



The Deconstructivism and Digital Design Movements

Manifesto:

Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, "Deconstructivist Architecture" (1988)

If there is one thing about which all deconstructivists agree, it is that there is no one thing about which all deconstructivists agree. What are we to make of a movement that picks apart the very concept of "movement?" Of science without truth, texts without authors, and buildings without visible structural logic? Deconstruction is the expression of an age that has lost faith in the idea that there is a key out there that will unlock the mysteries of the universe, if only we can find it. Fuhgeddaboutit.

It must have been with a certain sense of irony, then, that Mark Wigley and the venerable Philip Johnson put together their landmark exhibition, "Deconstructivist Architecture," back in 1988. The tortured angularity of Daniel Libeskind; the plastic

fluidity of Frank Gehry; the theorizing in three dimensions of Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Zaha Hadid, and Coop Himmelblau—the only thing their architecture seemed to have in common was to question the very notion of architecture.

But that was nearly twenty years ago. While academics have begun to weary of the language of arbitrariness, disjunction, and nonlinearity, and are busily scouting out the next new thing, architects and designers have increasingly embraced it, aided and abetted by the power of the computer as a design tool. The full bloom of deconstructivism may not be represented by a building at all, however, but by that phenomenally successful product, the iPod Shuffle—because "life is random." ▶

