from which the architect designer may well get intellectual pleasure by the elegant resolution of a problem. It may be that high-tech architecture's ostentatious revelation of construction is an attempt to make the usually hidden visible.

The proliferation of different visible details in the work of Behnish & Partners – no adherents of the high-tech school – may be another way of searching for that visual density that might approach the musical density of a symphony or opera. The same might be said of the work of Carlo Scarpa and may explain the interest his designs have aroused; there is now a considerable body of literature dealing with his architecture and designs in glass and silver. On any visit to the Brion Tomb one is very likely to meet others making the same architectural pilgrimage, captivated by that visual richness that is rooted in Scarpa's Venetian background.

Structure is governed by certain inescapable laws: the law of gravity, Hooke's law on the relation of stress to strain within the elastic limit of a material, the distribution of bending moments in a beam or the compressive strength of a material, to list some obvious examples. Mathematical tests can be applied to a structural configuration to determine whether it will fail or carry the loads imposed on it using equations derived from the laws governing the behaviour of the selected material. Before these tests can be carried out, however, a shape and a material have to be chosen. This can simply be an I-section steel beam or a concrete slab and no significant design intervention is required. In a more complex problem there is the possibility of choice and that choice is, I would suggest, considerably influenced by visual preferences and model selection.

Below
Centre Pompidou;
gerberettes in the foundry