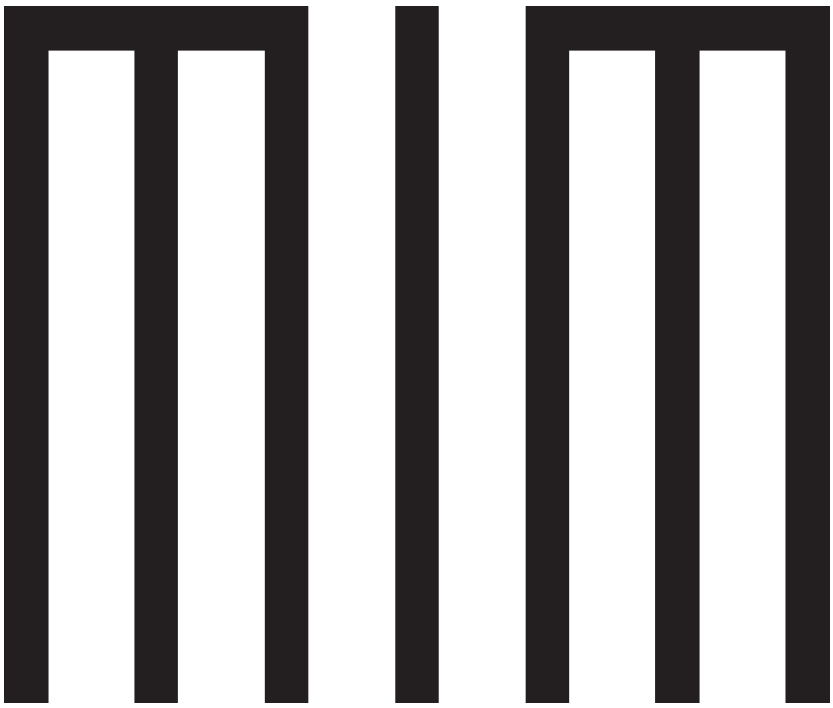


MUSEUM IN ¿MOTION?
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
[12 — 13 November 2004]

Museum Het Domein, Sittard / Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht /
Department of Architecture & Urban Planning, Ghent University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following publication contains the proceedings of the conference *Museum in ¿Motion?* that took place on 12 & 13 November 2004 at Museum Het Domein in Sittard and at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, the Netherlands. The event was jointly organised by the Jan van Eyck Academie Maastricht, Museum Het Domein, and the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning of the Ghent University (UGent). It benefited from generous funding by the Mondriaan Foundation and the Province of Limburg.

The conference comprised two meeting formats. On the first day, a symposium with invited speakers was held at Museum Het Domein in Sittard. Speakers were Christian Kravagna, Johanne Lamoureux, Camiel Van Winkel, Alan Wallach and John Welchman. On the second day, a three-session seminar was held at the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. The first two sessions saw the results of an international call for papers. Papers were presented by Lieven De Boeck & Teresa Stoppani, Christoph Grafe, Andrea Phillips, Joel Sanders, Wendy Meryem Kural Shaw, and Naomi Stead. Speakers at the Friday symposium acted as referees; Jeroen Boomgaard and Bart Verschaffel chaired the sessions; Dirk Pültau acted as additional referee. The third session presented the results of a closed architecture competition between three teams of artists and architects: Office, Dries Van de Velde & Richard Venlet, One Architecture & Berend Strik and Fün Design Consultancy, MAMA Showroom & Alicia Framis. The jury consisted of Wiel Arets, Judith Barry, Jouke Kleerebezem, Roemer van Toorn and Tristan Weddigen. During the first day of the conference, the interactive web-project *The Museum You Want* by Judith Barry could be consulted on a computer in one of the exhibition spaces of Museum Het Domein.

This publication gathers the contributions made at the *Museum in ¿Motion?* conference. We opted to digitally support the conference acts, as this allowed us to put together, within a relatively short period of time, a low-budget publication - both in terms of

production and distribution. The digital interface, however, is shell to a fully-fledged book. You can either navigate through the papers on a digital level or choose to create a material copy by printing them.

I am immensely grateful to all the people who made the conference possible and assisted me in setting up the whole enterprise. Main thanks go to Stijn Huijts, director of Museum Het Domein, and Koen Brams, director of the Jan van Eyck Academie, for having invited me to organize the conference. They also kindly offered to host the event.

Special thanks go to the Mondriaan Foundation and the Provincie Limburg for their generous support of both the conference and the resulting publication. I would like to thank all those who helped to put this publication together, especially all the contributors and the graphic designers Vinca Kruk and Adriaan Mellegers. They not only made the conference into a challenging and pleasurable event, but responded afterwards so positively to the idea of the proceedings. Special thanks go to Petra Van der Jeught, who was a true pleasure to work with during the whole project. Finally I would like to thank the following institutions and individuals for their indispensable help and advice: Department of Architecture & Urban Planning Ghent University, René Belleflamme, Madeleine Bisscheroux, Jean-Pierre Le Blanc, Maaike Frencken, Jo Frenken, Huub Gelissen, Jo Hardy, Claudine Hellweg, Winnie Koekelbergh, Geert Roels, Brigitte Schollaert, Kim Thehu, Bart Verschaffel.

Wouter Davidts, Ghent, November 2005

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Introduction: Museum in ¿Motion?

Wouter Davidts

Some days prior to the conference *Museum in ¿Motion?* the Spanish artist Santiago Sierra caused some turmoil at the Museum Dhondt Dhaenens in Deurle, a local museum at the outskirts of Ghent, Belgium. In line with his reputation of being one of the most controversial contemporary artists, he made a both simple and radical gesture. He took all the artworks from the museum space and then removed all the glass from exterior doors and windows. The museum was stripped to the bone, reduced to a bare structure, where wind and rain had free reign. Sierra's intervention fits within a fairly recent tradition of symbolic and ever more violent gestures on architecture. Since architecture gives form and identity to institutions, it is still by many regarded as the most exquisite target to attack, and thus critically evaluate those institutions, and the museum in particular.[1]

Since it was the ambition of the conference *Museum in ¿Motion?* to reassess the critical correlation between contemporary art and the museum, Santiago Sierra's work obviously raised many vital questions. Is this the kind of work that we can qualify as critical, in the sense that it develops critical insights in the present-day meaning and position of such an institution as the museum of contemporary art, or of art institutions in general? The artistic operation of dismantling a museum (building) may have been experienced as radical, straightforward and critical at the end of the 1960s, but is it still today? Is architecture still the most appropriate target to critically re-evaluate the museum? Why do critics, curators as well as artists still pretend or want us to believe that these kind of crude actions – that in the end merely dislodge the institution – formulate a firm critique on it?[2] They may cause much turmoil and commotion – especially in the case of Sierra within the local art community – but do they truly set our conception of the museum 'in motion'?

The conference *Museum in ¿Motion?* intended to trace the history of the critical correlation between contemporary art and the museum, to chart the various institutional responses, and to frame them within the broader context of socio-political changes. The title literally refers to one of the most important publications on the museum discussion in the 1970s: *Museum in ¿Motion? The modern art museum at issue / Museum in ¿Beweging? Het museum voor moderne kunst ter diskussie*, published in 1979.[3] The book was published on the occasion of the departure of director Jean Leering from the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. Leering's direction of the museum between 1964 and 1973 was considered so influential that it merited review and contextualisation. The editors started from the awareness that

since the 1960s, art had drastically altered its nature and strategies: it had become ever more agile, critical towards the institutional framework of the museum, and eager to operate on more specific sites. And this development, as they state in the introduction, caused museums of contemporary art to face 'major problems'.

In the introduction to the second part of the *Museum in ¿Motion?* book – a picture story of the drastic changes in contemporary art – Frans Haks lists some of the most burning issues. According to Haks, museums have the responsibility to stimulate, as quickly as possible, an awareness and understanding of developments in contemporary art; yet, they are confronted with spatial, institutional, and socio-political problems and limitations. As museums try to keep up pace with contemporary art, they face the following questions: 'Can we (…) defend a policy of bringing activists into the museum, when it is precisely institutions such as the museum that they reject? How can a museum accommodate artists who want to operate outside the building? Would both the repeated construction and demolition of complex structures prove too expensive?' In preparation of the book, a list of similar inquiries was sent to a wide range of museum officials, artists and critics, asking them to send back their written comments. This resulted in an impressive array of contributions by some of the most crucial voices of the post-war museum discussion, such as Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, Pontus Hulten, Willem Sandberg and Harald Szeemann. The collection of documents renders a lively insight in the animated and vibrant character of the museum discussion in the 1970s, graphically represented by the double question mark in the title. Although it may be regarded as a mere typographical joke, it represents the then 'disputable' state of the museum issue.

But do we, exactly twenty-five years on, still need these question marks? If we take a closer look at the questions that were sent around in preparation of the *Museum in ¿Motion?* book to the various art personalities, we immediately face the fact that many of them, if not all, no longer seem to be a true issue of discussion. Is there anyone who would argue that museums can only deal with visual arts or rather should connect with theatre, music, literature, architecture and dance as well? Or that the museum should engage merely with 'high art' or with any cultural phenomenon? Let alone that someone would contest the idea that a museum should organize temporary exhibitions. Just imagine that we would question the idea that the museum's activities are limited to its own building. And,

finally, whoever will contest the idea that a museum commissions artworks? Thus we must admit that the situation has drastically changed since the publication of *Museum in ¿Motion?* twenty-five years ago. The critical questions that the editors posed and the answers that the museum officials, artists, critics, theoreticians and academics tried to formulate, seem to have been completely superseded by the contemporary state and conditions of the art world. How many museums still feel impotent or helpless towards art that critiques the institution, leaves, or even destroys, the building, or asks for help for large-scale and complicated projects? It seems all the more that the former rebels have been domesticated, that they are embraced with the greatest cordiality, almost cuddled to death. The statement of William Rubin in the 1974 *Artforum* interview with Lawrence Alloway and John Coplans – reprinted in the *Museum in ¿Motion?* book – that artist should be 'more concerned about being embraced than being rejected by the museum', nowadays almost sounds tragic and cynical.[4] How many museums still rack their brains over so-called transgressive projects? Have they simply not become 'part of the programme'?

The main ambition of the *Museum in ¿Motion?* conference was to identify the kind of questions that need to be asked today. We started from the conviction that to discuss the critical relationship between contemporary art and the museum and to gain insight in and knowledge about the current situation and problematics of the museum, a precise historical perspective is mandatory. Therefore we pinned down the 1979 *Museum in ¿Motion?* book as a precise and distinct reference point, since it clearly marks a moment within the historical discussion on contemporary art and the museum. It offered an excellent framework to investigate the contemporary issues, concerns and problems. Furthermore it allowed us to investigate the present-day relevance of the questions that were posed in the middle and at the end of the 1970s. Are museums still confronted with the same problems? Is the critical relationship between art and the museum still a point of discussion? Or, do the massive socio-political changes in our society confront the museum with a much bigger challenge? How are we to define the former and current role of the museum of contemporary art, being one of the pre-eminent *public* institutions? When precisely did the dream of the mobile or living museum originate? Which forms and strategies of mobility have so far been developed? Where does the real 'motion' stop and rhetoric come in?

The *Museum in ¿Motion?* conference thus did not focus on the *future* of the museum. It focused on its present and recent history. We didn't ask our speakers to formulate their predictions nor to define the prospects of the museum. They were invited to discuss, based first and foremost on their critical and scholarly work, the historical shifts in the issues and themes that directed and still direct the museum discussion, such as the institutional *mise-en-scène* (Wallach), the public appeal (Van Winkel), architectural investment (Welchman), institutional critique (Kravagna) and artistic mobility (Lamoureux).

Together with Carol Duncan, Alan Wallach wrote one of the most influential essays in early critical museum theory. Their 'Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual', written within the same timeframe as the *Museum in ¿Motion?* book, offered a brilliant examination of the architectural iconography and curatorial *mise-en-scène* of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. On our invitation, Alan Wallach revisited and updated the 1978 article, in the light of, at the time of the conference forthcoming, re-opening of the MoMA.

In his book *Moderne Leegte* Camiel Van Winkel analyzed how artists such as Dan Graham and Bruce Nauman in the 1960s tried to grant their work the necessary social dimension by giving it an explicit 'public' destination and thus directing it towards a situation of 'publicness'. Nowadays, many consider 'the public' an outdated category, as it is said not to account for 'the multiplicity and diversity' of contemporary audiences. While one is obliged to speak about many 'publics', countless artworks are believed to force us into an aesthetic relationship, and 'speak to us' personally. We called upon Van Winkel to address the fundamental changes in the appeal to the public – on both an artistic and institutional level – that have occurred since the 1960s.

Much of the contemporary debate on museums has been dominated by architecture. Probably the most spectacular and most visible changes in the last two decades in the museum world have occurred on the architectural front. All over the world, museums, preferably designed by one of the contemporary 'star' or 'signature' architects, pop up at incredibly high speed. These often gaudy museum buildings exemplify the fact that contemporary architects have reclaimed and recruited almost every new object type and spatial relation that post-war avant-garde artists have explored. On our request, John C. Welchman, distinguished scholar of post-war and contemporary art, closely studied the work of Frank Gehry, undeniably one

of the major 'museum architects' and analysed how it renders such critical sculptural strategies as displacing, scattering, minimizing or mirroring into some of the most successful architectural 'design strategies' of today.

The book *The Museum as Arena*, edited by Christian Kravagna, reveals that the term institutional critique has come to cover a vast array of positions and attitudes. From the early critical deconstruction of the artistic institution by such artists as Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher or Hans Haacke, institutional critique has developed into a broad critical assess of socio-political and economic institutions and phenomena, by such artists as Martha Rosler, Andrea Fraser or Fred Wilson. For many contemporary critical art practices however, the art museum no longer functions as a subject, let alone as a point of reference. We asked Kravagna to reflect on what the implication is for the art museum, now that many artists seem to have shifted their interests to other museums and cultural institutions.

Since the 1960s and the advent of site-specificity, contemporary art operates on continuously shifting sites – physical, institutional, geographical as well as political – engendered by the ever increasing mobility of the artist. In her book *L'art insituable*, Johanne Lamoureux elucidates the different positions and attitudes within the broad range of artistic practices that engage with specific sites. Within the ever-expanding network of exhibitions, events and institutions the model of the 'itinerant artist' however seems to have lost its initial criticality. We invited her to reflect on the total mobilization of artistic (and curatorial) practices.

On the second day, the first two sessions explored the many ways in which the museum advocates architecture as the medium to overcome its identity crisis. A quick glance at the metaphors used by museums to question their status reveals an architectural bias, and as a consequence, the spatial nature of the crisis: if the museum of contemporary art wants to transform itself from a static *repository* into a dynamic *workshop*, it has to tear down its walls, open up its space, leave the premises, push back its frontiers, etc. Based on two separate call for papers, the first session reflected on the notion of mobility (Phillips, Stead and Sanders), while the second studied the contemporary relevance and significance of the notion of typology (Grafe, Shaw and Stoppani & De Boeck). The third session not only ended the conference, but functioned as a revelatory supplement. We set up a 'fictitious' architecture competition and invited three teams of artists and architects to design 'their museum'. By staging the presentation and the jury discussion as a 'live event',

we wished to develop an alternative format to discuss the role and significance of architecture within the museum. The fundamental premise of the enterprise was that an architectural project is an inherently discursive product, and as such, a suitable object to engender a theoretical discussion that finds its place within an academic conference.

It is hard to measure the success and accomplishments of a conference. It is a particular format and event with its own rules and customs. But if there was at least one convention we tried to contradict, it was the bromide that at conferences the most interesting discussions are held during the coffee break.[5] We shared the conviction that this has nothing to do with the genre of the conference, but first and foremost with the way they are organized. I am very grateful for all the energy and commitment that all contributors demonstrated in preparation of and during the conference, and afterwards by submitting their paper. I sincerely hope that the present collection of essays proves that the discussion on the relationship between contemporary art and the museum is still as vibrant and animated as it was in the 1970s. We at least kept the double question mark in the title. It is of course an illusion to assume that the conference would tackle the full scope of the contemporary museum problematic. Nevertheless, despite the variety of the delivered papers, we must admit that many questions remain unanswered. But perhaps this is due to the subject of the conference itself. If this collection of essays points something out, it is the elusiveness of the concept museum. It's an institution whose problems are both hard to grasp and easy to circumvent. But that aspect alone makes it a worthy subject that we must return to again and again, with all possible fervour.

It was a great pleasure to note that so many people made the effort to travel to Sittard and Maastricht, both charming cities in the Southern periphery of the Netherlands. At first sight they seem fairly unlikely places to organize such an ambitious academic conference. But, in the end, we experienced that both far-off locations perfectly befitted a conference on the museum – the secluded and remote site par excellence[6]. If we succeed in challenging the common assumption that you need a hotspot to produce vivid and vibrant discussions, I think we can consider the *Museum in ¿Motion?* conference a success

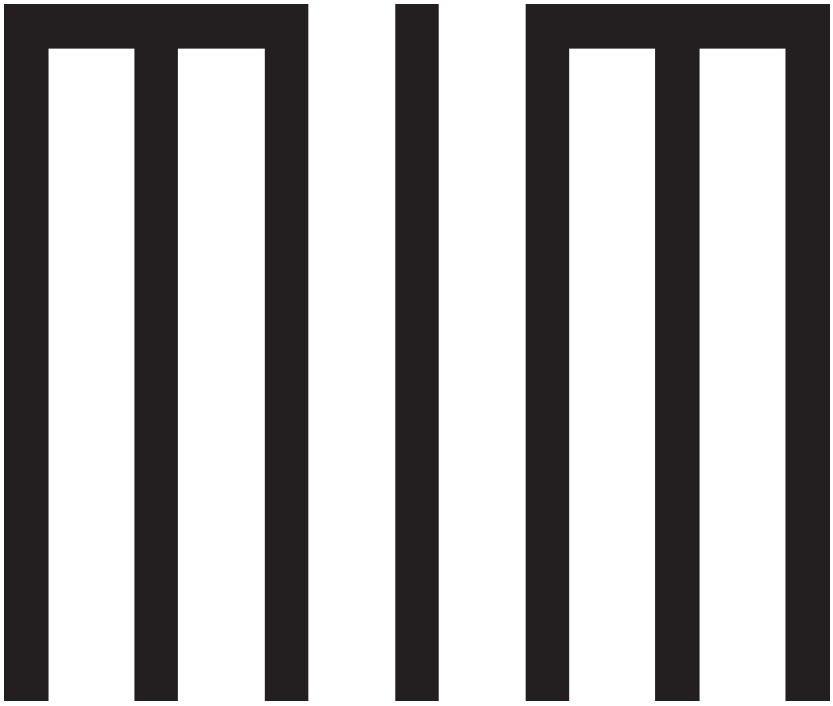
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Notes

1. This tradition starts with Yves Le Klein's *Le Vide* (1958), Armand's *Le Plein* (1960), Daniel Buren's sealing of the entrance of the Galleria Apollinaire (1968), Robert Barry's *During the exhibition the gallery will be closed* (1969), Michael Asher's removal of the windows of the Clocktower New York (1976), Gordon Matta-Clark's *Window Blow-Out* in the New York Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (1976), Chris Burden's *Exposing the Foundations of the Museum* in the Temporary Contemporary in Los Angeles (1986) to more recent intrusions such as Ingmar & Dragset's *SPACED OUT/POWERLESS STRUCTURES, FIG. 211* in the Portikus in Frankfurt (2003) to Kendell Geers' blowing up of a temporary wall in the Antwerp Museum of Contemporary Art *(The Devil never rests … [6 June 2004])*. For a brilliant discussion of the different gestures that use architecture to attack the conditioning of the institutional space, see the last chapter 'The gallery as a gesture' that was added to the 1999 edition of Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
2. Probably the most ironic and yet tragic aspect of the whole enterprise was that afterwards the museum officials stated with a mix of proud and pity that, due to the work of Sierra, the local authorities had cut the budget of the museum by 50%.
3. Carel Blotkamp (ed.), *Museum in ¿Motion? The modern art museum at issue / Museum in ¿Beweging? Het museum voor moderne kunst ter diskussie*, 's-Gravenhage, Govt. Pub. Office, 1979. In 2003, a one-day symposium was organized at the arts centre De Balie in Amsterdam under the same title. In 2003, the directors of the most important museums of modern and contemporary art were about to leave: Rudi Fuchs from the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Jan Debbaut from the Van Abbe museum in Eindhoven and, Chris Dercon from the Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. This collective exodus was experienced as a 'unique' situation, of both urgent and promising nature. The 'museum in motion' symposium in De Balie in May 2003 was already the third in a series of 'future debates' about the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum. (Reports on these two editions were printed in *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, 14, 6 (2002); *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, 16, 1 (2003).) For the event, several celebrities of the contemporary art world – from Boris Groys, Thierry De Duve to curators as Charles Esche, Nicholas Schaffhausen, Kathy Halbreich and Hans Ulrich Obrist et al. – flew in to predict the 'future' of the museum – constructing nothing less than a public interview of possible candidates. These

figures gave their view on the choices the museum of the 21st century was to make. During the evening program, a group of eminent Belgian and Dutch artists and museum officials discussed the critical local state of affairs. The idea to organize an academic conference with the same title grew out of the discontent of many with the symposium in De Balie. For critical reviews, see. a.o. Sven Lütticken, 'Stedelijk Museum Debate (3)', *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, 16, nr. 3, 2003; Wouter Davidts, 'Museum in Motion', *De Witte Raaf* 18, 104 (2003), pp. 27-28.

4. Lawrence Alloway & John Coplans, 'Talking with William Rubin', in Artforum (October 1974), as reprinted in: Blotkamp (ed.), *Museum in ¿Motion? / Museum in ¿Beweging?*, pp. 311-319.
5. This idea was taken literally by Hans Ulrich Obrist, who once organized the science and art conference *Bridge the Gap* with all of the infrastructure of a conference — the parties, chats, lunches, airport arrivals — but with no actual conference.
6. One highly ironic note during the first day of conference was delivered by a woman who approached Koen Brams, director of the Jan van Eyck Academy and one of the organizers of the conference. She blamed him for the fact that there were little or no members of the staff of the major Dutch museums attending the conference. Although the conference was well attended, it appeared that just a handful of the museum 'professionals' did pay the effort to travel to Sittard, a city in the Southern periphery of the Netherlands. Immediately, the question was raised who was to be taken responsible for this significant absence: the convenors – for choosing such a remote location – or the museum people themselves – for their lack of engagement and interest? Or, were there other, more profound and theoretical reasons to discern, besides the obligatory apology that people simply forgot to write it down in their agendas? Was it representative for the current (and at least local) state of the museum discussion, and for the debate about the museum for contemporary art in particular? Did it signify a situation of total disinterest, vanished criticality, deadening silence even?



SYMPOSIUM

Museum Het Domein, Sittard

'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' Twenty-Five Years Later

Alan Wallach

In 1978, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' appeared in the short-lived journal Marxist Perspectives. *That article attempted to understand New York's Museum of Modern Art as a ritual space in which the visitor acted out and thus in some way internalized a mythologized history of modern art. This paper will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Duncan-Wallach argument before proceeding to a discussion of MOMA's evolution since 1978.*

*

Circa 1978

'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual', which I wrote in collaboration with Professor Carol Duncan, appeared in 1978, a year before the publication of *Museum in ¿Motion?*[1] Although the two publications focused, at least to some degree, on particular institutions, they both attempted to develop a more general understanding of the art museum's role in society, albeit in different ways. *Museum in ¿Motion?* reflected a sense of cultural possibility within the broad framework of the social democratic state in which the idea of an artistic avant-garde still retained something of its bite. 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' was more pessimistic. While *Museum in ¿Motion?* touched on the question of the art museum as an instrument of a pervasive upper class hegemony, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' took that hegemony as its focus as well as its premise. Duncan and I thus began with the belief that the art museum ultimately functioned as an instrument of social and cultural oppression. We did not aspire to reform the museum, to make it more effective or more efficient or more responsive to the public's needs, nor were we concerned with finding ways for the museum to reach a larger audience, minority groups, or the lower classes. For us, the museum was a historically inevitable feature of capitalist society and we thus began by thinking of it in terms of social and cultural pathologies.

Our deep pessimism was very much of a piece with the historical moment, which witnessed the United States' unacknowledged but nonetheless ignominious defeat in Vietnam, the large-scale failure of the aspirations of the civil rights movement, the then recent bloody repression of African-American civic uprisings, the precipitous demise of the radical left, and the retreat of leftist intellectuals to the academy. By the late 1970s, the United States, thwarted in Vietnam, was preparing to embark upon new imperial adventures in Central America and to make a sharp turn to the

right domestically (in 1980, Ronald Reagan was to assume the presidency). The second cold war, as it came to be known, was at hand.

Duncan and I held somewhat different political views, but we shared a number of experiences: during the 1960s we had supported the anti-war and civil rights movements, we had both participated, although in different ways, in the student uprising at Columbia University in the spring of 1968 (an American echo of contemporaneous events in Paris), and in 1976 and 1977 we had both worked with an artists committee on a book entitled *an anti-catalog*, which was published as part of a protest against the Whitney Museum's bicentennial celebration.[2] That celebration had consisted of an exhibition of a collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American painting, traditional 'masterpieces' assembled by the art historian Edgar P. Richardson for John D. Rockefeller III. Objecting to the exhibition's exclusivity and lack of cultural diversity, to the way it put forth a genteel, upper-class version of American history and American art, the catalog committee along with its parent organization, Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, picketed the show's opening.[3]

An anti-catalog was a potpourri, an unstable mixture of heterogeneous elements in which collective editing resulted in a publication that often teetered on the edge of incoherence. Still, the publication, which was devoted to 'questions of the historical and ideological function of American art', often focused on the art museum. For example, images of the Milanese architect Gio Ponti's 1971 Denver Museum and Marcel Breuer's 1966 Whitney Museum accompanied a text arguing that art museums

> *are designed to keep art away from people – physically, psychologically and intellectually – and to keep art removed from daily life. It is telling that so many modern art museums resemble windowless tombs, bunkers or bank vaults. Both (…) art museums (…) are reminiscent of the fortified castle keeps of the dark ages (the Whitney actually has a moat). By design, modern art museums literally force people to experience art as untouchable, unexplainable treasures.*[4]

These remarks echoed the critic Max Kozloff's earlier observation that the Denver Museum exemplified 'the feudal iconography of the new museums (…) expressive of the corporate network which defines the American economy today'.[5] That feudal iconography – the brutalism of so much of late 1960s and 1970s American architecture

– can be taken as a perhaps not entirely conscious corporate-institutional retreat from the public realm, a reflexive desire, expressed in architectural form, to hunker down behind thick walls in the wake of uprisings that permanently transformed the social and architectural fabric of large sections of New York, Detroit, Washington, Los Angeles (which is to say Watts), and a host of smaller American cities.

These particulars of then recent American architectural history provided grist for *an anti-catalog*'s anti-art museum protest. That protest had its roots in what was, by the mid-1970s, a tradition of artists' protests against the policies of New York art museums beginning with demonstrations mounted by the Artworkers Coalition in the late 1960s. The group Artists Meeting for Cultural Change (known by its acronym, AMCC) had for several years brought together artists who believed in the importance, even the necessity, of political activism within as well as outside the artworld. AMCC set no requirements for membership and it eventually disintegrated in a series of bruising factional disputes, but at its highpoint it included artists from the New York section of Art and Language – Joseph Kosuth (who designed the *anti-catalog*), Sarah Charlesworth, Ian Burn, Mel Ramsden, Saul Ostrow, and Michael Corris. AMCC's raucous meetings and the more focused discussions of the catalog committee provided a context for a critical consideration of the role of the art museum in the artworld and in American society generally. This unacademic, and perhaps in some ways self-consciously anti-academic milieu, furnished a large part of the inspiration for 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual'.

The passage from *an anti-catalog* cited above contains the germ of our critique: that architectural form provides an essential clue to the museum's social and cultural role. In elaborating our analysis, Duncan and I drew upon methodologies and scholarship that were at the time readily to hand. We turned to iconography, then a staple of conventional art history, which we unconventionally applied to the museum's appearance as well as the layout of its galleries and installations. We looked to anthropological studies of ritual, especially the work of Victor Turner, which helped us understand the way in which architecture influenced visitors' behavior in the museum. We also took into account the work of Marxist and feminist critics. Inspiration came from such current texts as John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, with its relentless questioning of received opinion about the history and institutions of western art; Linda Nochlin's celebrated 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' and other writings that dealt with the absence of women from art history

and with the ways in which women have been represented in art; Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel's *L'Amour de l'Art*, which investigated the place of the museum in a society divided hierarchically by class and which contained an early version of Bourdieu's concept of 'distinction'; and perhaps inevitably for the mid 1970s, Walter Benjamin's 'Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproducibility' and the debates surrounding it.[6]

'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' was thus very much of its historical moment, a product of artworld activism and the 'new art history', as it came to be called, which since the early 1970s had been turning radical political criticism into criticism of the congealed assumptions of a smug, conservative, and largely closed Anglo-American art-historical discourse – a discourse that had been pretty much in place since the mid 1950s. Written in a terse, almost telegraphic manner, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' was a manifesto of the new art history and, needless to say, a deliberate provocation. Published early in 1978 in *Studio International* and later that year in a revised version in the short-lived but academically-prestigious journal, *Marxist Perspectives*, it took aim at persistent museological myths, above all the museum's claim to political and ideological neutrality[7]

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Ritualizing Modernism

'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' employed mainly conventional means to arrive at an unconventional and highly critical view of the art museum. By comparing art museums to traditional ritual structures (churches, temples, and palaces), and classifying museums according to architectural type – the modern art museum, the encyclopaedic or universal survey museum, and what we would eventually call the 'robber baron mansion museum' – Duncan and I were able to develop an insight into the museum visitor's experience. We were of course aware that different visitors responded to the museum in different ways – that visitors familiar with the history of modern art might gain more from a visit to MOMA than visitors with little or no art-historical background. In this respect, we maintained that the discipline of art history provided the modern-day litany, the sacred text, that made the museum ritual coherent and meaningful. Thus, while demonstrating that museums functioned as ritual structures, we were inclined to agree with Bourdieu

who wrote in *L'Amour de l'Art* that down to 'the tiniest details of their morphology and their organization, museums betray their true function, which is to reinforce for some the feeling of belonging and for others the feeling of exclusion'.[8]

The visitor's experience, as we came to understand it, depended upon the museum's ensemble of art and architecture. Museum architecture was not neutral, not simply a practical expedient for exhibiting works of art, but a crucial aspect of the visitor's overall experience. Museum architecture provided a setting for ritual – an idea already latent in popular descriptions of museum visitors as 'pilgrims', and museums as 'temples', 'churches', and 'palaces'. We took these commonplace metaphors seriously because they seemed to point to a central feature of the museum experience. If the museum was a ritual structure, then the works of art on display could be understood as architectural decoration or embellishment. Like the Parthenon frieze representing the Panhellenic procession or Giotto's frescoes on the walls of the Arena Chapel, art works in museums articulated meanings already latent or, as it were, inscribed in the architecture – meanings that the visitor, in accord with the level of his or her art-historical education, realized simply by entering the museum and walking through its galleries. The museum thus both prompted and accommodated the visitor's ritual walk, intensifying the feeling that the museum was a sacred space and that the works on display embodied society's highest ideals and values.

In sum, the museum like other types of ritual structures inculcated and reinforced belief. As we maintained at the time, the museum 'transform[ed] ideology in the abstract into living belief'. Although Duncan and I did not attempt to show in detail how MOMA affected any particular visitor or class of visitors, our surmise about the museum's ideological mechanisms provided a clue to MOMA's place in the larger culture. A close reading of the museum's architecture and iconographic programme – its choice of works of art to display in the galleries devoted to the permanent collection and the way in which these works were deployed within its gallery spaces – resulted in an analysis of the values underlying the museum's authoritative version of the history of modern art, an analysis that perhaps somewhat predictably demonstrated how MOMA's canonical history of modernism reinforced, symbolically, the corporate status quo.

As we observed at the time, visitors working their way through the labyrinthine spaces of MOMA's permanent collection were prompted by the architecture to

progress from Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism to Dada, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism. These artistic movements literally defined MOMA's modernist mainstream while German Expressionism, Mexican muralism, and pre-War American painting were relegated to so many dead ends and cul-de-sacs. Our reading of MOMA's iconographic programme stressed two interrelated themes. First, we interpreted the mainstream as 'a spiritual path that rises to ever higher levels of transcendence' culminating in the abstractions of Pollock, Rothko, and Newman. Second, Duncan and I were particularly attentive to the ways in which images of male transcendence (equals spirit, light, intellect) played off against images of the terrible mother (femmes fatales, Medusas, whores). In this reading, the museum ritual involved an ordeal in which the visitor attains (male) transcendence by advancing past and thereby overcoming the (female) terrors of the mainstream. In other words, we interpreted the iconographic programme as a series of oppositions between female and male, matter and spirit, immolation and transcendence – terms the museum's curators would have found entirely alien to their conscious intentions when they installed the permanent collection. For as far as Alfred Barr and his successors were concerned, the works displayed in the galleries devoted to the permanent collection represented a careful selection of indisputable modernist masterpieces.

If 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' scandalized curators and art-historians, it also inspired more thoughtful responses. At the time, the most pointed criticisms centred around the question of ritual. A participant in a religious ritual is usually aware of the nature of his or her activity. Wasn't our description of a visit to the MOMA as a 'secular ritual' an oxymoron – a contradiction in terms? Could ritual activity ever be unconscious or subliminal? Later critics took us to task for neglecting the problem of reception. As the museum educator Danielle Rice recently observed, Duncan and I inspired a current in critical museum studies that assumed that 'the museum is a value-laden narrative that communicates its message effectively to all visitors, whether they know it or not'. Rice overstated her argument – she claimed Duncan and I implied that museum visitors 'are mindless dupes of the powerful institutions that manipulate them' – but her point about the need for reception studies is well taken.[9] Thomas Patin, another recent commentator, argued that a formula Duncan and I once employed – 'ideology structures consciousness' – 'has a ring of idealism and magical thinking, and lacks a specific description of how

institutions work upon individuals'.[10] Obviously I'm not happy with Patin's 'magical thinking' but I agree that beyond understanding the museum visitor's behavior as a form of ritual activity we need to know more about how the experience of an art museum affects the public – in other words, what sort of knowledge art museums produce.

Probably the most radical aspect of 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' was its scepticism when it came to prevailing ideas about museums, its refusal to credence MOMA's (or any other museum's) account of its motives, and its determination to subject all institutional claims, all the familiar, dreary assumptions about art and museums, to empirical and conceptual tests. For those qualities, if nothing else, our article probably is still worth reading. But the world has moved on. The tiny trickle of critical museum studies of the 1970s has become a torrent. While 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' remains a staple of anthologies and university courses, the museum Duncan and I investigated in the late 1970s has undergone two renovation and expansion projects.

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Impasse

In 1973, the cultural critic Russell Lynes published a book entitled *Good Old Modern*, a well-informed if slightly tongue-in-cheek account of the history of the Museum of Modern Art.[11] In choosing his title, Lynes hit upon the central contradiction of MOMA's early history: for how could a museum, which by definition collected and exhibited artefacts from the past, devote itself to that which was modern and up-to-date? In its early years MOMA had no hesitation about redefining the term 'museum'. Indeed, in order to remain a museum of the modern, which in the 1930s and 1940s was synonymous with the contemporary, it adhered to a fifty-year rule according to which works in its collection that were more than a half century old – in other words, works that were, by MOMA's definition, no longer modern – would be de-accessioned. As late as 1947, the museum sold twenty-six paintings including Cézanne's *Man in a Blue Cap* and Picasso's *Woman in White* to the Metropolitan Museum of Art – a move MOMA subsequently came to regret. In 1953 MOMA abandoned the fifty-year rule; three years later, it officially declared its intention of exhibiting a 'permanent collection of masterpieces'.[12] MOMA thus ceased to be a museum ostensibly focused on contemporary concerns and became a full-fledged

museum of the history of modernism, which it defined as beginning, historically, with Post-Impressionism. At this point 'modern' and 'contemporary' began to diverge. Yet MOMA did not abandon its earlier aspirations. Indeed, in each of its two recent expansions (in 1984 and in 2004), the museum has continued to enlarge the space it devoted to contemporary art. Moreover, in 2000 it joined forces with PS 1, a former public school building in Queens that in 1976 was converted into an exhibition space and that now functions as a showcase for the work of contemporary artists.

In effect MOMA has become two museums – 'Good Old Modern', a museum of the history of modernism, and a museum of contemporary art. What explains this dichotomy? How to account for the museum's inability to connect authoritatively the modern and the contemporary?

In a footnote to 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual,' Duncan and I argued that

> *MOMA orthodoxy has led to an art-historical bind. Abstract Expressionism perfectly completed the inner logic of its doctrines. Although MOMA has collected post-Abstract Expressionist art, it is not integrated into the Museum's permanent iconographic program. Art of the 1960s and 1970s appears in temporary installations. (…) Since MOMA orthodoxy is so deeply rooted in the art ideology of the 1950s, during the last decade or so the Museum has lost much of the influence it once had in the art world.*[13]

What Duncan and I called 'MOMA orthodoxy' had its roots in the exhibitions Barr mounted at the museum in the 1930s and 1940s, shows that featured works by Post-Impressionist masters (Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, Seurat), Fauves (especially Matisse), Cubists (especially Picasso, who MOMA celebrated, and continues to celebrate, like no other artist), Dadaists, Surrealists, and so-called 'primitive' or tribal artists. Barr consolidated this view of the history of modernism in the 1950s in the installation of the permanent collection. William Rubin, Alfred Barr's successor as chief curator, followed in his predecessor's footsteps. As Rubin admitted in 1974, 'I find my own views of the collection and about exhibiting it very much like [Barr's]. That's partly because I was brought up on Alfred's museum, and on the collection as he built it'.[14] Rubin, influenced by Clement Greenberg as well as Barr, turned Barr's ideas into dogma. Kirk Varnedoe and John Elderfield, Rubin's two successors

as chief curator of painting and sculpture, have done everything in their power to perpetuate the Barr-Rubin legacy.

Barr's account of the history of modernism brought art-historical order to a welter of modernist tendencies, isms, and movements. Moreover, as a history or, perhaps better to say, a teleology, it played a role in the rise of Abstract Expressionism, which then seemed, logically, the culmination of its art-historical sequence. Abstract Expressionism would be unimaginable without Cubism, Surrealism, and so-called 'Primitive' art. But in MOMA's version of the history of modernism, Abstract Expressionism could only look backward, not forward. In the museum's galleries it appears as an art-historical dead end – the formal and as it were 'spiritual' culmination of a quasi-linear sequence that begins with Post-Impressionism.

It might be argued that MOMA could reinvent itself, that it could develop a more open or more multi-dimensional version of the history of modernism, that it could avail itself of the revisionist histories that have appeared over the last thirty years and which yield a far more complex history than Barr envisioned. It could thus find ways to link the modern to the contemporary. But here we run up against institutional moments of inertia, the way institutions become trapped within their own definitions of themselves. For MOMA, Barr's version of the history of modernism became an institutional reflex. Almost from the beginning, the museum's collecting took that version as its premise. Today MOMA's audience expects nothing less than an opportunity to view the 'masterpieces' by Rodin, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Brancusi, Giacometti, Mondriaan, Rothko, Pollock et al. that the museum long ago acquired and that have for generations defined its modernist mainstream. Or to put the matter another way, we might say that the split between modern and contemporary that plays itself out in the spaces of the museum represents the unacknowledged division between a broad, general audience for modern art, and a much smaller audience made up of artworld professionals and aficionados who care deeply about contemporary art. For the general audience – the approximately 22% of the United States public that visits art museums and has at least a smattering of art-historical education – the permanent collection confirms and reinforces its belief in MOMA's canonical history of modernism.[15] By contrast, the audience for contemporary art is not only much smaller but in artworld terms also far more sophisticated. Although it takes the history embodied in MOMA's permanent collection more or less for granted, its needs and interests run in a different direction.

As a showcase for contemporary art, MOMA now competes with a host of other museums and display spaces. As a museum of modern art, however, it is without peer or serious competitor. For educated Americans and, I dare say, for many Europeans, MOMA's is *the* authoritative account of the history of modernism – and as a museum artefact, that history is now, itself, all but sacrosanct. Thus Arthur Lubow began a recent article in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* devoted to MOMA's current $858 million renovation by announcing 'MOMA is a church [NB]. Its masterpieces, beyond their individual merits, serve a higher purpose: to spread the gospel of modern art. The new selection and arrangement of the permanent collection will be scrutinized as closely as Scripture'.[16]

Lubow went on to describe how chief curator John Elderfield had spent the year prior to the museum's reopening working feverishly with his curators and staff on installing the permanent collection. Yet despite unremitting calculation and experiment, the resulting arrangement did not depart substantially from MOMA tradition. For Elderfield and his team, even minor deviations in the selection and placement of works have been the source of unending worry and concern. As Lubow makes clear, their decision to replace Cézanne's *Bather* of 1885, which had for years greeted visitors at the entrance to the permanent collection, with Signac's 1890 *Portrait of Félix Fénéon*, represented a daring departure from hallowed precedent.[17]

Yet at the same time MOMA's curators were wringing their hands over small adjustments to their history of modernism, they were, predictably, running into a wall in their efforts to link Abstract Expressionism to later artistic movements. As Lubow observed, 'as the [historical] chronicle jumped back and forth between continents and began to approach our own time (…) it became more disjointed and harder to contain'.[18] Writing less than two months before the expanded museum's slated opening, Lubow noted that 'the curators [have] yet to decide when between 1965 and 1975 to end the historical collection (…) and how to organize the contemporary space' located on another floor of the museum.[19]

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Nostalgia

'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual' anticipated the curatorial dilemma Lubow so vividly describes. What it could not anticipate, however, was the

extent to which MOMA's modernist history has itself become increasingly an object of nostalgia.

We live in the era of the corporatization of the American art museum – a development that goes hand-in-hand with an unprecedented growth of the museum audience. Once the hushed, half-empty preserves of connoisseurs and upper-class aesthetes, American art museums are now obliged to appeal to a middle-class public, which they have done primarily via the medium of the blockbuster exhibition. This shift has led to crucial differences in the way the museum public approaches works of art. Fifty years ago, in an earlier phase of the history of the American art museum, the museum's ideal visitor was an upper-class amateur who viewed the work of art as an object of aesthetic contemplation – an object that demanded a refined appreciation of its formal traits. By contrast, in today's corporatized museum, the audience is increasingly prompted to admire works of art on other terms. The original work of art may still project an aura of authenticity and genius but it is also often an object of nostalgia for the high culture and bourgeois lifestyles of an earlier era. Thus, for example, Impressionism summons up the imagery of gracious holiday leisure *à la* Masterpiece Theater, while the work of Van Gogh or Picasso recalls the bravery and defiance of the avant-garde and its early supporters. In other words, blockbusters present works of art as components of popular historical narratives. They are in this respect not very different from the 'themed' entertainments associated with other instances of corporate culture (for example, Disneyland). Today, for all intents and purposes, MOMA's permanent collection functions as a permanent blockbuster. It too has a theme – and as we shall see, that theme has increasingly made itself felt in the museum's architecture.[20]

MOMA's history as an institution begins with what might be called its utopian moment – the two decades following its opening in 1929. The most revealing feature of MOMA's utopianism is the museum building itself. Designed by Philip Goodwin in collaboration with Edward Durrell Stone, the building was MOMA's most representative artefact, not something it had collected but something it had deliberately created and the most potent signifier of its utopian aspirations. Surrounded by architectural survivals from the nineteenth century when it was completed in 1939, the Goodwin-Stone building set up an opposition between a present still haunted by a backward, Victorian past, and a future of clarity, rationality, efficiency, and functionality.

We might at this point begin to conceive of MOMA as an undertaking of a powerful corporate elite – an elite that, as part of its claims to dominance, successfully projected its own aesthetic regime of modernity. Yet what is perhaps most remarkable about this aspect of MOMA's history is the failure of vision that quickly followed. There were no convincing post-World War II utopias. The 1950s marked MOMA's highpoint as an institution and the beginning of its transformation. For at this point MOMA began to look increasingly to itself and its past. Utopian projection was replaced by nostalgia for an outmoded utopia – or rather, for the time when belief in a utopian future was still credible. This romantic longing for the past's utopia came to dominate MOMA's practice as an institution.

The three campaigns to renovate and expand the Goodwin-Stone building provide evidence of MOMA's nostalgic attachment to its utopian origins. Between 1962 and 1964, Philip Johnson, then a disciple of Mies van der Rohe as well as a MOMA trustee, oversaw an expansion that nearly doubled the gallery space devoted to the permanent collection. Two decades after Johnson, Cesar Pelli, a one-time disciple of Eero Saarinen and then dean of the Yale School of Architecture, undertook a renovation that provided additional space for the permanent collection. Finally, Yoshio Taniguchi, who in the 1960s studied at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, at the time a Bauhaus stronghold, presided over MOMA's most recent expansion. According to the architectural critic Cathleen McGuigan, Taniguchi's work reveals 'a rigorous passion for modernism, and the influence of such masters as Mies van der Rohe'.[21]

All three architects have sought to preserve the Goodwin-Stone facade. Johnson deliberately maintained through contrasts of colour and structure a clear distinction between the 1939 facade and his own Bauhaus-style wings. Pelli considered himself above all a custodian of MOMA's architectural heritage. As he said at the time,

> *when you are working on a building designed by Goodwin and Stone, that has already been changed and added to by Philip Johnson, the issue is very different; the functions, the ideas, the beliefs that shaped these buildings are still present today. Transformation is not possible.*[22]

As McGuigan observed, Taniguchi 'started with a homage, restoring the façades of the original 1939 museum by Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone and

Philip Johnson's 1964 east wing'.[23] MOMA's facade thus acquired canonical status. In effect Johnson turned it into MOMA's logo, an architectural emblem signalling the museum's nostalgic attachment to the corporate utopianism of the 1930s. Yet if Johnson and his successors sought to preserve something of the visual contrast between the Goodwin-Stone building and adjacent structures, the resulting historical contrast reversed the original temporal sequence. Once a symbol of the future, the 1939 facade came to emblematize MOMA's past – a past made evident through its opposition to its surroundings, which signified the museum's present. This contrast was not without its ironies. MOMA's utopianism now appeared as a historical relic, as so much failed prophecy in the face of Johnson's no-nonsense steel and glass designs and dozens of similar Bauhaus-inspired buildings in the vicinity of the museum. In effect, the futuristic hopes of the 1930s were overwhelmed by the sleek, banal reality of postwar American capitalism.

Pelli's 1984 renovation underscored the growing dichotomy between modern and contemporary. While preserving what he could of the Goodwin-Stone exterior, Pelli radically revised the interior. Visitors passed from the street to the lobby and, after paying admission, proceeded to Pelli's glassed-in atrium or 'garden hall'. Having first entered the old museum (the facade), they again came into the museum, but this second time they in effect entered the new museum. Their progress through the building repeated the alteration between old and new, between the space of the present and the nostalgic space of MOMA's past. In other words, the experience of the building was literally structured around a spatial dichotomy between the new museum of the atrium and the old museum of the galleries housing the permanent collection.

Pelli's atrium represented an increasingly familiar form of public space, a space that is at once grandiose and overwhelming and yet barely legible. As Frederic Jameson and Rosalind Krauss have maintained, it is a type of space that tends to suppress older forms of subjectivity and to produce, in their place, an experience that is at once impersonal and fragmented, and yet tinged with a sense of euphoria.[24] The museum's exhibition spaces thus might have been read as so many 'insides' to the atrium's 'outside'. Yet 'outside' and 'inside' do not entirely fit the situation: to cross the boundary from one to the other, to go, for example, from the atrium to the 'intimate' spaces of the galleries housing MOMA's permanent collection of painting and sculpture, was to experience a profound disjunction. In effect, Pelli's design

further distanced MOMA's past – a past that thus acquired an aura of unreality, a sense of being sealed-off as in a time capsule, since it was now experienced through the medium of the atrium's present.

Taniguchi's enlarged MOMA upholds, as expected, the museum's modernist credo. A 36 meter (110 foot) high atrium, which is reached by a staircase from the main floor, has replaced Pelli's Garden Hall, but otherwise Taniguchi's antiseptic, and, to my eye, rather drab design can also be read as an exercise in nostalgia. From the atrium visitors make their way to the permanent collection of painting and sculpture, which, counter-intuitively, begins on the fifth floor and continues on the fourth. Contemporary art can be found in the galleries on the second floor surrounding the atrium but not in the atrium itself that, at this writing, contains works by Rothko, Newman, de Kooning, and, incongruously, one of Monet's largest water lily panoramas. The break between fourth and second floors and the jarring, art-historical discontinuity between the atrium and the galleries displaying contemporary art thus furnishes a corollary to the impasse MOMA's curators encountered installing the permanent collection.[25]

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In Place of a Conclusion [26]

In 'Valéry, Proust, Museum', Adorno remarks that 'museums are like the family sepulchres of works of art. They testify to the neutralization of culture'.[27] In this respect, MOMA has been a 'family sepulchre' par excellence. For decades the museum has presented a mythologized, which is to say depoliticized, history of modernism. I do not intend to argue for fragmentation or for the separation of a historicized modernist past from a postmodernist present – the eternal present of the shopping mall and the atrium. But given the options, or rather the lack thereof, it is perhaps just as well that MOMA has never been able to connect convincingly the modern and the contemporary – that despite the museum's best efforts, contemporary art can never be at home in its galleries

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Notes

1. Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis', *Marxist Perspectives 1*, 4 (Winter 1978), pp. 28-51. An earlier version of the article is Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'MOMA: Ordeal and Triumph on 53rd Street', *Studio International 94*, no. 988 (1978), pp. 48-57. See also Carel Blotkamp et al. (eds.), *Museum in ¿Motion?: the modern art museum at issue / Museum in ¿Beweging?: het museum voor moderne kunst ter diskussie*, 's-Gravenhage: Govt. Pub. Office, 1979.
2. *The Catalog Committee, an anti-catalog*, New York: The Catalog Committee, 1977.
3. ibidem, pp. 68-77.
4. ibidem, p. 41.
5. Max Kozloff, 'The Contemporary Museum: Under the Corporate Wing', in Brian O'Doherty (ed.), *Museums in Crisis*, New York: George Braziller, 1972, p. 156.
6. See John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, New York: Penguin Books, 1972; Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' *Art News* 69, 9, (January, 1971): pp. 22-49; reprinted in Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988, pp. 147-158; Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *L'amour de l'art* [2nd ed.], Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1969; Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations* [trans. Harry Zohn], London: Fontana, 1973, pp. 219-253.
7. See above, n. 1.
8. Bourdieu and Darbel, *L'amour de l'art*, p. 165. Translation from Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art* [trans. Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman], Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 112.
9. See Danielle Rice, 'Theory, Practice and Illusion', in Andrew McClellan (ed.), *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millenium*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p. 83
10. See Thomas Patin, *Discipline and Varnish: Rhetoric, Subjectivity, and Counter-Memory in the Museum*, New York: Peter Lang, 1999, pp. 134-135.
11. Russell Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, New York: Atheneum, 1973.
12. See Alfred Barr, '*Chronicle of the Collection', Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art, 1929-1967*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967, p. 635.
13. Duncan-Wallach, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual', p. 50, n. 22.
14. Cited in ibidem, p. 50, n. 22.
15. The approximate figure of 22% is my estimate based upon available data. See Alan Wallach 'Class Rites in the Age of the Blockbuster', in James Collins (ed.), *High-Pop*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, pp. 120-121.

16. See Arthur Lubow, 'Re-Moderning', *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (3 October 2004), p. 61.
17. ibidem, p. 65.
18. ibidem, p. 64.
19. ibidem, p. 64.
20. In the following paragraphs, I draw upon Alan Wallach, 'The Museum of Modern Art: The Past's Future', in Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States*, Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998, pp. 73-87.
21. Cathleen McGuigan, 'Red Hot MoMA', *Newsweek* (11 October 2004), p. 52.
22. Interview with Cesar Pelli, 'The Museum of Modern Art Project', *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal*, 16 (1981), p. 107.
23. McGuigan, 'Red Hot MoMA,' p. 51.
24. See Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review* 146 (July-August 1984), p. 61; and Rosalind Krauss, 'The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum,' October 54 (1990), pp. 12f.
25. For a thoughtful extended critique of the new MOMA, see Hal Foster, 'It's Modern But Is It Contemporary?' *London Review of Books* 26, 24 (16 December 2004).
26. Had I more space I would pursue three questions having to do with MOMA and the broader museum culture of which MOMA is a part. First, the way Pelli's and Taniguchi's renovations have, in effect, redefined the museum's ideal visitor. Second – and this is a related point – the eclipse of the Bourdieuian category of 'distinction' as it manifests itself at MOMA and its partial re-emergence within the realm of contemporary art. Third – and also related – MOMA's role in undermining the polarity between high and popular art – a polarity that once seemed immutable and absolute.
27. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Valéry, Proust, Museum', in *Prisms* [trans. Samuel Weber and Sherry Weber], Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981, p. 175.

The World in the Museum: Ethnography, Culture, and Critical Art Practice

Christian Kravagna

When we talk about the 'Museum', we mostly refer to the Modern Art Museum, its historical development, architectural forms, social significance and ideological implications. In fact, most of the artistic reflections on the museum throughout the 20th century focused on these issues. But there is also a somehow hidden history of critical art practice dealing with the museum in a broader sense of the word. In this history the museum is seen as one of the crucial institutions of Western modernity and its problematic relations to the non-Western worlds. The Western practice of collecting, presenting and classifying other cultures is understood as an undertaking which is part of the making of a modern subjectivity organized around a set of distancing processes towards its own past and the present of others. In this essay I can only shed light on a few moments in a art history when artists were dealing with 'collecting and displaying as crucial processes of Western identity formation', as James Clifford put it. To approach questions like these, artists diverted their view from the Art Museum to anthropological and ethnographic collections. As my examples from the 1920s, the 1960s and the present may show, the concept of the museum as producer of collective ideas of self and other cannot be restricted to the museum's walls, but has to be expanded into a wider range of displaying and archiving practices like popular magazines or the film industries. The work of such artists as Hannah Höch, Lothar Baumgarten and Lisl Ponger, who at different times addressed similar questions, point at the historical changes in the intersections of cultural forms of collecting and display within and outside the museum's walls and the ever innovative ways of critical analysis they demand.

During the period of European modernism artists reacted critically to various aspects of their social and ideological environment. Yet it was not until postmodernism that they began to include the museum as an institution of historiography and collective identity-formation in critical artistic practices. The attitudes of modern artists towards the institution of the museum varied between radical polemics against its preservation of tradition and the acceptance of its hold on truth. Anthropological and ethnographical collections in particular provided strong creative impulses for the early modernists. In contrast to other museums, these collections did not represent something old and well known, but rather something new and unfamiliar. The cultural productions of non-Western societies that they presented held the promise of a complete reformation of artistic accomplishment – because they seemed so fundamentally different from European traditions. In the light of such

a promise, it was easy to lose sight of the economic and ideological basis for such collections in colonial politics, and their function in relation to the imperialist order of the world. The fascination for everything foreign, as a source of a redraft of the self, was an obstacle to the perception of the mechanisms that construct Otherness itself. My focus in this essay will be on the beginnings, and later the more complex development, of an artistic reflection on the museum as an instance of the social transference of concepts of cultural identity and difference. I will concentrate on three examples that illuminate different aspects of institutional ethno-politics over an eighty-year period. These examples are all white European artists, chosen with the aim of considering their cultural influence by exoticism and primitivism as a problematic issue that merits investigation.

In the 1920s, Hannah Höch produced a series of photomontages which, with some justification, can be regarded as a form of institutional critique *avant la lettre*. The series by the Berlin Dadaist, which includes eighteen to twenty works, was produced between 1924 and 1934. Most of the sheets, in small format, are individually titled, and the group of works as a whole is titled *From an Ethnographic Museum*. The name of the series is itself remarkable and indicates a fundamental deviance from the then current norms of an artistic approach to other cultures and their artefacts. Höch's title clearly indicates that the motifs in the photomontages are allocated to a Western institutionalized context, and do not claim to narrate a cultural elsewhere. This title provides a framework for viewing the works even before the individual sheets are inspected more closely. Everything that might appear exotic, primitive, or strange belongs first and foremost to the discursive order of the museum and to ethnography as a scientific practice.

It was the Dada environment, in particular its political variety such as Berlin Dada, that probably provided the best conditions for the development of an 'institution-critical' artistic perspective in the early twentieth century. Dada art was not only critically at odds with the capitalist, nationalist, and patriarchal structures of the Weimar Republic, it also developed its own media consciousness. If the basic problem of all primitive and exotic early modernist art can be described as the difficulty of distinguishing between representation and reality, then the Dadaists had chosen the reality of speech and images, in particular those from the mass media, as artistic source material. Dada methods dissect the vocabulary and rhetoric of public language and images and then assemble their critical language from the resulting

fragments. In the photomontages and collages of the Dadaists, photography is treated rather as part of the modern reality of the mass media than as an image of reality. According to this view, pictures have always been framed and thus act as contextualized fragments of discursive practices. The Dadaist sensibility for media representation is additionally linked to a critical and ironic reflection of the social status of art and the role of the artist. This link between media awareness and self-reflection prevents Dada to adhere to an idealistic and unrealistic notion of the cultural Other, as displayed by the primitivist mainstream of early modernism.

Two further factors are significant in Hannah Höch's unconventional use of ethnographic images and objects. Firstly, Höch held a marginal position as the only woman in a male-dominated Dada group, and her entire work is pervaded by her reflection of the role of the woman in a modern, technical, media-dominated society. Secondly, Höch worked between 1916 and 1926 for the Ullstein publishing house, which published the most popular magazines in those days. The majority of the images used by Höch in her montages originate from Ullstein magazines (*Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Uhu, Der Querschnitt*). She had direct access to these magazines, in which the new image of women was negotiated between social emancipation and new forms of commodity. The magazines were also rich sources of ethnographic and exotic images With a few exceptions, Höch combines cut-out motifs and motif fragments from both these worlds in the series *From an Ethnographic Museum*, merging ethno-images and images of women into hybrid figures. Although the artist mentions visits to museums as one source of inspiration to her work, the series does not relate to one particular museum, but generally reflects the location and the techniques for constructing Otherness. One of the significant characteristics of this series is the interrelated interpretation of institutions and media as producers of meaning in relation to gender and cultural differences. The combination of image fragments depicting bodies of white women with fragments of images from non-European sculptures invites comparative interpretations and differs fundamentally from the usual absence of signifiers of European whites in primitivist art. The sculptures are perceived as objects in a Western-institutional frame of reference. They are exposed to the curious gaze of the spectator in the same way as their counterparts, the white women's bodies.

Where can we find the obvious clues to a reflection on the museum other than in the title of the series? First and foremost, simple, formal means refer to a museum

presentation. Höch often positions her figures on pedestals made of coloured paper. They are positioned in front of neutral backgrounds, in empty rooms, which often include window-like frames. These frames not only refer to showcases, but also, figuratively, to practices used for the production of meaning. For Höch, the frame also served as a symbol of desire, as exemplified by *The Dream of His Life*, a picture from 1925. It shows a bride in various sexually provocative poses, framed and fragmented by a whole series of picture frames. In this case, the frame undoubtedly functions as a metaphor for the way in which the depicted woman has been arranged to fit the fantasy of the male subject. The pedestals and the frames in the series *From an Ethnographic Museum* can be read as marks of a process of translation, to which the ethnographic object is subjected when it is transferred from the context of its origin into the context of a Western museum. In addition to these methods of representation, there is also the defamiliarizing technique of the montage itself, which fragments the sculptures and forces the fragments into new constellations – parallel to the practice of ethnographic collections that extract the objects from their cultural context of customs and meanings, and subject them to a foreign system of order. In addition it is noteworthy that Hannah Höch frequently balances non-European, sculptural upper bodies on fragile white women's legs, which often originate from images from dance or sports – thus from staged scenarios. Finally, the institutionalized desire for something different, to which the ethnographic objects are subjected, is emphasized by the sexualized (parts of) women's bodies. Together with the sculptures, they melt into a grotesque construction of the Other. Even if it is virtually impossible to reconstruct exactly Höch's critical intention, her angle on the media and institutional conditions of the construction of Otherness is clearly different from that of contemporaneous artistic approaches that imagined the 'primitive' as a projection space providing an escape from civilization.

If Hannah Höch's museum series can be regarded as a precursor of institution-critical art, the works of Lothar Baumgarten from the late 1960s are among the first systematic artistic reflections on ethnographic museum practice. Before going into more detail on Baumgarten's photographic work on the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, I would briefly like to mention two other early works from 1968, which reflect the artistic preoccupation with colonialism, ethnography, and the construction of identity. The small-format collage *Feather People (The Americas)* refers to the practice of naming as a symbolic gesture staking a claim to power. Baumgarten put

feathers on a map of North and South America, on which the names of the areas show traces of Spanish, English, and French conquests. The names of indigenous peoples have been written on the feathers. *Ethnography, Self and Other* shows the ethnographic image of a South American Indian, and next to her the artist himself with feathers in his hair. Baumgarten's comparison visualizes the source of the production of Otherness in the category of the self. However, the artist presents himself as the Other by adapting his image to fit that of the South American Indian, and by sticking feathers in his hair to signify a stereotype of American Indians. This self-portrait raises the question as to what extent particular symbols are able to destabilise Baumgarten's white, male identity, whereas the other image (the Indian) asks to what extent particular symbols are able to establish or ascribe identity. *Feather People and Ethnography* refers to the visual politics of colonialism on both sides: the practice of making the Other visible for research purposes; and the practice of making someone invisible, not only by real eradication or expulsion, but also by erasing traces in symbolic systems such as maps.

Lothar Baumgarten was a student of Joseph Beuys's in Düsseldorf when he completed these works. Beuys was known for adopting the visionary and therapeutic role of a shaman. Working to a certain extent from a blind spot in Beuys's late primitivism, Baumgarten set off on his ideology-critical cartography of journeys in the historical and political context of discourses and practices relating to the description, collection, and conquering of foreign cultures. It marks a clear shift from the modernist desire for difference to a critical archeology of formal representation of the Other.

In 1968 Baumgarten began a two-year photographic analysis of the display systems in ethnographic museums. The resulting slide projection, *Unsettled Objects* (1968–69), gives insight into the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, a late nineteenth century anthropological museum that has scarcely changed since its foundation. The eighty-one slides of showcases and single collector's items are cross-faded with words that describe the activities and effects of museum practice: displayed, imagined, classified, protected, consumed, mythologized, analyzed, claimed, transformed, photographed, framed, fetishized, etc. The museum was founded in 1884 by General Pitt Rivers for the University of Oxford, in order to oversee his private collection and make it accessible to the public. The museum's regulations and criteria for presentation are based on the evolutionary ideas of its founder:

> *Ordinary and typical specimens, rather than rare objects, have been selected and arranged in sequence, so as to trace, as far as practicable, the succession of ideas by which the minds of men in a primitive condition of culture have progressed from the simple to the complex, and from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous.*[1]

Perhaps it is also of no small importance for the imperialistic context of the anthropological museum that the general drew his methodical reflections from his studies on the development of firearms. At the entrance to the large exhibition hall the visitor to the museum still encounters a collection of guns. Although it is sometimes difficult to see any order in the mass of close-standing over-filled showcases, the historical and cultural image of this institution is governed by a typological and evolutional programme, distinguishing this museum concept from ethnical and geographical systems:

> *We have carried on his [Pitt Rivers's] comparative method by showing, in sequence with cases illustrating the tools of early prehistoric peoples in Europe, Asia, and Africa, a series showing the tools of peoples who were in their Stone Age at the time of their discovery by Europeans.*[2]

This reflex-like equation of spatial distance with temporal distance is characteristic of the history of approaches to non-European culture. The phenomenon to translate space into time has been well researched in the field of ethnography. In *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian demonstrates how ethnographers describe cultures they have explored as having already disappeared or as in the process of disappearing, and thus comply with the 'denial of coevalness'.[3] This is backed up by the 'salvage paradigm', which, according to James Clifford, organized the Western practices of art and cultural collection. The aim is to rescue authenticity in the face of destructive historical change.[4] The Pitt Rivers Museum brochure highlights the continuing relevance of this attitude: 'So-called "primitive" societies are everywhere under threat and the Museum is acting as a curator for the world in striving to preserve and record that which may vanish totally'.[5]

As Lothar Baumgarten later discovered, this museum, that has only marginally been modernized, can be perceived as a 'preserve of colonialism'.[6] *Unsettled Objects*

discloses the imperialist addiction to acquiring and accumulating the unknown, the desire for control over the Other via organization and classification. All the crammed showcases contain 'similar' objects – although the similarity is sometimes defined by function, at other times by motif or form – and testify to an interest in collecting that is not concerned with understanding social structures, but with demonstrating a global overview. The exhibited objects do not assume their location and function in a corresponding relationship to other objects in a specific society, but rather in relation to objects that are culturally and geographically distant, with which they are supposed to share the solution to general questions concerning 'the human race'. These are questions that have been formulated from the viewpoint of industrialized Western modernity that itself is not within the scope of the museum's interests: 'The Museum takes the world for its province, and for its period, from the earliest times to the present day, excluding the results of mass production'.[7] Whereas the museum – rather atmospherically than argumentatively – talks about the 'richness of our cultural diversity', Baumgarten's slide projection understands the anthropological museum as the manifestation of a regional formation of thought and knowledge that was founded in the historical context of colonialism. This is certainly the case with those images that deal with packaging, numeration, labelling, and the decorative rows of collected items. They show the pervasion of scientific, conservative, and aesthetic expectations. One of the most beautiful and meaningful photographs is the one that depicts an observational aid. It allows the spectator to avoid the disturbing reflection of themselves in the glass of the showcase. It refers to the systematic fading out of the structuring instance and the subject of representation from the institutional representational practices. Looking at the series of slides, one can no longer concentrate on or linger at single objects. The projection conveys a feeling of disorientation in the mass of the objects presented. It tends to provoke the desire for control in the observer, the desire to order the exotic material that can be seen only briefly in a personal frame of reference. While the observer does identify to a certain extent with the museum's attempt at creating order, this quality again undermines the critical distance to the institution by means of an exoticism that sympathizes with the museum order.

The ethnographic museum still represents one of the central institutions that organizes the social production of ideas relating to what is one's own and what is foreign. Yet the more we tend to historicize the museum as the 'preserve of

colonialism', the more the question of its successors must be posed. As far back as the 1920s, Hannah Höch's montages pointed out the inseparable nature of institutions and mass cultural representations of cultural differences. In Lothar Baumgarten's slide projection a displacement of forms of presentation used in museums is suggested in the film techniques. And as we know, the primitive and exotic world of the imagination of modernist artists, from Gauguin through to Höch's contemporaries and beyond, has always drawn from a mix of official and popular cultural sources. I would therefore like to conclude this essay by looking at an artist whose work traces the ramifications of the ethnographic paradigm in art, media, and everyday worlds of modernity.

The significance of Lisl Ponger's art practice lies in critical elimination of the determining factors shaping a Western subject's perceptions, ideas and fantasies of the Other. This is similar to the newer approaches found in critical anthropology. In this context, Kamala Visweswaran suggested a critical movement 'back home' with the title *Homework, not Fieldwork*.[8] When she sets 'homework' against 'fieldwork', her aim is not to make her own culture the subject of ethnographic research, but rather the epistemological foundations of knowledge production, the interests and motives behind research into differences and their representations. '"Home", for Visweswaran, is a person's location in determining discourses and institutions', writes James Clifford. 'Homework is a critical confrontation with the often invisible processes of learning (...) that shape us as subjects'.[9] Lisl Ponger's works often place the artist herself as the protagonist of the scenario . Her works focus on the subject of fantasy and the often invisible learning processes which it has been subjected to from childhood

In *Out of Austria* (2000), a direct reference to Karen Blixen's book *Out of Africa*, the encounter with the Other begins at home, in an imaginative space full of images and stories. The artist carries her bunch of lilies – here referring to a photo by Karen Blixen – and looks out on an African countryside with a snow-covered mountain in the background, from which several stereotypical black bearers are walking towards her. She is dressed in a robe with a pattern based on the motif of the moor that denotes the well-known Austrian Meinl coffee brand. Wrapped in the images of the Other that she brings from home, she meets the Africans in a process of recognition of the preconceived images that she has carried with her. Ponger highlights this circular structure of perception with the red headdress of the Meinl moor, the tropical hat

worn by the woman in the same shade of red, and the red load of the bearer walking towards her. The image of Africa itself is a painted enlargement of an illustration on a box of a children's game from the 1950s, the time when the artist was a child, and is, like the Meinl moor, a reference to a local variation of the unconscious acquisition of stereotypes. The artist has stepped into the place of the eliminated main character in the original picture – a white explorer, whose individuality was a significant contrast to the stereotyped Africans. This exchange of protagonists clearly shows how the staged individuality of the white traveller against a background of stereotypes derives from a pattern made up of pre-existing images.

The real plants and the painted plants used in the picture serve to create an illusion of a homogenous image space, as in the convention of studio photography of 'foreign people' in their 'natural environment'. Such techniques are related to those of the diorama in natural history and ethnological museums, which seek to contextualize their exponents. In her picture *Meet Me in St. Louis*, Louis (2000), Lisl Ponger stages an encounter between such a museum presentation and the history of the anthropological spectacle. A young black woman stands straight and stiff between stuffed zebras in an 'Africa museum' on the outskirts of Vienna. The pattern on her dress is similar to the zebra's stripes. While the animals in the photograph create the impression of being alive, the woman looks frozen, as if her gestures were anticipating the freezing of the living by the photographic apparatus. Her closed eyes decline any form of communication with the reifying view of the museum or the photograph. It is an uncanny scene that recalls the showpieces of colonized people. The title of the picture refers to a popular song popular at the time of the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 and alludes to the displays of ethnic peoples that were held there.[10] In these images, the museum is regarded as a 'xenographic' medium amongst many, and is cross-faded with references to film, photography, and popular and everyday culture.

The way in which the Western practice of collecting things from other cultures and presenting difference has been translated into new media is the theme of a work *From the Wonder House* (2002). It consists of a multifaceted wall of pictures, grouping a number of promotional images for Hollywood and other films around a central photograph showing the artist as the protagonist of an undefined action. The principle of single images organized around one central image can be traced back to a well-known model from art galleries, a model that links the historical idea of the

order of things with the demonstration of knowledge and power, as was established in the course of the Enlightenment in the Western centers – arising from the interaction between exploration and conquest and symbolic and real appropriation of the world. Ponger's work translates the production of this consciousness into the present time with its media industry. The stills from popular films such as *Die blonde Frau des Maharadscha* (1962), *The Maharaja's Blond Wife* or *West of Zanzibar* (1928), in which white protagonists meet non-white masses, stand for the modern version of earlier genres of entertainment and their copious dissemination of perceptions, saturated with ideology, of 'foreign countries and peoples'. The dividing line between fiction and science, between adventure novels and research reports, which has always been somewhat blurred, is illustrated by *From the Wonder House* from a modern-day perspective on the political world order: here, surrounded by cinema shots, we see a picture of a woman, dressed in male clothing and carrying a real (gun) and a symbolic (camera) weapon, that looks out over a country that, despite all defamiliarizing effects, can only be recognized today as 'Afghanistan'. The title *From the Wonder House* refers to the Wunderkammer or wonder chamber, precursor of the museum as a modern institution for conveying images of the world, which both have met their successors in Hollywood and CNN productions.

* * *

Notes

1. General Pitt Rivers in 1874 in an address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in the South Kensington Museum, cited from Beatrice Blackwood, *The Origin and Development of the Pitt Rivers Museum*, Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum University of Oxford, 1991, p. 2.
2. Blackwood, *The Origin and Development*, p. 3.
3. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 31.
4. James Clifford, 'Of Other Peoples: Beyond the "Salvage Paradigm"', in Hal Foster (ed.), *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1987, pp. 121-130.
5. Blackwood, *The Origin and Development*, p. 19.
6. Lothar Baumgarten, *Untitled Statement* in *Kunst-Welten im Dialog: Von Gauguin zur globalen Gegenwart* (exh. cat. Museum Ludwig Cologne), Cologne: DuMont, 1999, p. 372.
7. Blackwood, *The Origin and Development*, p. 19.
8. Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, Minneapolis, Minn., and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, pp. 101-105.
9. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 85.
10. See also Tim Sharp, 'ImagiNative' in *Lisl Ponger: Fotoarbeiten/Photographs* (exh. cat.), Vienna: Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte für Wien, Bildungszentrum, 2000, pp 53-72.

Architecture :: Sculpture

John C. Welchman

My aim here is to introduce some of the relations posed by recent artists, architects and critics between the domains of architecture and sculpture. I don't intend my remarks to operate as some kind of latter day paragon that competition for preeminence among the arts so popular in the late Renaissance; nor – for reasons of time and focus as much as anything else – as a contribution to the discourse of modernist utopianism in which painting and sculpture collaborate with architecture and design, collapsing their mutual distinctions in the name of a progressive future. Nor again is my aim to take sides in what seems like an endless sequence of professional jibes as artists and architects measure the difference between their activities in a series of quips and put-downs. We all remember Barnett Newman's witty definition of sculpture as what you bump into when backing up to look at a painting; or Marcel Duchamp's response to a question about the difference between sculpture and architecture: 'One has plumbing'.

If anything these dicta have become even more common with the rise of postmodern architecture and its aftermath and the emergence of a strand of thought – in which Frank Gehry, as we will see, is deeply implicated – that proposes a newly accelerated set of overlaps and interplays between sculpture and bespoke building. Arguing against this relation for example, Rafael Viñoly joked that the difference between 'big sculpture and architecture is the waterproofing'. And Gehry himself chipped in when he noted that the main difference between sculpture and architecture was, simply, 'the windows'.

With these anecdotes in mind, perhaps we should commence a broader account of the relations between sculpture and architecture on site. Looking at the characteristically dramatic shots of the Guggenheim Bilbao with which we are all familiar, one of things we notice – though probably not at first – is the telling presence of two sculptures, equally theatrical in their own right, doing battle for attention at the entrance (Jeff Koons' *Puppy*, 1997) and rear (Louise Bourgeois' 30' tall bronze and steel spider, *Maman*, 1999). These works are symptomatic of several relational registers put in negotiation between architecture as spectacle and sculpture conceived as supplement – or even pantomime.

First, the gigantism of the sculptures, their inflation of an animal and an insect to dozens of times normal scale subtly confers a sense of diminishment on the building they preface: for if we read it as we understand them, the Guggenheim itself is reduced to the scale of what they already are – large sculptures.

Secondly, we should note the particularities of these works: both are zoomorphic, both represent real, recognizable creatures. One, the most familiar and saccharine of domestic animals, the other an inhabitant of the dusty corners of domestic space. One is characterized by romping and innocent ebullience; the other, as in Redon's noirs, associated in the Symbolist moment with darkness and fear – but also aligned by Bourgeois with the nurturing vulnerability of motherhood. Both bring with them then intimations of an utterly different order than that normally brokered by either architecture or sculpture. For neither discourse nor institution would seem comfortable with the casual banality of the Koons or the menace and finesse of the Bourgeois.

In one sense, thirdly, these animals stand-in as the ironic endgame of that tradition of guardian spirits and hybrids that stretches back to the Egyptian sphinxes and the Lion Gate of Mycenae and forward to the grotesques of the medieval tradition located on portals or in the nooks and crannies of interior ecclesiastical space.

In another, they act as populist foils and vernacular embellishments lending the structure and precincts they command a kind of folksy accessibility or carnival affirmation. And it's in this condition that they may be said to participate in that orientation of architecture with homespun Americana and street-smart-lite that was introduced into Gehry's projects through an encounter with Pop art mediated by Claes Oldenburg.

Finally, the two-step sculptural bestiary that punctuates public navigation of the Guggenheim Bilbao, is the whimsically deadbeat party of an antithesis between inside and outside that implicitly sanctions the 'serious', mostly abstract, nature of the sculpture displayed within the museum – emblematized most notably of course by the stringently non-mimetic work of Richard Serra – but also by that of Chileda and others.[1]

I want to begin drawing out some of the wider issues in the relation between sculpture and architecture with a head text from one of Frank Gehry's most cited and celebrated statements. 'I don't know where you cross the line between architecture and sculpture', he famously remarked on the eve of the opening of the Guggenheim Bilbao. 'For me, it's the same. Buildings and sculpture are three-dimensional objects'.[2]

Gehry's insistence at the unveiling, or should we say, launch, of his most dramatic structure, on the shared conditions and boundaryless communion between

architecture and sculpture has been one of the unswerving certainties of his shifting career. In a statement published nearly two decades before, for example, Gehry notes, quite forthrightly: 'I approach each building as a sculptural object, a spatial container, a space with light and air, a response to context and appropriateness of feeling and spirit. To this container, this sculpture, the user brings his baggage, his program, and interacts with it to accommodate his needs. If he can't do that, I've failed'.[3]

In one of the earliest of his many conjugations of architecture and sculpture – pairings so numerous that in one form or another they dominate the popular reception of his oeuvre – Gehry situates the notion of a building as a sculptural object at the head of a concentrated mini-reprise of the nature of his enterprise. The sculptural approach to architecture presides over what appear as secondary, if necessary, functions of any building: as a 'spatial container', a shell or shelter within which various activities may take place – dwelling, working, viewing; an organization of space infused with light and air (this definition is sufficiently abstract that it could be coupled with either the sculpture or container orientations); and as a 'response to context', an affirmation of the co-dependency of a structure on its site, location and their histories that it further defined with the invocation not only of a material or locative specificity, but of a kind of 'appropriateness' that Gehry links with emotion and spirituality in something like a latter-day deployment of the empathetic as a measure of architectural outreach.

Inverting – perhaps symptomatically – the initial ascendance of sculptural objectivity over spatial containerization, Gehry concludes this concentrated itemization by attending to a final condition of architecture that he locates in the interactive reception of the building by an individualized user whose particular needs or programmatic orientations have to be 'accommodated'.

Gehry's commitment to a sculptural architecture, highlighted here and developed in quite nuanced, if sometimes inconsistent, detail throughout his career, points us then to a founding orientation of his work quite distinct from the kinds of self-conscious theorization or working assumptions that motivated previous architectural regimens – functionalism or commercial iterability; urbanism; civic, autocratic or religious monumentality, to cite only some of the most obvious cases.

But the relational question I am beginning to frame here is flanked by two converging extremities that I want, for the sake of scale and focus, to foreclose. The

first is an issue that I will pose here in the simplest of terms as a series of questions: what is the relation between architecture and the aesthetic? And what contribution, distinct or otherwise, to this relation has been made by Gehry's practice? I will argue that responses to these questions might best be accommodated if the sculptural is adequately situated as the crucial mediating term in the passage, if indeed there is one, from architecture to the aesthetic.[4]

The second issue is really a replay of the first, but in a different key, that of the mainstream reception of Gehry's projects, usually played out in the arts and editorial sections of regional newspapers between the announcement and construction of a local Gehry project. The latest of these can be found in the Toronto *Star and Globe* about a projected extension to the Art Gallery of Ontario.[5] But almost without exception such discussions turn on the same repertoire of arguments and historical examples, locking them in a polarity from which few commentators seem able to escape, to pose the question of whether Gehry is designing a building in the service of its function or an art work that by implication traduces and in effect spoils the former with an excess of the latter.

I don't want to suggest by any means that these questions are irrelevant, nor even that either local or aesthetically generalized responses are somehow out of order. My task here is much more modest. I want to demonstrate that for different but related reasons the aperture of the polarity between locality, function and the aesthetic is too great in these accounts, and the resultant adjudication of one over the other may be, in the end, a false choice, falsely premised.

In what follows I will think through several horizons of relationality according to which the practices – and effects – of architecture and sculpture have been either thought together, or knowingly prized apart (and occasionally both at the same time). Largely because they so usefully summarize or allude to a considerable number of the relational aspects attended to by artists, historians and critics, perhaps the best place to start is by returning to the texture of Gehry's own observations and opinions about the exchange between architecture and sculpture. But by doing this I do not want to ignore the important fact that many critics have followed Gehry's lead by anointing the architecture/sculpture conjunction as the foundation stone on which his success and celebrity are built. I'll cite just one example here (a couple more follow below). In her address on the occasion of the award to Gehry of the Pritzker Prize in 1989, Ada Louise Huxtable observes that Gehry's 'explorations

(…) characteristically take place at the point where architecture and sculpture meet in anxious and uneasy confrontation; this is the difficult, dangerous and uncharted area that he has made his own'.[6]

Here, then, are some strata in Gehry's wide-ranging thought on the terms and implications of a sculptural architecture. First, he notes on several occasions the relative separateness of architecture and sculpture, or at least that they may have different agendas, aims and consequences. Nowhere is this more apparent that when Gehry is self-critical about the final effect of a sculptural or architectural element, as when he bluntly assesses his error with the copper 'sculptural piece' for the Advanced Technology Laboratory Building at the University of Iowa in Iowa City (1987/89-92), which, despite his intention to rhyme its material with 'the copper of the Student Union', he simply 'did wrong'.[7] Even here, however, the sculptural is never quite sequestered from the architecture that governs it. For the amplitude of Gehry's error is double that of a purely sculptural mistake: according to his *mea culpa*, the piece fails not only on its own terms, but also in relation to the relationship for which it strives – that of the site-specific repetition of its signature material.

The relatively traditional role of sculpture as an additive or supplement to the arena of architecture is attested elsewhere in Gehry's work, as at the Headquarters of the Progressive Corporation in Cleveland Ohio (1987 +); with the rooftop sculpture terrace programmed as a discrete element into the American Center, Paris (1991-93); or by the logic of adjacency, as at the private home with guest house by Philip Johnson in Cleveland Ohio, where a sculptural work by Claes Oldenburg is set in the context of Gehry's building, or in the courtyard in front of the Fritz B. Burns Student Center at Loyola University Law School (1978 +), which is home to another Oldenburg sculpture, *Toppling Ladder with Spilling Paint*, added to the ensemble in 1986.

It's here too, under the aegis of the traditional, that we might set out some of the numerous more conventionally regulated encounters between Gehry and sculpture, which include his own sculptural works, such as the fish sculpture in Barcelona, or his glass-and-wood sculpture *Standing Glass Fish* on view at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden at the Walker Art Center, and direct collaborations with sculptors, notably, of course, with Claes Oldenburg but also with Richard Serra, with whom he worked on the design of two unrealized bridge projects, including one for Tate Modern in London and another for the exhibition *Collaboration: Artists and Architects*

(Architectural League of NY, 1981), which envisaged a connection between the World Trade Center and Chrysler Building with anchoring elements of giant Gehry fish and a Serra pylon in the East and Hudson Rivers.

Gehry has also produced a sequence of exhibition designs, many of them for exhibitions of sculpture, such as *German Expressionist Sculpture* (1983) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, for which he built arguably his most traditional edifice, reconstructing a portion of a niche in a brick church façade to provide a simulation of what was probably the original location of an Ernst Barlach sculpture (visible in the background of several photographs documenting the show).

Occasionally, this normativity is knowingly traduced, set up as a set-up, if you like, and nowhere more cunningly so than when Gehry wittily recalibrates sculpture – through architecture – as natural form in the garden of his own house after its 1992-93 renovation. Here architecture takes on the pictorial role of the frame in order to serve as a special catalyst that produces nature as public sculpture: 'I wanted to expose the beautiful specimen cactus in my garden to the public view. I wanted to present it like a public sculpture'.[8]

In addition to these situations for sculpture as art-work or architectural extra, the sculptural is considered by Gehry, secondly, not as a discrete practice or regimen of specific objects but as one of the many – and seemingly one of the most important – of the signifying effects of his architecture. Consider this observation about the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles: 'the building's orientation, combined with the curving and folding exterior stone, will present highly sculptural compositions as viewers move along (…)'. Gehry's comment collides several signal aspects of his thinking about the experience of architecture – to which we will return. These include movement and temporality, ascribed to the building itself, with its curves and folds, but also attributed to the perceptual sequencing of a visitor's itinerary; and the key notion of sculptural compositionality, a telling formula that will allow us to trace some strands in the history of the modernist theory of 'composition' so vigorously disputed in vanguard art practice from the 1960s on – and crucial I would argue to the emergence of Gehry's signature practice.

The sculptural effect that arises from architecture appears to develop from two different understandings of what exactly sculpture is in the writings and comments of Gehry and his associates. At one extreme, the sculptural is the product of concentrated or spectacular art-like assemblages of space and materials that lends to

a building something that delivers it to an aesthetic condition beyond its function. It is in this sense that the Headquarters for Vitra International, near Basel, Switzerland (1988/92-94) is described as 'flamboyant and sculptural'.[9] Or, in the same vein, that the nature of its 'communal support areas (…) allowed them to take on richer, sculptural spaces'.[10] As with many of Gehry's commissions, the correlation of the sculptural with the dramatic or the flamboyant does not emerge in isolation from other effects or different orders of association.

At Vitra, of course, the sculpturally avant-garde spectacle offers an enclosure within which, as Charles Jencks and others have noted, elements of design themselves, in the form of privileged items of furniture-becoming-sculpture, are isolated as singular, Platonic and exemplary on their plinths and pedestals. Here, then, sculpture in its para-architectural disguise offers shelter for design made over as sculpture in its traditional incarnation.

The plural and antithetical operations of sculpture's agenda so vividly present at Vitra are apprehended as singularities elsewhere. One reading of the American Center in Paris, for example, pronounced it 'slightly too unified, like a sculptural element', attributing this shortcoming to the fact that 'it was not completed to Frank's design'.[11] The purportedly more conventional appearance of the Center, driven by a Parisianizing plainness much remarked on by its critics, becomes another – here excusable – architectural error that is lent a palpable gestalt by invoking the discursive trope of the sculptural – defined in this instance by unadventurous homogeneity, stasis and unity.

Yet again, however, we witness a designation driven by the ubiquitous and deceptive sculptural metaphor that ends up being turned back against itself.

Robert Maxwell, for example, delivers as an approbation of one of Gehry's more whimsical buildings, the offices of the Chiat/Day advertising agency in Venice, California, with its façade famously pivoted on Oldenburg's gigantic binoculars, virtually the same pronouncement that was offered as a rationale for the relative failure of the American Center: Chiat/Day, he affirms, is successful as architecture because it is 'sculpturally unified'.[12] The building succeeds according to this account because of its ability, measured and defined in sculptural terms, to digest and resolve the outrageous and outsized object – the very symbol of that technological optic devised to conquer space, bringing the far to the near – that administers its fearless symmetry.

It's clear that the final frontier of the sculptural metaphor deployed by Gehry arrives with that special organization of form and material – and its privileged 'truth' long designated as the aesthetic. Gehry works out this aesthetic in generalized terms that confer on architecture the double premium of pictorial immediacy and sculptural order:

> *Painting had an immediacy, which I craved for architecture. I explored the processes of raw construction materials to try giving feeling and spirit to form. In trying to find the essence of my own expression, I fantasized the artist standing before the white canvas deciding what was the first move. I called it the moment of truth…*
> *The moment of truth, the composition of elements, the selection of forms, scale, materials, color, finally, all the same issues facing the painter and the sculptor. Architecture is surely an art, and those who practice the art of architecture are surely architects.*[13]

The recipe set out here is deceptively simple: immediacy and raw construction, admixed with feeling and spirit, articulated by composition (the key process that facilitates mobility and interrelation between discourses, as we will see) and set in motion by an originating 'moment of truth' – all this makes architecture an 'art'. There is so much at stake here in every word, phrase and assumption that I can only respond to it somewhat cheaply. Let me cite a ringing endorsement of Gehry's synaesthetic dream: We 'share', notes one of the prefaces to the Guggenheim Museum's own exhibition, *Frank Gehry, Architect* (2000-01), 'Mr. Gehry's ongoing search for "the moment of truth" – the moment when the functional approach to a problem becomes infused with the artistry that produces a truly innovative solution'. I draw your attention to the 'we share' – and to the correlation of artistry and the delivery of 'truly innovative solutions'. This preface was written by one Jeff Skilling, President and Chief Executive Officer of Enron. Cheap, perhaps, but telling nonetheless: for if the ingredients of Gehry's recipe can be selectively stir-fired in a sauce that cooks the corporate books, then the triangulations which it spawns are, doubtless, connected by some rather faulty wiring.

Irony, chilling or delicious, aside, the question remains: Can we learn anything from this litany of iterations and outright paradoxes in the interleaving of architecture

and sculpture beyond the obvious fact that reading one through the other is clearly desired, privileged and even compulsive in the reflections of both Gehry himself and many, if not most, of his critics and commentators?

I think the answer is, yes, we can. For what might result from this inquiry will clarify something at least about the nature of current avant-garde architecture, about the relation between architecture and both the aesthetic and the social, and about the new forms of congruence, or co-dependency, between architecture, sculpture and painting, media, technology, and the public sphere at a moment when both the material and conceptual separateness between these domains is fast diminishing.

In my sketch of Gehry's negotiations between sculpture and architecture I cited several occasions – most notably perhaps in his account of a visitor's dynamic experience of the Walt Disney Concert Hall – when architecture's sculptural orientation is aligned with the artistic effects of composition. Gehry's defence of composition in architecture has three main components. The first arises from the generalized association of composition with the aesthetic or the artistic – and its 'truths'. The second relates to the different realizations of compositional arrangement associated with various periods in Gehry's career – ranging from quasi-modernist singularity in the earliest works, (such as the Danzinger Studio and Residence, 1964-65, Hollywood, CA), through a syntax composed with modular elements, or an assemblage of distinct geometries (as inTeam Disneyland Administration Building, 1987-95, Anaheim, CA) to the seething fractal and curvilinear forms of the Guggenheim Bilbao and after (the Experience Music Project, 1995-2000, Seattle, Washington). The third is that noted in my leading example, a situation in which compositional effects arise from the complex perception of the building from constantly shifting points of view.

Versions of all of these understandings of the compositional were formulated – and disputed – in the development of the historical avant-garde, and did not cease to be a preoccupation for visual artists after the mid-century. In many ways it remained the key point of investment and antagonism for all modernist art. It was also the most important point of calibration for avant-garde and neo-avant-garde disavowals or reinventions of formal order. And it is of course these destinies of the compositional that were inherited most directly by Gehry.

There is little doubt that a signal component of Gehry's architecture has been achieved in sustained relation to the work and ideas of successive post-war

generations of late modernist, combine, Pop, installation, Minimalist and Earth artists who produced between them a startling new matrix for the production of art work in three dimensions as well as a series of powerful reflections on the relations between sculpture and architecture, art work and landscape, institutional and public space. Many of these artists, such as Oldenberg, Ed Kienholz, Anthony Caro, and Richard Serra have collaborated with Gehry and/or count among his friends. Others, including Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Smithson, Dan Graham or Hans Haacke made important, often more critical, interventions in the reciprocal relations between sculpture, architecture and their social or natural contexts.

Certain aspects of these relations can be generalized across individuals and movements, such as, for example, the interest shared by many of these artists in the deployment of cheap or everyday materials. 'My artist friends', said Gehry, 'people like Jasper Johns, Bob Rauschenberg, Ed Kienholz, Claes Oldenburg, were working with very inexpensive materials – broken wood and paper – and they were making beauty. These were not superficial details, they were direct, it raised the question of what was beautiful. I chose to use the craft available, and to work with the craftsmen and make a virtue out of their limitations'.[14] Other components of what emerges as a complex tessellation of exchanges, influences and deferrals were worked out with different emphases in the theory and practice of individual artists whose allegiances, clear from the names rehearsed above, range from variants of modernist formalism to thorough-going institutional critique.

In a lecture on sculpture and architecture delivered at the Tate Gallery in London in March 1991, Anthony Caro sketches a relationship that with numerous emphases and inflections is fundamental to the generation that opened up new understandings for sculpture after Abstract Expressionism:

> *(…) since the Sixties, sculpture has not been far away from architecture. In the Sixties and after, sculpture extended itself so it explored almost the same space as the architect's. Not quite the same space, because sculptors' space always, it seems, demanded an invisible wall between spectator and work.*
> *In those days sculptors were absorbed with making a new vocabulary for sculpture and that meant getting right away from old-fashioned modes and methods. Styling solves nothing. Nevertheless, to have realised the closeness of abstract sculpture to architecture would at that time have horrified us. All the*

same we were using rods that felt like handrails even if they were not for grasping, making intervals like doorways even though one could not go through them, enclosing space in works that felt like rooms though one could explore them with the eyes only.[15]

Caro confronts us here with an anxious proximity between sculpture and architecture that announces the retrospective 'horror' of their closeness, and concludes with a series of suggestive itemizations of their allusive dysfunction. The sculptural 'rods', 'intervals' or enclosed 'space', of which he spoke, offer intimations of their more concrete architectural correlates – handrails, doors, rooms – yet do not precipitate the specific action or experience associated with them – grasping or holding, entering and exploring (with the body). This hedged proposition speaks quite powerfully to the type of abstraction for which Caro reached, one that dwells in formal implication, invoking – but always deferring – the specificity of situations that are lifelike, embodied or programmed by function. At the same time it suggests the measure of his separation from the generation that succeeded him – and from the rise of architectural practices inhabiting a similar revision; for almost everything that Caro counts out here, but particularly, of course, the relegation of somatic perception, become crucial elements of the Minimalist platform.

Caro, appears to have responded later in his career to this shift – by virtue, in good part at least, of a direct encounter with Gehry in the late 1980s. In the summer of 1987, Caro and Gehry came together at the Triangle Workshop at Pine Plains, New York to collaborate on an architectural/sculptural 'village'. A recent account of this meeting notes that:

There have long been elements of buildings in his [Caro's] work but it was after a summer workshop in America in 1987 with architect Frank Gehry that the idea of exploring the relationship between architecture and sculpture took off. Freed from the constraints of functionalism bar the need to make their structures stand up, Caro and Gehry knocked up over a period of two days a sprawling, quirky and extraordinary hybrid construction in wood that combined ramps, steps, towers and other architectural elements, all used creatively and intuitively as sculptural elements.[16]

The effect on Caro and his work is obvious: the extended practicum with Gehry engendered the very possibility that a direct relationship between sculpture and architecture once termed horrific could not just be redeemed into some kind of new permissibility, but might actually take over as the driving force of his later career: 'the most ambitious area of his output is only just coming to fruition, an area he calls 'sculpitecture'.[17] It is tempting to suggest that for Gehry, always less direct and usually more cautious about the attribution of specific determinants for his work, the effect was somewhat equal and opposite. In other words, the experience of modeling, experimenting and playing with one of the magi of high modernist three dimensional form allowed him to redigest aspects of the imaginative free-play of shapes and volumes that in the same year he would begin to lay down as one of the foundations of the Guggenheim Bilbao.

Such a conclusion is surely too conjectural – and too pat. But while the momentum behind the pen that worked-up Gehry's famous napkin sketches – those almost mythological blueprints consecrated to the foundation of the Bilbao museum – cannot by any means be attributed to Caro, the meeting between them and Caro's emblematization of advanced sculptural abstraction constitute one strand of the formative interplay between sculptural and architectural discourse that I am attempting to trace here.

Another arises from a second set of interrelationships, both personal and professional, this time with Serra. Caro's 'horror' – whether feigned or projected – notwithstanding, Serra's views on architecture are altogether tougher. During a series of interviews in the 1980s, most notably with Peter Eisenman in 1983, Serra establishes several of the grounds for his dispute with architecture. These include the propensity of both modernist sculpture (he mentions the 'portability' of Alexander Calder and Isamu Noguchi and the 'site-adjusted folly' of Henry Moore) and mid-century architecture to be bound by their points of origination in the studio – with the result that both practices default on their relationships with scale and context. 'Architects', he notes, 'suffer from the same studio syndrome. They work out of their offices, terrace the landscape, and place their buildings into the carved site. As a result the studio-designed then site-adjusted buildings look like blown-up cardboard models'. There are designated 'exceptions', of course, and – significantly for the present context – Serra's list reads as follows: 'Le Corbusier, Wright, Kahn, Gehry (…)'.[18]

Secondly, Caro's rather coy 'horror' is converted by Serra into a more menacing scene of 'annoyance' engendered 'when sculpture enters the realm of the non-institution, when it leaves the gallery or museum to occupy the same space and place as architecture'. This move, and its concomitant redefinition of 'space and place' in terms of what Serra calls 'sculptural necessities' precipitate, then, one of the antagonisms on which his practice thrives … and 'architects become annoyed'. In the end, annoyance (on the part of architecture), though never quite counted out, is quickly converted into the communal currency of New York postmodernism in the 80s, as Serra makes it over in his very next sentence as critique (from the point of view of sculpture): 'Not only is [architecture's] concept of space being changed, but for the most part it is being criticized'. In this process the self-referentiality so coveted by the modernist paradigm is formatted as an aggressive re-territorialisation, for '[t]he criticism can come into effect only when architectural scale, methods, materials, and procedures are being used'.[19]

Thirdly, Serra is also critical of attempts by post-modern 'contextualists' such as Robert Venturi (with whom he once had an extended argument) who seek to transpose the site-specific into an extension of the 'indigenous cultural situation', outflanking it as it were with an overdose of vernacular trappings – and in the process dooming the result to nostalgia and mere contextual affirmation. Fourthly, in a position drawn out by Eisenman, Serra speaks once more to the idea of 'noncompositionality', here derived form the absence of a 'hierarchy of parts' he perceives in the paintings of Jackson Pollock, and set against the European pictorial tradition discussed above – Matisse, the Cubists, Mondrian. Reacting to Serra's anti-compositional activation of voids and spaces, Eisenman suggests that 'it is not the elements of composition in architecture – the bay, the column, the window – that are interesting, but what is between them'.[20]

And finally, Serra returns to another issue also raised by Caro: the question of the 'inhabitability' of his work, particularly the urban sculptures such as *Rotary Arc* and *Tilted Arc* in New York and *Clara-Clara* in Paris, which, as Alfred Pacquement put it, may 'discover their identity through the people who pass them by'.[21] Serra offers two responses. One recaps the stringent separation he always maintained between sculpture and architecture by underlining that the critique his sculpture brokers exposes the 'deficiency' of architecture precisely because its scale and situation are produced on comparable terms. The other appears to concur with Caro's view, and

even specifies virtually the same details: [my sculptures] 'have passageways, but no doors, no windows, no roofs'. While Caro understands the similarity-in-difference between sculpture and edifice as an abstract allusion, Serra insists on pressing home what he considers the most consequential implication of the modernist separation of sculpture from the pedestal – that, form this moment on, it always has the potential 'to become a structure that you can enter into'.[22]

These are some of the contexts then for the installation in 1999 of Serra's massive hot-rolled Cor-Ten steel sculptures, the *Torqued Ellipses*, in the Fish Gallery on the ground floor of the Guggenheim Bilbao. This gargantuan space, reached directly from the soaring central atrium, is a little longer than a football field and about half as wide, comprises nearly 35,000-square-feet and is topped by a dramatically various ceiling that ranges from around 35 to 75 feet high. In their discussion of this work, 'Sculpture in the Space of Architecture', Aruna D'Souza and Tom Mcdonough, rehearse Serra's 'notoriously complex relation to architecture' as he 'is seduced by its ability to definitively shape our experience of the world, and yet harshly critical of the continuous compromises – of program, budget and pragmatic vision – to which it is subject'.[23]

Their suggestion, however, that the 'Torqued Ellipses' function as 'meta-architecture, that is, as a discourse about architecture and its possibilities', seems somewhat misplaced. For it overlooks both the striking *accommodation* of Serra's massive but transient curves within Gehry's structural undulations – a situation that is founded almost on rhyme or mimicry – and, on the other hand, whatever is residual in that resistant critical capacity of his sculptures to challenge the architectural, even on its own terms. From within the inner sanctum of a space that may have responded to their gravitational pull, Serra's sculptures concur with double agenda of autonomy and contextualism that he has always maintained as the goal of a 'symbolic', 'poetic' and finally 'useless' art. Sculpture can subsist on the threshold between autonomy and site, but architecture, with its necessary dependence on program and function, client and commission, simply cannot.[24]

To close I want to shuttle to the end of the long tradition of counter-compositional discourse, and invoke a scene of compositional diminishment that seems quite alien even to the theatrical futurism of the Guggenheim Bilbao. This move surely signals some of the limit-terms of the revitalized compositionality defended by Gehry. Paul Virilio claims that it is in cinema that we can locate an ultimate composite sign-

technology that announces the final decomposition of the discrete, rule-bound, and now historical arts of painting, sculpture, and even architecture:

> *Cinema is the end in which the dominant philosophies and arts have come to confuse and lose themselves, a sort of primordial mixing of the human soul and the languages of the motor-soul. The chronology of the arts in history already demonstrates this decomposition.*[25]

Virilio takes these questions further in *Lost Dimension*, where he writes that what 'we are living is a system of technological temporality, in which duration and material support have been supplanted as criteria by individual auditory and retinal instants'. He continues:

> *The perspectival effects of classical ornaments and the cinematic characteristics of certain styles, such as baroque, liberty or neo-liberty, is replaced by an integral cinematism, an absolute transitivity, involving the complete and thorough decomposition of realty and property. This decomposition is urban, architectural, and territorial. It is based on the deterioration of the ancient primacy of the physical separation and spatial limitation of human activities. And this very deterioration occurs so as to facilitate the interruption and commutation of time – or better, the absence of time – in instantaneous intercommunication.*[26]

Thinking well beyond the parameters of the art world, the 'decomposition' envisaged by Virilio is urban, social, and political. Decomposition has become a name for the commutative, even the disappearing, action of time.

* * *

Notes

1. Koons work, in particular, epitomizes the globalizing carnival that in the last decade has been license to do pantomime and minstrelsy in front of major museums or civic monuments. *Puppy* began life in Sydney Australia, was exported for the opening of the Guggenheim (1997), where it remains, and has also done duty in front of the Rockefeller Center in New York (May-Aug. 2000) and elsewhere—each of its appearances being accompanied by sustained media hoopla and fanfare. The differences between the origins and implications of the Bourgeois' spider is quite striking. Mieke Bal (*Louise Bourgeois' Spider: The Architecture of Art-Writing,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) recently associated the work with the latest version of interstitial discursivity – postmodernism's reorganization of the paragone, if you like. For Bal *Maman* emblematizes a domain of signification that conjoins not just the sculptural and the architectural but also the dimensions of theory or critical reflection, historical genre, mythology and biography that might weave them together. The spider, notes, Bal, 'fits no genre or several: sculpture, installation, architecture. It relates to many currents of twentieth-century art, especially sculpture, but also beckons the baroque. Its contents and associations evoke social issues without being reducible to any one of them. It will doubtless become an icon of turn-of-the-century art'. Whether we agree or otherwise with the ambitious new zoning proposed by Bal, the symbolic mutations of Bourgeois's spider function in a domain quite remote from the decorative pastiche of Puppy.
2. Frank Gehry, as cited, most recently by Sarah Milroy in 'The Bilbao Effect, Art versus architecture: Which will win out?' in *Toronto Globe and Mail*, Saturday, January 24, 2004, p. R5.
3. Frank Gehry, as cited in Muriel Emanuel & Dennis Sharp (eds.), *Contemporary architects*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980.
4. This issue alongside its implied double and probable other defined much of the discussion at the conference 'Learning from the Guggenheim-Bilbao: Five Years After', April 22–24, 2004 at the Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nevada, organized by the Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno.
5. Milroy, 'The Bilbao Effect'.
6. Ada Louise Huxtable, 'On Awarding the Prize', 1989. http://www.pritzkerprize.com/gehry.htm
7. *Frank O. Gehry: Individual Images and Cultural Conservatism*, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p. 42.
8. Frank Gehry in Mildred S. Friedman, Michael Sorkin, et al. (eds.), *Gehry talks: architecture + process*, New York: Rizzoli,

1999, pp. 38-39.
9. *Frank O. Gehry: Individual Images and Cultural Conservatism*, p. 49.
10. ibidem, p. 83.
11. Charles Jencks, cited in ibidem, p. 65.
12. Robert Maxwell, cited in ibidem, p. 64.
13. Frank Gehry, acceptance speech for the Pritzker Architecture Prize, 1989, http://www.pritzkerprize.com/gehry.htm]
14. ibidem.
15. Anthony Caro, *Through the Window* (March 1991); Edited version of delivered at the Tate Gallery, March 1991, revised June 2001 http://www.anthonycaro.org/ysp1-thru-the-window.htm
16. Tim Marlow, 'Man of Steel' *Cambridge Alumni Magazine*, Lent Term 1997; reprinted in http://www.anthonycaro.org/Interview-MoS.htm
17. ibidem.
18. Richard Serra, *interview by Peter Eisenman* [first published in Skyline, NY, April 1983, pp. 14-17], in Richard Serra, *Writings and Interviews*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, p.p. 145-46.
19. ibidem, p. 146.
20. ibidem, p. 148-49.
21. Alfred Pacquement, 'Interview by Alfred Pacquement', in Serra, *Writings and Interviews*, p. 162.
22. ibidem.
23. Aruna D'Souza & Tom McDonough, *Sculpture in the space of architecture*, in *Art-in-America*, 2, 2 (February 2000): pp. 84-9
24. New Yorker profile of Richard Serra, August 5th, 2002: 'Art is purposely useless, that its significations are symbolic, internal, poetic-a host of other things – whereas architects have to answer to the program, the client, and everything that goes along with the utility function of the building. Now we have architects running around saying. 'I'm an artist', and I just don't buy it (…) there are some comparable overlaps in the language between sculpture and architecture, between painting and architecture. There are overlaps between all kinds of human activities. But there are also differences that have gone on for centuries'.
25. Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, (trans. Philip Beitchman) New York: Semiotext(e), 1991, p. 105.
26. Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991, pp. 84-85.

The Viewer Is Never at Home. Museum Culture after the End of Spectacle

Camiel van Winkel

The museum of contemporary art has increasing difficulty positioning itself within the broader context of today's culture; more specifically, it seems unable to decide about ways to resolve the uncertainty of its appeal to the public. This uncertainty is a result of the fact that the field in which the museum operates is determined by two conditions that partly counteract one another: *the public condition of art* and *the visual condition of culture.* I will return to these conditions, and their inherent tensions, later. First, I will examine the apparent 'public agenda' of the museum today.

Very high on the list of agenda items is the imperative to get more visitors to the museum. It's no overstatement to say that museums are obsessed with visitors' numbers. Elaborate publicity devices are set up to 'lure' people. There seem to be no limits to this. And why would there be? The presence of a large audience appears to prove that the museum is performing its public function well.

This summer an exhibition of highlights from the collection of the New York MoMA was held in the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin. It attracted 1.2 million visitors over a six months' period. People were queuing for up to twelve hours. The museum was open every day until midnight. During the last weekend it stayed open non-stop around the clock. In that final weekend 60,000 visitors saw the exhibition.

Of course the obsession with visitors' numbers is all terribly vulgar and banal for anyone seriously interested in art. It's an excess that seems totally unrelated to our personal experience of works of art. Still I wouldn't denounce the phenomenon itself as completely irrelevant and meaningless. It reveals something about the importance of visibility in today's culture, and about the peculiar position of the museum in that cultural context.

As a means to boost the interest of the public and to intensify the visibility of the museum, one solution in particular has been privileged: namely, architecture. The last two decades have given us a wave of new museum buildings and museum extensions in Europe and North America, soon to be followed by Asia no doubt. Architecture serves as a prestigious means to generate publicity and to highlight the international importance of museums and their collections.

However, the paradox is that by expanding architecturally in order to attract more visitors, the exploitation of the museum (heating, maintenance, personnel etc), becomes more costly, so that the visitors' numbers have to go up even more, in order to cover all the extra costs.

An interesting example is the new extension to the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. It was opened to the public in January 2003. For financial reasons the Van Abbemuseum will now have to draw twice the amount of visitors that it used to do before the new wing was built.

The architecture of the new Van Abbemuseum desperately tries to prove, to demonstrate, the artistic relevance of the architectural discipline. It seeks to show that architecture and visual art still have something in common – that they still can 'speak' to one another. The architect has sought to achieve this by designing a building that has *the condition of viewing* as its theme. The new museum wing emphatically tries to communicate that, just like art, architecture is about *looking*. That's the message visitors to the Van Abbemuseum are supposed to take home.

To a certain extent the architectural design has been conceived as a double anamorphosis. Only when looked at from a privileged but eccentric point-of-view does the building appear as a coherent and balanced spatial configuration. Everything seems to have been designed in order to be taken in from that specific vantage point. This applies both to the interior and to the exterior space

When you walk around the exterior of the building, it is not until you're facing the backside that the various building blocks assume their proper picturesque arrangement: with on the left hand side the restaurant and the offices, on the right the big cubist chunk of exhibition space, and in the middle a low glass corridor; everything arranged around the shallow pond that acts as a kind of reflective centrepiece.

A similar effect of anamorphosis can be noted in the building's interior. The new exhibition spaces – ground floor, three floors plus basement – form an intricate three-dimensional compilation of balconies, platforms, balustrades, corridors, stairways, landings, and bridges, laid out around a central atrium. A visitor climbing the stairs, spiralling upwards round the atrium, will not perceive the organisational order of this jumbled space until he or she has reached the top level and looks down. It's only then that all the erratic shapes line up in perspective, and a carefully staged architectural cascade materialises.

With its many vista's, pierced walls, lookouts and opportunities for viewing, the architecture of the new Van Abbemuseum incorporates the quest for the ideal viewpoint. What's more, visitors are being made to enact or perform that quest. Again and again you see people sticking their heads through openings, bending

their bodies over balustrades and looking up or down into the atrium. Bay windows penetrate the outer wall of the building, seducing the visitor with a view on the surrounding park or the river that runs through it. When you approach the building from a distance, you already notice people inside looking out.

It may seem obvious – as the architect of the Van Abbemuseum believes – that museums are places for looking, for viewing. The best museums must surely be those with the best conditions for viewing. But even if viewing is a central notion in the disourse of modern and contemporary art, the question remains: what is a 'viewer'? *Who* is the viewer? Are all museum visitors viewers? Are all viewers museum visitors?

The hunt for more and more visitors could easily make us forget that 'the viewer' is not a natural given at all. The viewer is primarily an idea, evoked in the process of thinking and writing about the experience of art. It is a theoretical construct, and quite an enigmatic one; a phenomenological abstraction; a role in an elaborate fiction or screenplay.

The viewer is the main protagonist in a lot of writing about art. In exhibition reviews or essays, works of art often are being considered through their mental or bodily effects on an unidentified subject called 'the viewer'. To a certain extent, writers and critics use the viewer to objectify their own observations, to achieve apparent neutrality that allows any reader to empathise. But there is also a more profound dimension in this recurring figure, a dimension hidden in the deeper strata of social and cultural conventions.

A brilliant evocation of the figure of 'the viewer', and of our ambivalent relation to it, can be found in Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube.* Just like the white cube itself, the viewer, O'Doherty argues, is a modern invention, an creation that came to us in the wake of modernism:

> *As we move around that [gallery] space, looking at the walls, avoiding things on the floor, we become aware that that gallery also contains a wandering phantom frequently mentioned in avant-garde dispatches – the Spectator.*
>
> *Who is this Spectator? Also called the Viewer. Sometimes the Observer, occasionally the Perceiver. It has no face, is mostly a back. It stops and peers, is slightly clumsy. Its attitude is inquiring, its puzzlement discreet. He – I'm sure he is more male than female – arrived with modernism, with the disappearance of*

perspective. He seems born out of the picture and, like some perceptual Adam, is drawn back repeatedly to contemplate it. The Spectator seems a little dumb; he is not you or me. Always on call, he staggers into place before every new work that requires his presence. This obliging stand-in is ready to enact our fanciest speculations. He tests them patiently and does not resent that we provide him with directions and responses: "the viewer feels..."; "the observer notices..."; "the spectator moves...". He is sensitive to effects (...) and smells out ambiguities like a bloodhound (...). He not only stands and sits on command; he lies down and even crawls as modernism presses on him his final indignities. Plunged into darkness, deprived of perceptual clues, blasted by strobes, he frequently watches his own image chopped up and recycled by a variety of media. Art conjugates him, but he is a sluggish verb, eager to carry the weight of meaning, but not always up to it. He balances, he tests, he is mystified, demystified. In time, the Spectator stumbles around between confusing roles: he is a cluster of motor reflexes, a dark-adapted wanderer, the vivant in a tableau, an actor manqué, even a trigger of sound and light in a space land-mined for art. He may even be told that he himself is an artist, and be persuaded that his contribution to what he observes or trips over is its authentic signature.[1]

O'Doherty's comes up with an enlightening description of the viewer as an 'obliging stand-in' – always willing to subject himself to whatever treatment the artist has had in mind He rightly assumes that the viewer is not a natural phenomenon which has always been around, but that it is a convention, a cultural construct somehow related to modernism.

The crucial qualification of the conditions of viewing can be summed up in a short and simple sentence: *the viewer is never at home.* Ingrained in the notion of the viewer is the awareness that one is never on one's own, in a private situation, when getting acquainted with new works of art, but always in the company of others – in the company of *strangers*. The viewer is a persona who perpetually wanders through the institutional space of art museums and galleries. His awkward movements, his hesitant, self-conscious behaviour vis-à-vis the art works that he is confronted with and vis-à-vis the other viewers that share his space, all point to the same conclusion: the viewer is not a private individual but the counterpart of a public realm or public environment. The viewer is the embodiment of the public condition of art.

This public condition of art implies that 'publicness' is a necessary circumstance for the production and reception of any specimen of visual art. It implies that in principle all artists work for the museum, whether they want to or not, the museum being the culmination of the domain in which the public examination and legitimization of what counts as a work of art necessarily take place.

Ever since the sixties, with Minimal and Postminimal Art, artists have taken into account the notion of the viewer as a public persona. For Minimal artists like Donald Judd and Robert Morris, 'publicness' still implied a deliberate choice: some art was in accordance with this new criterion, while other art wasn't. Without this duality Minimal Art would never have had its polemical and historical impact. However, since that period the public condition of art has gradually become an unavoidable given.

Visual art now is a separate and specialised cultural sector that is mainly focused inward. In this universe works of art derive a great deal of their relevance from their relation to other works and to the texts, concepts and theories that together comprise the art discourse. There no longer seems to be a ground for a fundamental discrimination between art and reflections about art. Every work of art implies a statement about the legitimization of art production, even in cases when the artist in question is totally unaware of that. Essentially both art and reflections about art use 'publicness' as their medium; no work of art can come into existence without this aspect of 'publication'. Nobody knows any longer what a work of art should look like or how it is to be distinguished from other objects and processes. As a result, a work of art can only be recognised as such if and when it manifests itself within the discursive domain of art, the domain in which visual art in general continuously seeks to produce justifications for itself and of itself.

So today the public condition is still an unavoidable and necessary condition for every specimen of visual art. The notion of the viewer as a public persona is a crucial prerequisite for the entire production of visual art. This public condition is now something totally obvious and unremarkable. The condition that in 1965 triggered the most radical insights has nowadays expanded and settled down to become the ultimate convention. The social vacuum in which contemporary artists necessarily operate, has resulted from the fatal succession of two historical events: first the disappearance of that private figure called 'the client', then the conventionalisation of that public figure called 'the viewer'.[2]

The field in which the museum operates is not only determined by the public condition of art, but, as I stated before, by *the regime of visibility* as well.

Given the extremely visual orientation of the culture in which we live today, one would expect the museum of contemporary art to be a highly regarded, well-respected and prominent institution. But in truth the situation is a bit more complicated.

What does it mean when we say that today's culture is a visual culture? Is it true that in our everyday life we are being engulfed and overwhelmed by an increasing excess of images and other visual material? My suggestion is that it may be fruitful to think about it in slightly different terms: life among visual media is characterised not by an excess but rather by a *shortage* of images. There are simply *not enough of them*. There is a permanent pressure to visualise practices and processes that originally do not belong to the realm of the visual. Images in themselves are less powerful than this imperative to visualise.

The shortage of images has created a dynamics of its own, closely affiliated to the economic principle of permanent expansion and growth. Everywhere, from art and commerce to fashion and lifestyle, it is now a common notion that, in order to be successful, one has to make oneself and one's activities visible and recognisable. Success equals visibility and visibility equals success. Whoever refuses to subscribe to this logic, is bound to fail in the rat-race of the market economy. What's invisible, simply does not exist.

The regime of visiblity is more than a dictate issued by the mass media. The individuals, institutions and practices that are afflicted by it, are actively contributing to it as well. The regime of visibility permeates all levels of culture and society, from centre to margin, from high to low. The most diverse forms of cultural production have been reduced to a number of visually mediatable aspects. Self-awareness, linked to the notion that one is different from the rest of the world, has to be expressed in a clear and visible form, otherwise it doesn't 'work'.

In a world that we consider to be excessively visualised, over-visualised, the visual has obtained a double meaning. This ambivalence results from two cultural dimensions that do not add up very well. The visual has two very different sets of connotations.

On the one hand, the visual is the domain of the gaze. The visual is the aspect of the world that triggers you to loose yourself in it. It functions by way of immersion. Your gaze is sucked in by a scene, a scene that doesn't even need to be spectacular.

You are hypnotised; your body gets all limp and paralysed, or on the contrary, all stiff and cramped. The visual has the power to push your consciousness through a narrow slot; at that point it stops being *your* consciousness; instead it becomes just a mindless imprint of the object world. To gaze into a fire, or out of a train window, or at a computer screen, causes the space of experience to flatten and close like an envelope, the content of which is always somewhere else.

But if the visual is the domain of mindless immersion, on the other hand, strangely enough, we tend to associate visuality with distance, detachment and control; with reflection and reflexivity. Sight is connected to insight; view is related to overview. We speak of both 'the gaze of the master' and 'the mastery of the gaze'. This second dimension of visuality, completely opposed to the first, has been theorised among others by such authors as Marshall McLuhan and Jean Baudrillard. For McLuhan, the spatio-geometric formula of the 'point-of-view' is related to the era of mechanisation. It is characterised by remote perception; linear thinking; rationalisation and fragmentation; chains of cause and effect; expansion from centre to margin; and the cutting up of complex processes into sequences of singular steps.

The shift from this universe of mechanisation to a global village based on electronic information technology, which McLuhan saw happening, would once and for all end the dominance of the optical model of a 'point-of-view'. In his book *Understanding Media* (1964) he wrote: 'Fragmented, literate and *visual* individualism is not possible in an electrically patterned and imploded society'.[3] Both McLuhan and Baudrillard anticipated a world that has moved *beyond* the visual, a world in which the distance between observer and observed object shrinks and is reduced to zero by the electronic extensions of the human nervous system; an imploded world in which visual perception is transformed into skin-to-skin contact, and tactile communication reigns supreme.

In 1976 Baudrillard proclaimed the end of the gaze and the end of spectacle. All technological and biological interfaces would cling together and give rise to the hyperreality of an integrated and aestheticised environment:

> *A whole imagery based on contact, a sensory mimicry and a tactile mysticism, basically ecology in its entirety, comes to be grafted onto this universe of operational simulation, multi-stimulation and multi-response. [...] No more scenes, no more cuts, no more "gaze", the end of the spectacle and the spectacular,*

> *towards the total, fusional, tactile and aesthetic [...] environment. [...] The old illusions of relief, perspective and depth (both spatial and psychological) bound up with the perception of the object are over with: optics in its entirety, scopics, has begun to operate on the surface of things – the gaze has become the object's molecular code.* [4]

So, whereas you can link the visual to a loss of distance and reflection, McLuhan and Baudrillard demonstrate that it can also be related to detachment and reflectivity. The contradiction between these two dimensions of the visual – on the one hand, mindless immersion, on the other hand, detached reflection – is more than just a theoretical issue. The phenomenology of everyday life is characterised both by the total immersion in stimulating environments and by a gradual loss of experience and disconnection from what is felt to be the real. Each of these phenomena seems to contradict the other, yet both are equally 'true'. The psychopathology of contemporary society is marked by an apparently random oscillation between moments of immense synaesthetic euphoria and moments of total numbness and dissociation. What's the most troubling about that is the absence of an overall logic that could explain and ultimately eradicate the contradiction. Individual and collective eruptions of emotion occur as isolated incidents. The lack of structure only enhances the intensity of these fragments. Any sensation is felt to be an absolute sensation.

Perhaps all this can be related to a peculiar characteristic of what I've been calling the regime of visibility. The regime of visibility is in a strange way different from what Christian Metz and Martin Jay have called 'the empire of the gaze' or 'the scopic regime', in the sense that it's no longer about *looking* at all.[5] It's about *being-looked-at*, but it's not about *looking*. Something is being looked at, that's for sure, but there is no way to decide who is doing the looking. There no longer seems to be anyone occupying the subject position of the viewer. Visibility has turned into a quantity, an economic measure that can only be verified with statistical means such as polls, market research, and viewer's numbers. The classical duality between an active component of *looking* and a passive component of *being-looked-at*, has disappeared. To be looked at, to be seen, has taken over the central position of looking and seeing, and has partly absorbed connotations of activity and domination. In that sense Baudrillard could have been right when he talked about the end of the spectacle.

What consequences does this have for the position of the viewer, the 'wandering phantom' that inhabits the sparsely furnished rooms of our museums? Once we have reached the conclusion that there is nobody left to occupy the subject position of the viewer, what does that mean for the museum? Can it be that the uncertainty museums experience in defining their appeal to the public, is in some way related to this? I think it is. It could be the real problem underlying the obsession with visitor's numbers. No matter how cramped the museum rooms actually are, no matter how many busloads of schoolchildren or tourists are being stuffed inside, there always remains a sensation of emptiness, a sensation of things disappearing. The museum public is characterised by a peculiar absence or displacement, a form of being-there-while-not-being-there. No matter how full the rooms actually are, at a meta-level they always appear to be void. Financial reasons aside, this may explain why museums continue their efforts to lure more people in.

Museums consider themselves as places where one learns to look, places for viewing, for looking at art, places where the viewing of objects is facilitated and celebrated. Yet today's culture, ruled by what I consider to be a regime of visibility, is no longer about looking. It's about being-looked-at.

This makes clear all the more to what extent the figure that we refer to as 'the viewer', this figure that we tend to invoke whenever we speak about art, is really a phantasmic figure. On some fundamental, unconscious level, we find it hard to believe that the work of art really addresses *us*. Surely the work of art is not meant for us, but for some unknown 'other'. We believe in art through this figure of an imaginary viewer, a slightly naïve figure that is totally open and receptive to the artistic experience.

When we speak about the civilising effect that art can have on people, is it ourselves that we think of? No, not really. We think of *the other*, the unidentified, paradigmatic viewer who still lacks something – who is in need of something we already possess: a certain awareness or enlightened consciousness. Then again, we also imagine this viewer as someone not burdened by all the excess knowledge and information that we carry with us and supposedly robs our art experience of a great deal of its spontaneity.

Our belief in art has been relayed to 'the viewer', who believes on behalf of us. The work of art does not affect us directly, but through this replacement viewer that we imagine is standing in front of the work. Only through that phantasmic figure is it

possible for us to continue believing in art. We have no desire for art, yet we believe in the viewer who needs art more than we do, as if his life depended on it.

This is the problem that the museum of contemporary art faces today. It has run out of arguments to convince us of the need to come and visit and look at the works ourselves. It's enough for us to know that the works are being kept in the museum, that whenever we want, we can go there and see them. We don't really need to go ourselves. There's no urgency.

Perhaps in response to this situation, the institutional field has started a collective ideological attack on the notion of 'the viewer' as a generalised, abstract persona with a blank identity. Fed by the ideology of pluralism that dominates the cultural and academic scene today, a broad range of specialists – from art theory to museum practice to politics and beyond – now seems to agree that *there no longer is a general public*. To regard the art audience as an abstract and neutral entity is considered both dangerous and *passé*. Many cherish the thought that the audience is made up of a heterogeneous collection of smaller groups – minority groups that each have their own social, cultural, ethnic or sexual identity. There seems to be a consensus that any institution disregarding this range of backgrounds and histories and failing to take into account the various interests and expectations of these specific groups, is not only guilty of discrimination, but also misses major opportunities for contact and communication.

Thus the empty subject position of 'the viewer' is rejected; or better, it is no longer perceived as empty. The viewer is turned again into an individual, particular human being. The singular figure of the viewer is replaced by a multiplicity of 'viewers'.

It is no coincidence that the '1990s have witnessed many well-publicised attempts by artists and curators to get into a closer and more intimate contact with their audience. We have witnessed projects and exhibitions that aimed at an intensification of the art experience – a more personal interaction between producer and receiver. A typical work in this genre would consist of a process, the content of which is reduced to an act of communication about the process itself. Artists take their audience by the hand and 'service' them, leading them gently into the utopian space of a non-intimidating creative environment.

The artists in question have often promoted their projects with an anti-institutional rhetoric. Yet what they do is unmistakably very similar to what museums and institutions do, that apply refined marketing tools in order to identify and target

their audiences. In a way artists mimic museums and art institutions in their efforts to market their work and to address an individualised audience as their target group.

This may seem perfectly innocent and sympathetic, yet the hidden assumptions and premises should be uncovered and criticised. Whoever claims that the art audience can be identified and targeted, implies that the individual need for art can be directly inferred from the social or cultural 'niche' the individual belongs to.

This assumption is even more hegemonic and patronising than the supposedly 'unitary' model it aims to replace. It implies that the human subject is identical to the sum of its apparent characteristics. When you're a single black mother from a poor neighbourhood, we know for sure that you won't like abstract painting....

To describe the audience as a diverse range of minority groups, as a kind of 'rainbow coalition', is to imply that the individual subjectivity consists of a number of fixed ingredients that, firstly, never change and that, secondly, can always be known.

The 20th century avant-garde has always refused to identify its audience in advance. Identifying one's audience in advance would amount to signing a 'social contract' intended to make the undefined and evasive status of the work of art acceptable for administrative institutions with their instrumental logic.

Even if we tried, we could not get rid of the phantasmic figure of 'the viewer'. I don't think we will be able to transgress the cultural conditioning of the museum and convince ourselves that the museum exists for us, rather than for some unidentified other.

This predicament, however, is not necessarily a bad thing. In a way, despite everything, you could say that this is what makes the museum of contemporary art still valuable and relevant today. Aesthetic experiences can be had everywhere; but only in museums do we have an aesthetic experience while at the same time feeling unable to fully identify with the subject of that experience. We don't really feel addressed by the artworks in the museum. Instead we feel that some absent viewer is addressed that will take our place as soon as we have left the room. In the museum context, works of art represent models of public address that might have worked in the past or that might work in the future. The fact that we don't feel addressed directly allows us to reflect on whatever it is that connects us to our material surroundings.

The museum of contemporary art is not the only place for art, nor the most ideal

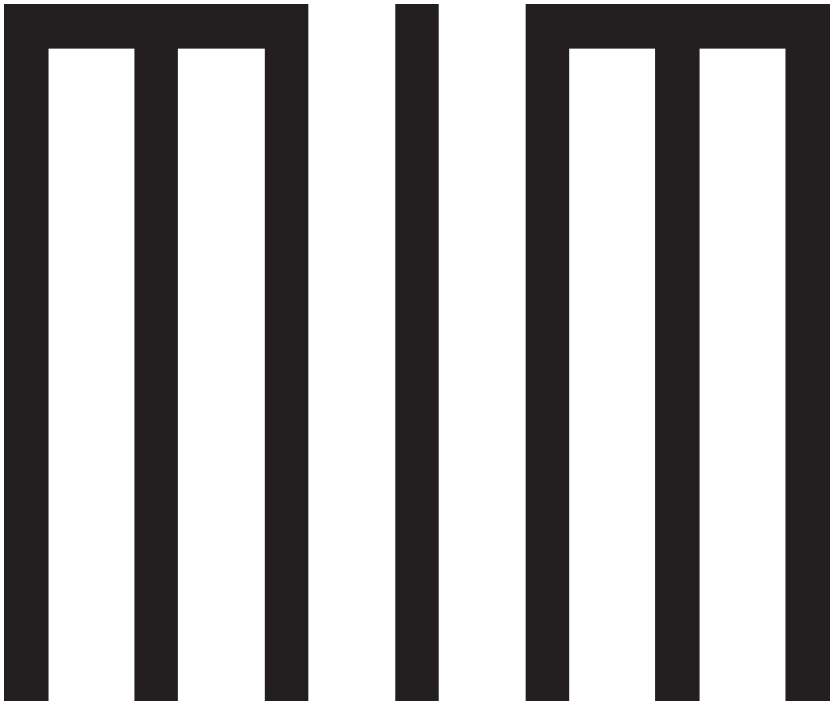
place; it's certainly not the most natural or neutral environment for works of art. That much has become clear in one hundred fifty years of institutional critique. Yet museums should be considered places where the art, if nothing else, can reflect on its own conditions and parameters. Not in a modernist fashion, by investigating its medium, but rather by investigating the *absence* of a medium, or the 'pastness' of the discipline of art. Where it can reflect on the arbitrary and conventional nature of our convictions as to what defines a work of art. The decontextualised, decontextualising aspect of what we have once started calling 'the art context'.

The museum is the only place where this indeterminate state clearly contaminates the apparatus of filters, screens, labels, and containers that we need in order to 'see' the art in the first place. It's also the only place where this indeterminate state contaminates *us*, the public, the audience, whoever that may be – anyone who volunteers to play the role of the viewer, while never fully blending with that role.

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Notes

1. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space,* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 39-41.
2. Cf. Camiel van Winkel, *Moderne leegte. Over kunst en openbaarheid*, Nijmegen: SUN, 1999.
3. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*, London/New York: Routledge, 2002, 1964, p. 56.
4. Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage, 1993, pp. 71-72.
5. Christian Metz, *Le signifiant imaginaire. Psychanalyse et cinéma*, Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1977 ; Martin Jay, 'Scopic Regimes of Modernity', in: Hal Foster (ed.), *Vision and Visuality, Discussions in Contemporary Culture 2*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, pp. 3-23.



SEMINAR

SESSION 1: The Museum: Dreams of a Mobile Architecture

The Museum: Dreams of a Mobile Architecture

CALL FOR PAPERS

This session will explore the many ways in which the museum advocates architecture as the medium to overcome its identity crisis. Briefly considering the metaphors used by museums to question their status reveals an architectural bias, and by consequence the spatial nature of the crisis: if the museum of contemporary art wants to transform itself from a static **repository** into a dynamic **workshop**, it has to tear down its walls, open up its space, leave the premises, push back its frontiers. Consequently, with every museum building enterprise - whether an extension, an additional wing or a brand-new building - museum directors explicitly express the ambition to tackle the 'institutional' space as well. Continually, architecture is used as a vehicle to fundamentally rethink the museum on both a micro and a macro level - not only the commissioning institution itself, but the entire concept of 'the museum' as well. Architecture is capable - or so we are made to believe - of extending the museum's boundaries in both the literal and figurative sense of the word. Is it not true, as Cedric Price once stated, that architecture is too slow to make experiments materialise, too slow to solve problems? When the typologies of the future take actual form, the future has long overtaken architecture. This session invites contributions that address the problematic task of architecture in the museum.

Walking into Trouble

Andrea Phillips

In this paper I'd like to consider the development of uses of mobility in contemporary curating in which artworks that either move, ask their viewer to move or present the traces of physical movement are commissioned. I want to suggest some reasons why this commissioning process has become common practice in a variety of institutional frameworks, and what it might stand (in) for. I also want to suggest that what is desired by the museum – an ontologically improbable and politically questionable sense of fluidity and transition into the social – can be countered by an alternative ethics of mobility, in which travel and its related rhetoric are not seen as ways to smooth out a process of institutional, interdisciplinary socialisation but instead as, to paraphrase Duchamp, 'standard stoppages' that demonstrate the contingency and resistance of people carrying out actions in a place. In order to do this I am going to examine a particular set of works commissioned for the grounds of a neo-classical stately home in the UK, Compton Verney, which has a permanent collection of work on view and, in recent years, has developed an annual contemporary commissioning policy.

Over a number of years I have been gathering information on artworks that are either produced or experienced by walking, sometimes both, and been thinking about how such works are translated, sometimes in a contradictory fashion, into wider paradigms of travel, movement and social access in contemporary culture. Most but not all of these works have at some point been described as 'public art'. Some take place in the countryside (like the ones I will describe at Compton Verney); most take place in or on the outskirts of cities. Many of the works are seen principally not as live actions 'in the field' or 'on the street' (to bring in two sites of ethnographic activity that have provided for an amount of contemporary art-theoretical fetishisation), but as documentary evidence, graphically rearranged, modelled and displayed in the gallery or studio. All return images of mobility to the gallery or museum in one form or another. All, intentionally or not, draw in ancient and modem mythologies of walking – from pilgrimages and diasporas to flâneurisms and *dérives* – as part of their effect. And all, it would seem, ask pertinent questions about the relationship between everyday movement and its artistic and architectural reincarnation as emblematic of accessible sodality.

My work is about walking but it is part of a more general inquiry into the use and abuse of movement as a trope of artistic and architectural thought. On the one hand, in an important debate about subjectivity and citizenship, fluid movement can

be seen to open up individual experience to new and different ways of perceiving and designing the world – offering subjectivities that can shift and sway according to their context. On the other, a more pedestrian understanding of movement can be seen to inhibit the impulse to think in such fluid terms; to accept the criticality of the tentative, the hesitant, the speculative and contingent aspects of pedestrianism, and to see in it a form of protest against the streamlining and de-differentiating, or smoothing out of cultural production.

Whilst previous practices might suggest otherwise, this contingent aspect of walking – and its institutionalization as the production of walked space – suggests a potential development in contemporary curatorial activity within the museum. Desires for the museum to move need to be seen as philosophical dream states. More so, such ideas should be connected firmly to the socio-political context from which they spring. Artists are either co-opted by the institution to play along with a narrative of sociality, participation and access through the creation of seemingly 'democratic' methods and forms such as walks, tours, performances and demonstrations. Or, occasionally, as I hope to show, they demonstrate the political contingency of such dreams, as they propose difficult journeys and strategic lines of flight that, consciously or not, counter smooth assumptions about the nature of social space.

Compton Verney is a stately home, just off the M40 in Warwickshire, 'Shakespeare Country', site of the most ferocious seventeenth century civil war battles, and an area of the UK that forms an iconic image of Englishness – here is the green and pleasant land, here is Albion. The house is the location of the Peter Moores Foundation collections, which consists of sixteenth century European and ancient Asian art and eighteenth century British folk art (a collection formed with debt to colonies near and far). The house, seat of the Verneys recorded in the Domesday Book, was rebuilt by Robert Adam in 1780 upon the commission of the fourteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke, a title earned by the Verneys through their assiduous loyalist support during the civil war. With grounds designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the house sits surrounded by two huge manufactured lakes. Inside the house, the serene architectural facade gives way to equally tranquil exhibition spaces in which eighteenth century witch's dolls, early Zhou Dynasty masterpieces and gems from the seventeenth century Neapolitan court, are cautiously divided. A contemporary art gallery has a revolving exhibition schedule. Sculptural works are commissioned

for the grounds that range from the monolithic (a John Frankland boulder) to the ironic and impermanent (a life-size inflatable airplane by Alexandra Mir; a series of large-scale mown grass drawings by Anya Gallacio; a series of coloured smoke plumes by Simon Patterson, Bob & Roberta Smith's *Mobile Reality Creator*). The audience for events and exhibitions at Compton Verney is drawn predominantly from commuter towns in the area. Closer villages, whose inhabitants shift to adjust to ongoing downscaling in farming production, visit less often. The difference between these diverse communities is marked in their various attitudes to the stately home. Just as the Verneys distributed their sovereign claim across the landscape in the eighteenth century, so the contemporary museum adopts an air of philanthropic patronage towards those that service its boundaries.

Whilst the buildings were closed for refurbishment in 2003, the Peter Moores Foundation commissioned four artists to develop walks inspired by the local environment, including the grounds, as well as these outlying communities. The commissions were a result of a difficult artist-Ied consultation process in 2002, of which I was a part. The assignments, that were intended to draw in local audiences, as well as to maintain a presence within the art world whilst the galleries were shut, were ambiguous from the start. Artists' responses acknowledged this ambivalence. But Compton Verney, with a complex set of its own institutional disenfranchisements (for example, a high turn-over of curators with no real control over programme), did not know what to do with, and seemed to a certain extent confused by, this product.

The fantasy of countryside walking is often that which Raymond Williams would have called seigniorial, a fantasy that is for the most of us based on a falsely inherited notion of purchase. Our fantasy is complex for it exists only as a result of a series of annihilations - of the labour and laboriousness of the construction of the image of the countryside, of the heterogeneity of the population that must be hidden in order to enable an unspoilt panorama, of political, social and environmental incompatibilities that might rupture an otherwise seamless view. What started for the Directors of Compton Verney as an unusual idea for some off-site commissions which might access a 'more diverse audience' quickly backfired in the hands of artists. This particular and literal idea of making the museum seem mobile by asking artists and audiences to walk around it began to demonstrate the absolute lack of conceptual, political, aesthetic mobility inherent in the idea.

Graham Parker offered a simple solution to the burden of history he felt meted out to him in the commission by suggesting the estate was refashioned, just as was already being carried out in the house and grounds with scrupulous attention to the detail of the original Adam and Brown design. But rather than authenticate an already constructed notion of that which calls on more traditional methods of *trompe l'oeil* – Brown was most famous for his trickery; foreshortening, extending and deleting ugly aspects of a particular view – Parker suggested that we imagine, for a day, that the estate was remodeled as a golf course (*Line and Length*, 2003). This idea resonated in a familiar way, not only because so much of interstitial land in middle England has been made into golf courses, but also because the poetics of the make-over, the quick cartographical, architectural, design-led fix reverberate via TV. Parker, working with a golf design firm, produced a map that indicated exactly how the eighteen-hole course 'master-plan' might work. On one Sunday in May, eighteen flags and tees were placed on the route and the public was invited to walk it. Instead of playing, people were asked to imagine a landscape that the artist perceived would be equally as legislative as Capability Brown's. The plan demonstrated the conceit of a hierarchy of perceptions of natural or correct ways of using the landscape related to contemporary taste. It also showed up landscape's mutability – usability – as responsive to late capitalist requirements for flexibility – and mobility – within the market place. Far from static in its privileges of ownership, the countryside has always been up for sale (as the history of the Verney family in this area of Warwickshire amply demonstrates). Within this pastiche of profitable, *nouveau-riche* or immigrant design (depending on your point of view), Compton Verney acquired another, and viable, use value.

The taste trespass of Parker's proposed golf course makes us all into invaders, as new modes of social performance take over from old ones. The flying ball has its way, just as the gun, the hound and the beater, continue to do in another sporting tradition. To imagine the landscape as a large arena for sporting pleasure is to imagine a landscape for sale, for accrual. Contemporary landscape revisionists would have such land up for grabs, sold as pockets of the picturesque in the name of meritocratic access. Compton Verney, literally brought back from destitution in the 1970s, demonstrates a benign and philanthropic consent by opening its grounds to all sorts of walkers, most of who would have been chased off the land a hundred years ago. The nineteenth century poet and country dandy Leslie Stephens named

this 'judicious trespass': those that have time, trespass judiciously, those that don't, trespass because they have to in order to survive.[1]

An altogether more obstinate demonstration-by-trespass has a long British history, starting with the walking clubs and fresh air societies set up by young men and women on their return from grand tours of Europe in the late eighteenth century and continued in a more radical vein by increasingly militant rambling clubs, particularly in the Midlands and the North of England. Here, the leisured pursuit of a new, healthier and more poetic 'senses of self' through walking was opened out to a call for rights of way for everyone, not just the rich. The famous mass trespass on Kinder Scout in 1932 (which was repeated in 1982 as if to show how little had really changed) was organised to protest at how little British upland was available for men and women to walk. In 1939 an access to land bill lobbied for by influential Labour Party ramblers and MPs was diverted at the last moment from a move to allow the right to walk on uncultivated, though privately owned, mountain and moorland to what was deemed a 'landowner's protection bill' through the simple act of adding a clause which made trespass into an offence punishable through the court system. The ensuing demonstrations resulted in violent clashes between ramblers and police. The act of walking became a most effective propaganda tool in which the exhibition of trespass in order to encourage its inverse, right of way, was extremely effective.

Representing Austria at the Venice Biennale in 1993 Christian Philip Muller posed as an alpine hiker and surreptitiously crossed the border of Austria into eight neighbouring countries. From the photographs that the artist took of these border crossings, the motility and insecurity of any boundary that cuts one part of a landscape away from its neighbour becomes comically clear. Occasionally the artist is seen leaping across a stream or a road but more often than not there is no mark to show a point of transgression. Whilst much of the project involved a conceptual game of cat and mouse with Austrian officialdom intended to illustrate the ridiculousness of border defense at a time of shifting national allegiances across southern Europe, another and more disturbing aspect of the project came about as the artist and his assistant were seized in the newly formed Czech Republic and forbidden to re-enter the state for three years, an event that immediately recast the humour of the piece into a harrowing creation of the circumstances of thousands of illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers. At this point, Muller says with some irony, he 'experienced the difference between the border as an artistic concept and a political reality'.[2]

The relationship between the idealised landscape and its more prosaic and often inequitable reality was the subject of Ben Sadler' s Compton Verney commission. Sadler produced a CD by a band called Circa '88, who were formed during the artist's collaboration with Kineton High School, a village local to the estate. Circa '88 sang songs with titles like 'The Chipshop', 'The Church', 'The Bridge' and 'The Pub', articulating the intimacy and, for teenagers as for others, confinement of idealised village life; the lyrics mixed social familiarity and teenage melancholy with deadpan humour. Music offers dreams of escape, masking the overlooked but intensely experienced prospects of rural communities whose public transport is virtually non-existent and whose job prospects are poor. Sadler says in the sleeve notes of the CD, 'The music on this CD is entirely by Circa '88. I could not have written these songs. I'm glad that Circa '88 still can', suggesting that age, or a move into a different world, dwindles our experience of the intensities of feeling expressed here. The lyrics propose a type of knowing naivety reflective of a critical moment in which a group of young people offer ambivalent words about their locality, their landmarks. Walking this circuit, in a fetishistically pretty English village, might be heart-wrenching, frustrating or mindlessly boring if you grow up there.

Local politicians, best characterised as a conduit between the small scale and the national, but as often as not the compromised messengers of party lines, have played a pivotal role in the development of the countryside and the way it is perceived. Jacqueline Donachie took up the image of paternal ancestral stewardship and its connection to local and national politics in the organisation of her Compton Verney commission. *The Greville Verney Walk* was performed for the first time in April 2002, following a route from the village of Combroke to the Compton Verney estate. Donachie, mainly interested in the photographic potential of the event, theatricalised the walk by creating a banner at its head and hiring a Gaelic marching band to play along the route. A local amateur dramatic society turned out in Victorian costume to walk, as did several women on horseback riding in dressage. The dramatic denouement of the event, along with its implied politics, was influenced by the artist' s own experience as a Glaswegian of the Orange marching season.

Greville Verney, to whom the walk was dedicated, was the last member of the Verneys to live on the Warwickshire estate. An active Tory peer, MP for Rugby from 1895 to 1900, Verney was as the holder of an inherited seat in the House of

Lords, a fervent anti-Parliamentarian. He supported the Union of Great Britain and Ireland (hence Donachie's choice of a Gaelic band from Birmingham to accompany the walk). His distinctly patrician royalist sympathies, echoing round a part of the British countryside still defined as a bloody battleground of the English Civil War, are clearly not at odds with many contemporary local allegiances and debates. By asking us to walk under his banner, Donachie reminded her audience of the competing politics of the countryside, where a gentle stroll in the spring sunshine may not be so innocently routed or perceived by others. Her photographs too turned our straggling mass into a carefully orchestrated rally. They had the effect, as all good propaganda images do, of transforming the thirty or so members of the public that turned up to the event, few of who knew each other through social or political circles, into a cohesive and directional mass. So, the artist returns her participants to the possibility of their own complicity within the seigniorial activity of Compton Verney and its commissioning programme. The contemporary art museum, housed in a stately home, sees the effect of mobility – of mobile art commissioning – as a strategic mask for its distinctly static value system.

Anne Wallace recounts how, by the mid-eighteenth century, only the very poorest or the most eccentric walked and gender and class divisions between walkers had become firmly established. At the same time, the development of the link between leisured walking and social and moral well-being, most dramatically epitomised in the romantic poetry of Wordsworth, disassociated the poetic product of the pedestrian from its more mundane association with social and spatial production within the market place. Wallace implies that this cleaning up of walking insulates the activity from its more seditious associations and creates a hierarchy in which walking, unless in the act of trespass, developed a confining power that kept people in their place 'both literally and figuratively'.[3] Still, for the underfed factory worker of the nineteenth century, or for the struggling asylum seeker of the twenty-first century, trespass might be the only option. Thus walking was, and still is, a demonstration of the contingency and instability of rights of way, where ethics and aesthetics meet uncomfortably and unevenly on a landscape determined predominantly by the movements of fiscal power. Thus mobility is crossed and re-crossed with uneasy alliances between power, desire and possibility. The dream of mobility is a gentrified one, played out across contemporary philosophy, whilst the ability to really move is far more pedestrian.

To trespass, from the old French, means to pass through, an etymology that has no negative alliance with lawbreaking. In this sense we might be said to trespass on a daily basis, and not simply physically. Passing through places, languages, atmospheres, ideas, we may not do damage, we may not propose change, but we will always affect those places. Artists are often portrayed as people that 'pass through' – arriving at a place, gathering knowledge, making work and then leaving, epitomises a self-fulfilling image of the avant-garde. It is no coincidence that the quizzical and alienated outlook of the works made for Compton Verney are invented by artists arriving at the rural from the urban, trying to make sense of a landscape that they do not (and perhaps do not wish to) inhabit. Their passing through, their ideas and images laid onto and over, propose an art of walking that admits to the difficulty of their reception, as dream images of the mobile, on the Compton Verney estate.

The final Compton Verney commission suggests the translation of a piece of music from one cultural locale to another and, in doing so, opens up a space in which we might think about what it means to trespass in a place that might seem to be historically and geographically stable but is in actual fact changing all the time. Working with a group of local bell-ringers, Matthew Thompson organised a performance of John Cage's *4' 33"* at St Peter's Church in Radway, another village on the borders of the Compton Verney estate. Originally performed on piano, though open to interpretation on any set of instruments, Cage's short composition has three movements all of which are silent. The beginning and end of each movement is indicated by 'some simple, non-obtrusive action' agreed upon and rehearsed by the performers. Radway Bell Ringers interpreted this instruction by tying and untying their bell ropes (a loose knot being the conventional position of rest, a hanging rope signalling a bell being ready to ring).

4' 33" (1952) is generally considered to be a work that sets up the conditions for an audience to pay attention to ambient sound - to the music, in other words, of everyday life. Thompson chose to rework the piece as his response to a commission to make a walk, so pulling together a series of concerns about the 'traditional' landscape and its relation with the conceptual languages of modernity. The work illustrated both obvious disjunctions and the potential conditions of conjunction, as its audience (those local, and those up from London for the event) met in silence in a small church. The work was not about walking at all, but instead brought people together through a series of diffuse interests and alliances. It was about differences,

made more articulate by stasis. Reminiscent of Paul Carter's theory of agoraphobia as a radical rupture from the repression of modernism's continuous impositions of fluidity (both architecturally and psychologically), this rendition of *4' 33"* was uncomfortable rather than ambient. Any illustration of romantic mobility had been, by this point in the commissioning process, dismantled by artists not prepared to fall into step with such institutional desires.

In commissioning artists to make public walks, the directors and curators of Compton Verney set in process a chain of questions surrounding the contemporary museum and its desire for a fluid and easy relation to its broader public. Many of the works that are gathered together by institutional marketing departments under the rubric of 'social engagement', are designed to fulfill governmental funding criteria of social inclusion, like those at Compton Verney. While many of the works that fit into recent theories of 'relational aesthetics', attempt to utilise fluid forms either physically – walking, journeying, moving from site to site – or conceptually – nomadisms, diasporas, flâneurisms – to ease the burden of representation that has fallen to them. This cursory attempt to redefine the museum as a place that welcomes fluidity (an attempt that, ironically, usually occurs in the guise of 'off-site' projects or projects that are commissioned to occur whilst a building is closed for renovation) is at least philosophical and at most strategic. The interests of those who would promote a more cautious dialogue in respect of a museum's desire to access the spaces outside its walls is currently not well served. At this juncture, the question is not one of curatorial fluidity, or of a museological understanding of its potential to be 'without walls'. Instead the demand should be for a more complex understanding of such curatorial and institutional investments. Walking is easy. Asking artists to take walks is also relatively easy (and cheap). But artists and viewers are suspicious of any motivation that asks them to 'join in' as if it were simple, as if space could be so fluidly crossed.

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Notes

1. Leslie Stephens, as discussed in Anne D Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 172.
2. Christian Philip Muller quoted by Brian Wallis in Jeffrey Kastner (ed.), *Land and Environmental Art,* London: Phaidon, 1998, p. 40.
3. Anne D Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture*, p. 26.

Decontextualisation, Autonomy, and the Neo-Avant-Garde: Institutional Critique and Museum Criticism

Naomi Stead

Perhaps it is simply a coincidence that the English-language titles of two of the most significant works of museum theory and criticism of the late modern period rest upon an architectural metaphor. Perhaps it is also a coincidence that both of these titles, Andre Malraux's *The Museum Without Walls* and Douglas Crimp's *On the Museum's Ruins,* refer to the breaching of the architectural envelope, the breaking down of the museum's integrity as a bounded, discrete, or autonomous realm.[1] But then again, perhaps this is no coincidence at all. Indeed, if there was to be any overriding metaphor that could encapsulate the state of the museum institution in the modern period, it is hard to see any that would serve better than the architectural. And if there were to be a theme that most characterised the work of critics of the art museum through the same period, it would surely be the attempt to break through the boundaries that isolate the museum from life praxis, to 'ruin' it by breaching its 'walls'. As Hugh Kenner has observed, '[t]he history of twentieth-century art may someday appear to have been simply a death struggle with the museum'.[2] The attempt to dismantle the museum's walls, whether literally or figuratively, is thus the sign of a desire to inhere the museum within the world, to render its edges permeable, even non-existent, and thus open to the free and reciprocal flow of light, space, time, people, objects and commerce.

Throughout the museum's history, declarations that the institution is itself 'dead', finished, ruined, a spent and outdated force, have frequently been balanced by condemnations of its process of 'killing' objects, subjects, art and history in order to represent them. The argument hinges around two different conceptions of the museum – one as a benign institution which passively collects objects that have already died, as it were, of natural causes, and the other as a murderous institution that stalks and 'kills' objects, dragging them into its lair never to see the light of day again.

The critical discourse which works against the museum as understood in this way – as a 'deadly' and destructive agent – is most fierce in its treatment of art museums, which in Daniel Sherman's words provide 'the most elaborately articulated instance of decontextualisation as a strategy of power'.[3] In light of this, it is interesting to note not only that the critical project of 'ruining' the museum by breaking down its walls has re-occurred throughout the history of the institution, but that it has taken both practical and conceptual forms – it can be identified in art practice as much as in museum theory and criticism. This paper will set out to trace this trajectory through

several manifestations: firstly, in the historical avant-garde, here exemplified in the rhetoric of Fillipo Marinetti, and later in the neo-avant-garde movement known as institutional critique. Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* and Hal Foster's later re-reading of this in his essay 'What's Neo About the Neo-Avant-Garde?', will serve as tools for the analysis and interpretation of these moments. It will thus be possible to observe a significant parallel between the avant-garde project of breaching the museum's walls, and a key trend in the 'new museology' – towards liveliness, openness, and the contiguity of the museum with the everyday world.

The polemically anti-museum stance of the Italian Futurist movement, and in particular of their spokesman FT Marinetti, is well known. The Futurists saw in museums a cult of the past, and expressed in a series of manifestoes their 'disgust' for the 'fanatical worship of all that is old and worm-eaten'.[4] In this conception, museum visiting is a form of 'poison' to the young artist, one that can only cause 'decay', especially when contrasted with the violence and vitality of the Futurist ideals of energy, aggression, speed, and militarism.[5] Marinetti writes that while it is acceptable to visit museums once a year, 'as one visits the grave of dead relatives,' they are really places for the dying, invalids, and prisoners, not for the young, strong, and 'living'.[6]

There is a binary opposition at play here: the Futurist dedication to the sound and fury of the instantaneous, fleeting moment of lived experience is pitted against the apparently unchanging, silent and funereal space-time of the museum, conceived as a mere archive of 'old pictures'. Such a conception implies not only that the museum is irrelevant and outdated, but also that it actually encroaches upon and stifles life and creativity in the present, preventing a direct and spontaneous engagement with the 'now'. Accordingly, in a fit of ecstatic iconoclasm Marinetti exhorts his fellow artists to 'set fire to the bookshelves! (…) Turn the canals and flood the vaults of museums! (…) Let the glorious old pictures float adrift! Seize pickaxe and hammer!'[7]

Marinetti's opposition here is clearly to museums as well as to the idea of art as separate and indeed alienated from life praxis in the present. An opposition to decontextualisation, the ways in which art museums 'kill art to write its history', in Quatremere de Quincy's words, can thus be recast as an opposition not only to the museum, but to the museum as it institutionalises autonomous art. This is the general position set out by Bürger, who argues that the historical avant-garde can

be defined by its desire to bridge the characteristically modern schism between the realm of art and that of the everyday.

Bürger derives his theory of the avant-garde, and in particular his conception of the role of autonomy within it, from Theodor Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory.* According to both Bürger and Adorno, the autonomy of art was historically determined, coming about through the separation of art from its magical or cultic origins – its 'disenchantment' – equally as it was separated from pragmatic functions in religious, courtly, or everyday life. Bürger writes that '[o]nly after art has in fact wholly detached itself from everything that is the praxis of life can two things be seen to make up the principle of development of art in bourgeois society: the progressive detachment of art from real life contexts, and the correlative crystallization of a distinctive sphere of existence, i.e., the aesthetic'.[8] The autonomy of art also entails a separation from the function of entertainment. In short, artworks became autonomous by negating their own historical origins: as Adorno writes, 'art retrospectively annihilated that from which it emerged'.[9]

This separation was certainly a product of historical conditions, and doubtless had many and complex causes and effects, but there are two that are most important here. The first is that the aesthetic came to be seen as a realm separate from the empirical world, and therefore that aesthetic experience came to be a special category of experience.[10] The second was the inauguration of the art museum in its modern form, and thus the isolation and institutionalisation of art as a special category of human endeavour, distinct from natural history, anthropology and even a broader conception of history itself, as these are constructed in and by museums. In Bürger's theory, the historical avant-garde was specifically, and polemically, opposed to both of these moments. It is clear that the two are interrelated, that the art museum functions as both the alibi and to a certain extent also the enforcer of art's alienation from the world, and its 'confinement in an ideal realm'.[11] It is little wonder, then, that the avant-garde directed much of its ire against the museum, as the tangible, physical, and indeed architectural symbol of art's separation from life.

But here there is a contradiction, as Bürger argues: it was at just the historical moment when art came to be seen, understood and appreciated for its own sake, and that the project of the historical avant-garde even became possible, that its separation from life praxis also rendered art irrelevant. The avant-garde thus struggles against the conditions that made it possible at all; the struggle is defined

by what it set out to destroy – which includes the museum. Bürger argues that after the failure or dissolution of the avant-garde project, as emblematised by the inability of artists like Marinetti to actually and successfully reconcile art with life, there came a subsequent, identifiable neo-avant-garde. This was conditioned by the experiments that had preceded it – its artists could not ignore the avant-garde's attempts to break down art's alienation and autonomy, but neither could they ignore the continuing fact of this alienation and autonomy. In Bürger's terms the neo-avant-garde were, amongst other things, engaged in a critique of the ways in which the historical avant-garde had been progressively institutionalised – the proof of the failure of its project.

The neo-avant-garde was thus in a difficult position – unable to proceed under the illusion that art could be truly engaged in social life, its artists were obliged to either move on in the knowledge of art's inevitable detachment, or to take the autonomy of autonomy itself as their subject. For this reason, much of the work of the neo-avant-garde was concerned with the framing conditions of art itself, the ways in which art is defined, constructed, and given value by the institution of art – the entirety of its structures of production, reception, and evaluation.

The neo-avant-garde's movement inside the museum's walls, as distinct from the avant-garde's more naive and violent project of breaking them down from without, is thus a sophisticated double-play. Acting as a kind of Trojan horse, it acknowledges the power and permanence of the museum's role in framing and defining art. As Bürger writes, '[n]eo-avant-gardiste art is autonomous art in the full sense of the term, which means that it negates the avant-gardiste intention of returning art to the praxis of life'.[12] This is particularly true, and particularly revealing, in that specific genre of the neo-avant-garde known as institutional critique.

Institutional critique could be defined, in the words of Benjamin Buchloh, as the attempt to 'integrate within the conception of a work, the final forms of distribution and the conditions of reception and acculturation, the modes of reading that ensue from them and that are contained within the practices of institutionalisation'.[13] It takes the institution itself as its subject, examining the methods by which the structures for the display, dissemination, and sale of art – structures including art criticism, history, and education – construct meaning and value, whilst they disguise their own complicity in these machinations of the culture industry. More than this, though, institutional critique is concerned to subvert the art museum's power to designate

what is art and what is not, and mount a powerful challenge both to the framing effects of the museum and to modernist definitions of art. Institutional critique exposes the museum's decontextualisation of art as being equally a *recontextualisation*, replacing art within a network of narratives, ideologies, and structures of legitimation and control.

The advanced mode of institutional critique is usually characterised – and I am deliberately following a canonical or conventional definition here – through the work of Marcel Broodthaers, Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren, Louise Lawler, and Fred Wilson, amongst others, and especially all of these, as Hal Foster has noted, as they were influenced by the work of Marcel Duchamp.[14] It can be briefly introduced here, and its iconoclastic power demonstrated, through two classic examples. First is the work that Michael Asher 'created' for the Art Institute of Chicago's 73rd American exhibition, which was a simple but effective act of recontextualisation. Removing the museum's 18th century bronze statue of George Washington, which had stood at the front of the museum for more than fifty years, he placed it inside the museum in a small gallery dedicated to European art of the same period. As Anne Rorimer wrote of this moment, '[h]aving been displaced from the front entrance of the museum, where it had served as a commemorative and decorative object, *George Washington* was put in the position of being seen in conjunction with other art. By being shown in the middle of the gallery at eye level, the sculpture of Washington was divested of its former purpose as a public monument'.[15]

Another more politically engaged example would be Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* exhibition, installed in the Baltimore Museum of Art in 1992. This exhibition used a similar process of recontextualisation to examine how the museum excludes certain historical narratives, in this case Afro-American history. Wilson exposed the museum as an instrument that silences the 'other' by exclusion; in a glass case labelled 'metalwork 1793-1880', surrounded with elaborate silver pitchers and goblets, he inserted a set of slave manacles, and thus demonstrated the profound effect of context on the meaning of both the object and its institutional frame. By introducing a marginalised history back into a traditional, provincial museum, Wilson was able to invoke the multiplicity of stories excluded by a modernist historical metanarrative.

In this context, the idea of the 'museum piece' takes on quite a new connotation: it is still, in a sense, an artwork designed 'for' the museum, not attempting to take up an independent life in the world, or to reconcile art and life in the avant-garde

manner. But rather than accepting the museum as an end in itself, the 'museum pieces' of the neo-avant-garde continue their work after their incarceration. Far from being defused or simply 'dying', these works act as irritants, coming to their critical fruition within the museum's walls.

And it is at this point that the various threads that I have attempted to trace in this paper can be drawn together. Bürger argued both that the project of the avant-garde was always contradictory, given that attacks against art's autonomy were themselves made possible by that autonomy, and that the project eventually failed, as evidenced by the rise of the neo-avant-garde. He argued that the answer to this aporia is not to simply collapse the distance between art and life; it is its very distance from social praxis, its alienation, that allows autonomous art to take a critical stance on life in the world. The collapsing of this distance would result in the loss of art's critical function, and the project of 'sublating' art into life must inevitably lead to the dissolution of art as a distinct category altogether. This becomes particularly telling for my purposes here when a parallel is noted, between the aims of the historical avant-garde, and the trajectory of much contemporary museum criticism. I would argue that the actions of contemporary museum theorists and critics who decry the museum's alienation from the world, its mausoleum character and isolation behind supposedly impenetrable walls, consciously or unconsciously echo Marinetti's exhortation to 'seize pickax and hammer' and tear those walls down. Marinetti's crude iconoclasm may be virtually unrecognisable in the sophisticated contemporary discourse of museums, but it is buried there nevertheless. This is more than a curious coincidence. It is the mark of a common project – to collapse distance and to console alienation, to refuse autonomy, and to inhere both art and museum within the space, time, and experience of the everyday. And neither is this contemporary trend entirely metaphorical: attempts to make the institution ever more lively, interactive and entertaining also have significant implications for the museum's actual walls, for its architecture.

Even more interestingly, while the historical avant-garde had little actual success in dissolving the way art is reframed by the art museum, the new museology has had quite a measure of success in breaking down the barriers between the museum and the world. In some museums of natural history, science, and particularly of social history, the boundaries between everyday, empirical life in the present and the space and objects of the museum are now virtually invisible.

The drive towards 'liveliness' in the museum has become enmeshed with ideas of democracy, populism, and accessibility in a way that makes it hard to refute. Of course, the identification of the museum's exclusivities and complicities, its unspoken assumptions and prejudices hidden under the presumption of authenticity, objectivity, and truth, has been a valuable project indeed. The chasm between museum and world has historically been constituted partly by a hegemony over 'high' culture both covertly ideological, and overtly exclusionary. But just as Bürger argued that the dissolution of autonomous art into life is a 'profoundly contradictory endeavour', one which would dissolve the critical utility of art along with its autonomy, it is possible to see the mode of museum criticism that seeks to 'ruin' the institution, break down its walls and re-inhere it with the world, as also 'profoundly contradictory'. It could be argued that a museum entirely dissolved within the everyday would have neither a critical nor indeed a particularly interesting stance in relation to the world. It is possible to argue that the complete reconciliation of the museum with life would also mean the dissolution and dispersal of the museum until its very distinctness, along with its value to society, was lost.

It will not be possible to address the full implications of this proposition here. But it is possible to make some brief observations, and frame some questions that might form the basis of further work. The first of these is the question of causality – of whether this branch of the new museology has come about as a belated but direct consequence of the avant-garde project, or of something else – perhaps a more thoroughgoing postmodern critique of institutions. This in turn leads to the question of why and how a position that is characteristic of an *aesthetic* avant-garde, and which therefore might be thought to apply only in the realm of art, has migrated out into other cultural discourses. Why, in other words, has a critique that was once specifically directed towards art museums come to bear upon other genres of museum, and other categories of artefact, and does this point to the increasing aestheticisation of all museums, or their growing reliance on aesthetic, or affective, interaction?

But perhaps the most pressing question to arise from the constellation of ideas and themes I have attempted to set out in this paper relates to the *distinction between* the critique enacted by the historical avant-garde, as opposed to the later, more subtle and more knowing stance of the neo-avant-garde. To put this bluntly, is the new museology repeating the mistakes and contradictions of the avant-garde, and if

so, is there a call for an equivalent shift in museology, even a neo-new-museology? This would entail the recognition that there is some value, even if negatory, in the alienation of the museum from life in the world in the present. It would propose that it is only through 'killing' objects, mortifying and tearing them from their context in the world, that they can, as shades, in the museum have the life that the instrumentalised world denies them. And even more crucially, it would recast this process as a specifically critical one, stripping objects bare of the accretions of affirmative culture, and revealing the blindness of simple assent to the culture that we have. These are, of course, large propositions. But what it is possible to say with certainty here is that the widespread attempt to break down all distinctions and barriers between the museum and the world should not be simply or uncritically accepted.

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Notes

1. In fact Malraux's book was released under this title only in its English translation – the original French title was *Le musée imaginaire*. But this in fact underscores my point, rather than undermines it. If we can assume some equivalence between an 'imaginary museum' and a 'museum without walls' then surely it also follows that a museum is free to be more 'imaginary' if it is not fettered by the earthly constraints of walls, and indeed of architecture at all.
2. Hugh Kenner, 'The Dead-Letter Office', in Brian O'Doherty (ed.), *Museums in Crisis*, New York: George Braziller, 1972, p. 172.
3. Daniel J. Sherman, 'Quatremere / Benjamin / Marx: Art Museums, Aura, and Commodity Fetishism', in Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (eds.), *Museum/ Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 123.
4. F.T. Marinetti, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto [11 April 1911]', in Herschel Browning Chipp, Peter Howard Selz, et al. (eds.), *Theories of Modern Art*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, p. 289.
5. Marinetti, 'The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism', in ibidem, p. 287.
6. ibidem, p. 287; p. 288.
7. ibidem, 288.
8. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* [trans. Michael Shaw], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p. 23.
9. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* [trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor], London: Athlone Press, 1997, p. 3.
10. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 23.
11. ibidem, p. 50.
12. ibidem, p. 58.
13. Benjamin Buchloh, 'The Museum Fictions of Marcel Broodthaers', in AA Bronson and Peggy Gale (eds.), *Museums by Artists*, Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983, p. 45.
14. Foster refutes Bürger's theory that the neo-avant-garde institutionalises autonomy, writing that 'to repeat the historical avant -garde, according to Bürger, is to cancel its critique of the institution of autonomous art; more, it is to invert this critique into an affirmation of autonomous art…the repetition of the avant-garde by the neo-avant-garde can only turn the anti-aesthetic into the artistic, the transgressive into the institutional.' See Hal Foster, 'What's Neo About the Neo-Avant-Garde?' in Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon (eds.), *The Duchamp Effect*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996, p. 13.
15. Anne Rorimer, '73rd American Exhibition, Gallery 219, The Art Institute of Chichago,' in AA Bronson and Peggy Gale (eds.), *Museums by Artists*, p. 22.

Skin Deep: Transparancy and Contemporary Museum Architecture

Joel Sanders

Have museums evolved from 'static repository' to 'dynamic workshop'? This paper will examine this central question raised at the conference *Museum in ¿Motion?* by examining two significant structures both designed and executed over the past ten years that bracket recent trends in museum building: Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao of 1997 and Yoshio Taniguchi's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) that recently opened in 2004. Looking at both structures from the perspective of a practicing architect, I will consider whether these two much heralded projects live up to the claims of their patrons and designers. Do they represent a radical break from the conventions of museum architecture as they have been passed down to us since the museum typology was first codified in the early 19th century?

Although nearly two centuries old, the Altes Museum by Karl Fredrich Schinkel still embodies the image of the Western art museum: a freestanding temple to the arts.[1] Sitting alone in a plaza and elevated from the 'profane' ground plane by a monumental staircase, a screen of columns guides visitors to a grand stair hall that mediates between city and institution. Inside, a chain of galleries ring a centralized top-lit rotunda. The Altes Museum's aloof detachment from the urban fabric coupled with its impenetrable stone façade reflects and perpetuates the longstanding notion that art occupies a sacred realm uncompromised by the contingencies of everyday life.

In their designs, both Gehry and Taniguchi explicitly reject classical precedents in favour of an alternative conception of the contemporary museum that integrates rather than isolates the institution from urban context. The centrepiece of a large-scale urban revitalization of Bilbao's abandoned industrial waterfront, the Guggenheim employs a palette of materials – limestone, metal and steel – that pay homage both to Bilbao's historic town centre and its shipping heritage. The memorable photographs of the building's sculptural massing shot through the narrow street corridors of the old city highlight Gehry's ambition to merge old and new. Yet these images are deceptive, suggesting that the building is embedded within the heart of the urban fabric, when in fact, it is separated from the city by a major vehicular roadway on the south and a river on the north that together constitute a kind of moat.

In sharp contrast to the smooth rectilinear envelope of the classical museum, the Guggenheim's crenellated perimeter clad in reflective titanium panels calibrated to dematerialize its surface, visually conveys permeability. Nevertheless, like a high-tech

armadillo, the building largely conceals its contents behind an inscrutable metal skin that is ultimately less porous than the façade of the Altes Museum which although clad in stone, is studded with windows. Likewise, the Guggenheim's convoluted entry sequence also undercuts Gehry's effort to promote pedestrian flow: contrary to expectation, the bold metal sign cantilevered over a row of glazed doors leads not to the main entrance but to retail, the museum restaurant and bookstore. In an interesting inversion of classical precedent, visitors descend rather than ascend a flight of steps to gain access to the Guggenheim's subterranean entrance.

As opposed to Gehry's bravura sculptural massing, Taniguchi's sedate composition of prismatic volumes clad in honed black slate and metal panels at first glance presents merely an updated image of the staid classical museum now rendered in modern garb. But, Taniguchi's scheme, the product of a two-stage design competition, exploits MoMA's dense mid-block site, creating a 'street museum' keenly responsive to its urban and historical context. The competition brief required architects to join the newly purchased Dorset hotel site with MoMa's other discrete properties built along the length of West 53rd street – the original 1939 Godwin-Stone building, a 1964 addition by Philip Johnson, and the 1984 Museum Tower by Cesar Pelli. Rather than sheath the pre-existing structures with a new unifying skin, Taniguchi, assumes the role of museum conservator and painstakingly restores them, treating them as 'a fascinating collage of milestones in the history of the museum', now oriented around yet another historical artefact, Johnson's sculpture garden of 1953. On 54th street, Taniguchi's paired pavilions bookend the refurbished garden: one houses an education centre, the other the main entry to the permanent collection and special exhibitions. These two low-slung structures whose heights match the cornice line of the 1939 building, are tied together by an extension of Johnson's original stone garden wall which, when seen against the transparent curtain wall of the garden courtyard facade behind, projects an overall image of institutional permeability, an impression further enhanced by the addition of a new mid-block arcade that links the 53rd and 54th street entrances.

Both Gehry and Taniguchi channel pedestrian traffic through that now ubiquitous feature of the contemporary art museum, the atrium. This updated version of Schinkel's rotunda no longer functions as a static space embedded in the middle of the plan but is in both projects conceived of as a spectacular multi-purpose space designed to accommodate visitors by day, parties and special events by night.

Although at first glance, Gehry's vertigo-inducing tangle of billowing sheetrock, glass, and metal activated by multiple vertical circulation systems seems miles apart from Taniguchi's serene composition of meticulously detailed stone and glass panels, both institutions are organized around monumental social condensers that offer visitors selected views of the exterior. However, while Gehry and Taniguchi conceive of the atrium as an urban sponge, transparency remains unidirectional. In both projects, the visitors' gaze is permitted to pass outside to regard framed views of the city but only selectively allowed to transgress the internal walls of the adjacent exhibition spaces that surround the atrium like a second opaque interior façade.

Interestingly enough, Gehry and Taniguchi unapologetically adopt lock, stock and barrel that quintessential container for modern museum spectatorship, the 'white cube'. Although a definitive history of the white cube has yet to be written, this typology, most likely derived from Bauhaus precedents, first emerges as an institutional standard in the United States at MoMA's influential 1939 building. It has remained the norm in museums and galleries around the world, its popularity based on the presumption that this pristine viewing environment does not distract the viewer's direct and uncontaminated apprehension of works of art. Despite critiques launched by numerous artists and critics from Brian O'Doherty to Daniel Buren, architects overlook the historical and ideological specificity of this contested space:

> *the white cubes' invention coincides with the emergence of abstract painting and facilitates the modernist's painter's renunciation of illusionist space in favour of flatness. The white walls of the modern gallery complement the surface of the canvas itself, becoming the foil for the display of large flat abstract images, images that are generally stripped of a significant yet often overlooked feature of traditional easel paintings, the picture frame.*[3]

Before the advent of the white cube, galleries were often hung floor to ceiling with pictures adorned with elaborate frames. In the same way that window frames differentiate interior from exterior, the continuous perimeter of the picture frame formed a discrete margin that distinguished actual from pictorial space and as a consequence, the realm of art from everyday life. Cleaving the transcendental realm of art from the material world, the frame also emancipated the eye from the corporeal

body stationed in actual space, inviting viewers to optically cross the threshold of the frame and conceptually enter into pictorial space. As a result, picture frames when considered in conjunction with illusionist images upheld a longstanding conception of vision and the senses dominant in Western thought since the Middle Ages, that distrusts and denigrates the abject body while it redeems sight as an immaterial operation affiliated with higher intellect. [4]

But as mural-sized post-war abstractions created by artists like Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning abandon their frames, paintings emerge as material artefacts that threaten to undermine two tenets central to both Humanist and Formalist (Greenbergian) art theory – art's autonomy and privileged status, maintained by pure disembodied opticality.[5] Architecture comes to art's rescue. The modern gallery assumes the burden of the now obsolete picture frame by in effect, becoming a three-dimensional, inhabitable frame. Uninterrupted by apertures, its six impervious surfaces (floor, four walls, and ceiling) effectively exclude the outside world, establishing a new spatial and cultural limit within which spectatorship can take place.

But while the pristine galley wall successfully divides art from life, unlike the picture frame, it fails to distinguish vision from the biological body. Gallery design must now compensate for the viewer's body, caught within the containing frame of the gallery walls and devise an alternative strategy to liberate eye from body if it hopes to uphold the fiction of disembodied vision. It does so by concealing all those architectural elements that might conjure the presence of the body, taking such measures as eliminating furniture (except for the occasional bench), hanging pictures at a standard (male) eye height and hiding the HVAC (heating, ventilating and air conditioning) that maintains human comfort.

However, the track light is the principal instrument deployed to allow observers to forget their corporeal existence. The track light, placed overhead on the ceiling and out of sight, distributes a band of light around the periphery of the gallery wall and floor, that situates the body, the receptacle for the human eye, at a prescribed viewing distance – typically 3 to 4 feet – from works of art. Track lighting makes visual communion with art works possible while at the same time physically distancing viewers from them, illuminating a precinct of looking but not touching. Behaving like the now obsolete picture frame, this band of light facilitates the metamorphosis of the viewer into a disembodied subject capable of encountering self-sufficient

abstractions through unmediated optical contemplation.

While both Gehry and Taniguchi go to great lengths to rethink the museum's traditional relationship to the urban context, both architects do not seem concerned with reconsidering the white cube, the normative spatial and ideological context within which museum spectatorship takes place. In yet another respectful nod towards preserving MoMA's architectural legacy, Taniguchi reproduces MoMA's formula in a modified format. In response to curatorial demand for immense galleries to accommodate large-scale contemporary art, Taniguchi inflates the template defined by MoMA's original domestically scaled galleries. Tweaking the convention of top lighting, he invents an ingenious stepped section that allows the perimeter zone of artificial illumination to be augmented by a band of natural light. Despite Taniguchi's penchant for using diaphanous window walls, views to the city occur rarely from the galleries themselves, but mostly from interstitial spaces between them.

At Bilbao, Gehry's penchant for making complex forms would make him inclined to tamper with exhibition conventions but it seems that his hands are tied. He houses the permanent collection in iconic square shaped white rooms that are arranged in suites of three and illuminated from above by centralized skylights and on the periphery by track lights. As at MoMA, the curatorial brief also obliged him to introduce a warehouse-like space for temporary exhibitions. Gehry's solution: an extruded white cube whose immense scale, boat-like form, and curving skylights, resists rather than facilitates the kind of flexible, sub-dividable, and demountable spaces craved by contemporary museum curators. Gehry does manage to slip in a few of his signature sculptural moves but only within a series of small rooms dispersed throughout the complex. These spaces are reserved for the display of works by living artists, perhaps justified by the logic that only emerging artists, grateful enough to have their work exhibited at a prestigious venue, will consent to compete with Gehry's strident forms. At Bilbao the configuration of galleries privilege canonical works by modern masters over recent examples by contemporary practitioners.

In the hands of Gehry and Taniguchi, gallery walls function as prophylactic membranes that not only prevent the mixing of art and life but also restrict the mingling of public space and private infrastructure. In both buildings, display is rigorously segregated from production: spaces for shipping and receiving objects and as well as for fabricating and mounting exhibitions (storage, workshops, conservation labs) are concealed from public view. (Ironically, Gehry's building

represses the most radical aspect of its director's mission – Thomas Kren's controversial conception of the Bilbao as one of a constellation of Guggenheim outposts that permit the global circulation of artefacts.) While the objects remain static, being fixed to walls or sitting on pedestals, the staff that handles them are relegated to a rabbit-warren of rooms in the basement. Those employees higher in the museum hierarchy are afforded a window and a view. Both the Guggenheim Bilbao and MoMA house curators and administrators within administrative wings rendered as independent volumes safe-guarded from the public. They merely pay lip service to the desire of erasing borders between general public and private institution. Significant architectural innovation is confined to making a permeable relationship between city and atrium. This, however, can be said of many of the recent crop of acclaimed buildings. Steven Holl's Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki or Santiago Calatrava's Milwaukee Museum represent dazzling exercises in sculptural form from the outside, but nevertheless leave the internal programmatic components of the traditional museum and their attending ideologies virtually intact. Galleries continue to be treated as windowless white boxes divorced not only from the everyday but also from the behind-the-scenes support spaces – curatorial offices, workshops, and storage areas – that make exhibitions possible. Although wrapped in eye-catching cladding, today's new museums do not truly differ from their neo-classical predecessors – aloof citadels invested in demarcating and perpetuating divisions between public and private, vision and the body, art and life.

How can we account for this discrepancy between rhetoric and design, a contradiction which some critics cynically attribute to the 'Bilbao effect', the triumph of photogenic trophy monuments constructed as tourist destinations? While it is tempting to cast the blame on architects, surely the problem is far more complex. Often despite their best efforts, architects are confronted with paradox: the ideal of transparency is thwarted by some of the following constraints, both practical and ideological.

Conservators are obligated to shield vulnerable art objects from potentially harmful environmental effects. As a consequence, today museum exterior envelopes have necessarily developed into sophisticated high-tech membranes that regulate sunlight and stabilize fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

In our post 9/11 world where priceless works of art are more vulnerable than

ever before, security and surveillance requirements preclude porosity. Escalating insurance prices and global tensions are discouraging museums from mounting the kind of blockbuster exhibitions predicated on international loans. If they hope to compete, today's museums must become fortified bastions equipped with inconspicuous electronic eyes that augmenting the work of museum guards, watch spectators while they observe art objects.

Responding to the pressure to mount multi-media spectacular productions, museums buildings have come to resemble theatres, incorporating complex technical facilities that reinforce the division between front and back-of-the-house. Reinforcing this public/private divide, museum administrators prefer to remain architecturally inconspicuous, perhaps as a way of diverting attention away from the now widely acknowledged fact that museums have become big businesses. (MoMA's high-profile board raised over $800 million to pay for the expansion's steep price tag and most now raise revenues to meet the building's increased operating expenses.) While museum boards occasionally might tolerate the work of artists like Hans Haake or Glenn Seator who provocatively highlight the intersection between art, politics and commerce, they understandably might seem reluctant to commission buildings that call attention to their inner workings.

The requirement to accommodate new media also inhibits architectural transparency. Video and digital art favour uninterrupted static walls and windowless spaces, leading some to predict that in the near future the white cube will be superseded by the black box. This impulse runs counter to the spirit of early practitioners of video art, like Yoko Ono, Vito Acconci, Andy Warhol and Michael Snow, who first introduced film into the site of the gallery as a strategy to de-familiarize the experience of watching film. Working in a similar vein to their Minimal and Conceptual colleagues, who were also interested in activating the space and body of the viewer, these artists encouraged ambulatory spectators to critically resist the complacency induced by Hollywood narrative films, as passively seen in the numbing darkness of traditional cinemas.[6] Why are we so quick to adopt new media galleries that have come to resemble precisely the black box theatres that these early pioneers rejected?

Interestingly enough, museum architects and their patrons have largely ignored these spatio/ideological issues, many of which have been highlighted by artists from Hans Haacke to Julia Scher, Marcel Broodthaers to Fred Wilson and discussed at

length in critical texts and academic conferences.[7] (In fact, in preparation for its Design Charette, MoMA conducted a series of debates, conferences and lectures, enlisting curators, staff and trustees as well as noted architects, artists, and critics in a year of 'soul searching', and 'self-analysis'.[8])

Rather than hold on to a naïve and unrealistic ideal of pure transparency, architects and their patrons must first confront these seemingly irreconcilable conflicts and work together to formulate viable new alternatives to the white cube. They must devise prototypes for exhibition spaces that realign conditions of spectatorship without overwhelming the works of art they display. They must discover new ways of redistributing programmatic relationships so that activities, both in the front and at the back of the house, public and private, can selectively overlap. Likewise, the challenge of incorporating state-of-the-art technologies required by film, video and performance art can inspire designers to think outside of rather than within the box, generating flexible multi-media spaces conducive to engaging the eyes and bodies of spectators. Lastly, the imperative to address post 9/11 security requirements can become a catalyst for creativity, initiating the invention of porous spaces that do not compromise the security of the objects and people they shelter. Only then can we hope to overcome the spatial and cultural constraints that are fundamentally at cross-purposes with the museum's recurring dream of borderless mobile buildings. Until then, the best we can hope for is yet another crop of signature buildings of which architectural flourishes remain only skin deep.

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Notes

1. Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995
2. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, Santica Monica: The Lapis Press, 1986.
3. Martin Jay, 'Scopic Regimes of Modernity', in Hal Foster (ed), *Vision and Visuality*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1988.
4. Clement Greenberg, 'Toward a Newer Laocoon', in Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism* [Volume 1], Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.
5. Chrissie Iles, *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2002
6. See a.o. Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art,1999
7. See John Elderfield (ed.), *Imagining the Future of the Museum of Modern Art*, New York: Museum of Modern Art / Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Non-space

Jeroen Boomgaard

Museums, and museums of modern art more in particular, have become the non-spaces of our time. Airports and shopping malls, yesterday's designated non-spaces, have made up a new typology that fulfils its purposes almost perfectly. Their visual appeal may be limited, yet through their organisation and structure they have become 'empowered' places where costumers willingly dwell. Although the exact nature of these places' attraction may be hard to define, they shamelessly reduce themselves to the bare essentials as far as purpose is concerned: they are places of consumption. Even an airport terminal seems more about spending power than the wish to travel. Rules and rituals ooze that first and most important principle.

These places have set an example for existing building types. Railway stations are looking increasingly like hybrid shopping malls/airport halls. They connect sheer necessity – travel or daily commuting – to the sense of freedom and consumption and attempt to erase the sordid and disreputable atmosphere that large railway stations have always breathed. The mix of expectation and nervousness, haste and endless waiting that was charmingly part of the traditional railway experience has been replaced by a much more regulated rhythm that does away with deviations.

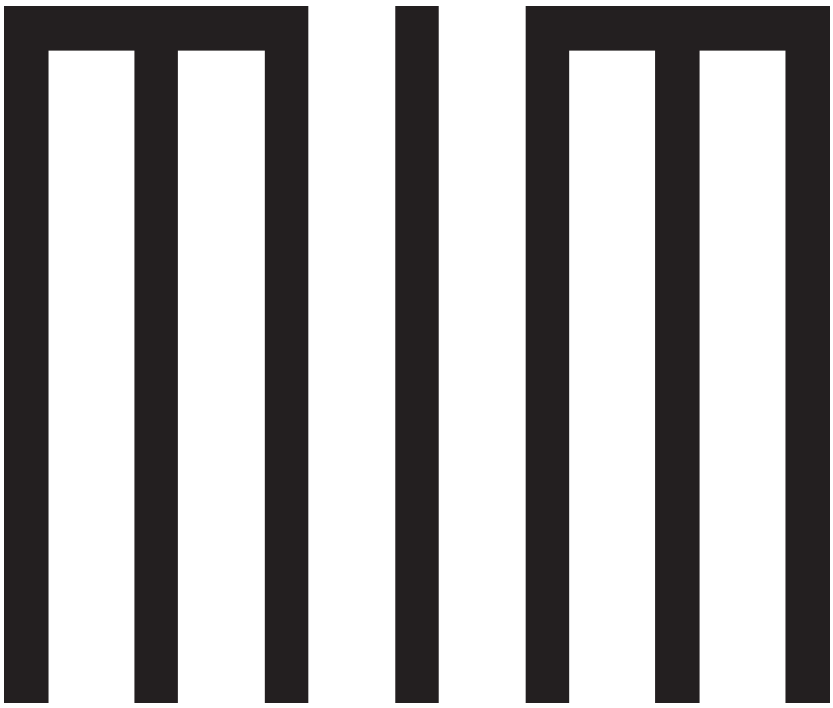
Museums used to be very well-defined places as well. Passing their thresholds, visitors would get a clear sense of purpose: entering a museum of modern art made them part of modern culture – not as a right of birth, but as a democratic principle. The museum experience could always be surprising, but was at the same time clearly distinct from daily life, even when art that intended to bridge the gap with common life was on show. Museum rooms promised a certain kind of liberty and hinted at possibilities that would probably never be fulfilled. Gratification was not an issue, which was very gratifying indeed.

When things changed is difficult to trace. Yet, the changes are obvious. This session of the conference deals with some of the issues that may be at hand. What it mainly deals with are for instance the tendency in contemporary art to establish a relation with the public outside of the museum – as is tackled in Andrea Philips' 'Walking into Trouble' –, the related factor that an avant-garde positioning in art may entail the end of the museum – as Naomi Stead argues in 'Decontextualisation, Autonomy, and the Neo-Avant-Garde: Institutional Critique and Museum Criticism' – and the inability of museums to create new spaces that would generate new programmes – Joel Sanders' 'Skin Deep: Transparency and Contemporary Museum Architecture'.

Since the 1950s and 1960s artists have tried to reconnect to daily life by escaping the embalming effect of the museum. Starting from the Situationist *dérive* movement was the favourite tool to find real life. Actions of the kind were intended to critique the institution and the fact that most of these neo-avant-garde endeavours ended up in the realm of the museum could be seen – once again – as proof of the institution's power and idiosyncracy. Contemporary artistic projects that involve walking and movement do not oppose themselves in the same way to the museum as the earlier projects did. They opt for surrounding of local communities just to connect to another audience and another tradition with its own rituals and habits. In doing so, the museum becomes 'just another place'; a place that does not seem to be connected to any specific community and does not carry any worthwhile tradition. The museum cannot counter or even gainsay this attitude, which results in a broader avant-garde attack on the position of art – the final end of all avant-garde action being the end of art as a separate category. The museum of modern art that wants to take up the challenge can only end up beyond itself, in some unpredictable place where art is no longer art but somehow part of life, which is exactly the crisis of identity that the museum struggles with. It no longer wishes to be the place of high culture for the happy few (voluntarily or involuntarily) and turns into a locale of events and consumption that only ephemerally relate to what art used to be. The layout of recent museum architecture mirrors this attitude. The new museum is visually stunning, yet its attractive appearance turns out to be a mere shell hiding the emptiness inside. The impressive appearance is an external thing only. The 'skin' of the building will attract the masses, but the hallway is a space for business where the aura of high culture can be commercially exploited. The rooms where the core business is taking place are often truly common. The white cube still dominates, deftly keeping the darker sides of art from view. This discrepancy makes the museum today into a schizophrenic building; a place that appeals but that leaves you in conflict as to what to do once you enter it.

A place of the kind can be very interesting. It might even answer to Foucault's definition of the heterotopy. But to become such a place of ritual and 'useless use' the museum will have to take this notion seriously and will have to give up longing to be something that it cannot be.

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SEMINAR

SESSION 2: Museum and Typology

Museum and Typology

CALL FOR PAPERS

This session explores the contemporary meaning and validity of the notion of typology. Within architectural theory, typological distinction is made in terms of programme - museums, churches, prisons, banks or airports - and of morphology - buildings with long hall-shaped interiors, centrally planned buildings, buildings with courtyards, buildings with interconnecting or with separated compartments. The typological discussion usually ensues around the degree in which functional types correspond to morphological types. The museum has a rich typological tradition. Many different 'forms' are believed to provoke different museological 'programmes', ranging from the classical enfilade of galleries in temple-like buildings, over the sculptural object, the Miesian glass box, the machine-to-exhibit-in to the loft-like or industrial space. But does the concept of typology - both in architectural and institutional terms - still hold critical value today? The trenchant socio-political changes, the drastic expansion of the typical museum programme and the resulting suppression of the classical museological responsibilities have led to a 'diffuse museological landscape', from which a typology for the 21st century is hard to extract. Moreover, since the museum of contemporary art seeks to reflect the new, and sets itself the goal to break with the past, it is said to need an 'evolving typology'. But does contemporary art really need a museum typology of its own, an institutional and architectural type that corresponds to its ever-changing strategies of production and presentation?

Cultural Centres in Europe

Christoph Grafe

From the late 1950s until the mid 1970s the 'cultural centre' was the default solution for the requirements of state-administered provision of culture in Western Europe. By the end of this period most smaller or medium-sized towns in Sweden, France, Holland, Germany and England had obtained such a building housing a variety of cultural institutions, from performance spaces to galleries, libraries and informal meeting places. In my view, the phenomenon of cultural centres, with all its faults and naïve proposals, needs to be regarded as one of the few attempts at establishing places which combined the claim to provide accessibility to cultural knowledge with an opportunity, in a specific environment, to transgress social and cultural boundaries.

What is – or was – the cultural centre? First of all, despite the name that suggests a diffuse range of activities, most cultural centres had a reasonably defined brief. Depending on the context, different programmes were arranged around one or two major public facilities. This could be a public gallery or a performance space, often in the form of a conventional theatre or a concert hall. Especially those cultural centres situated in suburbs or smaller towns tended to advance a public library as the core of the building complex. Secondly, the arrangement of these distinct activities and their spaces suggested that the sum would achieve a higher intensity of use than the constituent parts would on their own. Often economic arguments led to the decision to build a cultural centre rather than a separate theatre, gallery or library Under the influence of the drift of cultural debates in the course of the 1960s, however, the concentration of programmes under one single roof became more and more a matter of choice. The creation of a building that would house a range of activities instead of one confined cultural practice suggested an open and flexible approach to the idea of culture, inviting new audiences and establishing a fertile ground for exploring new artistic practices. Thirdly, the majority of the cultural centres in Northern and Western Europe were more often than not instigated by local council leaders or mayors, and thus devised and paid for by local authorities, rather than national governments (France is the only important exception, since cultural centres became part of the *Action culturelle*, the cultural policies instigated by de Gaulle's minister of cultural affairs André Malraux). This may also explain their fragility as institutions. While on the one hand they found themselves competing with established national theatres or galleries, they could on the other hand position themselves as distinct from these older institutions rooted in nineteenth century bourgeois culture. Fourth,

although many cultural centres were run by local bodies, their conception and realisation would not have been possible without the cultural policies as they were formulated by national governments across Western Europe after 1945. Fifth, the majority of the more important cultural centres were conceived and planned in the period spanning the late 1950s to mid '60s, and therefore predate the politicised and more radical ideas of 1968. In France, the events of May 68 effectively finished the era of Malraux as minister of culture, more or less terminating also the programme for building cultural centres across the country. Yet, as building developments necessarily involve a time lag between the moment of the initiative and planning and that of the completion of the building, many of the cultural centres came to be seen as characteristic products of the period of greatest visible social and cultural upheaval and the levelling of bastions of power associated with 1968.

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Cultural policies and architectural typologies

In order to understand the architectural proposals for the cultural centres we will have to take in account the political context in which the initiative for these buildings was taken and the cultural climate that instigated them. Also the typologies, the concrete building form and, perhaps even more importantly, the material appearance of cultural centres need to be discussed against the background of the interests and preoccupations within the architectural discipline. The genesis and the development of this type of institution is the result of debates that were initially not part of architectural discourse. The direction and nature of these wider cultural debates were, however, closely related to the social agenda of modern architecture as it was being reformulated in these years of reconstruction. The design proposals for cultural centres across Europe can be interpreted as responses to this field of forces operating between cultural politics and architectural culture.

The institutional framework for cultural policies was established in the aftermath of the war. This development may be seen as directly linked to the electoral success of Social Democratic parties. The involvement of politicians from other political formations, particularly those rooted in the Catholic social movement, should, however, not be underestimated. The building of cultural centres occurred as part of what might be seen as a second, completing phase of the establishment of the welfare state.

Between 1945 and 1965 cultural policies in Northern and Western Europe made a trajectory from a distinctly normative approach – bringing high art to the man in the street – to a more inclusive definition of what culture entailed. An indication for this change of direction is the shift in the terminology of the official documents. The original 1946 charter for the Arts Council of Great Britain, for example, specified 'the fine arts exclusively' as the working field of the institution. In the 1967 charter the adjective is dropped, leaving 'the arts' as a large container of possibilities, which, as Raymond Williams dryly noted 'of course returns us to the problem'. This shift was not unproblematic and cultural policies were a contested field; this, then, forms the background of Williams' explorations of popular culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s. How strongly the debate about the role of culture in the further development of the welfare state was connected to party-political considerations may be illustrated by a passage from the book *Har vi råd med kultur?*, in which Harry Schein, one of the major thinkers in the Swedish Social Democracy of the early 1960s, defines new cultural policy as one of the major Social Democratic instruments to influence society. Schein writes: 'Economic and social justice and security are respectable goals as such, but at the same time, just a means, the material platform from which the continued reform effort must be made in the immaterial field'. He clearly states that it is in the interest of the ruling Social Democracy to develop a strong, newly formulated idea about culture in an emerging consumer society, not least for electoral reasons.[1] The question is how this intended increased openness of culture – not just in the form in making traditional forms accessible, but essentially also allowing larger audiences to engage actively with the artists, performers and writers (kulturarbetare, cultural workers in the Swedish documents) – would affect the form and appearance of the cultural institutions.

One of the strategies of modern architecture before the war and in the 1950s had been to translate the requirement for public decorum into a display of transparency. Now this transparency acquired an extended significance in representing the openness of the public spaces designed for the new extended audiences addressed by the cultural centres. Merely opening up the façade was insufficient, not only because the variety of functions 'under one roof' could not be organised using established principles of composition, but also because the architecture needed to *facilitate*, rather than merely represent, the collective experience of people exerting individual choices. The combination of performance spaces, auditoria and public foyers with

spaces for informal sociability required a designerly investment in the lay-out and composition of the plan. During the first decade after the war the critical debates among architects about patterns of association and movement were dominated by the emphasis on the production of housing and residential new town. It would not be too far-fetched to suggest that these discussions on the form of informal meeting places in the city – streets and squares – had an impact also on the internal organisation of a building category that was primarily intended as a meeting place. Added to this, cultural centres, especially in larger cities with established theatres and museums, needed to position themselves against these older institutions, not only by offering different types of performances or exhibitions, but also by promoting a different reality of use.

The new programme of the cultural centre resulted in a great variety of architectural solutions. Here I would like to discuss the complex histories that inevitably accompany the development of a major public building and the underlying cultural and political assumptions by focussing on two case studies. In both cases the metropolitan context of the proposal meant that the designers operated from within established architectural cultures and that the buildings were objects of a critical debate in both the public media and professional circles. The first of these buildings, the South Bank Arts Centre was designed at the beginning of the 1960s, as one of the first cultural centres in a major European metropolis, and predates the changes in arts institutions and the general cultural climate. The second building, Kulturhuset in Stockholm was conceived in the mid 1960s in the middle of heated debates on the role of the cultural institution in the city, and the role of the institution as an exchange between the producers and consumers of culture.

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Case 1: South Bank Arts Centre

From the outside the South Bank Arts Centre presents itself to the uninformed first-time visitor as an entity unified by a particular architectural language. The building in fact contains two fairly separate parts, a concert hall and a gallery, each with its own entrance off the deck system. The perception of the building as one structure with a complex geometry is almost entirely the result of the elaborate system of outdoor walkways and bridges connecting the Arts Centre with its wider surroundings and the Underground system.

This emphasis on the connection with the city – as if the building needed to dissolve – contrasts with the rather more traditional internal planning where we find both parts of the building being developed from a brief that was formulated separately. In the extensive correspondence between the commisioners – the local politicians – and the future users – the arts administrators – the combination of two venues for different art forms is presented as a *fait accompli*. Consequently, there is no evidence that arranging spaces for different types of cultural production on one site was seen as part of a programme of diffusing boundaries between visual and performing arts or experimenting with new forms of interaction between producers and their audience.

Ideas for an extension of the complex of cultural buildings on the South Bank had been discussed in the early 1950s. It took almost a decade before this programme took the shape that was eventually executed. The London County Council (LCC), and particularly its leader Isaac Hayward, were determined to realise a concentration of cultural buildings on the site, but the programme was also the result of accidents; the concert hall, for example, evolved out of the original plan to extend another concert hall on the site, the Royal Festival Hall (1948-51). The idea to build an exhibition gallery following the model of a German *Kunsthalle* or the Orangerie in Paris had its roots in a programme of travelling exhibitions curated by the Arts Council of Great Britain – intended to bring major art to the capital and the provinces. Both the concert hall and the gallery were not rivals to existing institutions, but provided additional and complementary facilities. The requirements for the travelling exhibitions resulted in a solution for a flexible art space of considerable dimensions that itself had no parallels in any British city and few elsewhere at the time. This was a strategy towards design that allowed technical solutions to be developed separately, and afterwards to be integrated in the scheme. The building then becomes the accumulation of these solutions and involved a variety of specialists, as well as the core group of designers within the architect's department of the London County Council, London's local authority at the time. This involvement of many participants created a pretext for a design approach which relied on first identifying separate issues and their solutions and only afterwards integrating them.

The design team included Warren Chalk, Ron Herron and Dennis Crompton who became members of Archigram in 1962. As reference for the solution at South Bank Chalk mentions the entries for the *Hauptstadt Berlin* competition of 1958 by

the Smithsons and Arthur Korn.[2] In a similar fashion, the design for South Bank provides walkways to establish a new ground level and to offer comfortable and uninhibited access to those spaces they interconnect. The formal language of the building and its concrete cladding in particular disguise the fact that essentially the building was conceived of as a machine. All channels of movement – of people and cars but also of air or electricity – were expressed as independent elements, detached from the enclosed rooms that they serve. The main feeder duct to the auditorium, for instance, appears as a heavy ribbon wrapped around its top, while air ducts materialise as cantilevered concrete bands resembling the pedestrian balconies winding around the building. A few years later this conception of the building as a conglomerate of shells and separate servicing 'plugs' undoubtedly would have been expressed in a lightweight steel or even inflatable structure. In this respect, the South Bank emerges not only as a first sign of Archigram's city of 'components on racks, components in stacks, components plugged into networks', but also as a somewhat unlikely predecessor to that other notorious cultural centre, the Centre Pompidou in Paris (1971-77).[3] In proposing a building free of the compositional ideas that had governed the architecture of the late 1940s and 1950s, the Arts Centre seemed, however, not only to point to a city of the future, but also to one pre-ceding history. Warren Chalk describes the building as a pseudo-prehistoric landscape element, as 'an anonymous pile, subservient to a series of pedestrian walkways, a sort of Mappin Terrace for people instead of goats'.[4] The reference to the artificial rock featuring wild animals in the London zoo is revealing, proposing the building as an adventurous playground for tribes of urban dwellers, formed by nomadic patterns of movement and association. His description of the users of the city in general and the building in particular reads as an ethnographic analysis of tribal behaviour, rather than of forms of sociability and public display in a twentieth century capitalist metropolis: '(…) the pedestrian, the gregarious nature of people and their movement was uppermost in mind, and the built demarcation of space used to channel and direct pedestrian patterns of movement'.[5]

The question is, of course, whether this interpretation of the South Bank is an adequate representation of the design ideas of Chalk and his fellow architects at the time of the design, or whether it must be taken as part of a general re-positioning of the project, well after the event. Without doubt this version only ever reflected the views of the future Archigram members of the design team, who had a limited

amount of control over the project. Set against the reality of the building with its highly prescriptive layout, Chalk's suggestion of a pile shaped by informal footpaths and open to appropriation is misleading and, at the same time, telling. It illustrates the huge discrepancy between the traditional concept of institutionalised performance and curatorial practices as laid down in the brief on the one hand and the designer's ideas and or fantasies about the buildings' capacity to invite interaction and accidental events on the other. Public galleries and performance spaces derive their flexibility from offering well-facilitated floor area and space, not from the possibilities for individual appropriation. Ironically, despite Warren Chalk's later suggestions of an anarchic and adhoc inhabitation, it is the flexibility of the interior that is the most successful aspect of the South Bank. The exterior, with all its promises of an informal, interactive behaviour, has remained virtually unchanged since the building opened to the public.

This discrepancy between the intended or suggested flexibility and the rather less adventurous programme is tangible in this design. There is not the slightest evidence that either the LCC or the Arts Council sought to provide a building for the type of self-determined use suggested by Chalk's statement and the architectural language of the project. Furthermore, the description of the audience as a collective or the users as individuals remains strangely abstract in the designers' argument. The nature of the relation between producers and consumers of art is not questioned. Even if Chalk retrospectively suggested that the building should be open to appropriation, this applies in fact only to the outside: the cultural centre as mountain you can climb, but not enter.

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Case 2: Stockholms Kulturhuset

While the South Bank Arts Centre in London hides its contents in 250 mm of solid concrete, Stockholm's Kulturhuset displays the totality of its things on offer in one enormous window facing Sergels Torg, the square marking the epicentre of the Swedish capital's commercial district. Kulturhuset spans the full width of the square and matches the scale of the surrounding buildings. The open space is marked by a constant stream of cars and buses moving along one side and, on a lower level, by a steady flow of pedestrians hurrying towards the central underground station and regularly by a variety of constituencies gathering to demonstrate. Situated on the

south end of the largest reconstruction area of the post-war period, the square is the final outcome of a period during which the Swedish modern welfare state developed and probably reached its climax.

Sergels Torg, with its department stores, large-scale offices and its layered arrangement of traffic flows is where the consensus of Swedish society in the 1950s and 1960s seems most tangible: the belief in collective organisation offering the citizen social security, housing and education while, at the same time, embracing technological innovation and a profound rationalisation of all aspects of public and private life. Kulturhuset forms the background for everything that is happening in the square, from the daily dealings to moments of large emotion – the square for example accomadated the wakes for Anna Lindh, the minister of Foreign affairs who was killed while shopping in the department store opposite.

Unlike the South Bank, Kulturhuset was designed against the backdrop of a developed debate about its contents and the concept of culture it was to represent. The building is the result of a competition held in 1967 for a programma containing a cultural centre, offices and the central headquarter of the Swedish national bank. In contrast to many of the competition entries, the architect Peter Celsing decided to limit his proposal to the actual site. His apparently cautious approach entailed a radical departure from the rigorous functionalism that had been dominating urban planning in this area during the 1950s and '60s. His project can best be summarised as an ensemble of objects, each of which are precise, finite and positioned in a way that resolves the ambiguities of the site. The building was constructed in stages, the first of which was finished in 1971 and served as temporary home for the Swedish Riksdag for the subsequent 12 years. The second stage was finished three years later.

Both the urban development of the area and the content of the cultural centre were widely and passionately discussed in newspapers and magazines, allowing at least the partial reconstruction of the arguments and intentions for the building. Reading through some of the material it is clear that the proposal for Kulturhuset was a *cause célèbre*, both for the advocates of a new 'progressive' cultural policy and the defenders of 'traditional' values and institutions. One of the main protagonists in this debate was Pontus Hultén, then director of Stockholm's Moderna Museet and later first director of the Centre Pompidou. Hultén had acted as host for informal gatherings and happenings in the museum and now advocated a partial relocation

of the museum to this site in the centre of the city. This move was motivated by the opportunity for the museum to counterbalance the banality of the commercial world that had taken over the city: 'The main intention for the relocation of Moderna Museet is to make cultural activities more accessible for the larger general public. One wants to offer non-material (*andliga*) manifestations with the same effectiveness as those produced by commerce (…)'.[6] Hultén's conception of the house represents a notion of culture 'that does not know about divisions of social class, and directs itself to "the man in the street" '. In these statements it appears that Kulturhuset is given a strategic task, as if to halt the ongoing colonisation of all aspects of life by the logic of commerce. Hultén's position is nevertheless ambiguous. While Kulturhuset is an act of resistance against commercialisation, it also needs to absorb commercial activities: not only a bookshop, but also a record shop – possibly still a controversial choice in the 1960s. The combination of exhibition spaces, a theatre, lobbies and a *Läsesalong*, a reading lounge with direct access to books and newspapers, is programmatic. Boundaries between artistic disciplines are to be extinguished. Hultén formulates this explicitly: 'At a time that many areas are characterised by an increasing specialisation, we experience that boundaries between forms of art dissolve and disappear more and more'. The *allaktivitetshus* was to absorb the museum, which would occupy one of its floors. The architect Peter Celsing views his building in the same terms, describing the project as a 'department store, flexible and adaptable to new situations'.[7] Kulturhuset was to be open to all kinds of activities, from amateur art to happenings at the art museum. This programme with an emphasis on openness and change is housed in an urbanistically very defined building with a large degree of neutrality. All of this went out of the window when Moderna Museet decided not to use Kulturhuset in 1970, after Hultén realised that his plans for a building open to all sections of the public were not to be realised.[8] Left without its main cultural user (and most influential supporter), Kulturhuset had to be reinvented.

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Appropriations

The cultural centres have survived three decades of embarrassed acceptance, neglect and various proposals for demolition. In the same measure that the memory of the culture that produced them has faded away, the intentions and, hence, the

objections associated with this architecture have lost their significance. The fact that these buildings have now been relieved both of many of their initial meanings and of the politically motivated resentments against them, provides a fresh opportunity to register which forms of public and private behaviour they allow and how they have been absorbed by their surroundings.

We live in a Europe celebrating its urban renaissances with anxiety, as if to remind ourselves of our supposedly threatened cultural identities. The assumption that the existing social and cultural fabric can somehow absorb the cultural changes of the last three decades seems very optimistic and the insistence on the necessarily exclusive character of culture impedes the exploration of opportunities to reformulate its role

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Notes

1. Harry Schein, *Har vi råd med kultur?*, Kulturpolitiska skisser, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1962, p. 21.
2. Warren Chalk, 'South Bank Arts Centre London', *Architectural Design*, (March 1967): p. 120-125
3. *Design Quarterly*, (1965): p. 30.
4. Warren Chalk, 'Architecture as consumer product', *Arena (the Architectural Association Journal)*, 8, 900 (March 1966): p. 288.
5. Chalk, 'Architecture as consumer product', p. 288
6. Pontus Hultén, 'Celsings fondbyggnad vid Sergels Torg', *Arkitektur* (July 1967).
7. Peter Celsing, 'Struktur för Kultur', *Arkitektur* (July 1967).
8. The report of the committee installed to rewrite the brief for Kulturhuset after Hultén left for Paris contains a programmatic text in which an expert group, including the museum director, had made the case for this new open public institution. 'Skrivelse från expertgruppen, 5 January 1969' in: *Kulturlokalerna vid Sergels Torg*, Kulturkomiténs Slutrapport, Kommunstyrelsens Utlåtanden och Memorial (Stockholm), nr. 49, 1971.

The Undoing of the Museum. The Manual, The Architect and the Millionaire

Teresa Stoppani & Lieven de Boeck

The paper traces a parallel between different operations performed in architecture (the definition of the formal type, the construction and the erasure of the manual, the dismissal of the functional type) and outside of architecture (the performance and its staging, the collector as curator, daily life as exhibition), in order to open up the museum as a space of display between the individual and the city, between private and public.

In architecture, Lieven De Boeck's investigations use exact quantities, numbers, precise definitions of words, dimensions and times. It is with the sharpness of these tools that his drawings cut through architectural typologies and conventions. The stated scope of his work is the preparation of a visual 'dictionary of space'. Reaffirmed and multiplied, dissected and deconstructed, emptied forms and rules offer room to define and liberate new occupations of space. De Boeck's work on the museum operates on the different languages of architecture – norms, definitions, typologies. His drawings question the manual's formal regulations for the 'museum' through their obliteration, substitution, replacement and misplacement.

Outside architecture, but constantly interacting with it, Peggy Guggenheim's life experiment in contemporary art collection and display enacts a critique of the space and the role of the museum which anticipates and realizes some of De Boeck's theoretical provocations. From *Art of This Century* to Ca' Venier dei Leoni in Venice, Peggy Guggenheim explodes all predefined programmes and formal solutions for the display of contemporary art, suspending the space of the museum between the private/personal and the public/city: on the one hand there was a woman who loved, sponsored and promoted artists, constructing her autobiography through artworks; on the other hand a city so historically and culturally loud that it could never be excluded from the space of the collection, providing for it the best context, apparently perfect and yet vulnerable and perpetually unfinished.

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Stage Setting

This text is not only an essay on the undoing of the museum to be read individually or to be delivered to an audience of convened specialists: it is in fact the script for a performance. As such, the written word is only one of the elements of a composite message, delivered not only through the reading of the text, but also through other means or theatrical props. Some spatial considerations are required then, to set a

stage that allows to speak of – or perform on – the space of the museum and its fading.

Stage: a large rectangular white room, the typical 'white cube' space.

Audience: a small audience of about fifty, educated enough to smile at the performers' innuendos and willing to participate.

Characters: the Lecturer, equipped with the usual tools of the speaker, a lectern with microphone, a laptop computer for digital slides presentation, a projector and projection screen, a pointer; the Architect, surrounded and identified by a spatial arrangement of his tools and work, architect's manual, a wall of pinned-up drawings, a box of architectural references and typologies, a table, an industrial light fitting. To make role definition even clearer, make the two characters male and female. Dress them in outrageously bright colours, to identify them as performers and distinguish them from the greyness-blackness of the audience of architects, artists, museum curators.

Setting: the two performers and their props are to be placed at the opposite ends of the room; the audience is to face neither of them, seated in orderly rows parallel to the long side of the room and staring into the void.

The end. Or the beginning.

Performance: the Lecturer delivers her speech; the Architect, silent, mimes and points at his work; Lecturer's pointer and Architect's floodlight move and intersect across the room to direct the audience's gaze, concentrating or confusing their attention. The space and the act are deconstructed.

Topic: the undoing of the museum, in architecture and outside architecture, beginning with its definition as type, building, institution, container, display.[1]

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The Beginning

Before any consideration on the questions of the museum's role, its work and its contents, to architects the word/task 'museum' invokes the idea of 'type', as it was developed by the theorists of architecture of the Enlightenment. Type is not understood as a defined form, but as a series of prescriptions for a form – or, to use Quatremère de Quincy's definition of 1825, 'an object after which each [artist] can conceive works of art that may have no resemblance'.[2] What is absolutely relevant from a design point of view and still has critical repercussions today is that for

Quatremère 'all is more or less vague in the *type'*, as it acts 'like a sort of nucleus about which are collected, and to which are co-ordinated *in time*, the developments and *variations of forms* to which the object is susceptible'.[3] Extraordinarily modern in its conception and non-definition of space, Quatremère's definition of the type refuses to congeal it in one form and offers to architecture the tool of a dynamic four-dimensional proto-form that is at the same time original-generative and derivate-cumulative – we would call it, today, a diagram.

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The Manual

When addressing the theme of the museum, as architects we think 'type' and we go to our manuals, before we even start considering the issue of its contents. We go, in particular, to one of the many (national) versions of 'the' manual, Ernst Neufert's *Practical Encyclopaedia of Design and Building*. And while Lieven De Boeck begins a critical reading by erasures (tip-exing) of his English edition, I look at my Italian copy.

Succinctly covering the topic in only two pages, my Neufert conveniently sandwiches 'Musei' between 'Chiese' and 'Cimiteri', thus offering a lapidary but nonetheless powerful Focaultian reading of the institution 'museum'. Editorially and typographically placed between two other heterotopias – the church and the cemetery – the museum is here still identified as container, in a sequence of increasingly enclosed and sealed spaces, from the openness of the post-Second Vatican Council catholic church – where space is articulated by and around the presence and the positioning of certain key elements (parish centre, parvis, nave, presbiterium, altar, seating, ambo, tabernacle, schola and organ, chapels, baptistery, campanile, and church annexes) – to the enclosed cemetery space – clearly delimited and essentially organized around the modularity of the stacked bodies, coffins or tombs.[4] Stuck as it is between the two, the museum is thus implicitly but quite clearly defined as both a public space of ritual communication (like the church) and a space of collection of memory (like the museum).

The pages on 'museums' begin with a disconcertingly biased and outdated (even for post-modern 1980) definition: 'Particularly suitable for historical objects, for which these building provide the right frame, better than those cold museum called "modern" '.[5] In the exhibition rooms, the works 'must be 1. protected from damage,

theft, fire, dampness, dehydration, sunlight and dust, and 2. displayed in the best light (in the widest sense of the term)'.[6] The manual emphasizes shelter, storage, accumulation and cataloguing before display, and consequently in the functional diagram and schematic layout that it proposes (prescribes) the gallery space – i.e. the exhibition – occupies only a small part of the museum, and is directly connected to just a few other functions. As for the display component of the museum, this seems to be resolved in a series of prescriptions for light modulation, enhancement or exclusion. Thus far on page 1.

The issue of presentation, representation and appearance is carefully avoided also in the definition of the museum's overall space: page 2 is entirely devoted to examples of museums presented only in plan and section, and not the ones corresponding to the others, but offered in an assortment of mismatched parts constructing an 'ideal' and impossible – and faceless – museum of 'perfect' functionality. And yet, the text in the manual ends with the disconcerting acknowledgement of the failure of architectural specificity: 'Fortifications, castles, abbeys and the like are often empty because they are no longer usable, and therefore very suitable to be turned into museums'.[7]

In the late 1970s Neufert decrees the death of the space of the museum as public space of display and representation, reducing it to a functional diagram for the optimization of archival storage, distribution layout, lighting conditions: more than ever, the museum as heterotopia of accumulation.

Where does architecture go from here? What is there left to do for architecture, apart from defining storage and/or modifying, refurbishing, changing use in 'castles, abbeys and the like'? Does the generative type – the dynamic four-dimensional proto-form – of the museum still exist, if even the manual invites us to restrict architecture to the transformation of what is already there and originally generated for other purposes?

The Neufert – technical, conservative and prescriptive as it is – if critically read, seems to contain or at least suggest a critique of the discipline and of the role of architecture in answering the question 'what is a museum?'. It places the museum between the church and the cemetery, that is, between the celebration of the collective ritual (the church), and the collection and preservation of memories and the past (the cemetery), in a sacred and difficult and always already ambiguous position. Without reaching Bataille's provocative paroxysm of associating the museum to

the slaughterhouse as spaces of collective rituals, this dry technical manual triggers questions on the nature of the museum, which remain unanswered.[8]

Functions and systems of relations of the museum are thus defined, but the museum finds no form, as it remains only suggested by a series of partial and unrelated examples (plans and sections but not corresponding ones). While the museum has many functions and can take many forms, even the Neufert (in 1980) must acknowledge that the museum type does not exist as a form. Not only that. The museum can easily occupy, parasitize, existing and disused structures. It is therefore defined by its functions and contents, by how it occupies rather than makes space.

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The Architect

It is here that Lieven De Boeck's work on museum typology begins. De Boeck's architectural investigations always use exact quantities, numbers, precise definitions of words dimensions and times. It is with the sharpness of these tools that his drawings cut through architectural typologies and conventions. Here the tool is a tip-ex pen, subtle instrument of precise and partial erasure that leaves on the manual's pages ghostly traces of the lines and words, which have not been removed but added onto. Tip-exing rather than knifing away, he adds onto the certainties and the doubts of the given, obliterates functions and keeps spaces, but only to re-occupy and modify them. The operation is precise, part of a more extended work for the preparation of a visual 'dictionary of space' for the definition of new typologies and methodologies for the production of space. But De Boeck's research is indeed the site for the construction of a critique of architecture through the proliferation of a very personal -and only apparently rational- design imagery. Reaffirmed and multiplied, dissected and deconstructed by the individual, the emptied forms and rules are made available to be defined and liberated by new occupations of space.

De Boeck's work on the contemporary art museum operates on the different languages of architecture - norms, definitions, typologies. His tip-ex drawings question the handbook's formal regulations and quantitative prescriptions for the 'museum' through their erasure, substitution, replacement and misplacement: functional bubble diagrams are obliterated; prescriptions of optimal lighting become space themselves, as agents of an architecture of displays whose materials are not necessarily solid and permanent walls; examples of museums are no longer

recognizable as such and, effaced, become themselves available to other different occupations. In turn, the concealment of scale-identification in random architectural examples of architectures of the 19th and 20th century makes them available to occupation by the museum contents.

All these operations seem to suggest that the museum as public space of communication is not defined by the nature of its architectural shells but by its contents, by their 'democratic' accessibility, and by the devices employed for their display. In other words, a sort of Malrauxian museum without walls, in which the role of architecture is redefined: not shelter, container, and chronologically ordered celebratory frame, but exhibition device designed with the lightness of tip-ex on the vestiges of the old museum. A re-definition by adjustments.

Then, what redefines the museum, after functional diagrams, technical requirements, and building types have been tip-exed?

According to De Boeck, the tools of museum making are:

1. A catalogue of available *building solutions* (neither models nor types any more) that are not museums but could become it. A box of tools with an invitation to re-invent architecture not from scratch but from a given with partial amnesia.

2. A printed *invitation* to the celebrating – opening, closing, in-process – event. The exhibition becomes a mediatic event that takes place and has repercussions outside the physical boundaries of its location, and therefore engages different spaces.

3. and 4. The museum *exhibitions programme* and the *catalogue*, which both reproduce, in other media, the nature of the museum as heterotopian time condenser: of the future – the programme of events is a catalogue of (past) futures, of possibilities and planned strategies – and of the past – the catalogue preserves the (already past) contents of the exhibition and its display by transferring them to another medium (the book). It is not the event and/or the place in themselves that matter, but the recording of them in the book. (Would a museum of exhibition catalogues then be still a museum, or a library? The difference here would be determined – to confirm De Boeck's assumption – by the nature and definition of the display.)

And finally, 5. A *table* where these objects lie, a white 'frame' that silently screams 'look at me', inviting to behold and reconsider all these ingredients together: 'I am the museum, the frame, the trigger of attention'.

A table, a house, a tip-exed plan of a building designed for another purpose: for De Boeck the museum is a private space (the house) that is made public (the erasures performed with the tip-ex) for the presentation and exhibition of a specially assembled selection of objects, and whose scope is made recognizable by a sign (the table, the programme, the invitation). For De Boeck the principal role of the museum is 'to exhibit' – 'to make things public': the artwork, the collection, but also the curatorial work, the art production and research. If the museum is a strategy of accommodating, organizing, opening and distributing information, then the work of architecture here is to make its space public, and not only by walls or their demolition. Thus de-composed, taken apart, transformed into a *con*-tainer that does not 'hold in' but 'holds together', the type of the museum is exploded. Its pieces, now liberated, are made available for the (re)making of the undone museum, a museum penetrated and inscribed by its context, which brings in what norms, definitions and typologies seem to lack: the individual and the city.

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The millionaire: art in the city

While architecture, slow as usual, struggles with the dilemma and redefines its tools, life seems to provide answers. Peggy Guggenheim's life in art and work for art can suggest a way to look at the idea of museum as architecture from beyond and outside architecture, through the individual and the city. In different ways, with different languages and actions, with the tools and ways of a lifestyle rather than architecture, Peggy Guggenheim enacted and lived the transgressions that De Boeck draws 'by erasure' on his Neufert. More than anybody else (or at least more loudly and more effectively than anybody else) – artists, curators, art critics, architects – Peggy Guggenheim lived and worked towards an opening up of the museum as a space of display that operated between and was compromised with both the individual and the city, the private and the public. From 'Guggenheim Jeune' in London before the Second World War, to *Art of This Century* in New York during the war, to her final and long-lasting 'experiment' in Ca' Venier dei Leoni in Venice, Peggy Guggenheim exploded all predefined programmes and formal solutions for the display of contemporary art, opening up the exhibition space and suspending it between the private/personal and the public/collective.

In Venice especially, spatial categories and divisions are defied, private life and

art production intermingle, domesticity and business coexist. On one hand there was Peggy Guggenheim, the woman who loved, sponsored and promoted artists, constructing an autobiography through artworks that although very personal was never exclusively private. On the other hand there was Venice, a city so historically and culturally loud that it could never be excluded from the space of the collection, and offered for it the best context, apparently perfect and complete and yet vulnerable and perpetually unfinished.

Venice is, by her own nature, the place of multiplicity and non-dialectic coexistence of differences, of ongoing changes and adjustments, both in her physical making and in the construction of her myth. The city becomes the ideal setting for Peggy's operation – her life, her collection, and the idea of turning the private space of her house into a place for the production and exhibition of art – a world, writes Gore Vidal, 'where the party still goes on and everyone is making something new and art smells not of the museum but of the maker's studio'.[9]

The encounter with Venice is facilitated by Peggy Guggenheim's purchase of the perfect setting for her operation, Ca' Venier dei Leoni, an 18th century family palace on the Canal Grande, remained unfinished during construction for legal disputes with the neighbouring families, and occupied in time by different forms of precarious inhabitation. The '*palazzo non compiuto'*, writes Peggy Guggenheim, 'had the widest space of any palace on the Grand canal, and also had the advantage of not being regarded as a national monument. […] It was therefore perfect for the pictures'. But also, she continues, 'The top of the palace formed a flat roof, perfect for sunbathing'.[10] And sunbathing she did, lying on the roof above her art collection, in view of the main traffic artery of the city, and in front of the palace of the Prefect.

The art collection was everywhere in the palace-non-palace, and originally the entire house was open to the public on museum days: 'In place of a Venetian glass chandelier, I hung a Calder mobile, made out of broken glass and china that might have come out of a garbage pail. […] Most Venetian, and at the same time un-Venetian, is a *forcola*, or gondolier's oar-rest, which Alfred Barr presented me with for my garden. Those who don't know what it is admire it ass a wonderful piece of modern sculpture, which is just what Alfred intended'.[11] She doesn't even have the privacy of her own bedroom, as in it artworks and personal items, or pieces that are both, commingle: the silver bed head made for her by Alexander Calder, which, in

her words, 'against [the] turquoise walls looked as though it had been made for its ultimate destination – Venice'; a painting by Francis Bacon, whose 'background is all done in fuchsia-coloured pastel, which goes admirably well with my turquoise walls […]. The rest of the walls are decorated by my collection of earrings, a hundred pairs or more […]. In addition to this, the room has Venetian mirrors and Laurence Vail's decorated bottles and Cornell's surrealist "objects"'. She concludes: 'it was difficult to exclude the public from all this, but in the end I had to'.[12]

Peggy Guggenheim buys the palace in 1949, and begins to hold shows in the house and garden. Public and private spaces are still undivided and originally the entire house is open to the public on museum days. 'So many people came wandering into all our bedrooms that we had to cordon off the exhibition. I had a house guest […] staying with me at the time, who perpetually forgot that there was an exhibition and often found himself in the midst of strangers in his pyjamas in the garden'.[13] The visitors to Peggy Guggenheim's exhibitions enter the private living quarters, and slowly the 'house' has to give in to the gallery space. 'In order to create space, I began turning all the downstairs rooms, where the servants lived and the laundry was done, into galleries. […] Matta helped me transform the enormous laundry into a beautiful gallery, and then one by one the other rooms followed suit, till finally the servants got pushed into smaller quarters and the laundry had to be done in a basin at the entrance to the waterfront'.[14] Plans for an extension of the palace fail. She does not like Belgioioso, Peressutti and Rogers's project for a two-storey penthouse elevated on pillars twenty feet high on the roof of the unfinished palace: 'The front was to resemble the Doge's Palace, and in their minds they conceived something that they thought would be a link between the past and the present. I found it very ugly and I was certain the Belle Arti of Venice […] would never have allowed it to be built'.[15]

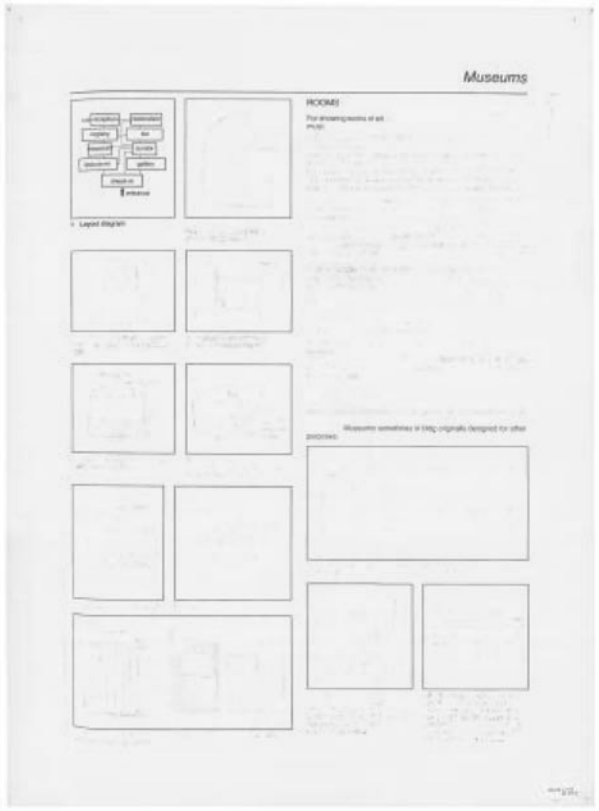
But it is not only the public that enters Peggy Guggenheim's private domestic space. Her collection enters the Biennale of Art first, and then penetrates the culture and the space of the city, it absorbs it and infiltrates it. For just a short while, and almost by accident, the best selection from her collection occupies the most representative space of the city, the jewel-like salon of St. Mark's Square, momentarily turning Venice's best *salotto* into Peggy Guggenheim's 'own' living room: in 1950 she exhibits her Pollocks in the Sala Napoleonica in the Museum Correr. Self-satisfied and with a sense of accomplishment and belonging, she contemplates the

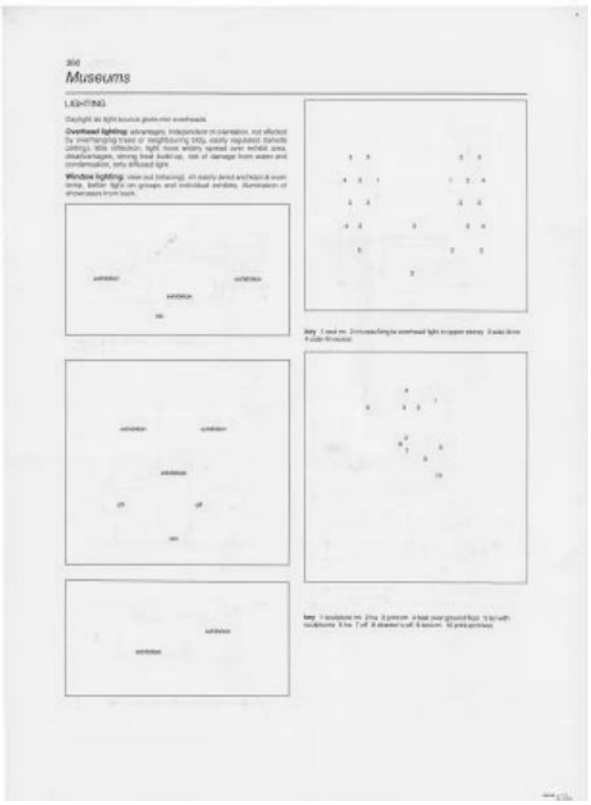
paintings lit at night from the square. 'I remember the extreme joy I had sitting in the Piazza San Marco beholding the Pollocks glowing through the open windows of the museum, and then going out on the balcony of the gallery to see San Marco in front of me, knowing that the Pollocks were behind me. Is seemed to place Pollock historically where he belonged as one of the greatest painters of our time, who had every right to be exhibited in this wonderful setting'.[16]

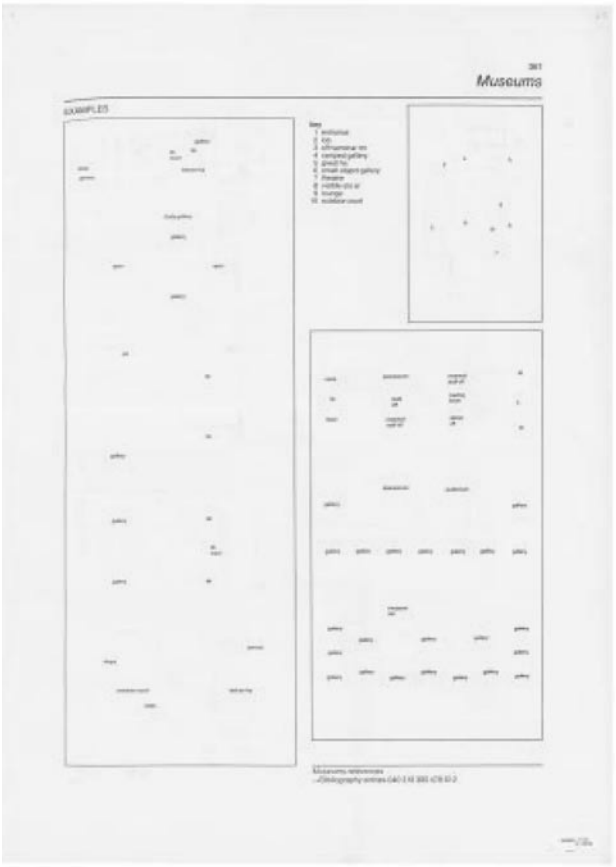
The expansion continues with constant growth. Between 1958 and 1959 Peggy Guggenheim constructs a *barchessa* on one side of her garden, to enlarge her exhibition space and rearrange there her Surrealist paintings and sculptures. After her death in 1979 the Guggenheim Foundation (now owner of the museum), further expands the gallery spaces, acquiring the buildings at the back of the garden, to host temporary exhibitions, services, a bookshop, a cafeteria. Notwithstanding the diminutive dimensions of the interiors, carved inside the existing Venetian 'minor' architecture, the spaces of the extension look, feel and smell 'American'. But inside them the museum is still forced to work with the city and with the former inhabitant, and like them: slowly, prudently, in a piecemeal way made of adjustments, innovations, negotiations, infiltration, occupations.

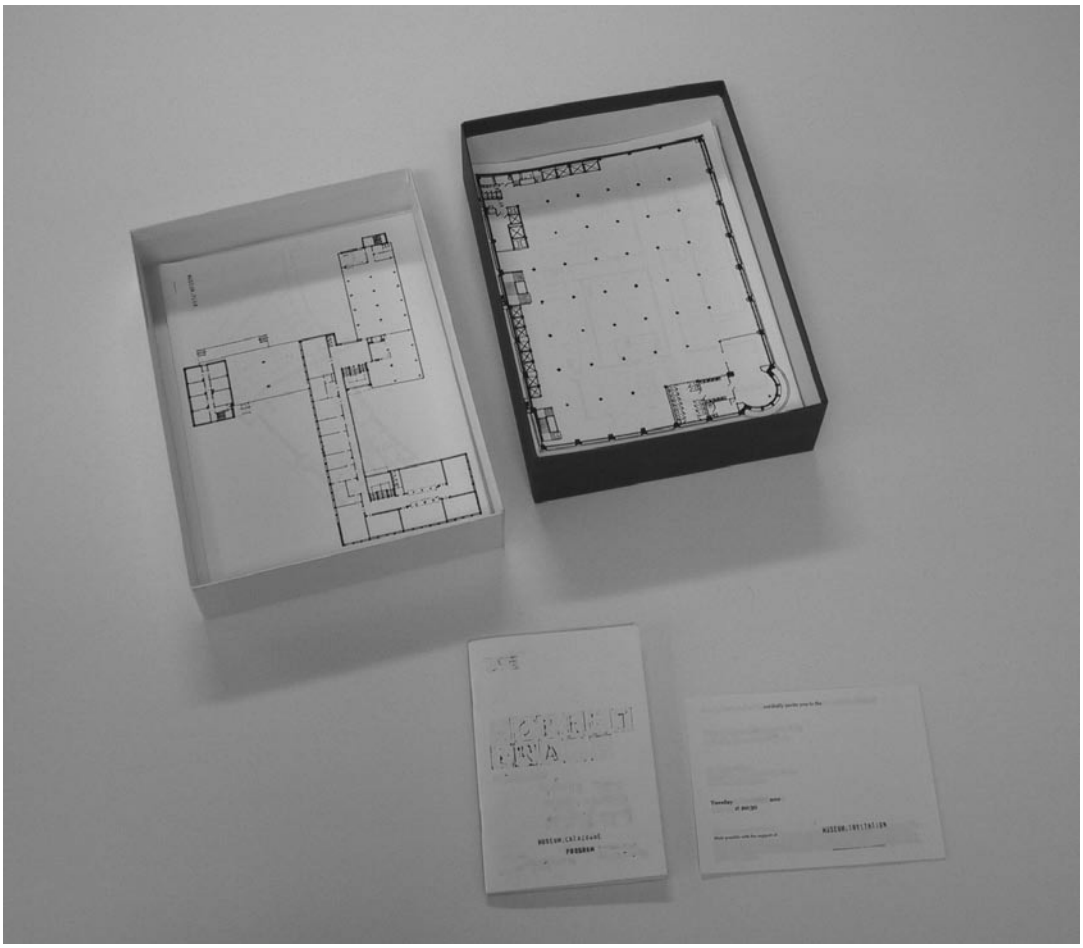
'Se la forma scompare …'[17]

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Museums


Museums


Museums



Notes

1. '*mu·se·um* n., a building or institution where objects of artistic, historical, or scientific importance and value are kept, studied, and put on display'. *Encarta® World English Dictionary* © 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 7 ibidem, p. 496. My translation.
2. Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, 'Type', in *Encyclopédie Méthodique*. 'Architecture', vol. 3, pt. II, Paris, 1825. Translated in English in *Opposition* 8, now in K. Michael Hays (ed.), *The Oppositions Reader*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998, pp. 617-620.
3. ibidem, p. 618. My emphasis.
4. Foucault defines heterotopias as 'real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter-arrangement (…) in which (…) all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable'. These places 'are absolutely other with respect to all the arrangements that they reflect and of which they speak'. (Michel Focault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Lotus*, 48/9, 1985/86, pp. 9-17). Church and cemetery can be considered heterotopias of time, the church characterized by an openness/ closeness penetrable only through a rite of purification and access, the museum adding to the condition of breach of time that of potential accumulation ad infinitum.
5. Ernst Neufert, *Enciclopedia pratica per progettare e costruire* (6th Italian edition 1980), Milan: Hoepli, 1981, p. 496. (German edition, *Bauentwurfslehre*, 1980.)
6. ibidem, p. 496. My translation.
8. Georges Bataille, 'Museum', p. 64 and 'Slaughterhouse', pp. 72-73, in Georges Bataille, Michel Leiris, Marcel Griaule, Carl Einstein, Robert Desnos, *Encyclopaedia Acephalica*, (Atlas Arkhive. Documents of the avant-garde, no. 3: George Bataille & Acéphale), Robert Lebel and Isabelle Waldberg (eds.), London: Atlas Press, 1995.
9. Gore Vidal, 'Foreword', in Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This century. Confessions of an Art Addict*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1983, p. xiii.
10. Peggy Guggenheim as cited in *Guggenheim, Out of This century*, p. 333.
11. ibidem, p. 354.
12. ibidem, p. 354-355.
13. ibidem, p. 336.
14. ibidem, p. 339.
15. ibidem, p. 338.
16. ibidem, p. 336.
17. 'If form disappear …', the title of a work by Mario Merz in the Guggenheim Collection, displayed in the garden of Ca' Venier dei Leoni in Venice.

Behind the Museum: The Purposes and Projects of Turkish Museums, Past and Present

Wendy Meryem Kural Shaw

When Theodor Adorno made his famous pronouncement that the museum is 'the family sepulchre of art', he made the assumption, all too common, that a museum is merely about art. Indeed, however one sets about to define a museum, its definition seems to slip away to another expression of another need defined by an elite producing an institution to supply an audience, or a populace, with a remedy for an illness it never knew it had. In 1778, as the museum became reified into a seminal institution of the modern age, it could be defined by the French Royal Academy of Architecture as 'an edifice containing the records and achievements of science, the liberal arts, and natural history'.[1] Thus, in keeping with the quest for the totalization of knowledge characteristic of the Enlightenment, the museum was defined both by the singularity of its walls and the scope of its contents. Initially intended to, in the words of Tony Bennett, reassemble the figure of Man from his fragments, the Western museum has diversified, but as an institution now federated among disciplines, it still attempts to mirror the fragments that come to constitute a given society's Imaginary vision of self.[2] As such, it plays a vital role, vitalized still further by auxilliary institutions that maintain it at the centre of social life – in particular links with education and underwriting by governmental subsidies. If the museum is a sepulchre, it is at least not a tomb of the forgotten.

In contrast, most of the museums in Turkey have rarely played a lively and participatory social role; they are spaces that strangely exclude their imaginary visitor, as if indeed they only had room for the dead – and for many tourists. Through a brief survey of the needs addressed by Ottoman and Turkish museums at their moments of emergence, this paper will attempt to analyse when and for whom they have entered the realm of the living and, conversely, why they have for the most part acted as unvisited haunts of forgotten representations. As a new generation of museums comes to the fore in a country that continues to asymptotically approach Europe, what role can the museum take on?

While the history of modern European museums can be traced to private collections of the fifteenth century, museums in the Ottoman Empire did not emerge from existing imperial collections such as the vast stores of the six-hundred-year-old dynastic treasury, but from collections conceptually modelled on their European counterparts. Emerging at the same time as museums were becoming a standard civic institution in the United States, the pointed difference of the types of collections in each country on the fringe of Europe suggests the very different needs

that institutions similar in name were intended to address. In the United States, young museums like the Chicago Art Institute and the Metropolitan Museum of Art used an evolutionary model akin to the scientific progression of Natural History to produce a narrative of the march of civilizations culminating in the modern and the local. In order to do so, not only did such museums collect originals that built this tale, they also filled in the gaps of their developmental order with copies of both sculpture and painting. Much as value was of central importance, the developmental metanarrative of history which naturalized the culmination of civilization in the West, and underscored the shared identity of the young United States with paternal Europe, formed the core of the American museum. This story was intended to produce a particular type of elite citizen, with an education and identity that could place them simultaneously in a structure of class, nation, and high civilization.

In contrast, the earliest Ottoman Museum developed out of collections of military booty that had, for several centuries, been stored on the grounds of the Imperial Topkapi Palace, within the halls of the Church of St. Irene, the second cathedral church of the Byzantine Empire that had been converted into an armoury at the time of the conquest in 1453. Yet this space of storage only began to emerge as a museum as antiquities gathered from all over the empire began to join them. Established in 1846, the first Ottoman museum, as yet closed to the general public but open to elite visitors, soon became a space that doubly encoded territoriality both through military spoliate and antiquities that represented not art, but the places where they were found and the loyal civil servants who had sent them to the capitol.

As the antiquities collections that had been initially housed in the church grew too numerous for the crowded church, the museum split into two institutions. In 1873, the antiquities collections moved first to the Tiled Pavilion, the first building of the Topkapi Palace, and then into a building built expressly as The Imperial Museum, in 1881. While the military museum closed to the public during the same era, it re-emerged as a vital centre between 1913 and 1923 as war ravaged the final years of the empire. While the Imperial Museum quietly imagined a new social identity for an emergent Ottoman nation increasingly divested many of its territories, the military museum put forth a valiant history for a popular audience in need of ideological succour during an era of war and immanent defeat.

As the Tiled Pavilion was revamped as a museum, architectural renovations shifted its fifteenth-century, Central Asian architectural elements – a columned portico

with hidden stairs, decorated with green and blue mosaic tiling – into a European guise, with an externalized staircase, plastered walls, and Europeanized fireplaces inside. In contrast to the developmental order preferred in Western museums, the collection allowed the visitor to travel backwards in time, while the arrangement of exhibits reminded the visitor less of their art historical value than of their territorial identity. The concern with territoriality remained a central tenet of the museum as it expanded, becoming the Imperial Museum and moving into a new building across from the Tiled Pavilion. While the museum bears a neo-Classical exterior typical of nineteenth century museums, the architecture was supposedly based on a sarcophagus discovered on Ottoman soil, as part of the Sidon necropolis that served as the core collection inspiring the construction of the new museum. Thus a neo-Classical identity associated in the West with Hellenism was appropriated as part of Ottoman territorial identity. In contrast to American and European Museums, which were on occasion willing to make due with copies to maintain the narrative of stylistic development central to their institutions, the Ottoman Imperial Museum eschewed any objects that did not have an Ottoman territorial past, and arranged exhibits according to excavation sites. Again in contrast to its Western counterparts, the museum avoided realizing its initial plans for a Natural History collection, rejecting the core narrative of development implied by such a collection. Likewise, the Imperial Museum did not collect art as it developed into the present. Although its primary director and ideologue, Osman Hamdi, was a prominent Ottoman painter, the museum also rejected the collection of contemporary arts. Thus there was no claim of bringing the narrative of Hellenism to the present. Rather, the emphasis was to see the past defined as European as part and parcel of Ottoman territoriality, and to recognize the processes of archaeological excavation as imperial designs on Ottoman lands. As Osman Hamdi wrote and rewrote antiquities laws designed to stem the tide of antiquities from Ottoman soil filling European Museums – including the Parthenon Marbles, the Venus of Milo, the Victory of Samothrace, the Altar of Zeus, the Friezes of Nimrod, and the Ishtar Gate, to name but a few – he used the museum to work against the Western writing of art as divorced from space, a narrative that also divorced historical territories from the present. While highly ideological, such a museum did not intend to have an interface with the public. Rather, its intended audience was, on the one hand, an intransigent sultan (with whom the museum was often at odds) who viewed the empire and its treasures as his

own, to bequeath at will, and a West hungry for its history that it located outside of its own lands. While the Archaeology Museum remains, with some additions, at its site beside the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul, it seems that nobody knows what to make of it. Replete with collections any of the great Western museums would envy, it has been excluded from any narrativization of national consciousness. Likewise, visitors who might eagerly traipse to the Getty in Los Angeles or the Louvre in Paris seek more exotic venues in Istanbul, and walk past this monument to a supposedly Western identity as they visit the Topkapi Palace Museum, Hagia Sophia , and the Blue Mosque in the immediate vicinity.[4]

In addition to the antiquities collections, the Imperial Museum eventually developed a department of Islamic Arts. If ever there was a tomb for art, this was it: objects of religious significance divested of their use and placed under a secular gaze.[5] Osman Hamdi's art suggests that he was well aware of revolutionary implications of such a space. His *Mihrab* of 1901 depicts a Western woman, modelled after his French wife, sitting on a *Qur'an* stand in front of a *mihrab*, a niche indicating the direction of prayer, which was one of the first works taken from a mosque as part of the museum collection. Not only does she displace the books that lie opened and torn at her feet, she sits in the place of the holy book and interrupts the possibility of prayer. Surrounded by these objects of the museum, she may herself be the personification of the museum, or of the West itself which presents a threat to the traditional role of these objects in the process of religious worship. Not simply sacrilegious in itself, the painting points to the revolutionary affect of the museum in reinvesting religious objects with ocular, secular meaning.

The experiment became a central trope of museums after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Throughout the republic, museums featuring collections of local archaeological finds and ethnographic collections served as a staple of modernizing ideology. Yet as they culled contemporary costumes from people's backs, declared their spatial habits of eating and living as historical relics, and pulled religious objects from mosques and into their silent halls, such ethnographic museums created the sepulchres of modernization.[6] As Franz Fanon pointed out, 'at the very moment when the native intellectual is anxiously trying to create a cultural work he fails to realize that he is utilizing techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country. He contents himself with stamping these

instruments with a hallmark which he wishes to be national, but which is strangely reminiscent of exoticism."[7]

Ethnographic museums are not alone in their ongoing collecting of dust. The Istanbul and Ankara Museums of Painting and Sculpture, established in 1938 and 1980 respectively, bear a similar fate. Focusing on state-sponsored art that gained inspiration from Western modernist movements, such as cubism, fauvism, or abstract expressionism, such work created a Turkish version of Western modernity without conveying the intellectual urgency of its models. Choosing subjects that were generally Turkish but oddly impersonal, modern artists emerged from elite families who exoticized the elements of folk culture from which they created a national identity. The work excludes the popular audience rather than representing them, speaking in a visual language without translation of a nation imagined rather than lived. While obviously no single work can support such an assertion, one might consider Nurullah Berk's *Woman Ironing* of 1950 as an example. Here, a traditional woman, her head covered, irons in an environment pattered on traditional Turkish textiles and kilims, familiar in the West from their common use in the paintings of figures like Holbein and Vermeer. Here, the notion of tradition becomes combined with modernist effects of flattening reminiscent of cubism – and indeed often named cubism – within discussions of Turkish art. While such an image freezes the traditional, both in the guise of the woman and the textiles, within a modernist vocabulary, it fails to create a type of image through which real people of a tradition interact with, understand, and incorporate the modern into their own perceptions. It is no less an orientalist view, in other words, than views of Algeria by Delacroix and, after him, Picasso and Matisse. Not only did people vote with their feet by not showing interest in such art, subsequent governments have neglected the arts, seeing them neither as the propagandistic medium for which they were initially imagined nor as a means of social mirroring for the production of a collective identity for which they have been so successfully coralled in the West.

In contrast, the Ottoman Military Museum that developed during the Balkan Wars and remained beside the staging grounds of Ottoman soldiers as they departed for the front during World War I and the subsequent War for National Salvation, was designed to address specific needs of a specific audience. Sermed Muhtar, the museum's director, hired his mother to sew flags for the museum. He revived the historical military band, creating new uniforms for it and writing scores for their

performances, which included benefit concerts for refugees and for hospitalized soldiers. Museum exhibits were accompanied not only by explanatory texts, but by oil paintings that contextualized their use and helped the visitor to visualize the historical might of the empire. In a society without a tradition of large-scale paintings, such images must have had the vitality of film today. Indeed, as soon as the technology was available, a small film theatre was added to the museum complex in 1916. Not only did the theatre provide a venue for the viewing of documentary footage, it also showed films such as the *ABC of Love* and *Disaster in St. Moritz* a – all to the accompaniment of military music, making entertainment serve a double function of increasing national ardour. Finally, museum visitors were encouraged to participate in the museum by making donations from the personal items of fallen soldiers, and by signing the guestbook of the museum. Unlike other Ottoman museums, the museum was made for an audience, and addressed the immediate ideological and psychological needs of war and the ongoing British occupation of Istanbul. While the museum entered the republican period, at first at the church and later in an independent building, it is perhaps fortunate that there has never been the same need for it to play a role in the public psyche.

Yet as Turkey approaches possible membership in the European Union, and even more importantly implements legal changes allowing for the growth of civil society, museums that can address the public should play an increasingly central role in allowing the public to formulate itself. While during the 1980s and 1990s, private museums sponsored by banks and major industrialists have created spaces for the exploration of art, archaeology, and science independent from the ideology of a central government, they have had varying rates of success in appealing to a broad public. In doing so, they have perhaps never tried to act as a mirror through which society can construct a wholistic view of its own fragments, made Other only to be repossessed in a Symbolic realization of communal identity that requires the interactive play of fragments more than the construction of a uniform body. In a post-Enlightenment frame, the museum can no longer attempt to reassemble the figure of Man from its fragments, for Man has entered his tomb. What has remained in his stead is people as they construct themselves into varying entireties that they recognize as the social. If museums in Turkey have failed in their imagining of a top-down national identity to create a uniform society, it will be the measure of a new generation of museums to allow for a collective imagining of self for a new

character on the public scene, the museum visitor who seeks cultural sharing not as an experience of exteriority – showing class affiliation or Western desires – but as one constructing a collective self.

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Postscript:

Six months have passed since our lovely meeting in Maastricht. In the interim, new permanent sites devoted to modern and contemporary art have opened in Istanbul: Istanbul Modern opened along the shores of the Bosphorus in late November; Proje4L re-opened with a permanent display of the Elgiz collection; the Pera Museum is set to open in early June, and Santral Istanbul is set to open in fall of 2006. How does this unprecedented burgeonning of museum sites correspond with the development of a museum culture? It is, of course, in many ways, too early to tell. However, there are some signs for the future.

With a category-based exhibition space inspired by that of Tate Modern, Istanbul Modern has attempted to bring together several private and public collections in a former warehouse. While its collection is in many ways weaker than that of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, more modern displays, far more extensive publicity campaigns, and a very chic and inviting café have made it into to a relatively popular venue. While the museum is a good start, however, it has a long way to go. The room devoted to education has little beyond paper and crayons for children, with little in the way of explanations or devices with which children or adults can feel close to the work at hand. Likewise, within the main galleries there is no explanatory information available with which viewers can contextualize what they see beyond their preformulated likes and dislikes. Within the museum, the cavernous space of the warehouse has been divided into long hallways, creating an architectural framework more like a gallery than with the nuances of flow and pause that construct spaces of contemplation within most museums. Likewise, an exhibit featuring painting and almost no sculpture or other forms of art eliminates a sense of dimensionality in the exhibit. There is little indication of how visitors are to choose a direction in the museum, which leads many to go immediately to the lovely view, the bookstore, and the café. It has been said that in this respect, the attendance numbers may be misleading: people may be going to the museum to eat rather than to look.

The example of Proje4L presents a diametrically opposed picture. With a much

sharper focus, the Elgiz collection presents both Turkish and international works from the 1980s to the present. A connoisseurial arrangement for the works constructs an effective grouping of Turkish and international artists, removing the narrow national focus of both the state collection and Istanbul Modern. A wider range of media, including sculpture, installation, and video, presents a more representative range of contemporary artistic practice even within a much smaller institutional framework. Non-intrusive texts are available near the works allowing for their interpretive contextualization, and an informed staff that is knowledgeable to discuss works with visitors. Although the space is also industrial, the bi-level arrangement of the galleries creates a flow lacking in its larger counterpart. In contrast to Istanbul Modern, and to its earlier incarnation as a gallery, Proje4L has not had extensive promotional campaigns and addresses only those already interested in art and willing to go there for the art and events rather than for the extra amenities offered by most museums today.

But perhaps the greatest issue at stake for Turkish museums is to take on a role in constructing a canon through which Turkish art, past, present, and future can be discussed and interpreted through both its national and international traditions. Such is the issue at hand, indeed, throughout the non-West as it at once partakes in the traditions of modernity yet remains excluded by the canons produced exclusively within the Western tradition. Much as survey textbooks have in recent years attempted to create an approach extending beyond the Western tradition, museums as well have begun to integrate non-Western works not only in galleries devoted to historical non-Western traditions, but in modern collections (such as the new gallery spaces of the renovated MoMA). As this conversation between contemporary cultures, one that became pervasive in international biennials and is only recently becoming institutionalized within museums, comes to the fore in the modern museums of Turkey, these new institutions in turn can become central to Turkey's integration with Europe

Istanbul Modern opened earlier than was originally planned so that the Prime Minister could make a show of its opening before he travelled to Brussels for meetings concerning Turkey's accession to the EU; soon thereafter the exhibit Turks, featuring works by Turkish people made before 1500, opened in London. It is this contrast – the myth of exotic, Islamic, Oriental empires against the affectations of the modern – that frames the debates concerning Turkey's relationship with Europe.

Museums and their exhibits may be most distant from the emotions and debates that underlie these discussions, yet they also lie at its heart. As Turkey's new museums develop, they will play an important role in shifting the perception of Turkey from the affectations of modernity towards the effects of the modern. One can only hope that an exhibit by Turks sent abroad five years hence will come from the present rather than the past, answering the YBAs of the 1990s with the YTAs of the 2000s .

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Notes

1. Chantal Georgel, 'The Museum as Metaphor', in Sherman et. al. (eds.), *Museum Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 116.
2. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 39.
3. Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, p. 32-37.
4. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, pp. 83-107; 149-171.
5. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, pp. 172-184; see also Wendy M. K. Shaw, 'Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum', in *Ars Orientalis* XXX (August 2000), pp. 55-68.
6. Wendy M. K. Shaw, 'Tra(ve)ils of Secularism: Islam in Museums from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic', in Derek Peterson, (ed.), *The Invention of Religion*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
7. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, 1963, p. 223.

Museum and Typology

Bart Verschaffel

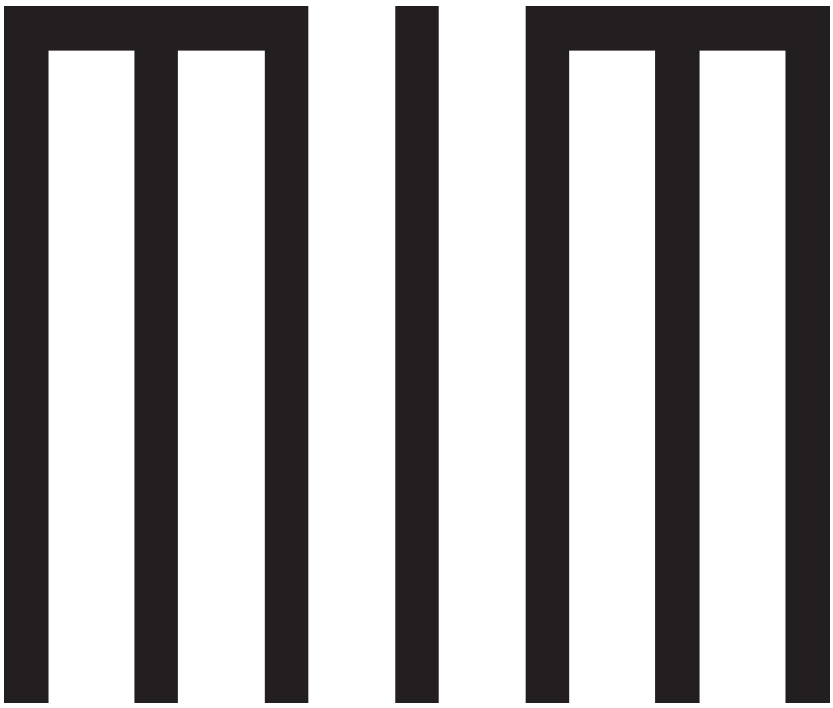
In the theoretical discussion concerning the meaning of cultural buildings and the investments and impact of their architectural importance, the specificity of the cases have to be taken into account. It will not do to simply lump everything together that seems remotely connected and consider everything at the same time. False generalities generate spurious problems. For instance, the issue of the role of a cultural centre in a medium-sized or small city without a significant cultural infrastructure is not exactly of a piece with the issue of assessing the necessity of having a museum of contemporary art, which in its turn differs from the question about the difference between a museum and an arts centre. The question of the topicality of 19th century museum typology is dissimilar to the question of how a historical building such as a palace, a church or a dwelling can recieve a museum function. This does not imply that general questions of cultural-political nature cannot be put under discussion. Cultural participation, the relationship between high and low culture, the tension between commitment and criticism, the wearing down of conventional bourgeois notions of cultural heritage, the importance of the national past that is waning when it comes to national identity – they are important issues indeed. It does imply that positions and choices pertaining to this discussion cannot be directly applied or related to the logics of a cultural institution or an architectural programme. The (cultural)-political discussion does not have to be carried out on the basis of univocal architectural statements or strong views. Buildings that correspond with a straightforward message and are exciting at the most because their failure implicitly shows their complexity, are less than interesting.

In her text Teresa Stoppani quotes Quatremère de Quincy's intelligent definition of an architectural 'type': 'an object after which each [artist] can conceive works of art that may have no resemblance'. To De Quincy then a type does not set an example; it does not show how things should be. It is not a criterion. After all, every constituent of the type is 'vague', which means that a type does not suggest a well-defined form and that a realisation does not resemble the type but is rather analogous to it. This very modern definition of a type is quite similar to what Max Weber meant by the 'ideal' type half a century later. A type is not an essence; nor is it a truth. It is an instrument. The type relates to a group of buildings or an architectural tradition in the same way that Weber's ideal type relates to a social practice: an abstract figure that clearly generates a logic and a

set of relationships between terms and as such provides a model through which events and facts can be 'measured' and grasped; these exist in a context and are consequently never purely 'rational'. As such the museum, the arts centre, the cultural centre, the gallery, the collection and so on can be thought of as types, without bringing an image or example to mind. Describing and interpreting is not about recognising something as a specific type or about using the type as criterion. It is about discerning, by means of a type, the complexity and stratification of the actual building and gaining a clear insight into how the building truly – that is: within its spatial and historical context – exists and carries meaning.

However, there's more to this. The type is not a norm, but since it transparently formulates a social rationality, it indicates the stakes: what is fundamentally chosen before 'reality' intervenes and makes things less than transparent. The type is first and foremost a means to ponder – about the museum for instance – and formulate what is at stake in architecture. This is relevant when a building order is granted, even more relevant than when a building is designed, and definitely more relevant than when one wants to understand an existing building. So: what is / what does a museum typology, what is / what does an arts centre typology? To keep collective possession and show consensus regarding a valuable tradition? To direct undivided attention to topical and urgent problems? To make private (artistic) interventions in the public sphere possible as well as individual appropriation and 'privatisation' of 'collective possessions'? Is the museum supposed to leave the visitor 'be' with the art works? Does it have to create 'rooms' that resemble living rooms to that purpose? Is it preferable for a museum to be itself or should it rather be self-explanatory and 'deconstruct' itself and keep on apologising ad infinitum for what it is? The choice to make typology central (again) to architectural discussions is in the first place an attempt to act counter to the appearance of neutrality that architecture is capable of creating. What matters is what a community wants or expects, the assigning and taking of responsibilities. Architecture and criticism should make clear that there is more to architecture and to any concrete building than meets the eye and the expectations.

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SEMINAR

SESSION 3: Design Competition: Our Museum

Design Competition: Our Museum

COMPETITION BRIEF

For the closed design competition, three teams (of architects and artists) are invited to develop a project that launches a critical reflection and discussion about the museum as a public institution and as a public building. The objective of the competition is to carry out research into the role of architecture in the museum of contemporary art, as both a space and a place.

Continually, architecture is used as a vehicle to fundamentally rethink the museum on both a micro and a macro level - not only the commissioning institution itself, but the entire concept of 'the museum' as well. Architecture is capable - or so we are made to believe - of extending the museum's boundaries in both the literal and figurative senses. In the last three decades, we have indeed been regaled with the most diverse and spectacular architectural 'appearances'. But has this architectural extravaganza offered a similar amount of thought-provoking institutional structures in exchange? In other words, did these buildings 'imply', bring about, even provoke totally different museum policies? Did all these exquisite bodies generate an equivalent amount of innovative and pioneering institutional personalities? How many actual building projects, if any, have succeeded in setting the traditional museum typology - architectural as well as institutional - 'in motion'?

Nowadays, it seems that most architectural investment is made in the unit of external programming: does it provide the city with a landmark, does it fit into the cityscape, does it add value to the surrounding urban fabric, does it stimulate city planning, or distribute the museum's different peripheral functions in an interesting manner? These kinds of design qualities situate the role of the museum within a broader socio-economic, urban, and political context, but do they really provide new insight into

the way in which the museum can function as a platform for contemporary art? Do they really develop new approaches to the - doubtlessly still compelling - traditional museum programme: the conservation, study and presentation of artworks?

Participants in the design competition are asked to reflect upon the possible task(s) of architecture in the construction of future museums of contemporary art. Is there still a vital role and significance to discern for contemporary architecture? The order for the construction of a museum may still be one of the most prestigious commissions an architect can get, but is it really as challenging as it used to be, or is claimed to be? Has architecture failed so dramatically in helping the museum to rethink its space that it is now being forced for good into a mere subservient and benign position, creating flexible and neutral interiors, hidden behind gaudy exteriors? Or is the problem not a matter of architectural, but rather of institutional nature? Is it not the case that architecture has been rarely permitted to intervene in the actual spatial development of the museum programme, on the basis of flexibility, neutrality or programmatic freedom?

The participating teams are asked to design 'their museum'. They are expected to develop a project that will encompass a stimulating vision on the present and future role of architecture within the programme of the museum of contemporary art. However, the teams enjoy total freedom in their choice of type of programme and context. They are asked to develop a project that first and foremost stimulates a critical reflection and discussion on the role of architecture in the construction of the site of the museum.

REQUESTED DOCUMENTS

* Concept paper: max. 2 pages
* Max. 3 A3 drawings
* 1 advertisement page for the project in a self-selected art magazine (which needs to be specified)

DEADLINE

The deadline for the competition is 11 November. Documents are to be submitted at the Jan van Eyck Academie before 18:00 hrs.

The results of this closed design competition are presented on 13 November during a semi-public jury session at the **Museum in ¿Motion?** conference at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. The participants are given 15 minutes to present their designs to both jury and public. Afterwards, there will be a semi-public jury deliberation and a plenary discussion with the participants, members of the jury and the public. Once a consensus has been reached, the winning team will be proclaimed.

A similar competition was organized by the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning of the University Ghent and the Jan van Eyck Academie in December 2003. For further information please visit: http://www.iconopolis.tk

* Jury: Tristan Weddigen, Roemer van Toorn, Wiel Arets, Jouke Kleerebezem, Judith Barry

< OFFICE 12 >

TO ENTER A MUSEUM ONE MUST OPEN THE DOOR

< TO ENTER A MUSEUM ONE MUST OPEN THE DOOR >

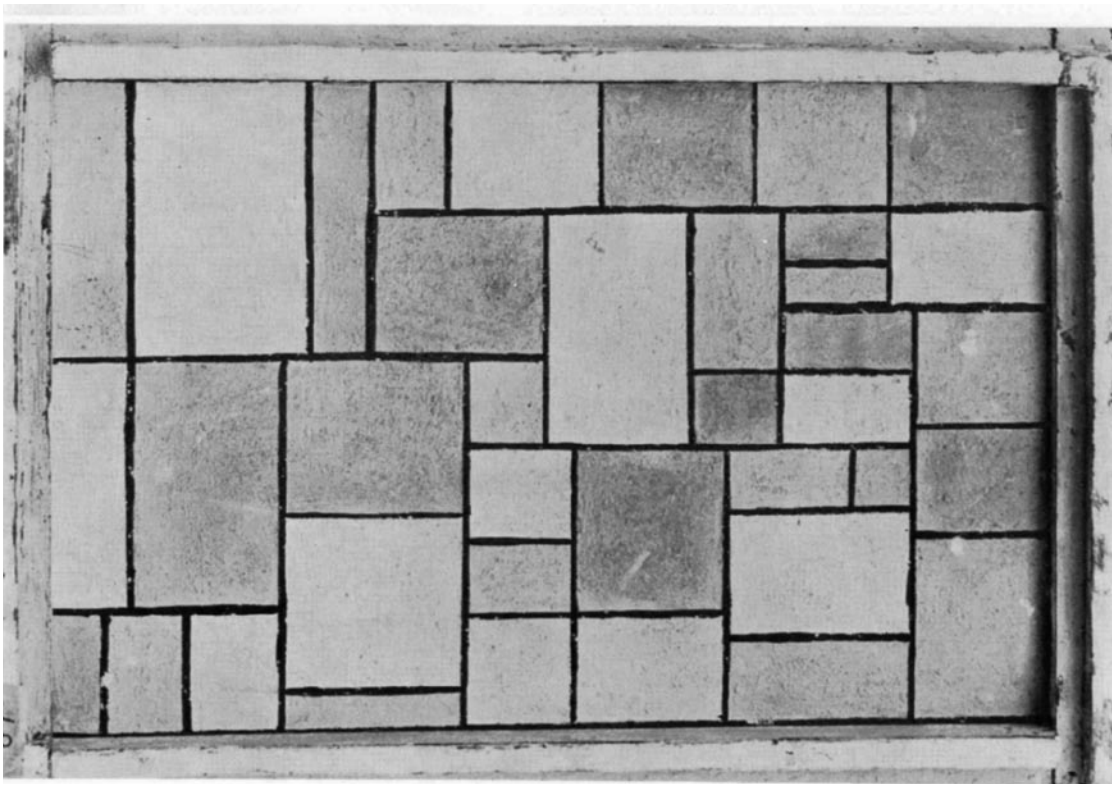


< 1. Steel Door, Wittgenstein House, 1928 >

Museum architecture seems an easy endeavour, nowadays. First, invest a maximum of effort into spatial extravaganza for every part of the museum directly linked to outer public space : plaza, elevation, lobby, pavillions, bookshop, interiorised streets. Then, fit in the needed galleries for the contemplation of art. For these, design effort is minimal. Art rooms, cabinets or galleries are conceived with an abundant architectural reluctancy. Prepare this space for art! Strip it down to a white neutralisation of conditions!

How could a breeding ground with such spatial infertility ever be expected to procreate endlessly contemporary art?
In the places we consacrate to contemporary art, space as such is a leftover.
Our proposal is an attempt to re-install space as a principal part of artistic creation and presentation.

< OFFICE 12 >



< 2. Etude, G. Vantongerloo, 1919. >

Our conquest of museum space rethinks the classical layout of the Beaux-Arts gallery : a sequence of large rooms.

The choice of typology is brilliant in its evidence : it contains completely differing artistic universes in fundamentally equal – but spatially different – rooms. The proposal massively intensifies this typology : all rooms are shut off with self-closing steel doors, all walls are conceived as translucent.

The museum is revived : The brilliance of the new layout enables curators and artists to incorporate these doors and neighbouring rooms into artistic presentation or creation. Light, rooms & doors are organised as one single spatial concept : coming in through the entrance courts, light filters through the translucent walls, losing its intensity over the adjacent rooms up to the point it generates a black box.

< TO ENTER A MUSEUM ONE MUST OPEN THE DOOR >

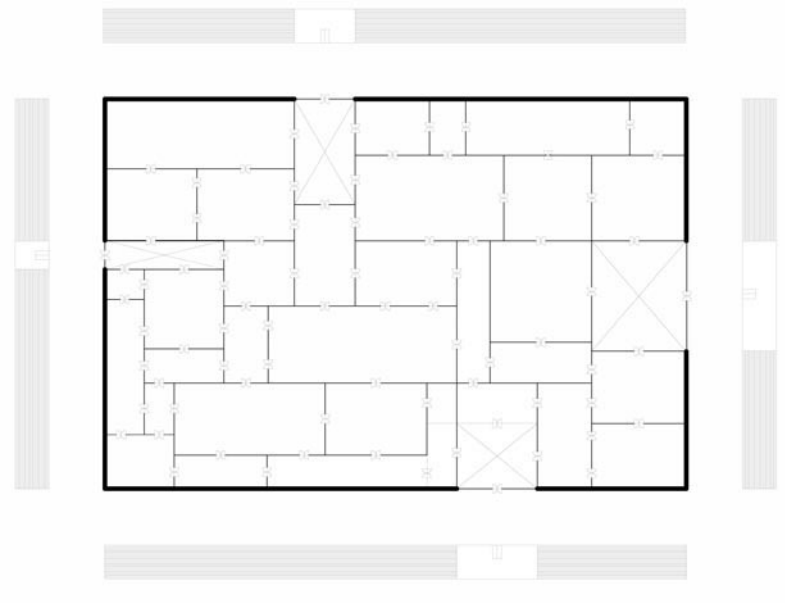


< 3. Interior View to Entrance Court iv. Interior View >

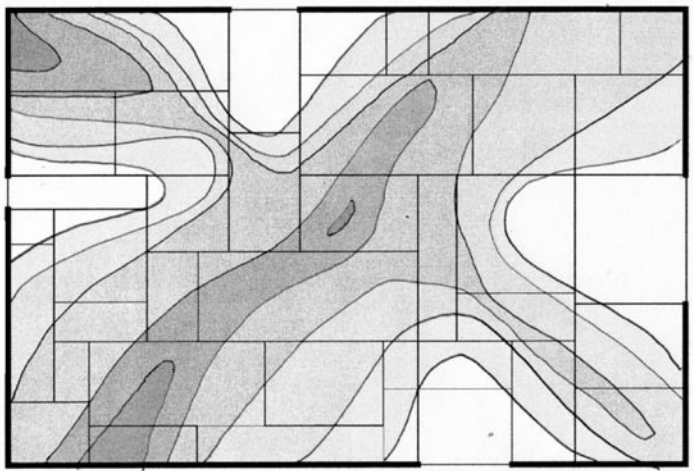


The spatial design shifts hands : The parcours, traditionally neatly defined by the architect, becomes crucial part of artistic conception and visitors's experience. One by one, all decade-old schisms of the museum of contemporary art are overcome : Somewhere in their ever-changing strolls through the museum, people swiftly pass from white cubes to black boxes, from ancient enfilade to individualised room for art, from intimate artistic environment to interiorised public space.

< OFFICE 12 >



< 5. Floor Plan and Elevations >



< 6. Illuminance Plan >

Deprived of its internal struggle between public and contemplation, the museum can finally resign from its haphazard quest for the Public. The import of public space, squeezing the interior art rooms, finally halts exactly where it once began : at the brickwork facade of the museum building, its perimeter. The boundary between museum and outer world is restored. Public Space has been expelled. The transparancy that has blurred the boundaries between the street and the Institute has finally been appropriated and incorporated by the Institute itself. It has been cut loose from it's dominating polemic and given to the artists to tackle. To enter a museum you must open the door.

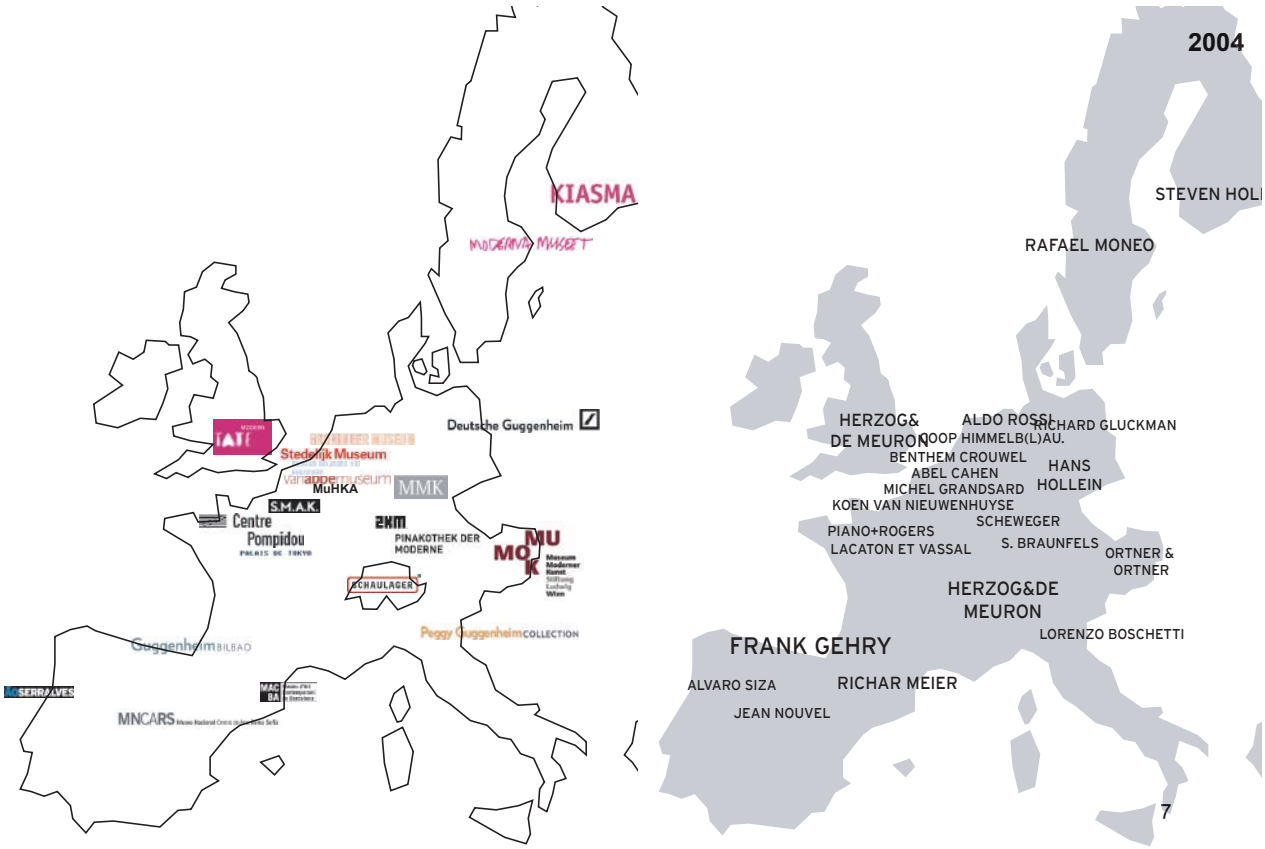
< TO ENTER A MUSEUM ONE MUST OPEN THE DOOR >

© 2004 — Office
Kersten Geers, David Van Severen with
Dries Vande Velde and Richard Venlet

FÜN DESIGN CONSULTANCY
with ALICIA FRAMIS
and MAMA SHOWROOM

FUTURE (CON)TEMPORARY ART MUSEUM?

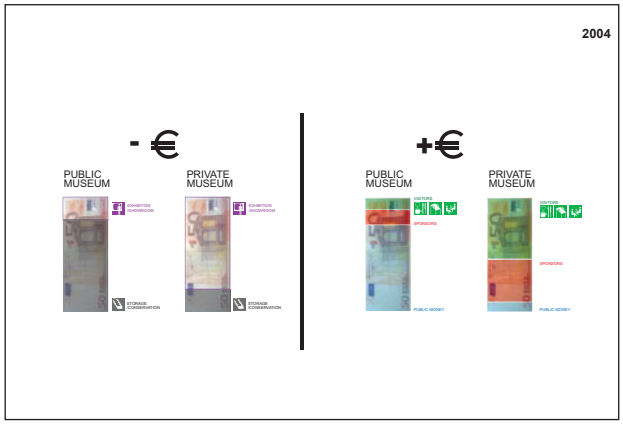
(FIRST PRIZE DESIGN COMPETITION: OUR MUSEUM)



IN A FIRST APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF HOW RECENT ARCHITECTURE HAS ENRICHED THE CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM AS AN INSTITUTION, IT IS VERY EASY TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE SAME CLASSICAL MODEL OF ARCHIVING, PRESERVING AND PRESENTING HAS BEEN USED ENDLESSLY. SOMETIMES IN A SCREAMING FASHION (ARCHITECTURE AS SCULPTURE) BUT ALSO IN A MORE MODEST WAY (ARCHITECTURE AS A BEAUTIFUL CONTAINER). ALWAYS, THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE PERFORMED AS ICONS TO SHOW POLITICAL POWER (CITY ICON) OR TO SHOW PRIVATE POWER (GUGGENHEIM).



THE BIGGEST PART OF THE AVAILABLE BUDGET OF THE PUBLIC MUSEUM IS COMMITTED TO ARCHIVING AND PRESERVATION, PRESENTATION GETS THE LEFT OVER. BUT LOOKING AT THE COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAM, IT IS CLEAR THAT EVERYWHERE AN EQUAL INCOME MODEL IS REPEATED: CAFETERIA, BOOKSHOP, LIBRARY, RESTAURANT, CONFERENCE FACILITIES. THESE 'SECONDARY USES' ARE BIGGER OR MORE ACCESSIBLE IN PRIVATE MUSEUMS AND STARTED TO APPEAR MORE AND MORE IN PUBLIC ONES. THE DISPARITY IS QUANTITY AND LOCATION IN ORDER TO GET MORE OR LESS REVENUE. DOESN'T THE LACK OF EVOLUTION HAVE ITS ROOTS IN A PROBLEM OF FINANCING RATHER THAN PROGRAMMING?



MOVING DEEPER IN THIS LINE OF THINKING OTHER PHENOMENA APPEAR: ART INSTITUTIONS ARE GETTING MORE AND MORE SPONSORS, PARTNERSHIPS AND FRIENDS (SONY, IKEA, MICROSOFT). THEY GIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT EITHER TO SPECIFIC EXHIBITIONS OR TO THE MUSEUM AS A WHOLE.

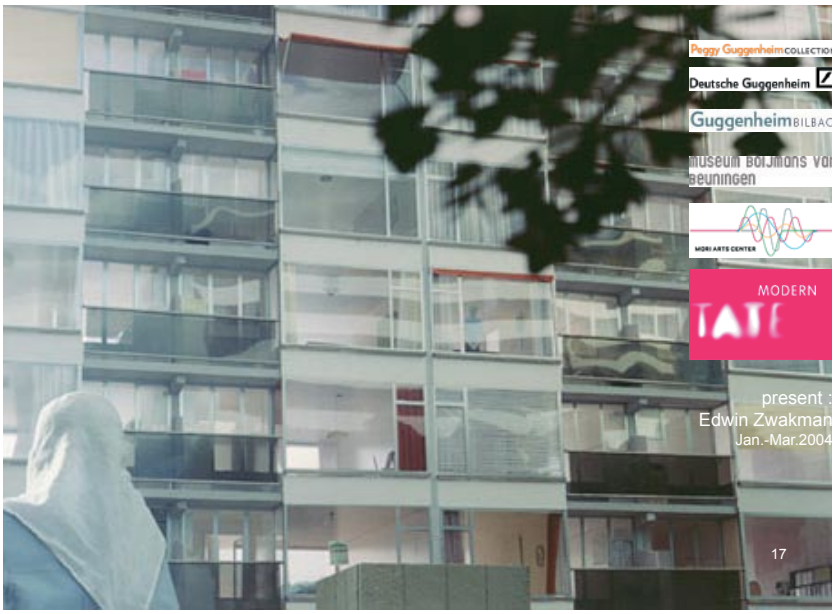


WHEN PUBLIC MUSEUMS REMAIN THE PURE CONSERVATORS AND ARCHIVERS OF ART, WHEN THEY HAVE THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF MONEY TO BUY ART PIECES, THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES THAT HAVE THE POWER TO ESTABLISH THE CONTEMPORARY ESTHETICS. THE PUBLIC MUSEUM IS STILL THE DICTATOR OF WHAT IS HISTORY OF ART AND WHAT IS NOT. IN TELEVISION THE GOVERNMENT USED TO BE THE ONE DECIDING WHAT WE HAVE TO WATCH. AS FAR AS DIFFERENT TV NETWORKS APPEARED WE ARE NOW ABLE TO CHOOSE WHAT WE WANT TO WATCH.

FROM THE ART POINT OF VIEW. ART IS NOT ANYMORE A UNIQUE PIECE, LIKE A PAINTING OF VAN GOGH. SINCE THE SIXTIES ARTISTS USES VIDEO, PHOTOGRAPHY, INTERNET, ... THIS ALLOWS THEM TO REPRODUCE THEIR WORK AS MANY TIMES AS NECESSARY.



MODERN TECHNOLOGY MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR AN ARTIST TO SHOW THE SAME PIECE OF ART IN THE GUGGENHEIM, THE BOIJMANS, THE MORI MUSEUM AND THE TATE AT THE SAME TIME. ARTISTS BECOME INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN AT VERY YOUNG AGE, VERY RAPIDLY, UBIQUITOUSLY.



IN FACT, WHEN WE GO TO AN EXHIBITION, WE DO NOT KNOW IF WE SEE AN ORIGINAL OR AN 'EXHIBITION COPY'.



FROM THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS CONCLUSIONS COME EFFORTLESS TOGETHER:

—— FINANCIAL ISSUES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLL IN THE MUSEUM AS AN INSTITUTION. THEY INFECT THEIR MANAGEMENT, THEIR PROGRAMMING AND THUS THEIR DESIGN. THE DANGER OF DENYING THEM WILL LEAD US TO A SITUATION THAT ALREADY EXISTS —— THE 'DEUTSCHE GUGGENHEIM', WHERE GUGGENHEIM AND DEUTSCHE BANK ARE THE SAME INSTITUTION.





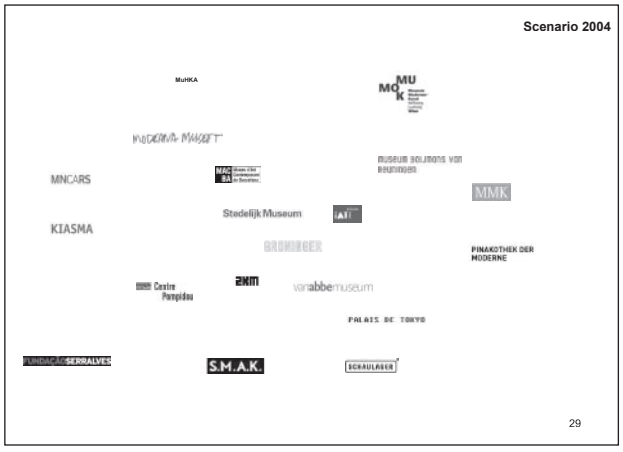
IS THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS GOING TO BE A CONSTELLATION OF PRADA BOIJMANS OR SHELL STEDELIJK. OR WORSE, ARE THESE COMPANIES GOING TO BUY THE MUSEUMS? ARE WE GOING TO HAVE IKEART INSTEAD OF MACBA? AND ARE PUBLIC MUSEUMS GOING TO DISAPPEAR IN THE END?



— *MODERN TECHNOLOGIES COULD ALLOW US TO HAVE THE SAME FIRST-CLASS EXHIBITION IN 400 CITIES AT THE SAME TIME. WOULD ART THEN BECOME ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE AT ANY TIME?*

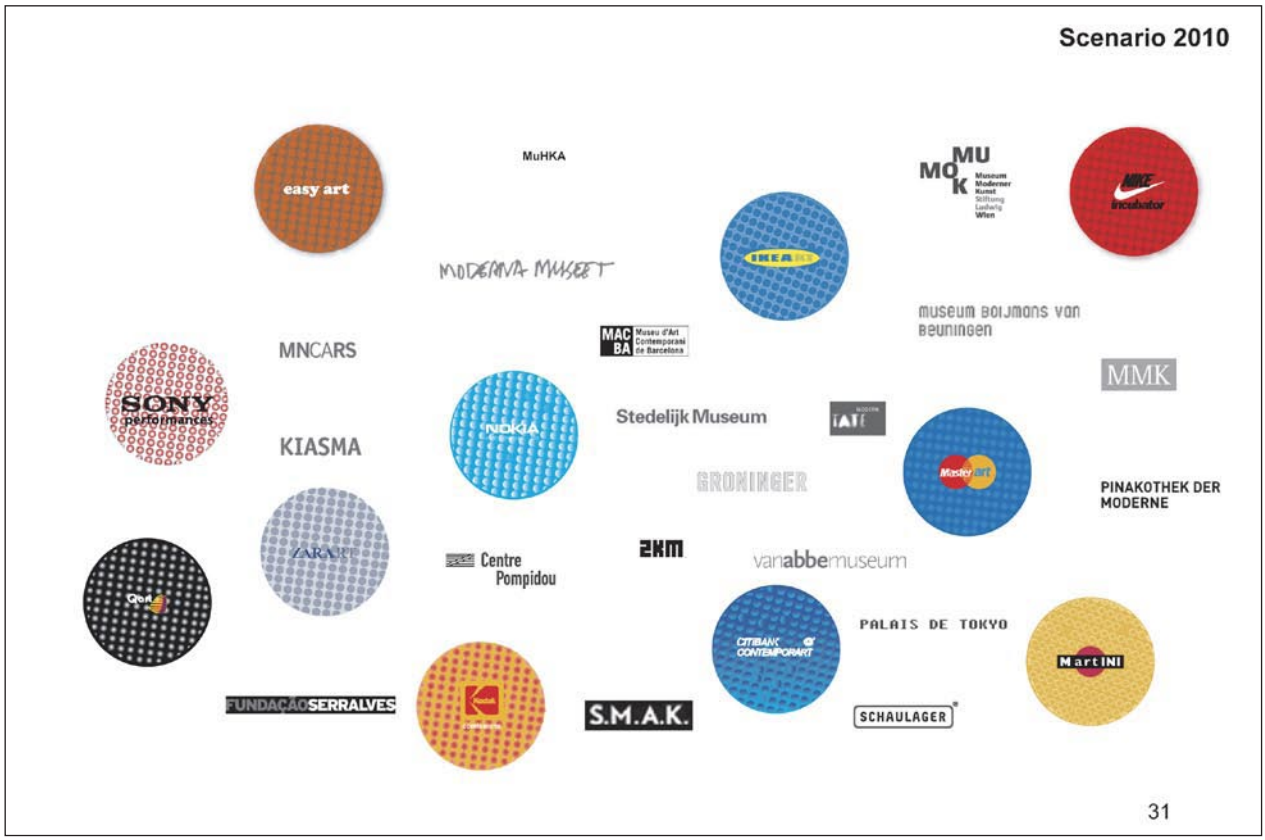


— *PRIVATE COMPANIES ARE THE ONLY ONES THAT HAVE THE POWER AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO BREAK THE PUBLIC ART MONOPOLE.*



(CON)TEMPORARY ART TOMORROW:

AS WE SEE IT, THE PROPOSED SCENARIO FOR THE NEXT CENTURY WILL CHANGE THE ART LANDSCAPE INTO A MUCH MORE INTERESTING ONE. IT WILL COMPLETELY CHANGE THE ART WORLD IN ALL ITS LEVELS:



THESE COMPANIES, ALREADY FINANCING MUSEUMS, HAVE IMPORTANT COLLECTIONS AND SUPPORT CHALLENGING ART. IMAGINE THEY FINALLY BECOME VISIBLE AND SET UP THEIR OWN MUSEUMS: IKEART, NIKE INCUBATOR, EASYART, SHELL COMISSIONS, MASTERART, NOKIA CONTEMPORARY ART, SONY PERFORMANCES AND SO ON.

FOR INSTANCE SONY, PHILIPS, CANON WOULD HAVE A CENTER OF ART WHERE ARTISTS WORKING WITH DIGITAL IMAGING COULD BE SUPPORTED AND EXHIBITED. SINCE ONE OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE MUSEUMS NOWADAYS IS THAT WHEN THEY SHOW VIDEO- OR SOUND-ARTISTS, THEY HAVE TO SPEND A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY BUYING THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT THE ARTISTS NEED. SONY COULD PROVIDE THE BEST TECHNOLOGY, SUPPORT THE ARTIST TO MAKE THE BEST PIECE AND FIND AN ART CURATOR IN CHARGE OF THEIR OWN SHOWS AND COLLECTION.

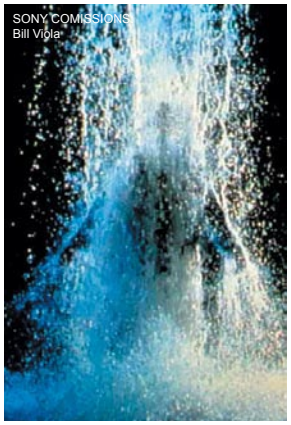
NIKE AND ADIDAS WOULD WORK MORE WITH ART RELATED TO YOUTH, SUBCULTURES AND SPORT, AS THE WORK OF MATTHEW BARNEY...



IKEA WOULD WORK WITH ARTISTS LIKE JORGE PARDO, JOEP VAN LIESHOUT, TOBIAS REHBERGHER, MARTIN KIPPENBERGER, FRANZ WEST, ABSALON, ETC... THEY WORK WITH THE IDEA OF HOME, DOMESTIC SPACES AND DESIGN OF THE EVERYDAY. THE RELATION INBETWEEN ART AND COMPANY WOULD NOT BE DECORATING THE WALLS, IT WOULD SHOW A STRONG INTEREST IN THE CONCEPT OF THEIR OWN OBJECTS. THE SAME RELATION-SHIP COULD BE APPLIED FOR ARCHITECTURE.

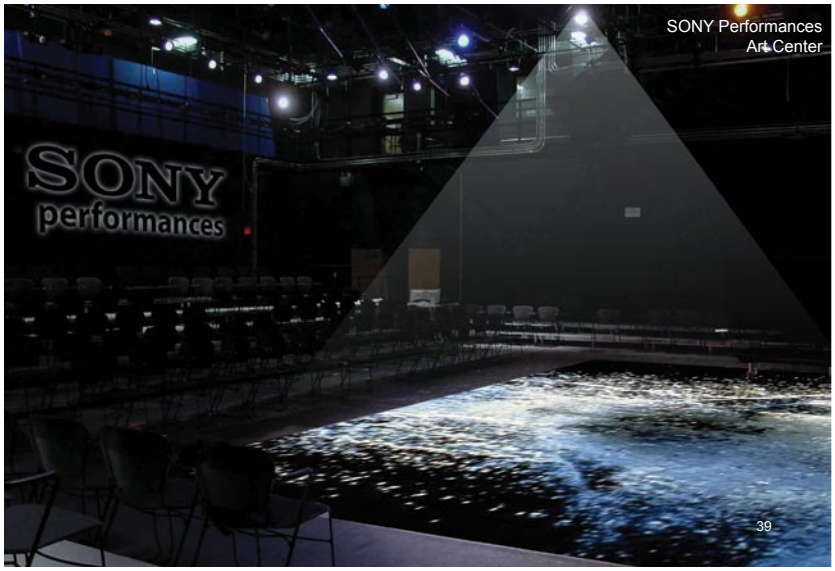


EASYJET/EASYART COULD CREATE A NEW WAY OF SHOWING ART.. IF THEY WOULD WORK WITH DOUGLAS GORDON, THEY COULD DECIDE TO SHOW HIS WORK IN THEIR EXHIBITION SPACE, IN THEIR AIRPLANES, IN THE AIRPORT OR IN THE STREET.









COMPANIES COULD CREATE ART A LA CÀRTE. IF SONY, FOR INSTANCE WORKS WITH BILL VIOLA, HE COULD DECIDE IF HE PREFERS TO SHOW HIS WORK ON THE STREET , IN THEIR SHOPS, OR IN THEIR ART CENTER.





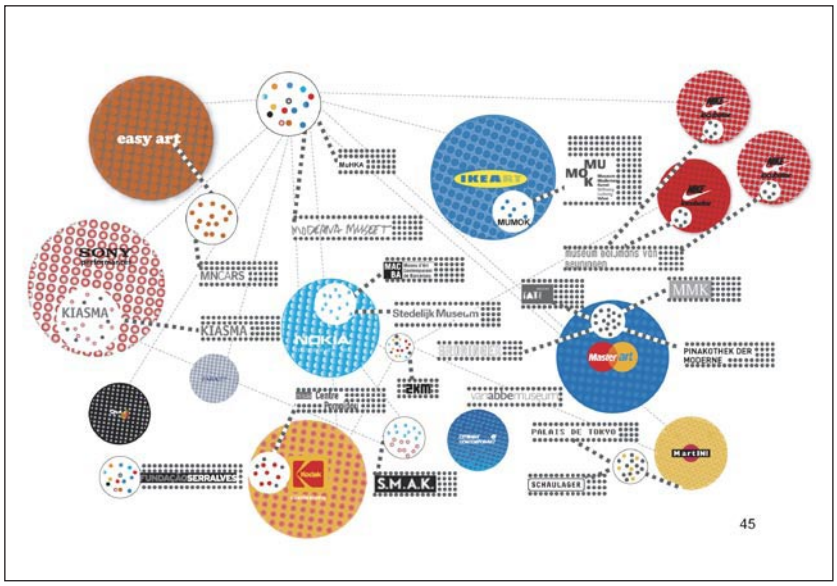
IN THIS NEW SORT OF RELATIONSHIPS ALL ARTISTS, ARCHITECTS AND COMPANIES WILL BENEFIT.

ART WILL BECOME MORE ACKNOWLEDGED AND WILL BE ASSIMILATED FASTER.

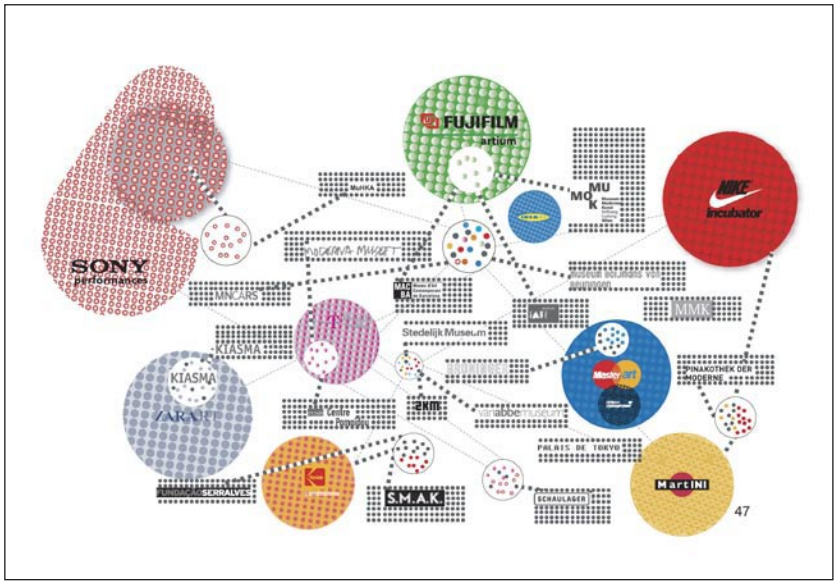
ARCHITECTURE WILL NOT HAVE THE CHALLENGE TO DESIGN THE 'CITY MUSEUM' BUT AN INFINITE ARRANGEMENT OF TYPOLOGIES. ARCHITECTURE A LA CÀRTE?

COMPANIES WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS 'CUTTING EDGE ENTREPRENEURS' OF ART QUALITY. ENTERPRISES WILL PROMOTE THEIR SPACE FOR ART IN A MUCH MORE OPEN FASHION IN OTHER THINGS THAN THE MUSEUM INSTITUTION – AND SINCE SELLING THEIR IMAGE IS THEIR BENEFIT THESE NEW SPACES WILL IRONICALLY BECOME MORE PUBLIC.

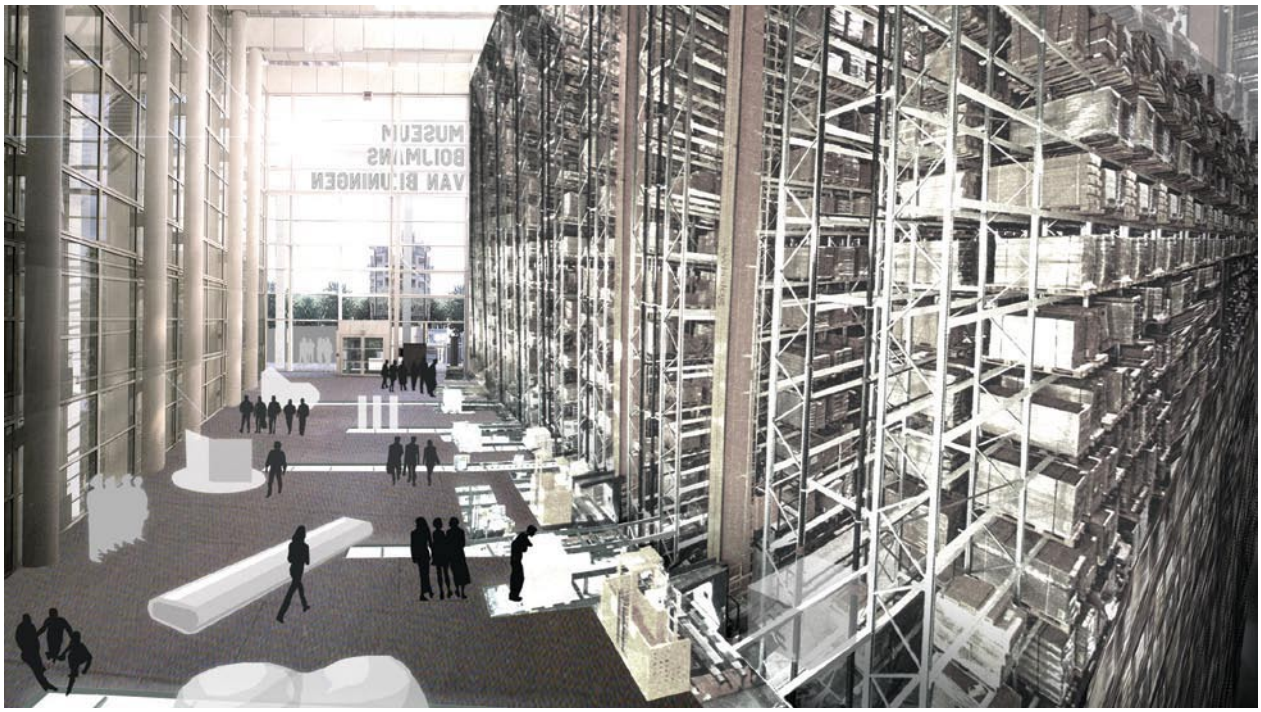
ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS WILL NOT BE ANY LONGER ATTACHED TO AN EXHIBITION SPACE. SONY WILL NOT REQUIRE A BUILDING LIKE BOIJMANS OR TATE MODERN BECAUSE SONY IS MORE THAN A CONSTRUCTION. IT IS EVERY CONCERT, SHOP, FAIR, STREET SCREEN,... ON THE OTHER HAND SONY IS FASHIONABLE AND THUS TEMPORARY.



THE PUBLIC MUSEUM WILL REMAIN THE GUARDIAN OF THE HISTORY OF ART. THEY WILL HAVE THE TASK TO BUY, PRESERVE AND ARCHIVE THE ART HISTORY, AS NATIONAL LIBRARIES DO. THEY WILL BE THE QUALITY CONTROLLERS IN THIS ENTIRE CONSTELLATION OF NEW RELATIONSHIPS.



CURATORS WILL START THEIR CAREERS IN THE BRAND INCUBATORS AND THEY WILL MOVE TO THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS WHENEVER THEY HAVE ACQUIRED A CERTAIN STATUS. COMPANIES WILL ASK THE MUSEUM CURATORS TO ORGANIZE SHOWS IN THEIR ART SPACES AND WE WILL SEE KIASMA FOR ZARA OR POMPIDOU FOR T MOBILE...MUSEUMS WILL BECOME THE ART BRANDS OF THE QUALITY...



CAN WE SAY THEN THAT THE PUBLIC MUSEUM WILL BE LIBERATED FROM ITS ACCESSORY FUNCTIONS AND BECOME THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ARTCHIVE OF THE WORLD?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO TRAVEL TO TATE MODERN ANYMORE TO SEE A SPECIFIC SHOW?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THIS SPECIFIC SHOW IS IN ALL CITIES OF THE WORLD? WHAT WILL THE SCENOGRAPHY OF AN EXHIBITION THAT IS SHOWN SIMULTANEOUSLY IN 400 PLACES BE LIKE?

HOW IS THE SONY MUSEUM GOING TO LOOK LIKE?

WHAT WILL BE THE ROLL OF THE ARTIST AS A POP STAR?

WHAT WILL BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IKEA ART AND EASY ART?

IS THE ART A LA CÀRTE THE REAL WAY TO BREAK WITH THE BOUNDARIES OF A MUSEUM?

WILL THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE PUBLIC MUSEUM CHANGE THEN? IS IT GOING TO BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL 'ARTCHIVE' OF THE WORLD?

IF ART CAN BE REPRODUCED ENDLESSLY WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF ART-TRANSPORT BUSINESS?



PAGE 15

MUSEUM IN MOTION
12 - 13 NOVEMBER 2004
1 ST PRIZE: DESIGN COMPETITION: OUR MUSEUM

TEAM:
FÜN DESIGN CONSULTANCY
(PAZ MARTIN, CESAR GARCIA, JOHAN DE WACHTER
AND LIU PEI, ZUOMIN WANG)
WITH
ALICIA FRAMIS
AND
SHOWROOM MAMA (JEROEN EVEREART)
SPECIAL THANKS TO: REIN WOLF

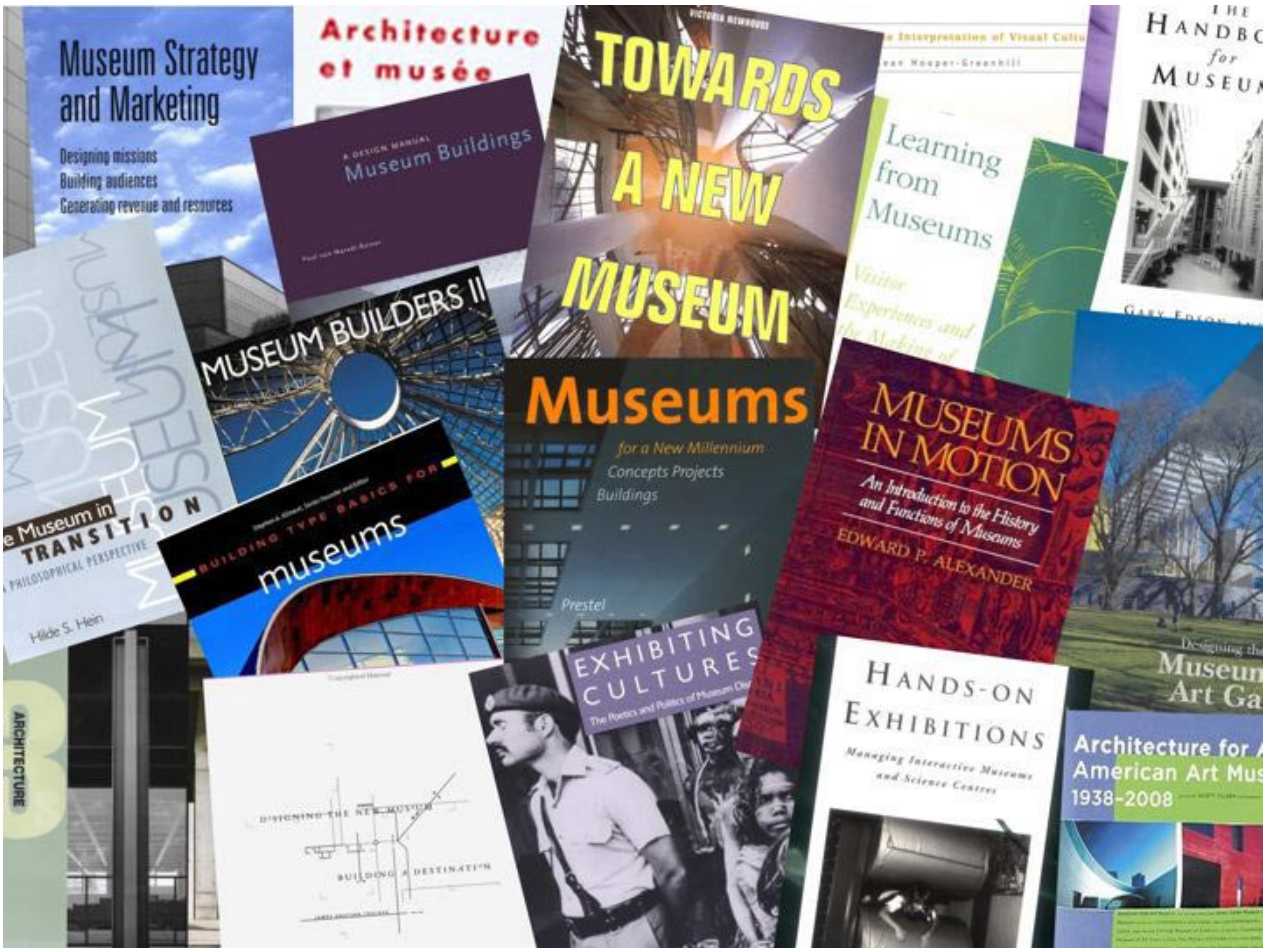
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T: +31 (0) 10 2709671
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INFO@FUNDC.COM
WWW.FUNDC.COM

ONE ARCHITECTURE

MUSEUM IN ¿MOTION?



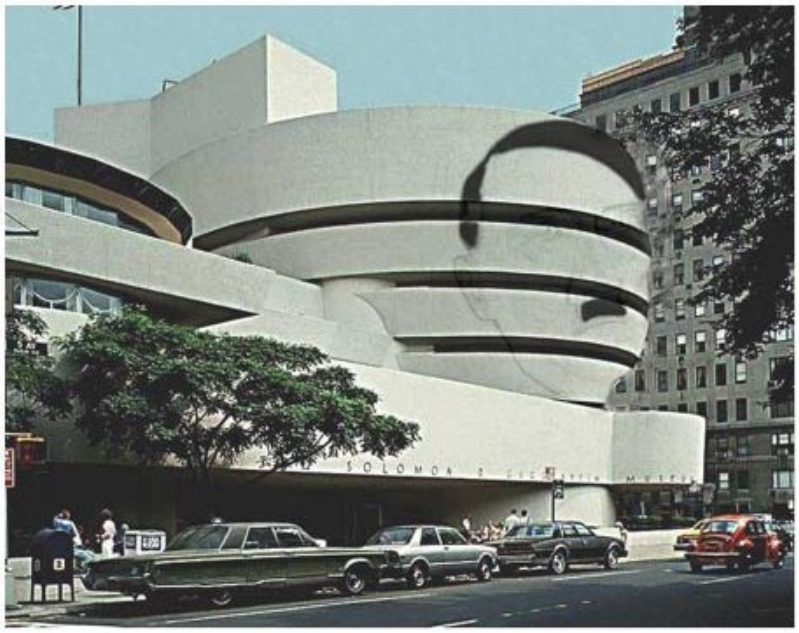
ONE ARCHITECTURE



It is somewhat discomforting to have read all the texts around the conference *Museum in ¿Motion?* It has become clear the museum is not, in this age, the pivotal place for the dissemination of art. The idea of the museum has even, to some extent, become synonymous with what has been; the museum is a place where one stores and displays things from the past. Arguments have been made to treat, within the context of its refurbishment, the Stedelijk Museum as the 'Museum for the art of the 20th century'. However much that might be a relief and absolve us from answering the question of this competition (to design 'our museum'), until the moment that there is a 'museum for all the texts and conferences about the future of the museum', we are still in trouble.

With the world in motion, with developments such as the ascent of the experience and entertainment economy, the rise of the network society, the privatization of government, and the death of the avant-garde, about as many new manifestations that before belonged to the museum have emerged.

ONE ARCHITECTURE



02

Following the outrageous success of Bilbao in positioning both the city and the Guggenheim as a brand, the Maurizio Cattelan Museum goes even further by using the potential shock value of the work of this greatest artist of our time to entice audiences.

ONE ARCHITECTURE





03

‘DERCONSOFT’ capitalizes on the fact that curators are better at using technology such as airplanes and cell phones than the works of art themselves, thereby shifting the center of power in the art world.

(thanks Wouter)

ONE ARCHITECTURE









04

This same trend has even more exacerbated the privatization and outsourcing of the presentation of artworks to private galleries, which in turn have become to resemble the 'traditional' museum. Larry Gagosian's Chelsea gallery is every artist's wet dream (in more ways just than it being the perfect white cube).

ONE ARCHITECTURE



05

Even the museum's function as society's conscience, through the promotion of social agendas, has been outsourced; real activist art now takes place on boats.

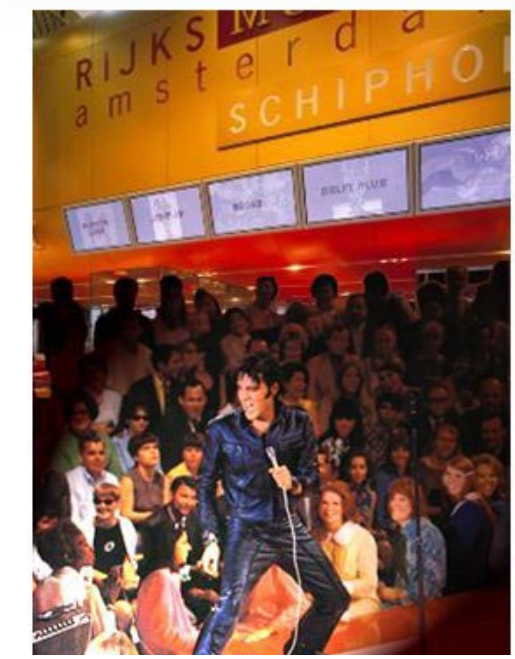
ONE ARCHITECTURE



06

And all that is popular, like Elvis and Celine Dion in music, eventually end up in Vegas,

ONE ARCHITECTURE

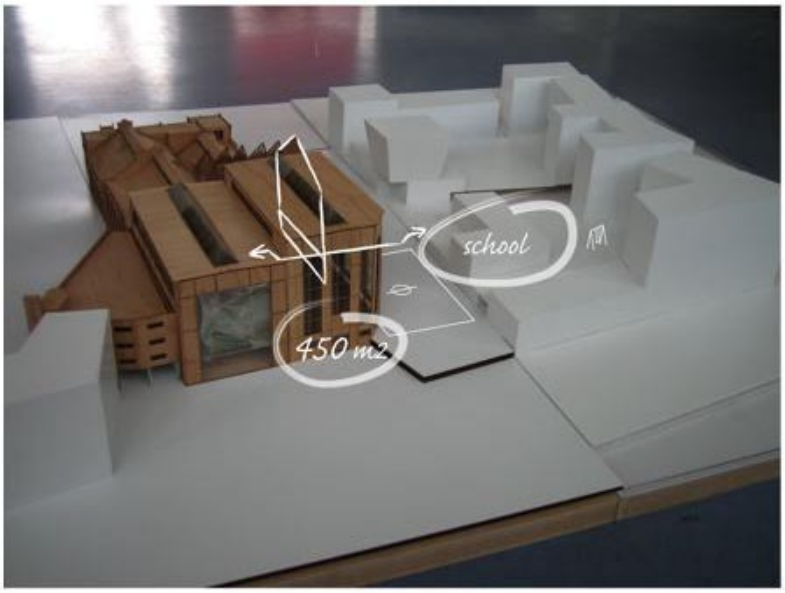


07

...on the airport or in the supermarket.

The diversity and quantity of venues and forms of 'museum' is greater than ever. 'Museum' is a 'growth' industry. Crisis? What crisis?

ONE ARCHITECTURE



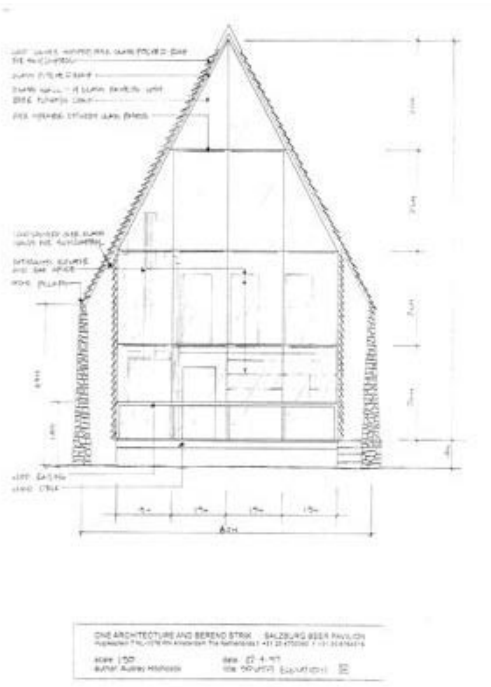
08

We think that most of the traditional roles of museum (such as collecting, promoting and showcasing) are run well by the market, with, often, no state, and no museum necessary. We think that government should still play a role, however, in education. We are happy to work at this moment on several combinations of schools with cultural programs.

For our own private museum, with so many opportunities, our proposal is specific to the interests of Berend and me. It will not necessarily be used to store and display things. It will take into account the potential prevalence of object over contents. It will be a social space. It will not need state sponsorships. It will be political.

ONE ARCHITECTURE





We once had such a project in our Frueshoppen Pavilion, up to and including ecological value by recycling the produced urine into beer. But the lack of corporate sponsorship (we were talking to Heineken) killed it.

ONE ARCHITECTURE









For the entry to this competition we have resorted to the DIY-method. We went into the garage as would be museum-designers. We punked Berend's unsold embroideries into a tent.

The use of recycled materials gives it 'ecological value'.

It is both art object and display space.

It embeds art within the larger framework of the production of images in contemporary society. Stitching becomes a curatorial activity. It renders the world more intensive and more tactile.

ONE ARCHITECTURE

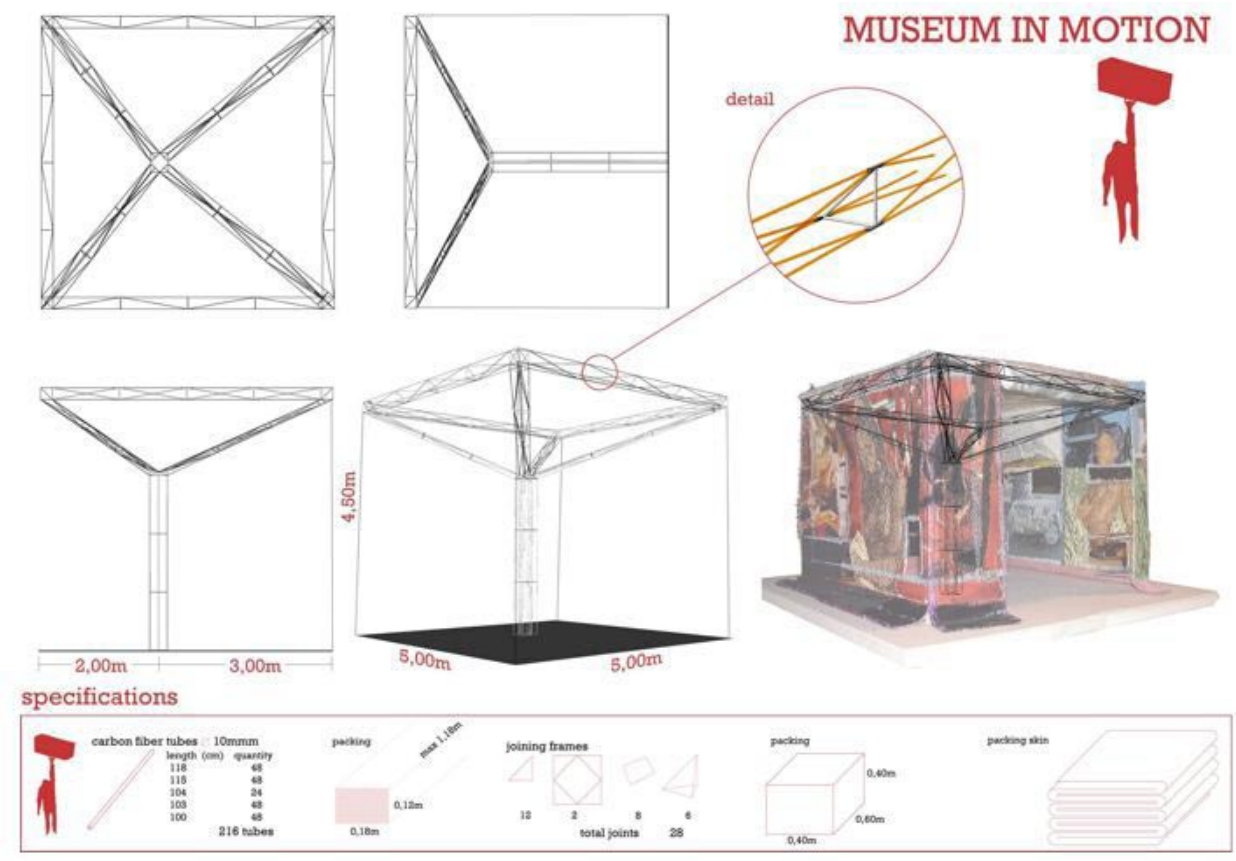




11

It is a tent which transforms as necessary. The 5 x 5 x 4.5 meter cube can be used to frame 2D or sedentary art. This tent is acoustically adapted for audio and video art; it can also become a little theater for performances. The structure can be used to hang lights and other equipment.

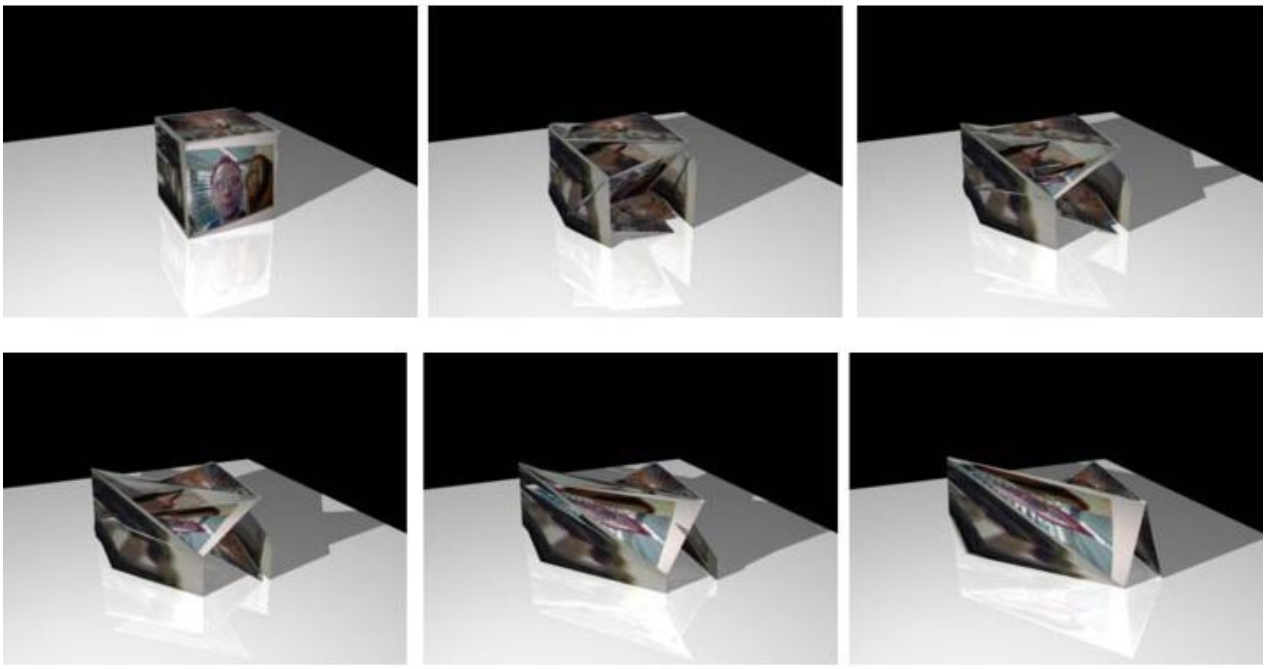
ONE ARCHITECTURE



The carbon fiber makes it lightweight; it can fold up into two 120 cm long packages, each weighing approximately 40 kg. It is mobile and can escape its own institutionalism. It can travel. In combination with the fact that we are not dependent on institutional or corporate money to make it, it gives us freedom to operate.

ONE ARCHITECTURE





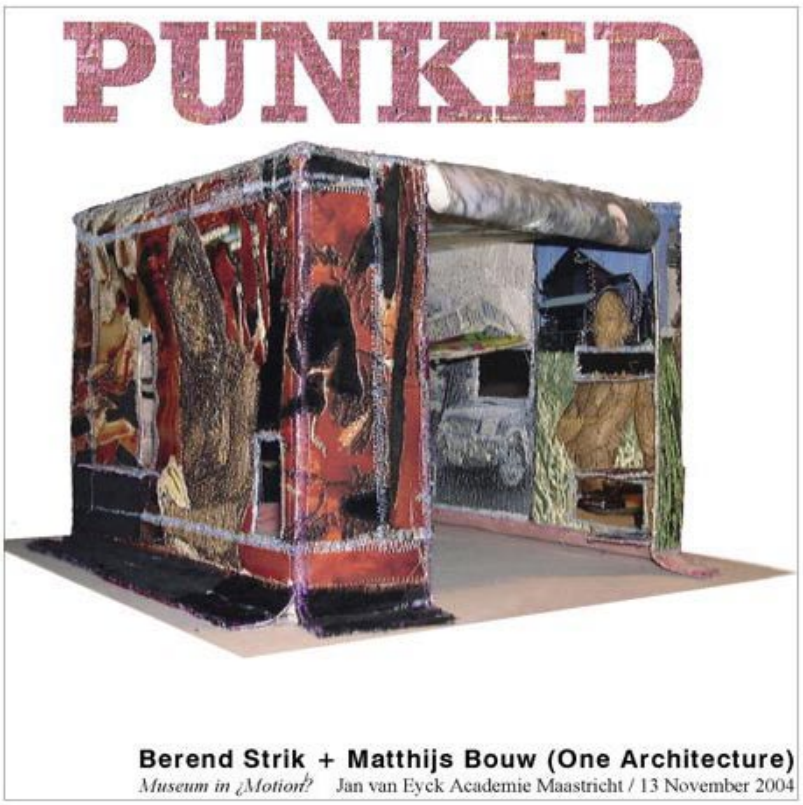
An appealing aspect is that the tent is not a dominant Western form, a prime concern in these turbulent times. Our design combines, formally, the Bedouin tent with the neutral highlights of 20th century architecture (Kahn, Mies & Corb).

ONE ARCHITECTURE



And because, essentially, 'art', to paraphrase Don DeLillo, 'is made by men in rooms', it can be used as a site for networking by the patriarchs. If the atmosphere gets too stale, it is easy to let some fresh air back in.

ONE ARCHITECTURE



Just do it?
Power games and museums.

Tristan Weddigen

Fakes can tell the truth. At the Jan van Eyck Academie Maastricht, the *Museum in ¿Motion?* conference staged a fictitious design competition for a new museum of contemporary art: *Our Museum*. The jury consisted of five people concerned with architectural and art criticism. Although the competing teams, the jury, and the audience were fully aware of the fictional character of the event, the game was taken very seriously. Proposing projects as well as judging them has a sportive side, and both the competing teams and the individuals in the jury, of course, tried to impose their ideas.

The thus created artificial situation can be regarded as a small-scale model of real decision processes within the culture market. Competition is a capitalist paradigm motivated by animal instincts and justified by social Darwinism. For the very reason that competition is a highly successful ritual – i.e. a symbolic and social interaction with real consequences – it stands between fiction and reality. It constitutes the social and aesthetic space in which capitalist democracies exist and evolve and something as unnecessary as 'art' plays a major role. And this is why games – and also this particular museum game – need to be taken seriously.

Our Museum – whose museum? Who plays the museum game? In capitalist societies, political and economic decisions are mostly taken or steered by oligarchies of influential personalities. They often act as experts, lobbyists, or supervisors in boards of trustees and advisory committees. They constitute a homogenous network and elite of decision and opinion makers. Because science, culture, and the fine arts are being increasingly integrated into the economic system, this model of management is becoming the rule in cultural institutions like museums and universities, too. This is where part of the game is being played. As long as companies and institutions are part of society, they need to cultivate the dialogue with voters, consumers and tax payers. Advisory committees, to some extent, defend interests that go beyond the firm's or institution's goals, but they do not represent the general public either: their members do not get voted, but are invited. While in economy committees fulfil precise functions – such as the increase in profits – their role and competences in cultural institutions remain less clear.

In order to participate in the cultural market and to influence its mechanisms, it is necessary to understand the decision games played in commissions. For example, the evolutionary idea of 'trend' is central to economic and cultural discourse. Advisory boards and juries are generally constituted not by specialists,

but by experienced 'decision makers' and newspaper-reading 'generalists' who are highly receptive to trends. The propagation of the idea of 'globalisation' in the 1990s has shown in economy and culture that the winning position is to be at the avant-garde of what is expected 'to come anyway': desiring the 'unavoidable'. But commissions, boards, and juries take an active role in the trend market, and consultants produce self-fulfilling prophecies. This is why in general it is becoming less and less possible to think of alternatives and why our societies are marked by a fundamentally fatalistic acceptance of the economic paradigm. The mass production of demand and offer has become the leading discourse and space of public participation, beyond national constitutions and party politics. Other ideas central to capitalist culture management, such as 'strategic thinking', 'sports', or 'branding' are crucial terms for understanding of today's society and art. There is nothing more powerful than words.

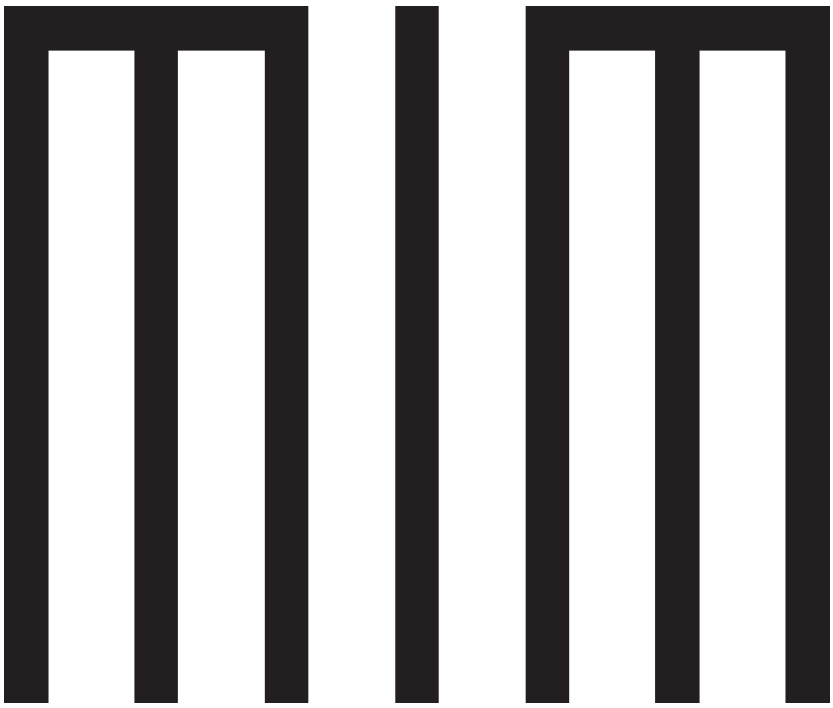
Fün Design Consultancy's competition project is not that funny – it is entirely realistic. The perspective that multinational firms not only sponsor works of arts, exhibitions, and museums in the background, but that global players openly make the art market and run the show is only a question of time and rentability. 2007 is more realistic than 2054, and firms like *IKEART* and *easyArt.com* will act as art commissioners and retailers, selling it as a lifestyle commodity for the new global middle classes. The fusion between art and industrial design, of art and economy, i.e. of art and 'life', will happen in the near future – or so the *Zeitgeist* seems to dictate. Hypnotized by 'inevitable' globalisation, we are passively witnessing the dismantling of cultural welfare – because we simply did not need to fight for it. Fully aware that economy recycles and profits even of its own critics, Fün Design Consultancy has chosen the only appropriate form for the presentation of its project: advertisement. Art and advertisement intensely interact, and they might fuse into 'artvertisement'. This is 'our' Western, rapidly and globally expanding language. The museum's future no longer resides in building(s); it is well beyond architecture's reach, situated in economy and politics. Therefore, Fün Design Consultancy did not act as architects, but as cultural managers. Their project's playful fatalism, its idea of making critique profitable, its ironic and ambiguous radicalisation of today's trends, mirrors what is actually happening. Their vision is nothing but a sharp counter-image of our times, the blunt materialisation of our forecasts. Hence we, as a jury perceptive to trends, liked it.

– 3 –

Public presentations of projects are daily business, whereas a public jury can be considered a critical experiment. By putting the jury live on stage – seemingly in a glass box or in a TV container – the public witnessed a process it is normally excluded from. Public art is usually made *for* and not *by* or *with* the public. Although its participation was obviously virtual and illusionary, the audience still gained insight into what happens backstage. Although the 'mediatisation' of politics is, ever since, an inevitable and dangerous phenomenon, the idea of a 'transparent jury' or 'jury show' offered material for reflection. For instance, it becomes clear that decision processes – as oral interactions – are seldom documented. A secret vote, then, sums up and covers the diverse and complex 'strategic' arguments which lead to a decision, so that the responsibility for one's decisions over public matters becomes elusive. Putting boards, commissions, and juries in front of the anonymous eyes and cameras of the public would exert pressure onto its members to 'watch their words' and to assume full responsibility.

This is how we felt, although it was a game – a game that we are all playing. The question is whether we can progressively change the rules in the course of the game and introduce more transparency. The idea that I might be responsible for supporting an 'inevitable' museum trend made me shiver when, on my way back from Maastricht, I discovered a museological mutant, the *Art @ the Airport* shop at Brussels Airport, which could just have come from our conference laboratory.

***



INSERTS

What Could Make Today's Museums so Different, so Appealing?

Judith Barry

Institutional Critique

The legacy of 'institutional critique' (for want of a better term) haunts all discussions on the museum and its future. While contemporary concerns are symptomatic of the current cultural conditions, they are the product of a long history as well. This record has much to offer to the discussions on the 'crisis' of the museum. Throughout the second part of the twentieth century, many artists – Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Broodthaers, Yves Klein, Michael Asher, Daniel Buren, Christian Phillip Mueller, Andrea Fraser, Mark Dion – used the crisis of the museum to precipitate a transformation in the views of art's nature and potential. Their activities have lead to a certain 'revolution' in art practices and produced a different understanding of art as an activity with consequences. Many art writers and critics however adhere to a synoptic trajectory of the history of 'institutional critique' and presume that there is a homogeneous body of tried and true artistic strategies as well as agreed upon definitions of what constitutes the institution and the art object. Yet these assumptions undermine the critical reception of the work and impede any understanding of its potential for contributing to the discussion.

Although many writers consider 'institutional critique' as the 'crossing of institutions of art and political economy, of representations of sexual identity and social life', they fail to maintain the dynamic aspect of the process implied, that is, that institutions and their objects are in a continuous process of 'becoming'.[1] When 'institutional critique' is applied to the institution itself, what is fluid and dynamic at the moment of analysis becomes suddenly fixed and unchanging. The particular 'meta' discourse – whose operating criteria may or may not be understood – is shown as existing 'in time'. The same applies to the notion 'intervention'; artists are often expected to make interventions that interrupt or expose the institution in such a way that what was previously invisible is made visible. This revelatory work is often considered the artwork itself – compare for instance interventionist strategies by artists such as Asher, Buren and Serra. However, since the networks of art practices, institutions and discourses are continuously expanding, contemporary artistic strategies of involvement have evolved beyond simple and indentifiable operational procedures. Offering a very personal point of view, I find that many artists are much more interested in setting up conditions and/or projects that engage with the dynamic networks constituted by museums, sites and/or objects. The ambition is still to cause effect and even change, but no longer to stop or freeze the situation as is implied

in the older notion of intervention. For too often, interventions have been merely empty gestures; they produce nothing new. Rather than merely calling attention to the way things work, many artists are actively proposing changes within the art world's operational system. They no longer 'intervene' but 'insinuate' or 'embed' – the choice of words is of course crucial here – their activities directly within the site that is, by definition, heterogeneous and evolving.

Many of today's 'crisis questions' evolve around the local implications of contemporary 'global culture'. Within the move toward a global art world, we face the question whether all art is obliged to subscribe to the same model, as the proliferation of 'western style' biennials seems to imply? Cultural differences can provide a lens through which we can challenge current assumptions on the homogenization of so-called global culture. More than anything institutional critique might be characterized as a method for placing terms under analysis and bringing those terms to the fore by 'visualizing' the issues that art confronts. While strategies for doing so should continuously be adapted to reflect individual conditions, the specificity of differences can be enunciated and developed toward the proliferation of numerous alternatives. Homi Bhabha's notion of the 'in-between' might add important questions to the debate on contemporary art's nature and potential. In the aftermath of negotiations between various cultural spheres, art has become a hybrid form, both interstitial – not located within traditional categories – and provisional.

In my practice as an artist I start from the premise that 'art' and its institutions are in constant 'crisis'. Therefore all the terms surrounding art's nature and potential are to be continuously re-thought for each project that I undertake. I want to elaborate the use-value of the crisis as a methodological procedure for constructing new discursive frames of reference. Hence, I eschew a signature style and both form and content of my work derive from a research methodology.[2]

*

The Museum You Want[3]

'The Museum You Want' is an interactive web-based game. It makes the museum visitor think about what they want a museum to be in the digital realm. Should it be a memory palace of collective histories, a simulacrum of a physical space, a site for viewing collections on-line, a curated exhibition of other web projects or something else entirely? What can make the experience of an on-line museum unique? How

do our hopes for a cultural future intermingle with the memories of our personal and shared pasts? What kind of consensus, if any, can be reached?

The project aims at triggering alternatives to the physical museum as it is currently defined; the user is asked to imagine a museum that can reflect each individual's interests. My hope is that this project will become the lynchpin for thinking about a different kind of museum: one that is creative rather than normative, responsive rather than reactive, inclusive rather than exclusive, and one in which every user can potentially engage with what is culturally important to them.

The website offers a simple polling game whose data form a unique graphical index that represents the user's responses to a set of questions while simultaneously displaying other users' responses to these same questions. The database of answers functions as a neural net, a continuously evolving entity that grows exponentially as more users respond to the questions.[4] As the database grows, the users' answers reveal patterns of consensus about the digital museum. Ultimately, the aim of the project is to use the database of each player as a template for the design of an ever evolving, programmable desk top 'museum' which will be able to archive and display each user's own personal museum.

In her reading of Andre Malraux's 'musée imaginaire', Rosalind Krauss ends by discussing the plight of the artist under 'postmodernism' – as someone who succumbs to the seeming inevitability (read as alibi) of 'pastiche'.[5] It is remarkable that she does not return to the question of the museum and, in particular, to the question whether the museum within walls is not always also the 'musée imaginaire' that we each construct – as an endlessly evolving structure – as we move through the actual space of the exhibition. Her article is marked by a turn toward the (unfortunate) plight of the artist rather than to the unfolding of audience, display and spatial paradigms – as though the problems are somehow to be displaced onto the artist as a condition to be solved. But perhaps that is the artist's role: to take up the 'crisis' and explore it – especially the one of the museum.

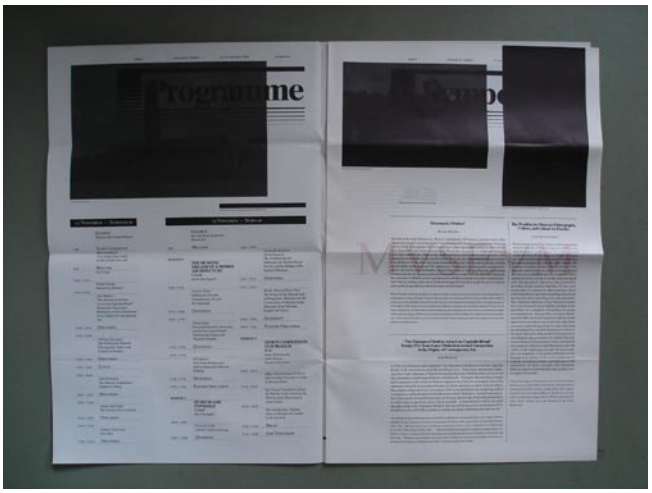
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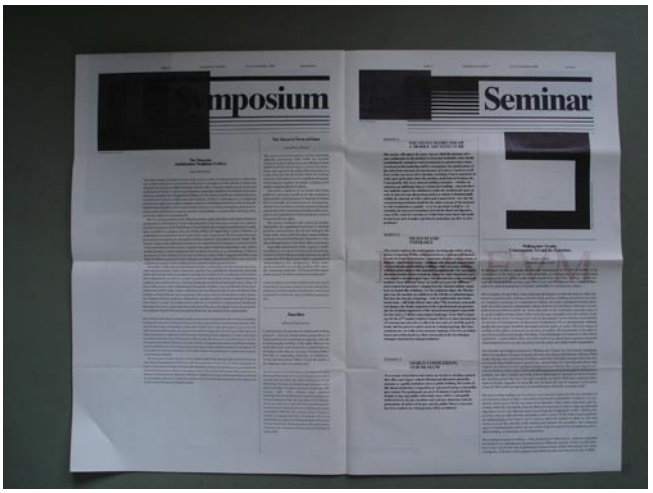
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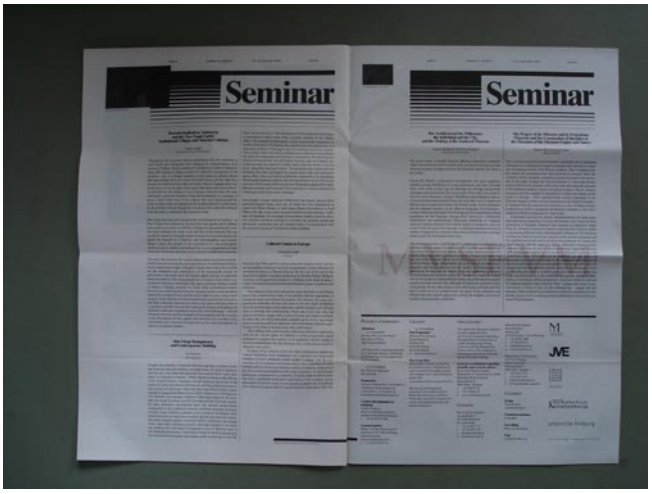
1. Hal Foster, *Recodings*, Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1986.
2. For a description of my relation to issues of institutional critique both in terms of my artistic and curatorial questions, see Judith Barry, 'Dissenting Spaces', in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions*, London: Routledge, 1996; Judith Barry, 'Serving Institutions', in Bizmarch/ Stoller/Wuggenig (eds.), *Games, Fights, Collaborators*, Kunstraum der Universitat Luneburg / Cantz, 1996; Judith Barry, 'Questioning Context', in *Context, Nexus, Philadelphia*, 1998.
3. (URL: http://ica.20q.net/intro2.html or http://www.icaboston.org/Home/ Media/ArtistWebProjects) The project was developed in collaboration with programmers and designers Robin Burgener, Mike McLoughlin and Max Black.
4. The website was launched in 2003 with a database of about 100 questions. It now has over 200, as I periodically update the questions based on suggestions from users who are invited to submit a question each time they play the game. The initial questions were compiled in relation to a variety of systematic analyses of the criteria that might be considered to be in operation when thinking about a museum. They included categories that hypothesize the spatial and representational possibilities of forms and discourses across a broad spectrum of museums and art works (both physical and digital). Here are a few examples from a field of about 150 categories: spatial/ representational paradigms or potential forms of the digital museum and/or the digital artwork; types of possible art experiences; curatorial practices in relation to media/subject matter/viewer-user; perpetration/conservation; institutional issues; surveillance; copy right; digitization and so on. These research categories, many with 100+ subsets, were sent to museum and art world friends and acquaintances. All were invited to submit thoughts and questions. Over a period of about 2 years, these responses became the genesis for the first 100 questions.
5. Rosalind Krauss, 'Postmodern's Museum without Walls', in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions*, London: Routledge, 1996.

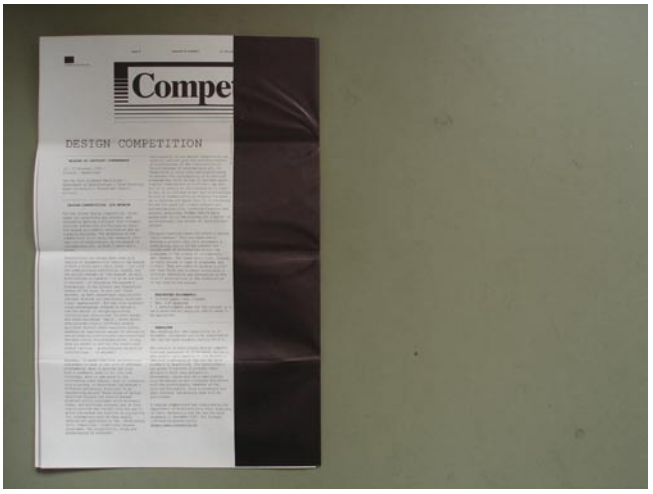


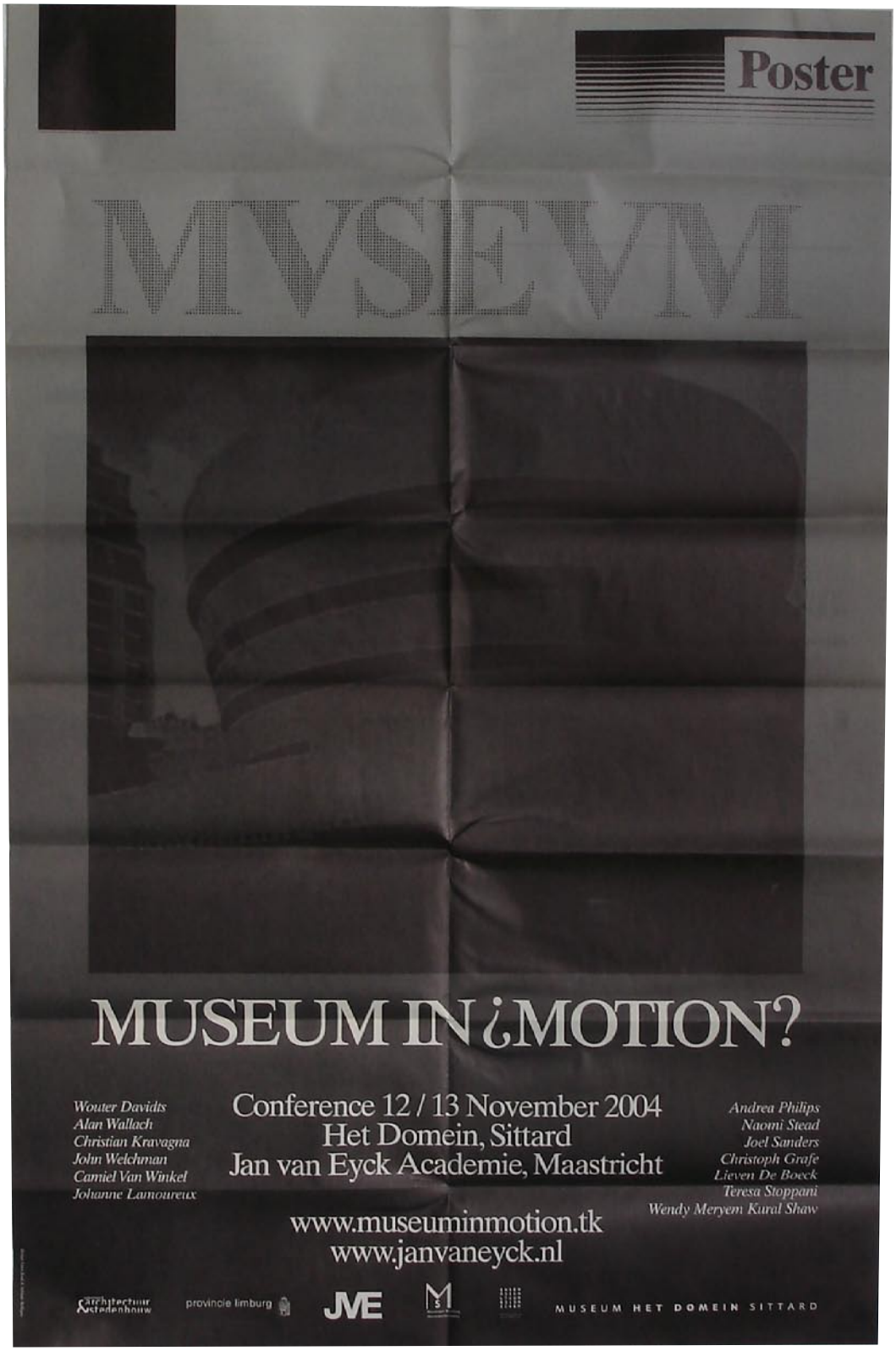

Introduction
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in
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Seminar


Seminar
Seminar


Compe
DESIGN COMPETITION


Poster
MVSEVM
MUSEUM IN ¿MOTION?
Wouter Davidts
Alan Wallach
Christian Kravagna
John Welchman
Camiel Van Winkel
Johanne Lamoureux
Conference 12 / 13 November 2004
Het Domein, Sittard
Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht
Andrea Philips
Naomi Stead
Joel Sanders
Christoph Grafe
Lieven De Boeck
Teresa Stoppani
Wendy Meryem Kural Shaw
www.museuminmotion.tk
www.janvaneyck.nl
provincie limburg
JVE
MUSEUM HET DOMEIN SITTARD

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Judith Barry is an artist and writer whose work crosses a number of disciplines: performance, installation, sculpture, architecture, photography, new media and exhibition design. She has exhibited internationally at venues such as the Berlin Biennale, Venice Biennale(s) of Art/Architecture, Sao Paolo Biennale, Nagoya Bienale, Cairo Biennale, Carnegie International, Whitney Biennale, Australian Biennale, and INsite. In 2000 she won the 'Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts' and in 2001 she was awarded 'Best Pavilion' and 'Audience Award' at the Cairo Biennale. Currently, she is working on a book about art and technology, several installation projects and two web-based works. *Public Fantasy*, a collection of Barry's essays, was published by the ICA, London, edited by Iwona Blazwick (1991). Recent publications include *Projections: mise en abyme*, with an essay by Brian Wallis and an interview between Judith Barry, Mark Wigley and Brian Wallis, Presentation House, Vancouver 1997; the catalogue for the *Frederich Kiesler Prize*, Vienna 2000, the catalogue for the *8th Cairo Biennale 2001*, essay by Gary Sangster, Contemporary Museum, Baltimore and *The Mirror and the Garden*, Diputacion Granada, Spain with essays by Jan Avgikos and Jean Fisher (2003). She has taught and lectured extensively in the USA, Japan, and Europe.

Jeroen Boomgaard is lecturer in Art & Public Space a the Gerrit Rietveld Academie / Amsterdam University. He also teaches at the Department of Building and Architecture at the Technical University Eindhoven. Recently he published *De magnetische tijd. Videokunst in Nederland 1970-1985* (2003, together with Bart Rutten) and *One year in the Wild* (2004), a collection of essays on art and public space.

Wouter Davidts teaches Architectural Theory at the Departement of Architecture of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and is postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning of

Ghent University, where he obtained a PhD on museum architecture in 2003. In recent years he has regularly published on the museum, contemporary art and architecture in magazines such as *Parachute*, *Open*, *Archis* and *De Witte Raaf*, and in several books and exhibition catalogues. He edited the publication *B-sites* in 2000 and in 2006 his book on museum architecture will be published by *A&S/books*. His current scholarly work focuses on post-war artistic attitudes towards architecture and on the architectural status of the contemporary artist's studio.

Lieven De Boeck studied architecture at the University for Art and Science / Sint-Lukas in Brussels and recently completed his post-graduate research on Housing/Public Space/The City/Manual at the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. He collaborates with Xaveer De Geyter Architects, Antwerp/Brussels as core designer, where he developed the research documented in the edited book *After-sprawl. Research on the contemporary city* (2002). He's currently partner of Kobe Matthys in the Project Agency and works as a free lance journalist and editor of architectural publications. He has lectured on the contemporary conditions of architectural production at the Berlage Instituut in Amsterdam, at the Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst in Brussels, and more recently in the Studio Open City series, Brussels. His professional activities focus on research to develop architectural tools to create a new paradigm for architecture and urbanism.

Fün Design Consultancy (César García Guerra, Paz Martín Rodríguez & Johan De Wachter) is an international architecture and urban design studio operating from Rotterdam. Through stimulating concepts they envisage the world between dream and reality. FünDC´s objective is to become a unified source of design solutions. FünDC operates in plural contexts that enrich and broaden the design solutions. In this sense they offer solutions in the fields of: architecture, urban planning, interior and event design, graphic and image design. For those areas

outside of FünDC main focus, their network of experts provides a global design concept. FünDC´s approach is interdisciplinary.
Christoph Grafe is architect and writer based in Amsterdam and London and Associate Professor of Architectural Design / Interiors at Delft University of Technology.

Christian Kravagna, an art historian and critic, teaches Postcolonial Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. He is the editor of the books *Privileg Blick: Kritik der visuellen Kultur* (1997); *Agenda: Perspektiven kritischer Kunst* (2000) and *The Museum as Arena: Artists on Institutional Critique* (2001). In 2002 he curated the exhibition *Routes: Imaging Travel and Migration*, Grazer Kunstverein.

Office (Kersten Geers David Van Severen) was founded in 2002 by David Van Severen and Kersten Geers. Both studied architecture at the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning, Ghent University in Belgium and at the Esquela Tecnica Superior de Arquitectura in Madrid, Spain. In 2004 they collaborated with Bas Princen and Milica Topalovic on the *Fear of the City* project on Rotterdam (group portaits) and in 2005 they won the competition *BorderGarden, Mex-Usa bordercrossing* (with Wonne Ickx). Their work has been published recently in A+U.

For the Competiton Our Museum, they collaborated with **Richard Venlet** and **Dries Vande Velde**. **Richard Venlet** is an artist who makes spatial and visual art on the notion of mental and physical (re)presentation. **Dries Vande Velde** works as structural engineer and art/architecture critic. Their individual work has been exhibited and published in major international institutions and magazines. Out of their respective professional backgrounds, Venlet and Vande Velde started a first collaboration on the occasion of a competition design for the Belgian pavilion of the Venice Architecture Biennale (finalist project - 2003). The proposal explored a concentrated integration of technical, spatial and artistic conditions, as a direct way of architectural representation. The further exploration

of these themes has led to regular collaborations with architects, most notably in the *Venlet-Macken-VandeVelde* association.

One Architecture is an architectural office based in Rotterdam, directed by Matthijs Bouw and Donald Van Dansik. **Matthijs Bouw** is a faculty member at Sci-Arc's Metropolitan Research + Design programme in Los Angeles. Before founding One Architecture, while still studying at Delft University of Technology, Matthijs Bouw was already teaching, contributing to several architectural magazines and building. **Donald van Dansik** (1950) is a Professor of Architecture at Eindhoven University of Technology. Before joining One Architecture he worked for OMA from 1988 on. At OMA he worked on many Urban Planning projects in Europe and Asia, the most famous being Euralille where he was project director. Starting 1998 he was managing director in OMA. For the Competition Our Museum, they worked together with Berend Strik. **Berend Strik** is an artist living and working in Amsterdam. His work has been exhibited in major museums in the Netherlands and abroad.

Andrea Phillips is Assistant Director of the Curating Programme, Department of Visual Arts, Goldsmiths College, University of London. She writes and lectures on connections between contemporary art and current spatial and socio-political thought and is working on a book, *Walking into Trouble: Contemporary Art and the Pedestrian*.

Joel Sanders is the principal of Joel Sanders Architect (JSA), a design studio based in New York City. In addition to running his practice, Sanders is an Associate Professor of Architecture at Yale University. Projects by JSA have been featured in numerous exhibitions including *Unprivate House* at MoMA NYC, *Folds, Blobs, and Boxes* at the Heinz Architectural Center, *New Hotels for Global Nomads* at the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum and *Glamour* at SFMoMA. In addition, designs by JSA have been showcased in numerous international publications including *Architectural*

Record, The New York Times, L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, Wallpaper, and *Assemblage*. The editor of *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), Sanders frequently writes about art and design, most recently in *Artforum*. A monograph, *Joel Sanders: Writings and Projects*, was released by Monacelli Press in the spring of 2005.

Wendy Meryem Kural Shaw is interested in the visual effects of cultural adaptation during the modern and contemporary periods, with a primary focus on Turkey and its relationship both with its own past and with its European Other. She is the author of *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (University of California Press, 2003), as well as several articles concerning contemporary art and modern ideologies surrounding archaeology as part of nationalist discourse production. She is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Media, Bilgi University, Istanbul.

Naomi Stead is a Senior Lecturer in Architectural Theory, Philosophy and Cultural Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture with first class honours from the University of South Australia, and in 2004 completed her doctoral thesis, entitled *On the Object of the Museum and its Architecture,* at the University of Queensland. Her research interests include the history and theory of museums, architectural criticism, questions of representation in and of architecture, and intersections between architecture and the visual and performing arts.

Teresa Stoppani studied architecture at the IUAV in Venice and at the University of Florence (PhD in Architectural and Urban Design). She has collaborated with architectural practices in New York, Venice, London and Munich, and taught architectural design and theory at the IUAV, Venice (1995-99) and at the Architectural Association, London

(2000-02). Since 2001 she is Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Greenwich, where she directs the MA in Architecture programme and the postgraduate Architecture Theory programme. Her main research interests are the relationship between architecture theory and the design process in the urban environment, and the influence on the specifically architectural aspects of other spatial and critical practices. Her work has been published in Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany and Argentina. Recent publications include *Mapping. The Locus of the Project* (Angelaki, 9:2, 2004) and *Dusty Stories of Woman. Notes for a Re-definition of Dust* (The Issues in Contemporary Culture and Aesthetics, 1, 2005). She is currently working on the book *Manhattan and Venice: Paradigm Islands of Anti-Modern Space.*

Camiel van Winkel is Professor in Visual Art at the Academy for Art and Design Sint Joost of Avans University in Den Bosch, the Netherlands. Based in Amsterdam, he teaches art theory at Sint Lukas School of Arts in Brussels. He is the author of *Moderne leegte. Over kunst en openbaarheid* (1999), a critical study on the theory and practices of public art. A book entitled *The Regime of Visibility* is forthcoming with NAi Publishers in the fall of 2005.

Bart Verschaffel is philospher and Head of the Department Architecture & Urban Planning, Ghent University, where he teaches Architectural Theory and Criticism. He has widely published on knowledge theory, cultural philosophy and aesthetics. Among his most recent books are *A propos de Balthus* (A&S/books, 2004), *Architecture is (as) a gesture* (Quartz Verlag, 2001) and *Figures/Essays* (Vlees & Beton, 1995).

Alan Wallach is Ralph H. Wark Professor of Art History and Professor of American Studies at the College of William and Mary. He was co-curator of *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History* and co-author of

the accompanying catalogue (Yale 1994). His most recent book is *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (University of Massachusetts Press 1998). Wallach's writings have appeared in leading periodicals--*Art Bulletin*, *Artforum*, *Art History*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, etc.--and anthologies and he is active as speaker, commentator, and panel chair. Wallach's current scholarly concerns include the influence of corporate sponsorship on American art museums and the history of landscape vision in the United States before the Civil War.

Tristan Weddigen studied in Heidelberg, Cambridge, Rome, and Berlin and is currently Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Bern. He has published on Renaissance and Baroque art, especially Raphael, and is at present working on the Dresden Picture Gallery and the aesthetic canons of the 18th and 19th centuries.

John C. Welchman is Professor of art history and theory in the Visual Arts department at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of *Modernism Relocated: Towards a Cultural Studies of Visual Modernity* (Allen & Unwin, 1995), *Invisible Colours: A Visual History of Titles* (Yale UP, 1997) and *Art After Appropriation: Essays on Art in the 1990s* (Routledge, 2001); co-author of the *Dada and Surrealist Word Image* (MIT Press, 1987) and of *Mike Kelley* in the Phaidon Contemporary Artists series (1999); and editor of *Rethinking Borders* (Minnesota UP, 1996). He has written for *Artforum* (where he had a column in the late 1980s and early 1990s), *Screen*, *Art + Text*, *Third Text*, the *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, the *Economist* and other newspapers and journals; and contributed catalogue essays for exhibitions at the Tate (London and Liverpool), Reina Sophia (Madrid), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), the LA County Museum of Art, the Sydney Biennial, Vienna Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Ludwig Museum (Budapest). His current projects include editing the collected writings of Mike Kelley (the first vol. *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism* was published

with MIT Press in 2003; the second *Minor Histories* also, with MIT arrived Spring 2004; volumes on music and sound culture, interviews and performance scripts are in preparation, as are translations into French). Welchman has just completed a long catalogue essay for the exhibition *The Uncanny* (Tate Liverpool/Vienna Museum of Contemporary Art (Spring-Fall, 2004); is finalizing two books on the relation between art, film and the representation of faces (*The Celluloid Face* and *Faces and Powers*); and is contracted to write a major survey, *Global Art at the Millennium* for Phaidon (London).

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MUSEUM HET DOMEIN SITTARD

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