

# Introduction

## Logic of “Crossover-architecture”

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“Crossover-architecture,” which applies the idea of Xover to architecture, dissolves the concept of architecture as we know it along with its concrete design language that has long been branded a modern style of the 20th century. Instead, it constructs a theory of space that is inherently linked to the more continuous relationship between architecture and human beings.

Architecture is monumental in nature. As is often referred to regarding food, clothing, and shelter, architecture is also a civilization before it is a culture; furthermore, architecture is one of the fundamental necessities we need for survival, and has been since the beginning of recorded history. Thus, it is impossible to separate architecture from human history, and the lifespan of architectural structure is often much longer than that of individual people. However, from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century (when modernism was advocated to replace formalism) the separation of actual human history from the expression of historicism was confused. As such, the monumentality of architecture in modernism is misunderstood as a fixed expression from a particular time. Inevitably, any period of time is extremely ephemeral; thus, I believe that the static pressure that encapsulates the social value of today's architectural designs is derived solely from the exaggerated distortion of its monumentality.

Indeed, a series of post-modern attempts can be seen as constituting a common epoch among those who have acknowledged the problem. However, the post-modernist method of collaging and assembling the symbolic form (which stripped the period’ s meaning from the historical form of the past) became a constraint on the designs of post-modernists in that the form itself was not renewed, which thus depreciates architecture and leads to a bitter existence formed from cynical criticism. If those who do not specialize in architecture think that architecture is distant from them, it largely results from the magnitude of this effect.

However, architecture exists far longer than any single human being, yet cannot exist unless it is constantly and closely linked to human history. Therefore, the original monumentality of architecture is not created by a specific symbolic form but is always deriving its significance by someone seeing and experiencing the architecture; architecture’ s monumentality is constantly updated, even for the same architecture.

In fact, this idea came from the cities of Weimar and Berlin.

It was born out of my knowledge of the Nietzsche-Archiv in Weimar and the Reichstag, the German parliament, in Berlin. I believe the two buildings survived the sad history of World Wars I and II with a very high level of intelligence and different monumental significance, the former symbolizing modernity and the latter postwar democracy.

For people today, who now have increasing opportunities to face extremely interactive surfaces with computers, the future

design of architecture will require a sufficiently innovative method of securing "blank” (i.e., a space used to represent something else) that will enable us to update more monuments. Furthermore, this method will eventually emerge in our living spaces in the form of architectural expression as visual art.

If we imagine the origin of our living spaces, originally there would not have been a concept of the “field” of design, which is an ingenuity created by humans for comfortable and useful living. As a significant number of designs have been created, and by many people and have been archived since recorded history, a method of categorization was the only rational way to classify them conveniently and to pass on each design’ s techniques efficiently. Because the concept of “field” is nearly synonymous with the type of technology, a design should be considered a complex of multiple technological systems, such as textiles, paintings, ceramics, sculptures, architecture, and images. If it is a field (i.e., a type of technology) that dictates the design, this is clearly putting the cart before the horse.

However, for us in the twenty-first century, we are too accustomed to organizing and understanding things within the concept of fields that were established mainly in the twentieth century. Therefore, to make design understood easily, if we review what design should be from the perspective of the concept of a field in a retrograde way, then we can describe the state as “crossover-media.” In this context, “media” is defined as the format within which the technology of each field is an output. In short, a field’ s absence is, relatively speaking, a state of crossing over between diverse fields.

Furthermore, when we consider this idea in terms of architecture’ s tangible output, the following logic emerges: in order for architecture to be truly a comprehensive art, it must consist of designs from fields other than architecture. In other words, architecture does not contain only the field of architecture among various fields.

In this exhibition, a logic of "crossover-media” limited to architecture is defined as a logic of “crossover-architecture.”

As I mentioned earlier, architecture is monumental in nature, but from this logic, the monumentality of “crossover-architecture” always comes through technology.



**Nietzsche-Archiv.** photo© Taishi Watanabe



This is so because the absence of the field of architecture operates by the same principle as the absence of architectural technology. In other words, because architecture does not have a field of architecture itself, architectural technology must always derive from another field (i.e., another type of technology). Originally, the specific technology used was intended for purposes other than architecture, so it is probably incorporated into architecture later. Examples include technologies used for building ships and airplanes in the twentieth century, projection mapping, and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies today. However, here, I would like to cover a smaller and more familiar technology.

In crossover-architecture, creating a void of monumentality means intentionally creating a void of technology (fields). From the opposite perspective, the renewal of monumentality emerges from the values of new technologies (fields).

Based on this line of reasoning, the phase, “crossover-architecture” , is defined as follows:

- 1. Covering or involving methods in fields (i.e., technologies) other than architecture in design or production.**
- 2. Having a manufacturing process that does not separate designers (i.e., architects) and builders (craftsmen).**
- 3. As a result, the structure’ s design covers the parts of the building, such as the walls, floor slabs, columns, and windows (the design of the structure’ s framework does not match the framework’ s functions).**

In this exhibition, we restored forged nails used in the five-story pagoda of the Horyuji Temple, which was built in the sixth century (and is Japan’ s oldest existing wooden building). Additionally, we used the forged nail as a concrete milestone for the term “crossover-architecture.”

These forged nails were made for constructing the pagoda’ s ancient wooden skyscraper. It is easy to imagine that the same blacksmiths who made swords and ritual tools also produced these nails. The skyscraper itself is made of wood and



*Reichstag.* photo© Taishi Watanabe

constructed by carpenters, however, these forged nails were inserted in such a way that they could not be seen from outside. Because the nails are hidden, the five-storied pagoda is now entrusted with the monumentality of being "Japan's oldest wooden structure" after fifteen hundred years. However, simultaneously, the structure included the most advanced technology that represented the progressiveness of Buddhism, which was introduced in Japan at the same time. As such, if we know about this forged nail in our own time, then this five-storied pagoda will be lent a sense of monumentality and a significant sense of value. Therefore, in this exhibition, this five-storied pagoda is presented in the context of its monumentality, which we call “crossover-architecture.”

In this way, the addition of another field or technology (such as forged nails) creates that sense of monumentality. Similarly to the five-story pagoda, other exhibits show that the design of modern and contemporary Japanese architecture was cut out and presented as a technical representation from the perspective of “crossover-architecture” , or as “architecture brought about by something other than architecture.”

In fact, the peculiarity of "Japanese” modern architecture is expressed in the exhibitions. Approximately 150 years ago, Japan modernized itself by importing civilized culture from Western countries; architecture is one such example. At that time, a distinct field of architecture, as well as the technology called architecture, had not yet been recognized. In those days, Japan’ s industry of modern architecture was started by a group of craftsmen other than carpenters. A typical example is pseudo-Western-style (Giyo-fu) architecture, which resembled Western-style construction but relied on the techniques of traditional Japanese wooden architecture. As such, the designs similar to Giyo-fu are collectively called “Japanese spirit with Western technology” (Wakon-yosai) or “harmonization of Japanese and Western style” (Wayo-secchu). In other words, Japanese modern and contemporary architecture is essentially an extension of these styles, and has been a long-standing problem for Japanese architects. Therefore, in this exhibition, by reviewing the peculiarity not as a mixture of Japanese and Western styles, but as architecture in other fields, we intend to share the architectural potential with Europe, and with the world, as “crossover-architecture.” I aspire for people worldwide to observe the different architectural methods and expressions produced in other countries (such as Japan) and compare them to their own environments in which they were born and raised, yet also doing so from a universal perspective.

The exhibits here each demonstrate crossover-architecture individually, while the combination of exhibits is intended to amplify your understanding of the overall state of crossover-architecture. In the practical section, you’ ll be able to see some of the specific architectural design practices used in this type of architecture.