



# ARK-A3001 Design of Structures\_Basics Force Distribution

**Toni Kotnik**

Professor of Design of Structures

Aalto University  
Department of Architecture  
Department of Civil Engineering

**Poisson-effect**  
**stress**  
**stress-strain diagram**  
**beam**  
**cantilever**  
**bending**  
**structure & architectural concept**

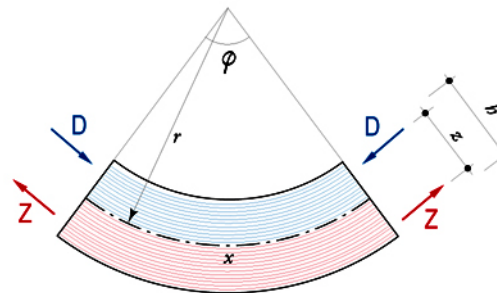
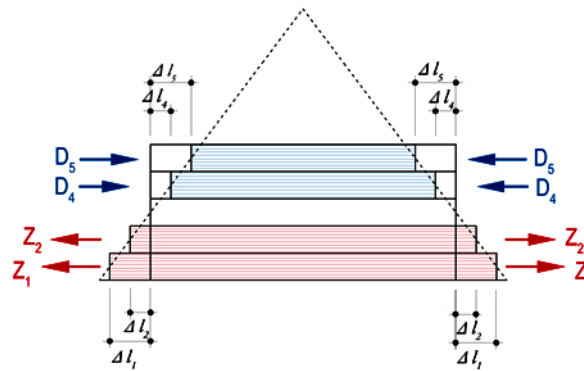
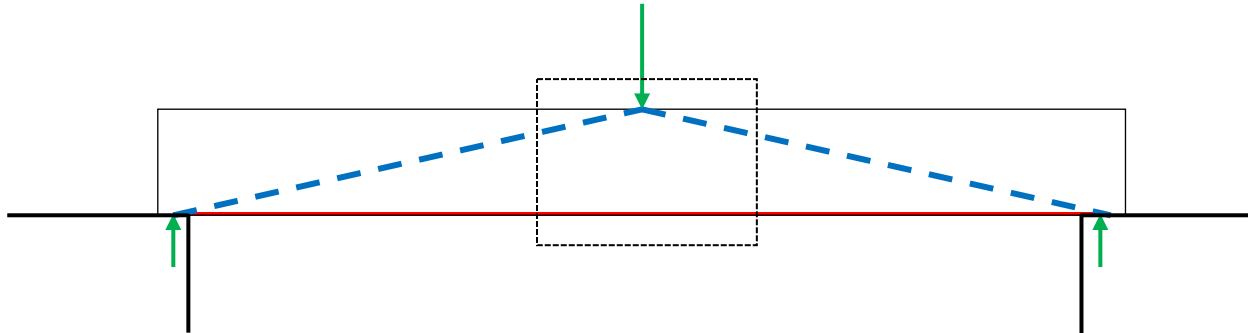


**ARK-A3001 Design of Structures\_Basics**  
**Tension & Compression**

**Toni Kotnik**

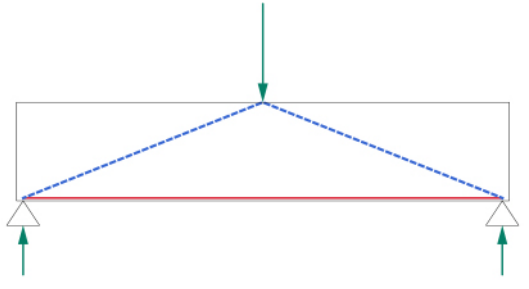
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# Bending

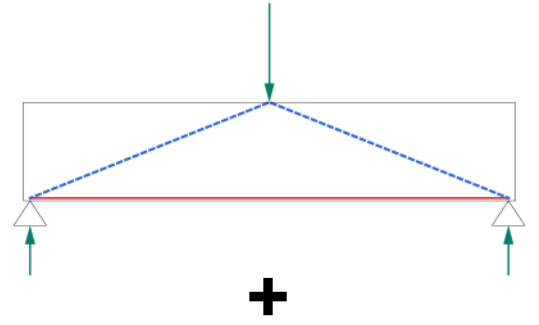


compression and tension in the same section results in **bending**

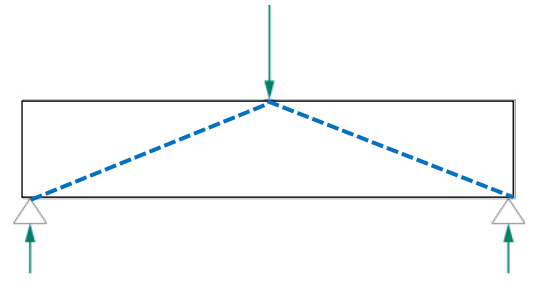
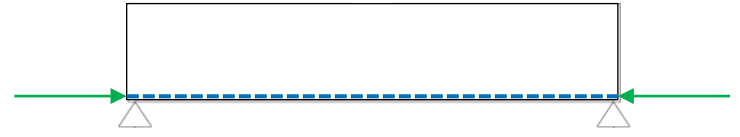
# Post-Tensioned Beam



strategy against bending →



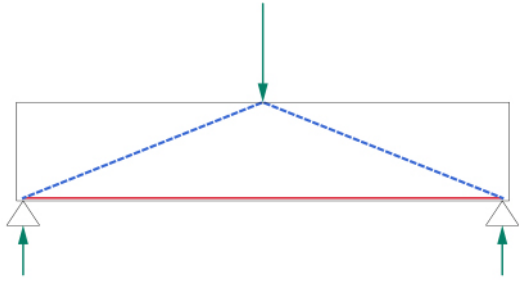
tension cable to press both ends of beam together



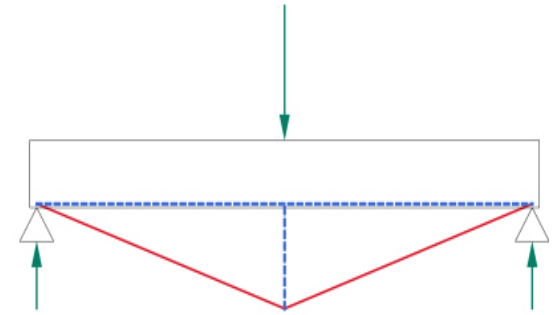
compression and tension in the same section results in **bending**

compensate tension by additional compression

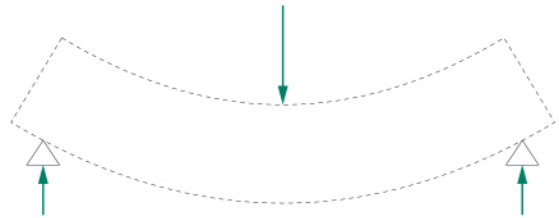
# Bracing



strategy against bending →



isolate effect of tension and compression into independent elements



compression and tension in the same section results in **bending**

separate tension and compression

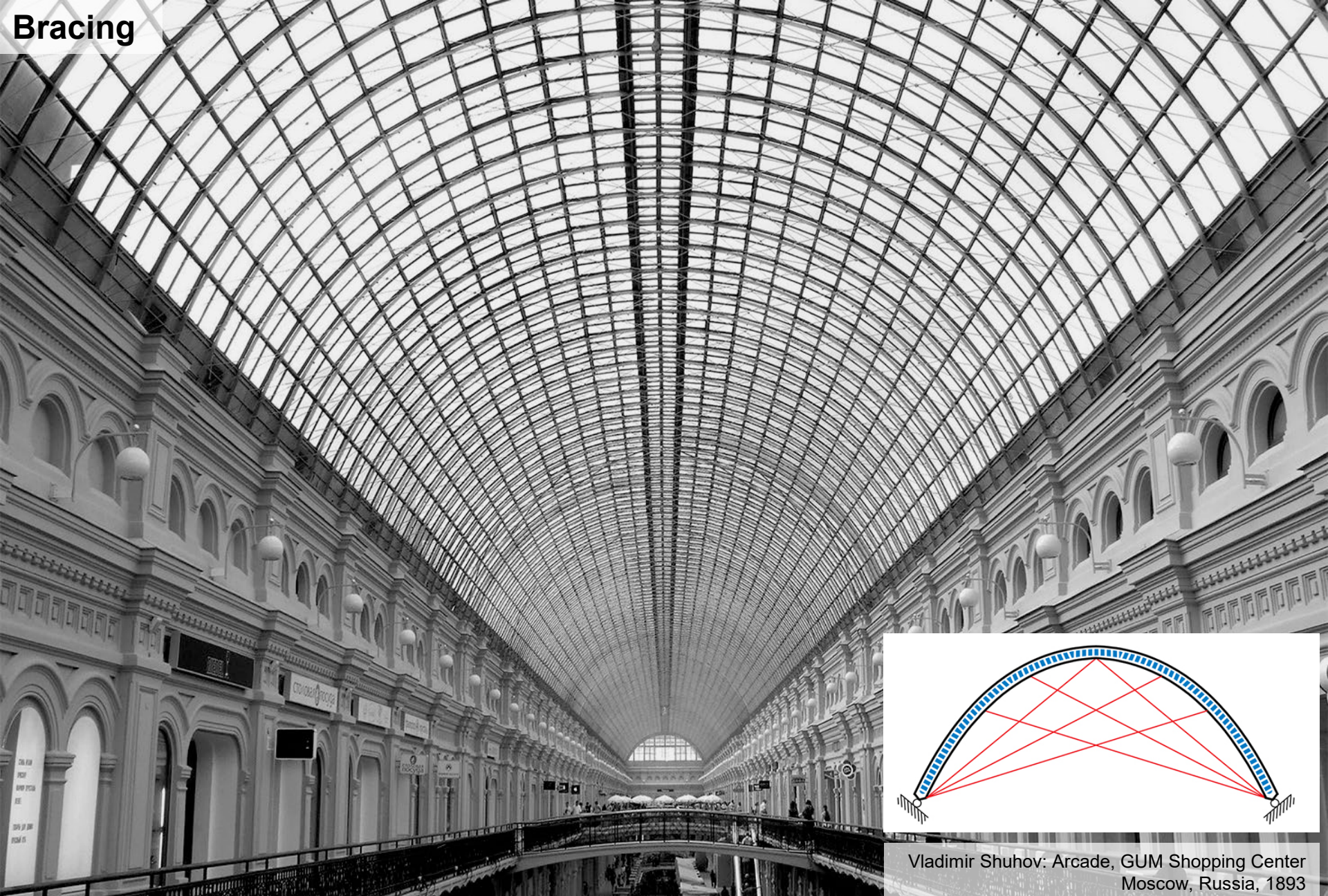
# Bracing



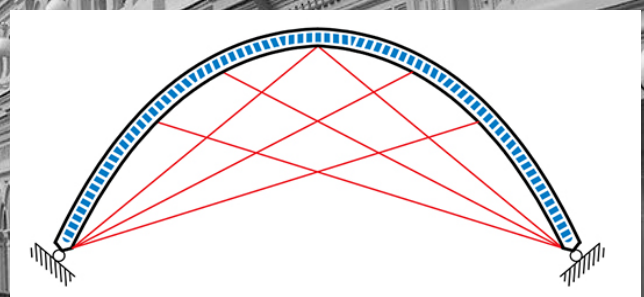
Bridge over Mura River  
Beltinci, Slovenia, 2003



Grimshaw Architects: Airside Center  
Zurich Airport, Switzerland, 2003



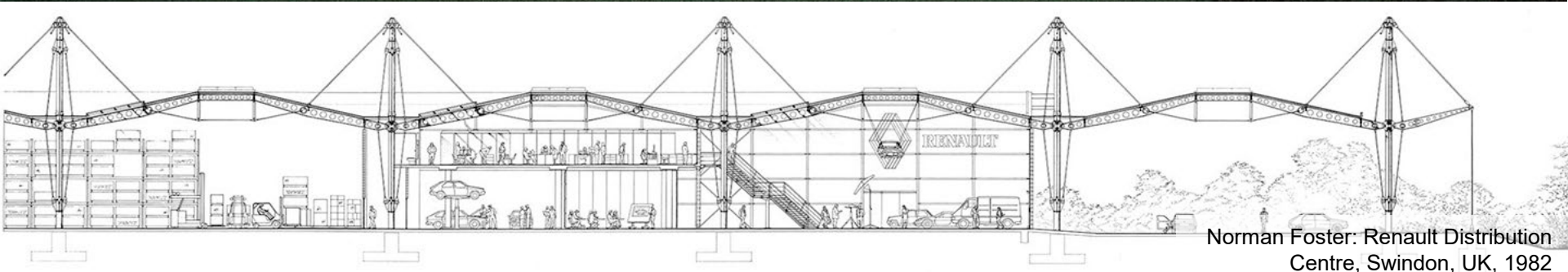
# Bracing



Vladimir Shuhov: Arcade, GUM Shopping Center  
Moscow, Russia, 1893



# Bracing

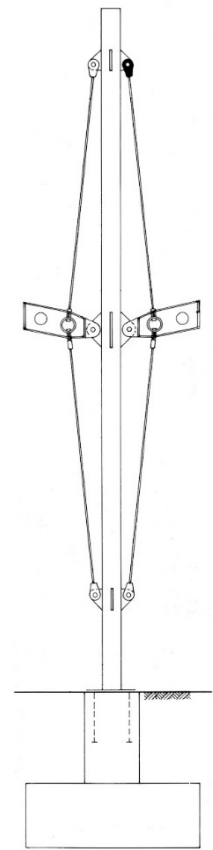
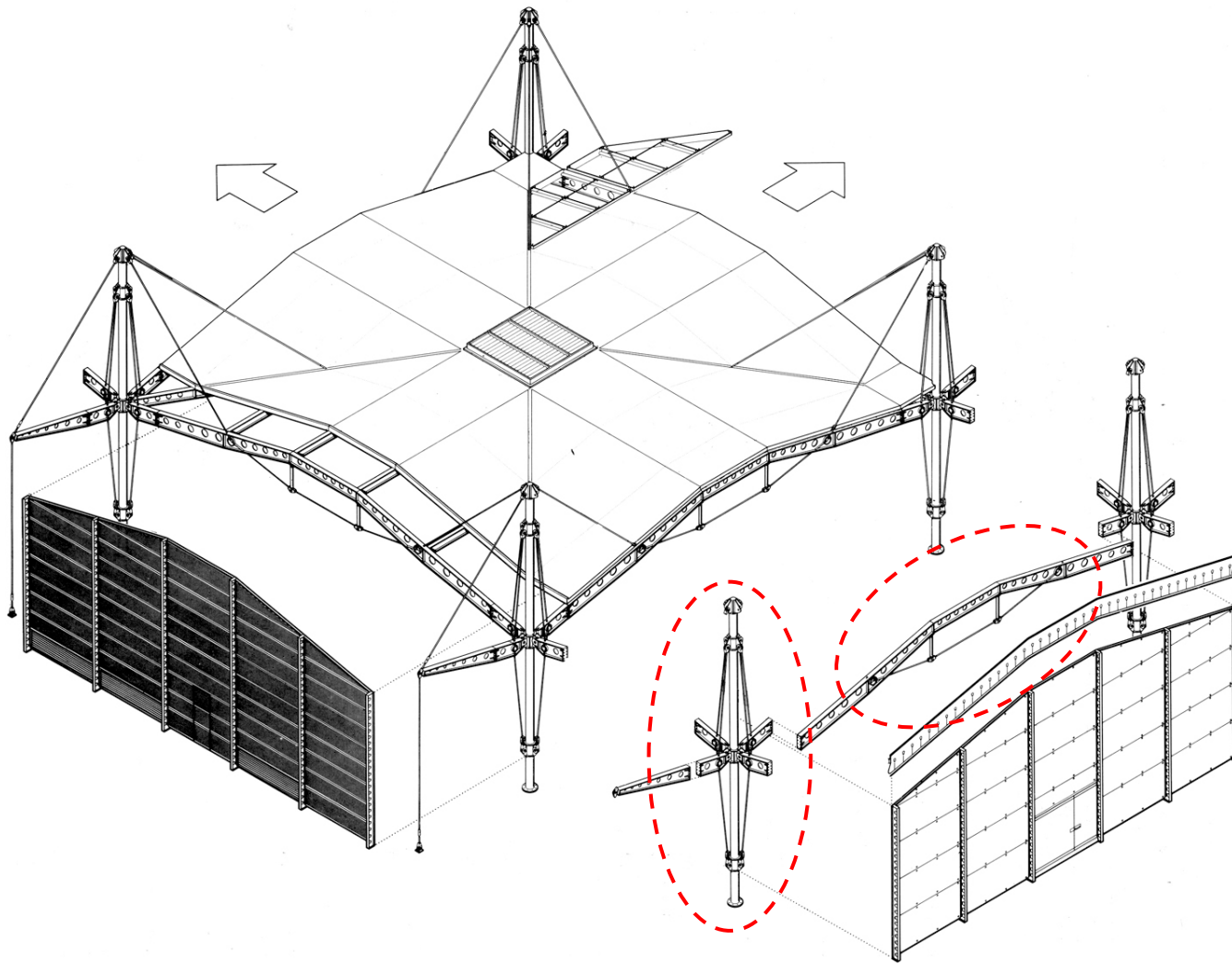


Norman Foster: Renault Distribution Centre, Swindon, UK, 1982



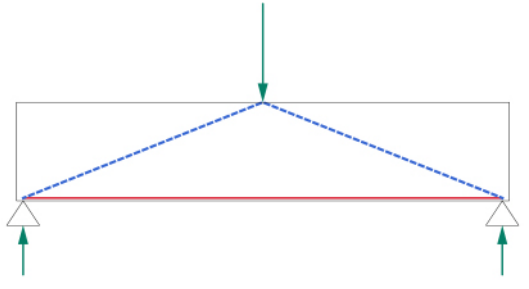
Norman Foster: Renault Distribution Centre, Swindon, UK, 1982

# Bracing

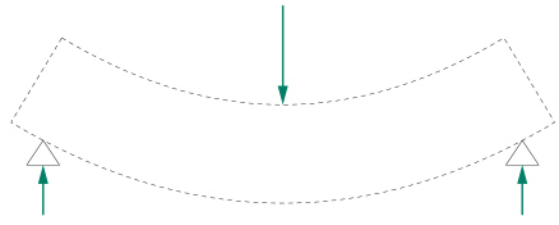
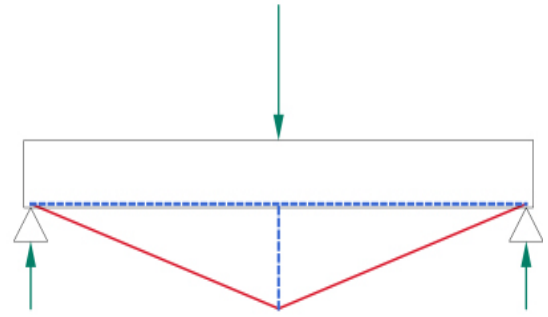


Norman Foster: Renault Distribution Centre, Swindon, UK, 1982

# Bracing



strategy against bending →



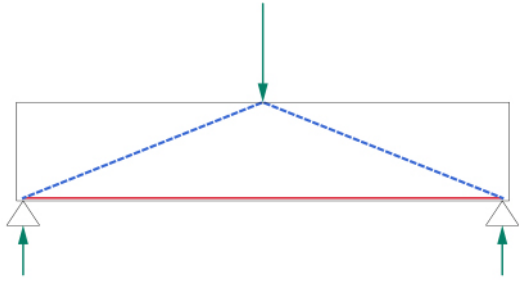
isolate effect of tension and compression into independent elements

compression and tension in the same section results in **bending**

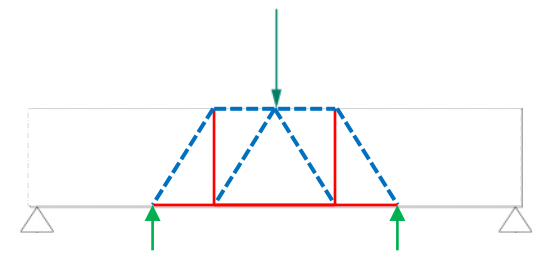
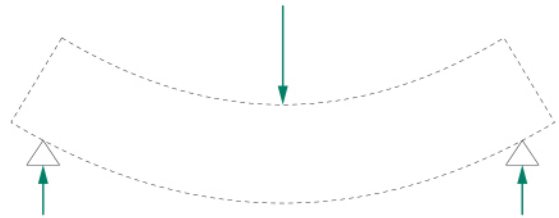
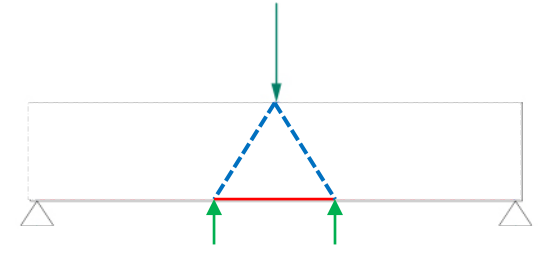
keep inner forces small to save material

separate tension and compression

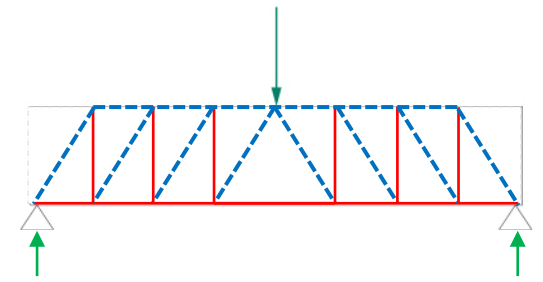
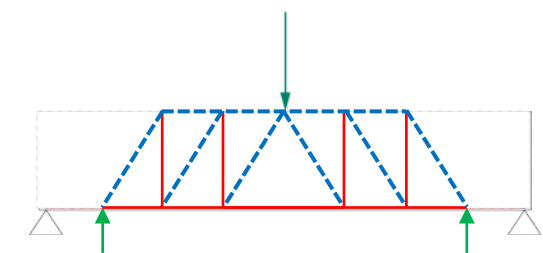
# Truss



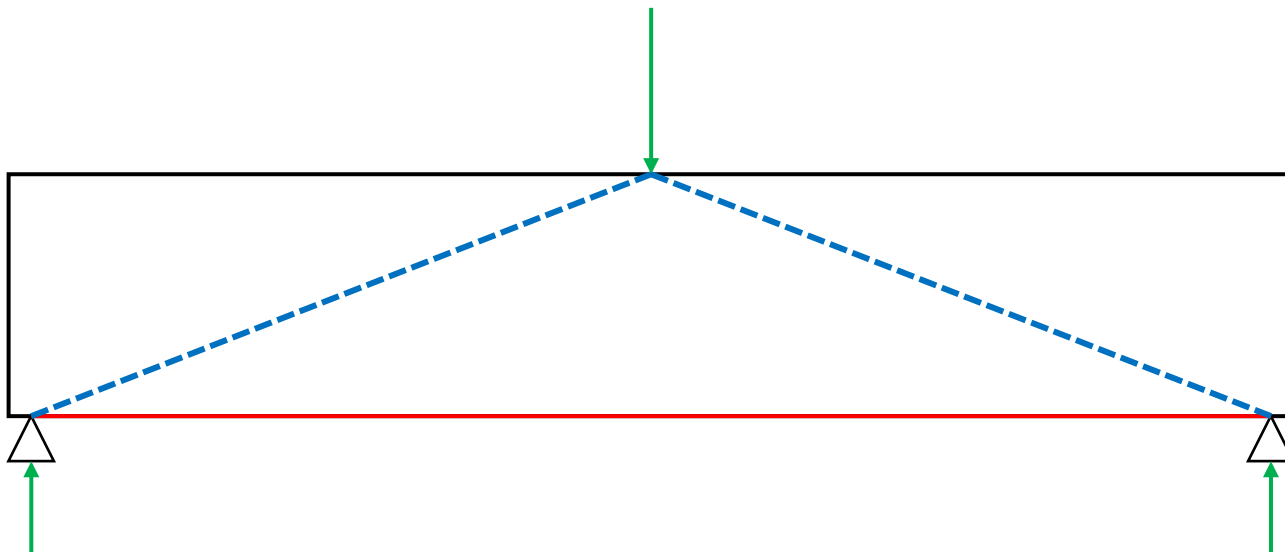
strategy against bending



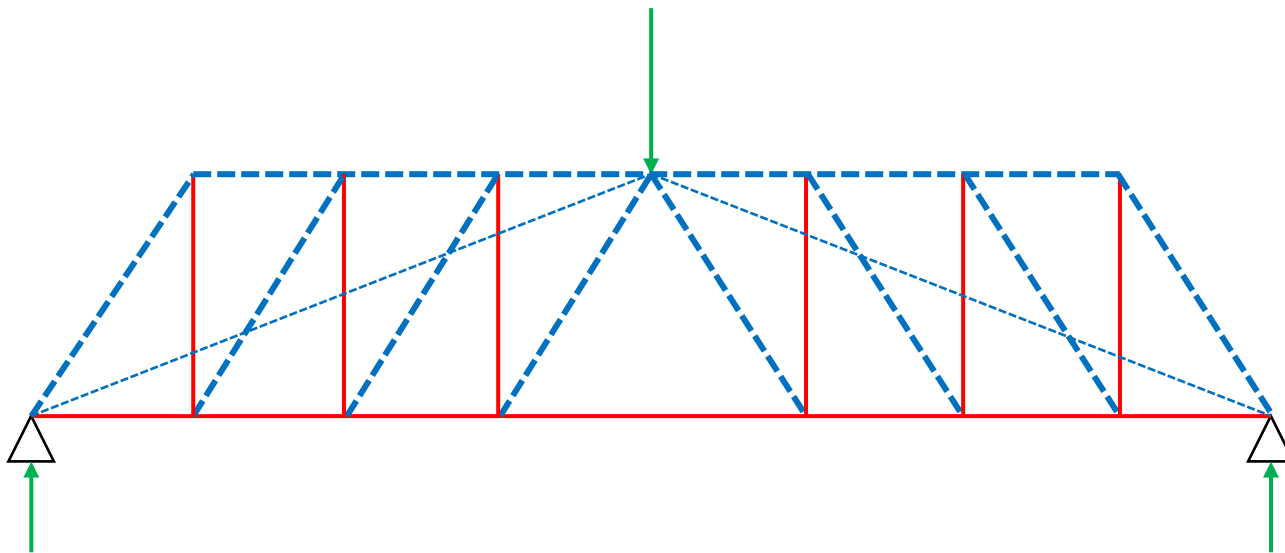
compression and tension in the same section results in **bending**



# Truss



distribution of forces into the neighborhood





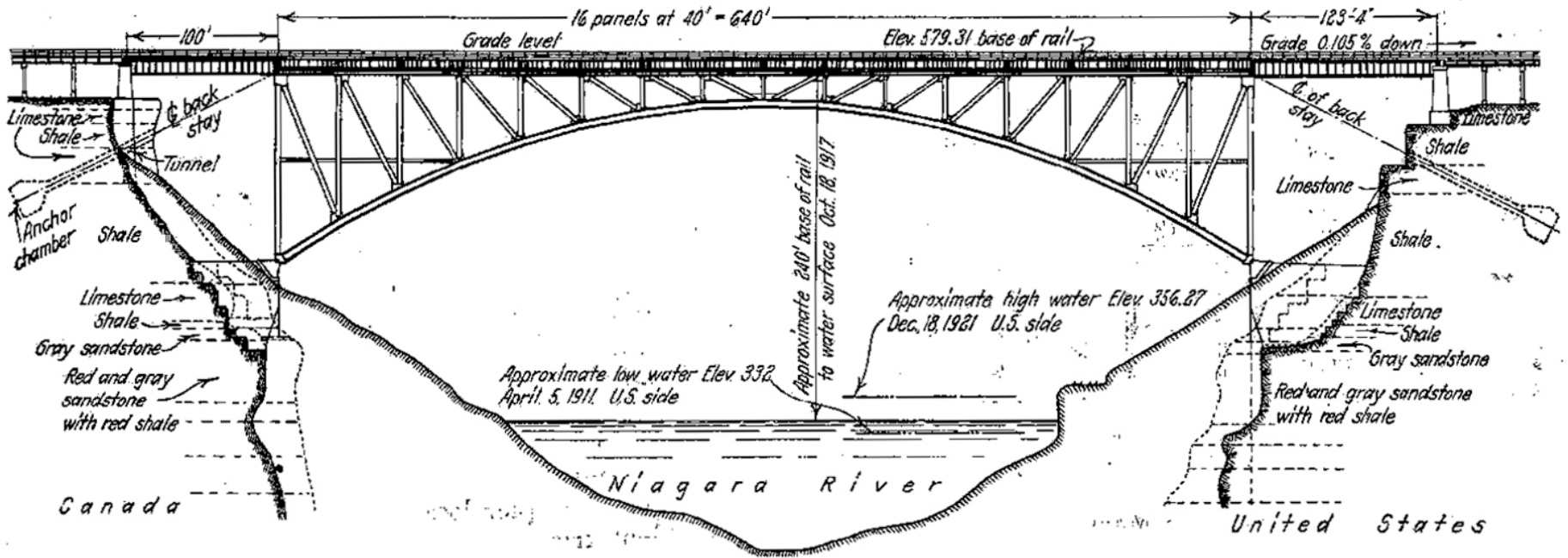
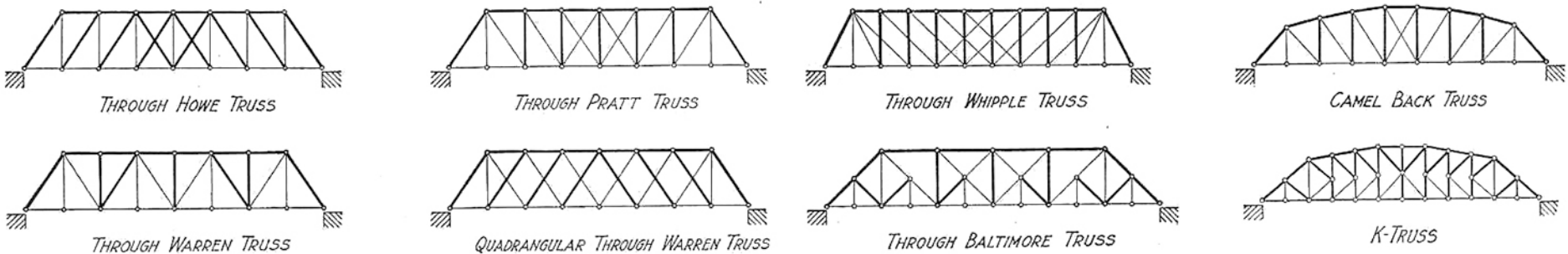
Christian Kerez: School Leutschenbach  
Zurich, Switzerland, 2010



Christian Kerez: School Leutschenbach  
Zurich, Switzerland, 2010

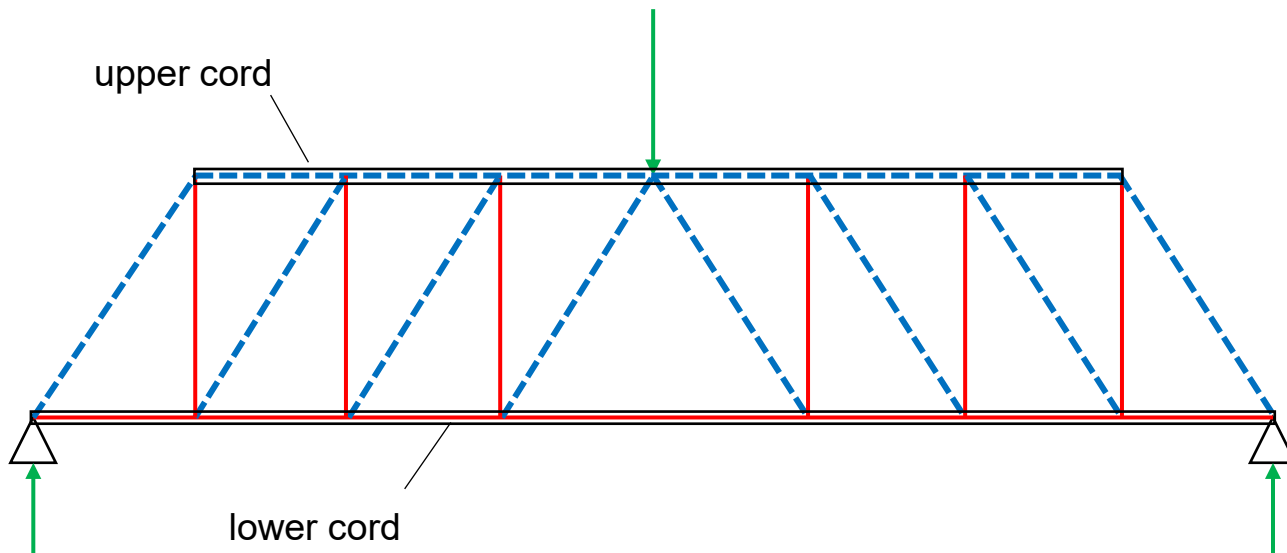


# Truss



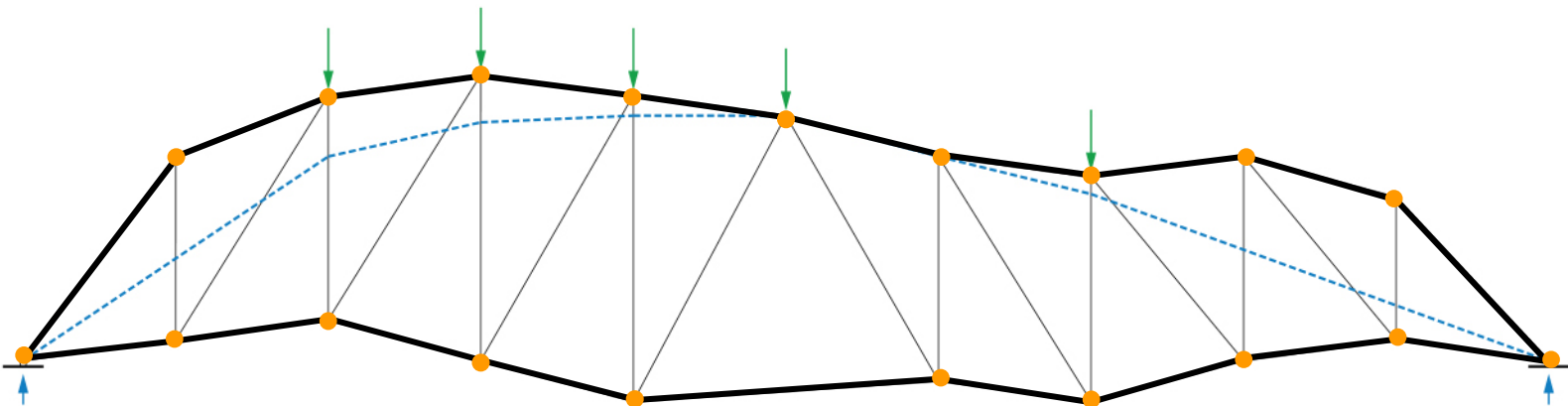
Olaf Hoff: Whirlpool Rapids Railroad Bridge  
Niagara Falls, Canada/USA, 1925

# Truss

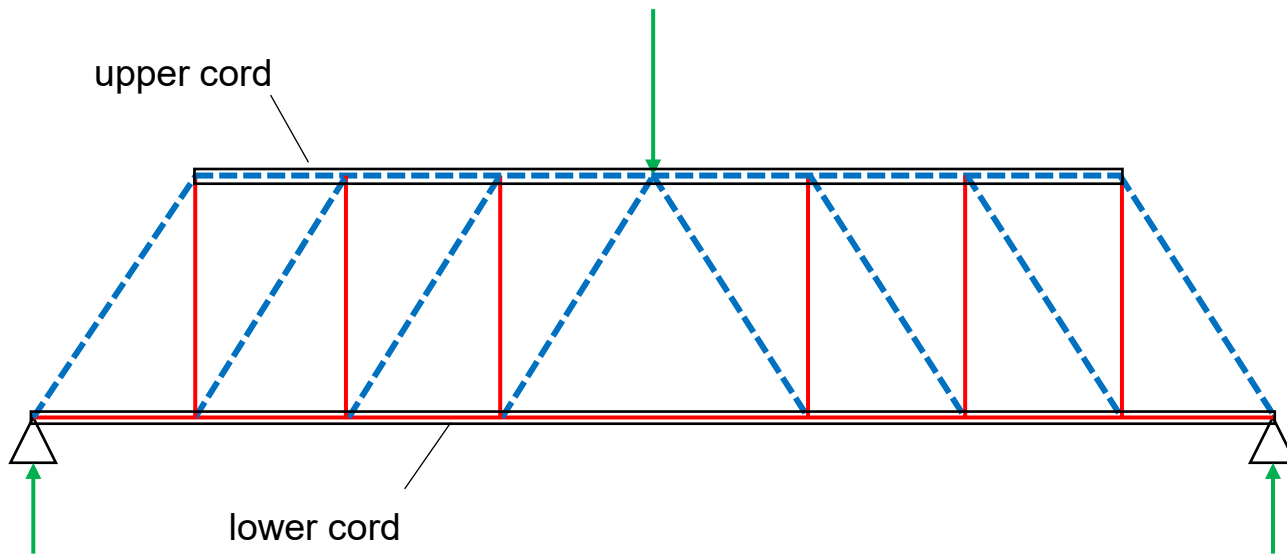


principle of distribution not dependent on linear truss shape

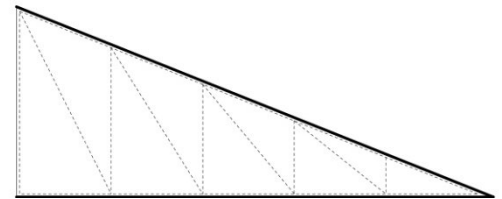
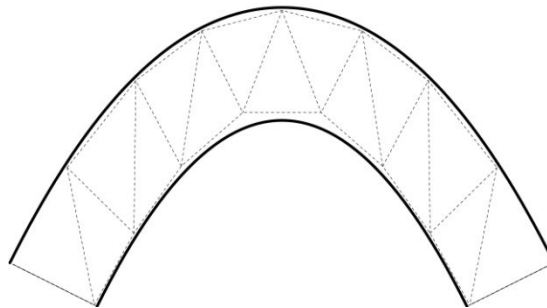
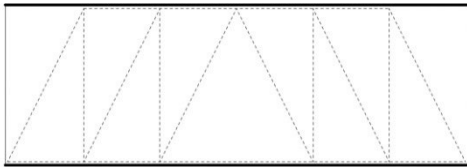
in a truss, loads should always be introduced at the knots



# Truss



principle of distribution not dependent on linear truss shape



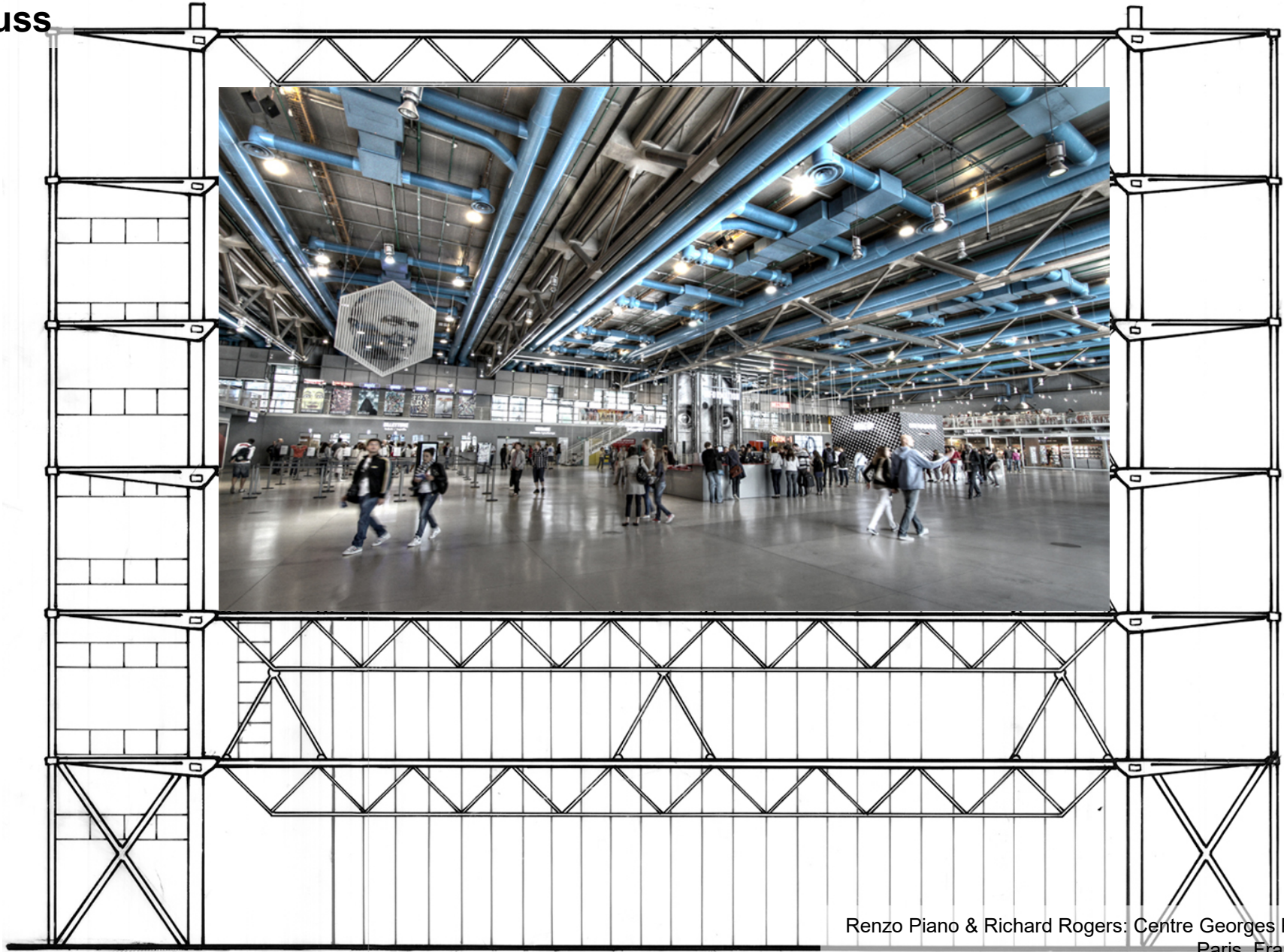


Renzo Piano & Richard Rogers: Centre Georges Pompidou  
Paris, France, 1977



Renzo Piano & Richard Rogers: Centre Georges Pompidou  
Paris, France, 1977

# Truss

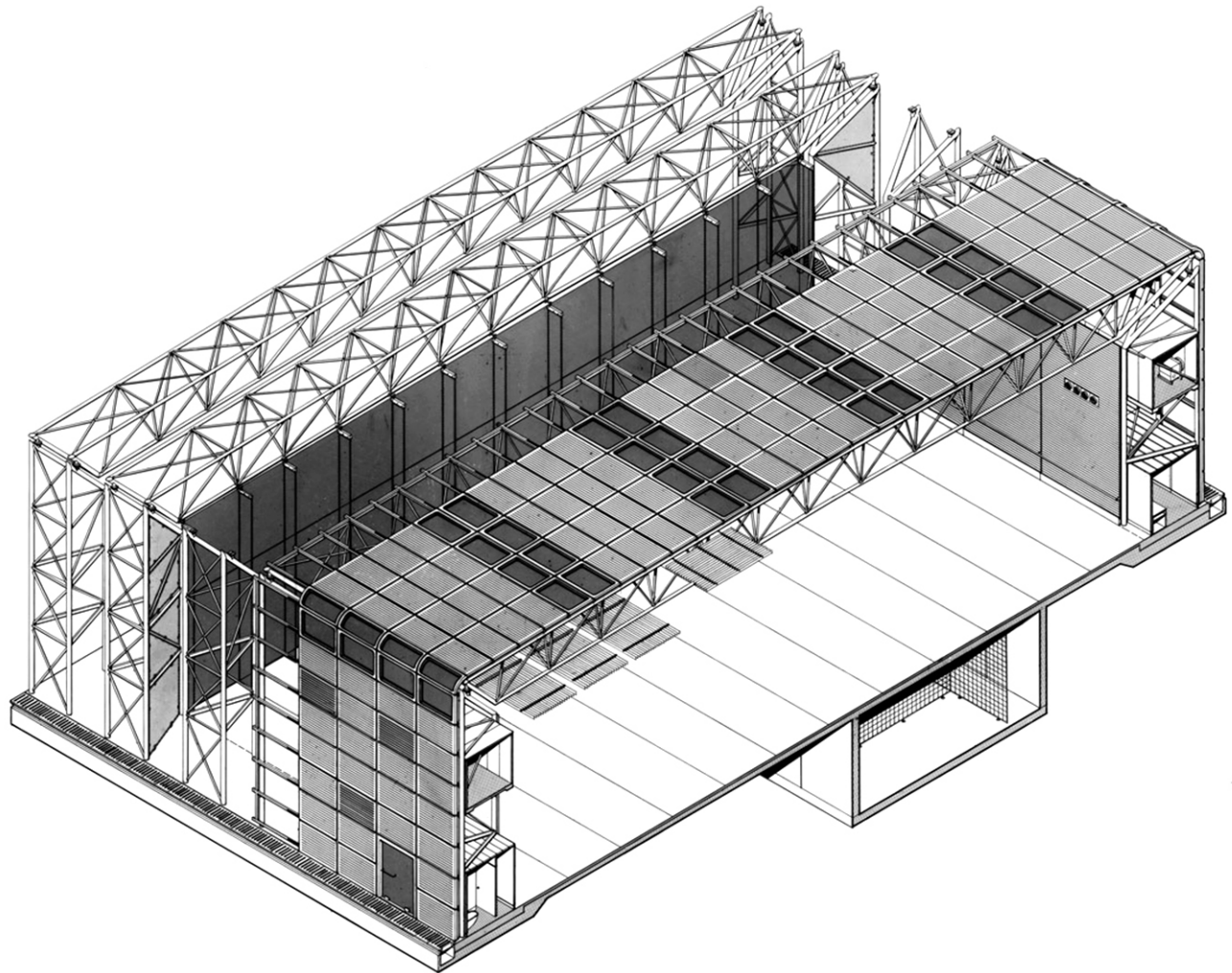
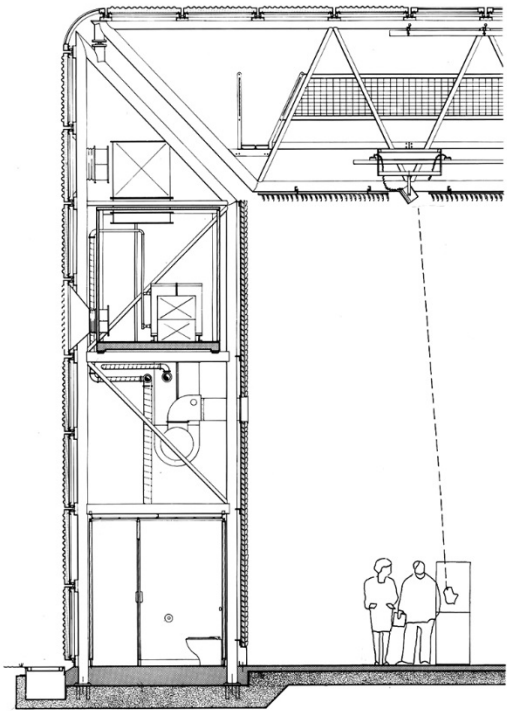


Renzo Piano & Richard Rogers: Centre Georges Pompidou  
Paris, France, 1977



Norman Foster: Centre for Visual Arts  
Sainsbury, UK, 1978

# Truss



Norman Foster: Centre for Visual Arts  
Sainsbury, UK, 1978





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Sainsbury, UK, 1978

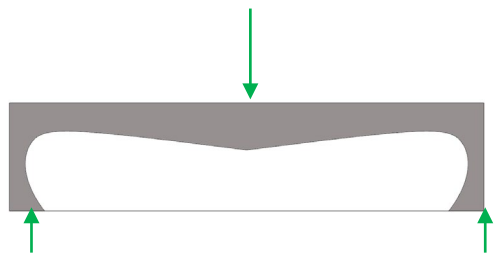
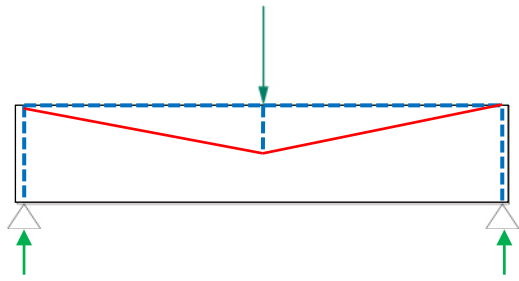
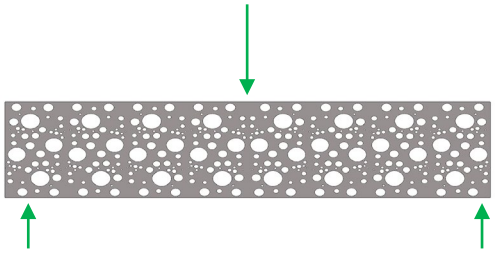
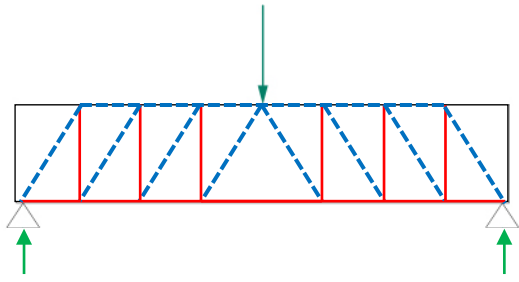
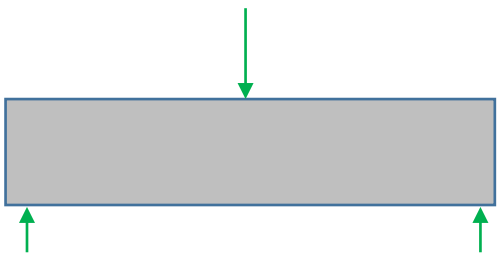
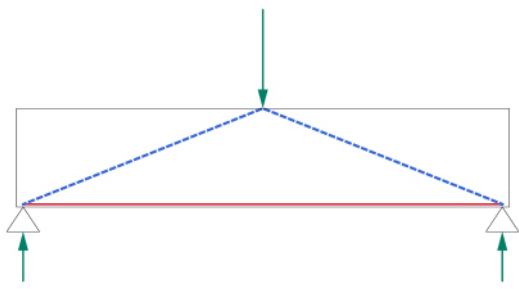


Gustave Eiffel: Ponte Maria Pia  
Porto, Portugal, 1877



Gustave Eiffel: Eiffel Tower  
Paris, France, 1889

# Design Freedom

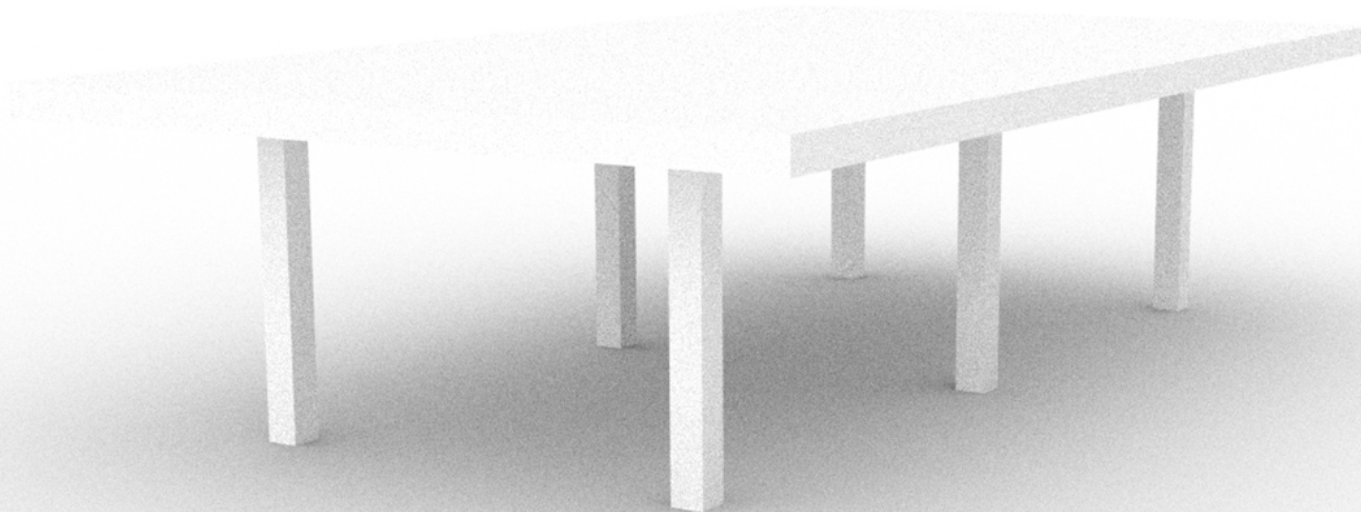


for a load condition many **different** correct **solutions** for the flow of inner forces are possible!



each distribution of inner forces can provoke a different design solution

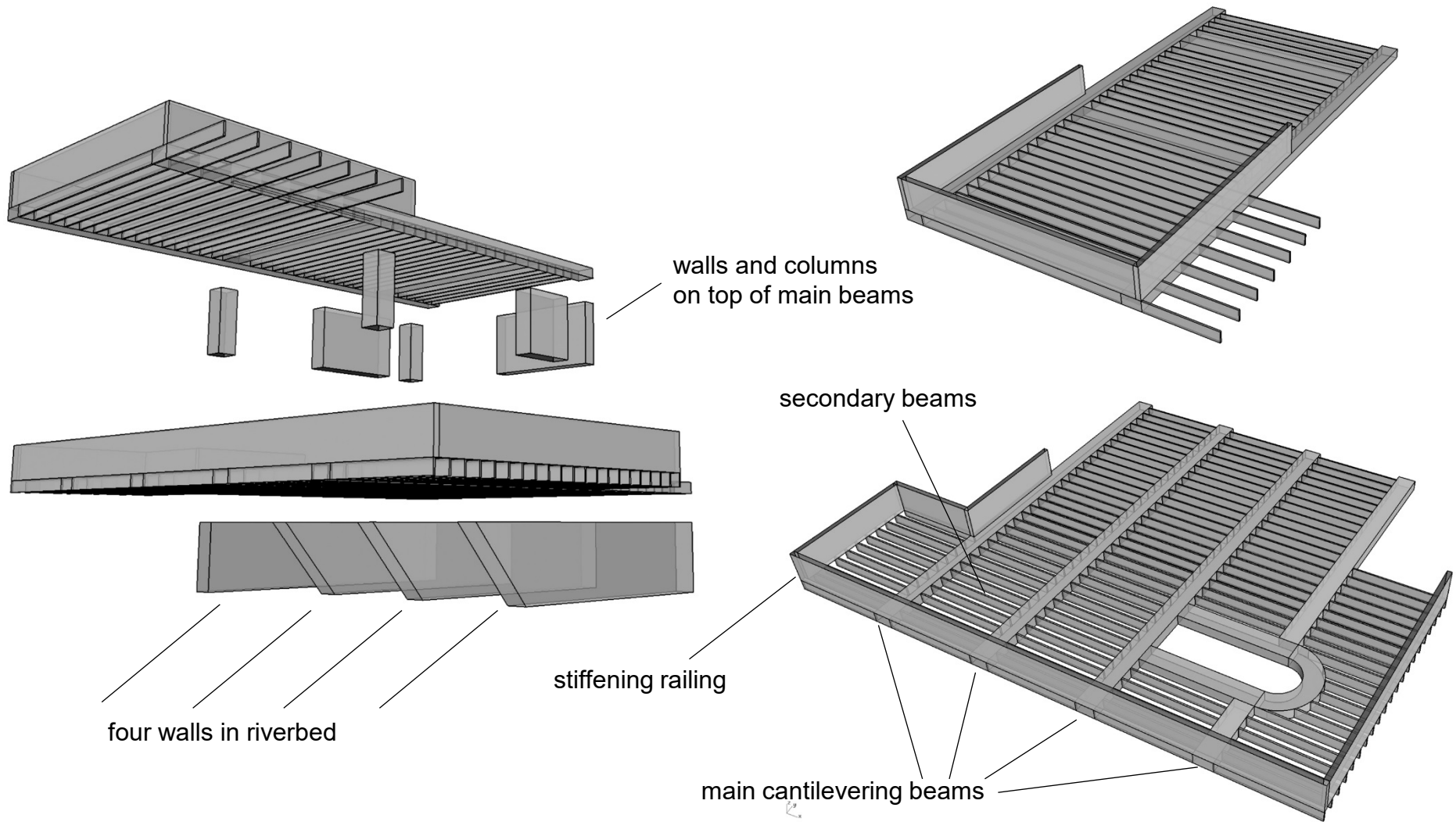
How does a plate distribute load to the columns?



each distribution of inner forces can  
provoke a different design solution

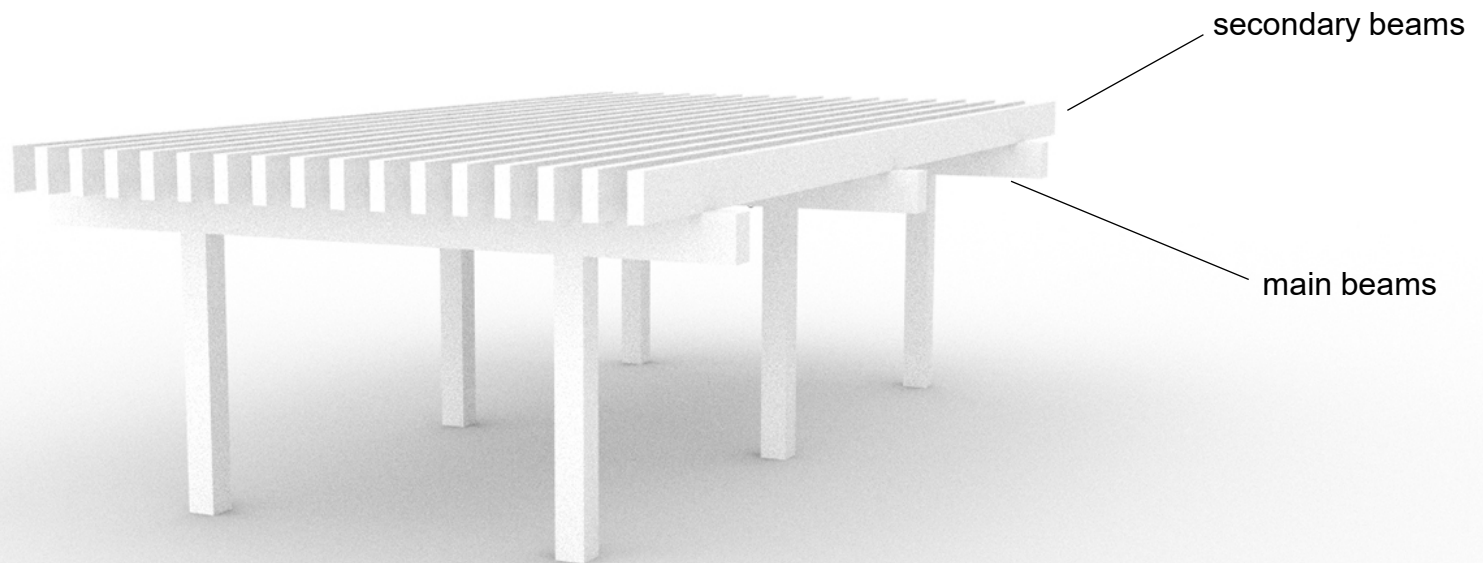


Frank Lloyd Wright: Kaufman House  
Bear Run, USA, 1935



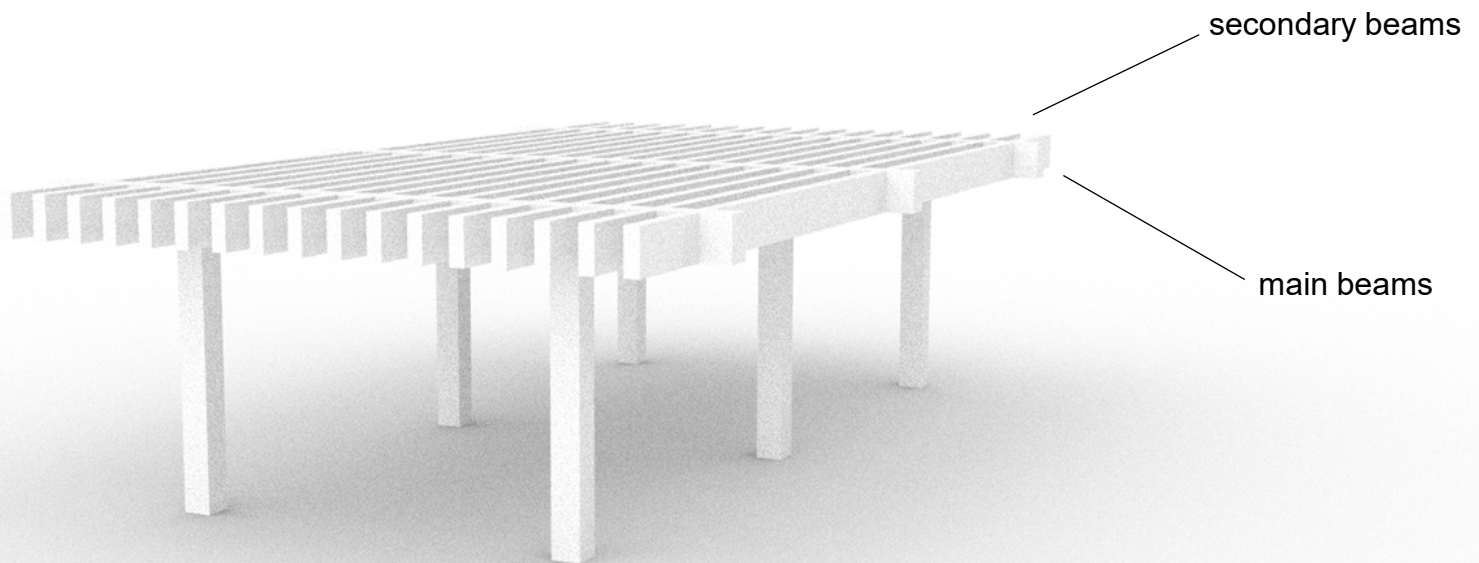
Frank Lloyd Wright: Kaufman House  
Bear Run, USA, 1935

How does a plate distribute load to the columns?





How does a plate distribute load to the columns?



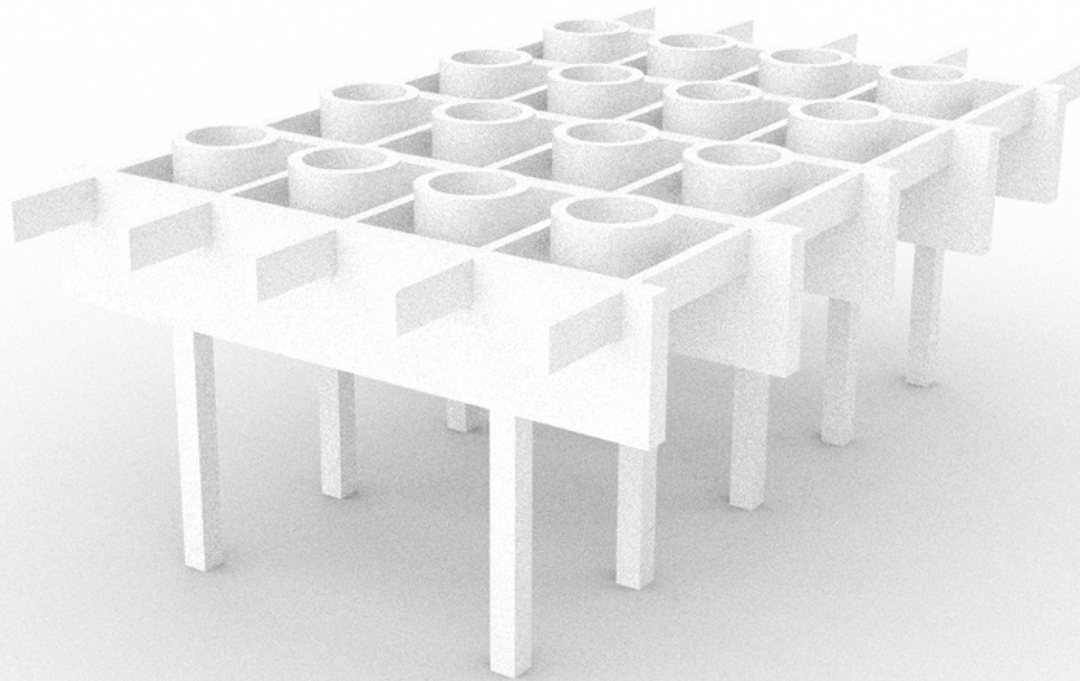


Albert Kahn: Highland Park Ford Plant  
Detroit, USA, 1917



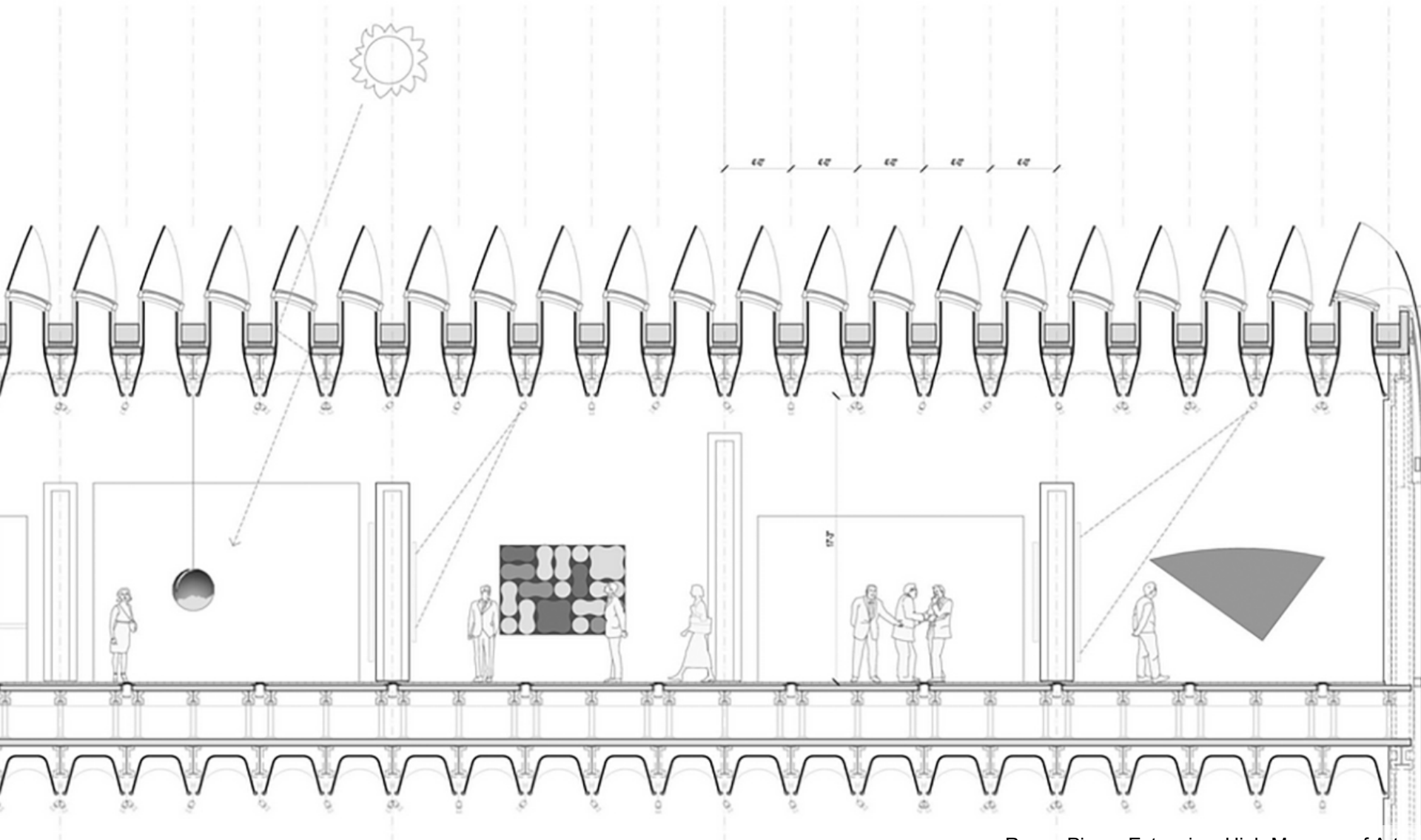
Renzo Piano: Extension, High Museum of Arts  
Atlanta, USA, 2005

How does a plate distribute load to the columns?





Renzo Piano: Extension, High Museum of Arts  
Atlanta, USA, 2005



Renzo Piano: Extension, High Museum of Arts  
Atlanta, USA, 2005



Alvar Aalto: University Library  
Espoo, Finland, 1969



Mies van der Rohe: National Gallery  
Berlin, Germany, 1968



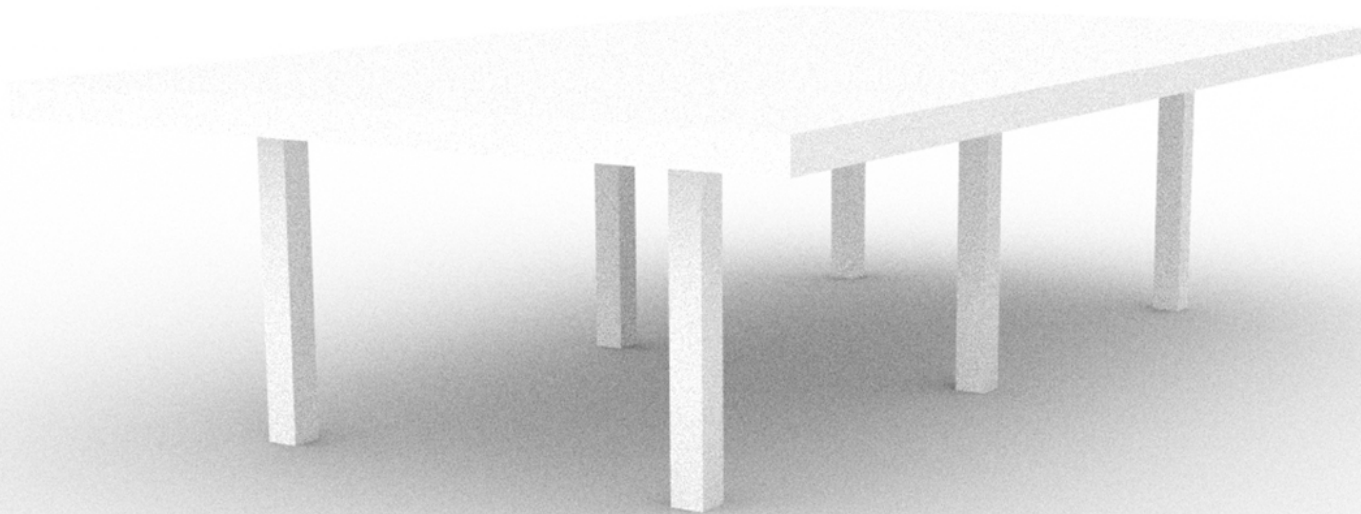


Louis Kahn: Art Gallery, Yale University  
New Haven, USA, 1953



Heinrich Degelo: WEF Congress Center  
Davos, Switzerland, 2010

How does a plate distribute load to the columns?

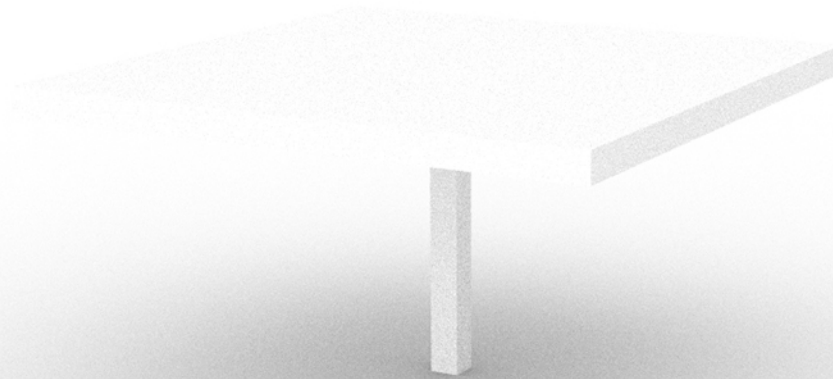


this is not so much a technical question  
but rather a **question of design!**

How does a plate distribute load to the columns?

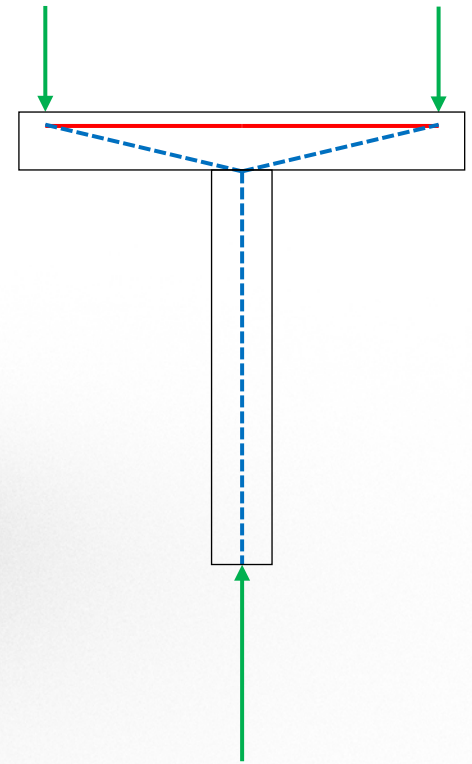
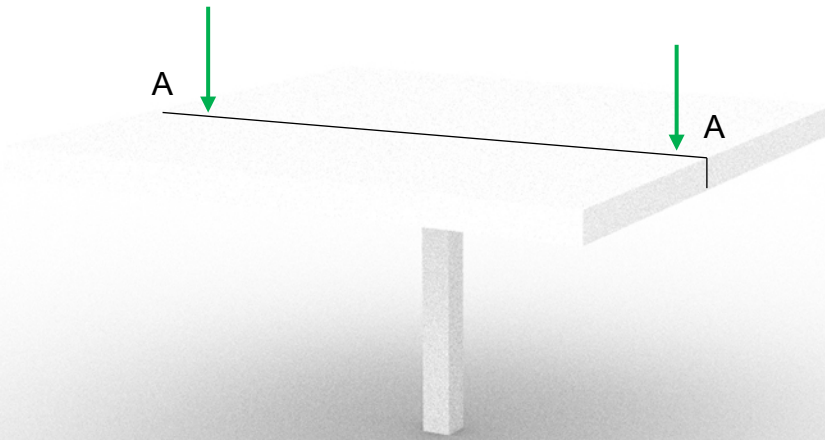
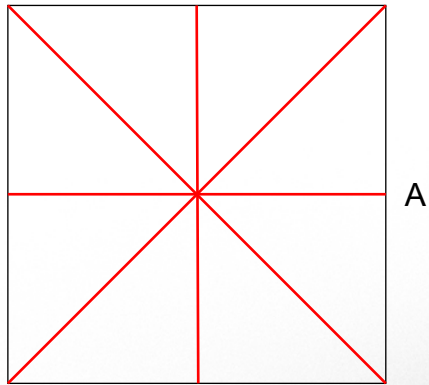
or

How does a column attract forces from the plate?

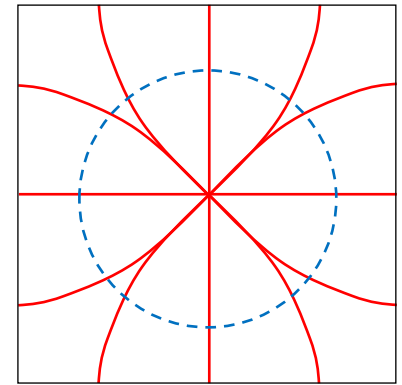
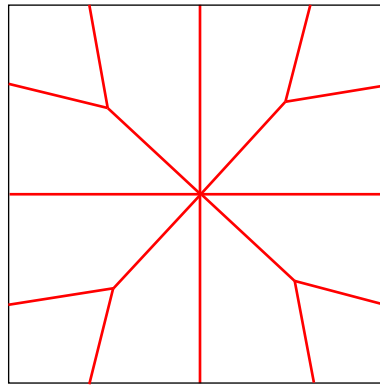
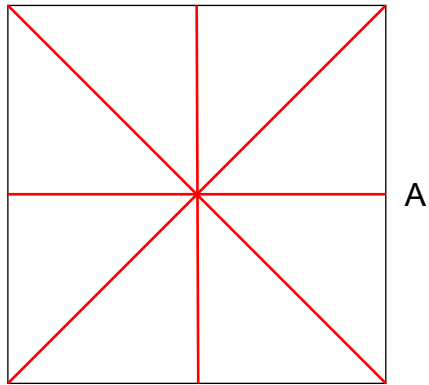


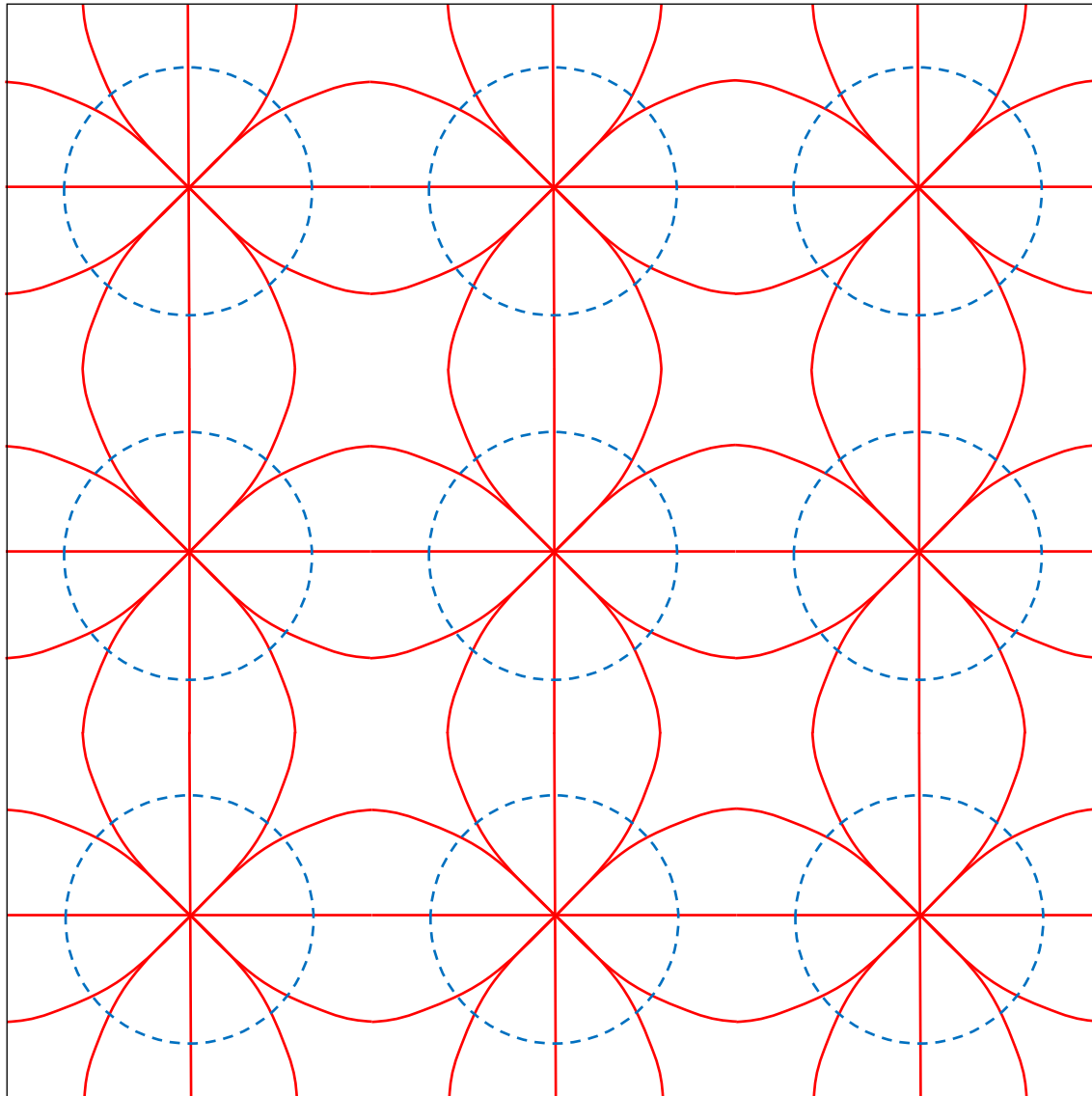
top view

side view



top view



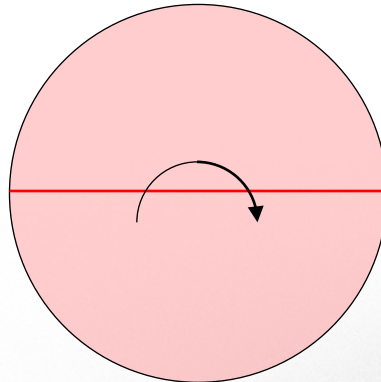
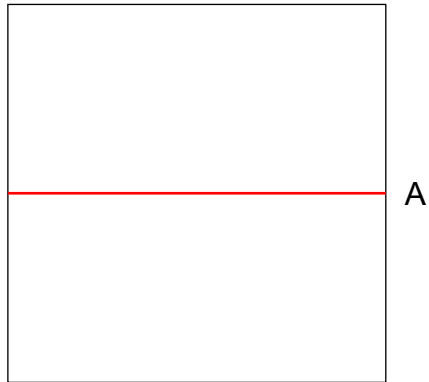


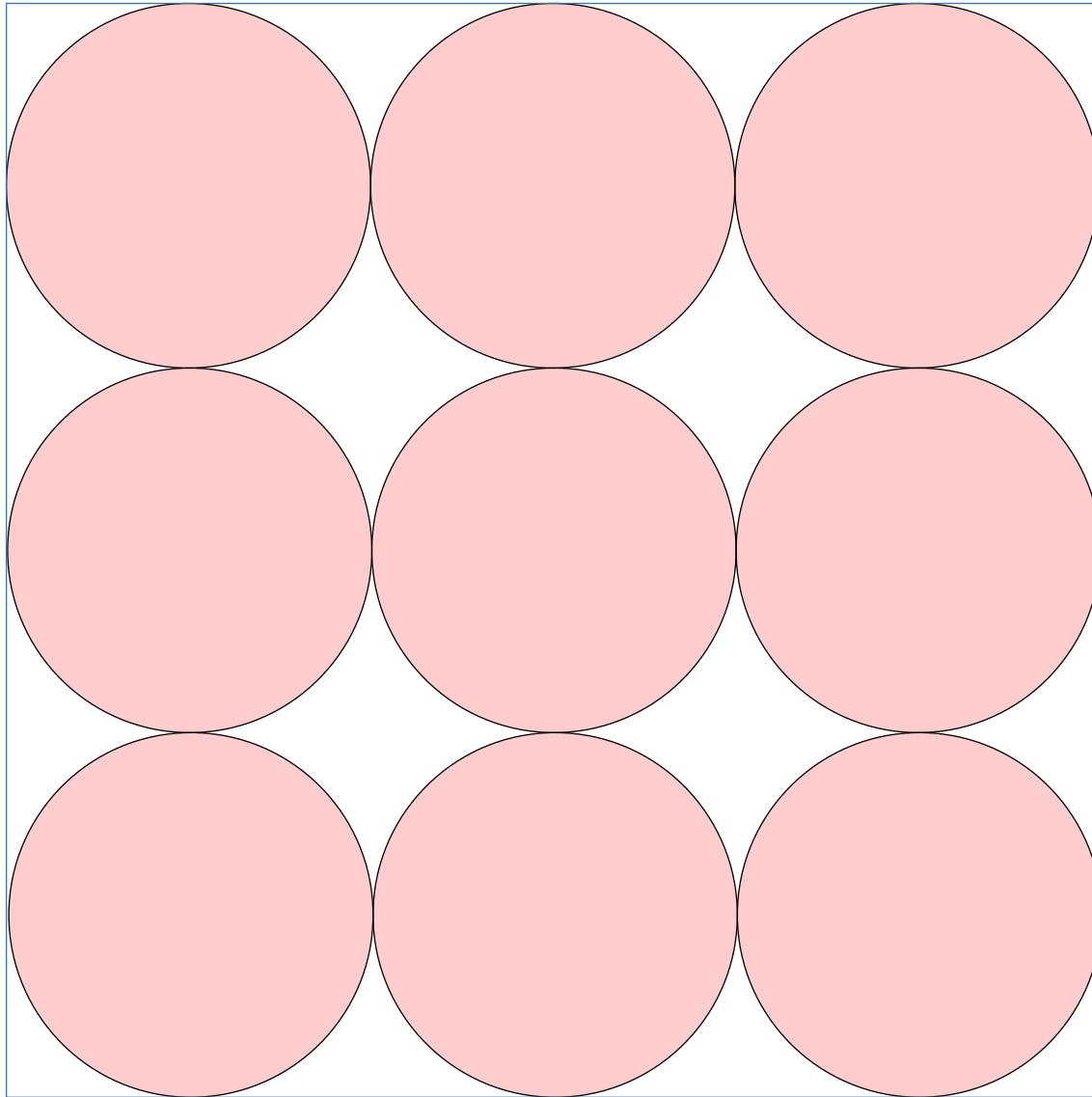


Pierluigi Nervi: Wool Factory Gatti  
Rome, Italy, 1951



top view





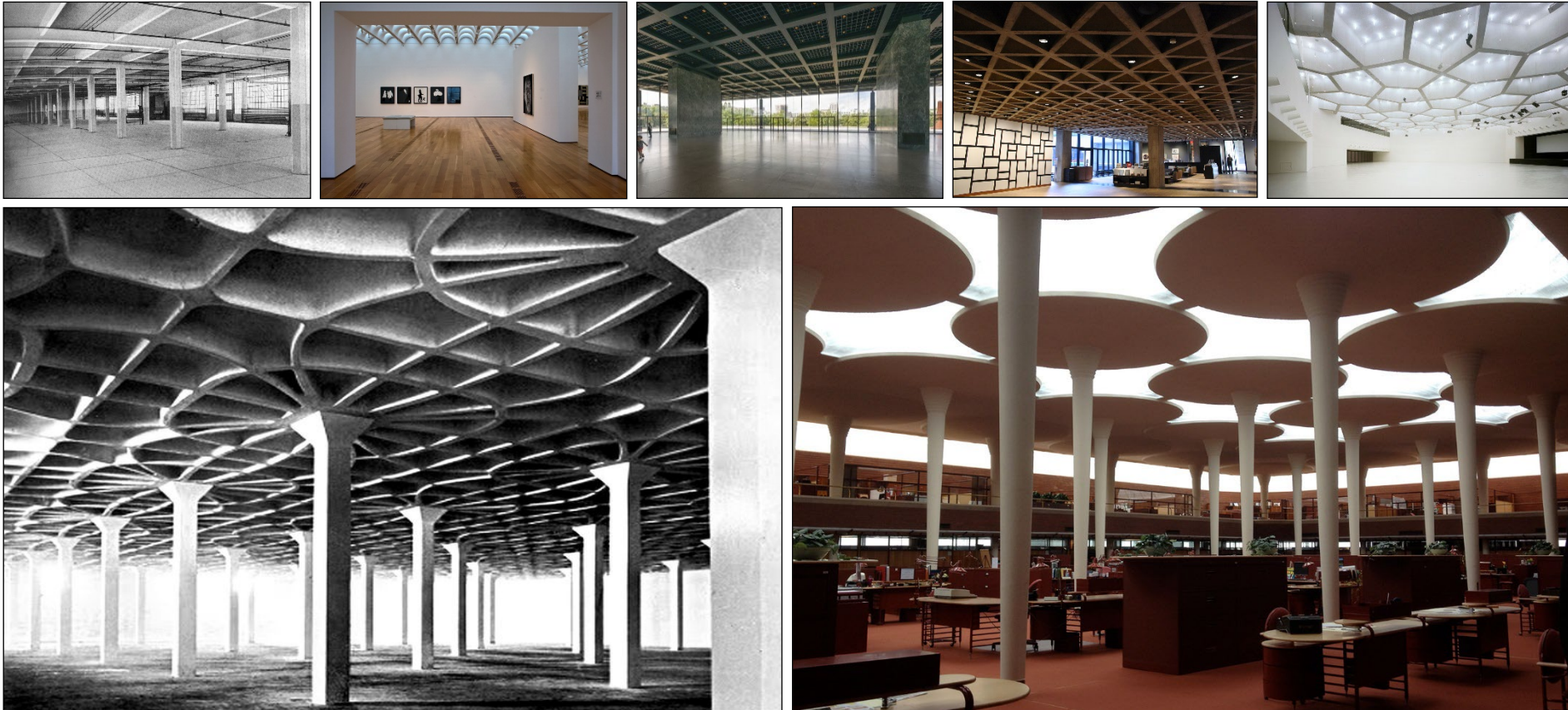


Frank Lloyd Wright: Johnson Wax Building  
Racine, USA, 1936

# Design Freedom

How do inner forces flow?  
What does this mean for design?

structural design is primarily a question of **design thinking**,  
it is a creative & intellectual process!



# Efficient Design Solution

What means efficiency here?

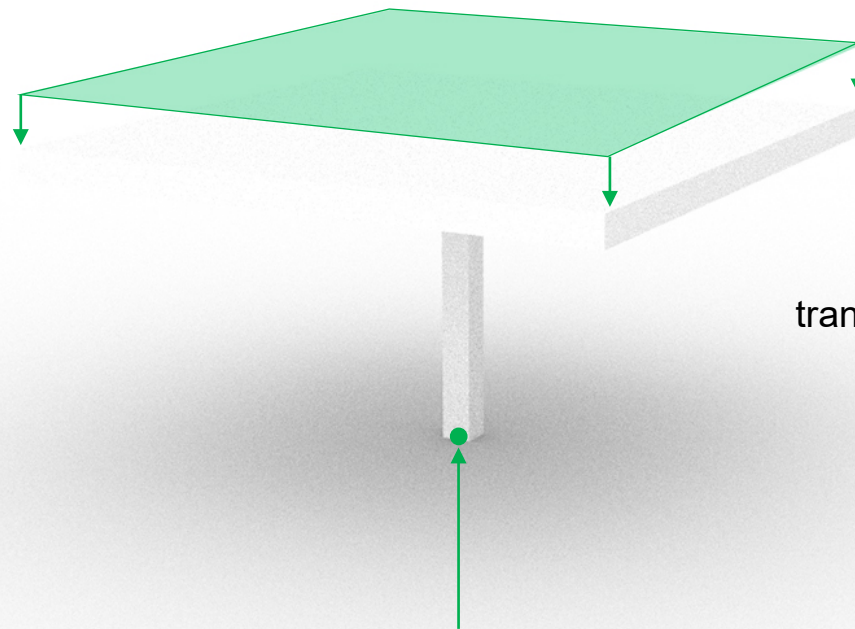


Gerkan, Marg & Partners: Airport Stuttgart, Germany, 2004

# Efficient Design Solution

What means efficiency here?

least amount of material to transfer  
loads from a surface to a point

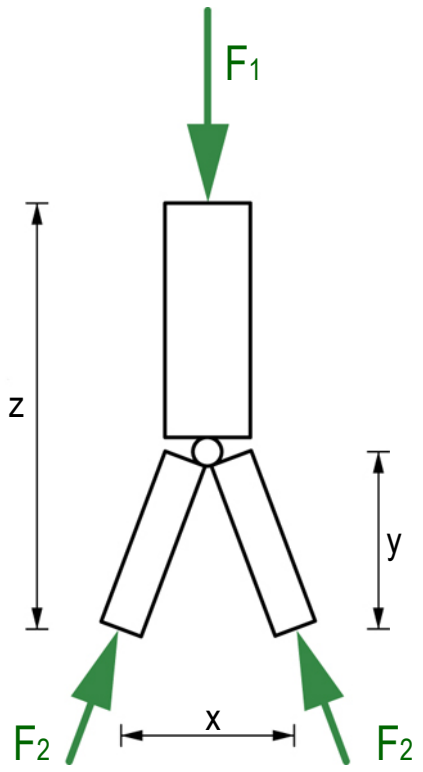


transfer of load from surface to point

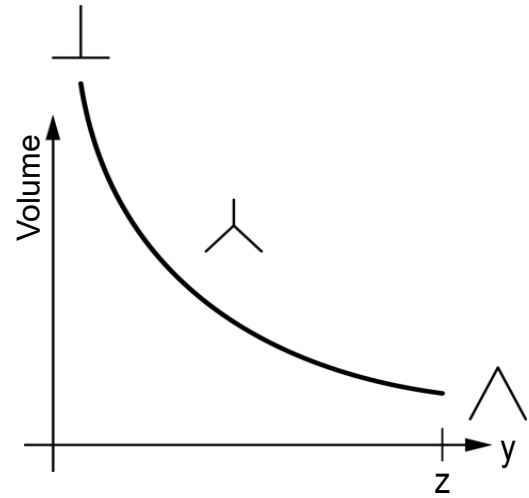
# Efficient Design Solution

What means efficiency here?

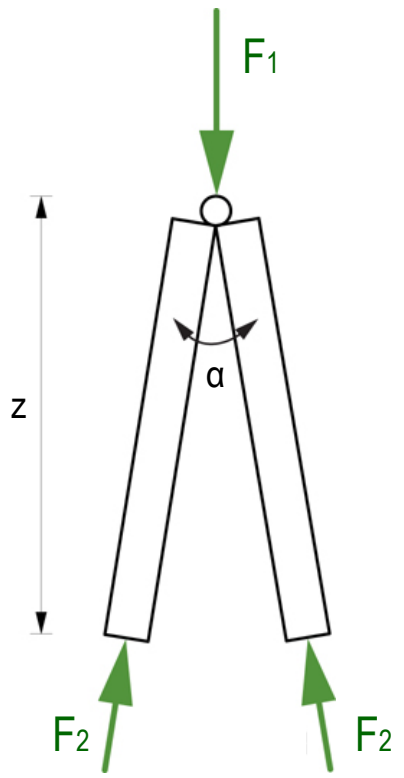
least amount of material to transfer loads from a surface to a point



x & z fixed  
y variable



**material efficiency:** economic use of material if maximal allowable stresses are distributed uniformly at available material

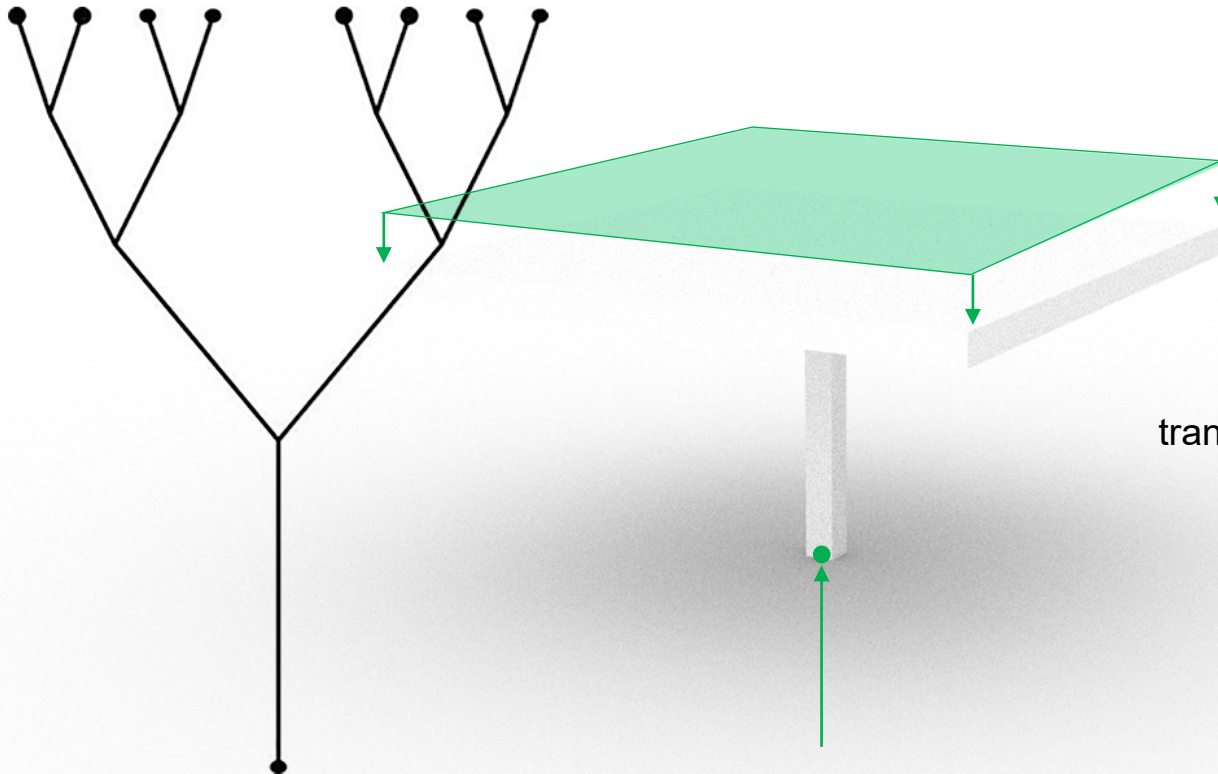


z fixed  
alpha variable

# Efficient Design Solution

What means efficiency here?

least amount of material to transfer loads from a surface to a point



transfer of load from surface to point

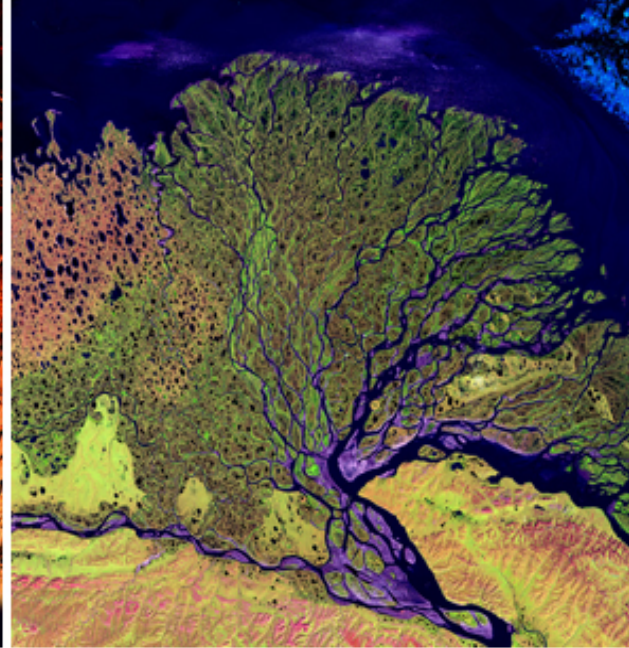




Dirk Hebel & Philippe Block: tree-like column out of mycelium, Seoul Biennale, 2017

# Efficient Design Solution

efficient flow from surface to point



truss  
distribution of forces in space  
relation column-plate  
structural design thinking



**ARK-A3001 Design of Structures\_Basics  
Force Distribution**

**Toni Kotnik**

Professor of Design of Structures

Aalto University  
Department of Architecture  
Department of Civil Engineering

# Exercise 5.1



EMBT: Renovation, Santa Caterina Market  
Barcelona, Spain, 1997 - 2005

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EMBT: Renovation, Santa Caterina Market  
Barcelona, Spain, 1997 - 2005

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EMBT: Renovation, Santa Caterina Market  
Barcelona, Spain, 1997 - 2005

## Exercise 5.1



After its renovation in 2005, the Santa Caterina Market in Barcelona is covered by a wavy roof designed by Enric Miralles and Benedetta Talgiabue (EMBT). It consists of a combination arches, cables and beams and spans an area of about 60 x 50 m without any support. Sketch the structural system of the roof.

EMBT: Renovation, Santa Caterina Market  
Barcelona, Spain, 1997 - 2005