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A Museum Explosion:
Fragments of an Overview

Stanislaus von Moos

An explosion of typologies and formal themes, culminating in Frank O. Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, has led many artists, museum professionals, and architects, to agree on what they deem "risky" in museum design, and conversely on what they see as valid and desirable for the long term. As early as 1984, long before the era of Gehry, the German artist-prince Markus Lüpertz remarked in an expression of discontent at the many "interesting" new buildings: "These new museums are beautiful, remarkable structures, but, like all art, they are hostile to 'other' forms of art. Simple, innocent paintings and simple, innocent sculptures cannot compete ... Architecture should have the generosity of spirit to play a more supportive role and not overpower the art with artistic aspirations of its own; nor should it - which is even worse - exploit art as 'decoration' for architecture."
Lüpertz was still envisioning the "classic museum" (let's ignore for the moment whether he truly judged his own work to be "simple" and "innocent"): "The classic museum is structured as follows: four walls, light from above, two doors, one for those who enter and the other for those who exit."[1]
Over the past years, a number of museums have delivered *de facto* proof that the classic model is indeed valid. Switzerland, of which I am best equipped to speak, has subscribed less to classicism than to the simple, neo-or late-modernist "box" in order to offer resistance to what seems to have become a standard "arbitrariness." The Goetz Collection, a small private museum in Munich (architects: Herzog & de Meuron), is to many emblematic of this attitude.[2] Architecture of this kind is often experienced as "neutral" in form, historic associations, and relation to the objects displayed within. "Neutrality" seems best to satisfy what many museum professionals expect of a restrained exhibition space.

Minimalism and "Neutrality"
The Goetz Collection is, however, anything but "neutral." And as for the Kunsthaus Bregenz, a popular destination for all who seek out minimalist museum design, the extremity of *its* neutrality has been criticized for going so far as to "destroy" some pieces in group exhibitions.[3] Shouldn't the aesthetic standard of the semantic "neutrality" in each of these cases alert us to a skeptical response? The problem is a familiar one. When Jean Cassou defended the white museum, the unadorned museum "container" of the fifties, as the model museum design that surpassed all ideologies, others countered, justifiably, that the "white" museum - seemingly devoid of representational pretensions - was more ideological in nature than any other museum design, if only because it was a concept that, having become sacrosanct in western Europe and the United States during the Cold War era, denounced all other museum ideas as reactionary and anti-democratic.[4] A further footnote in hindsight would be that "white" is rarely a true white in architecture and "minimal" does not necessarily deliver a "simple" overall impression.

Why then does "minimal" museum and exhibition design more than any other compensate for excluding historicizing connotations by creating an aura that can only be called sacred? Why does the sophisticated aesthetic Puritanism of such buildings often translate into autonomous artistic themes that impose themselves between viewer and object? And why, conversely, do “expressive" or "historicizing" designs - buildings that are anything but “simple" - offer breathing space for the art in them by virtue of their structure and complexity, yet still manage to push their own complexity to the foreground?

Answering such questions might lead one to relativize ideological prejudices toward museum design in favor of a more precise aesthetic perception and greater specificity in posing the problem. One might propose that an alternative exists to museum design whose architectonic envelope is merely "servile" or whose envelope is first and foremost a celebration of itself (as in the case of Richard Meier, who wanted to inaugurate the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt before the collection was put into place). The alternative then is not a question of idiom but of attitude. An other way of looking at it would be that "minimalist" and "deconstructivist" museum architecture is but an extreme variation of the current trend of creating museum design in close collaboration and dialog with the visual arts.

Museum Concepts around 1920

The idea of the museum as a site where the arts emerge from their isolation and converge into a Gesamtkunstwerk has its roots in the early twentieth century. It has less to do with formal design than with museum content. In a slim and now largely forgotten volume entitled *Umgestaltung der Museen im Sirme der neuen Zeit (Redesigning the Museum for Modern Times),* first published in 1919, Wilhelm R. Valentiner put forth the idea of founding a museum that would combine the fine arts, represented by master works of German painting and sculpture, with exponents from the decorative arts, juxtaposing the two "arts" for each era. The goal was to document the history of art with masterpieces from the permanent collections in German museums, presented in chronological order and extending over 23 rooms, beginning with so-called "primitive" art right up to contemporary art.[5]

Valentiner was curator of decorative arts at the Metropolitan Museum in NewYork from 1908 to 1914. Based on his American experience (as opposed to his German experience) he argued that museum tradition could be a didactic tool in teaching art history. In his mind's eye, Valentiner saw the building as the quintessential embodiment of German Art located in a provincial setting in Germany, close to Coburg, for example, or Marburg. Moreover, he thought of it as crowning a hill or a small mountain. By contrast, his ideas on the design were very general, stipulating simply that it should resemble neither a palace nor a warehouse. To Valentiner, placing the museum on a hilltop was of great importance: he felt that visitors would quite naturally make the transition from gazing into the distance to "an inward focus and a close-up perspective." One can easily picture the architectural images which may have inspired Valentiner.

In his day, Valentiner's ideas were met with skepticism by art critics and curators alike. Some felt that they could detect the corruption of Bolshevik ideology (W. Pastor), while others decried Valentiner's proposal by arguing that he was merely interested in running a museum to entertain tourists, "a Bayreuth of the arts, an attraction for American tourists" (C. Glaser). Since Valentiner's book had appeared in Berlin in 1919 under the subtitle *A Memorial to the Workers' Arts Council,* it seems logical to connect his ideas with the revolutionary upheavals of the post-war era. Valentiner's concept has much in common with the idea for a "people's palace" developed by architects such as Bruno Taut, Hans Scharoun, Hermann Finsterlin, and others, sometimes even from within the Workers' Arts Council. Today, we can no longer determine to what degree Valentiner was aware of

the connection between his ideas and the freely penned dreams of his architect friends yearning to create "sites for mutual exchange between the arts and the public," to paraphrase Bruno Taut.

The Avant-Garde becomes a Matter of State

They would have to wait until after 1945 before their dream would became more attainable. They hoped to liberate the genre museum from centuries-old architectural traditions and translate the "free" form - hitherto delegated to the realm of fantasy - into concrete projects, no matter how few and ahead of their time these were. In the main, the renewal focused on the museum as a building type, not as an institution. The process was driven by a complex dynamic all of its own. The centuries-old tradition of the "classic" museum had experienced somewhat of a revival in development projects for public museums and galleries during the pre-World War II era. Nor had this revival been limited to a National Socialist or Fascist Europe (see below). The end of Nazi rule in Germany prepared the ground for the state to make a clear break with the rules of convention and to throw itself whole heartedly behind the artistic avant-garde.

At the same time, the voice of Pax Americana grew ever more strident in the politics of culture and was gradually absorbed into the language of the avant-garde. The modern movement was ready to supply the official language of art for the "free world." When we think of Frank Lloyd Wright reinventing the museum out of a spirit of the romantic "I,"Taut, Finsterlin, and Scharoun, immediately spring to mind. For example, Wright uses the museum *parcours* as a means of bringing the wide expanse of the universe once again into contact with the consciousness and the reality of *here and now* (specifically: Manhattan). In the light of Wright's late stroke of genius, the socialist fantasies around 1918 - those “deliberately far-fetched ideas," as Taut called them - boldly foreshadow less a socialist future than a mythology of unbridled creative individuality that is uniquely American. Before the *Fall of Public Man* (or: *The Tyranny of Intimacy* as it was aptly entitled in the German version) no one could have contemplated implementing a program of this kind. Harald Szeemann describes the consequences: "What Kandinsky called the 'ethics of artistic impetus' [driven by] 'internal necessity' has become the standard to which every museum architect subscribes, sometimes with disastrous results."[6]

In that light it is no political paradox that Frank O. Gehry's museum in Bilbao - the brightest monument to American cultural hegemony in Europe - should relate more closely than any other recent project to those post war sketches for a revolutionary people's palace.

The Dregs of Tradition

One might assume that all this would have made the classical tradition in museum design obsolete. But Valentiner would have disagreed, as would some younger museum professionals and quite a few architects. Our perception of what a museum should be - in function and form - is still more readily informed by the Vatican, the Louvre, the Uffizi, and the Alte Pinakothek than by the fluctuations of current tastes in architecture (at least where museums that exhibit the Old Masters are concerned). The current invasion of modern architecture into the museum world aside, the Grand Louvre project under president Mitterrand - a continuous museological landscape linked by a mall - remains the singular most spectacular museum "operation" of the eighties. And one of its most interesting aspects is the treatment of the building's history, which has itself become an object for exhibition in the palace basement, where visitors are treated to an informative and well-documented "archeological" tour of the complex.

The varied display, which also includes some models, illustrates the development of the royal picture gallery from the seventeenth century onward, i.e. the development of the "classic" exhibition space. Initially, galleries had nothing to do with hanging paintings on a wall. Their simple *raison*

d'être was to provide a link between distant sections in large palace complexes.[7] Nevertheless, utilizing such spaces for the display of art collections was a logical development. The Vatican is a case in point. The papal collections quickly spread across the multistory galleria complex, designed by Bramante after 1500, to link the Belvedere at the northern end with the center of the papal residence. (The first permanent sculpture collection, incidentally, was installed in 1508 commissioned by Pope Inocent VIII - in the courtyard of the Belvedere, a weekend residence, at some distance from the Vatican.)
Fontainebleau has a similar history. Works by Primaticcio, Rosso Fiorentino, and other famous artists "imported" by the king from Italy to France were displayed in its Galerie François Ier, originally built to connect the two palace wings. Soon after, Vincenzo Scamozzi built Vespasiano Gonzaga's Galleria in Sabbioneta near Mantua, whose interior was later decorated with statues. More time would elapse before the Uffizi in Florence served as both administrative offices and home to the ducal collection, which was housed in the deep enfilades - cornerstone of Vasari's brilliant intervention into Florence's town center - as late as the end of the eighteenth century. The development of the Uffizi into a picture gallery was similar to that in the Louvre, where the wing that connected the palace core to the Tuileries had been built in the early seventeenth century but was used as a museum space only in the eighteenth century.[8]
The great American museums were all built during the first decades of the twentieth century: the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Wilhelm R. Valentiner's place of work prior to 1914); the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the National Gallery in Washington. These are buildings whose place as institutions representative of the official politics of culture is firmly based in the great museums of the Old World. And while each foundation is unique, they derive from the same compact model. Thus Smirke's British Museum in London and Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin are related. The floor plan for the Altes Museum (completed in 1828), with its combination of galleries and central access area, has been widely imitated, as has Alois Hirt's approach to hanging paintings in the Altes Museum.[9] In this model, all is made subordinate to a clear didactic program: taking viewers by the hand and guiding them along a chronologically organized presentation of the development in art.
Klenze applied a reduced, linear version of the same concept to the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. The slightly larger dynastic museums of the late nineteenth century, above all Semper's Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, have fixed the classic style as *the* design for museums as public institutions in the public's consciousness.

An Attempt at a Typology

These examples merely set the stage for the more specific topic under discussion here (the writings of Nikolaus Pevsner, Helen Searing, and others are recommended for further reading[10]). On the one hand, they cast a stark light on the chasm that separates modern museum design (including postmodernism) from the "great" tradition of the European museum. And on the other hand, they illustrate the thematic continuity that persists despite the morphological break of modernism.
What has shifted is the scale and the external face. Since the eighties not a few architects have nevertheless begun to revisit the tradition of the classic museum. For the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, James Stirling and Michael Wilford have grouped enfilades of galleries around a circulation rotunda, a direct allusion to Schinkel's Altes Museum. Mario Botta found an analogous solution for the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Francisco, while Heinz Hilmer and Christoph Sattler shifted the entrance rotunda in Berlin's Neue Gemäldegalerie off-center, occupying the central position laconically with a large atrium.
Faced with these confusing scenarios, how can we define a "typology" for the contemporary museum? In what is probably the best overview of this topic, Victoria Newhouse has organized her

work under the headings of public or private ownership, representational expectations, relationships with existing predecessors and core buildings (in the case of museum expansions), or even the visual arts.[11] By contrast, this author's approach of identifying four "typical" solutions - while somewhat lacking in order - may come closer to looking at the specifically architectural side of the issue:
1.The museum as a converted monument.
2.The "open" museum (the "loft" or *Kunsthalle).*
3.The museum with traditional enfilades.
4.The museum as "sculptural architecture."

1. *The museum as a converted monument.* In a world where the Vatican, the Louvre, and the Uffizi are still seen as quintessential models for what museums should be, one would do well to remember that conversion - all three examples started out as royal or ducal palaces - has been the rule rather than the exception in museum development. With the exception of sensational projects such as the Grand Louvre, conversions rarely take center stage in architecture. They simply don't make good "copy". Still, haven't some of the most important art museums and *Kunsthallen* found new homes in empty industrial monuments (the Musée d'Orsay in Paris; the Hamburg railway terminal building in Berlin; the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg; and the new outpost of the Tate Gallery in London, to name but a few)? Has not factory conversion, into a museum or *Kunsthalle,* become one of the most widely practiced approaches worldwide (the Lingotto in Turin; the Dia center for the arts in New York; the Hallen für Moderne Kunst in Schaffhausen; the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Geneva)?

2. *The "open" museum.* As a space "without characteristics," the "open" museum of the sixties is in many ways the archetypal modern museum, hailed as "democratic" and user-friendly by its proponents, who claim that it diminishes the "threshold fear" that grips visitors as they enter other "hallowed" museum spaces. In favor of perfecting the technical installations, the "open museum" seemed to relinquish all pretension to architecture in the traditional sense. The Centre Pompidou (surely the most spectacular example of throwing monumentality in museum design overboard) has successfully bridged the gap between modern art and pop culture.

3. *The museum with traditional enfilades.* The twentieth century has never fully abandoned this principle, even though it contradicts the canon of New Building and its predilection for pavilion-inspired exhibition landscapes. In the eighties, when Lüpertz published his manifesto in support of the "classic" museum, the image of self-contained enfilades seemed to catch up with the "open museum" concept. At the time, Dominique Bozo, curator of the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris, added internal insertions in a traditional style into the Pompidou's formless "lofts," a strangely historicizing wake at the grave of the "open museum" (architect: Gae Aulenti).
Wc have already mentioned the return of the classic enfilade in museum design (Staatsgalerie addition in Stuttgart by Stirling & Wilford). The Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London (architects: Venturi & Scott Brown) was yet another variation on the classical theme, here combined with side or corner access areas (an obvious reference to Sir John Soane's Dulwich Gallery from 1810). Other revivalist examples were the new J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles (architect: Richard Meier) and the Neue Gemaldegalerie in Berlin (architects: Hilmer & Sattler).

4. *The museum as "sculptural architecture.*" This implies a redefinition of the sequence of museum spaces in the sense of a series of organic or expressive spatial forms that can no longer be defined in

terms of traditional concepts.

Form versus Function

In the thirties, when the National Gallery was under construction in Washington (and the Haus der Kunst in Munich) Schinkel's Altes Museum still provided the answer to the question about the "archetypal" museum.

The focus has since shifted to one of organization and order of precedence. But let's return to the problem of defining museum “typology." Typology concerns the museum as a whole, beyond appearance and structural configuration. Infrastructural issues are increasingly important, and design is only one factor among many. A French critic recently formulated the following definition of an archetypal modern museum. In particular, he distinguished three components:

1.Catchment areas (reception, lobby, coat check, restaurant, cafeteria, etc.)

2.Presentation areas (galleries, exhibition rooms)

3.Offices, workshops, administration, storage, conservation, etc.[12]

This seems simple enough. The museum, then, is a combination of these three functions, whereby the first and third elements (catchment areas and offices, workshops, etc.) occupy approximately two thirds of the usable volume; or, as Robert Venturi put it: "The ratio of 'space for art' to 'space for reception and access' was 9:1 in the nineteenth century. Today, this ratio is closer to 1:2, i.e. only about one third of the available space is used for exhibition purposes."[13]

In other words, the museum has long ceased to be first and foremost a place where works of art are displayed and stored. It now contains restoration workshops, conservation departments, lecture halls, computer rooms, libraries, and offices; and still more: retail shops, a cafeteria, and kitchens. Consequently visitors who enter the museum often follow a long and complicated path past shops, cashier, information kiosk, and cafeteria, before they reach the art in the gallery. In the modern museum, "archetype" has therefore little to do with form. Instead, the archetypal is found, if at all, in patterns of arranging functional areas such as reception, exhibition, conservation, and storage.

There exists no catalog of architectural forms to satisfy all three functions (with the exception, perhaps, of the function of presentation itself, i.e. of exhibiting, for which the gallery form [read: enfilade] still offers a classic solution, as we have already established. But even this concept is anything but binding. Since Frank Lloyd Wright we have known that a gallery can also take the shape of a spiral).

Framework and Spiral

From the perspective of architecture, "hard" museum buildings are those where form, usage, and infrastructure are subordinate to an overriding morphological concept. An example of a morphological concept would be the framework or grid; another would be the spiral.

The Centre Pompidou is based on a fundamental concept - that of "neutral" space, i.e. a semantic vacuum - where anything is possible. The diverse components that make up the formal language of industry are themselves subject to specific premises. Historically speaking, the Centre Pompidou is first and foremost a daringly engineered scaffold construction, consisting of 45-meter-long steel girders that are anchored at the longitudinal sides of the rectangular building and span huge trussless loft spaces. The lofts are available for reception, exhibition, or administration without any distinguishing features to set each function apart. The air-conditioning system is fully exposed on the east façade in all its multi-colored clumsiness, while tubular "public access ramps" meander up the west façade in snaking horizontals.

There are no definite precursors for any of these features in the history of museum design. In the search for forerunners one has to look further afield: to sluice-and-lock construction in the Weimar

Republic, for example (e.g. the lock at Niederfinow, which raises boats in a water basin that is linked to the canal by more than 80 meters). One could even regard some power stations in southern California as forerunners, although they could scarcely have been known to the architect at the time of drafting the design. The east façade may have been inspired by England's Archigram group (Furniture Manufacturers project by Michael Webb, 1958) or by an early project by Gunther Nitschké (Palais de la Publicité, 1936), respectively. But none of the above are related to "museum" design.[14]

And now an example to the contrary: the Guggenheim Museum by Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's solution is comparable to the Centre Pompidou in one aspect only: neither building derives the morphology of its solution from historic museum design. What matters in this example is the motif of the spiral, founded in the formal grammar of Wright's architecture. The theme was developed in connection with tasks that had little to do with the museum idea: the approach ramps to the Ford Pavilion for New York's World Fair in 1939 (architect: Walter Dorwin Teague) may have inspired or even directly influenced the Guggenheim design. And some of Wright's own projects foreshadowed this work: a garage with gas station in Pittsburgh (unrealized, 1947). In the case of the Centre Pompidou, as in that of the Guggenheim Museum, there is a kind of grotesque coupling of science fiction with the art world. Forms from the visual inventory of technology are linked with the comparatively atavistic function of art exhibitions.

Diversification and the Influence of Art

From a purely economic perspective, the "explosion of typologies" that has occurred in museum design is best described as “diversification. "The price of unlimited diversification in the marketplace of culture as an industry is first accelerated disintegration and then the total collapse of all rules of the game that make "culture" possible as a phenomenon that shares a common social goal. And the result? We pick up a phone and it slips from our hand like a plastic dummy; we stand at a sink and are faced with a mystifying array of flashing push buttons instead of faucet, soap, and towel; we buy rubber-encased tubes filled to bursting with toothpaste, but that uselessly dispense either nothing at all or else ejaculate uncontrollable amounts of paste. And, finally, we find ourselves inside a museum unfit for use as such or else only fit to exhibit itself.

For museum design, emancipating the building from its cultural, architectural, and typological heritage poses an obvious challenge: "freed" from the constraints of the past, architecture enters into a barter trade with art where concepts of form and space become the objects of trade. Why put a stop to it? Frank O. Gehry has said that he spends most of his life in museums looking at pictures.[15] When Gehry sits down at a table with Claes Oldenburg, Richard Serra, and Frank Stella, traditional boundaries between art and architecture fall away - or nearly.[16] It would seem worthwhile to trace the first beginnings of this interdisciplinary promiscuity, submitting it to the "acid test" of the ground plan.

It is well documented that, long before the Guggenheim Museum, Wright had already used the spiral motif for above-ground car parks and in the design for a planetarium that was to draw tourists to a hilltop in Maryland. He may well have been unaware of the shape's atavistic symbolism and may not have intended to reinterpret the ancient notion of the spiral as a symbol of growth and eternal rebirth. Still, this is precisely what he did do. Moreover, Wright could hardly have been unaware of the motif's role in modernist vocabulary ever since Borromini (let alone Tatlin's unrealized project for a monument to the Third International, 1920). In 1931 Le Corbusier had already developed the "four-sectioned" spiral as the central motif for his Musée à Croissance Illimitée (museum of unlimited growth). The spiral was to grow proportionately with the expanding collection. One should remember that Le Corbusier was also an abstract or semi-abstract painter

and hence was fascinated by the symbolic power of the shape and the laws that govern it.
The spiral - a "global equation"? A key to laws of proportion that reach from watercress leaves to museums and beyond to the universe?
In their ground plans, postwar avant-garde architects may well have delivered astonishing proof of their identity as "artists in architecture. "Thus Aldo van Eyck, whose ground plan for the Sonsbeek Pavilion, a sculpture park near Otterlo, was conceived in homage to Paul Klee (1948). Stirling and Wilford's addition to the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart was inspired by the collages and *papiers collés* of Picasso and Braque, and in effect created an example of what Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter have called the "Collage City". And finally Venturi and Rauch's project for the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt (1978) translated into a plan that stands as a metaphor for origin and natural growth, reminiscent of Brancusi.[17]

Giant Sculpture or Historical Pastiche?
Is modern art - by Klee, Picasso, Brancusi, but also by Serra, Stella, Judd - the formal and symbolic parameter for museum design? Given a building project to which an artist is favorably disposed from the very beginning, concepts of this kind would seem to be justified. Only in the completed work, though, do they prove to be compelling. The notion that architecture in the guise of art is "hostile" to the visual arts or actually "supplants" them (as Lüpertz claims) still has to be proved. Beuys' experience in the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the experiences of Gerhard Merz and Claes Oldenburg in Hans Hollein's "difficult" Museum for Modern Art in Frankfurt am Main would seem to demonstrate the apposite. Ideally, one would like to measure the standard of quality that Wright, Gehry and Hollein - as well as Herzog and de Meuron - have established and fix it for all time; but that, of course, is illusory.
On the other hand, the museum of the future will of necessity become a site of memory. As such it could benefit from architecture whose framework lends support even more aggressively than the works of the above-mentioned architects do, especially since our architecture, as cultural heritage, counts among the "memories" that are worth preserving. When palaces and castles are converted into museums, architecture is often reduced, voluntarily or not, to archeological piety. This is a natural progression, even though it hasn't always been so. Looking back at the history in museum design since the fifties, projects such as the Palazzo Rosso and the Palazzo Bianco conversions in Genoa, both from the fifties, caused quite a stir with their provocative deconstruction of the traditional relationship between image, frame, and interior space, and their affected staging that removed works by Old Masters from their "familiar" surroundings and displaced them into the semantically "neutral" space of an aesthetic ideology.[18]
Nor should we forget to mention Carlo Scarpa and the Castelvecchio conversion in Verona. Recognizing that the courtyard façade was by no means medieval in origin, but rather a twenties' *pastiche* consisting of original windows from Veronese palazzi set into a predominantly contemporary wall, Scarpa relieved the fabric with details whose number and invasiveness come as a surprise: the overall impression is one of embellishment by means of "transplanting" a historic skin.[19] Today's conservation authorities would hardly let intrusion on such a massive scale pass without objection. And indeed, the kinds of projects exemplified by Scarpa's work have largely ceased in the wake of a new generation's passionate stance towards conservation (an attitude which is by no means always catastrophic).
Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown tackled similar projects decades after the Castelvecchio conversion at sites that were less "burdened" by history: first with the Sainsbury Wing for the National Gallery in London and secondly with the addition to the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, California. The façade imitates the elevation of an early stage in Irving Gill's original

design and the pergola echoes the shape of the Women's Club across the street, also designed by Gill circa 1910. Like Scarpa (yet completely different as to formal means) they too laid bare the fictional character of the historicizing *pastiche,* as if they were simply demonstrating an architectural paradigm, i.e. how to walk the fine line between renovation and reconstruction. They went even further and turned paradigm into theme by way of architectural "sampling." Many in today's cultural establishment would regard this kind of approach as dangerously close to kitsch.
What then is the primary issue in the difficult dialog between the present and the past: the "image" or historic authenticity of the individual piece or artistic “facts"? The rider's monument to Cangrande Scala atop the pyramid-shaped tomb in Verona's historic town center is but a replica. The original stands in the courtyard of the Castelvecchio: Carlo Scarpa has integrated it into the "scenic" museum tour as one of the main attractions. Mounted on a projecting base, it is the focal point in a spectacular installation and can be seen from a covered walkway from above or from a platform on the ground. As an institution, the modern museum transforms a tomb monument into an aesthetic object. The original site, where the monument was to perform its "actual" function as memorial, must make do with a replica.
In the aesthetic space of the museum, material and historic "authenticity" matter. For the cult site, i.e. the tomb, aesthetic artifice will do. Is the cult of authenticity therefore an obsession unique to the modern museum; and, conversely, is the tolerance for imitation the norm in a culture of remembrance that is defined primarily by anthropological rather than aesthetic concepts?[20] And if so: what are the implications for a culture driven by entertainment and leisure and called upon to be environmentally and socially "friendly," in an era where the "art of modernism" is merely one voice amid a whole chorus, and perhaps not even the dominant voice?

The Long-Term Perspective

At the very latest on the day the Centre Pompidou first recorded more visitors than the Eiffel Tower, the arts - and especially the system of financing them - succumbed to the logic of the consumer and leisure society. At the latest since that date, the availability of subsidies for cultural purposes has been strictly linked to the ability of the arts to attract the masses. This may seem regrettable, and it is certainly a tragedy in one respect: the competition to which the various interests in this field are exposed means the death of those museums and galleries whose curators have never taken any trouble to make their collections "interesting" to the public. This applies to all those "musty" collections of objects, specimens, and curiosities of natural and technical history - "musty" simply because the public has forgotten them; but it also involves the *raison d'être* of the "mildew" in museums that forms the actual substrate of an exhibition culture which is dressed up to make it attractive to the public.
As far as new buildings are concerned, there would seem to be a firmly held opinion, especially among architects, that a choice has to be made between “modern" architectural solutions and solutions that either do not lay claim to the word or are not worthy of it. The indisputably modern appearance, or "legibility", of their own "contemporary" designs is regarded as the epitome of "open-mindedness." In contrast, any design strategy that shows "sympathy" for historical forms - although modern building legislation has made this a basic requirement as a sign of "respect" for the urban environment - is allotted a place among the garden gnomes. As a result of this, liaisons with pre-modernist architecture manifest themselves all the more exotically on the trivial plane of architecture for fun gastronomy and tourism in leisure parks, winter sport retreats, and highway service areas. Will the entry of the Bauhaus style into the international "low culture" of dining and tourist architecture, which is already taking place, clear the ground for the consolidation of a new, intelligent approach to history in the realm of architectural "high culture"?

In the context of museum construction, it seems paradoxical to have to canvass for the acceptance of something so eminently normal: for a design culture that also includes a sometimes more, sometimes less alienated historical quotation and a cautious treatment of surviving architectural monuments - as Scarpa and the Venturis have demonstrated, and as the German architects Hilmer and Sattler have shown in their distinguished new Gemaldegalerie complex in Berlin or the installation of the Berggruen Collection in a Neoclassical palace by Friedrich August Stüler opposite Charlottenburg Palace in the same city. Today, buildings of this kind would seem not to stand in the architectural limelight. But in view of the impulses they generate and the long-term effect these may have, that is perhaps not such a bad omen.

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[1] Markus Lüpertz, "Kunst und Architektur," in *Neue Museumsbauten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Main, 1985), pp. 30-33.

[2] Architects have since distanced themselves from this position; see Gerhard Mack, Kunstmueen auf dem Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert (Basel/Berlin/Boston, 1999), pp. 15 and 41. For an overview of "simple" museum architecture before 1996 see minimal tradition. Max Bill e l'architettura 'semplice' *1942-1996/(Max Bill and 'Simple' Architecture, 1942-1996)* (Baden, 1996).

[3] G. Mack, op.cit. (note 2), p. 14.

[4] S. Jean Cassou, "Art Museums and Social Life", in *Museum,* II, 3 (1949), pp. 155-58. For a critical statement on Cassou's position see C. Duncan and A. Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," in *Art History,* 3 (1980), pp. 448-69; especially note 34 and passim. Rarely has the myth of the supposed "neutrality" of the "white wall" been exposed with such insight and wit as in Brian O'Doherty's "In der weissen Zelle. Anmerkungen zum Galerie-Raum," in Wolfgang Kemp (ed.), *Der Betrachter ist im Bild. Kunstwissenschaft und Rezeptionsästhetik* (Cologne, 1985), pp. 281-93.

[5] For a discussion on Valentiner see Monika Flacke-Knoch, "Wilhelm R. Valentiners Museumskonzeption van 1918 und die zeitgenössischen Bestrebungen zur Reform der Museen," in *Kritische Berichte,* 4/5 (1980), pp. 49-58.

[6] Harald Szeemann, "Ecce Museum: Viel Spreu, wenig Weizen," in Gerhard Mack, op.cit. (note 2), p. 8; the expression "Tyranny of Intimacy" is taken from the German translation of Richard Sennett's title *The Fall of Public Man* (1974).

[7] Wolfram Prinz, *Die Entstehung der Galerie in Frankreich und Italien* (Berlin, 1977).

[8] S. André Blum, *Le Louvre. Du Palais au Musée* (Geneva/Paris/London, 1946), and Y. Cantarel-Besson, *La Naissance du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1981).

[9] Beat Wyss, "Klassizismus und Geschichtsphilosophie im Konflikt. Alois Hirt und Hegel," in Otto Pöggeler and Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert (eds.), *Kunsterfahrun, und Kulturpolitik im Berlin Hegels. Hegel-Studien* (Bonn, 1983) (supplementary volume 22), p. 117 ff.

[10] Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (London, 1976), and Helen Searing, "The Development of a Museum Typology," in Suzanne Stephens (ed.), *Building the New Museum* (New York, 1986). Still informative, although difficult to track down: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Early Museum Architecture* (exhibition catalog) (Hartford, Conn., [Wesleyan University], 1934).

[11] Victoria Newhouse, *Toward a New Museum* (New York, 1998).

[12] Frédéric Edelman, "L'Architecture de la maison des muses," in *Le Monde*, January 14 issue, 1988.

[13] Robert Venturi, "From Invention to Convention in Architecture (The Tenth Thomas Cubitt Lecture at the Royal Society of Art)," in *RSA Journal,* January (1988), pp. 89-103.

[14] Current monographs on the Centre Pompidou touch only peripherally on such typological contexts. See "Centre Pompidou," special edition A.D. *(=Architectural Design) Profiles*, 2 (n.d.), with an essay by Alan Colquhoun. The fact that Nitschké's idea for a "billboard wall" was finally realized twenty years after the opening of the Centre Pompidou, albeit in a temporary fashion as a giant Swatch ad to cover up the renovation underway behind it, deserves mention only in a footnote. Aesthetically no more convincing than the majority of Swatch wristwatches, and therefore difficult to justify at a site that applies the most exacting criteria, the ad delivers an interesting, although partially involuntary, commentary on the integration of the avant-garde into our entertainment and leisure society, to which this museum has contributed in such large measure. However, this is a completely separate topic.

[15] G. Mack, op.cit. (note 2), p. 26

[16] Frank Stella subsequently discovered his own genius for architecture-a side effect one simply accepts in such circumstances; sec Victoria Newhouse, op. cit. (note 11), pp. 119-29. On Gehry and his dialog with art see Kurt W. Forster, "The Architect Who Fell among the Artists," in Cristina Bechtler (ed.), *Frank* O. G*ehry/Kurt W. Forster* (Ostfildern-Ruit, 1999), pp. 9-15 as well as "Conversation between Frank O. Gehry and Kurt W. Forster, with Cristina Bechtler," ibid., pp. 17-95.

[17] S. S. von Moos, "Secret Physiology," in *Venturi, Scott Brown* & *Associates. Buildings and Projects, 1986-98* (New York, 1999). The problem of the museum as an autonomous work of art has been the subject of numerous studies. See for example Jürgen Paul, "The Art Museum as a Palace of Aesthetics: The Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart by James Stirling and Some Considerations Concerning the Cultural Function of an Art Museum," in *'Tribute to Lotte Brand Philip* (1985), pp. 133-43.

[18] The pros and cons of the discussion on museums in Italy at that time - in part inspired by the museum concept developed by Alex Dorner, who emigrated to the United States - have been unjustly forgotten. See, among others, Giulio Carlo Argan, "Il museo come scuola," in *Comunità,* 3 (1949), pp. 64-66 as well as "Problemi di museografia," in *Casabella-continuità,* by the same author, 207 (1955), pp. 65-67.

[19] Richard Murphy, *Carlo Scarpa e il Castelvecchio* (Venice, 1991), C6-8

[20] For a discussion on this topic in the context of contemporary conservation policies see Stephan Waetzoldt and Alfred A. Schmid, *Echtheitsfetischismus? Zur Wahrhaftigkeit des Originalen.* Carl Friedr.von Siemens Stiftung: Themen XXVIII (Munich-Nymphenburg, 1979).