

To Speak of Light
as Soft.

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To Speak of Light as Soft

Artist's Statement

When viewing light all of our senses play integral roles in the experience. When viewing *soft*, in particular, the merging of the senses has a direct impact on the language we use to describe it. To define light as *soft* is to allude it to our memories of physical and emotional softness - the word applies itself not only to describing texture but also to a feeling. It is an explicit example of our multisensory experience of our environments. Often, when speaking of light as soft we describe it not by its technical, scientific make up, but through its interaction with us, and to our personal associations with a certain soft milieu. It is 'soft' not because of *it*, but because of us.

*‘The
hands want
to see, the
eyes want to
caress.’*

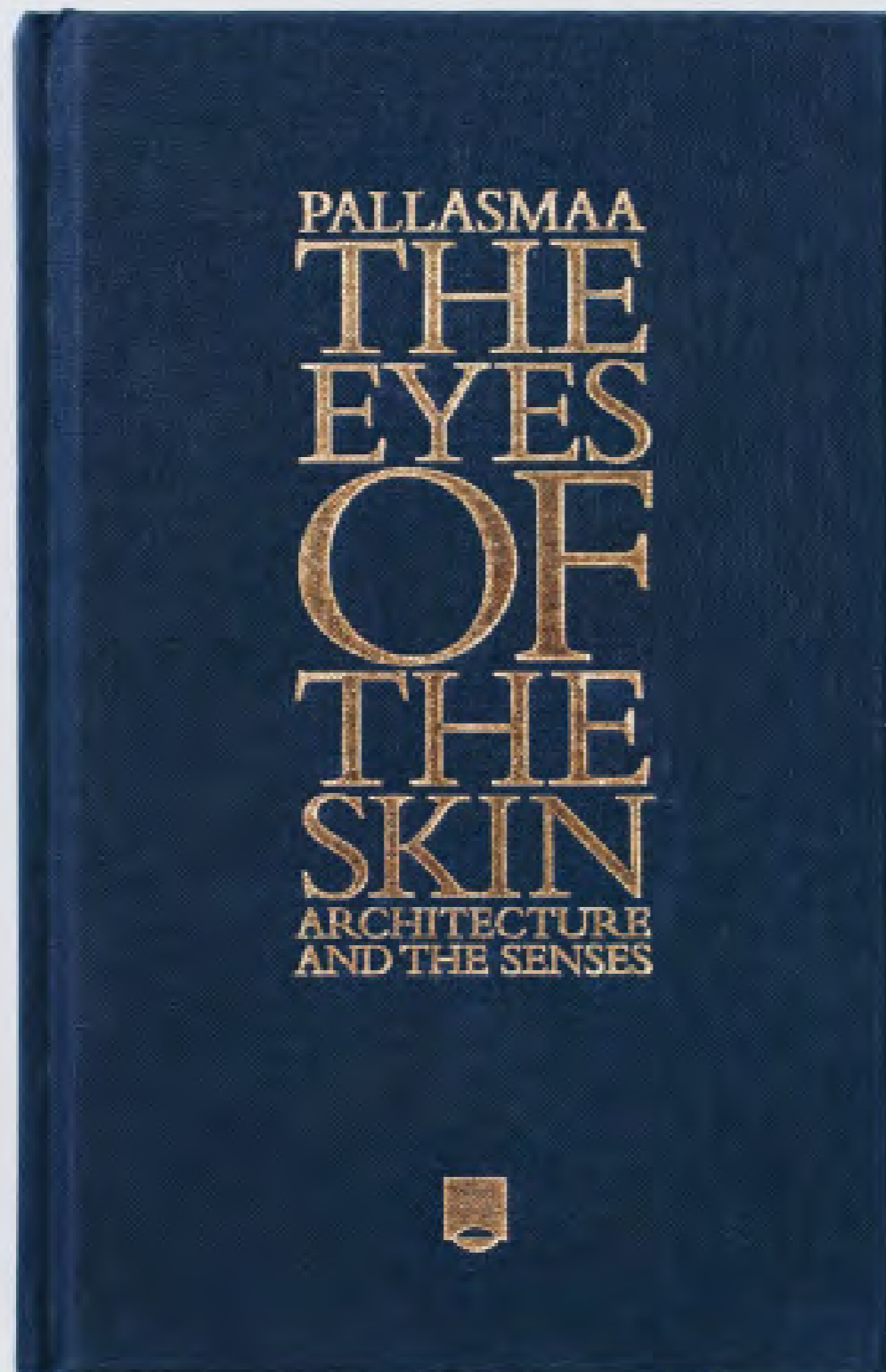
By Juhanni Pallasmaa

Reading

I had begun reading on my project in the summer before the autumn term commenced. I’ve found that when it comes to themes of the senses and phenomenology I often find myself reaching for texts, such as this one on the right, by Juhanni Pallasmaa, to explain the things that I feel but have not yet been able to put into words.

The Eyes of the Skin, by Juhanni Pallasmaa, offers a comprehensive narrative on the minutia of our everyday. He tells us of the integral role our senses play in our settling in the world; for our sense of self is dependant on them.

Whereas, *Thinking Architecture*, by Peter Zumthor, is, arguable, a more approachable piece of writing addressing light, and how important it is to our human existence. The text is emotional and heartwarming, it reaches beyond the page as though Zumthor has walked with you through your life, and understands how you must feel about the world. It is a text I will always come back to, and have done through the course of this project.



Page 17

“The hands want to see, the eyes want to caress.”

Page 44

“In Merleau-Ponty’s own words, ‘Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system’; and ‘[s]ensory experience is unstable and alien to natural perception, which we achieve with our whole body all at once, and which opens on a world of interacting senses.’”

“Sensory experiences become integrated through the body, or rather, in the very constitution of the body and the human mode of being.”

“The eye collaborates with the body and the other senses. One’s sense of reality is strengthened and articulated by this constant interaction.”

Page 45

“The eyes want to collaborate with the other senses.”

“Sight detached from touch could not ‘have any idea of distance, outness, or profundity, nor consequently of space and body’.”

Page 46

“Vision reveals what touch already knows. We could think of the sense of touch as the unconscious of vision. Our eyes stroke distant surfaces, contours and edges, and the unconscious tactile sensation determines the agreeableness or unpleasantness of the experience. The distant and the near are experienced with the same intensity, and they merge into one coherent experience.”

Page 50

“The eye is the organ of distance and separation, whereas touch is the sense of nearness, intimacy and affection. The eye surveys, controls and investigates, whereas touch approaches and caresses. During overpowering emotional experiences, we tend to close off the distancing sense of vision; we close the eye when dreaming, listening to music, or caressing our beloved ones. Deep shadows and darkness are essential, because they dim the sharpness of vision, make depth and distance ambiguous, and invite unconscious peripheral vision and tactile fantasy.”

PETER
ZUMTHOR
THINKING
ARCHITECTURE

BIRKHÄUSER

•
Page 89

“I have always wanted to write a book on light. I can think of nothing that reminds me more of eternity”, says Andrzej Stasuik in his book *The World behind Dukla*. Events or objects stop or disappear or collapse under their own weight and when I look at them and describe them, he says it is only because they refract light, because they shape it and give it a form that we are capable of understanding.”

Page 90

“Sensing, smelling, touching, tasting, dreaming in the dark – that’s just not enough. We want to see. But how much light do people need in order to live? And how much darkness? Is there a spiritual condition or a life condition so sensitive that tiny amounts of light would be enough to ensure a good life? Or, to go even further: Are there some things we can experience only in dark, shaded places, in the darkness of light?”

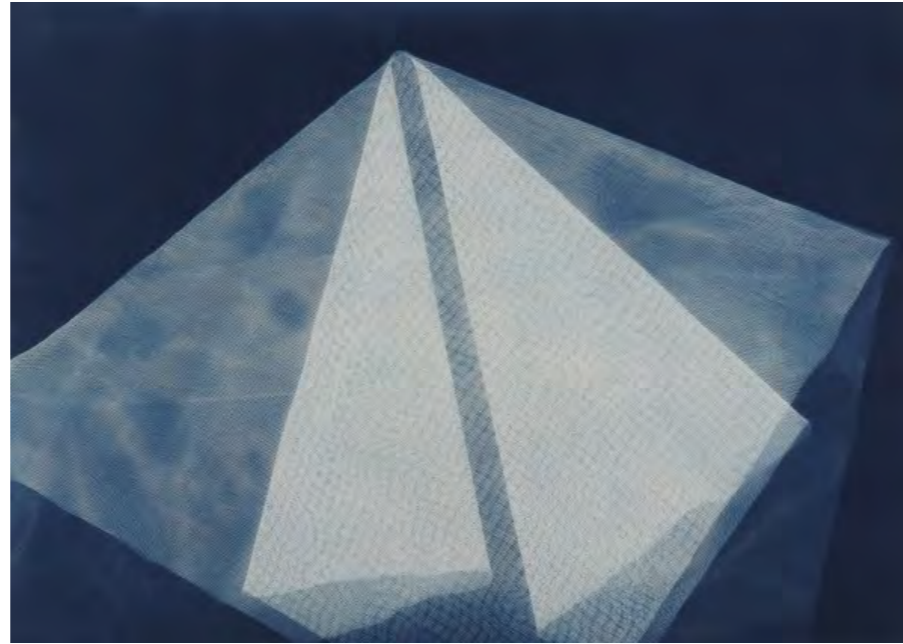
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“Is it even possible to imagine things without light?”

“Jun’ichiro praises shadows. And shadows praise light.”

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Barbara Kasten



Here I found photograms,

Physical objects are used in the dark room to create silhouettes on photosensitive paper.

The works exhibit both the harsh and soft relationship between light and shadow.

At the exhibit I was witness to just what light was capable of in the way of shape and form.

Man Ray



Test 1.



- fibre base paper
- 4 f. step.

THE DARK ROOM

TEST 2



- resin coat paper.
- 16 f. step.

Test 3.



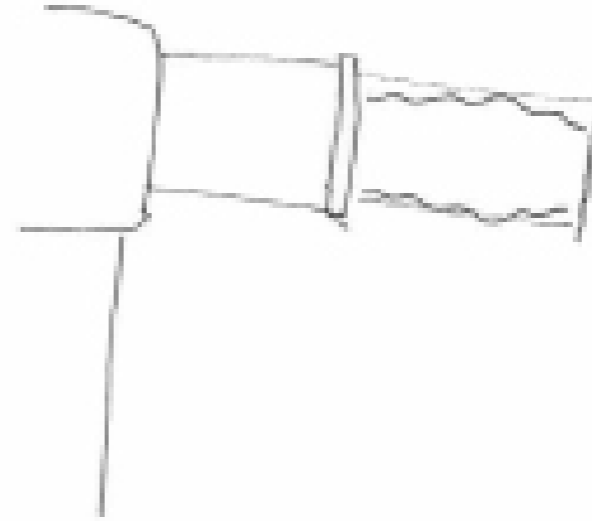
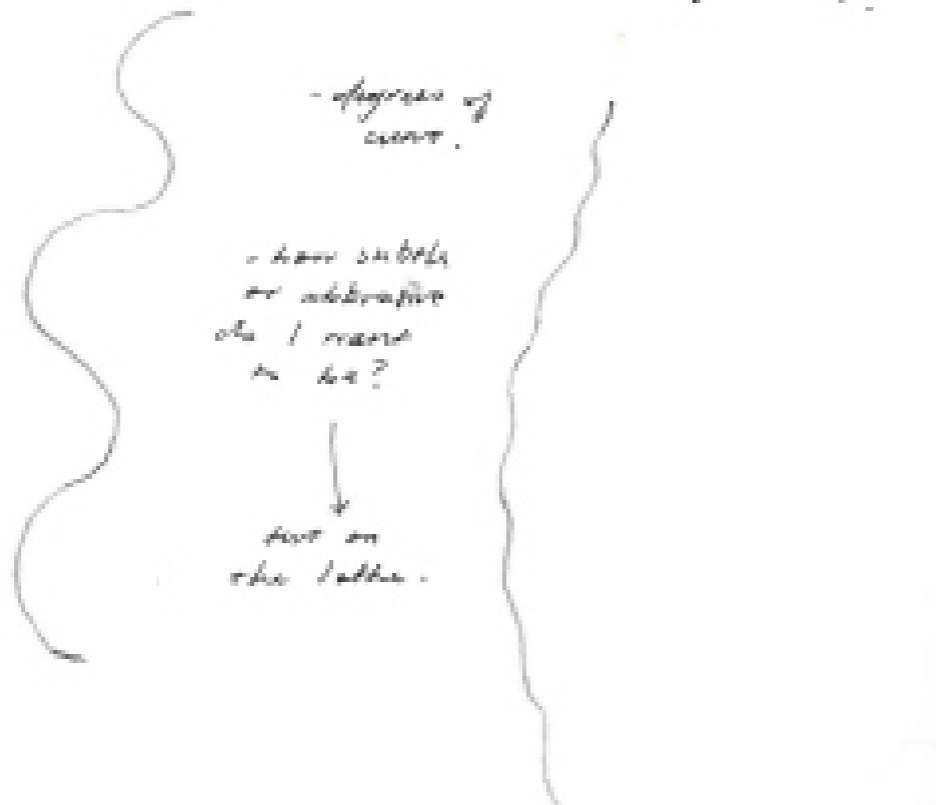
- fibre base paper.





CIRCLES ON CIRCLES ON CIRCLES

Converting the circles from my dark room prints into 3D visuals.
Circles on top of circles in plaster, just as they were in paper in the dark room.



ON THE LATHE





***FIRST LATHE TURNED FORMS.** The lathe turning process was an unexpected joy. I found that the ideas flowed from my hand to the material in a way that the tools truly felt like extensions of myself. Usually I find quite a separation between myself and material by way of machinery, but, in this instance, the mechanism felt as though it were an extension of myself. Ideas of form and scale executed themselves naturally into the plaster.*



THE AFFECT OF LIGHT

I started to observe how the objects changed in relation to the light. I carried out a series of visual experiments, documenting the affect that the change of light might have on the plaster forms. I placed the pieces in front of the window by my desk and photographed them at different times of day, and during different levels of cloud cover.

The pictures to the right show that the objects drastically changed in the from one time of day to the next. The first images show a direct source of sunlight on a very clear day. The light shone strong onto one face of the objects then it cuts drastically into a shadow.

The second pair of images show the objects in cool shadow on a bright, clear day. What you can see is that the blue of the sky is picked up in a glow that carries itself around the curve of the objects. Here it became clear the the matte, powder-like texture of the form is what aided itself well to carrying the colour so softly.

The final set of images were taken on a day of vast cloud cover. The objects took on an almost ghostly role with a steady halo of light that touched their exteriors, whilst the centre of the objects lay silent in a fuzzy shadow.

What is even more apparent than the aesthetics that separate the different qualities of light, is how differently the two objects reacted under the circumstances. The different degree of curve between the two objects meant that while one object was consumed by a high level of shadow.

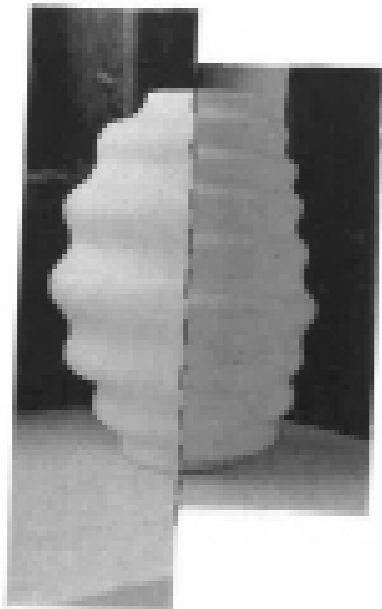


3D Development

*Controlling the course of light over the surface
of the objects by merging the forms.*

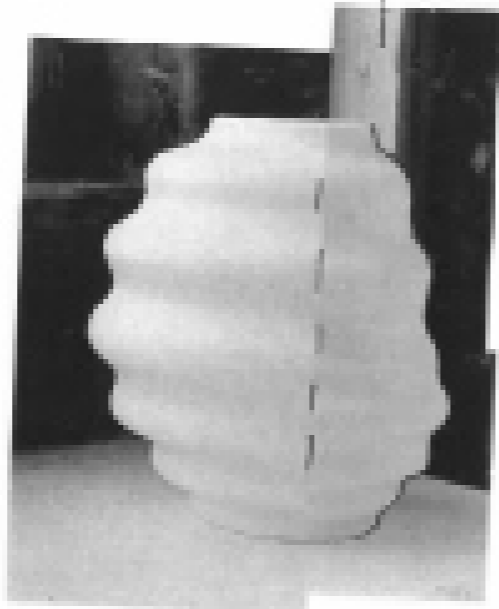


Cutting + pasting.



rather than
across
the length.

Structure
the
same.



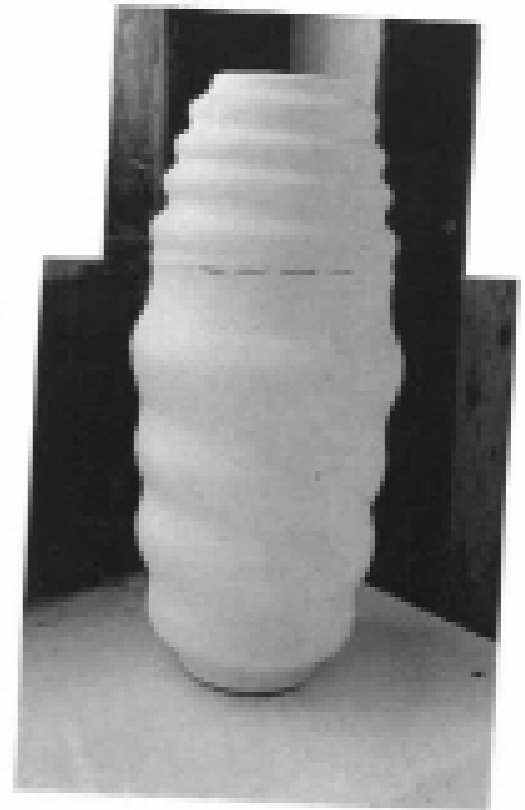
almost like an
external
structure.

different
quality of light.

different structure
belong in different
quality of light.

series of
day.

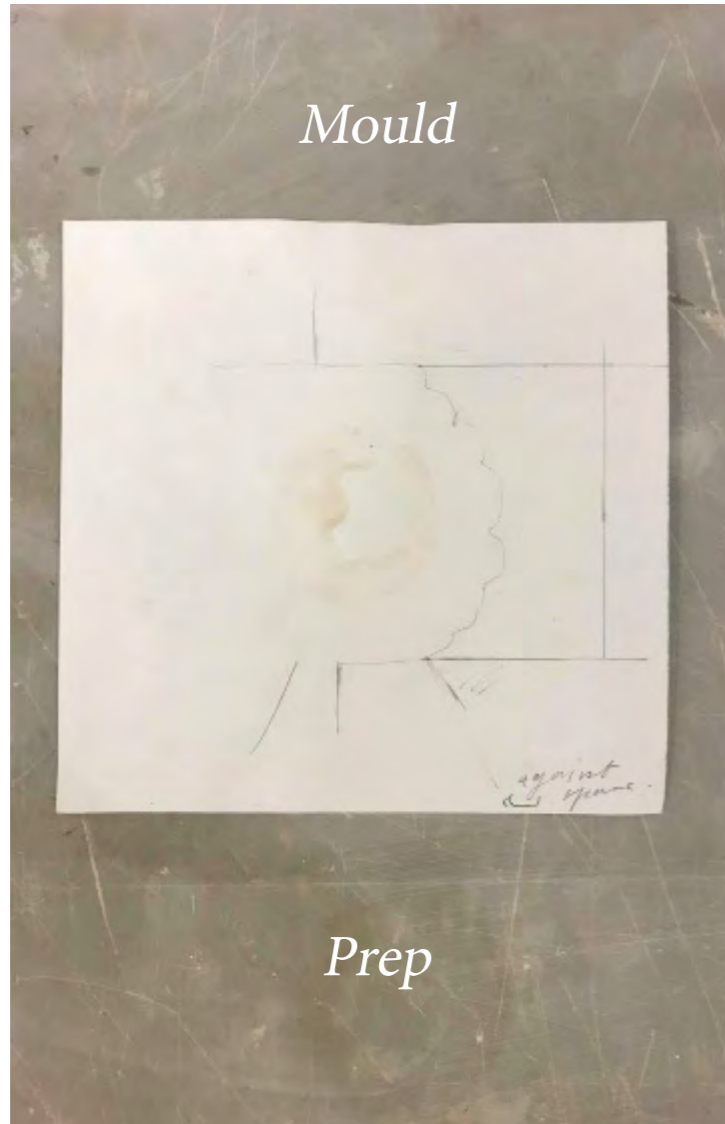
slide the
copying water
better cut
across the
width of
the glass.



almost like a
structure of
time/light/
space.







Mould

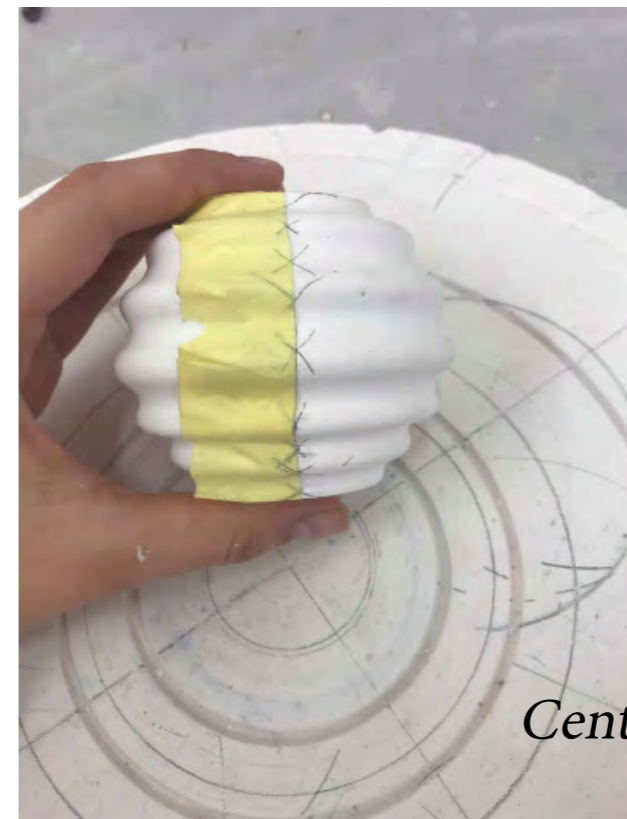
Prep



Lathe turned spare



Plaster formers



Centre line



Mould Making Process



Final

Mould



*An experiment in going
large on the lathe*

7kg of plaster

*As large as you can go on
the lathe.*













I made a wooden jig for my plaster object so that the object wouldn't rotate as it was being cut on the bandsaw - resulting in even slices of plaster.











Cutting smaller lathe turned forms on the bandsaw





Manipulating slipcasted forms.

What I found when cutting the plaster is that it would easily crack under the force of the bandsaw.

So I experimented by manipulating already slipcasted forms, while the clay was still in its wet state.







Porcelain forms fired to stoneware.





Attempting part 1
of series.
Large vessel.

- The largest I can go
on the lathe is 7 in.
- will attempt smaller
to see for scale.
- May have to do on the
lathe in parts.

↓
would be best if all
pieces were made
on the lathe.





Two lathe turned halves of one form.

Mould making





*Studio images of all final objects will be displayed
in my 'Studio Photography' book at degree show.*