

# NOTEWORTHY Marlon Blackwell



## ON TONAL SPACE

You can have too much of a good thing. I think we have long since reached that point with modern architecture, so often saturated with light and overexposed. What inspires me instead are spaces with more darkness than light, more mystery than clarity, spaces that are thick, slow, and implicit. This drifting absence of light invites us to linger, to experience the eternal, the atmospheric, and the ambient. Such spaces speak of the sacred and the poetic, not only for the honorific but for the prosaic, too. Perhaps it is this scarcity of light that captivates me most.

This photo was taken in Le Corbusier's Ronchamp chapel, which I visited in June 2017 during my sabbatical year in search of darkness and light. The rough texture of the whitewashed walls creates a surface of light and shadow—for me, an exemplar of spatial tonality. Spaces like these challenge me to imbue my own work with the unexpected dominance of darkness, allowing the ordinary to become extraordinary. So far, I've been able only to introduce moments, but I'm waiting for—dreaming of—the chance to make tonal space the true inspiration, the architecture itself.

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