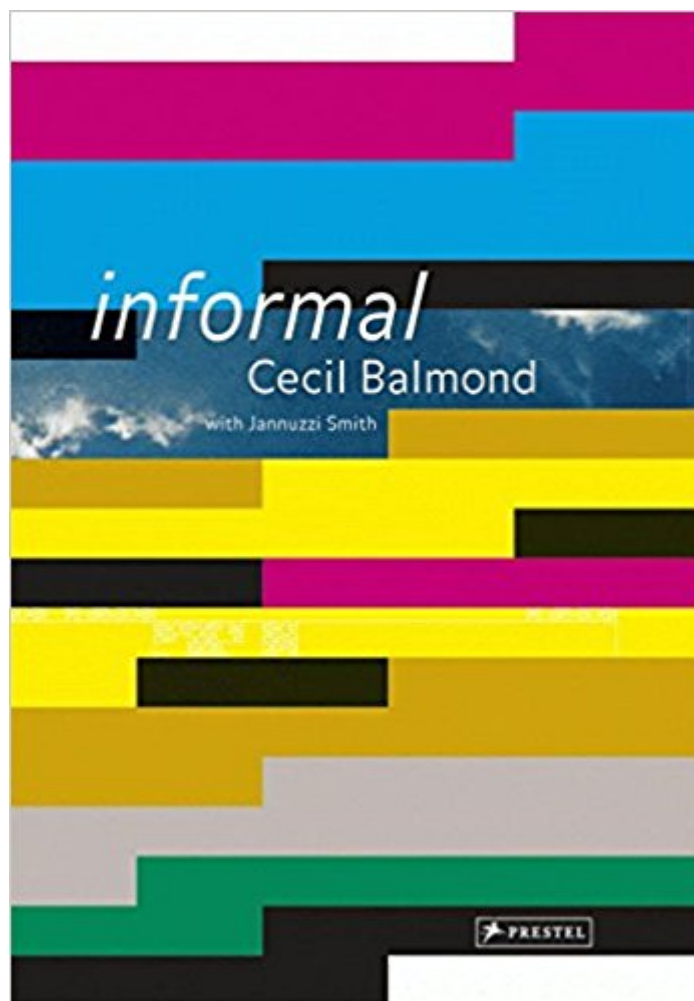


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# Informal



## Synopsis

Balmond is making the transition from structural engineer working alongside other architects to an architect in his own right. His structural thinking differs from that of others in his field, in its completely innovative conception of the engineer's contribution to architecture. The plasticity of architectural plans is enhanced through a decisive promotion of their structural designs. The borderline between structure and architecture thus becomes increasingly blurred. This process is explained in detail in "Informal" by reference to eight seminal projects. Balmond elucidates the theoretical basis of his engineering and architectural solutions, and his sketches transcend purely technical illustration - they are key to his approach. "Informal" invites readers to rethink their understanding of the relationships between architecture, design and engineering.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A Koolhaas-slick monograph with Balmond's own manifesto-style meditations on everything from fractal geometry to Victorian tiles. -- The New York Times  
A riveting and articulate take on the chaos factor rapidly infiltrating engineering and architecture...A clear and highly engaging view ahead. -- Jay Merrick in The Independent  
One of the most visionary and influential engineers of his generation. -- Architects' Journal

Balmond's structural thinking differs from that of other engineers in his field in its completely new conception of the engineer's contribution to architecture. The plasticity of architectural plans is

enhanced through a decisive development of its structural design. The borderline between structure and architecture thus becomes increasingly blurred. This process is explained in detail in "Informal" by reference to 8 exemplary projects. The author makes the theoretical basis of his engineering solutions understandable to the reader and his sketches are more than just purely technical illustrations - they are the key to his approach. After reading "Informal", architects will have to rethink their understanding of many well-known buildings. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I wanted to dislike Informal. I was frothing at the mouth ready to find fault with the book...up until I read it. And it was stellar. I'm actually kind of upset this isn't required reading in my architecture school. The ultimate benefit of reading Informal is in getting a glimpse into how Balmond thinks. Regardless of whether or not the end products were built, seeing how he thinks his way through problems makes you wish his overwhelming creativity would wash off on you. Balmond explores structure as a possibility rather than a limitation. He conceives highly imaginative and innovative solutions that work symbiotically with the architecture. He writes with humane prose and presents his ideas with inquisitive boyishness, in no way belying his erudition. Genius. Pure and simple. Worth every dime.

This is a book for both architects and structural engineers to read and learn how collaboration between the two can be taken into a higher creative level instead of the status quo.

Wonderful book that bridges the gap between engineering and art.

This book perfectly encapsulates the art of the engineer and how the very best modern buildings are a blend of architecture and engineering.

Gorgeous book! Amazing how she describes how it is to work with the famous architects of the moment and the creative solution that she provides to structure issues

Great!

the book is perfect, easy texts for an architect to understand and great solutions for formal and informal structures. Cecil is a genius

Informal is an extraordinary work. I guess the reason why it's so shocking is that the content of the book is not like those static structural forms or solutions that we see in structural class. The case studies that Balmond brings to the table are very recent and genuine by star architects. I guess I was shocked by the fact that all these architects are not structurally oriented architects such as Foster/ Piano/ Calatrava/ Hopkins. Rather, they are theoretically approaching architects such as Koolhaas/ Liebskind; or, tectonically approaching architects such as Siza. I never thought projects by them had anything to do with structural or mathematical innovation. Reading Informal, one can easily detect where the originality lie in each project. Sometimes it's in the irregularity of geometry or sometimes it's in mathematical mystery. Balmond contends that they are all in mother nature. Unlike a formal structural engineering (e.g. Peter Rice) Balmond's originality comes from the informal networks. In High-tech, the ingenuity of structural entity was condensed into joinery. Informal networks is much more diverse and complex than that. It is against the conventional formal structural idea of hierarchy/center/symmetry. Balmond argues, formal approach is defining a problem in a "fixed" or "contained" manner; hence, leading to a same old idea of solution/ detailing. In Informal, Balmond redefines it in a more active/dynamic geometry, to bring about unexpected realities. Sometimes through structural innovation and sometimes through special surface treatment, Balmond promoted and realized the ideas of star architects. Overall, he has freed architecture from the "Cartesian Cage".

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