

Below
**Nicholas Grimshaw &
Partners, Eden Project,
Cornwall, England 2000;**
the steel structure is clad
with hexagonal triple mem-
brane cushions of ETFE film
which are kept inflated by a
constant low pressure air
supply

124



constructional techniques but equally the computational and drafting techniques available to make valid designs. Portraits of Baroque architects frequently show them holding a pair of compasses/dividers; portraits of 21st century architects ought to show them sitting in front of a computer. A design such as Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim or Nicholas Grimshaw's Eden Project in Cornwall is entirely dependent on advanced computational methods. The tools available to test and communicate architectural thought can enlarge the range of solutions in the same way that materials and building methods can increase the spectrum of the possible.

Materials

125

If, in terms of experiencing architecture, we accept the limitations of drawings, computer simulations and scaled-down models, then architecture needs to be a built reality in order to be experienced fully. That in turn means that it has to be created out of particular materials. When I am considering the design of a building, I need at the outset, or at least very soon after, to be concerned with the selection of the materials to be used in construction. This is especially true for those materials which will have an influence on spatial organisation and appearance. It is highly significant whether I choose fair faced brickwork or stainless steel panels as the walling material. This is unlike, say, the choice of the damp-proof course. In varying degrees materials are of necessity part of architectural thought.

Right
Richard Meier & Partners, The Getty Center, Los Angeles, California 1984 – 1997; wall of riven travertine

