

## Modules at Play

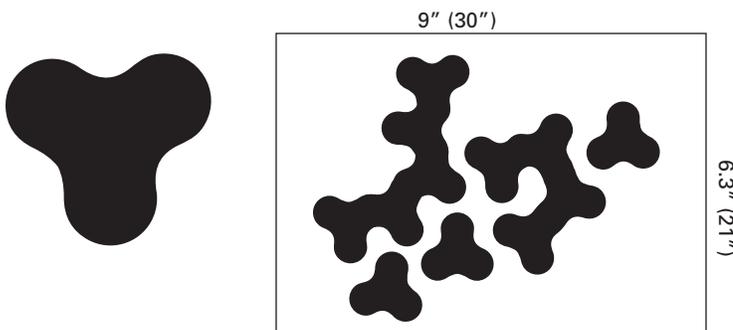
### What is Modularity?

Modularity is the interplay of identical graphic elements on the page.

A modular composition is made up of many identical parts. When simple shapes are repeated, they start to build rich visual relationships on the page. As a method, modularity opens up the design process, inviting others to participate in making.

**The Brief** Explore the expressive potential of shapes by creating a modular wall graphic system. Make a public display for the MICA community to play with the shapes and make their own compositions.

**Phase One** Using Adobe Illustrator, design three different shapes: curvy, angular, and combination of the two. Pay special attention to the way they repeat. Do they create exciting extended forms when combined? Do they engage the negative space around them well? Bring printouts of all three to class for discussion. Together, we will select the best shape for you to continue working with.



Example of a *curvy* shape and its repetition

**Phase Two** Refine your chosen shape and create a full-size interactive “puzzle”. Make sure the shape is simple enough to cut, without thin joints or fine lines. You can make your shapes black or another solid color (by using colored board). Use the laser cutter to cut 13 copies of your shape and back them up with magnetic sheeting to turn them into functional magnets.

**Phase Three** Install your puzzle on the magnetic boards in our department. Work in a team to put the display inviting our “public”, the MICA community, to play with the shapes and make up their own compositions. Over the course of the week, observe and document how people are using your shapes.

**Phase Four** Use Adobe Flash to create a 10-second animation showing the different ways your shape can repeat. Allow your observations of how people played with your puzzle to inform your storyboard.

### GOALS

- > Use rhythm, repetition and figure/ground relationships effectively.
- > Design a modular system and put it into play.
- > Tech: Improve Illustrator and Flash skills and learn to work with a laser cutter

### READING

- > *Typography as Endless Repetition*, from *My Way to Typography*, by Wolfgang Weingart, Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2000. (308–347)
- > *The Open Work*, essay by Umberto Eco, published first in 1962, available online:  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=7jroM0M8TmC&pg=PA1&dq=isbn:0674639766&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=7jroM0M8TmC&pg=PA1&dq=isbn:0674639766&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- > *Modularity*, chapter from *Graphic Design: The New Basics*, by Ellen Lupton and Jennifer Cole Phillips, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

### SUPPLIES

- > 1 pack or 5 magnetic sheets
- > DoubleTack or StudioTac 2-sided adhesive sheets, 5 sheets
- FORMAT** 9" x 6.3" rectangle. (This will later be enlarged to a 21 x 30" rectangle)
- SHAPE SIZE** Shapes should fit roughly in a 1.5" square. If they need to be longer in one dimension, that's perfectly fine.
- REPETITION** Duplicate your shape 12 times and make a composition in the 9 x 6.3" format.
- COLOR** black and white to start. Add color later by cutting your shapes out of colored board

