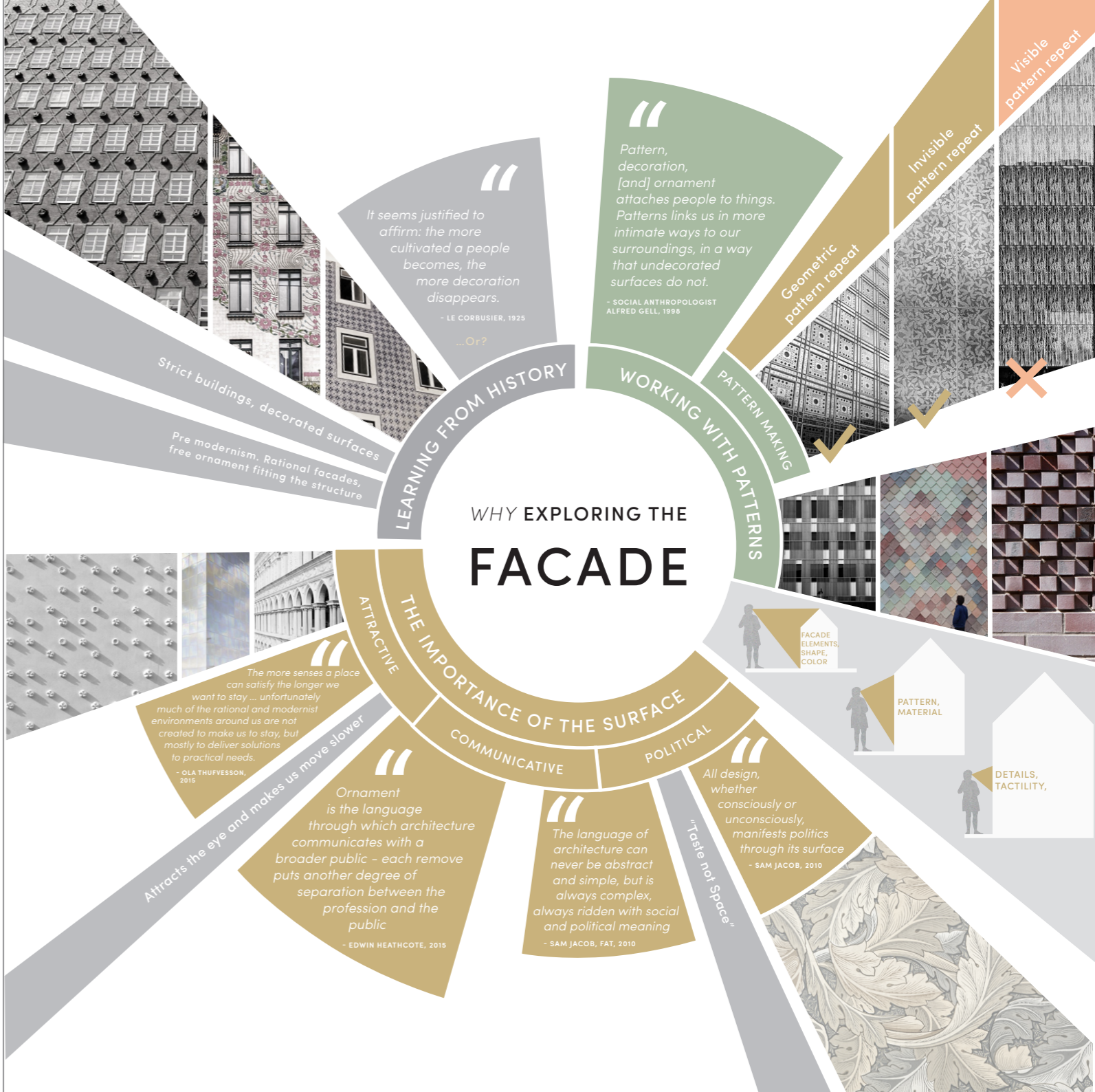


3.

DESIGN  
EXPLORATION

FROM ANALYSIS TO DESIGN

During readings and search for ornament within architecture I came to the conclusion that one of the biggest benefits of ornament is its ability to tell a story and to communicate with the broader public. I therefore wanted to work with symbolism and a cultural context within my design exploration. Focusing on the communicative function of ornament in combination with my will to challenge the general architectural aesthetics led me to focus on a facade for my design case.



## Patterns by Arne Jacobsen



F.20

Can we still do  
both kinds?

## 3.2

### PATTERN APPROACH

As my ornamental approach, I have chosen to work with patterns. Mostly and simply because I like patterns.

I like patterns because it is methodical as well as artistic. I am fascinated by patterns partly by the same reasons that I am fascinated by architecture: I like the combination of precision and creativity, it is both complex and free.

I would say that architects work a lot with patterns. In facade elements, in flooring or ceiling, in plans and even in city planning. Historically a lot of architects, Arne Jacobsen for example, also worked with patterns for wall-papers and fabrics. Maybe we lost the knack?



*Pattern, decoration,  
[and] ornament  
attaches people  
to things. Patterns  
links us in more  
intimate ways to  
our surroundings,  
in a way that  
undecorated  
surfaces do not.*

- SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST  
ALFRED GELL, 1998

INTRODUCTION TO CASE

For my design exploration, I have chosen a site in the city center of Leksand, situated in the heart of Dalarna. Locally, the city center is referred to as “Noret”.

Dalarna in general and Leksand in particular is famous for its vivid cultural heritage with national costumes, paintings, red wooden houses, folk music and midsummer celebrations. In contrast to this, Leksand city center is very anonymous. On the chosen site, right next to the main square, is today a one storey grocery store building, that could be placed in any Swedish small town.

As there are plans to move the current grocery store to an other location there are also plans to build something new on this very central plot in Leksand, right in the middle of functions and styles.

The design exploration within this thesis has been to make a proposal for this site with an ornamental and aesthetic focus, working with the facade as the interface between the building and the public.

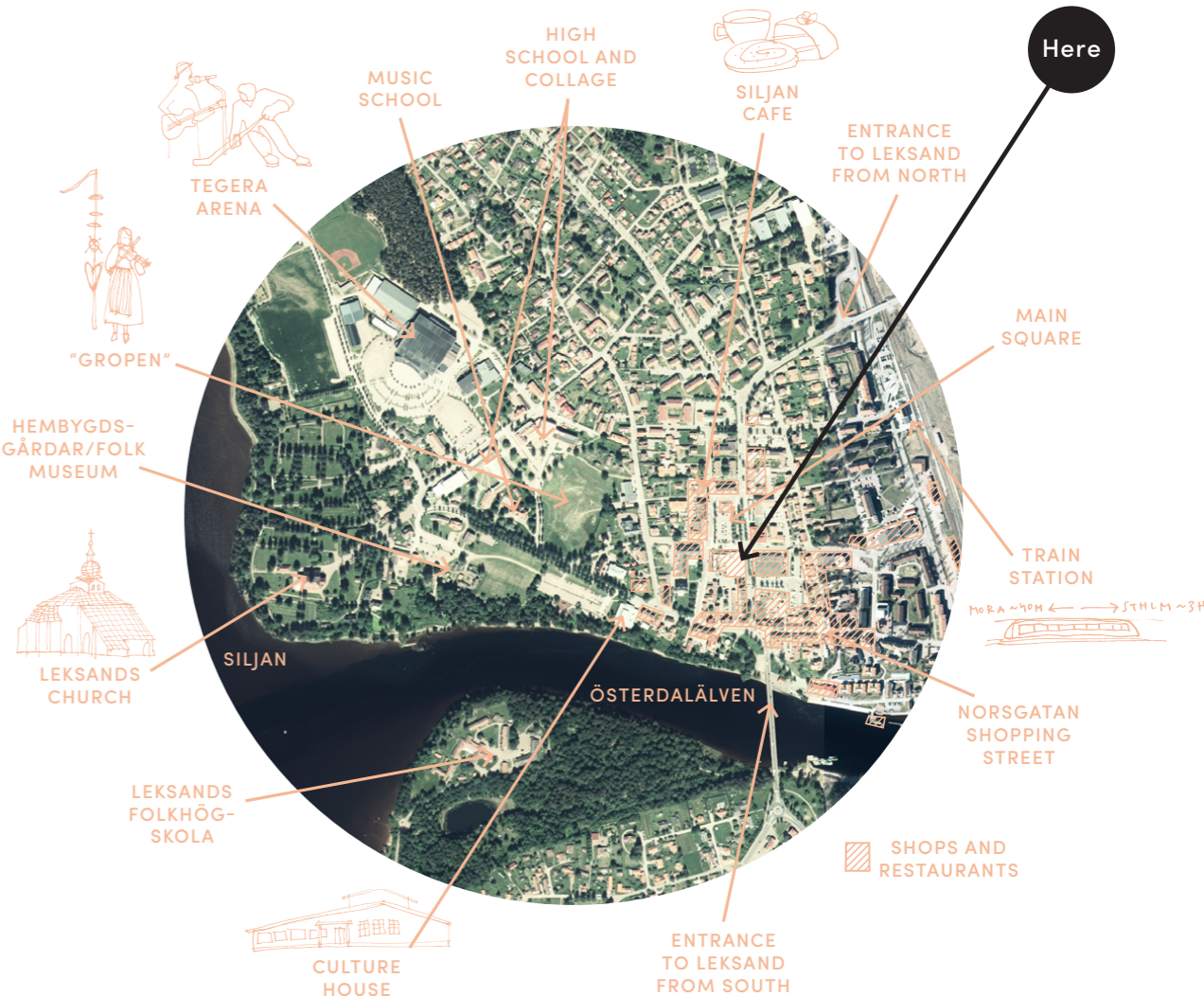
STRONG CULTURAL HERITAGE:      VERY ANONYMOUS CITY CENTER:



3.3.1  
LEKSAND



3.3.2  
SITE



LOCAL HERITAGE

Timber building culture, dalapaintings and kurbits and the traditional costumes are three of the most important examples of folk culture and cultural heritage in Leksand, together with folk music and midsummer traditions (Leksand.se).

I have in this project chosen to focus on the costume. Beyond its connection to local culture and history it is also connected to female history and crafts, and it consist many parts that can be seen as ornament in it self.

The Leksands costume is one of the most famous local costumes in Sweden and people still use it frequently, especially for midsummer. As recently as 30 years ago there where women in Leksand who didn't wear anything else during their entire lifetime. My grand grandmother was one of those women.

TIMBER BUILDING CULTURE



CONSTRUCTION

DALA PAINTINGS AND KURBITS



F.21

ART

TRADITIONAL COSTUMES



ORNAMENT



*"Wasted women's power" was once said, not so long ago, about women's handicrafts. That does not apply today. The interest and the need to create something beyond the daily routine has for many become a vital necessity. It may also be the therapy needed to counteract the haste of our time.*

- ANNA HÅDELL FROM HER BOOK ABOUT THE SHAWL EMBROIDERY

3.4.1

THE LEKSANDS COSTUME AND ITS TUPPHALSKLÄDE

I have always been very fascinated by the Leksands costume with all its different parts and complex craft works. Not least have I been fascinated by all the work that women in generations have been putting in to it.

I have chosen to focus especially on the shawl that is used for special occasions, such as weddings, called the *tupphalskläde*. The shawls complex embroidery has it's roots in the renaissance, and not many people know how to do it today. It is by many seen as the most beautiful part of the Leksands costume and of Swedish textile works in general (Leksand.se).

I like the tupphalskläde because of its graphic expression and I also find it suitable for this project because of it's strong narrative and symbolism. It highlights and celebrates local history, women and a handicraft that is about to be lost.

At the same time as the embroidery has a very strong connection to local culture it also possesses an aesthetic expression that relates to cultural patterns from other parts of the world, far from Leksand. It shows and symbolizes that our roots and histories are connected.



Tupphalskläde from 1840

TRUE ORNAMENT

TRUE DESIGN

LOCAL IDENTITY

STRONG NARRATIVE

SYMBOLISM

CELEBRATING  
HISTORY, WOMEN  
AND CRAFTS

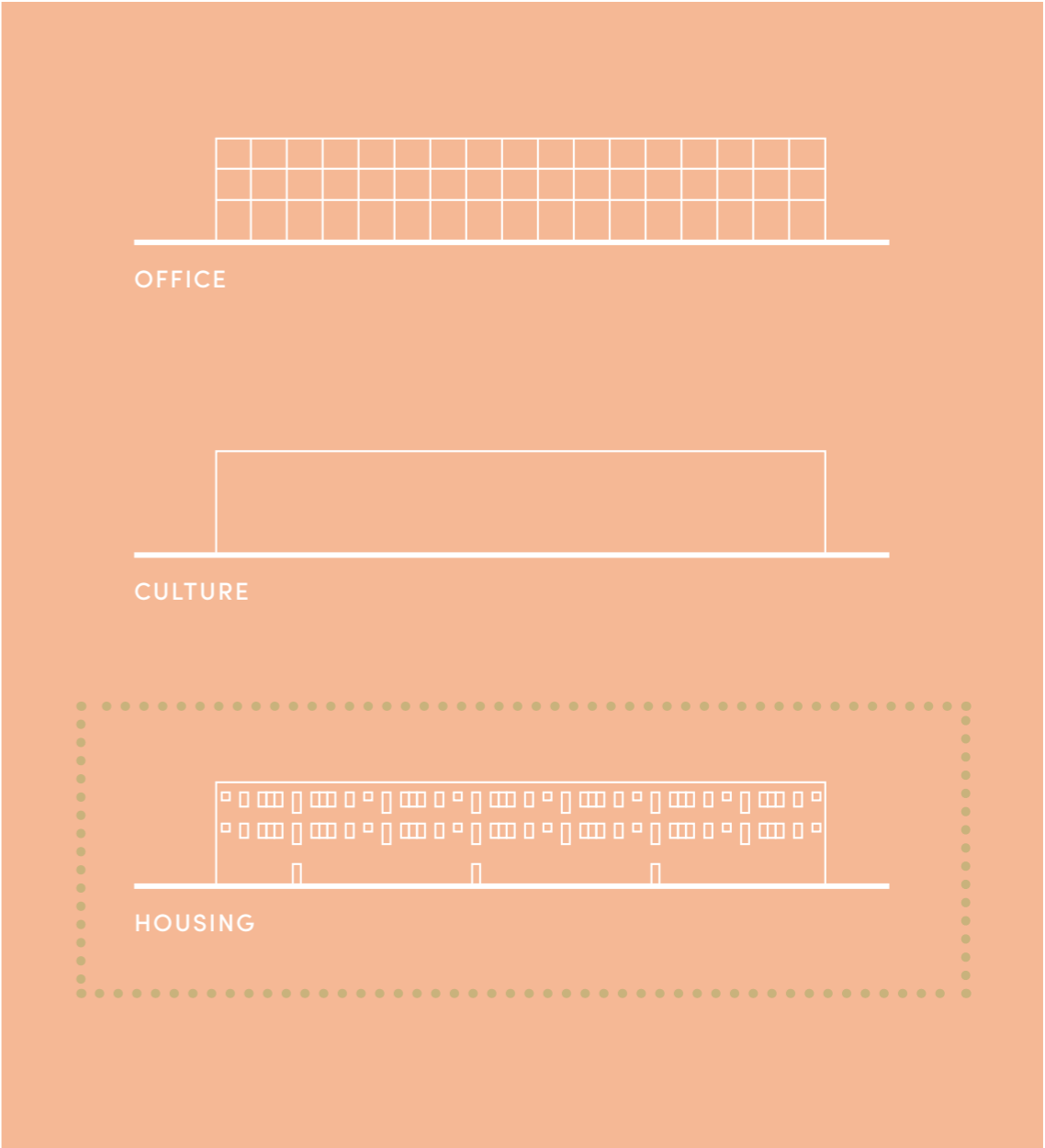
ESTHETICALLY  
RELATED TO OTHER  
CULTURAL PATTERNS  
AND ORNAMENTS

HOW TO USE  
THIS WITHIN AN  
ARCHITECTURAL  
PROJECT?

SETTING THE CONDITIONS

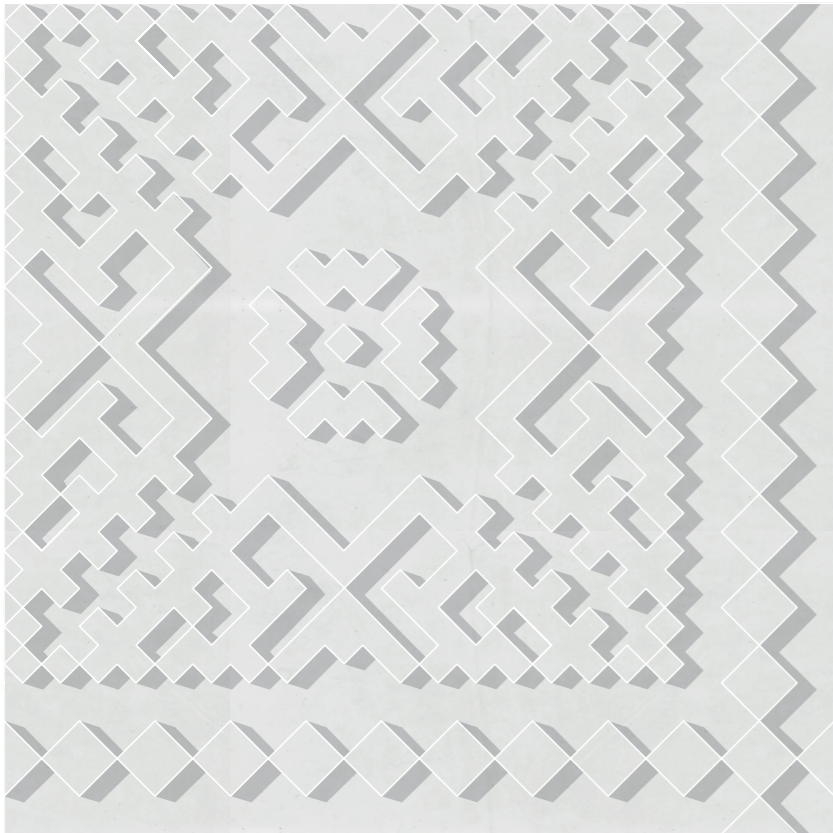
I tried the idea of having another program for the site - office spaces or some kind of cultural house - but in the end I chose housing because I believe it suited my exploration better. Within offices and cultural houses it is generally both easier and more allowed, both by facade structure and by architectural norms, to work with patterns and ornament. Housing gives a bigger challenge, since the facade is neither as free to form as it could be in a cultural building, nor as repetitive as in an office building. Housing is also a typology where ornament is usually not prioritized, at least not since the creation of the now very expensive addresses built in the late 19th and early 20th century. Today's housing also often lacks the care for details that can be found in early modernist buildings. Instead, many newly built housing areas end up looking quite monotonous, with facade expressions formed in large extent by what can easiest be produced by the construction and housing industry.

In addition to this there is also a need for smaller housing in Leksand.



DIFFERENT PATTERN COMPOSITIONS

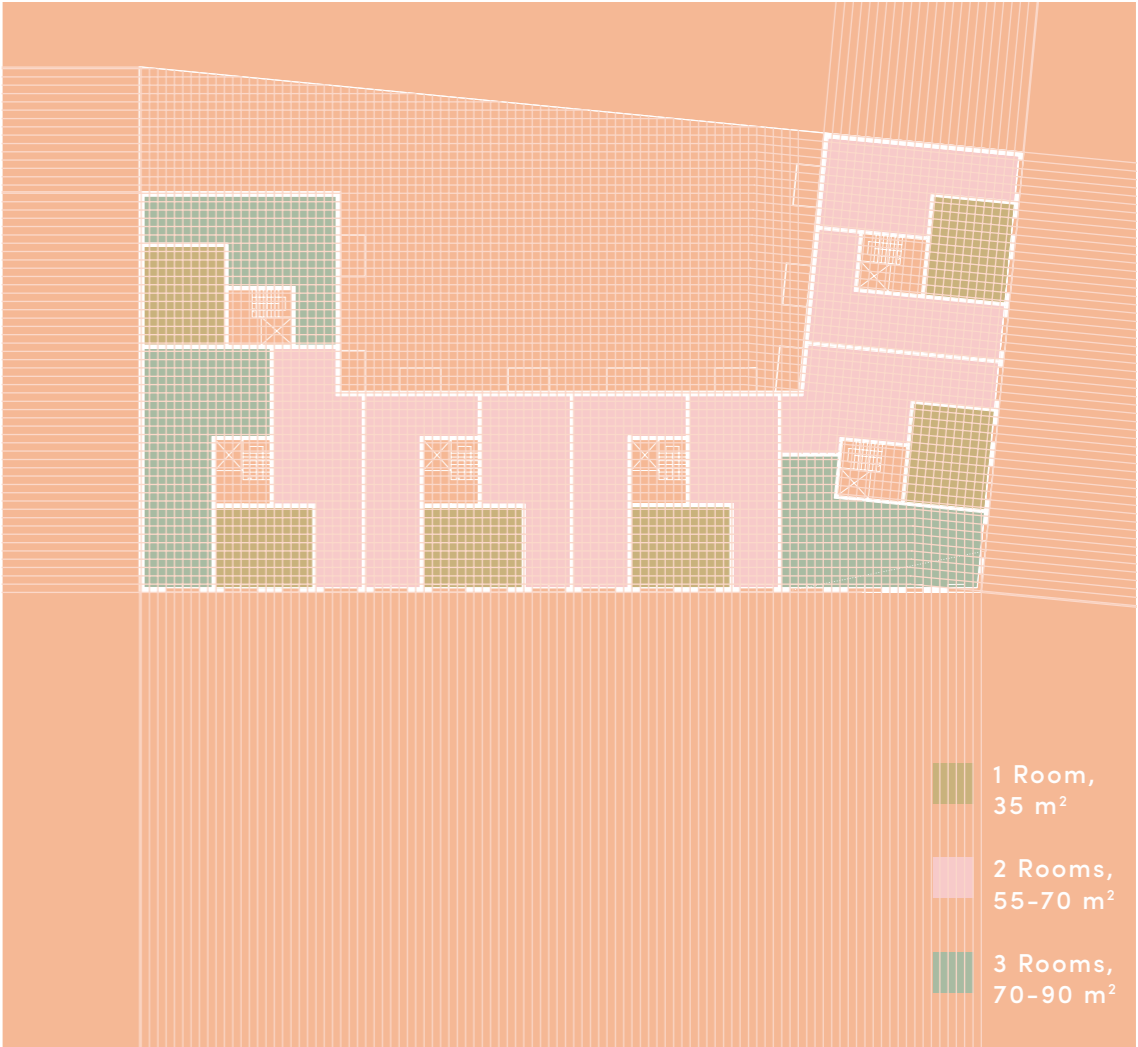
BASIC FRACTAL 1:5



DRAWINGS

As a delimitation, in order to keep the focus on ornament, the over all building solutions are made in a more conceptual way. Even so, they are still important to mention and show since they have been developed parallel with the ornamented facade, as inseparable parts depending on each other. Although, most effort has been put on developing the facade pattern in the case of this thesis.

CONCEPTUAL HOUSING PLAN 1:500



### 3.6.2

#### FACADE ELEVATION, LEKSANDSVÄGEN 1:200



### 3.6.3

#### FACADE ELEVATION 1:50



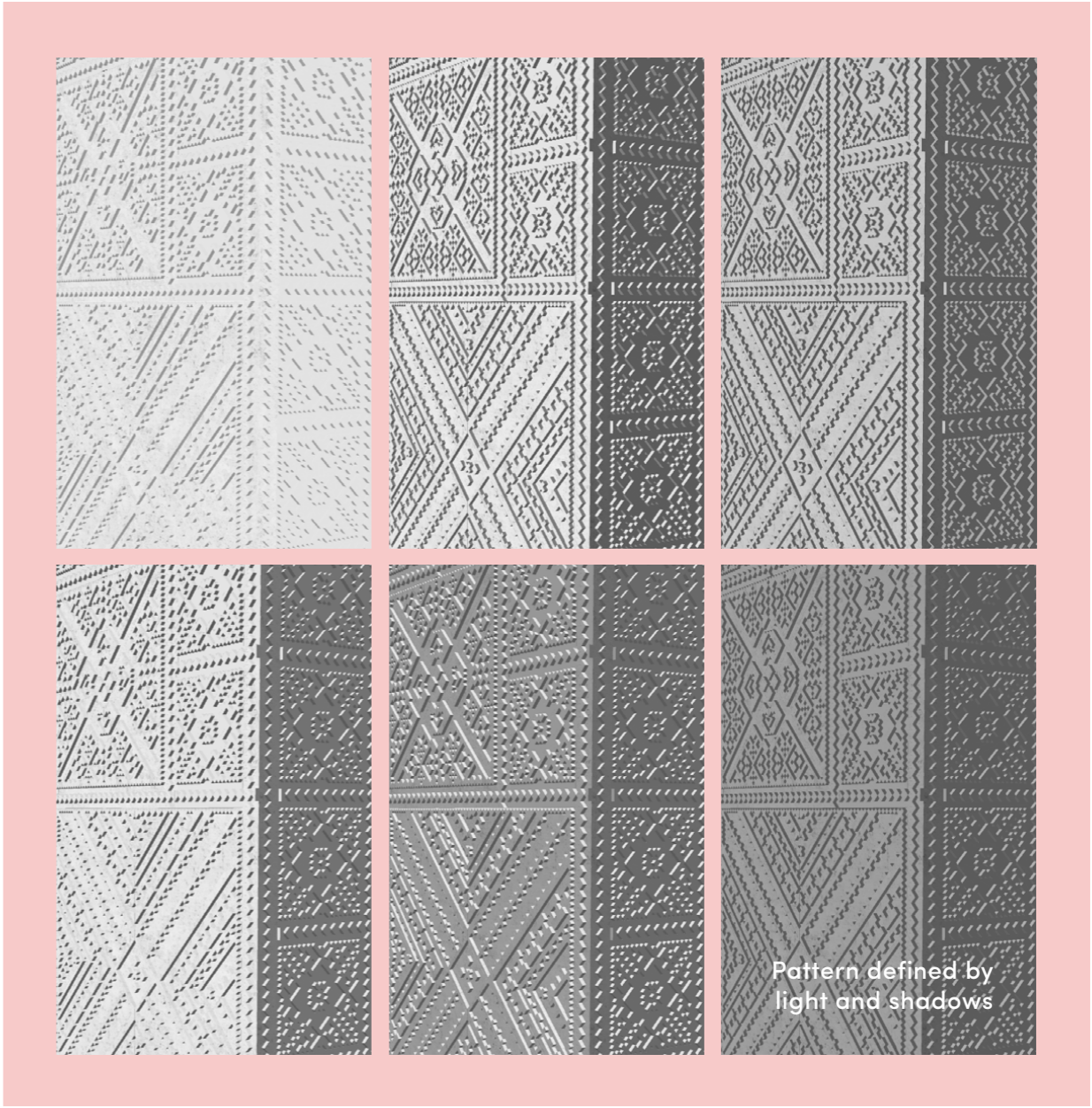
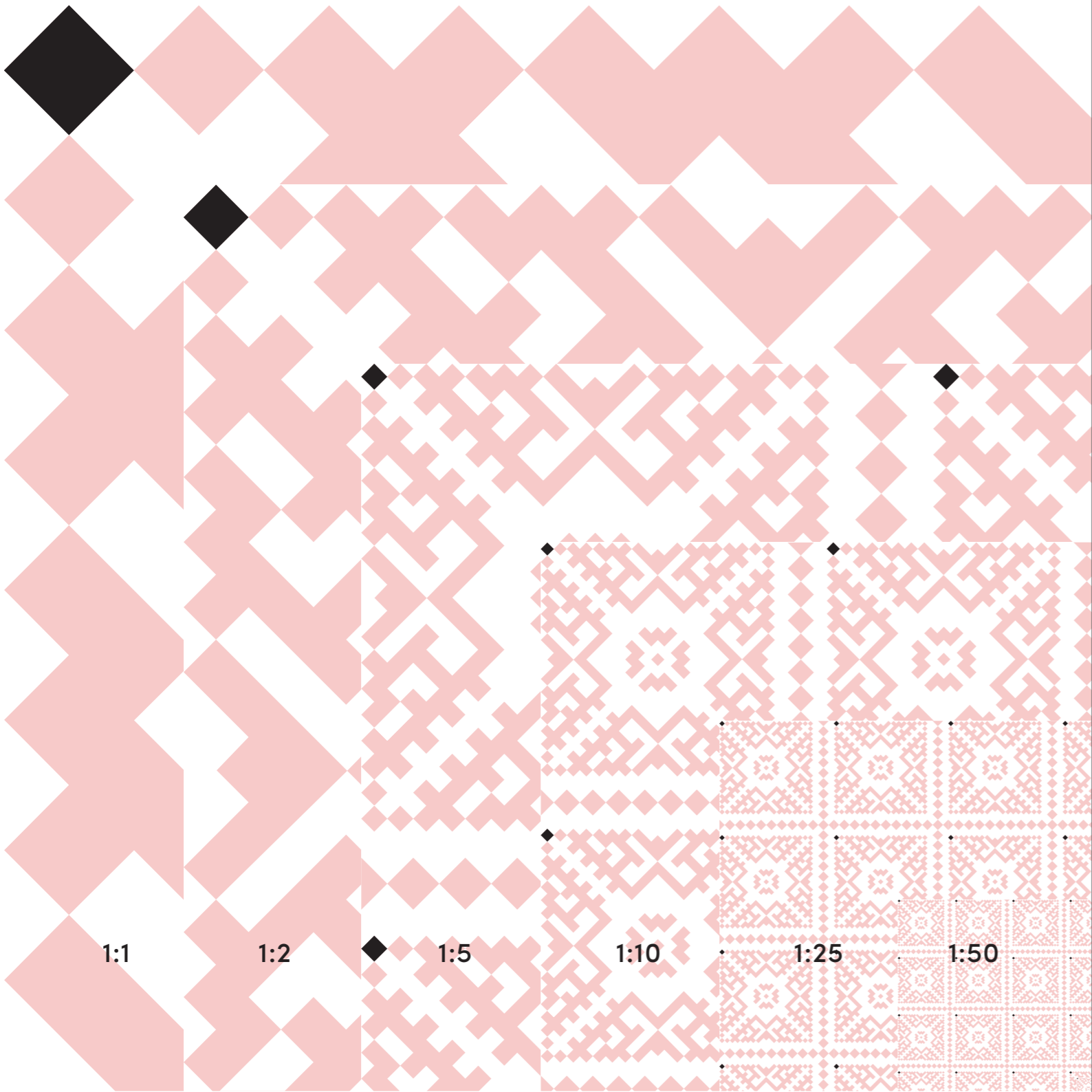
## MATERIALITY AND TECHNIQUE

The technique thought to create the facade is 3D-printed castings for white concrete elements, a technique that is among others used by the Swedish architecture firm Monsén Architects in their Super Deco projects (Monsén Arkitekter, 2014).

The use of 3D-printed castings for prefabricated concrete elements makes it possible to create complex ornament in an industrial way, without the need of craftsmanship on site. This makes, or at least will make in the future, it possible to have a high level of detailing but without the cost of the project (and thus, the rents in the building) ending up sky high.

The monochrome three dimensional facade also make the perception of the pattern shift by light and distance. From a far the building look rather plain and simple but the closer you get the more details appear. This can also be seen as a reference to the almost invisible (white on white), but still highly detailed embroideries on the sleeves of the Leksands costume.

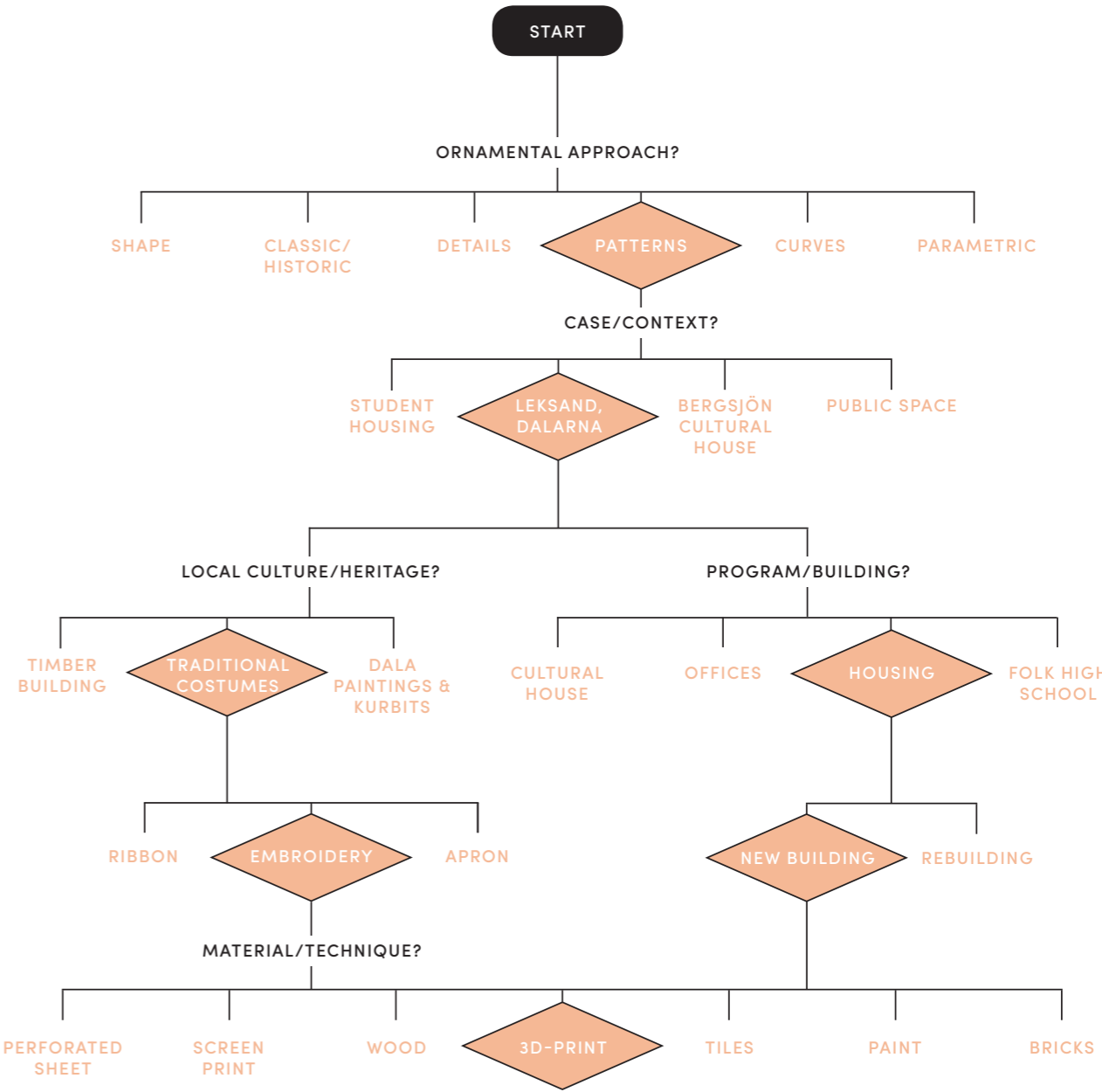


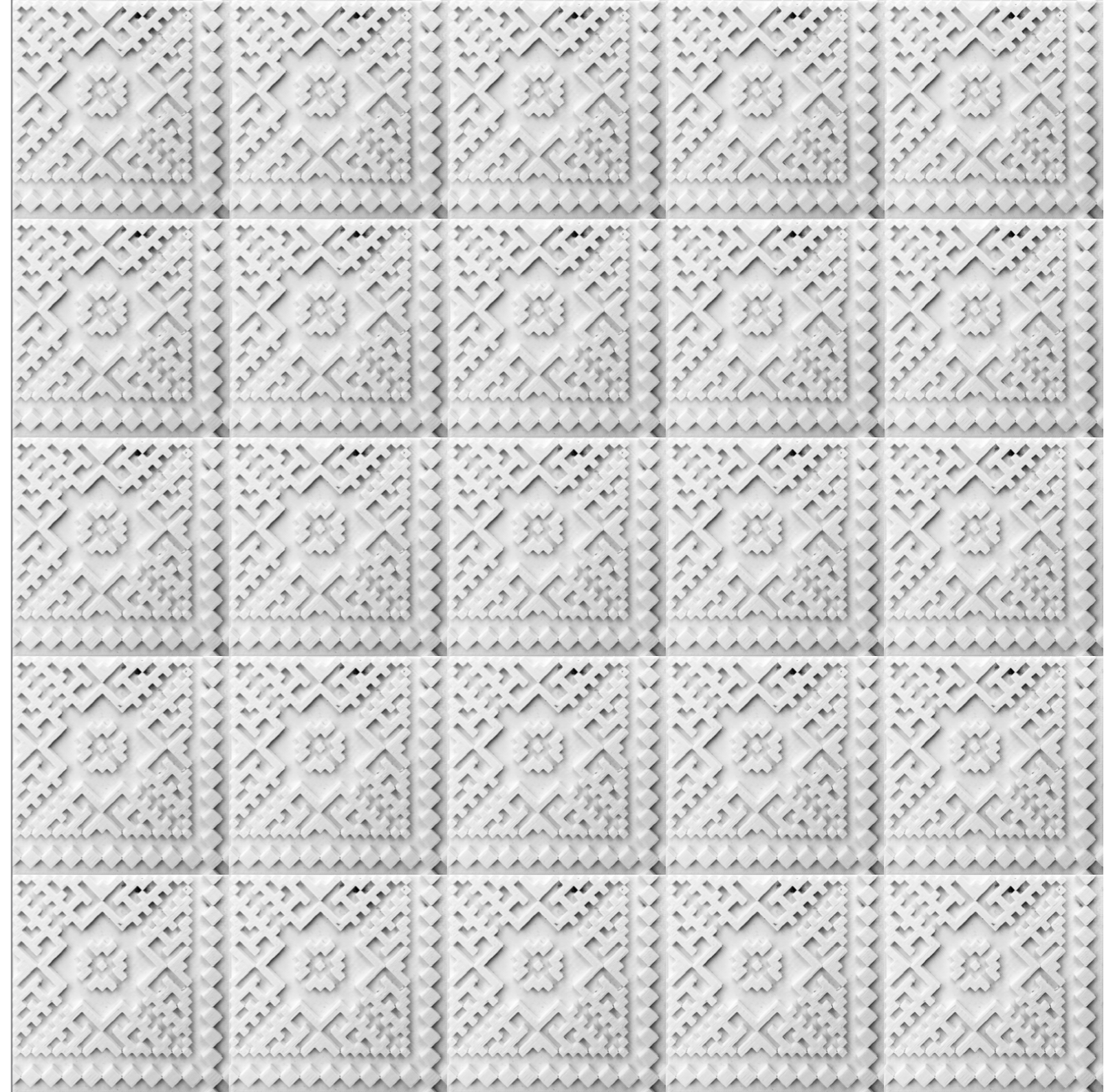
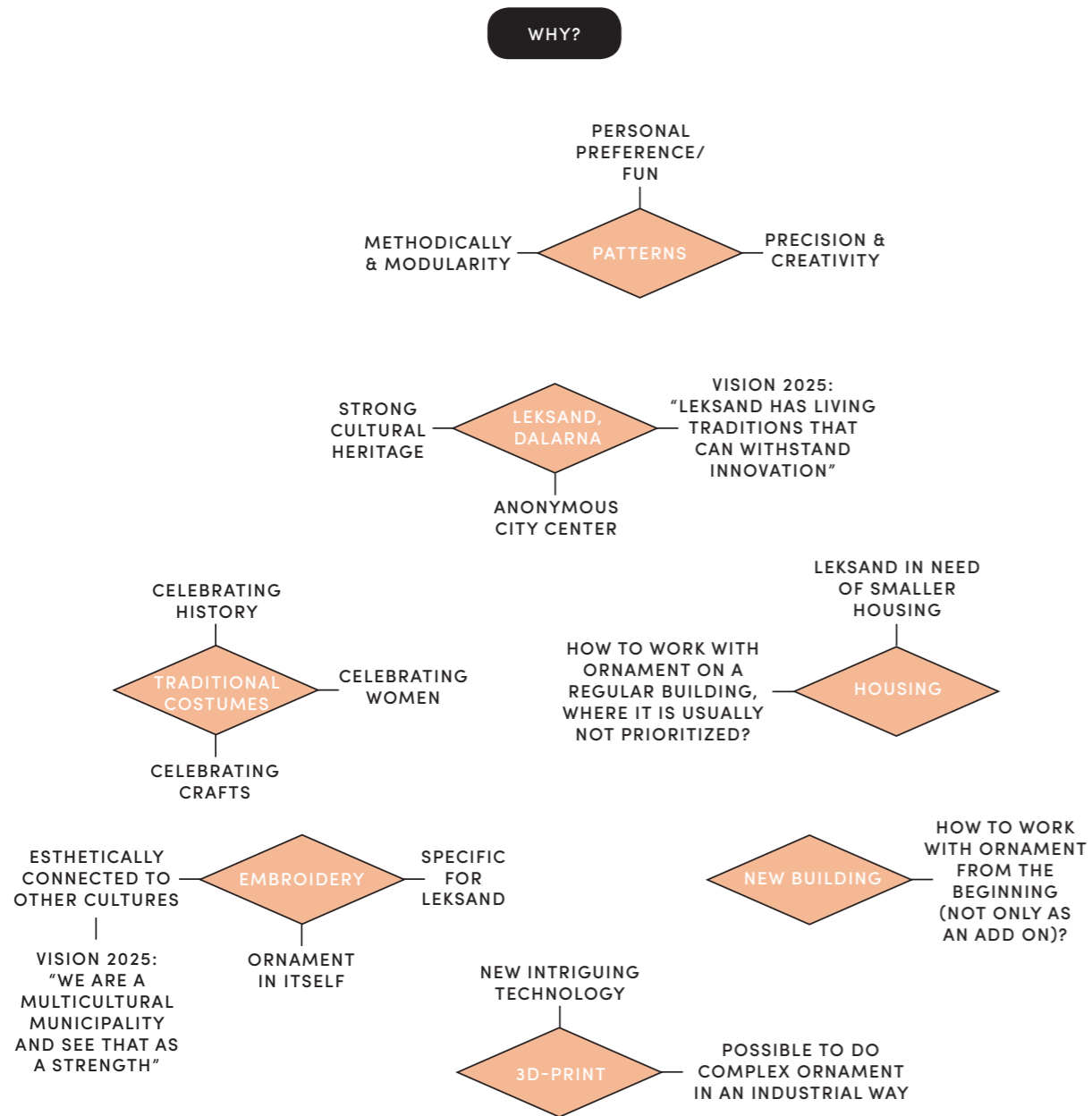


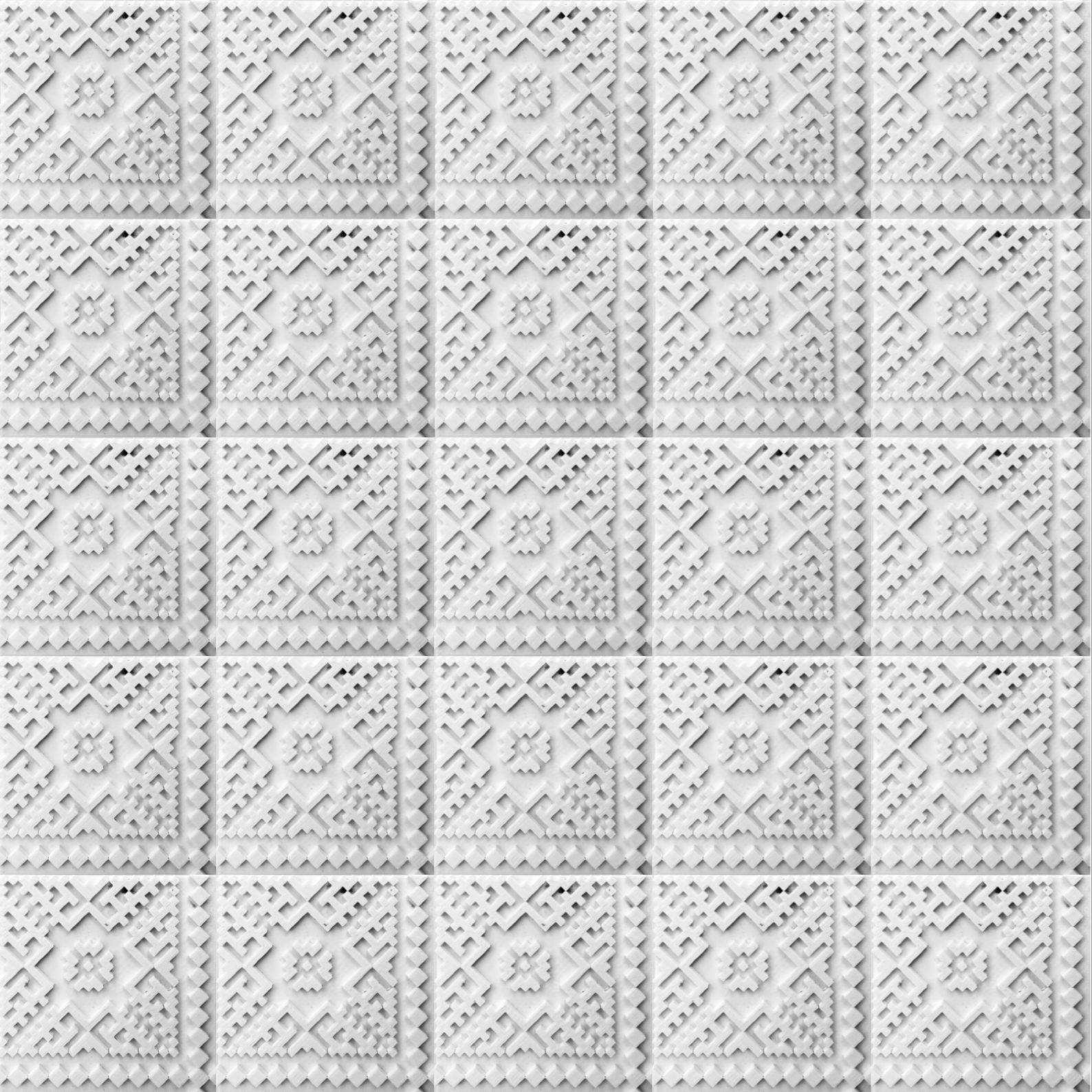
DELIMITATIONS AND DECISIONS

Since I started this project as a free exploration of ornament, the final design is a product of several decisions and delimitations along the way. If those decisions would have been made in another way, the design outcome would also have ended up in something completely different.

The final design should therefore be seen as what it is, an exploration and an inspiration to work with ornament. But most importantly it should be seen as a will and a try to bring ornament and taste into the discourse of the school and the architectural profession, and as an attempt to stretch my own boundaries of what can be considered as architecture.







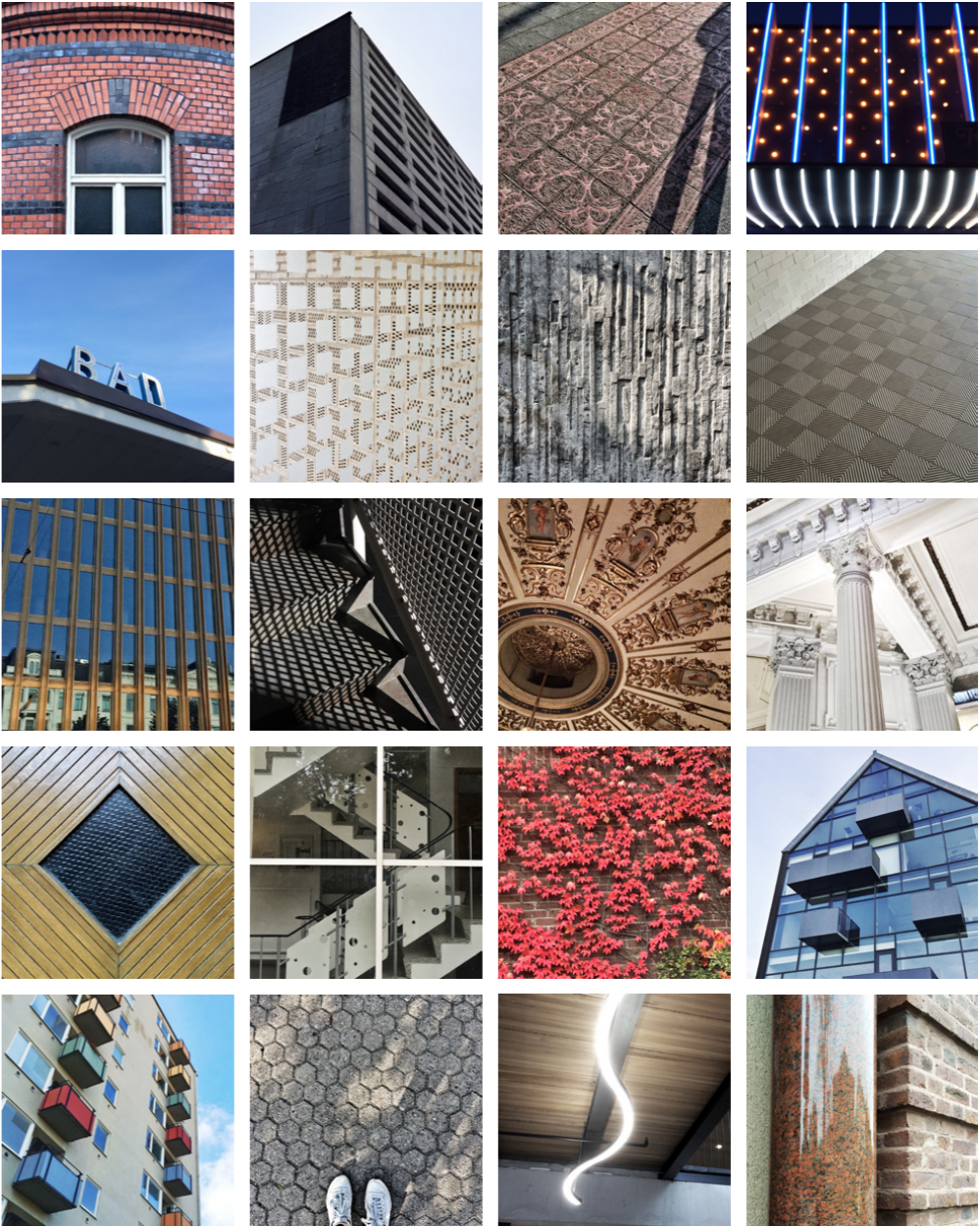
4.

PROCESS

ORNAMENTAL DIARY

Taking pictures of ornament in my everyday environment in order to be inspired, to set my mind on ornament and to get new eyes on architecture. A try to change and challenge what I usually see in my surroundings and a try to widen my own perception of what architecture can be.

Here is a selection of these pictures.



## 4.2

### PROCESS DIARY

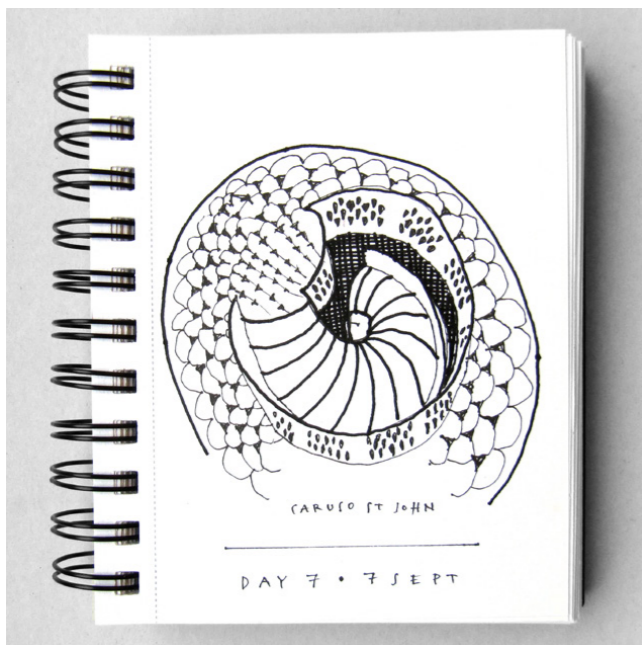
Concluding each and every day with a sketch. Illustrating what I did, learned, realized, decided or thought about. Or something else. One page, one day, no cheating.

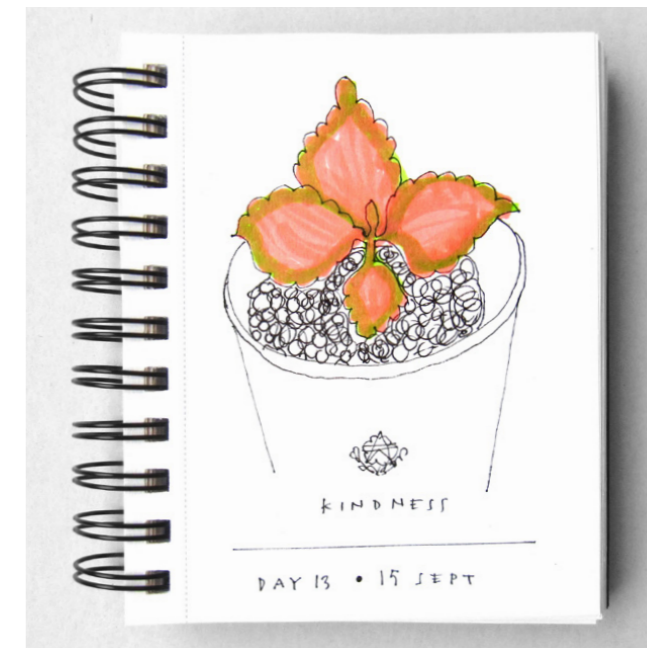
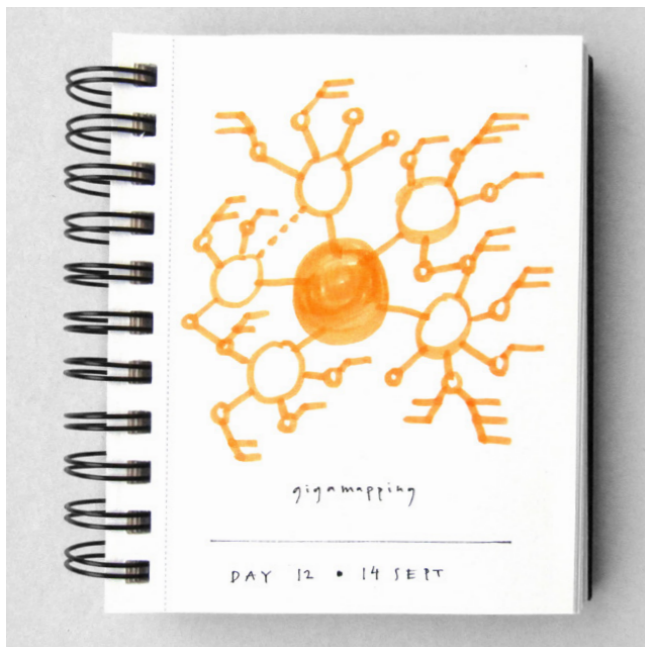
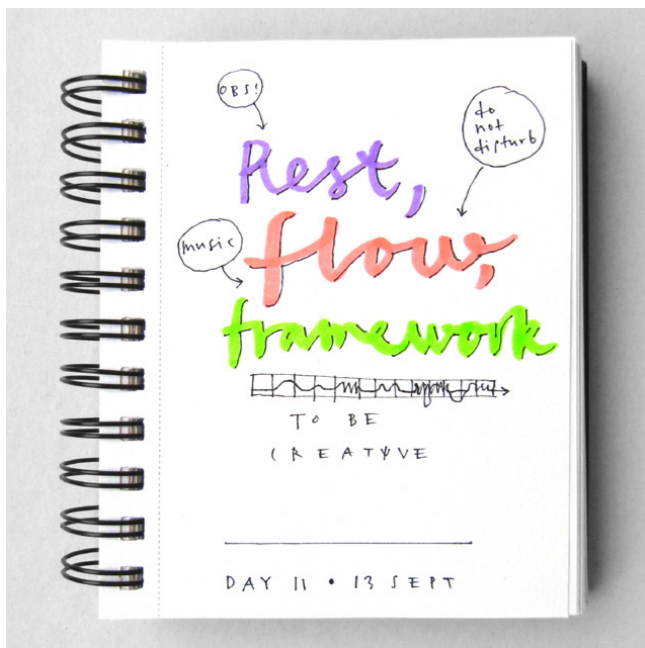
In order to do something by hand everyday, to let things come out and to keep track of my process.

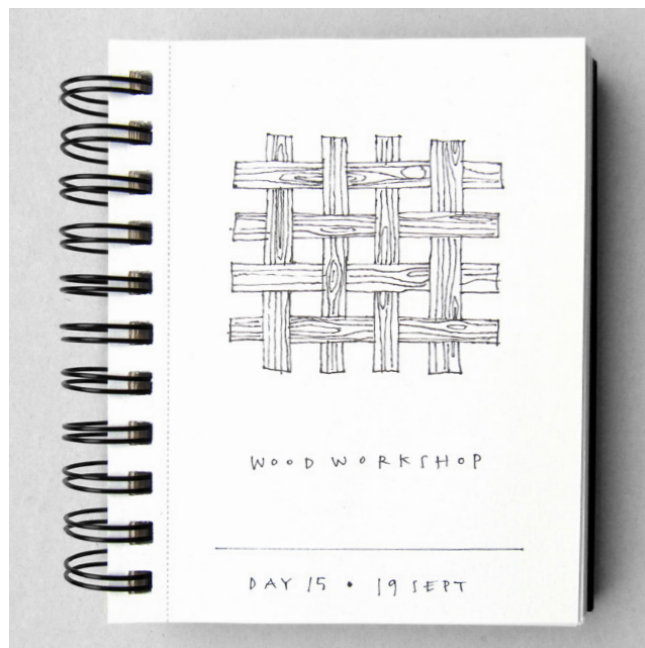
Here is a as good as all of them.

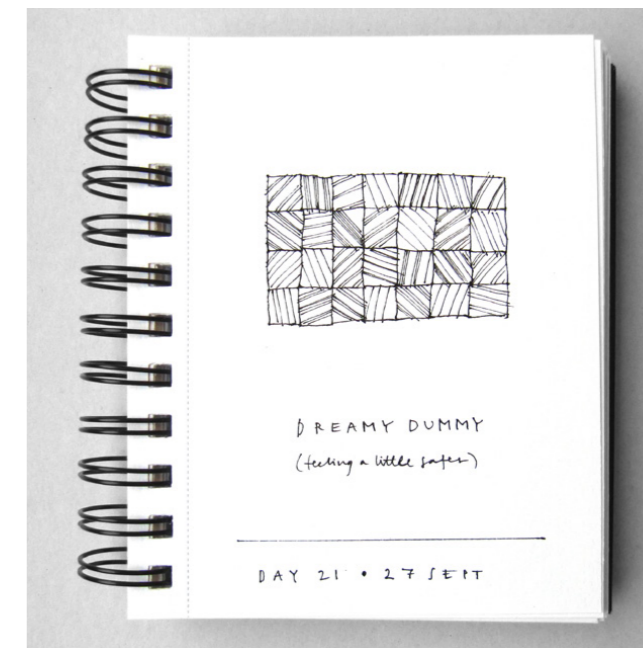




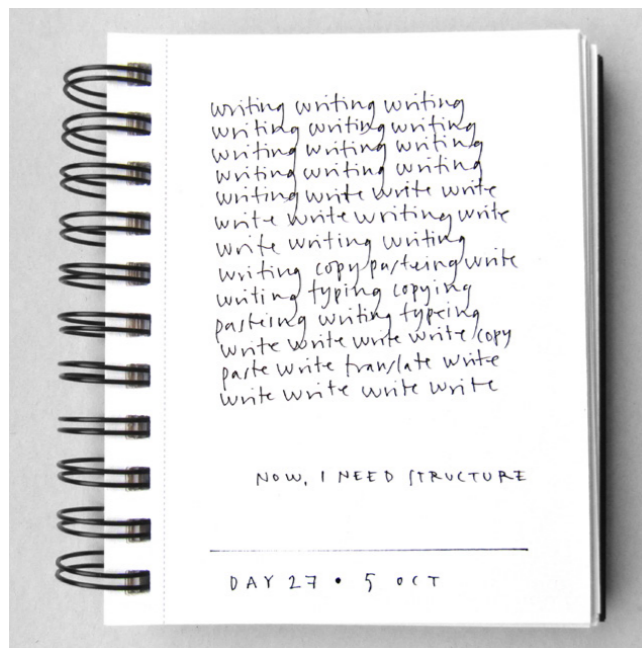


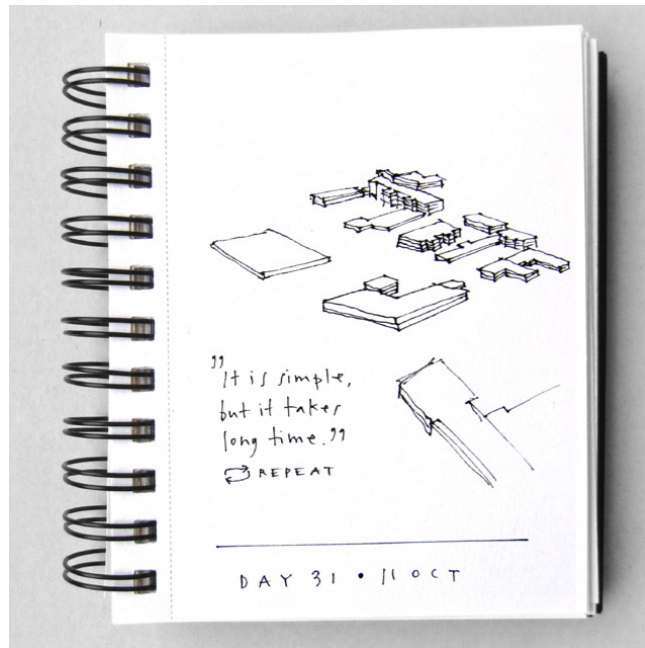


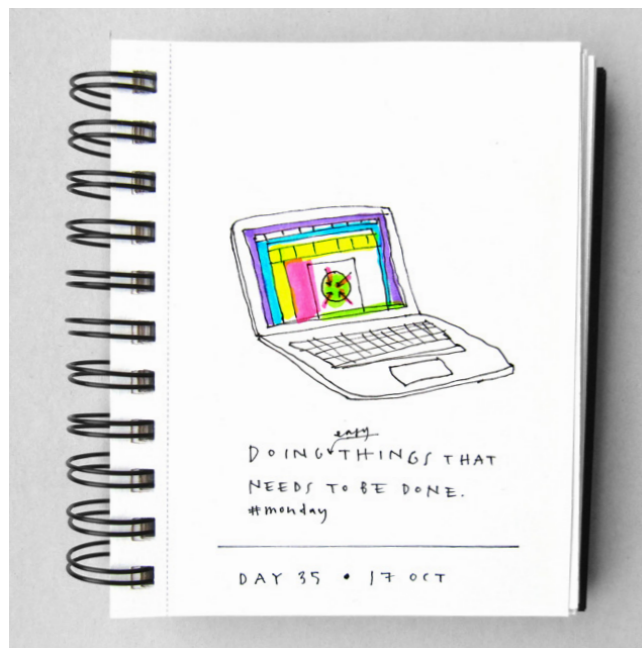


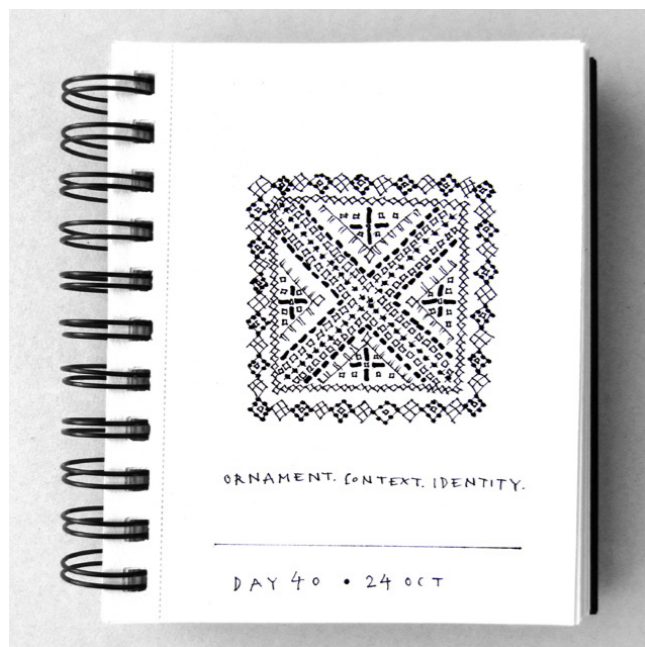


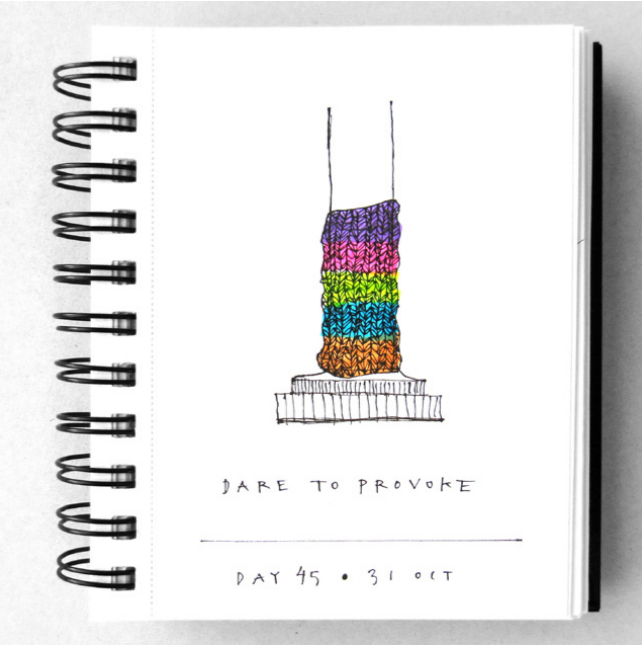






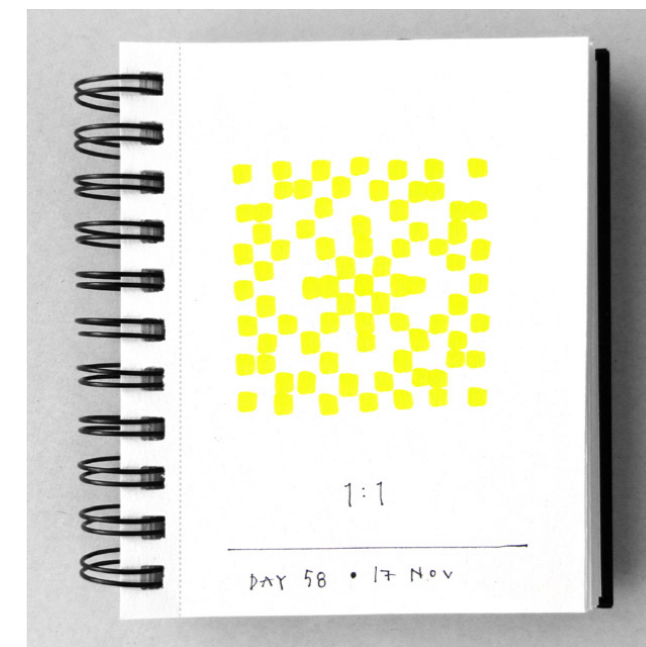
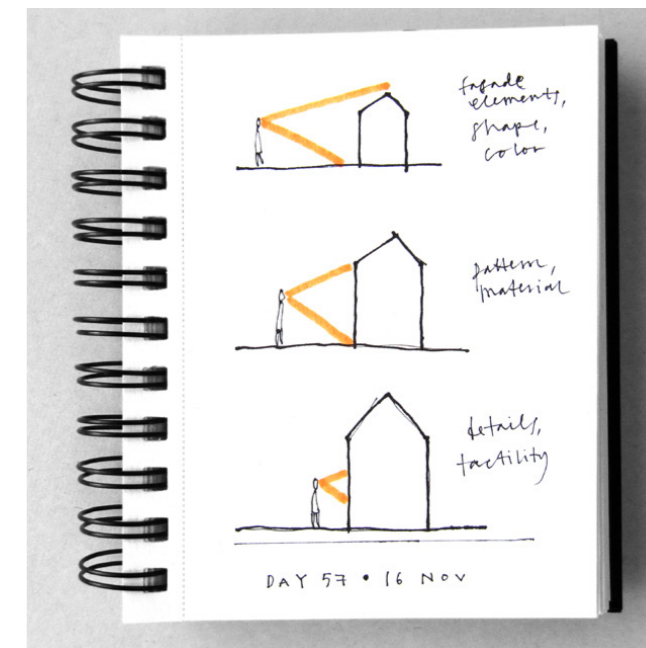
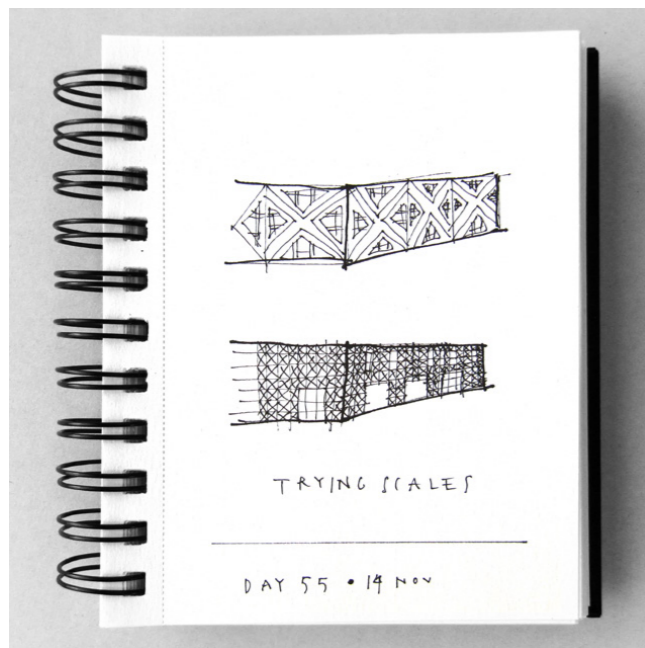


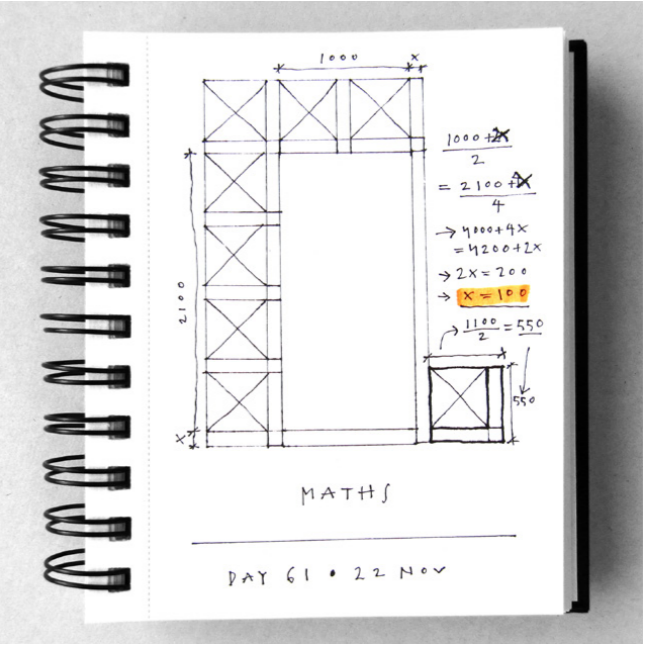
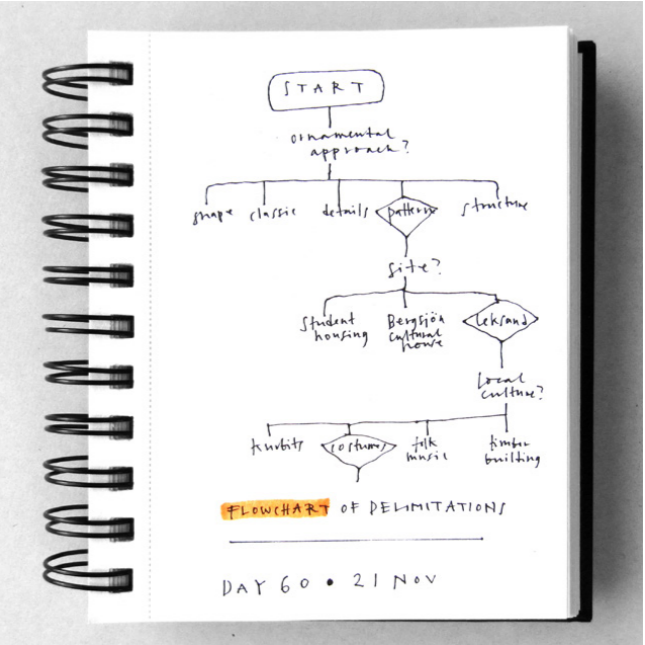


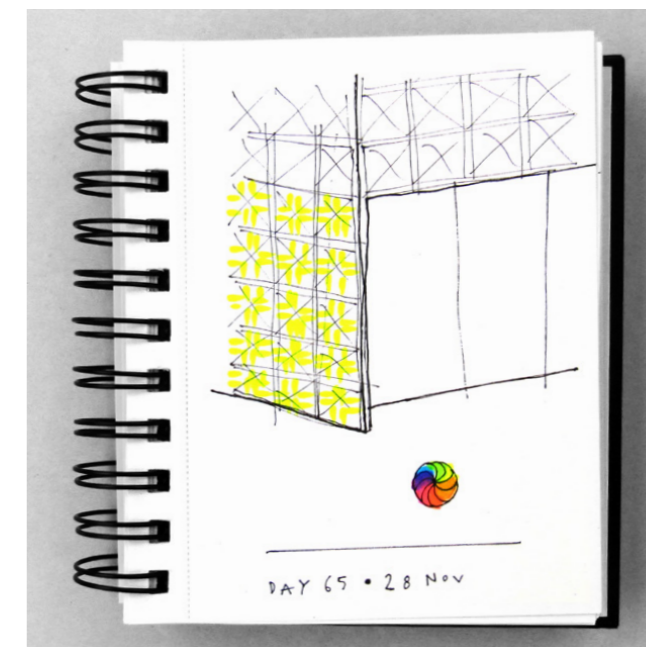
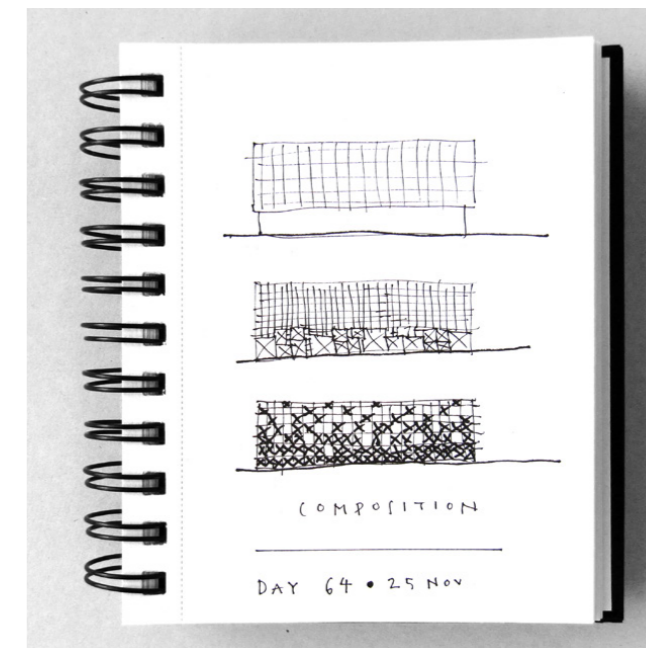
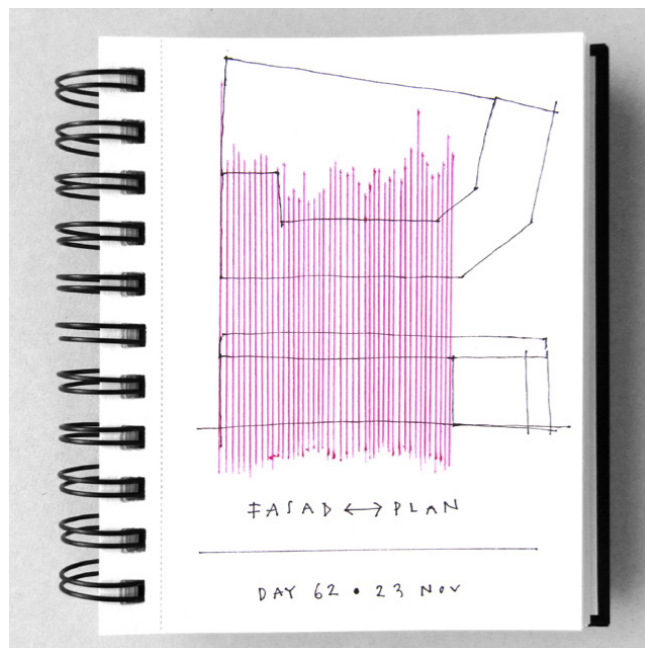


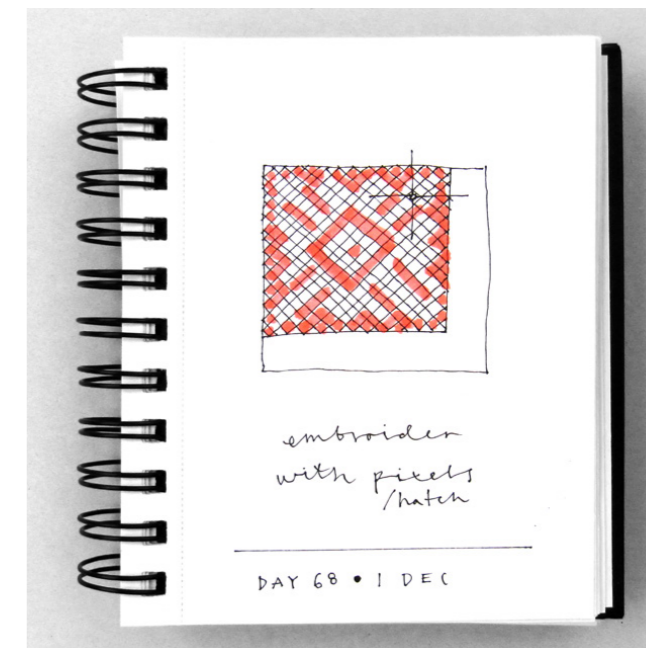






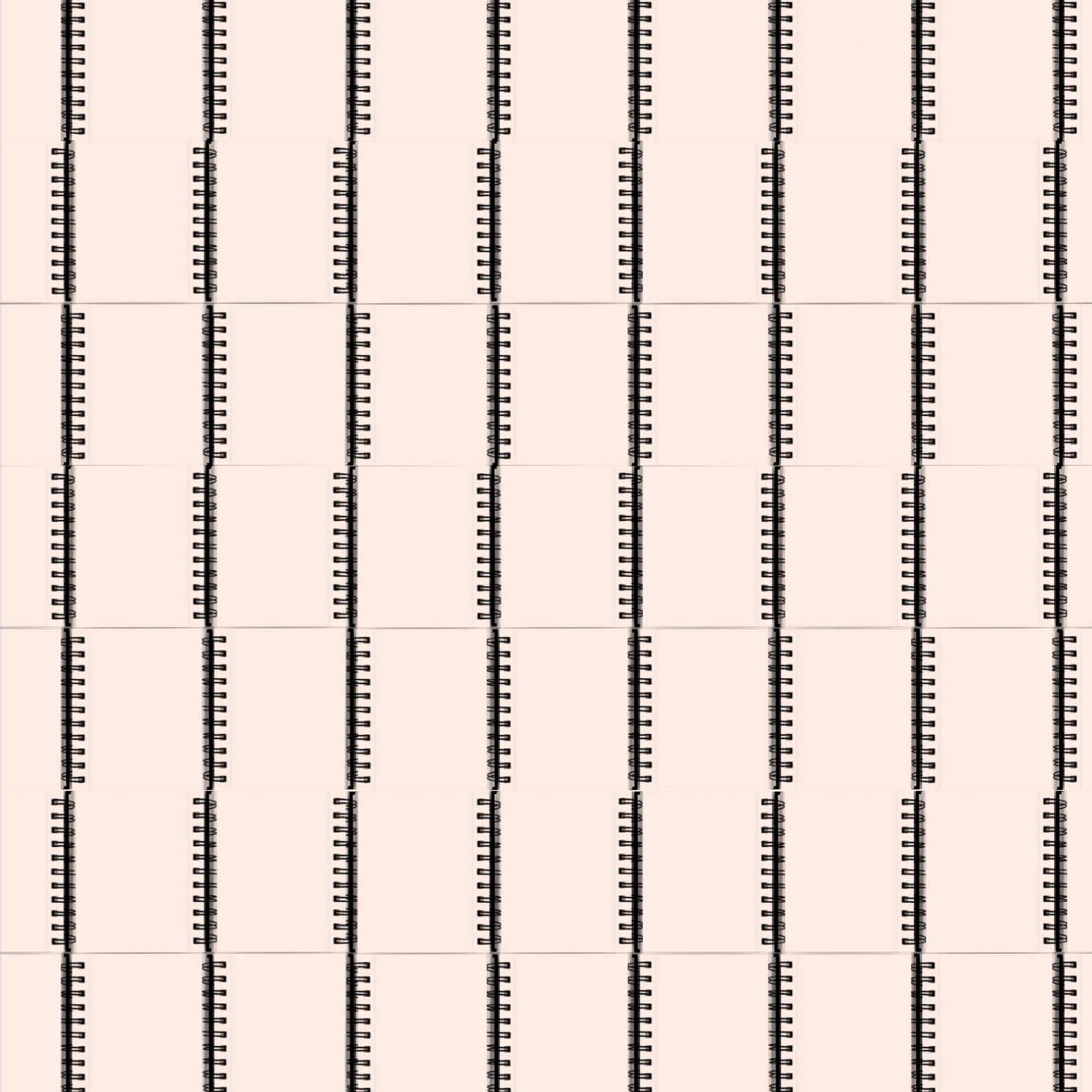


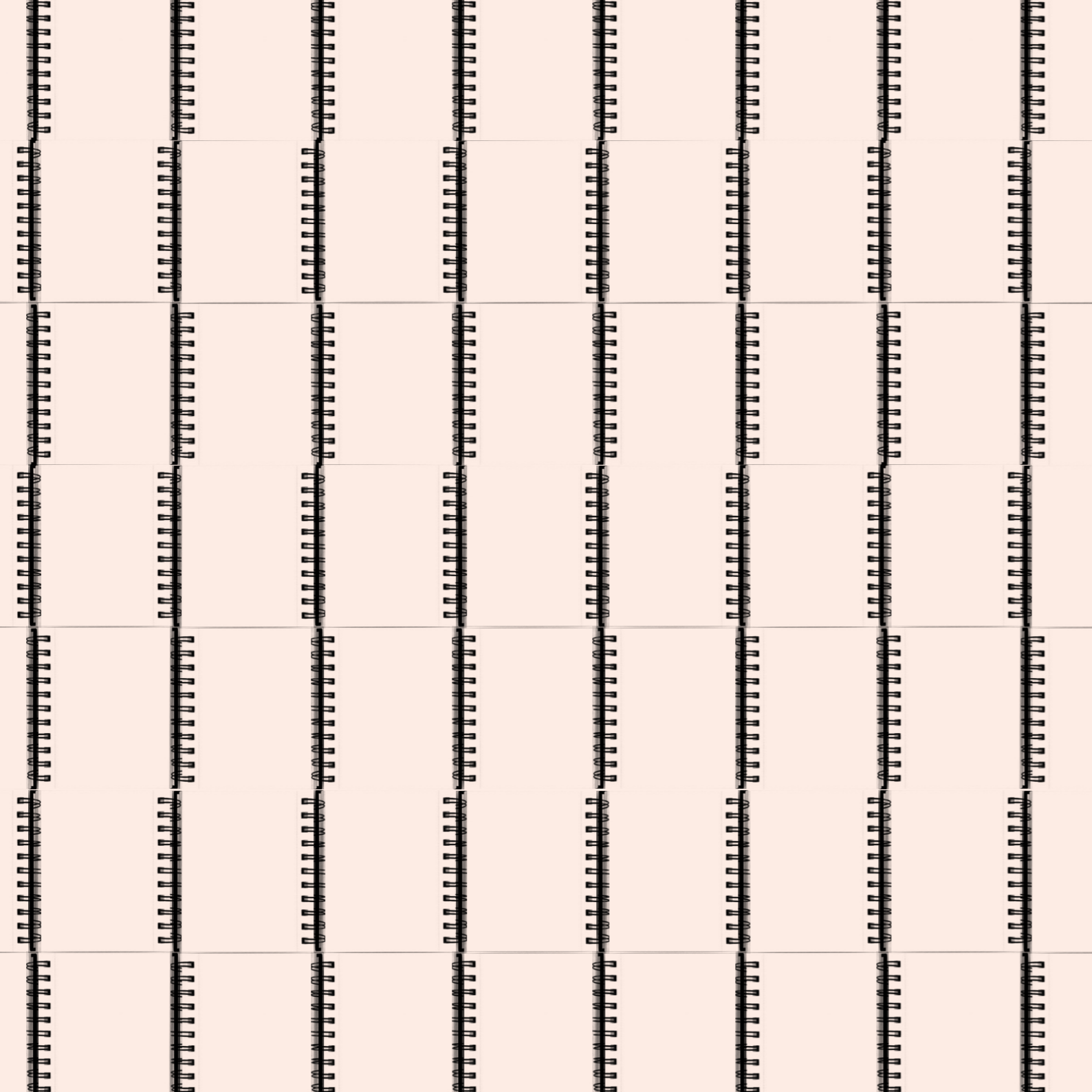












5.

CONCLUSIONS/  
REFLECTION

## CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTION

In many ways this whole thesis is a discussion and a reflection. It provides more questions than answers and it aims to bring up a conversation, not a new (or old) truth.

Symbolism is ambiguous and the role of ornament is hard to define. Nevertheless, I believe that it is important that we, as architects, designers and those in power of form, begin to discuss and reflect upon what our aesthetics are actually symbolising. I can understand why ornament is not prioritised within architecture but I can not understand why the discussion about it is not.

Money and time, as always, are big reasons to why ornament is not prioritised. But I believe there is more to it than that. Ornament is connected to symbolism and symbolism is charged, by definition. It is charged with values and references and this is what makes it both so interesting and so hard to work with. The Leksands costume is a good example, it has been a lot of discussion in Leksand about what you may or may not do with the local heritage, and who is allowed to do it. Maybe this kind of discussions is part of the reason why architects tend to lean towards parametric design, random design or design without connection to context when it comes to ornament, it is considered to be less charged with values and by that less risky.

Another reason for why we do not work with ornament is simply because we don't know how to do it, architects hardly haven't practised it for decades. At least we don't learn how to in architecture school. Architecture today tends to always validate itself in terms of structure, space or shape. Perhaps there are other values



*Architecture today  
always validate itself in  
terms of structure, space  
or shape. Perhaps there  
are other values to work  
with as well? Perhaps  
we just lost the knack  
and courage to create  
these values?*

to work with as well? Perhaps we just lost the knack and courage to create these values?

I believe there are other values to work with, I even think it could be economic to consider it. I believe ornament can create environments where people would like to spend time (and by that also money in many cases), environments for lingering and strolling. This also means environments that people will care for, and by that also *take care of* - a basic form of sustainability.

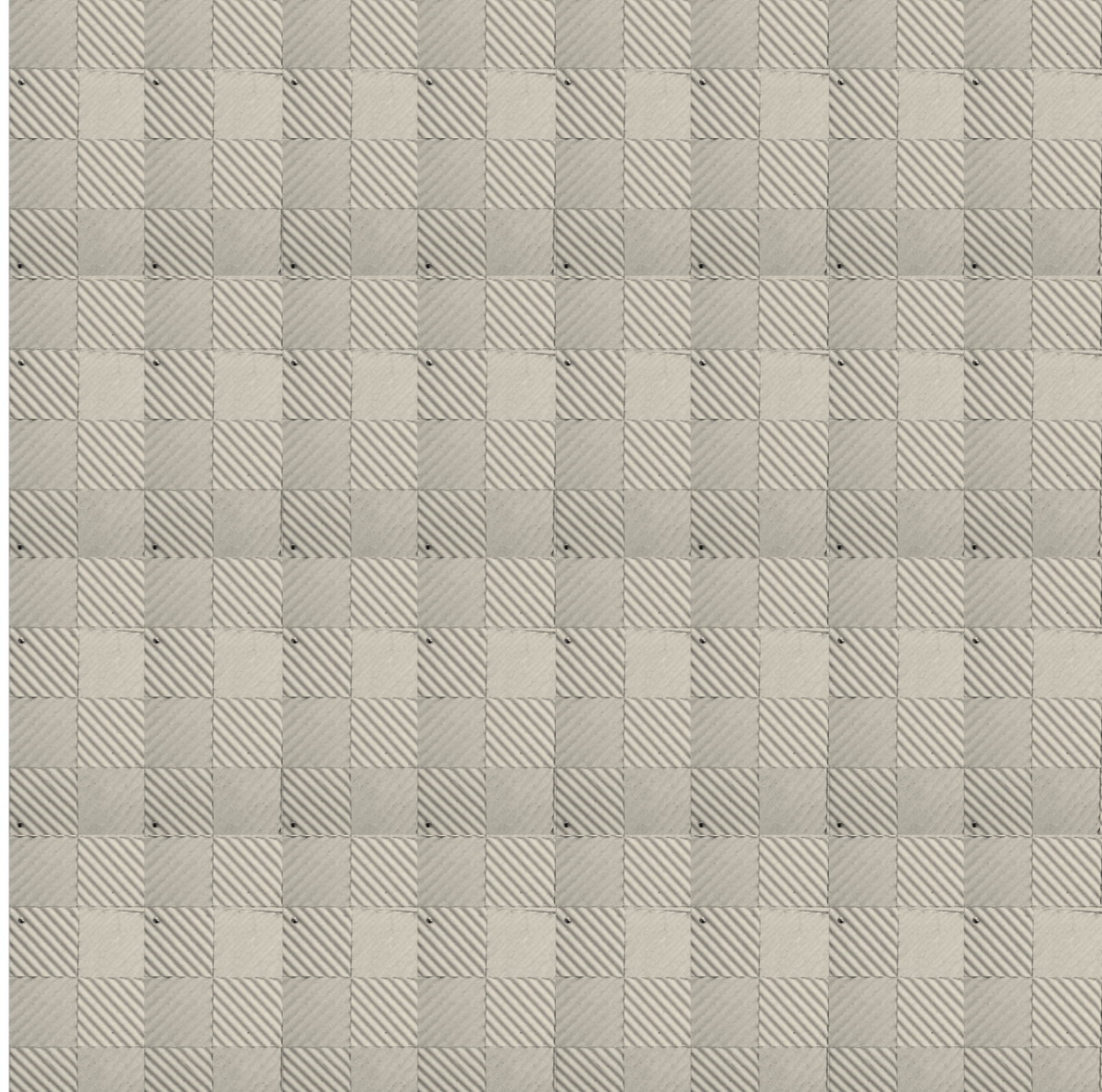
However, we have to practice. If we want to work with ornament we have to really work with it, we have to bring it in earlier in the process and we have to put effort on it. It applies for ornament as for all parts of architecture, it needs to be worked through to be good in the end. The design exploration within this thesis was my own first try, hopefully the more I practice the better the design.

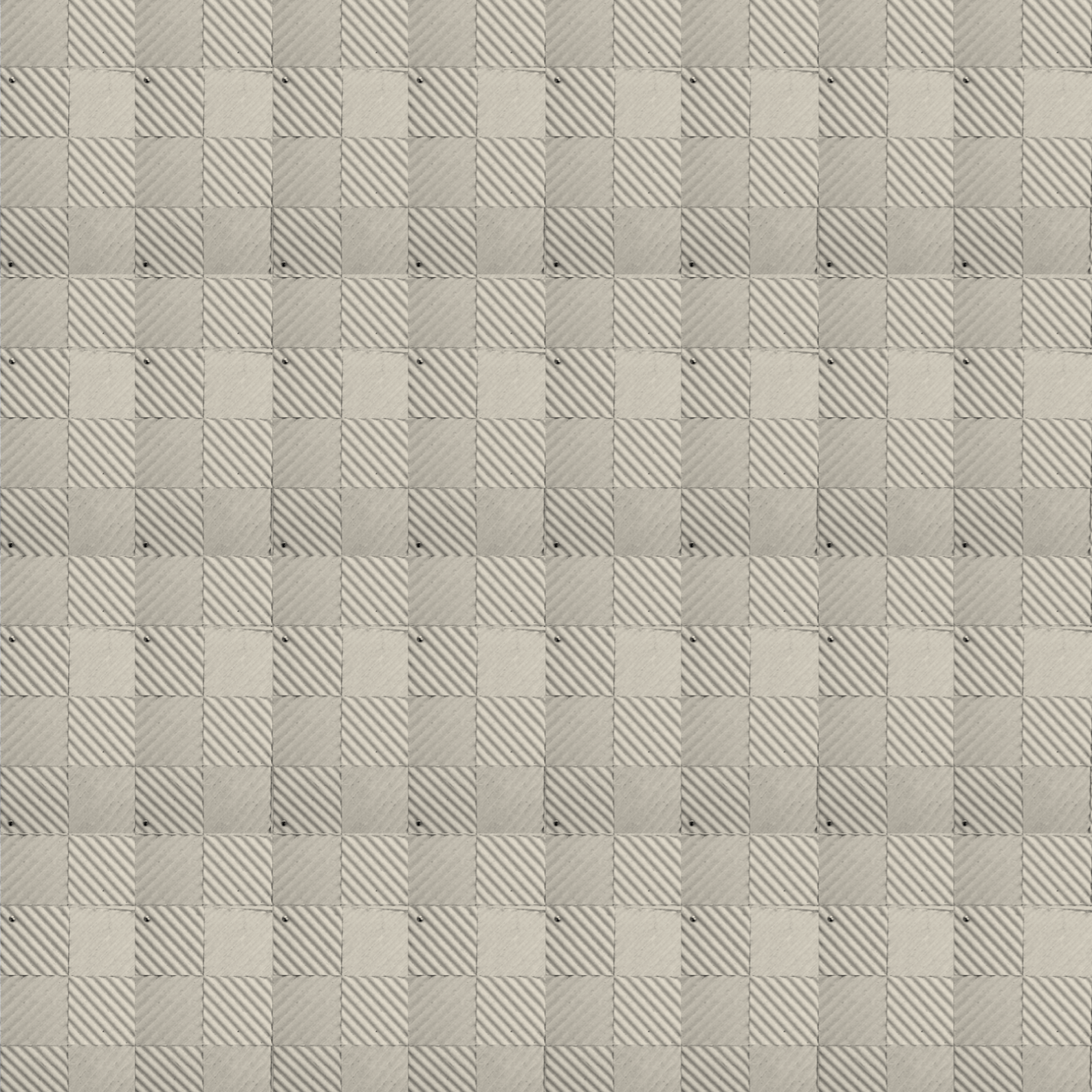
This thesis adds on to an ongoing and increasing discourse about norms and modernistic standards in architecture. A current, quite provocative, Swedish example is the so called *Arkitekturupproret* (architecture rebellion), a Facebook group with more than 17 000 members and the slogan "*There are alternatives to square boxes*". I obviously agree that there are, but their opinion seems to be that the alternatives are to find even further back in history than modernism. That I do not agree with, my aim with this thesis is has been to be an add on to a discourse that hopefully can stretch the tense framework that we are supposed to be creative within and by that generate *new* alternatives, or mixed alternatives, not other old ones. All I ask for is a bit of reflection and diversity.

”

*But I said, 'Do not weep. Do you not see the greatness of our age resides in our very inability to create new ornament? We have gone beyond ornament, we have achieved plain, undecorated simplicity. Behold, the time is at hand, fulfillment awaits us. Soon the streets of the cities will shine like white walls! (...) Then fulfillment will be ours.*

- ADOLF LOOS, 1913





6.

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IMAGES

*Figure. 1.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cueva\\_de\\_las\\_Manos#/media/File:SantaCruz-CuevaManos-P221o651b.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cueva_de_las_Manos#/media/File:SantaCruz-CuevaManos-P221o651b.jpg)

*Figure. 2.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_of\\_Edfu#/media/File:S1o.o8\\_Edfu\\_image\\_9885.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Edfu#/media/File:S1o.o8_Edfu_image_9885.jpg)

*Figure. 3.* Retrieved from [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympi%C3%A9ion\\_\(Ath%C3%A8nes\)#/media/File:Temple\\_of\\_Olympian\\_Zeus\\_-\\_Olympieion.jpg](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympi%C3%A9ion_(Ath%C3%A8nes)#/media/File:Temple_of_Olympian_Zeus_-_Olympieion.jpg)

*Figure. 4.* Retrieved from [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arc\\_de\\_Titus#/media/File:Ac\\_titus\\_face\\_est.jpg](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arc_de_Titus#/media/File:Ac_titus_face_est.jpg)

*Figure. 5.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reims\\_Cathedral#/media/File:Reims\\_Cathedral-3.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reims_Cathedral#/media/File:Reims_Cathedral-3.jpg)

*Figure. 6.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa\\_Maria\\_Novella#/media/File:Santa\\_Maria\\_Novella.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Maria_Novella#/media/File:Santa_Maria_Novella.jpg)

*Figure. 7.* Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trevi\\_Fountain,\\_Rome,\\_Italy\\_2\\_-\\_May\\_2007.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trevi_Fountain,_Rome,_Italy_2_-_May_2007.jpg)

*Figure. 8.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wainwright\\_Building#/media/File:Wainwright\\_building\\_st\\_louis\\_USA.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wainwright_Building#/media/File:Wainwright_building_st_louis_USA.jpg)

*Figure. 9.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Majolica\\_House\\_facade.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Majolica_House_facade.jpg)

*Figure. 10.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrysler\\_Building](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrysler_Building)

*Figure. 11.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa\\_Savoye#/media/File:VillaSavoye.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_Savoye#/media/File:VillaSavoye.jpg)

*Figure. 12.* Retrieved from <http://venture-scottbrown.org/pdfs/BestProductsor.pdf>

*Figure. 13.* Retrieved from <http://www.mirohotelbilbao.com/content/imgsxml/en/fondos/diruna-con-nubes-i-hd.jpg>

*Figure. 14.* Retrieved from [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allianz\\_Arena#/media/File:Allianzarenacombo.jpg](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allianz_Arena#/media/File:Allianzarenacombo.jpg)

*Figure. 15.* Retrieved from <http://designresearch.sva.edu/research/patterns-of-ornament-technology-and-theory-in-contemporary-architectural-decoration-2/>

*Figure. 16.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenzhen\\_Bao'an\\_International\\_Airport#/media/File:Shenzhen-airport-detail.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenzhen_Bao'an_International_Airport#/media/File:Shenzhen-airport-detail.JPG)

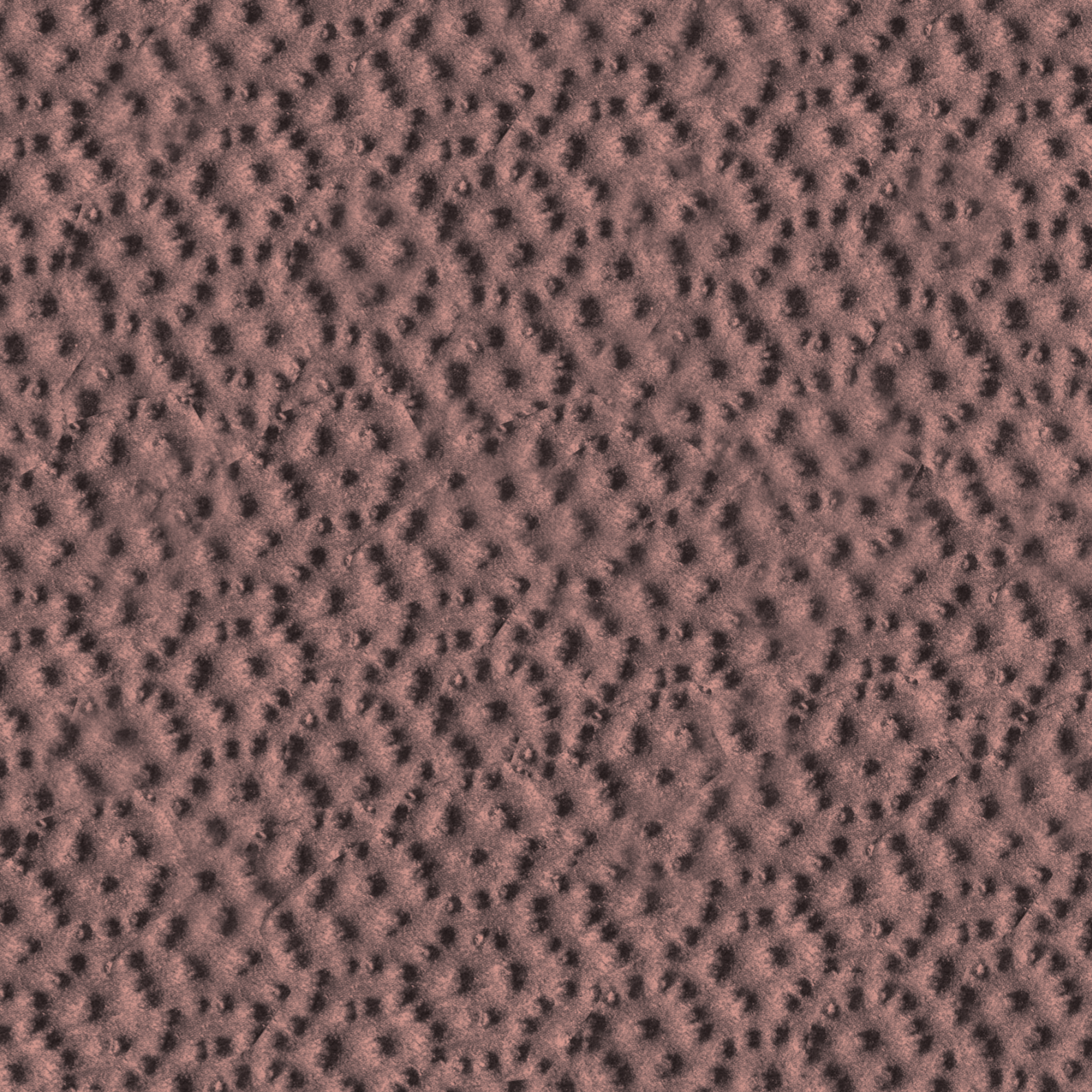
*Figure. 17.* Retrieved from <http://www.emergingobjects.com/project/quake-column/>

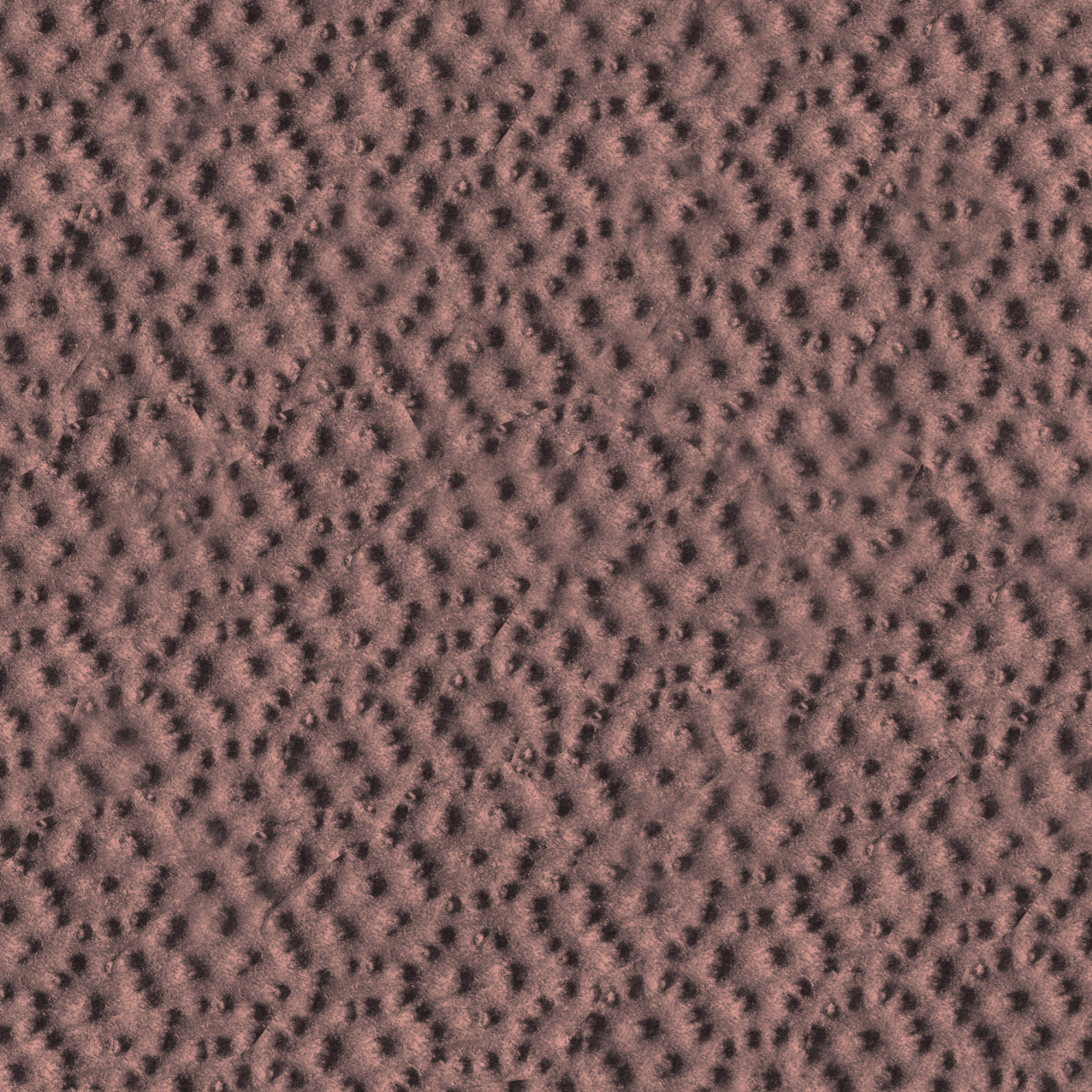
*Figure. 18.* Veach, Z. (2014). Retrieved from <http://architecture.yale.edu/gallery/ornament-theory-and-design>

*Figure. 19.* Retrieved from <https://global.britannica.com/biography/Ludwig-Mies-van-der-Rohe>

*Figure. 20.* Retrieved from <http://news.cision.com/danish-agency-for-culture/i/skovbund-wallpaper-by-arne-jacobsen-1944--courtesy-of-the-danish-library-of-architecture--design-a,c1467682>

*Figure. 21.* Retrieved from [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back\\_Olof\\_Andersson#/media/File:Backolofandersson1808bondepart.jpg](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back_Olof_Andersson#/media/File:Backolofandersson1808bondepart.jpg)





7.

THANKS

## 7.1

### THANK YOU!

I believe in working together. To get a better result and to have a more pleasant journey. Here is my thanks to all of you who have been my companions during this thesis journey.

Emilio and Joaquim for tutoring

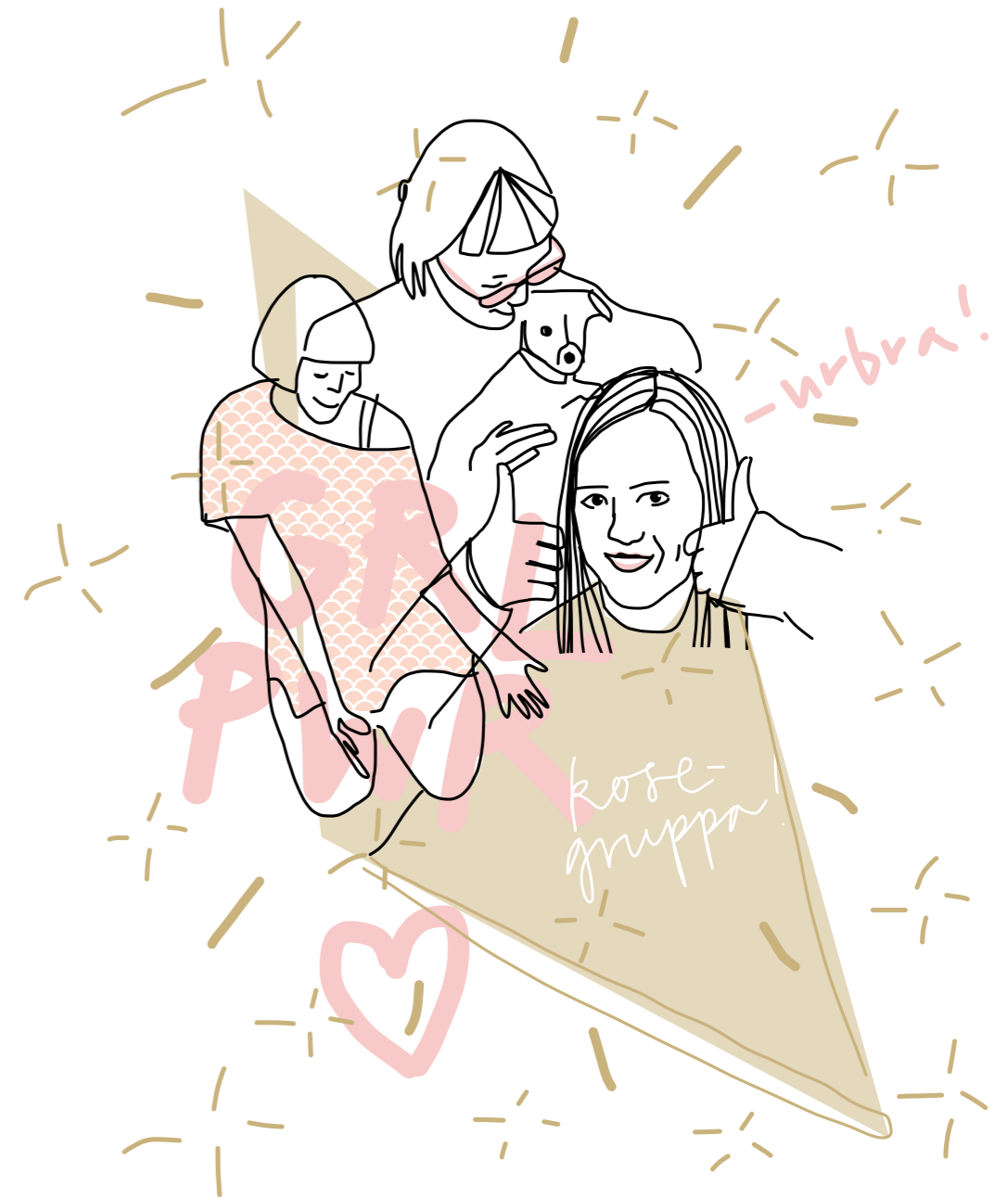
Leksands kummun for digital material

Ola Thuvesson for involvement and encouragement

Robin for enduring my project swing

All my fellow students on third floor for doing this together! Without you no thesis. You are all stars! Special thanks to Filippa, who have been my companion since our very first year at Chalmers, without whom these years would have been much duller. If ever finished.

Over and out!



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*Perhaps  
ornament is  
not a guilty  
pleasure  
after all,  
perhaps it is  
just a  
pleasure.*

