



Architectural Facade

April Virgoe

The output is a design commissioned for the façade of the Grimsby School of Art building, in collaboration with Ryder Architecture and RMIG. Virgoe was responsible for the visual design. It was manufactured from perforated anodised aluminium.

Research process

The panel designs began as drawings, that were then reconfigured digitally, and produced as sheet panels. The process of creating an image through various sizes of perforation had previously been used for more organic, or photographic images. The geometric nature of the design presented new challenges both in terms of developing the digital designs and applying these to the panels. The perforated skin of the building is illuminated at night from behind. The flat schematic drawing becomes more illusory and three dimensional at night.

Research insights

In the design, Virgoe conveyed something of the nature of the work that was going to take place in the building. She noted that the design needed to be fluid and changing, rather than a distinctive image that would quickly become too familiar. Virgoe noticed the ways in which the image changed when it was lit from behind and when viewed from different directions. The image expressed something universal about the different kinds of creative practice that the building facilitated.

Dissemination

In addition to the building opening, the design was disseminated via Architects Journal (August 2015), Architects Data File (August 2015), blogs, including Refurb and Developer update (September 24 2015), the architect (Ryder) and manufacturer (RMIG) websites and the media.



Architects: Ryder Architecture

Fabricators RMIG

Cladding Design: April Virgoe

Material: Perforated anodised aluminium



Statement

The panel designs began as drawings, that were then reconfigured digitally, and produced as sheet panels. The process of creating an image through various sizes of perforation had previously been used for more organic, or photographic images. The geometric nature of the design presented new challenges, both in terms of developing the digital designs and applying these to the panels. The perforated skin of the building is illuminated at night from behind. The flat schematic drawing becomes more illusory and three dimensional at night.

What I wanted to do was convey something of the nature of the work that was going to take place in the building, and also create a design which had a kind of durability - something fluid and changing- rather than a distinctive image which might become too familiar. I was particularly interested in the way the image could change when lit from behind, or when viewed from different locations. It was important, from the beginning, to create a design that would both respond to the building and express something universal about different kinds of creative practice.

These started as drawings of semi-architectural spaces - I was thinking about the kind in spaces in which artists make and show work, and also an idea of an empty stage - a space in which something can happen. It then became more about the nature of creativity itself -the open nature of what we do - artists often celebrate the unfinished, and also strive for work which is open to interpretation rather than closed or fixed in terms of its meaning. And I became interested in expressing that in an abstract way - through repetition but also through forms that suggest mutability and endless reconfiguration.

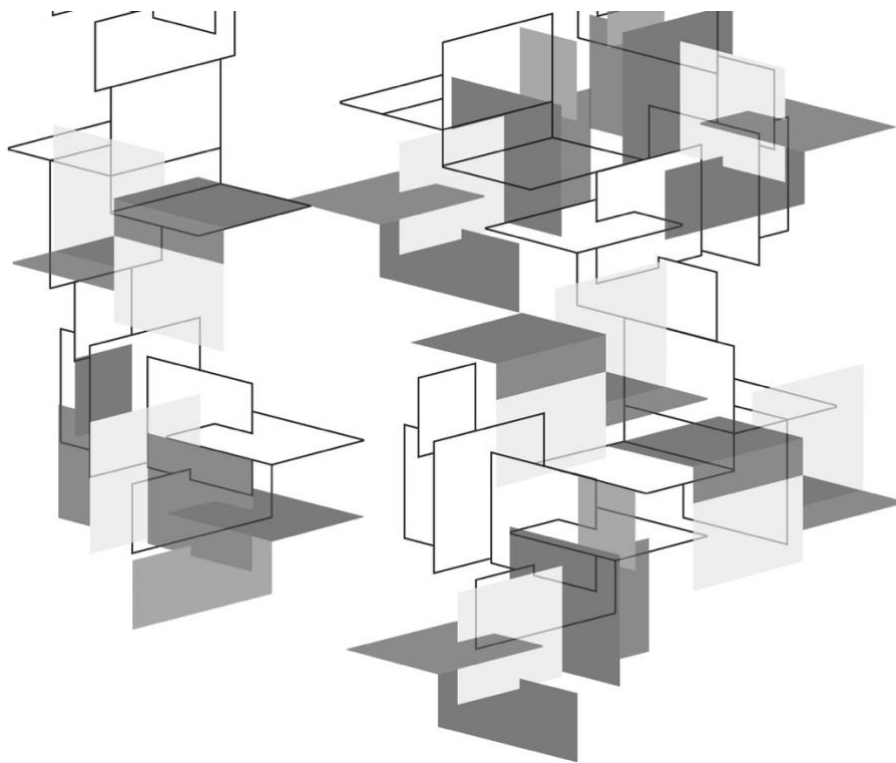
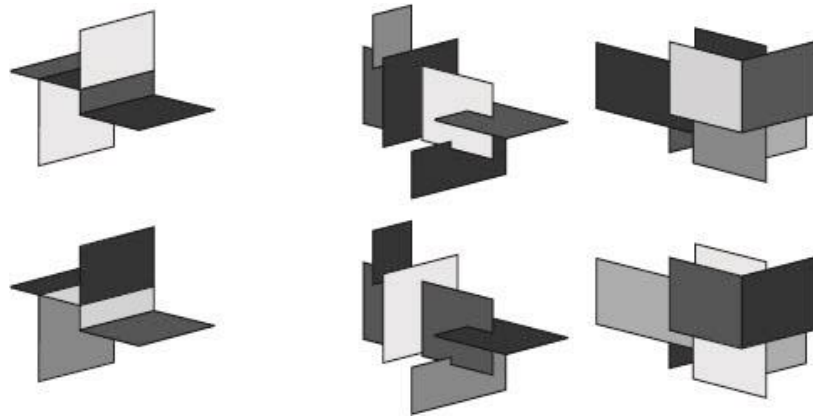
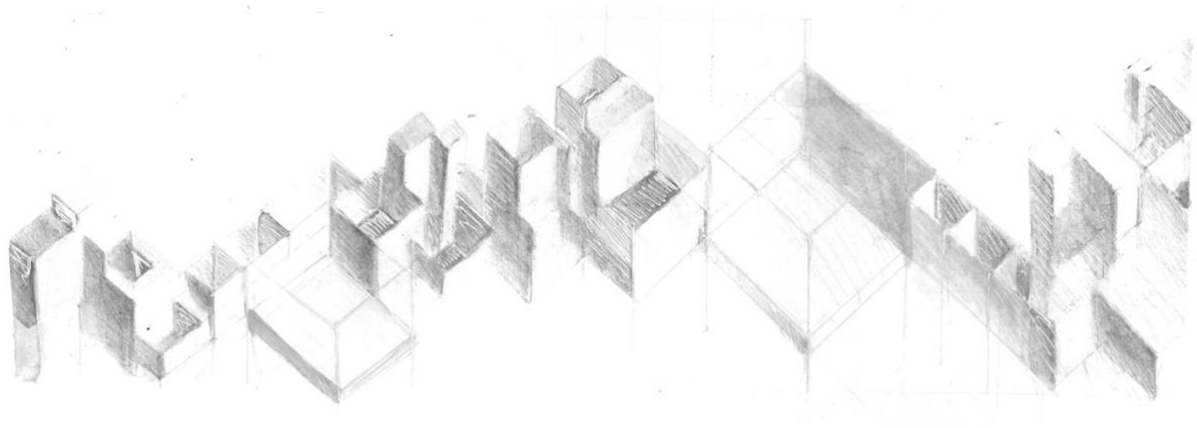
The design is constructed from modular units that can be seen as architectural but which also perhaps suggest simple folded or cut paper forms, a little like origami, which can be repeated, reversed and recombined in infinite variation.

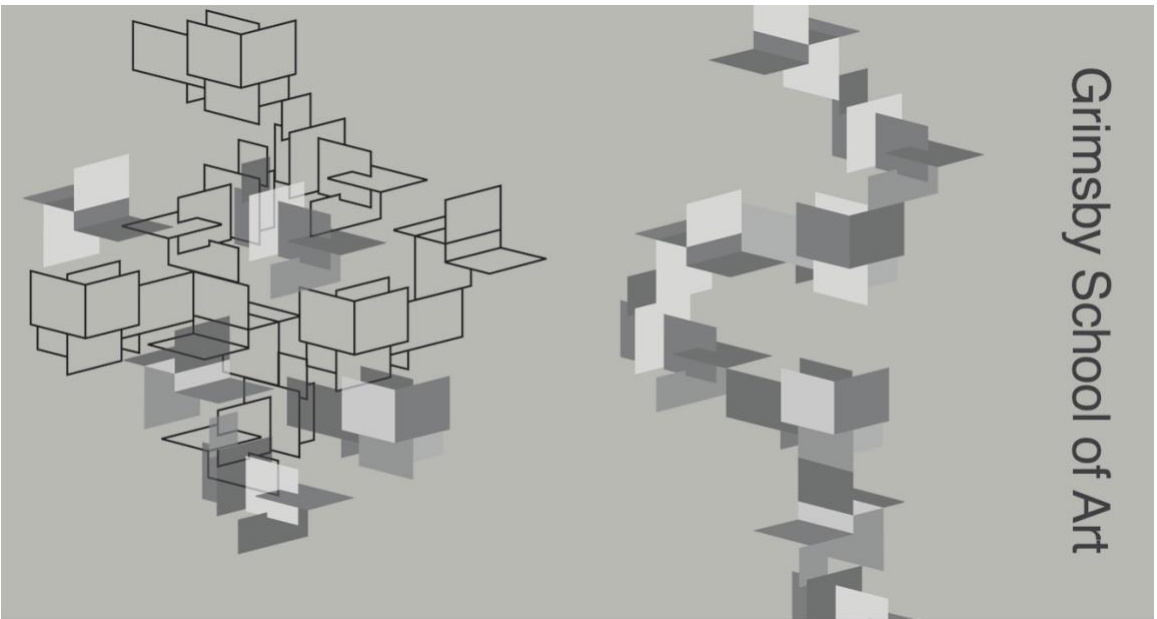
On the longest perforated aluminium section these tumble across the surface and suggest perhaps the movement of a dancer across a stage or a kind of graphic musical notation. On the other there is an elongated form poised in a floating, rotational movement which could suggest once again the human body but also a double helix, perhaps a suitable metaphor for the building blocks of creative practice.





DESIGN PROCESS







PUBLICITY/ MEDIA INTEREST

<https://www.ryderarchitecture.com/projects/grimsby-art-and-design-school.htm>

http://www.rmig.com/EN/City+Emotion/Case+studies/Projects/Grimsby+School+of+Art?do_c=1677&page=1&url=/en/city%20emotion/case%20studies/application&sort=application

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/ryder-completes-67m-grimsby-arts-school/8687412.article>

<https://www.architectsdatafile.co.uk/news/grimsby-art-school/>

<https://www.buildingconstructiondesign.co.uk/projects/university-centre-grimsby-and-grimsby-sports-centre/>

<https://developer-update.co.uk/2015/09/24/grimsby-institute-gets-an-artistic-perforated-facade-from-rmig/>