Design grammars

Scott Chase: *My name is Scott Chase, I'm professor of digital design at, in the Department of Architecture Design and Media Technology at Aalborg University in Denmark.*

Probably my main area of, my special area of research is design grammars, or shape grammars to be more specific, and if you make the analogy with natural language, a grammar is a set of rules that is, can be used to basically construct the sentences in a language, so applying the rules of English grammar you can make all of the legal sentences that are syntactically correct in English. Well, with design grammars you can do similar things but using drawings, for example, or visual compositions, and the idea is making a set of rules of composition for creating designs. You can also use the rules to sort of parse your designs, and actually understand how they were constructed, if you have them.

So, the nice thing about being able to use a set of rules is that the designs you create or the language of designs, because you're creating a lot of them, can be considered stylistically similar. So there have been grammars that have analysed works of architecture such as Palladian floor plans, that can generate the floor plans that Palladio designed, but also using the rules to generate new plans, that he never designed, but that are in the same style, and this has been used in a lot of areas for design, not just architecture but art, and product design, and decorative design, and, we see this also for students in a design studio creating original designs of their own style, so it's a very powerful tool.