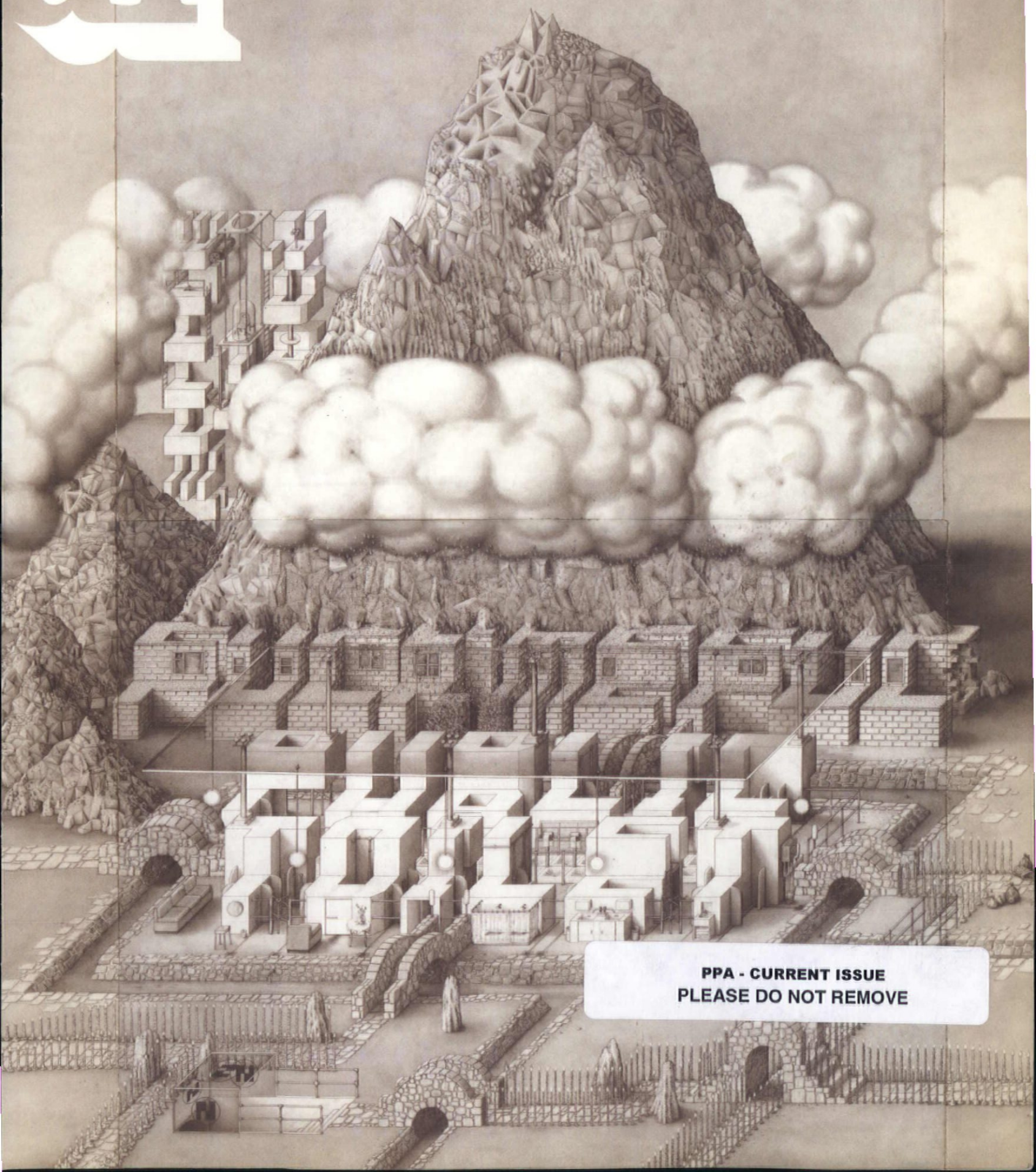


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Cover: opening this issue
on art and architecture is
the grandiose, Metabolistic
Public Toilet (1999) by Paul
Noble who was shortlisted
for this year's Turner Prize
(see p98)

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'The best museum
of all is Venice: with a
steady supply of German
and British retired
schoolteachers and the
generally bored to keep
it going until it drowns'
Peter Cook, p19

'One walks away rather
moved by the memory
of this fiercely lovely
silo, settling onto its
wandering plinth like
a morsel of gravel
onto an oily raindrop'
Nicholas Olsberg, p22

'In the pages of *Playboy*,
John Lautner's Elrod
House looks like the
first-class lounge of an
international airport
full of sex kittens, and
finally ends up as home
of Bambi and Thumper
in James Bond. Perhaps
it was not *Playboy*, but
the architects that were
talking rubbish'
Paul Davies, p86

'The entire world of
art and architecture
has failed to contribute
in any substantial way
since, let's say, 1968'
Aldo van Eyck, p94

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Peter Buchanan will be back with his final salvos in the Big Rethink campaign early this year

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William JR Curtis is a critic, historian of 20th-century architecture and author of such seminal texts as *Modern Architecture Since 1900* and *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Form*. This month he remembers the late Oscar Niemeyer and reviews Carlo Scarpa's designs for glassware, currently on show in Venice

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Andrew Mead is a London-based writer on architecture and the arts, and is our foremost photography correspondent. This month he visits the Grindbakken bunkers on a dockside in Ghent to see an installation by Rotor

Jeremy Melvin is a lecturer, scholar and writer covering a wide range of architectural topics. In these pages he interviews Adam Caruso and Ptolemy Dean on the Soane Museum refurbishment

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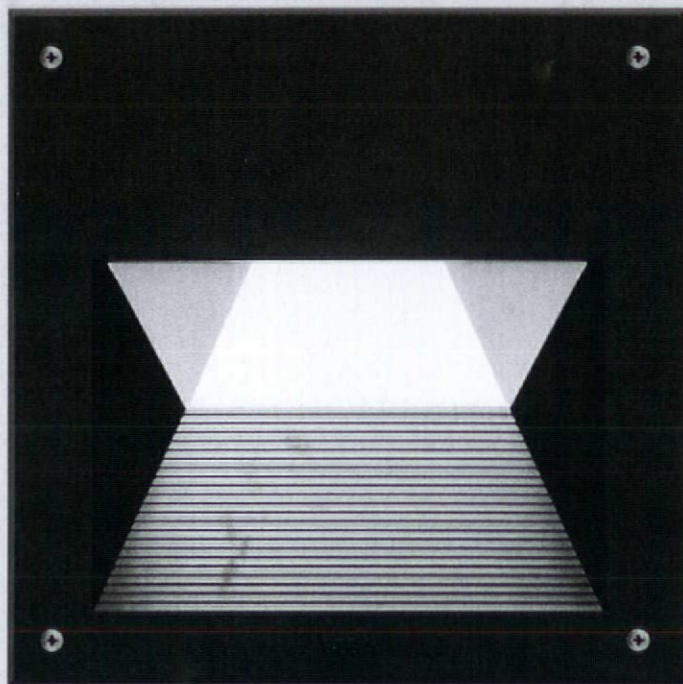


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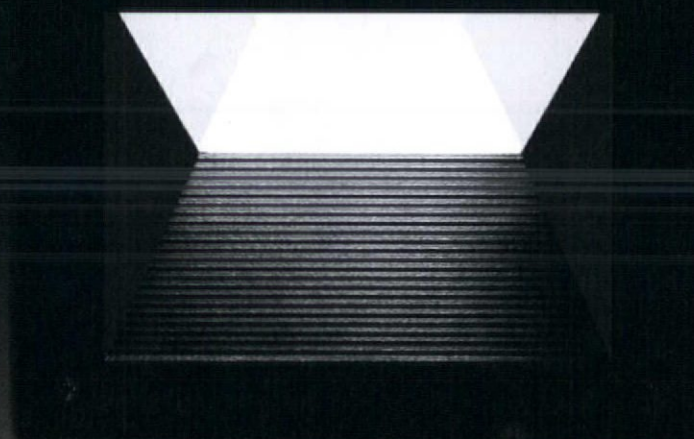
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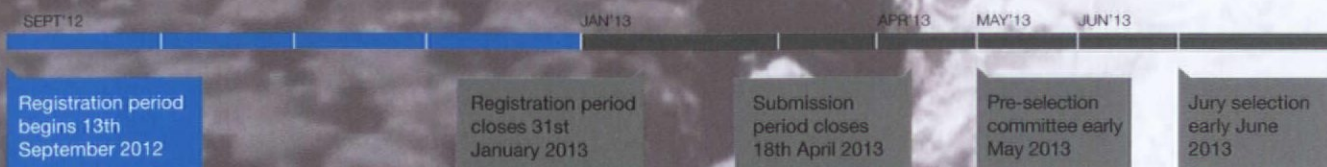


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Editorial view

Forget the art object; museums must connect with wider civic life

The recent death of Oscar Niemeyer at the astonishing span of 104 has prompted many tributes from the architectural cognoscenti. Ours is furnished by William JR Curtis (p10) who writes that 'He embodied the very notion of the artist architect who conjured up forms with the rapid lines of his pen ... (yet) behind the bravado lay a penetrating mind which elaborated an entire architectural language for dealing with a wide range of social tasks.'

Some years ago on a trip to Rio de Janeiro, I visited Niemeyer's Museum of Contemporary Art, the one that looks like a 1950s flying saucer clamped to a cliff. This involved catching a packed and dilapidated ferry to the unprepossessing suburb of Niterói, as Niemeyer's building was the initial salvo in some grand plan to reactivate one of Rio's more disregarded locales. Teetering on its cliff and visible for miles, it was a gaudy, disinhibited bauble of sinuous white concrete, spectacularly reproduced on dozens of magazine covers, and the only reason for anyone to catch that ferry. Yet as a working art museum it was a disaster, its curved walls totally unsuitable for displaying art, which was apologetically arrayed on movable partitions like some low rent student show. But no one came for or cared about the art; instead they came for the architecture and the mindblowing views of Rio's cosmic topography from the bridge of Niemeyer's flying saucer.

Notwithstanding its photogenic pulling power, Niterói is now probably regarded as one of the

late and less successful works in the Niemeyer canon, but it aptly encapsulates the theme of this issue, the shifting and complex symbiosis between art and architecture, contents and container, artist and architect. The rise of the trophy museum is one of the more enduring legacies of contemporary interaction between culture and architecture, when anything from tarot cards to torture now seems fair game for curators in the quest to corner the cultural short-break market or kick-start urban regeneration.

In the modern era, museums have assumed many incarnations, from city-museum, to museum-city, museum-implant and latterly, as Antonello Marotta observes in his extensive typological survey (p75), the museum-prosthetic and museum-landscape. 'These museums are the polar opposite of the neutral ones of the Modern Movement,' says Marotta. 'In these new contexts the place is full of pathos, of a time that produced an occurrence that is, in itself, spectacular and theatrical.' Paradoxically, the most formally modest project in this issue, the Grindbakken bunkers (p44), in which an industrial structure becomes a repository of art and memory, is also the most experientially resonant.

Yet a wider challenge still remains, in that too often modern museums and galleries are conceived as preening, isolated art objects. To cultivate a sense of authentic and enduring meaning, such buildings must connect with the wider civic life and milieu from which they emerge and which sustains them.

Catherine Slessor, Editor

Overview

OBITUARY

Oscar Niemeyer 1907-2012

The unrivalled master of Modernist Baroque defined a nation and leaves a legacy of global significance, writes
William JR Curtis

When I heard the sad news about Oscar Niemeyer I had a sudden flashback to the one occasion on which I had a conversation with him. It was seven years ago and we were both in remarkable buildings which he had designed, only they were roughly 600 kilometres apart. He was sitting in the garden of the house at Canoas (1952) just outside Rio de Janeiro. I was standing next to a lectern on the stage of the ballroom with glass floor in the casino in Pampulha (1943) just outside Belo Horizonte. It was a video link, of course, and as I do not speak Portuguese we conversed in French about the Chapel of San Francisco in Pampulha (1943) which I had just seen for the first time and which had just been well restored. Our conversation took us through several subjects including the inspiration provided by nature.

The event in which I was participating included three days of lectures and reflections upon modern architecture in Brazil. Niemeyer had wanted to attend for he said that it was in Pampulha over 60 years before that he had found his true way. But he hated planes and could not face a long journey by car. So we spoke with him one by one

from that stage and he replied from the garden. He appeared on the screen altogether larger than life, with that monumental face and that jutting chin. But the image was silvery and pale as if he were a ghost already speaking from the past.

To say that Oscar Niemeyer was a living legend would be an understatement. His life spanned over a century of world history and his career took him back and forth between the 'third world' and the more advanced industrial nations. Niemeyer leaves behind him roughly 600 projects in places as far apart as Rio de Janeiro and Algeria, Pampulha and Paris, and several of these can be counted as masterpieces. One thinks in this connection, precisely, of the casino at Pampulha and the house in Canoas which both combined the rigour of modern structure with fluidity of space and form, and sensitivity to nature. In addition there are vast numbers of works of high standard, and a few real duds towards the end. Niemeyer embodied the very notion of the artist architect who conjured up forms with the rapid lines of his pen. But one should be wary of the caricature which the wizard himself encouraged when

hypnotising his visitors with charming and self-protective rhetoric. Beyond the bravado lay a penetrating mind which elaborated an entire architectural language for dealing with a wide range of social tasks. Rather than repeating the clichés it is best to experience the extraordinary spaces and sequences of his buildings, including their orchestration of site and view. Architecture touches all the senses and communicates in silence. Niemeyer's true testament lies in the constructed thoughts of the works themselves.

Niemeyer belonged to what is sometimes called the 'second generation' of modern architects, meaning that he inherited and transformed the discoveries of pioneers such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe to deal with the realities of rapid modernisation in his own country, Brazil. He worked alongside Lúcio Costa and Le Corbusier on the project for the Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro in 1936, one of the first skyscrapers to be fitted out with sun-shading louvres, and a building which seems as fresh today as the day it was built. He subsequently developed an architecture which worked at all scales from that of the individual house to that of the monumental ensemble: his contributions to the new national capital of Brasília designed in the 1950s (basic plan by Lúcio Costa) such as the Presidential 'Palácio da Alvorada' ('Palace of Dawn'), show that he could handle questions of monumentality and state representation with great elegance. The exteriors with their inverted arches on tiptoe have been accused of mannerism, but it is on the interior that this building comes alive, with its ample public spaces, dignified *promenade architecturale*, and luxurious roof terrace affording a social stage with an expansive view to the horizon.

While modern and progressive in tone, Niemeyer's architecture absorbed lessons from the past and from nature. His biomorphic



PAULO FRIDMAN/CORBIS

In his later years, Niemeyer retreated into self-parody, but his line remained unrivalled



DUCCIO MALAGAMBA

Niemeyer's crown-of-thorns cathedral in Brasília (completed in 1970). Souvenir sellers shelter from the sun behind bronze sculptures of the four evangelists by Dante Croce

forms were inspired in part by Picasso and Arp, but also by the Baroque inheritance in Brazil. He developed a style which abstracted the shapes of the meandering rivers and contours of the tropical landscape, and those of the female figure. His architecture combined sensual curves, rich materials, and movement through layers of space. His buildings resemble filters through which air may pass while heat and glare are excluded by screens. He developed contrasts between technological abstraction and eruptive tropical vegetation. Niemeyer often played off pure prisms such as rectangular towers or blocks against lateral expansion at the level of the ground plane. He took over the principle of

Le Corbusier's 'free plan' and extended it in dynamic curves and ramps celebrating both pedestrian and motor circulation. His buildings responded to topography but were themselves artificial landscapes of a kind, and in this he was an aesthetic cousin of Roberto Burle Marx, the landscape architect with whom he often collaborated. In effect, landscape was a metaphor embodying myths concerning the roots of society and the beginnings of architecture. Niemeyer's shapes were suave and sophisticated, made of concrete, marble and steel, but some of the underlying dreams were primitivist in tone.

In Niemeyer's 'utopia', man was supposedly to achieve harmony with nature through

the liberation of space and the use of new technology – a position which expressed almost unconsciously Brazilian national myths of universal progress on one hand, and conceptions of identity on the other. A Communist who built houses for the rich, a cathedral, social housing, museums, and buildings for numerous state bureaucracies, Niemeyer was anything but ideologically consistent. The worlds for which he built have passed away but his buildings remain in all their intriguing richness. Towards the end he was sometimes guilty of an empty formalism and self-caricature, as flying saucers and pointless curves began to take over. His late works were uneven, while the press obediently trotted out

his own clichés about the law of the meander and shapely Brazilian women. It is time to put the legends aside and to look afresh at the works themselves, especially the earlier ones, without such distractions. The history of Niemeyer remains to be written and his creations have hardly begun to reveal their secrets. His vast oeuvre testifies to his fecund spatial and social imagination, and his capacity to work at all scales. His constructed buildings and drawn projects supply a three-dimensional treatise of architectural lessons and principles. More than a collection of buildings, Niemeyer leaves behind him a creative universe which is liable to influence others for a long time to come.

LONDON, UK

New world order

Edward Denison

Sustaining Identity, symposium, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, on 29 November

Change is afoot. Not a revolution as such – that's not its style – but slow, purposeful, perceptible change. For decades there has been a growing sense that our world is getting smaller and with it the built environment has become blander, monotonous, nullified by architectural ubiquity. Even the glitzy offerings by so-called 'starchitects' have become tired and predictable in their affectation. However, counter to the tidal wave of homogenisation that is supposed to have inundated settlements worldwide, an architectural undercurrent that has long struggled for legitimacy is coming to the fore. The vanguard of this architecture recently gathered for the latest symposium in the series *Sustaining Identity*, at London's V&A and the message was clear: architecture is changing, for the better.

The gravity of this change is best appreciated in a broad temporal and geographical context. For half a millennium Renaissance ideals and notions of modernity have underpinned Western thinking, fuelling colonial (mis)adventures whose consequences continue to shape the world today. Over the past three centuries, the industrial revolution has transformed the planet and humankind's relationship with it. The last century has witnessed unparalleled urbanisation, culminating recently in the majority of our species becoming city dwellers. Since the Second World War, the two pillars of perceived progress – modernisation and Westernisation – have been seen as bedfellows, and foisted



Tanghe River Park Red Ribbon, Qinhuangdao, China (2008): a modern take on local traditions by landscape architect Kongjian Yu

upon developing nations by transatlantic consensus. But today it has become clear that these pillars were a mirage, an illusory edifice masking the damage caused beyond the West, culturally, socially, environmentally and, if the more resolute conservatives required more proof, economically.

Throughout the 20th century, modernity has been an elite club established by the West, who not only held the keys but also determined the dress-code. Architects dutifully provided the uniform, fashioned from novel materials – concrete, steel and glass – while their champions prescribed the style and modes of production. The rules were simple: you were either in it or you were out – modern or traditional, civilised or primitive, right or wrong. This crude outlook has been implicit in architectural production for centuries – whether seen through

Baroque in Bogotá, Classicism throughout China or Modernism in Mogadishu.

Architectural universality, which reached its apogee with Modernism and became explicit in the International Style, like modernity itself, has brought untold benefits, but in both theory and practice it is also increasingly (occasionally catastrophically) outmoded, failing to satisfy sometimes even the basic needs of the user, the immediate setting or the wider context in which it is sited. In stark contrast, the architecture discussed in *Sustaining Identity* proposes a very different approach: 'an architecture that stands in the face of commercial globalisation, rejects commoditisation and excess, and sustains local identity, both in terms of cultural heritage and conservation of the environment.'

Cynics will balk at the lofty

aspirations and idealistic rhetoric, but what was evident from the many presentations is that terms like 'people-centred', 'localised', 'cultural meaning', 'rootedness', 'authenticity', and even 'earth-bound' are no longer fodder for the sceptics, but are the basis of a meaningful architectural response to the profound global problems that have accompanied centuries of progress. It was hard not to be moved by the passionate conviction of Francis Kéré, an ebullient architect trained at the Technische Universität Berlin and born in Burkina Faso. In a country with endemic illiteracy and poverty, modern buildings designed to improve the human experience have often done the opposite. Modern concrete high-rises require air conditioning that can be neither afforded nor maintained, while modern classrooms of breezeblock and corrugated iron generate



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temperatures above 40°C – an environment better suited to creating bread than wisdom. Determined to provide an alternative, Kéré is among a new generation of Africans that see the future not in the promised land of the West, but at home. His designs for primary and secondary schools (employing local materials, technologies and labour) are stimulating a quiet revolution in education and the building industry in Burkina Faso and bringing Kéré's work international acclaim.

On the other side of the world the work of German architects Anna Heringer and Eike Roswig in Bangladesh is founded on the same conviction that architecture is a tool for improving lives, requiring the architect to get their hands dirty instead of 'learning Rhino and a few mouse-clicks'. Their design for a school in the village of Rudrapur, built with locally produced cob and bamboo using locally sourced energy and workers exemplifies a more sophisticated understanding of sustainability – not the exhausted buzzword that even the keenest former adherents now abhor, but a return to its original values of ensuring that whatever we do today does not compromise tomorrow.

More refreshing still is the anti-egotism and humility that this position demands from the architect in accepting their works have but a finite life and will soon return to the earth.

These approaches could be said to be far from novel – for decades people have been talking about the need for architecture to be more compatible with natural and human environments – but the difference now is one of scale and sophistication. Whether we like it or not, our societies today are more embedded in global networks than they have ever been. Barring nuclear Armageddon, this trend is unlikely to reverse. The architecture of *Sustaining Identity*, which also features in the current edition of *AD* magazine, is understandably more sophisticated on account of the larger and more complex problems confronting humankind and our planetary home, and the exceptional range of information and tools at our disposal to assist us in resolving these problems.

While the work of some speakers is founded on low-tech solutions, Declan O'Carroll of the symposium organisers, Arup Associates, made a compelling case for technology's central role. Like all tools, it is merely

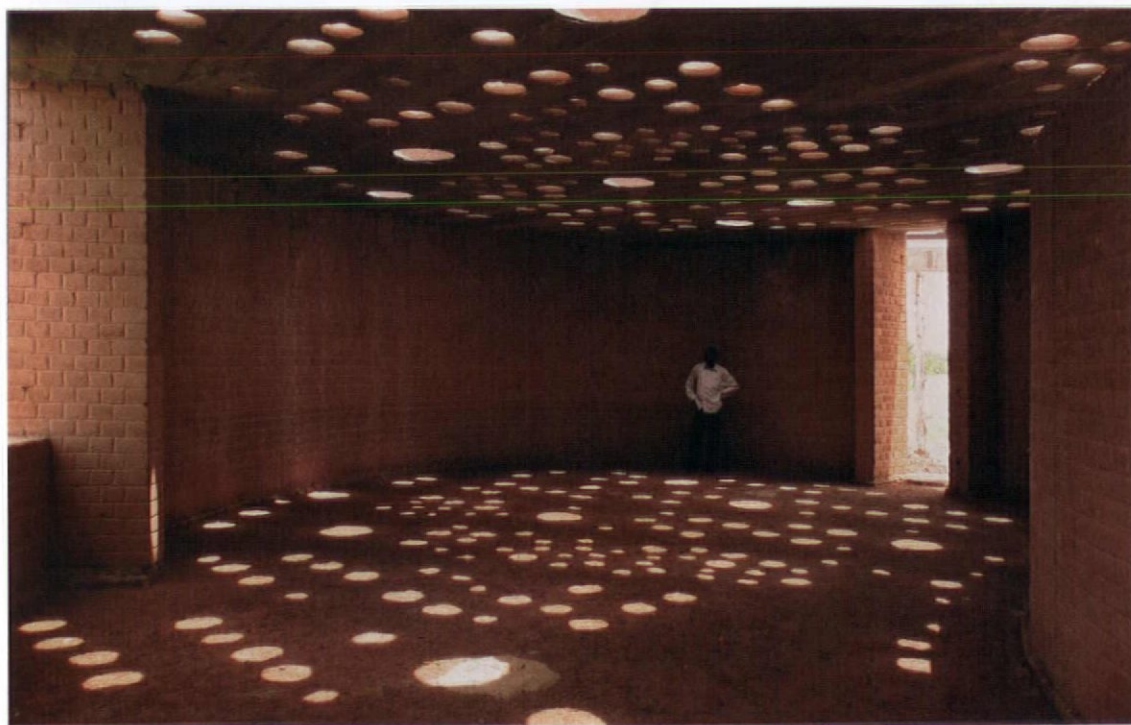
a question of how to use it. Empowering and disabling in equal measure, technology in the right hands can cope with the extreme complexity of planning and delivering architecture that is of its place and which serves both people and the planet.

This was the third symposium in the series *Sustaining Identity*. An evident distinction from the previous two was the inclusion of Chinese practitioners. Li Xiaodong presented the award-winning Liyuan Library outside Beijing funded by the Luke Him Sau Charitable Trust, while the landscape architect, Yu Kongjian, promoted his 'Big Feet Aesthetic', which rejects the damaging consequences of high-culture and advocates building an infrastructure based on ecology and environmental ethics. However, the symposium's trump card was this year's first ever China-based Pritzker Prize winner, Wang Shu. His work, more than any Chinese architect before him, combines the country's unique aesthetics and customs associated with its ancient building traditions with the modern practice of architecture. In nearly all of his projects, not least the Ningbo Museum and the Xiangshan campus of the China Academy

of Art, Wang Shu has reached unprecedented heights of originality and beauty in an architecture that invigorates cultural meaning and restores a sense of place.

Under the intellectual guidance of the symposium curators, the Finnish architect and theorist, Juhani Pallasmaa, and South African architect and director at Arup Associates, Paul Brislin, the seeds of this emerging architectural paradigm have been carefully nurtured and have flourished. It would be simplistic to deduce from Pallasmaa's renowned rebuttal of newness for newness's sake an endorsement of nostalgia, traditionalism or conservatism. *Sustaining Identity* is a celebration of continuity in the creative process and an architecture that sustains cultural identity and is profoundly connected to place.

Pallasmaa's thinking resonates with his contemporaries in other intellectual fields, suggesting something more profound is under way. Building on the ground prepared by Edward Saïd, Shmuel Eisenstadt's theory of 'Multiple Modernities' contends that 'Western patterns of modernity are not the only "authentic" modernities.' Instead, he proposes 'the best way to understand the contemporary world, indeed the history of modernity, is to see it as a story of continual development and formation, constitution, and reconstitution of multiple, changing and often contested and conflicting modernities.' If Pallasmaa, Eisenstadt and many other like-minded intellectuals and practitioners are right, then we are at last being liberated from the celerity and celebrity associated with 20th-century Modernism and its homogenising effects, and entering an era characterised by a planetary consciousness and a creative heterogeneity derived from manifold traditions – an age of multiple modernities. How fitting that those blazing the trail in architecture are from territories formerly perceived as peripheral: places as far-removed as Burkina Faso, Finland, South Africa and China.



Traditional construction methods were used to build this school library in Gando, Burkina Faso (2012) by Francis Kéré Architecture



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View from...



Adrift in the Senegal River, the island heart of the old colonial city is protected from the fearsome Atlantic breakers by an urbanised sand spit, the *Langue de Barbarie*

YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND/CORBIS

Saint-Louis, Senegal

Italo Calvino would have felt at home in Saint-Louis, the former capital city of Senegal, and the Venice of Africa, reports *Paul Brislin*

There is an island on an African river that has something of Venice about it, and of Italo Calvino too. It seems almost a city of dreams: a faraway world where anything is possible as it balances on the cusp of its future between the currents of the Senegal River and the rolling waves of the Atlantic.

This is Saint-Louis. Formerly Senegal's capital, the tides of its economy have waned. The high water marks are still there to see in its architecture. But the shift of rule to Dakar, the cessation of heavy harbour trade, and the failure of the single railway line have cut the city off. Ironically, this isolation has made it special. Although threatened, there is still a vibrant fishing economy. And its battered, faded architecture remains: 19th-century French colonial villas, the courtyards and shaded balconies designed for the tropics; 1920s Art-Deco houses; early '30s civic buildings; small '50s international-modern office blocks. For these layers, and their human scale, the island is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

But Saint-Louis is important for more than its beautifully disintegrating plasterwork. It is a living experiment in tolerance; a negotiation of the complex relations between past and present in the uneasy transitions of Africa. 'For a long while', says an indigenous Saint-Louisian, 'we did not care about the history or the buildings. They represented the worst of the past, a colonial

oppression. But that made us what we are, a new African nation. If we destroy the past we destroy part of us, and of our future too.'

Saint-Louis is a living, working city under pressure. Pressure to move the tough fishing quarter, as sanitation is non-existent and the waves that blow from the US roll over the island in storm season. Pressure from the quickening pace of decline. Some buildings have fallen completely. And where restoration has been attempted, delicate timber fretwork balconies are replaced with precast concrete bollards, and naturally ventilated spaces stopped up forever.

But how to chart the path ahead? Fishing – and tourism of a particular kind – will remain the economies of the future. But what is especially interesting is that, somehow, Saint-Louis is choosing the kind of imagination it wants to attract. Nearby Mali is the heart of the desert blues, the origin of a host of Western music forms. Fear of kidnap now makes Mali off limits, so Saint-Louis has established itself as a centre of West African music, its annual Jazz Festival attended by major African and international artists. There is an air race from Paris, across the dunes of Mauritania; and a transatlantic rowing race to Cayenne in French Guinea.

At the level of architecture and city planning, there is imaginative small-scale intervention. Activists such as Yves Lamour and Marie-Caroline Camara are central to

these fragile efforts, culturally and in urban planning terms. With the help of French universities, a planning guideline demonstrates how the essence of the city can be maintained, without rejecting responsive contemporary architecture. Intelligent buildings are the result. Yves has revitalised a French colonial villa. Meals are held in a stair-sheltered courtyard while air flows through verandas and shutters to naturally ventilate. Marie has chosen an entirely different approach, stripping her house to its essence. A palm courtyard flows into the living spaces with no separation apart from a movable fabric screen for the *harmattan* that blows in winter. Through the spirit of a half dozen individuals like these, a fragile course is being charted.

I hope that the winds and currents are beneficial for Saint-Louis. It could go in any direction from here. The UNESCO funds may dissipate and the buildings fall into ruin. Or tourism might pickle the island in a pastiche of its past. The city is in balance. But it may be successful too: if only for the fact that to reach it from, say London, requires a leg to Paris, a six-hour flight to Dakar, and a five-hour car journey through the baobabs and palms, where the police will stop you for transactions of one sort or another. So if you are the kind of person for whom the journey stirs a sense of adventure, reach out a hand to Saint-Louis.

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Viewpoints



PETER COOK

Musing on the value of museums

Among my early memories is one of Leicester Museum, where the stuffed giraffe and a Duncan Grant exhibition seemed to be in the same space. Moving to Ipswich and its museum I have a similar memory of a stuffed rhinoceros with some East Anglian water-colourists, and for years absorbed such 'culture', along with Terence Rattigan acted-out by repertory companies, visiting pianists and flint-knapped churches.

Gradually, the distinction of a museum as such began to mirror those between cathedral/church, orchestra/quartet, palace/manor house. So: a mandate to be taken seriously. Long before the internet, hunger for information and stimulus was satiated via books. Even now, a good exhibition drives you to its catalogue, the catalogue to discussion with companions and then, maybe, back to the internet.

A drive along a provincial highway in the UK, Germany, France, New England, and many other places, reveals museums of owls, village crafts, old cameras, a submarine in a hut, a museum for the preservation of interest in the indulgencies of a 19th-century man of money (post-rationalised in a natty catalogue by an art historian). Museums have become a vehicle for anecdotes, T-shirts, but most of all for a special game of culture-play that is easier and cheaper than going to *Rigoletto*.

Then we have the architecture. Often it is the appropriation of an existing building: owls in a barn, cameras in a beautiful Sverre Fehn conversion near Oslo or Bournemouth's Russell Cotes Museum that charmed with its

comfortable Edwardian past but stultified all serious museum-making in the region for a century.

But then comes the status game of the German cities: if in the 19th century it was the opera house, in the 20th century it was the museum. In Frankfurt's high moment (before the fall of the Berlin Wall), the creation of the 'museum mile' elevated the city by ranging a series of institutions along a strip of villas with the Städel Museum at one end and Meier's three white blocks around one villa (forming the Museum of Applied Art) at the other. This building became part of a tacit competition between Meier's three friends/rivals: Hollein in München-Gladbach, Isozaki in Gunma or LA and Stirling in Stuttgart. Each expressing an extreme moment of creative mannerism and generating spatial experience.

Similarly, Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum became a marker of insistent fusion between conscience, spirit, statement and architectural language. However, Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim changed the rules of the game. Even picky English critics who like the meek and the modest had to admit it was special. The effect upon local restaurants, hotels and airlines ricocheted around the world and 'iconic' building syndrome was born. Closer inspection would have revealed that the foreunner was actually Gehry's Vitra gallery: hated by the Germans and Swiss because it's funky, but an exercise in lighting and access to take seriously.

In strict functionalist terms, the museum is a flaky model: for even issues of natural v artificial

lighting, 'staginess' or straight narrative presentation bewitch curators and others who brief their architects and there is always the conflict of the museum as public 'attraction' versus its usefulness as a centre of study. How many researchers are still in poky pockets by the boiler room?

Perhaps the best museum of all is Venice: with a steady supply of German and British retired schoolteachers and the generally bored to keep it going until it drowns. Ideal, because it bombards us with so much that has 'a story', with a tapestry of aesthetic that can flatter the observer laid into a circulation system that has its own logic yet remains perverse. Almost lost, is the fact that it was once tough, operational and authentic.

If a museum building can rarely have such a degree of integrity, it remains a casket that has to deal with the same titillation as unwrapping a present. The sigh of 'oh', or the delighted cry of 'oh' levels out at the dimension of a building. Those who have made buildings for travelling shows or installations have enjoyed the opportunity to play with the surrounding town (hence our 'naughty nozzle' in Graz that focuses on the castle and appropriates it as an 'exhibit'). Others have used the gravitas of history, or rather dual histories (of Egypt and Berlin) that can resonate, as in Chipperfield's Berlin Neues Museum.

Yet I'm still uneasy among all this posturing: for the mix of the giraffe and the Duncan Grant felt good, and remained in the mind for a long time.

LAST WORDS

'Each afternoon at the Colony Room was like a bizarre cocktail party hosted by Jean Genet and Albert Steptoe; an extraordinary mix of the exotic and down-at-heel'

Craig Brown on the Colony Room, *The Times*, 3 December

'It's time to make Yakult for the built environment!'

Rachel Armstrong speaking at the AR's *Architecture & debates* series, the V&A, 4 December

'Brasília is a model for architecture. I don't know any architects for whom Singapore is. That would be like calling McDonald's to help you open a fine food restaurant'

UIA President Albert Dubler at the Pan American Congress, 29 November

Your views



Cast out the joss sticks, crystals and Spiral Dynamics?

With the greatest respect for the ambition and sentiment behind Peter Buchanan's *Big Rethink*, I wonder how this Campaign fits in with the (exciting, admirable) relaunch of the AR as a *critical* organ? The rather loopy theoretical component of Buchanan's campaign, Integral Theory, is accepted uncritically (certainly not the case in mainstream academia), whereas the unthinking adoption of other ideologies comes in – quite rightly – for a sharp slap on the wrist. Integral Theory is New Age woolly thinking dressed up as science: to point out just one of its contradictions, it's highly critical of other thought systems with universal pretensions, but what could be more one-size-fits-all than this attempt to plot all cultures and all history, both past and future, on one spuriously-labelled graph? As a result, architecture is treated as if it existed in some vacuous 'Noosphere', purged of power relations and economic realities (the combination of Teilhard de Chardin's spiritual terminology and marketing nonsense like 'StriveDrive' and 'Beige Memes' is revealingly Boomerish, mixing business and bullshit). It would be more productive to bring architecture back down to earth where it belongs; in this era of deep global crisis and rising inequality, we don't have time for joss sticks and crystal gazing.

André Todd, Arundel

You've got to hand it to Peter Buchanan. Just when you think he can't get any more bonkers, he goes and writes last month's essay (AR December 2012). Perhaps my characterisation of Buchanan's essay is more than a little unkind and probably says more about my own 'meme' status than anything else, but unkind or not, many will respond to it in just the way that I have done.

It would be unfortunate if such a response prevented readers from seeing the importance of some of the central issues raised in the essay, not least that of the

need to change 'thinking' at a fundamental level in order to develop the capability to effect the sort of change that creating a sustainable world requires.

There are a number of obvious problems/questions regarding Spiral Theory and its application which Buchanan himself addresses (rather naughtily) right at the end of the piece. Surely the Red Meme dominated profession will not make it that far.

The discussion on memes does shed light on just how difficult it is to change our own minds, let alone those of others. There is a well-known Blue Meme solution to this problem. Crisis.

History shows us that change in perception is often forced through crisis and the fact that we are currently passing through various crises of a natural, financial and political kind, tells us something about the type and magnitude of crisis that will be required to effect the necessary change this time around.

Maybe Peter Buchanan isn't so bonkers after all.

Michael Badu, London

Vidler on Eisenman on Palladio

Anthony Vidler recently contributed a lengthy article on Peter Eisenman's exhibition: *Palladio virtuel*, at Yale School of Architecture (AR November 2012). In the most effusive terms, Vidler states that it is one of the most intellectually challenging, myth-overturning and beautiful exhibitions of recent years. His enthusiasm goes on to affirm that rather than tracing the modifications of the Wittkower-Rowe ABABA grid, Eisenman has identified three fundamental volumes characteristic of all 20 villas: the portico, the transition or circulation spaces and the central or main spaces.

However interesting Eisenman's models and the third dimension drawings could be, to affirm that he identified the

porticos, circulations and main spaces of Palladio's villas is really such a revelation that one is left with the sense of being cheated with something that is clear even for an architectural student; let alone for experts.

It is clear that Vidler is a close friend of Eisenman, but to affirm that he demonstrates that none of Palladio's villas, however pure it seems at first glance, has any formal consistency – or rather has any formal typological consistency in relation to another is, to say the least, pure nonsense.


Vidler's revelation contradicts his friend's work, because all his work is based on formal analysis; Eisenman's doctoral thesis was the formal basis of modern architecture. One could understand Vidler's attempt to please his friend, but his conclusion is erroneous. To maintain that Palladio's architecture lacks any formal consistency is an insult to the intelligence of your readers. The work of major architectural critics on Palladio's work, as Wittkower, Rowe, and also George Stiny, Lionel March, George Hersey, that Vidler did not include in his analysis, is an example of professional work and analysis that contradicts Vidler's attempt to put Palladio's work under Eisenman's limits. Nobody deserves to be misinformed by Vidler's attempt to please his overrated friend.

Antonio Toca Fernández, Mexico

Errata

In the November 2012 issue we neglected to mention that William JR Curtis also took photographs 21 and 22 of the Salk Institute in his article on the work and influence of Louis Kahn.

In the December 2012 issue on the Emerging Architecture Awards, Bloc 10 Housing in Winnipeg, Canada by 5468796 Architecture was photographed by James Brittain, but not credited.

 The corrected versions are now online

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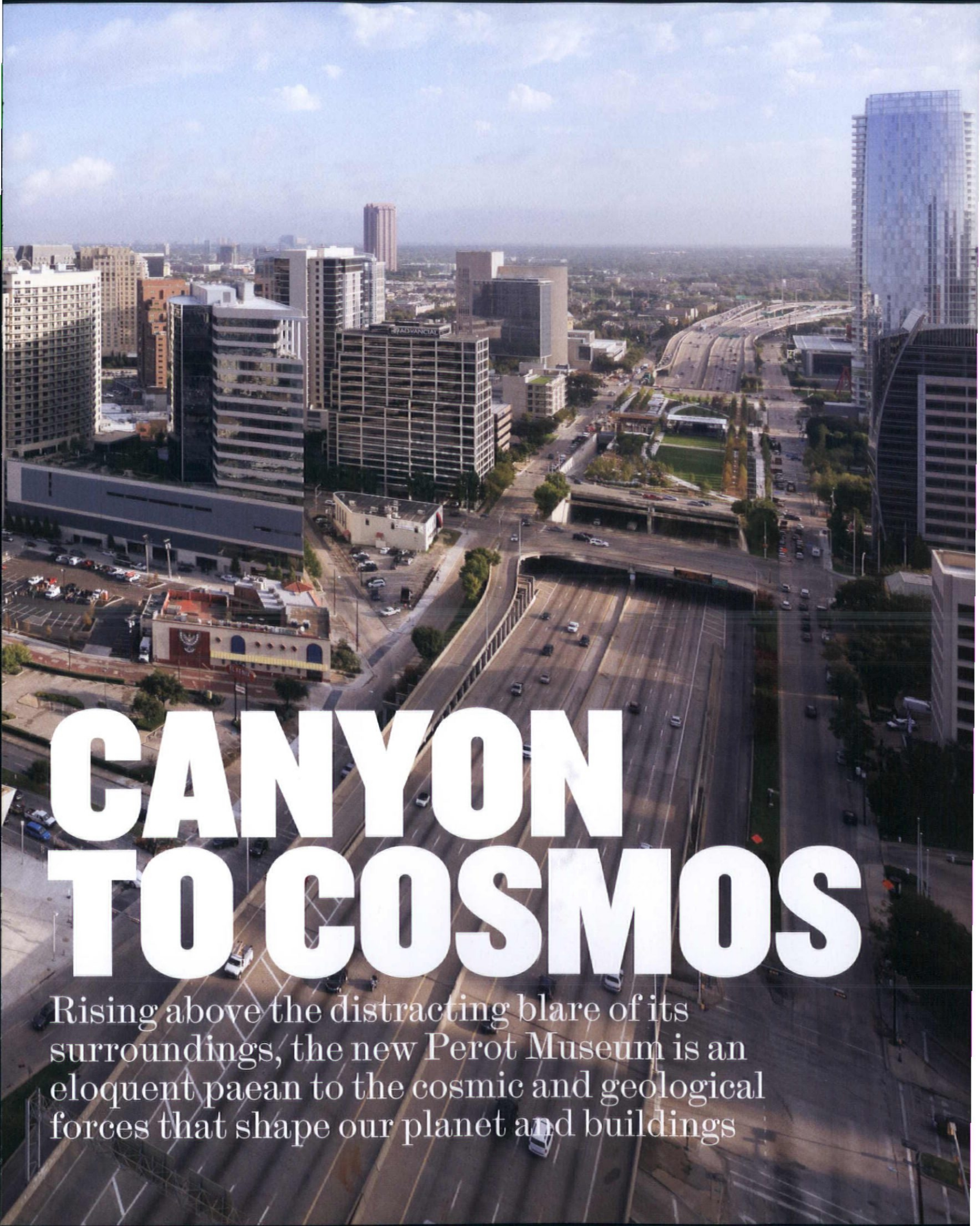
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CANYON TO COSMOS

Rising above the distracting blare of its surroundings, the new Perot Museum is an eloquent paean to the cosmic and geological forces that shape our planet and buildings

**Perot Museum
of Nature
and Science,
Dallas, Texas,
USA,
Morphosis**

1. (Previous page)
bordered by freeways and
parking lots, the museum
confronts the distracting
urban glare of Dallas
2. Jurassic car park –
within this disconnected
milieu, the building has
the presence and solidity
of a modern castle keep
3. A glazed bar containing
an escalator is clamped
to the side of the building,
offering views of its
dystopian environs
4. The green podium
ripples above pedestrians

CRITICISM

NICHOLAS OLSBERG

It is now 40 years since Morphosis first began its critical and unsentimental interventions into the urban fabric. Thom Mayne has never lost sight of the original agenda of the firm's collective sensibility, continuing to cast his work into disjunctive conversation, critical dialogue or combinatory discussion with the urban context, but never deferring or merging into it. For the most part that visual commentary on the setting has been so determinedly and ruggedly urbanist that it has been hard to make connections to the sensory, to the dynamics of the body and its comprehension of space and light, or to nature and the larger landscape in which all buildings sit.

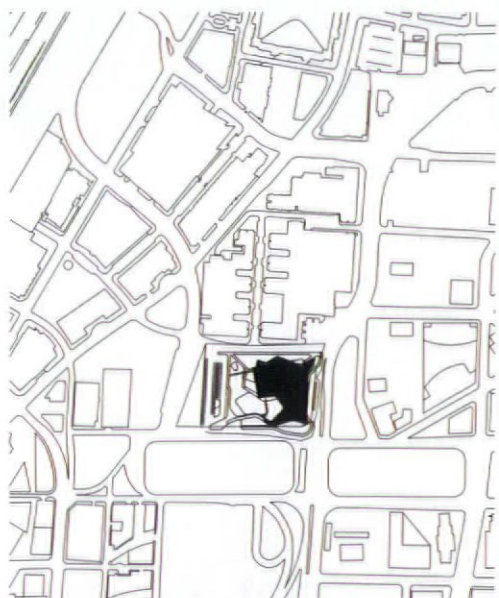
Now, in a most unlikely setting, with a Dallas museum of science and nature that rises into a sky punctuated by a hundred lonely glass and concrete boxes, on a forlorn site beneath a downtown flyover, abutting a wilderness of parking lots on three sides and a sentimental neo-Victorian apartment complex on the other, he seems to have found a voice for the poetics of the city. Dense, opaque and monochromatic, conceived at the wonderfully satisfying scale of a castle keep and cast in a gorgeous concrete skin whose narrow extrusions evoke the strata and striations of the natural world, the Perot Museum tower comments on the arbitrary, mis-scaled flimsy lucent high-rises around it with an almost visceral solidity, while the folds of the shallow concrete skirt that falls from it to the street and flow around the visitor in its plaza are positively melodious.

The whole scheme, not only in its didactic programme but in such factors as its studied attention to conserving resources, and to bringing light into a closed container, talks to the planet and its crisis. Some steps in this

direction are less successful than others. The sloping podium from which the concrete container of the museum rises wraps around it an arc of the geological and living environments of Texas. Where this undulating sequence becomes a roof, a layer of shale flagstones and grasses is laid down, the orientation allowing it to shed and capture water. This didactic and rather ghastly demonstration of natural living environments along the roof of the plinth becomes visible from many points, including the adjacent freeway. As a result there has been much discussion of the concrete forms and other fabricated elements of the building that were very oddly scattered among the rocks at a late stage of design. To some – including the architects – a positive symbolic message seems plain enough: that buildings grow from the shaping of materials drawn from nature. But the idea is growing that they represent shards that fell from the great slash in the side of the building during some recent fictive catastrophe, and that, as memories of rupture, they are therefore predictive of cataclysms to come.

Where the approaches are less didactic or self-conscious and grounded in the experiential, they have real clarity and force. Some sensory moments are positively luxurious in their attention to the body and its awareness of motion. The main entry is the

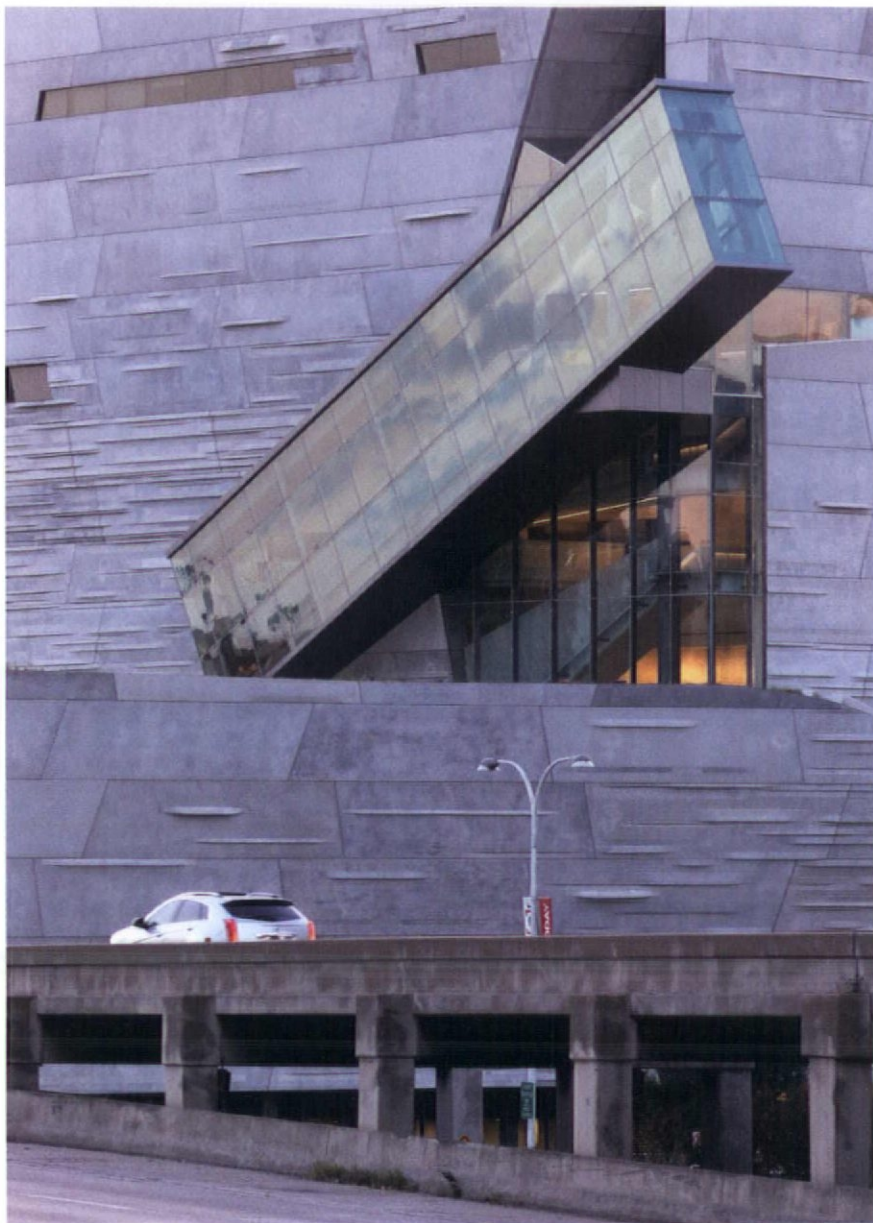
‘[The materials] represent shards that fell from the great slash in the side of the building ... memories of rupture, they are therefore predictive of cataclysms to come’



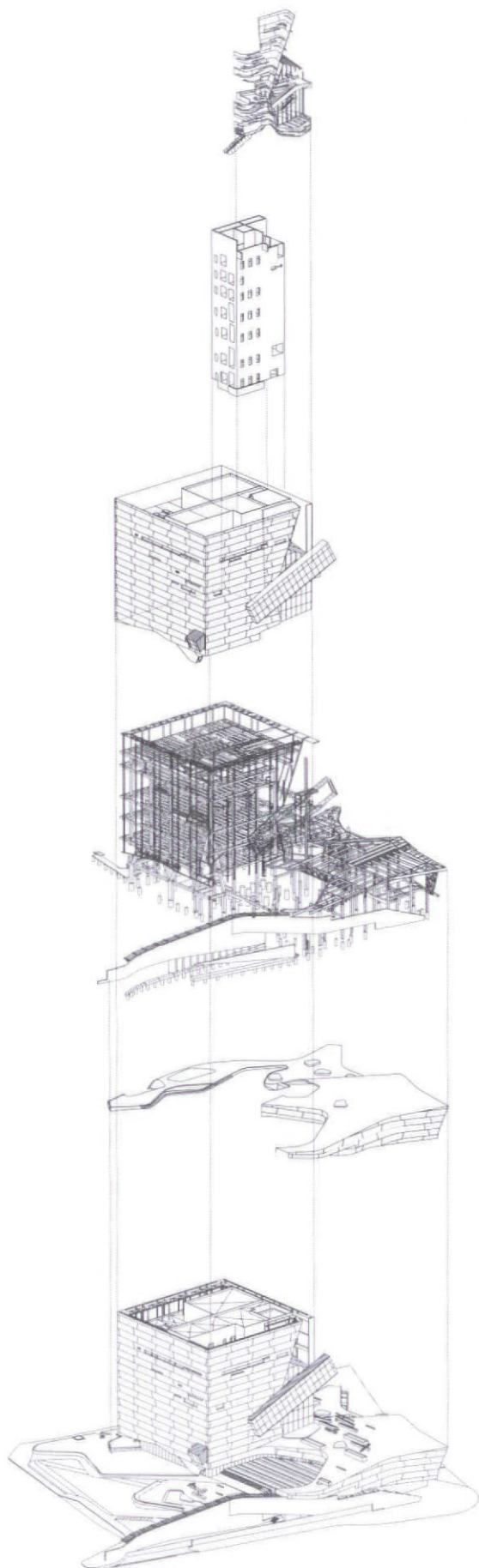
location plan



3



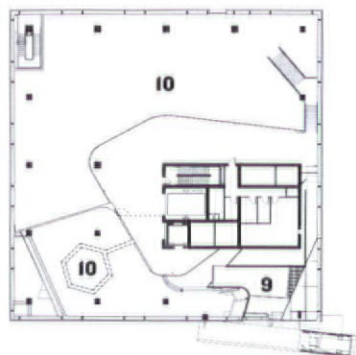
4



exploded projection

Perot Museum of Nature and Science, Dallas, Texas, USA, Morphosis

- I concourse
- 2 café
- 3 kitchen
- 4 theatre
- 5 shop
- 6 lobby
- 7 roof deck
- 8 landscape plinth
- 9 atrium
- 10 gallery
- 11 office



third floor plan



fourth floor plan



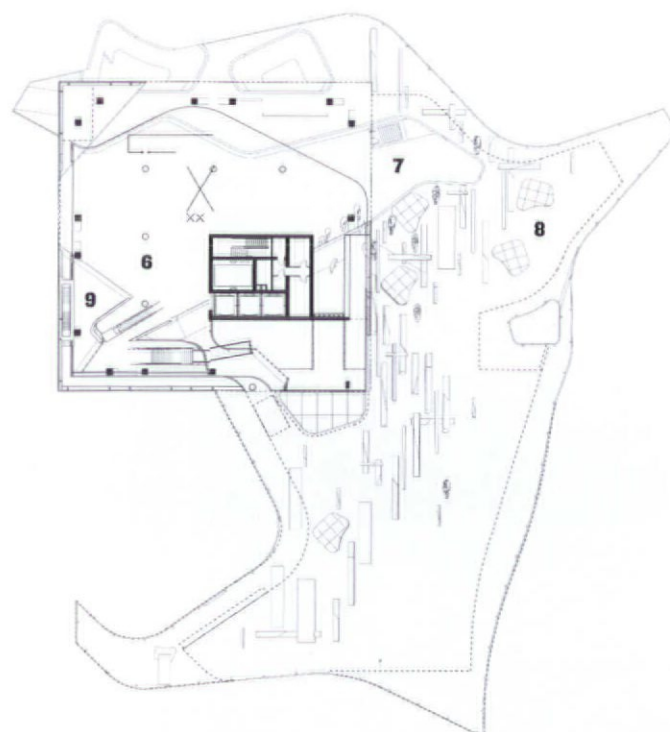
lower second floor plan



upper second floor plan



lower ground floor plan

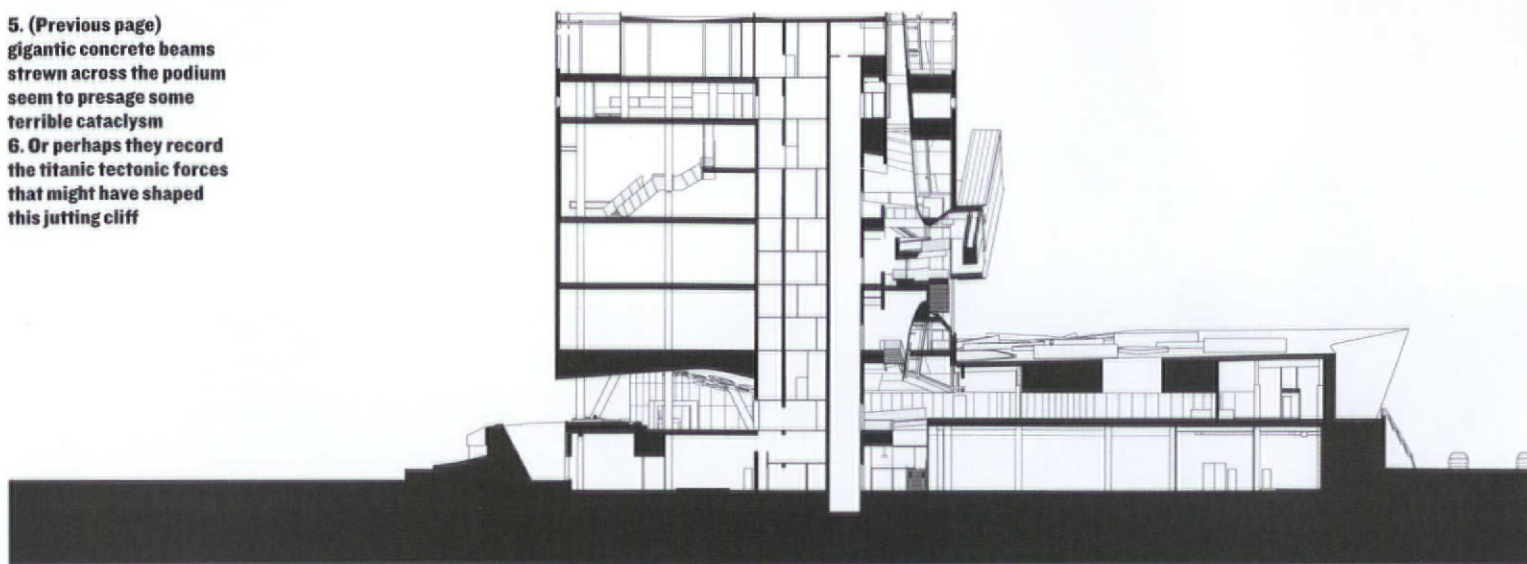


upper ground floor plan

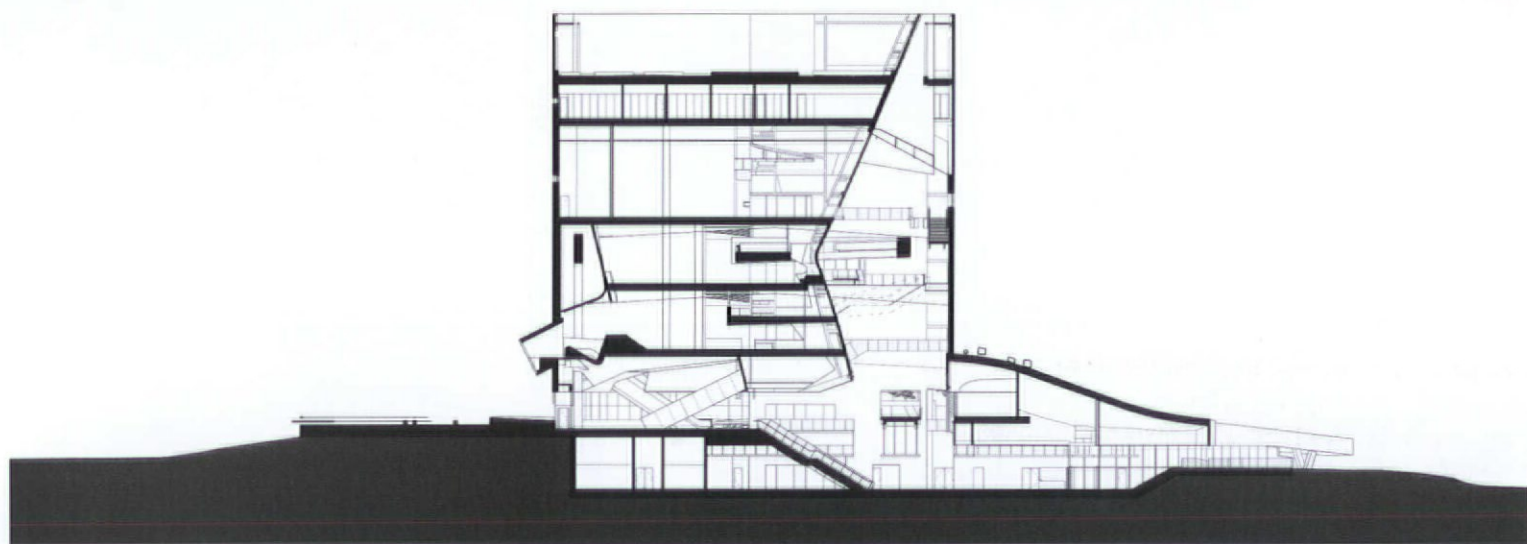




5. (Previous page)
gigantic concrete beams
strewn across the podium
seem to presage some
terrible cataclysm
6. Or perhaps they record
the titanic tectonic forces
that might have shaped
this jutting cliff



section BB

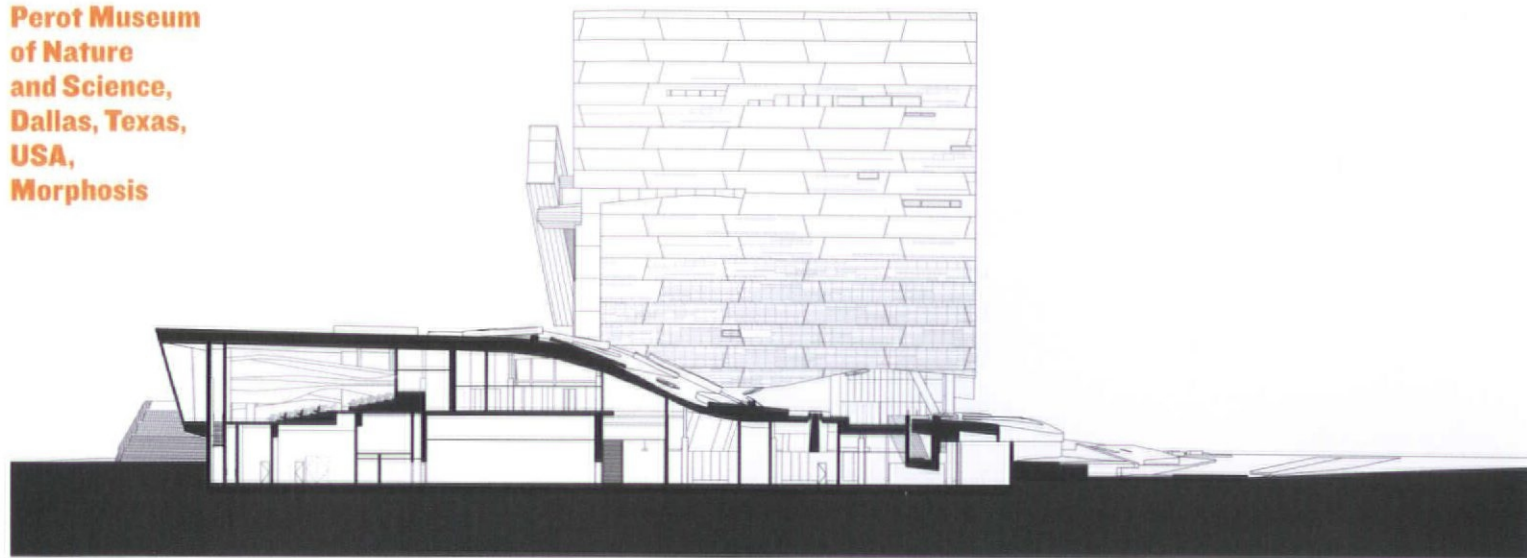


section AA

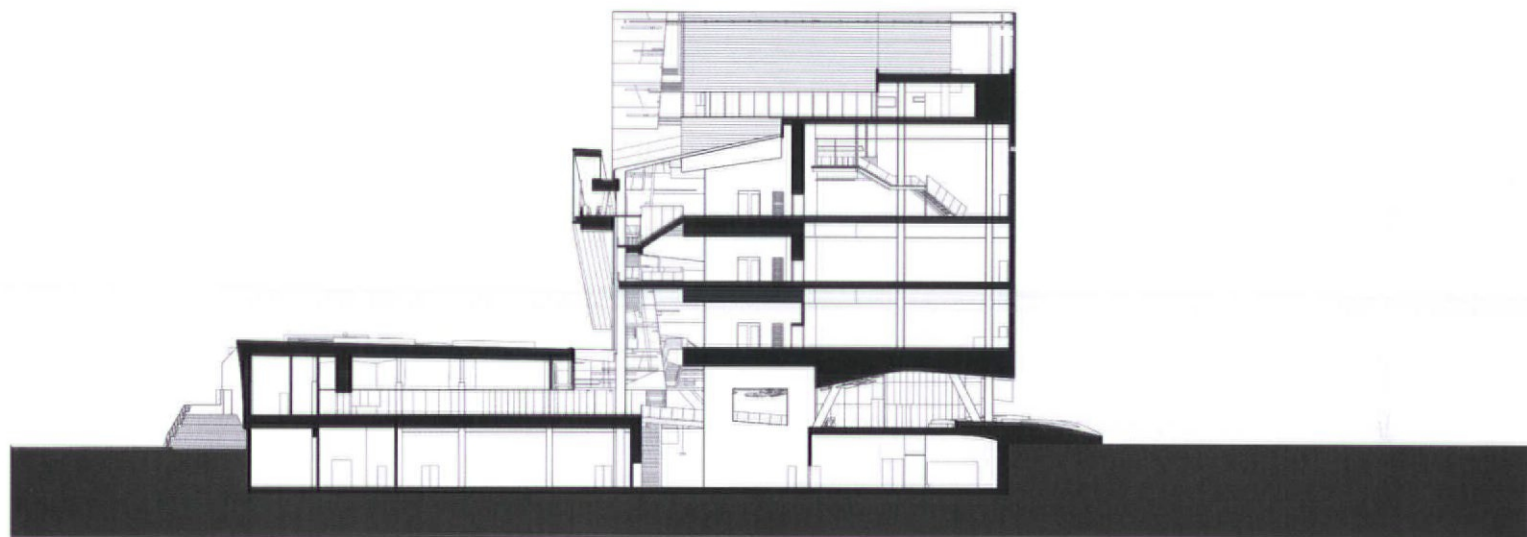
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**Perot Museum
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section DD



section CC

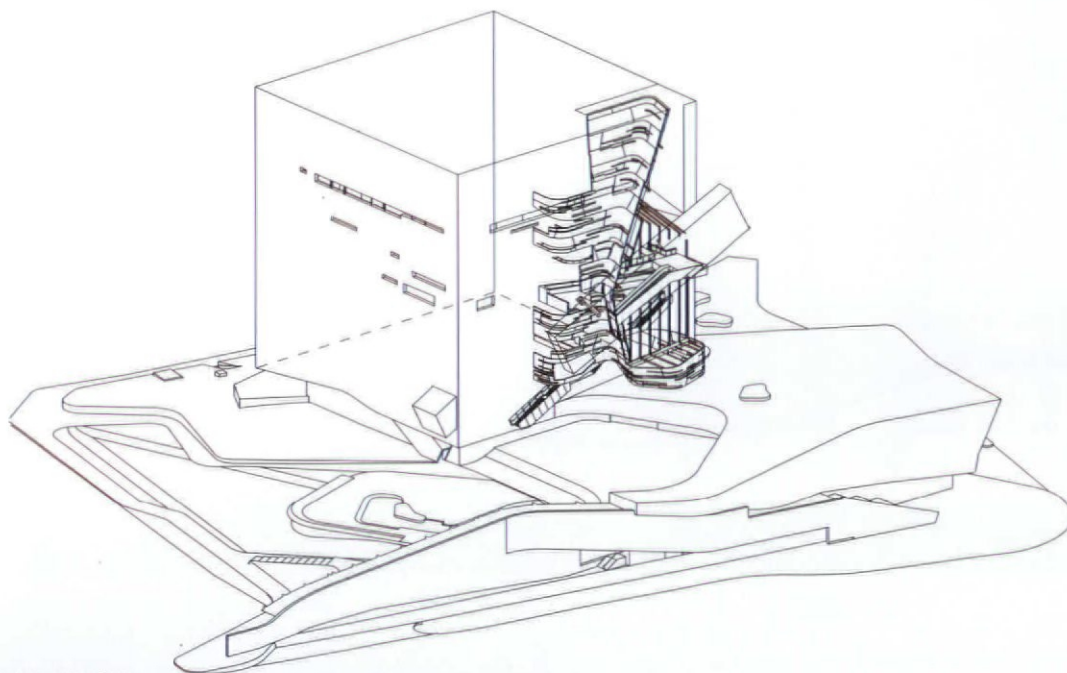
pedestrian equivalent of an on-ramp. A sweepingly curved walkway, under a luminous canopy, skirting a forest glade, and broken by a stream of the museum's circulating water system, guides your feet to the entrance. The initial entry comes where these fluid lines converge on the base of a great glazed shaft cut up through the dense container. Such splittings are now a signature Morphosis gesture. They have a 'combinatory' intent, connecting the life inside the building to that of the city outside by unveiling each to the other, drawing in forms and materials from the exterior language and exposing to the world at large elements and activities on the inside. Here the open shaft is also used to display – as if it were a kind of science in itself – all the varying heights, scales, materials, shapes, systems and lines with which the building operates. Thus we are welcomed to the museum by an anatomical section of the structure and its armatures

'Morphosis leads us ... to a world in which the body and mind pace movement and recognise the moments of wonder that come with the slowing of motion'

rather as if it were the skeleton of a dinosaur. In another nod to the morphology of buildings and towns, a busy and brightly lit 'entertainment' district – the museum's store, café and theatre – spills off from this, settling under the gently rising landscaped roof that serves as a watershed.

It is all a little too compressed and complicated, but both the compression and the complexity have their points, especially in nudging visitors – like the bridge at Breuer's Whitney or the great steps of a 19th-century

gallery – into the change of speed and gaze that has to mark the transition from street to sanctum. In this case Morphosis leads us from an automobile city in which the privilege of motion is almost entirely granted to the machine to an alternate world in which the body and mind pace movement and can recognise the moments of wonder that can come with that slowing of motion. One of those moments comes very soon in a vast, shockingly dim basement lobby. It is a sudden explosion of space, undulating surfaces and visible structural members, covered by a high web of starlights beyond which it is impossible to exactly discern the finite ceiling. Morphosis says only that the lobby's patterns 'reflect the dynamism of the exterior landscape, blurring the distinction between inside and outside and connecting the natural with the manmade'. But, decorated with a single giant dinosaur, this evocation of the 'great hall' seems to say much more. It could

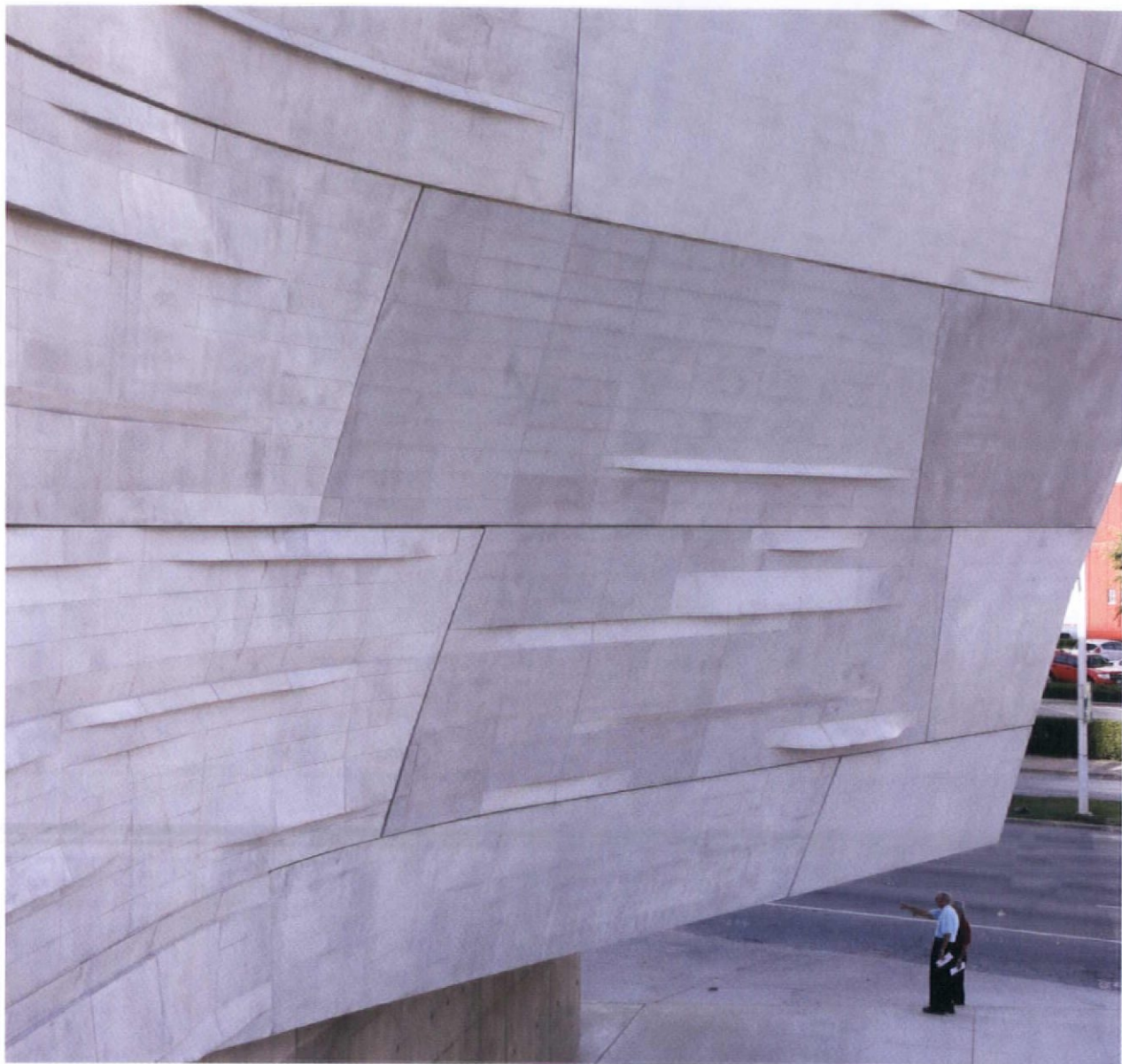


7. Interior spaces juxtapose organic and angular forms to Scharounian effect
8 & 9. The epic sweep of the concrete facade is broken up by irregular striations that recall the geological strata of a cliff-face

cutaway projection



8



9



**Perot Museum
of Nature
and Science,
Dallas, Texas,
USA,
Morphosis**



10. (Opposite) layered walkways and bulbous concrete piers imbue the mechanics of circulation with a powerful spatial and experiential drama
11. The low, dark lobby is the lair of a solitary dinosaur: a reminder, along with the star-spangled ceiling, that the cosmos is more awe-inspiring than our car-strangled cities

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Morphosis
Associate architect
Good Fulton & Farrell
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Erco
Acoustic ceilings
Hunter Douglas: Techstyle
Structural glazing
Novum Structures
Locks and door closers
Dorma
Photographs
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Perot Museum of Nature and Science, Dallas, Texas, USA, Morphosis

be seen as a lovely and mysterious reminder, as the museum's tale of the planet begins, not simply of how one's journey began in the great halls of the traditional natural science museum but of the smallness of the human place in our universe and of the vastness of the human capacity to comprehend it. This is one of a number of points at which Mayne's work transcends the determinedly virile and unlyrical manner in which his team describes it.

The second moment of intended amazement is less successful. Taking its cue from Wright's Guggenheim, the Perot addresses the problem of the vertical museum both aesthetically, by celebrating the vertical circulation, and pragmatically, by carrying you first to the top and allowing for a gradual descent. Models show an extraordinary amount of attention to the huge glass escalator shaft that breaks out from the most visible facade of the museum. It follows the same lines and serves much the same purpose as a giant telescope, taking visitors to the roof of the building and – with vistas of the city along the route – leaving them at the end of its trajectory among a discussion of the stars in the museum's gallery of the universe. Yet so much has been done by the time one takes this ride to introduce this experience – the most

conspicuous feature of the building and its most touted – that there is very little surprise or excitement in the short journey; positive disappointment in the dismal vista of parking lots and banal office towers it affords along the way; and no excitement at all in the final meagre and vertiginous little observation deck it takes you to (with an urban view of next to nothing). The best views by far are actually those looking down and around, to the very elegantly crafted and beautifully lit white stairwells, the simplest and clearest passages in the entire building and the least cluttered with ideas.

The memory of those stairs becomes an essential counterpoint to the overwhelming visual noise of so many of the galleries, in which the spiral scheme, the architecture and especially the unfortunate specimens themselves, all become lost in a garish forest of labels, billboards and flickering backdrops. The few points of focus and repose in this busy scene – the quietly glowing hall of minerals is one – serve only to point out where the museum best and most surprisingly succeeds in arousing a desire to keep this earth intact, which is not in its displays, nor in the rather fierce and didactic xerigraphy of its landscape scheme – but in the many moments of almost loving, sensuous spatial poetry with which its supposedly cool, proudly prosaic, rugged, critical and urbanistic architect has endowed it. The museum's conversations between straight line and curve, softly dense wall and decisive cut, completed box and open cylinder are too abrupt at times. But there is in that abruptness something true to how nature shows itself in an urban setting; so that one walks away rather moved by the memory of this fiercely lovely silo settling onto its wandering plinth like a morsel of gravel onto an oily raindrop, catching the light and casting reflection in a thousand ways.

'The museum succeeds in ... the many moments of almost loving, sensuous spatial poetry with which its supposedly cool, proudly prosaic, rugged, critical and urbanistic architect has endowed it'



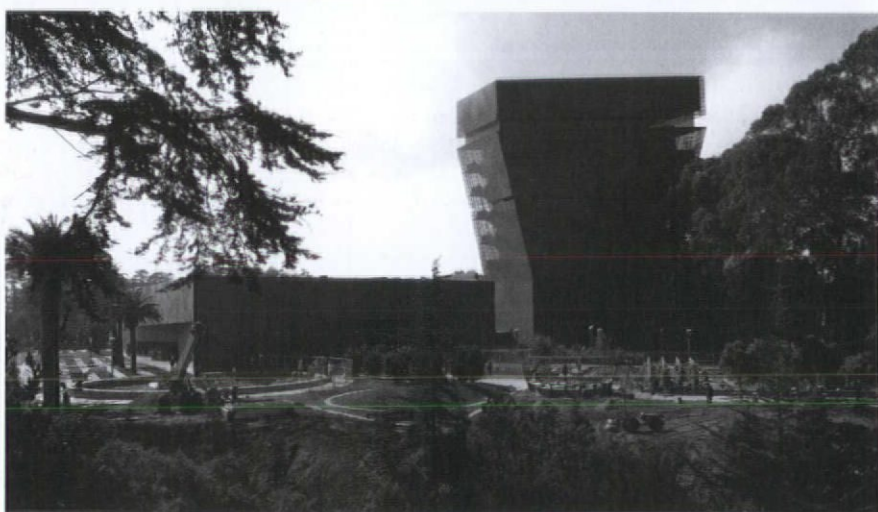
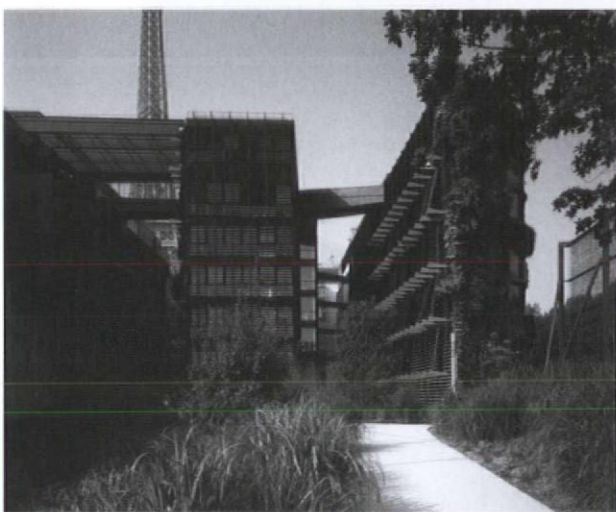




HORIZON LINE

Synthesising allusions to the vernacular with contemporary abstraction, the new Parrish Art Museum encapsulates the changing dynamic between art, landscape and architecture

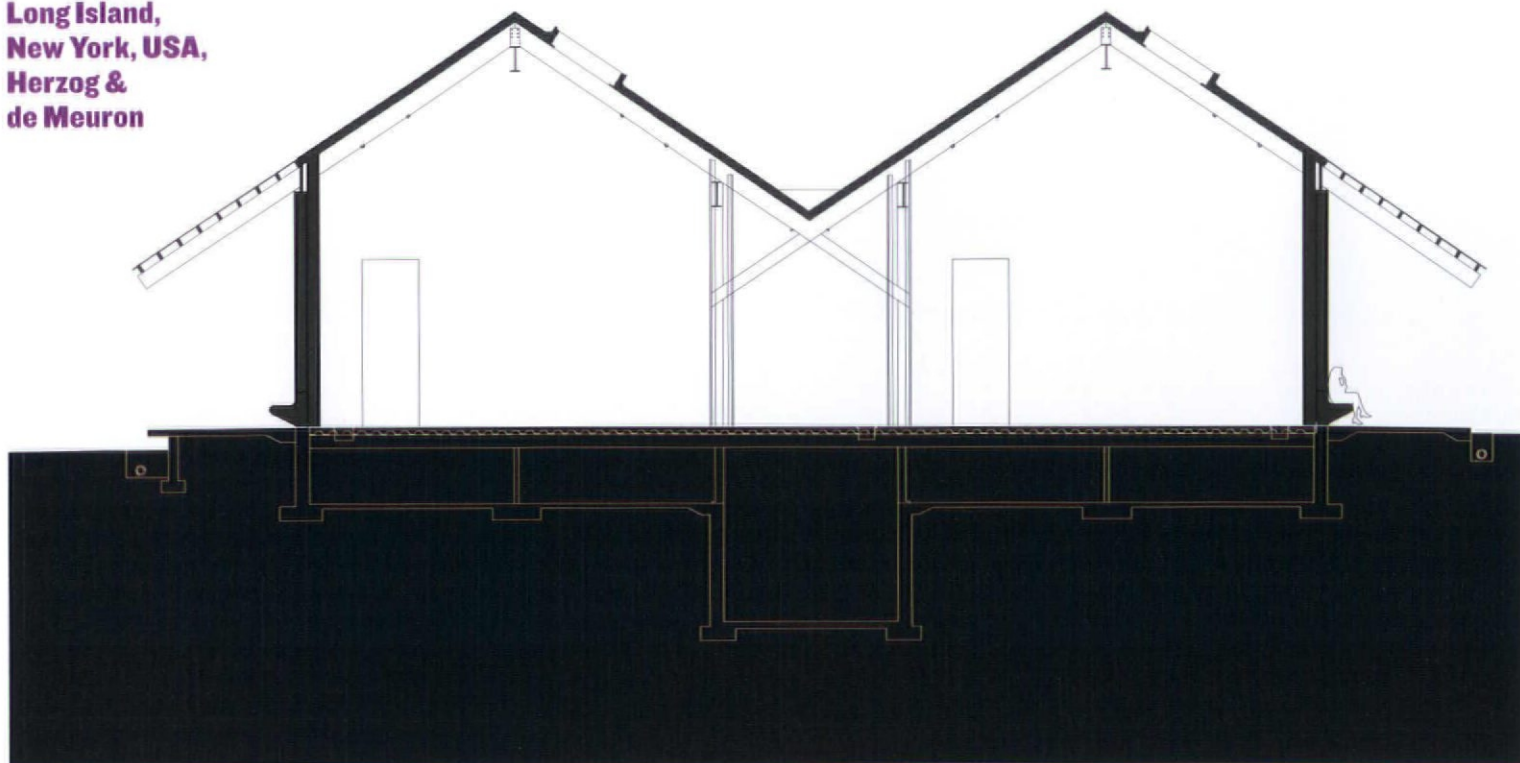
**Parrish Art
Museum,
Long Island,
New York, USA,
Herzog &
de Meuron**



1. (Previous page) set in the bucolic coastal landscape of the Hamptons, the new Parrish Museum is a long, precise bar, its scale and abstraction apparently at odds with its rural milieu 2. Yet at ground level, the building evokes the familiar qualities of vernacular structures such as barns and houses

3. The Parrish is a riposte to the idea of the museum as art work, typified by Jean Nouvel's Musée du Quai Branly in Paris 4-6. Herzog & de Meuron's recent museological antecedents: de Young Museum in San Francisco, Museum der Kulturen in Basel and London's Tate Modern conceived as a giant mineral landform

**Parrish Art
Museum,
Long Island,
New York, USA,
Herzog &
de Meuron**



section AA

CRITICISM

EMMANUEL PETIT

Opened last November, the new Parrish Art Museum displays works from the museum's permanent collection of American art, encompassing paintings, works on paper and sculpture amassed over its 115-year history. The building is sited next to the village of Southampton, one of Long Island's most affluent communities and a weekend refuge for many Manhattaners who periodically flee the island for the bucolic idyll of the Hamptons. A 90-minute drive takes you from the traffic-congested city to the serene dune-and-shrub landscape of Long Island. Amid the disjointed, small-scale beachside buildings, Herzog & de Meuron nest an abstractly detailed, longitudinal bar with a double-pitched roof set on a strict east-west orientation to catch north light for galleries through rhythmically-placed skylights.

In this project, H&dM revisit two of the key themes that have come to define their architecture. On one hand, they see architecture as emerging from the genius loci, and on the other, they interpret it as the tautological tectonics of the 'house'. While these two aspects reconfirm their own penchant for a phenomenological architecture, perfected over the years and shared with contemporaries such as Steven Holl and Peter Zumthor, in respect of this latest project, one consequential question

remains. What should one think about the harmonious, attuned and seamless coexistence of art and architecture at the Parrish Museum and the insistence on genius loci at a time when notions of local materials or crafts, and the unmediated and genuine access to both nature and art seem to have been displaced for good in our culture? For all the tectonic perfection of this building and the elegance of its materiality and detailing, the architecture of the Parrish has an orthodoxy and sternness which seems atypical of both contemporary museum architecture and of H&dM's own work.

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao (AR December 1997) challenged the orthodoxy that a museum had to be a neutral backdrop to suspend art in an autonomous, conceptual, 'zero gravity' space. In the face of contemporary art, which abandoned its more traditional 'object' status and now claimed to be spatial in its own right, Gehry's riposte involved making architecture even more sculptural and object-like. Similarly, Jean

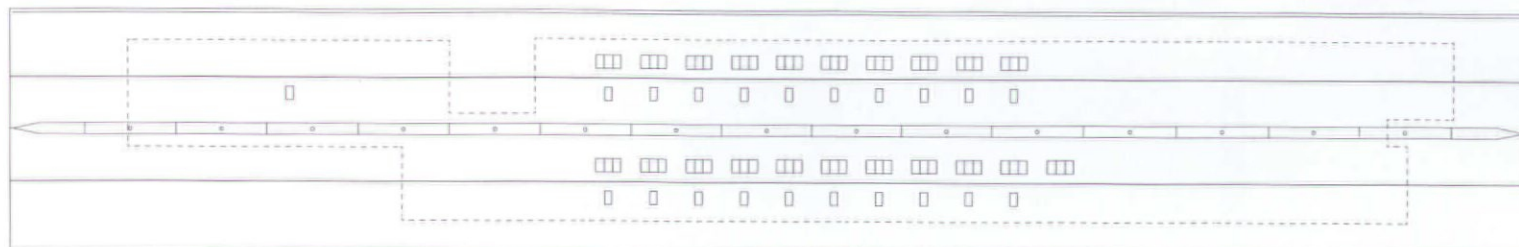
Nouvel's Musée du Quai Branly in Paris (AR October 2006) explored the fundamentally mediated nature of exhibits (in this case anthropological artefacts). Here, architecture engages art in a spatio-geometric dialogue by immersing it in a sensually intense and formally complex experiential milieu that exploits to great effect the superposition of reflections, transparencies, textures, colour and light. On the building's facade, Nouvel devised a vertical garden (*mur végétal*), which transformed nature itself into an artefact and object of the manmade environment. Arguably, these two buildings are emblematic of what came to be called the era of postmodernity, where the belief in the essential differentiation between medium and content, between container and contained, and between architecture and art object, has been suspended. Not so in the Parrish Museum.

On Long Island, H&dM's earnest take on the interaction of museum, art and nature is surprising, especially in light of their own repertoire of museum projects. Take the Museum der Kulturen, which plays with the traditional iconography of Basel's medieval roovescape and wittily invokes nature when suggesting (at least rhetorically) that part of the building is supported by 'inverted' columns made of hanging plants. Every element is treated without any pathos about the alleged genuineness of nature or tectonic authenticity of architecture. Similarly, the

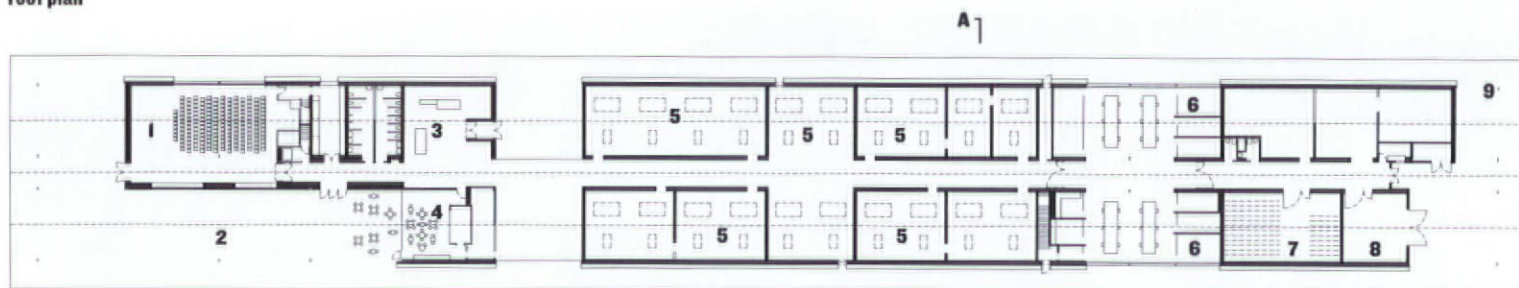
'For all the tectonic perfection and elegance of its materiality and detailing, the Parrish has an orthodoxy and sternness atypical of both museums and H&dM'

- 1 auditorium
- 2 terrace
- 3 entrance
- 4 café
- 5 galleries
- 6 administration
- 7 archive
- 8 art loading
- 9 works on paper

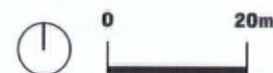
**Parrish Art
Museum,
Long Island,
New York, USA,
Herzog &
de Meuron**



roof plan



ground floor plan



'It's conceivable that the passive and conventional role H&dM's architecture assumes in relation to the art it houses comes with the territory'

ongoing extension to London's Tate Modern likens architecture to a gigantic mineral landform, so severing the romantic connection between natural environment and architectural form. And at the de Young Museum in San Francisco (AR October 2005), architecture and nature are integrated in diagrammatic and abstract ways that largely deny all sentimental apprehension of the genius loci.

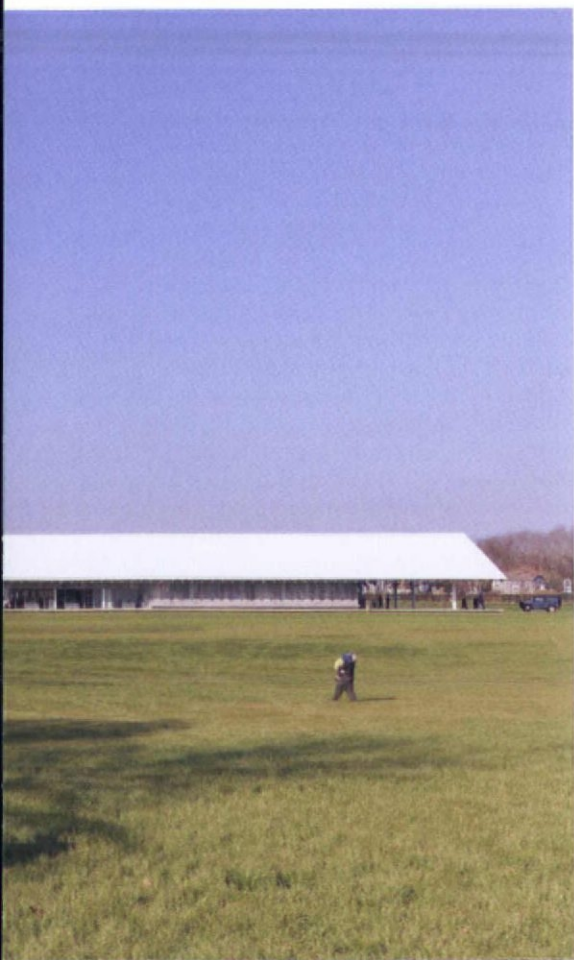
A satellite image reveals the Parrish Art Museum's autonomous scale and orientation in the landscape and points up one of its most important characteristics, the silvery metal roof, which makes the structure stand out against the dark ground plane. Standing in front of the building, you immediately grasp the phenomenological intention. The long roof reflects and merges with the bright and luminous sky, the cast concrete sidewalls are rooted and terrestrial. Architecture is seen as a meeting point between sky and earth; a sort of horizon in its own right, or at least an expressive interpretation of this notion.



8



9



7. Conceived as a horizon in its own right, the long, silvery bar of the building is transformed into an evocative meeting point between earth and sky
8. Materials are treated with great finesse and precision. Concrete walls are rooted and terrestrial, while the metal roof merges with the sky
9. The roof oversails at each end to create sheltered spaces under its double-pitched canopy



The typological choice of a long linear structure, which exceeds the possibility of being apprehended as a finite object, confirms this intent. Unlike the small houses that seem whimsically scattered around the landscape, this building wants to be a matrix of the landscape itself: it makes visible what is otherwise only conceptually accessible. In one of his more famous essays on the onto-phenomenological role of architecture, Heidegger likens architecture to a longitudinal structure – a bridge: ‘The bridge does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream ... The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream ... a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge.’ In other words, nature does not simply predate the insertion of the architecture/bridge, but architecture frames the landscape so that it becomes, for the first time, visible with all its inherent qualities. Architecture is a bridge that connects the human to his/her environment – it is an *Auslegung*, interpretation, or ‘lay-out’, which makes things accessible to consciousness and thus renders them intelligible.

The Parrish Museum can certainly be conceptualised this way: its horizontality makes visible the smooth topography of the dunes; its hard geometry explicates by contrast the soft forms of the vegetation; its framed views of the landscape reveal the long-drawn-out spaces of the fields and the

‘Architecture frames the landscape so that it becomes, for the first time, visible with all its inherent qualities’

beaches. H&dM’s own precedent to the theme of building-as-horizon is to be found in the Dominus Winery in Yountville, California (AR October 1998), where they made horizontality itself into the very theme of their architecture.

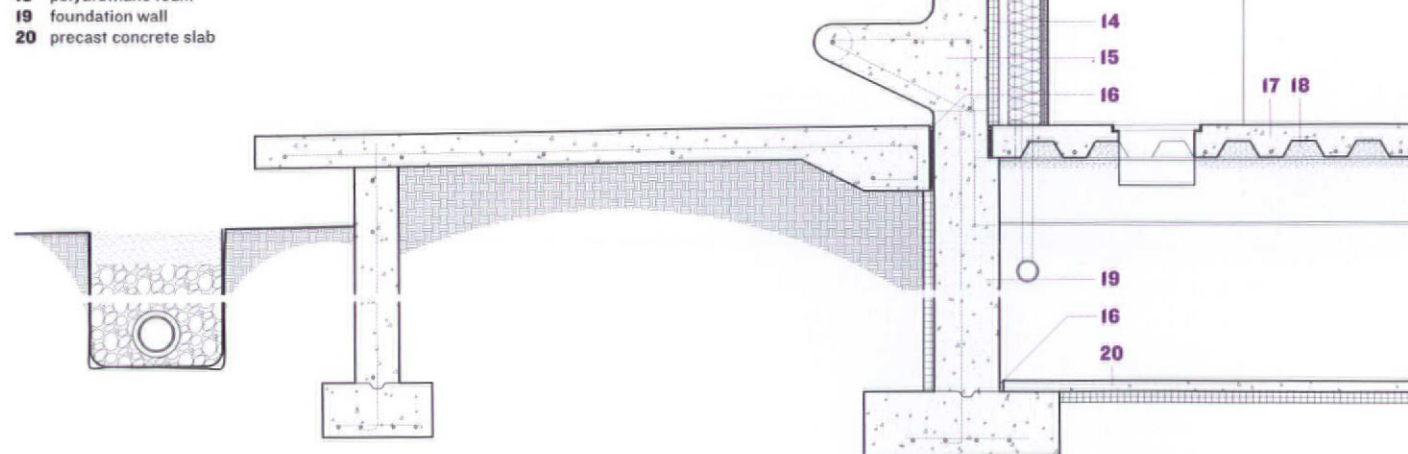
The Parrish is essentially an extruded bar, cut off to reveal a double-pitched roof which runs with the grain of the building and thus evokes the imagery of a double house or barn on both end elevations. This architectural two-sidedness is reminiscent of John Hejduk’s IBA projects in Berlin, where Hejduk gave his buildings one figural facade with a sort of inverted roof obliquely referencing the iconography of the traditional house. He then extruded this architectural sign into deep space to create abstract and ‘modern’ side facades. Hejduk designed a whole series of conceptual ‘double houses’, and also ‘half-houses’, suggesting that architecture had a double grounding in the symbolic and allegorical realm of the human imagination and, at the same time, in the material and pragmatic logic of the ‘real’ world. These ideas resulted in a two-and-a-half dimensional architecture that suggested the domestic

scale of the individual dwelling and the scale of the urban apartment house could paradoxically coexist in the same building.

At the Parrish Museum, H&dM deploy the symbolism of the house in many different ways. The entrance to the building is marked by a missing section of the long bar, which takes on the shape of the ‘absent’ barn. At this point, the visitors set foot in the architectural thematic of the shed even before they proceed to enter the actual building. The entrance door is made of a very sophisticated black textured wood, which is more reminiscent of the small doors of a jewellery chest than of a building. Inside, the cafeteria and galleries are defined by the contours of the house, lined with white walls but opening the space to the whole height of the pitched roof. The exposed, untreated wood construction of the timberwork emphasises the reading and reinterpretation of a vernacular structure.

H&dM have previously turned to the symbolism of the traditional house. Projects such as the recent VitraHaus in Weil am Rhein (AR March 2010) make clear how the iconography of the gable roof and *Urhut* have determined their architecture. With both the VitraHaus and the Parrish Art Museum, they are less mythical about the motif of the house than Hejduk, but it similarly helps them to reconcile the institutional scale of a museum with the domestic reality of the local architecture. The tectonic meeting point of

10. Benches are cast into the external walls, a device also employed at the VitraHaus



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de Meuron**



12



Architect
Herzog & de Meuron
Associate architect
Douglas Moyer Architect
Photographs

All photographs by
Iwan Baan apart from:
Ateliers Jean Nouvel,
Philippe Ruault, 3
Paolo Rosselli / RIBA
Library Photographs
Collection, 4
Herzog & de Meuron
Basel, 5, 6

11. Gallery spaces are defined by the contours of the two 'houses' and the double roof structure
12. The meeting point of the twin roofs itself reads as inverted roof which compresses space and forms the building's long circulation spine

the double roof is also spatially interesting — especially on the inside. Where the two roofs connect and their beams structurally and expressively cross over, their interior surface reads as an inverted roof, which compresses the space inside the building. At the same time, the ridge of this upturned ceiling becomes the spatial guide for circulation throughout the museum, granting access to galleries of variable size on either side.

On the whole, it's hard to miss the careful and subtle details that are so masterfully deployed, such as the way the building sits on a thin concrete surface which appears to float above the natural ground by just an inch or so. The shadow joint between this surface and the ground is minute, yet it elevates the building into a realm determined by precision and meticulousness that is largely unknown to the American construction industry and is, at the same time, a trademark of Swiss architectural culture. Similarly, the exposed ceilings throughout the museum exhibit a sense of careful carelessness when electric cables are nailed to the timber beams or sprinkler pipes run along rim lines. H&dM's Parrish Art Museum is an extremely skilled and artful essay on the tectonics of timber-and-concrete construction and on the genius loci and it's conceivable that the passive and conventional role their architecture assumes in relation to the art it houses comes with the territory.



**Grindbakken
Bunkers,
Ghent, Belgium,
Rotor**

2



WHITE OUT

A smear of paint transforms former bunkers on Ghent's docks into a sequence of public spaces — and also into a critique of regeneration

**Grindbakken
Bunkers,
Ghent, Belgium,
Rotor**

REPORT

ANDREW MEAD

Ghent is one of Belgium's most important ports but during the last decade the focus of activity has shifted northwards, making the old docks near the city centre redundant. In a scenario familiar worldwide, they are now being redeveloped with a mix of offices and apartments. In the process, a 160m-long complex of canalside concrete bunkers used for storing sand and gravel – the Grindbakken – was earmarked as a new public space.

Architect Sarah Melsens and artist Roberta Gigante won the competition for its redesign and invited the Brussels-based practice Rotor to collaborate with them. In autumn 2012 they unveiled the result, which is not just a visually striking addition to the waterfront but a history lesson – a dossier on the way that buildings register the passage of time.

Melsens and Gigante proposed making cuts between the bunkers, so the public could circulate throughout them, and

then to paint the whole complex white. Rotor's intervention was to resist this total camouflage of white and instead leave some parts as they were, chosen for what they revealed about the construction of the bunkers and their subsequent life. Deciphering the evidence on site visits with people from other disciplines, including an engineer, a botanist and a former worker at the complex, Rotor identified 36 areas that together would tell a story. Retained on the walls 'as found', with explanatory captions nearby, these remnants are vivid and almost hyperreal amid the encompassing white.

An overriding theme of the highlighted patches is the behaviour of concrete.

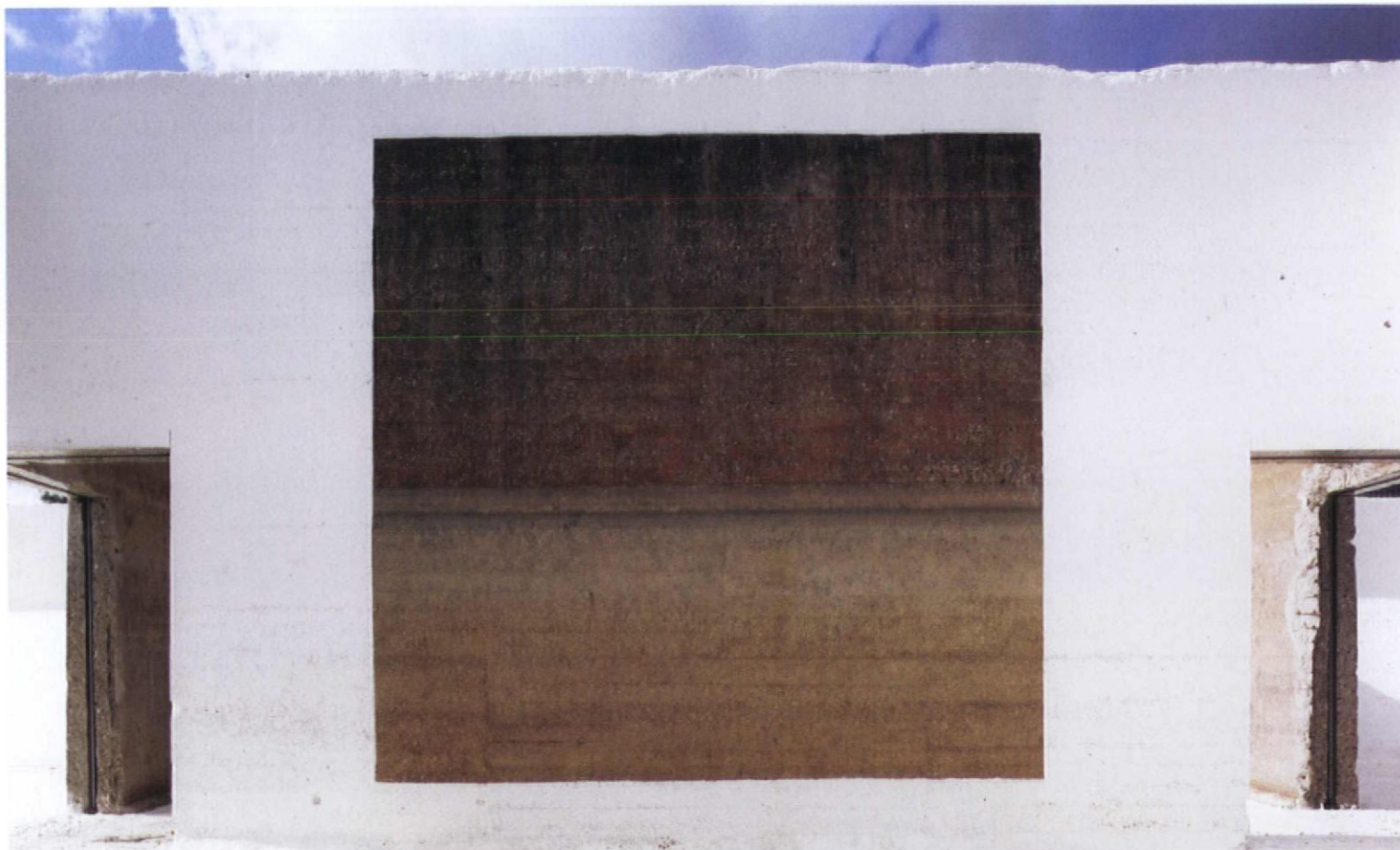
'A striking addition to the waterfront ... a history lesson – a dossier on the way buildings register the passage of time'

A wavering line across a whole bunker wall marks the boundary between one pour and the next. Other framed areas show the concrete staining and spalling as its reinforcement corrodes. At the bottom of one slanting wall the granular structure of concrete is particularly evident. Elsewhere an expansion joint has lost its filling so now you can see the canal through the gap.

Surrounded by white is a reddish square that looks from a distance to be a minimalist monochrome; its hue comes from the iron ore that was stored here once. Other colour changes on the walls reflect the former presence of water, accumulating as the drainage systems failed when the site became disused.

There are botanical clues to the bunkers' past: for instance, the lichens that proliferate on one wall above a ghostly outline of the gravel heaps that hindered their formation lower down. 'A lot of plants make no difference between a city and a mountainous landscape,' says the caption beside some tenacious Biting Stonecrop. That staple of

3



4

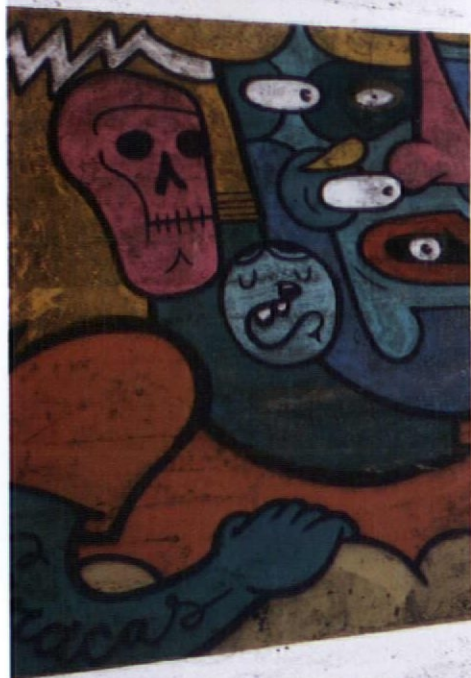


1 & 2. (Previous page)
the white enfilade of
former storage spaces
makes a vibrant contrast
to its dingy surroundings
3. The concrete bears the
imprint of industrial use
4. Open to the sky and
pierced by newly-carved
apertures, the white
concrete shells are like a
chilly northern version of
a Luis Barragán pavilion

5. Inspected more closely,
the paintwork's lacunae
reveal places of historic
interest, identified by a
roster of experts on site
visits. The long zigzag
shown here exposes a join
between two pours of the
concrete; in other spots,
lichens and other flora,
and human interventions
in the form of graffiti,
are islanded by the white

5





**Grindbakken
Bunkers,
Ghent, Belgium,
Rotor**

abandoned sites, Buddleia, of course makes an appearance and one wonky circle isolates a dense growth of moss.

If plants and minerals have left their traces in the bunkers, so too have humans – and rather less discreetly. The captions drily distinguish between crude and more sophisticated graffiti: 'We are dealing here with early attempts by youths in the course of discovering the possibilities of the spray can.'

In many respects, Rotor's Grindbakken recalls its exhibition in the Belgian pavilion at the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale (AR October 2010). There the first impression on entering the building was of a minimalist art installation but the numerous scuffed monochromes proved to be table tops or seat covers or flooring. With its accompanying publication *Usus/Usures*, the display scrutinised the response to use of things and materials: 'We looked for materials that were common and contemporary, showing mild wear as a result of moderate use,' said Rotor.

'The bunkers are a reminder to always think twice before obliterating traces of history, making buildings more mute'

While the approach seemed neutral and non-judgemental, the message to an architectural audience that habitually prefers the pristine was that wear is inevitable and perhaps should be embraced. 'Wear humanises architecture and brings it to life,' was the credo. Such sentiments are none too familiar, though they enhance Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow's book *On Weathering* (MIT Press, 1993).

With so much white in evidence at the Grindbakken, and the bunkers resembling an alfresco gallery, I found myself thinking of the presentation of art in the last few decades, which has been torn between the quintessential white cube. In the case of industrial sites, consider

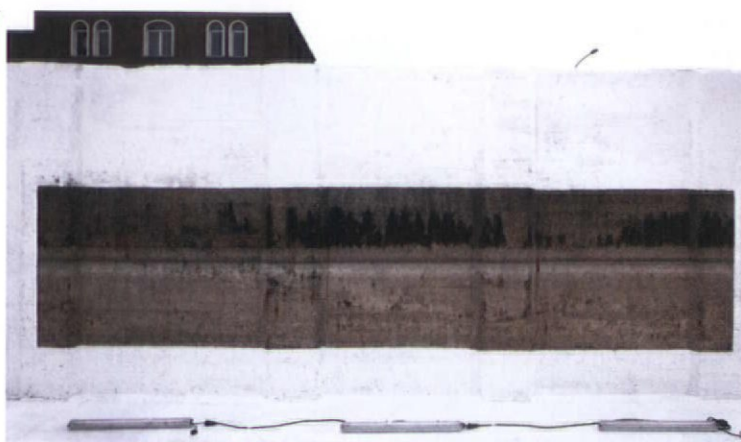
the difference between Donald Judd's hands-off renovation of Fort D A Russell in Marfa, Texas, and the treatment of London's Tate Modern, where the disused power station has been largely emasculated by Herzog & de Meuron's bland galleries. These Ghent bunkers are a reminder to always think twice before obliterating traces of history, making buildings more mute than they might be.

Naturally the arts crowd has loved Rotor's Grindbakken bunkers, but there has also been a strong public response to its pedagogic aspects – its lessons about time and materials. The ensemble stayed intact for three or four weeks before it too was gradually appropriated by new graffiti, but happily there are many photos that record it at the outset. Meanwhile Rotor is busy curating this year's Oslo Architecture Triennale, which will open on 19 September. The theme is sustainability and Rotor promises 'to bring nuance and dissension to a field dominated by slogans'. That should be one to watch.

6-12. White paint has long been used by the art industry – via the 'white cube' – and architectural Modernists, to create unreal, Platonic voids. Here, the 'imperfect' white paint forms a subtle critique of this ideology, and of the ideology of regeneration itself, which so often attempts to whitewash the industrial past that it supplants and the indexical traces that humanise architecture

Architect
Rotor
Photographs
Courtesy of the architect apart from:
Johnny Umans, 3, 4
Eric Mairiaux, 5

7



8



9



10



11



12



CABINET RESHUFFLE

In the latest chapter of the Soane Museum, Adam Caruso discusses the process of introducing contemporary elements for display into an eccentric historic palimpsest

**Sir John Soane's
Museum,
London, UK,
Caruso St John**



1. (Previous page) the new display cases hark back to the old, but avoid pastiche by using contemporary materials
 2. Soane's original cabinets are a tight fit in a richly textured and coloured interior
 3. The familiar elevation to Lincoln's Inn Fields with pared-down loggias

2



**Sir John Soane's
 Museum,
 London, UK,
 Caruso St John**

3



INTERVIEW

JEREMY MELVIN

'It's not every architect's dream to work alongside another architect', says Adam Caruso, introducing his work in Sir John Soane's Museum, 'but we [together with his partner Peter St John] are interested in Soane and in that period of architecture.' This project comprises four rooms in No 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields, the first of the three adjacent houses Soane acquired (he began in 1792, and continued modifying the interiors up to his death in 1837) which are slowly being reintegrated into a unified institution. Three of the rooms – two gallery spaces on the first floor which were the archive and research spaces and a shop on the ground where Eva Jiricna's glass display cases were installed in the 1990s – were completed in the middle of 2012. The fourth, a study room for education, is yet to be installed.

Tim Knox, the museum's curator, explains Caruso St John's appointment. Upgrading the museum overall is intended to 'do honour to Soane's original concept, especially in No 13' where the most famous spaces are. 'We have the great good fortune to have both the flanking houses designed by Soane ... they are extraordinary water-wings, sustaining Soane's extraordinary vision.' But they also represent 'an opportunity', he pauses, 'in fact a duty to work with contemporary architects and designers just as Soane did'. 'We needed to do something which would

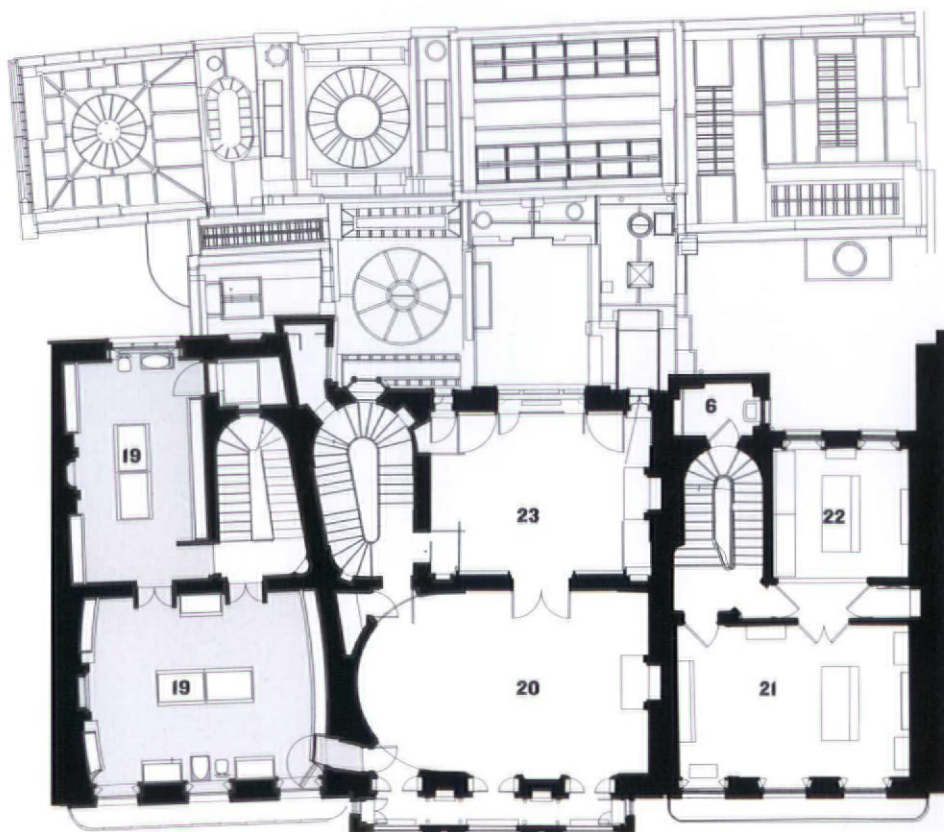
equal [previous curator] Peter [Thornton]'s vision with Eva Jiricna ... it's important to continue that tradition'.

Much of the ongoing work in the museum, such as recreating the two chapel-like spaces off the main stair in No 13, dedicated in ascending order to Shakespeare and Charity, demands painstakingly archaeological exactness. But 'we don't feel we've been cravenly traditionalist here' in the galleries and shop, continues Knox, shuddering at what one distinguished architectural commentator said on seeing them, 'Just think what John Simpson could have done!'

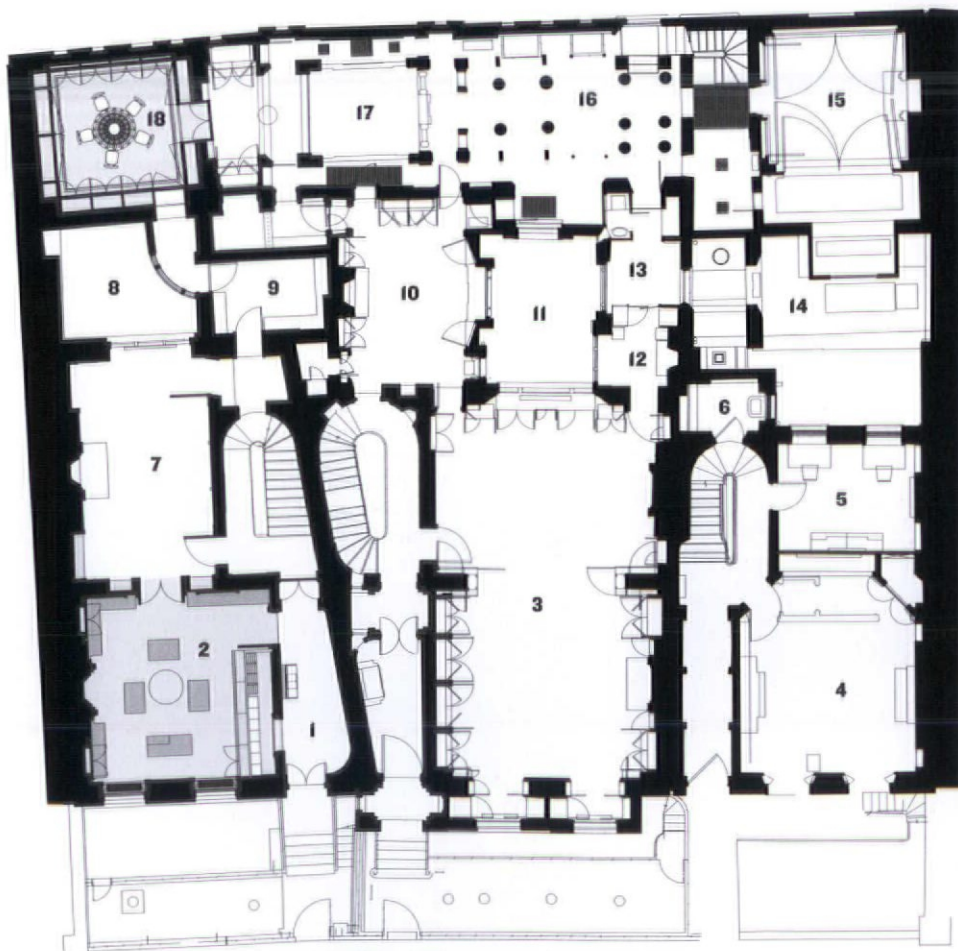
So how did Caruso St John tackle this challenge? First of all, says Caruso, it was an 'amazing opportunity to learn more about Soane. It was a big piece of research you have to do, but it's a pleasure to do it'. He sees Soane as one of a small number of architects who 'think about the history of culture and architecture and construction – you have to think about those things – Soane ... found it difficult but he was very engaged'.

'We have the great good fortune to have both of the flanking houses designed by Soane ... they are extraordinary water-wings, sustaining his extraordinary vision'

- 1 entrance hall
- 2 shop
- 3 library
- 4 lecture room
- 5 education office
- 6 WC
- 7 breakfast parlour
- 8 new court
- 9 anteroom
- 10 breakfast room
- 11 monument court
- 12 study
- 13 dressing room
- 14 monk's yard
- 15 picture room
- 16 colonnade
- 17 dome room
- 18 proposed study room
- 19 new gallery spaces
- 20 south drawing room
- 21 research library
- 22 picture room
- 23 north drawing room

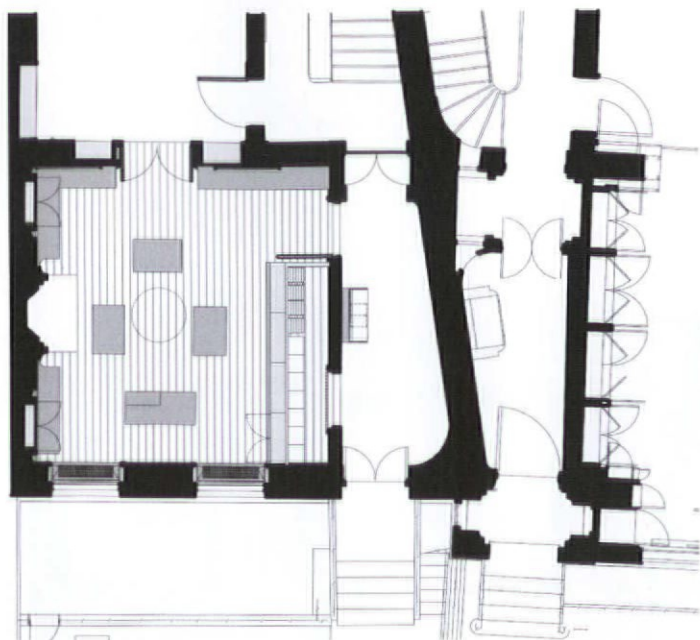


first floor plan

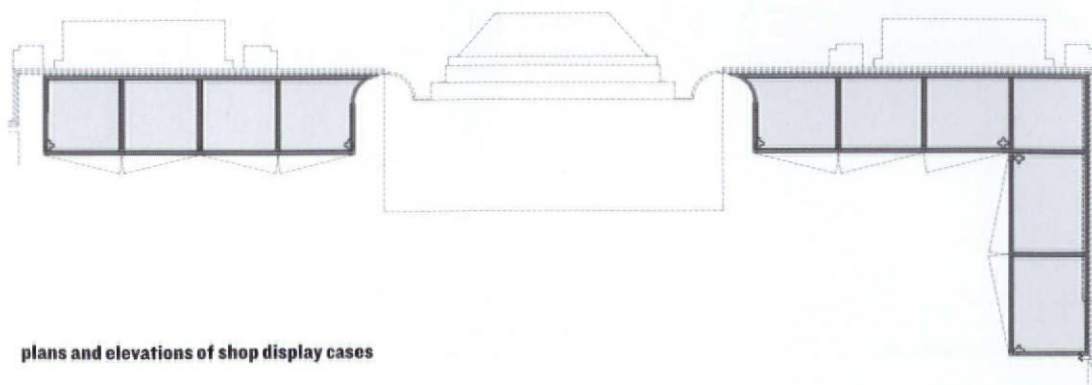
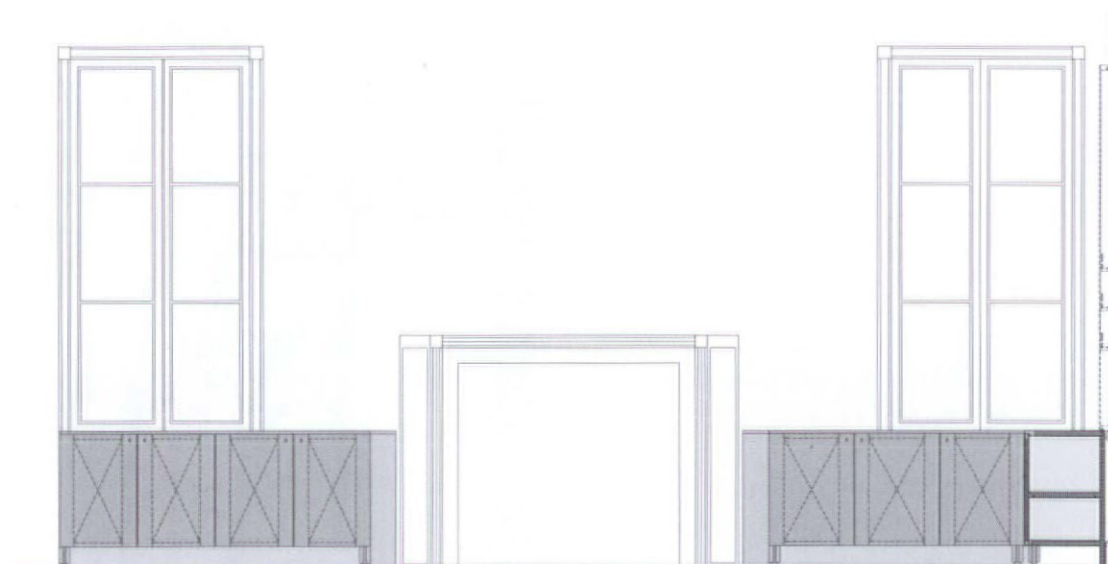
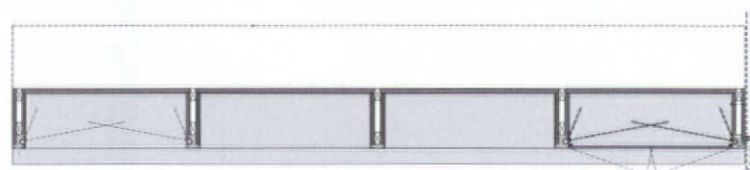
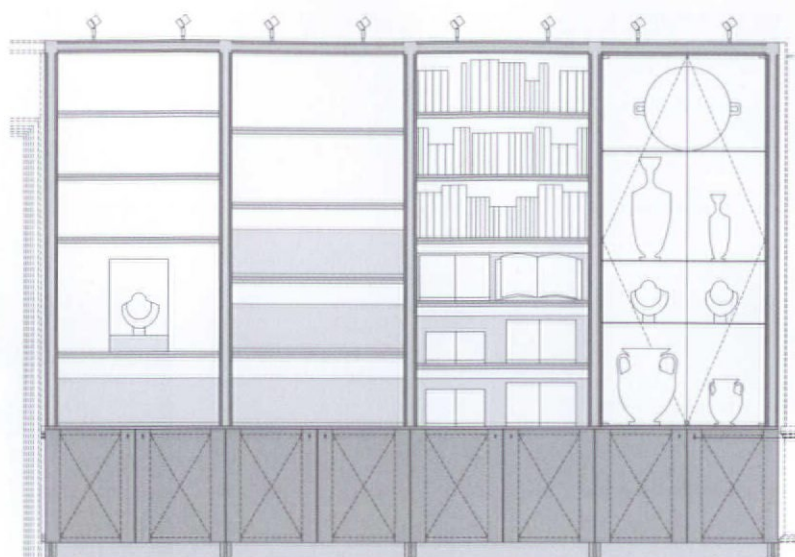


ground floor plan





plan of shop and entrance



**Sir John Soane's
Museum,
London, UK,
Caruso St John**

plans and elevations of shop display cases



4. The remodelled shop with its customised display cases and walls of a slightly more piquant Pompeian red

‘The really big thing was that there would be a tightness between the architecture and the furniture, because that’s how Soane and that period furnished things’

Their brief called for a series of modern display cases to fit within the two first-floor rooms whose historical decoration was being painstakingly researched with a view to reinstatement. Eventually it was decided to restore them to an original scheme that Soane had devised in the 1790s, a bright crimson in the front room and more muted tones in the back chamber, Mrs Soane’s bedroom. Its sharp effect disturbs Ptolemy Dean, who spent years researching Soane’s remoter country houses in these rooms, but, ripostes Knox, ‘When we took down the big portrait of Soane to lend to Dulwich [Picture Gallery] for their bicentenary we found a large bit of totally preserved and unexposed Pompeian red ...’ ‘We would hear ... discussions about the colour of these rooms’, muses Adam Caruso.

But there were other lines of inquiry too. Noting that the project was essentially about furniture design, he notes that deputy curator Helen Dorey’s book about furniture in the house has just been published. ‘That made it more accessible’, he noted, since without her research the project ‘would have been different or more difficult’.

Above all, explains Caruso, ‘the really big thing was that there would be a tightness between the architecture and the furniture, because that was how Soane and that period furnished things ... [with] an incredibly close fit’. ‘Adam noticed the way bookcases in the dining room creased against the chimney pieces,’ adds Knox.

Two new cases flank the fireplace on one wall of the front gallery. One of them scallops in to make space for the window, the other continues undisturbed into the opposite corner. ‘Were you tempted to make them symmetrical?’, Dean asks Caruso, noting that Soane was very exercised by symmetry. ‘We looked at both’, replies Caruso, ‘but within each local situation you try within the language of the furniture to adapt and resolve these things’, and warming to the theme, ‘we’re really interested in symmetry, but also when you come close to look at how it negotiates individual [instances]’. Even Soane, Dean adds, ‘couldn’t resolve the translation of the axis of the [three] windows [in the front room] to the [single-windowed] room behind’.

Caruso’s mention of the ‘language of the furniture’ suggests the key to the project.

**Sir John Soane's
Museum,
London, UK,
Caruso St John**



5. Mirrored panels at ankle-height brighten dark corners of the two new gallery spaces

6. Curved cases presented a problem for the cabinet makers, since the glass could not slide open

7. The architects strove for Soanian symmetry, even where the complex plan made it impossible. The language of mirrors and mahogany alludes to but is not a pastiche of Soane's original



In wanting 'to engage with the spaces' in this building they noted 'the incredible quantity of furniture. [So] we said we wanted to make a cabinet gallery' because that 'is how these houses were furnished.' That led to a request 'to explore the Soanian vocabulary of mirror and mahogany, but we didn't want anyone for a moment to think this was pastiche'.

The cases are, he notes, 'incredibly technical pieces of furniture', with humidification units and directional light fittings installed inside them. They had to be big enough to hold the fabled Academy drawings as well as providing space and flexibility for a wide range of exhibits in an expanding programme. And, as Knox points out, 'this is the only decent-sized gallery for displaying architectural drawings' in London.

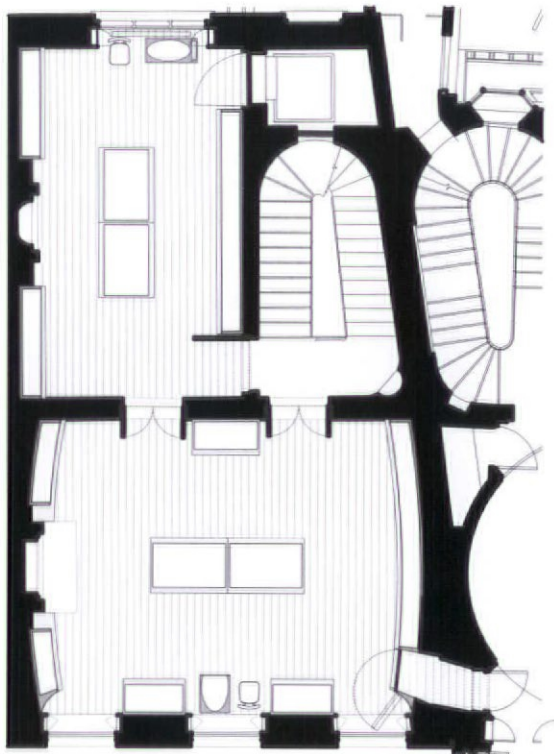
All these conditions led to a paradox of the type Soane would have recognised. 'We knew we wanted to make the joinery as fine as we could' says Caruso, 'but they are holding pieces of glass weighing a tonne ... nobody thought it could be done.' Fortunately a manufacturer, with 'a hinge they have developed themselves', could meet the specification for openable cabinets. That means they can have a very Soanian curve on them, impossible if the glass fronts had to slide open. Through such negotiations a language for the cabinets began to emerge.

Another important factor was the choice of materials, mahogany and Corian, for pieces to complement the cabinets, like an 'art

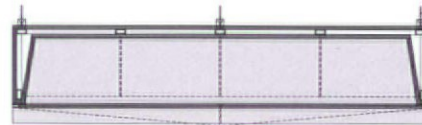
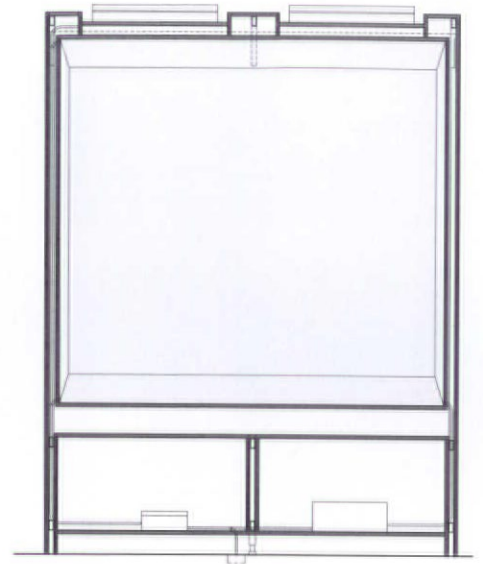
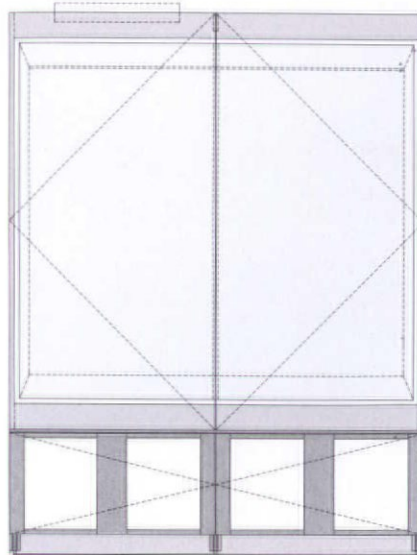
trolley' and an *escritoire* in the ground floor lobby by the shop. 'It may be a very inventive combination' suggests Caruso, 'I'm not sure it's ever been done before ... Corian ... is a synthetic material but such a good one ... You can use it like joinery. You can mill it like wood but you can also weld it', although because it moves differently to timber you need to design tolerance. These pieces of furniture, argues Caruso, have some connection to 'contemporary sculpture' – he cites Richard Artschwager – 'which refers to traditional furniture'. The *escritoire* is a 'piece I could imagine making at home'.

Not so the cabinets, which are 'quite specific to their location'. This is partly a project about making exhibition space, and, says Caruso, one reason 'why we get to do galleries is because we're interested in what the galleries are used for. We're interested in powerful architecture ... [but] we're really interested in seeing exhibitions'. Gallery design has a 'huge effect on experience ... it's much more memorable to see an exhibition in a special place'.

The Shard, Caruso muses, 'is such an oversized, underthought thing': by contrast, the Soane galleries 'required a lot of thought'



plan of new gallery spaces



plan, section and elevation of cabinets in rear gallery



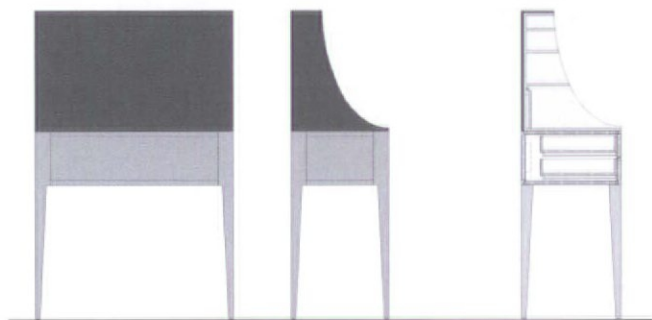


**Sir John Soane's
Museum,
London, UK,
Caruso St John**

8. Combining traditional and modern materials, a new *escritoire* in the entrance hall is fabricated from mahogany and Corian



entrance hall *escritoire*



So this project is also about 'expanding the narrative of the whole house', and indeed it plays its part in the opening of new spaces (including the Soanes' private apartments) to visitors, with a route from the familiar entrance to No 13, through the famous museum spaces, up to the second floor and descending via the new gallery, down again to the shop and out through No 12. The project, says Caruso, is 'part of the narrative, but only two rooms here [on the first floor] and one downstairs within a larger number of rooms'.

It also represents a small but significant part of contemporary architectural discourse in London, points out Ptolemy Dean. 'In a London-wide context you have huge buildings being built – the Shard and all the rest of it, [but] you still have architects dealing with furniture.' The Shard, Caruso muses, 'is such an oversized, underthought thing': by contrast the Soane galleries 'required a lot of thought'. The best work, he continues, demands 'very, very intense' commitment, mentioning bank headquarters Caruso St John are designing in Bremen. It's leading them to an 'incredible engagement with Hanseatic architecture which we only knew from a distance', but being on the square, such rigour is necessary.

But this sort of historical research is also 'fun', insists Dean, 'history is fun'. It is 'amazing open territory', agrees Caruso, 'we know more about it than ever before, but there is still this Modernist craziness [about the refusal] to engage with it ... we've never explicitly used a [Classical] order, but we will.

At [the café in the grounds of] Chiswick House we tried and couldn't do it'. 'What holds you back?', asks Dean. 'Nothing', Caruso answers, 'I'm quite interested in things that are on the wrong side of "tasteful", but to do it [ie, use an order at Chiswick] would have become pastiche in a bad way. Materially, chromatically it is incredibly resonant ... the piers are loadbearing; they are actually holding up the roof and it would have been cheaper not to do that, but it wasn't the right situation.'

If, for Caruso, each project demands an excavation of its material, functional and intellectual context, he is particularly satisfied when the result is provocative. 'Soane's own house is pretty provocative', says Dean, 'can you out-provoke Soane?' There is provocation, and then there is provocation. 'Some people won't even realise we've done anything,' replies Caruso, 'I wouldn't put it at the same level. You have to get to the right pitch in different projects.'

But, 'the combination of very big pieces of glass held with glue on steel carriers and [combined with] incredibly fine hardwood joinery', has 'something quite radical about it ... We have to expand our formal vocabulary to do it'. His work at the Soane may not be as dramatic as an altarpiece he is designing for St Gallen Cathedral in Switzerland – demanding 'radicalism of a quite different kind' – but here, as he explains, 'it doesn't shout, but we don't whisper, and it's not a shrinking violet'.

Architect

Caruso St John

Photographs

All photographs by Hélène Binet apart from 3 which is from the RIBA Library Photographs Collection

**Eli and Edythe
Broad Art
Museum,
Lansing,
Michigan, USA,
Zaha Hadid
Architects**





STEEL ORIGAMI

Exploring ideas about fabrication, craft and display, Zaha Hadid's latest art museum is a compelling, site-specific art work in itself

ELLI AND EDYTHE BROAD ART MUSEUM
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

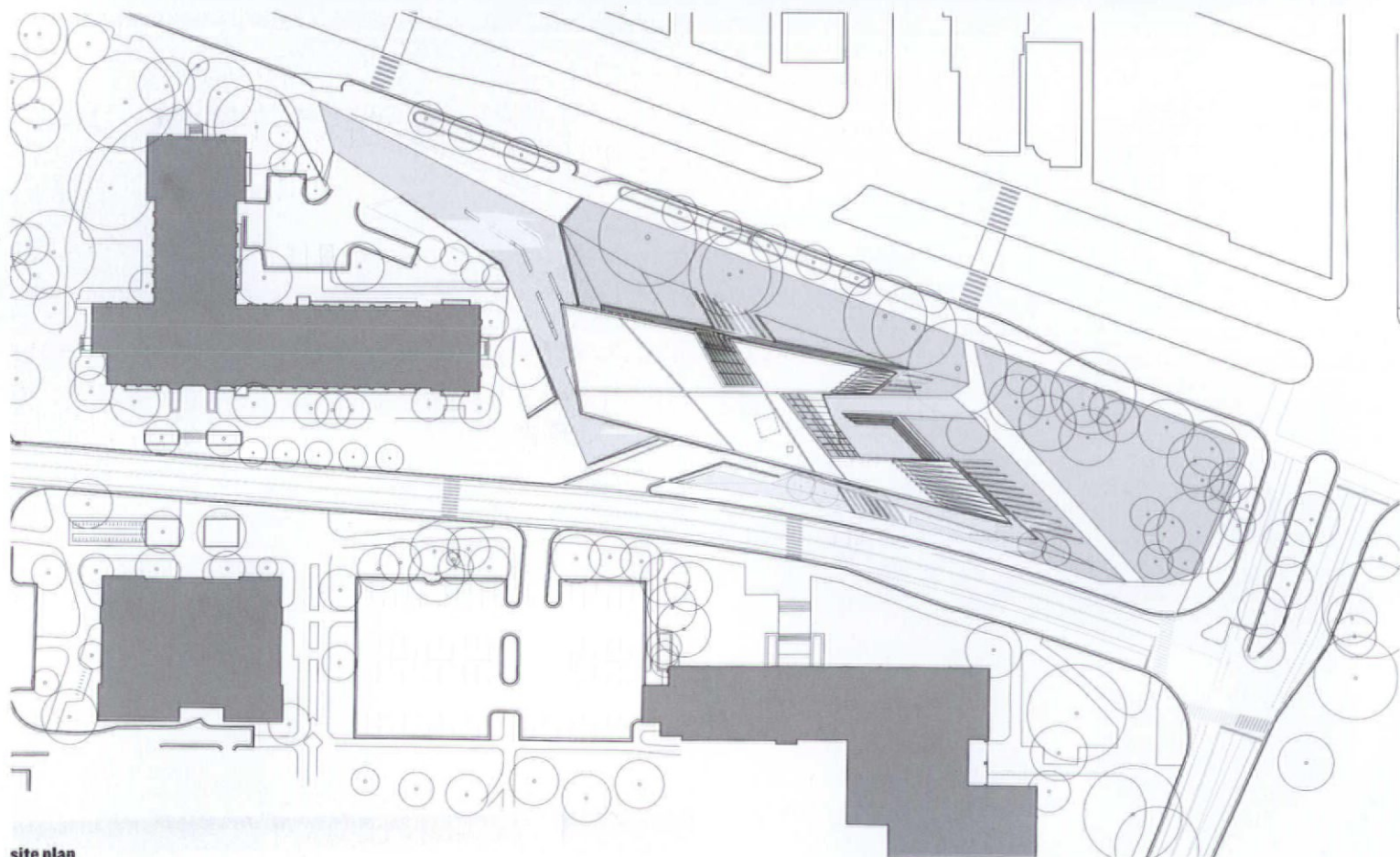
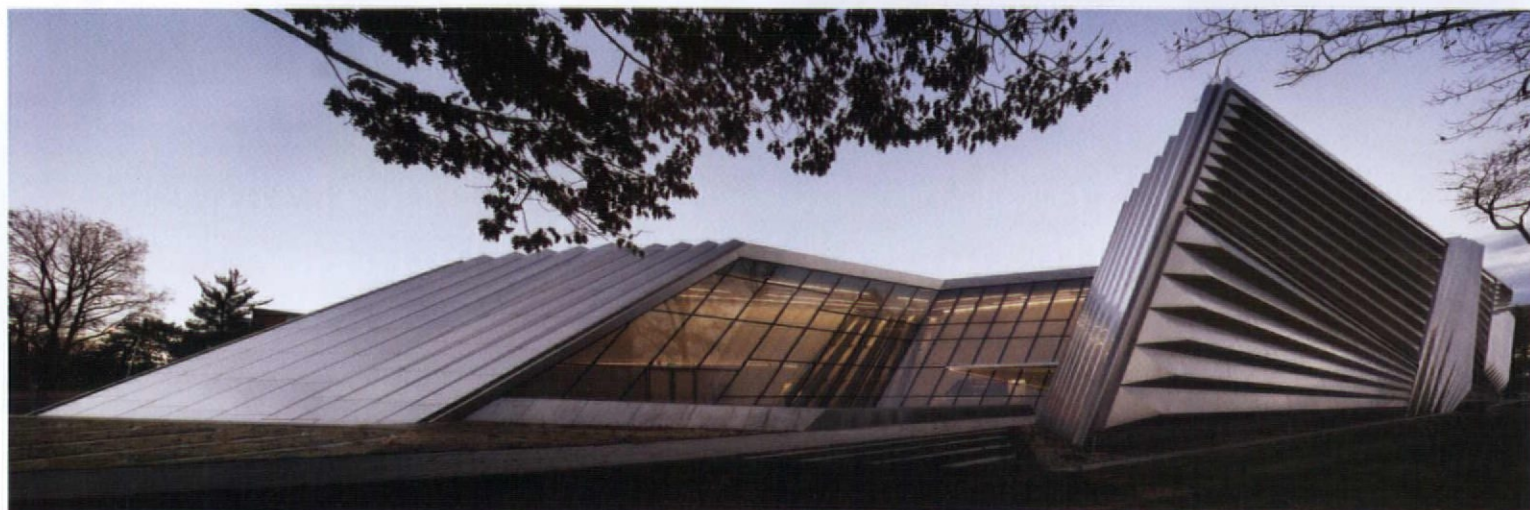
**Eli and Edythe
Broad Art
Museum,
Lansing,
Michigan, USA,
Zaha Hadid
Architects**

1. (Previous page) angular
volumes are encased in
a pleated steel carapace
2. Hadid's intervention
adds a contemporary jolt
to the groves of academe
3. Thrusting volumes
define a courtyard at
the building's east end
4-7. Initial paintings and
models show the evolution
of the museum and the
development of its
origami-like cladding

2



3



site plan

REPORT

MICHAEL WEBB

Michigan State University, which sprawls over 2,000 hectares of woodland, was an agricultural college for its first century and still owns experimental farms, but is now a leader in nuclear physics and medicine. The state capital of Lansing, once a centre of car production, has also reinvented itself, as a hub of insurance and technology. Those transformations inspired the university to commission a new art museum that engages the city and embodies the spirit of innovation. They chose a site on the north-eastern edge of the campus, secured a major grant from a billionaire alumnus, and selected Zaha Hadid's bold design.

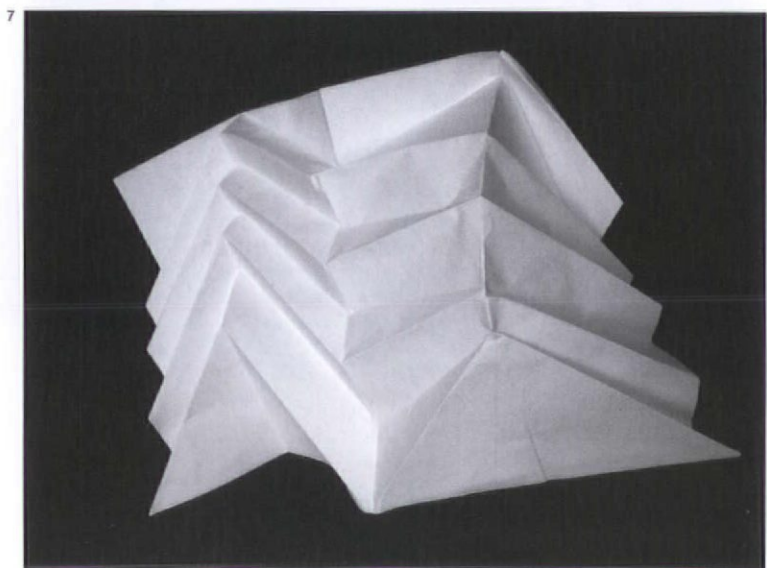
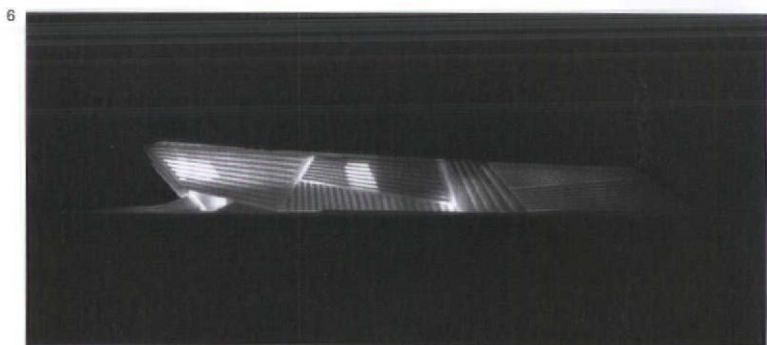
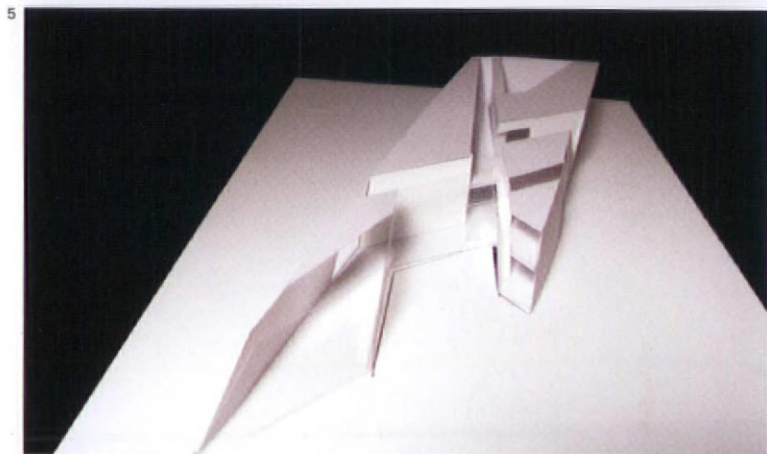
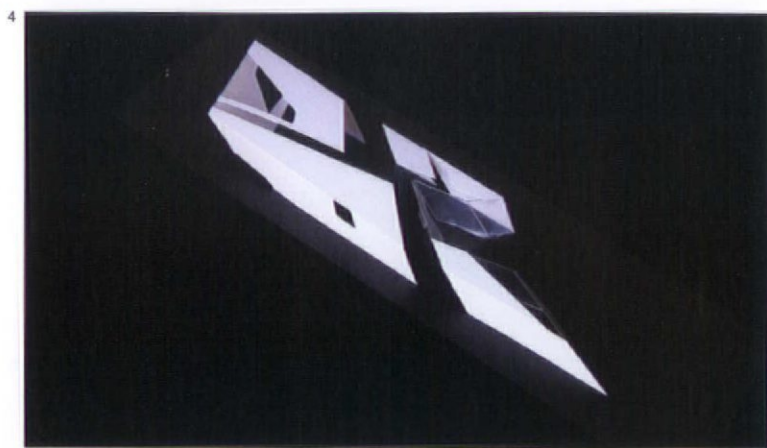
The contrast between old and new could not be greater. To the north is a scruffy commercial strip, to the south mature trees and traditional red-brick academic buildings. Embedded between is a trapezoid of folded stainless steel, sharply angled towards the west. It rises gently from a sculpture garden to a prow that overlooks a plaza and the solid bulk of a classroom block. An expansively glazed educational wing flanks an amphitheatre at the east end, presenting a welcoming portal to the street. A second entrance is tucked into the west end and oriented towards the campus. Each of the four elevations has a distinct character, from the dynamic rhythm of the long sides, to the drama of the cantilevered west front and the open east end. Renderings of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum suggested a shiny bauble or an alien intruder that has alighted in this bucolic setting; the completed building is a fusion of poetry and practicality. A site-specific work of art in itself, its interior is dedicated to the display and study of art the institution has acquired, borrowed or commissioned.

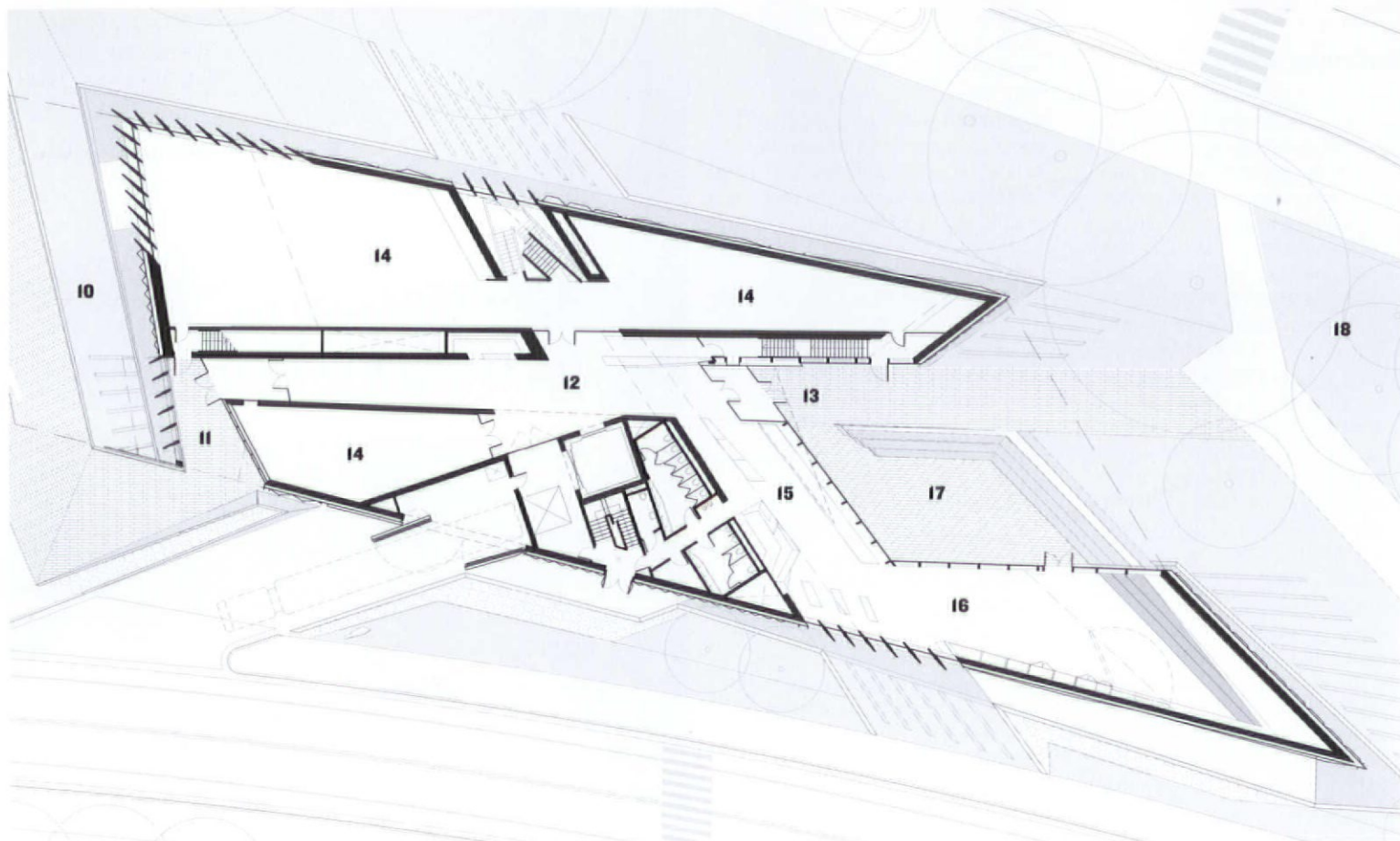
As project director Craig Kiner explains, a team from the Hadid office studied patterns of circulation across the site in preparation for the 2006 competition. They produced concept diagrams that helped

to shape the dynamic flow of the envelope and the spaces it encloses. That sounds like a fanciful conceit and quite irrelevant to the curators' needs. However, the diagrams provided a fruitful spark and the floor plan is abstracted in the long facades, which capture the youthful energy of the students and the bustle of traffic on the street beyond. Located at a major entry to the campus, the museum provides a new marker – a 21st-century alternative to the neo-Gothic tower that rises from the historic core. The steel folds reflect and refract the changing light and their sharp angles complement the trees as they turn from green to gold and become wintry skeletons.

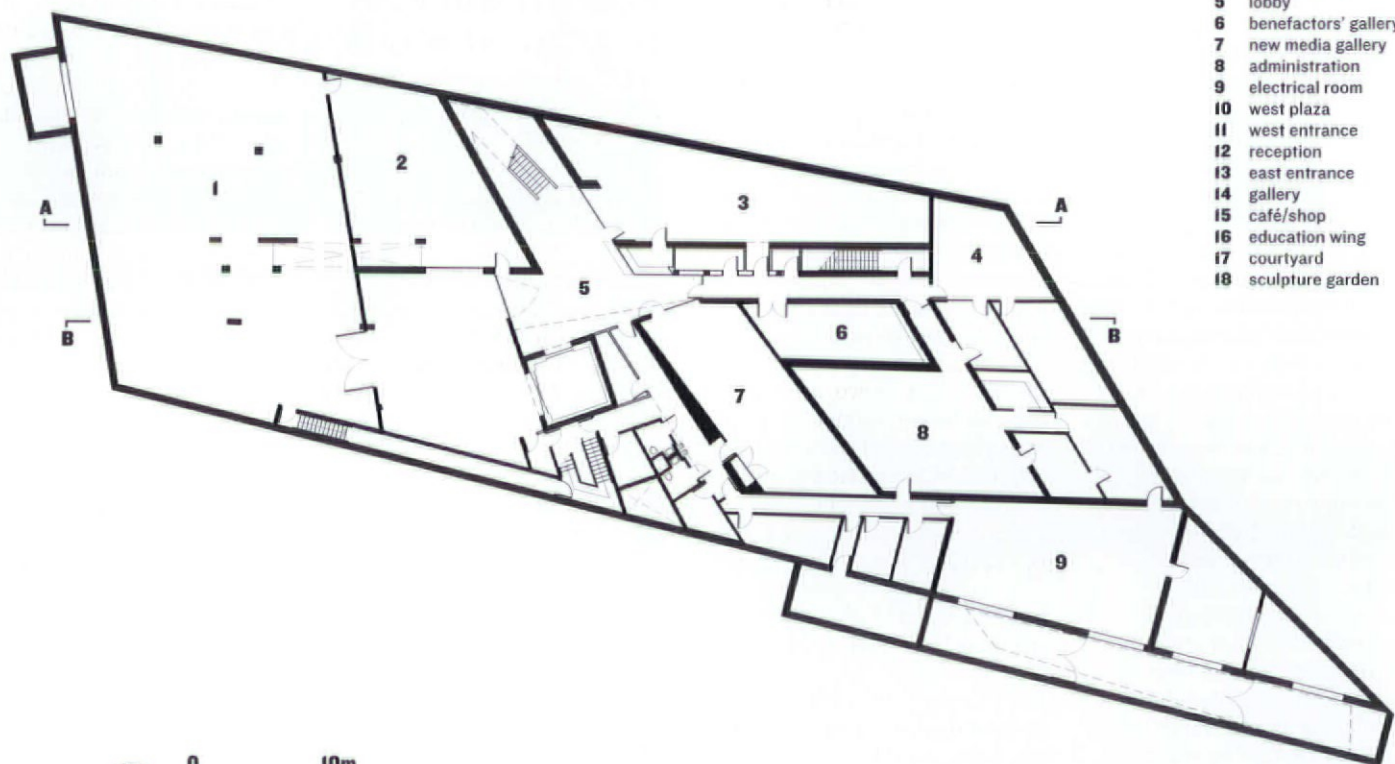
This is only the second building Hadid has realised in the US, following the Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati (AR July 2003). There, on a confined urban site, the architect had to defer to traditional neighbours and stay within a tight envelope. Here, there were no such constraints, but the architects have again eschewed wild flights of expression. The shell is heavily insulated to withstand climatic extremes, which range from 40°C to minus 30°. Triple-glazed, argon-filled windows contribute to this thermal barrier, which minimises energy consumption, while maintaining a steady internal temperature. The steel was folded from the largest available sheets in Kansas City, and assembled seamlessly by a Michigan-based contractor. Invisible joints accommodate the expansion and contraction of the skin, and the architects specified a non-directional finish on the steel to give it greater depth and softness, after testing several alternatives. Sections are perforated to filter direct sunlight, and the folds mask

'A shiny bauble or an alien intruder that has alighted in this bucolic setting ... the completed building is a fusion of poetry and practicality'



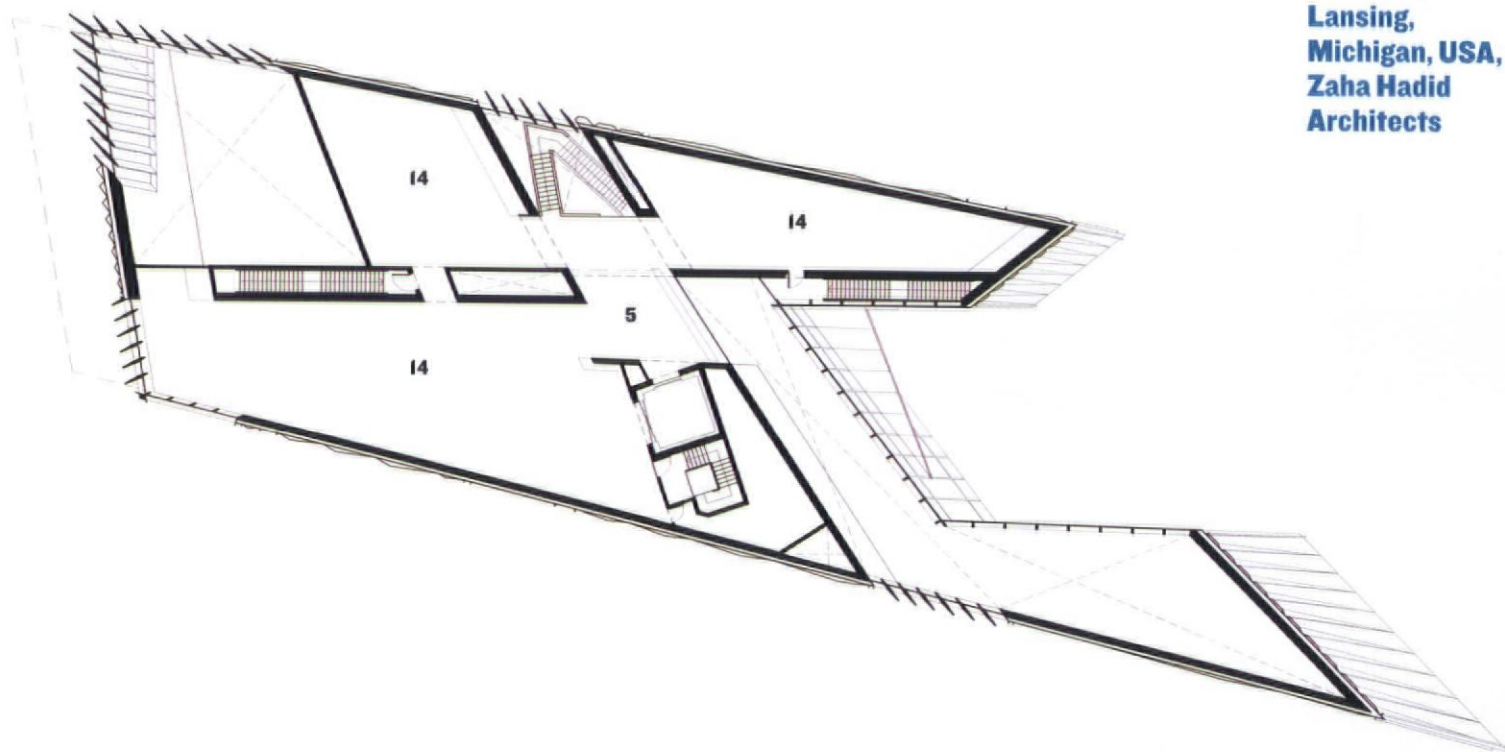


ground floor plan



- 1 plant room
- 2 art handling
- 3 study collection
- 4 study centre
- 5 lobby
- 6 benefactors' gallery
- 7 new media gallery
- 8 administration
- 9 electrical room
- 10 west plaza
- 11 west entrance
- 12 reception
- 13 east entrance
- 14 gallery
- 15 café/shop
- 16 education wing
- 17 courtyard
- 18 sculpture garden

basement plan



first floor plan

the extent of the glazing, which provides abundant natural light throughout the building.

The structure is a hybrid of concrete and steel, with a centrally located staircase and lifts linking the upper and lower floors to the axial concourse that doubles as a reception area. Each of the three galleries on the main floors is different in size and fenestration, and there are two small basement galleries and an open archive, as well as a study centre for the older works in the university's collection. In contrast to MAXXI (AR July 2010), with its sharp distinction between circulation and display, nearly three-quarters of the 3,600 square metres of useful space can be used for display. There's no shop or restaurant, and only a few subterranean offices. That was a major concern of the principal donor, who wanted an exclusive focus on the art. Eli Broad has been criticised for impatience in rushing buildings to completion, notably the house that Frank Gehry began, and Renzo Piano's BCAM, the first museum he commissioned

for his huge collection of contemporary art. He is now working with Diller Scofidio + Renfro on a more ambitious facility in downtown Los Angeles, and if he accords them the same independence he gave Hadid, his legacy will be as memorable as his generosity.

Few changes were made to the competition-winning scheme, and the architects stayed within the budget without compromising the design or the integrity of the finishes. Kiner worked closely with the structural engineers and the contractor, testing the mix and the formwork for the self-compacting concrete, which is employed for three walls that define circulation spaces. The consistency of the pour and the finish is exemplary. In the public areas, a grey-toned concrete with a fine aggregate was poured over the structural slab and ground to a high polish that reflects the light. The refined surfaces are particularly evident in the elongated education wing, where the door to a storage closet swings open at the far end to provide a projection screen

'A building that appears impassive from without feels transparent within, and each space flows fluidly into the next'

for students sitting on a tier of bleachers, and the space between this improvised theatre and a sculptured Corian café counter at the opposite end is alive with reflections in the floor and the tilted window wall. Oak boards replace the polished concrete in the galleries and on the main staircase.

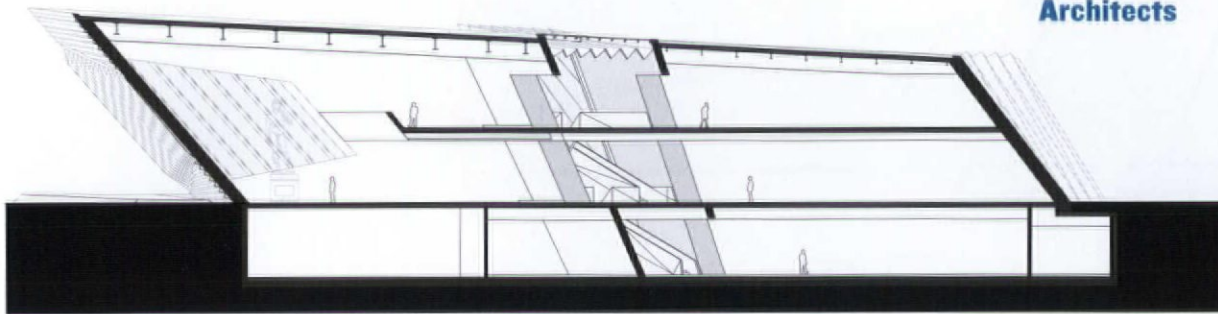
A building that appears impassive from without feels transparent within, and each space flows fluidly into the next. Two opposed wedges of galleries flank the narrow concourse, and their tapered plans offer creative opportunities for the curators. Some galleries are enclosed with glass doors to provide additional climate control, but there are few visual barriers. A mezzanine overlooks the largest gallery in

the north-west corner, with its 11.6 metre ceiling and angled window. Admission is free, so visitors can enter from either end and browse the whole museum or quickly locate the exhibit they've come to see. Director Michael Rush is excited by the potential, extolling the basement mechanical room as 'something you might find exhibited at Documenta', and promising to keep the displays spare 'to give the architecture room to breathe'.

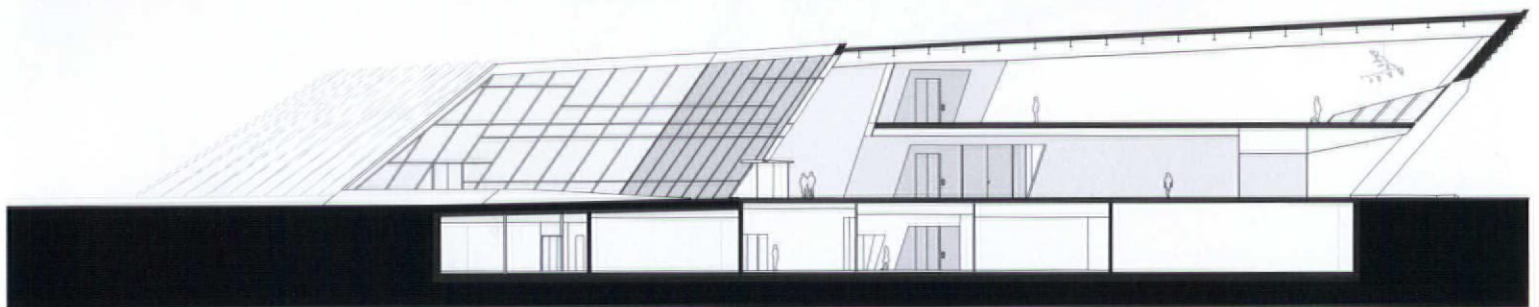
It's rash to judge the success of a museum before it has had a thorough workout; as with a sleek car, performance is paramount. What's clear is that this scintillating structure gives the university a new public face and collegial focus. A campus this large needs gathering places, and the amphitheatre at the east end and the plaza to the west should play this role. It's one of Hadid's more remarkable buildings, in its disciplined invention and impeccable execution; hopefully, it will prove a model of how to put architecture at the service of art, with no sacrifice of creativity.

**Eli and Edythe
Broad Art
Museum,
Lansing,
Michigan, USA,
Zaha Hadid
Architects**

8. The museum's
corrugated prow looms
over its surroundings.
The building is a
site-specific art work
9. (Opposite) spaces
and elements flex
and fold within the
angular geometry



section AA



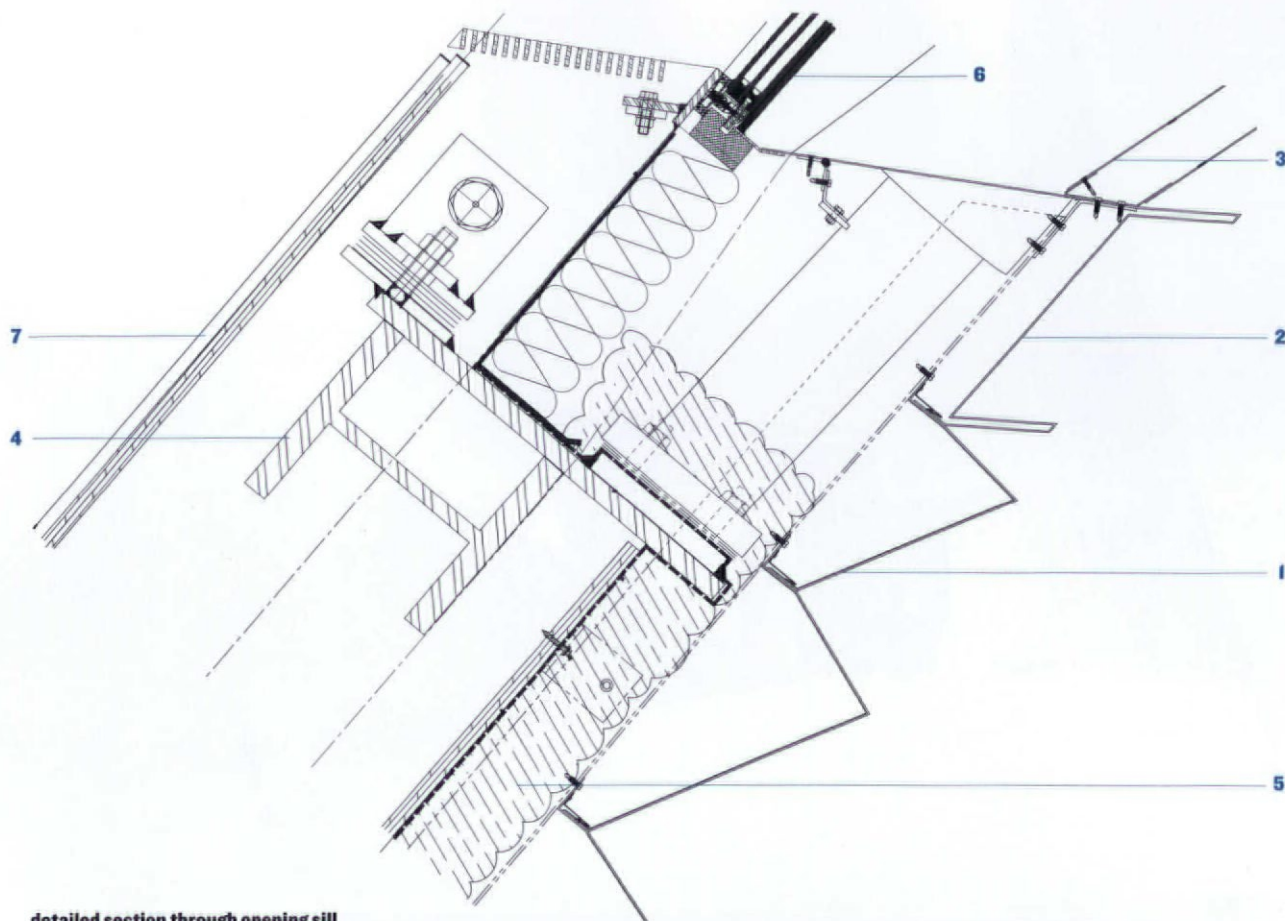
section BB

8



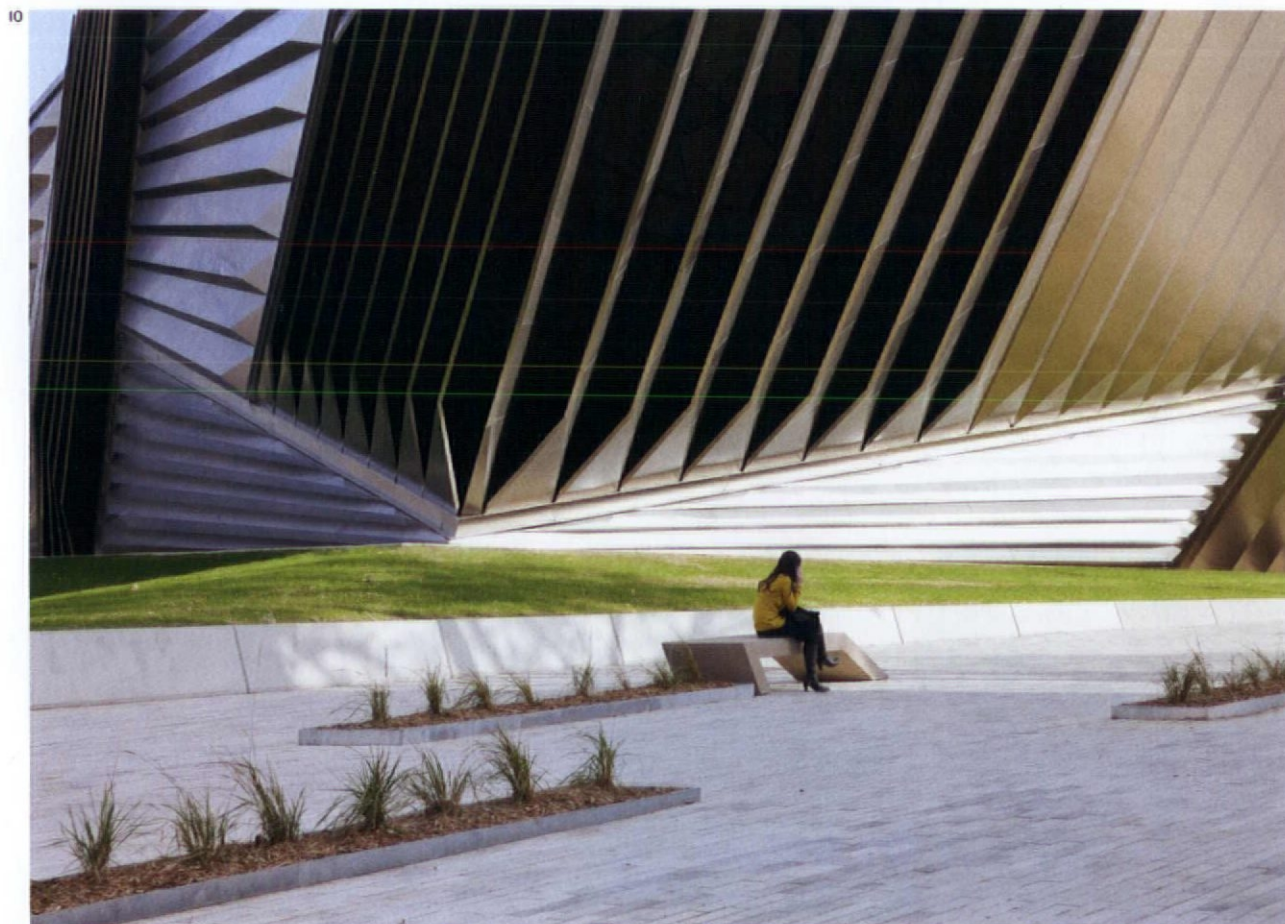


- 1 stainless-steel pleat
- 2 stainless-steel portal
- 3 stainless-steel fin on CHS section
- 4 primary steel structure
- 5 weather barrier on plywood substrate
- 6 glazing system
- 7 interior finish

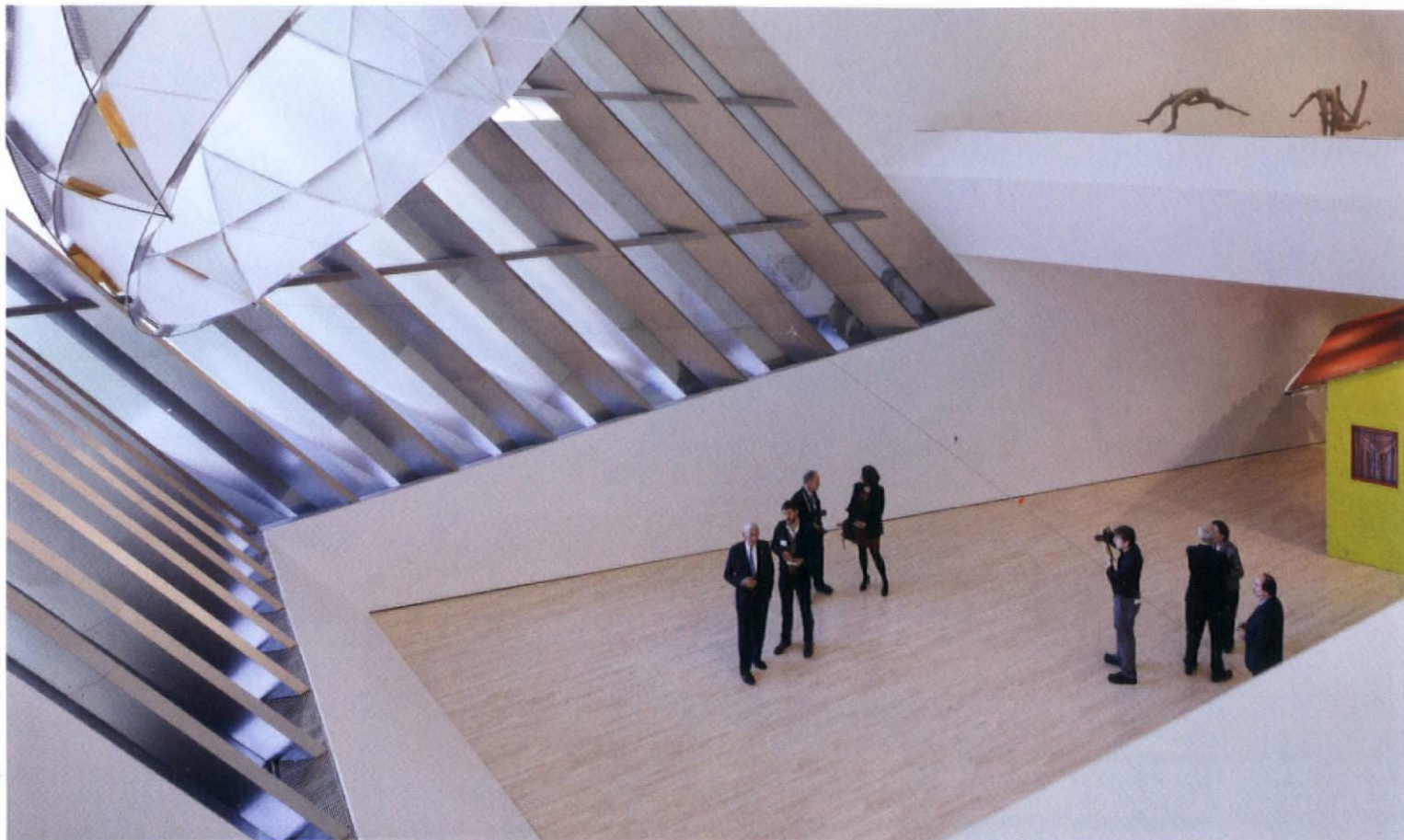


detailed section through opening sill

**Eli and Edythe
Broad Art
Museum,
Lansing,
Michigan, USA,
Zaha Hadid
Architects**



11



12



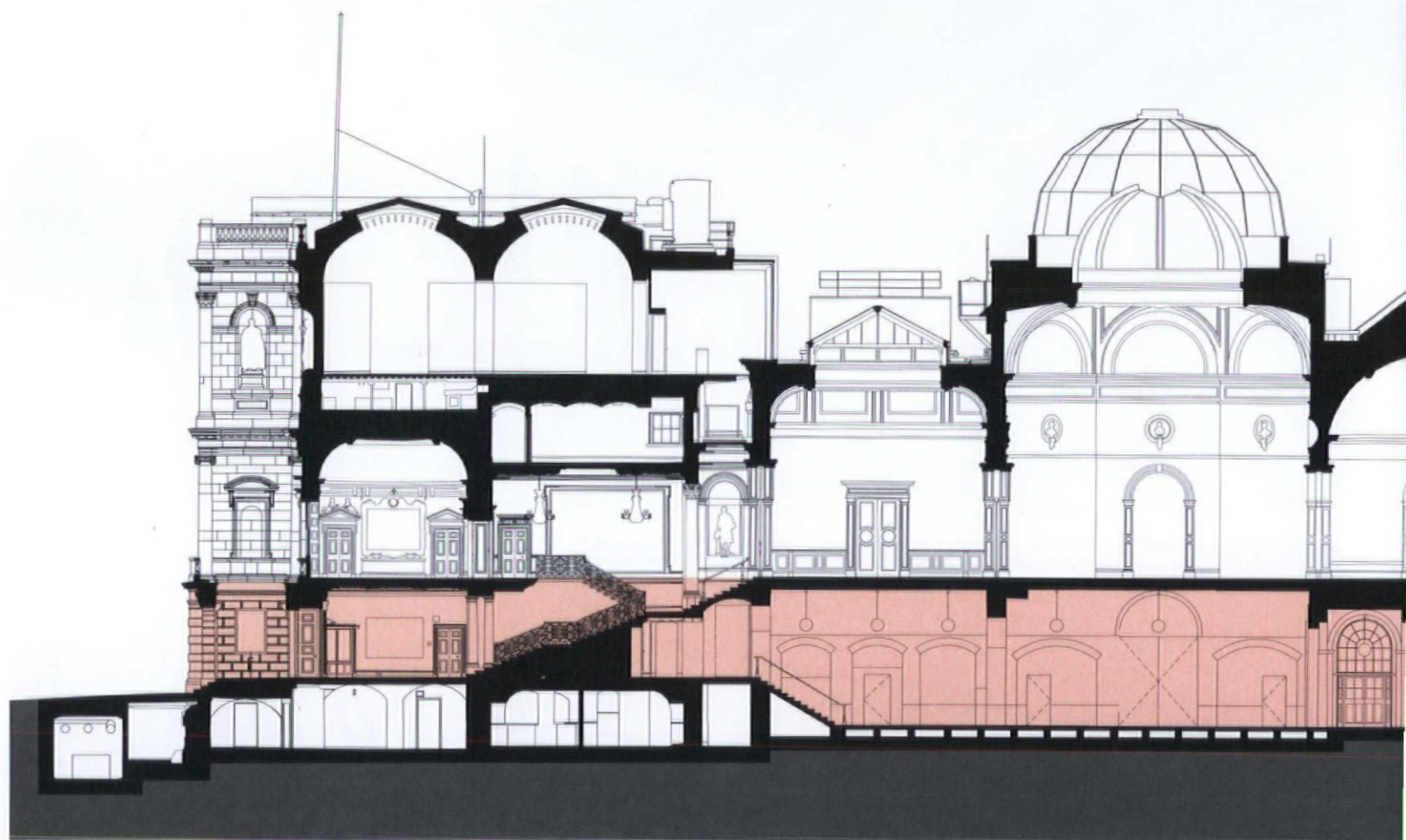
10. Landscaping echoes the dynamic lines and rhythms of the building
11. The tapering forms of the gallery spaces have a challenging, unorthodox potential for curators
12. A muted palette of grey and black forms a neutral backdrop for the art and its associated activities
13. The museum's café and shop overlook the central courtyard

Architect
 Zaha Hadid Architects
Associate architect
 Integrated Design
 Solutions
Photographs
 Iwan Baan, 2, 9-13
 Paul Warchol, 1, 3, 8

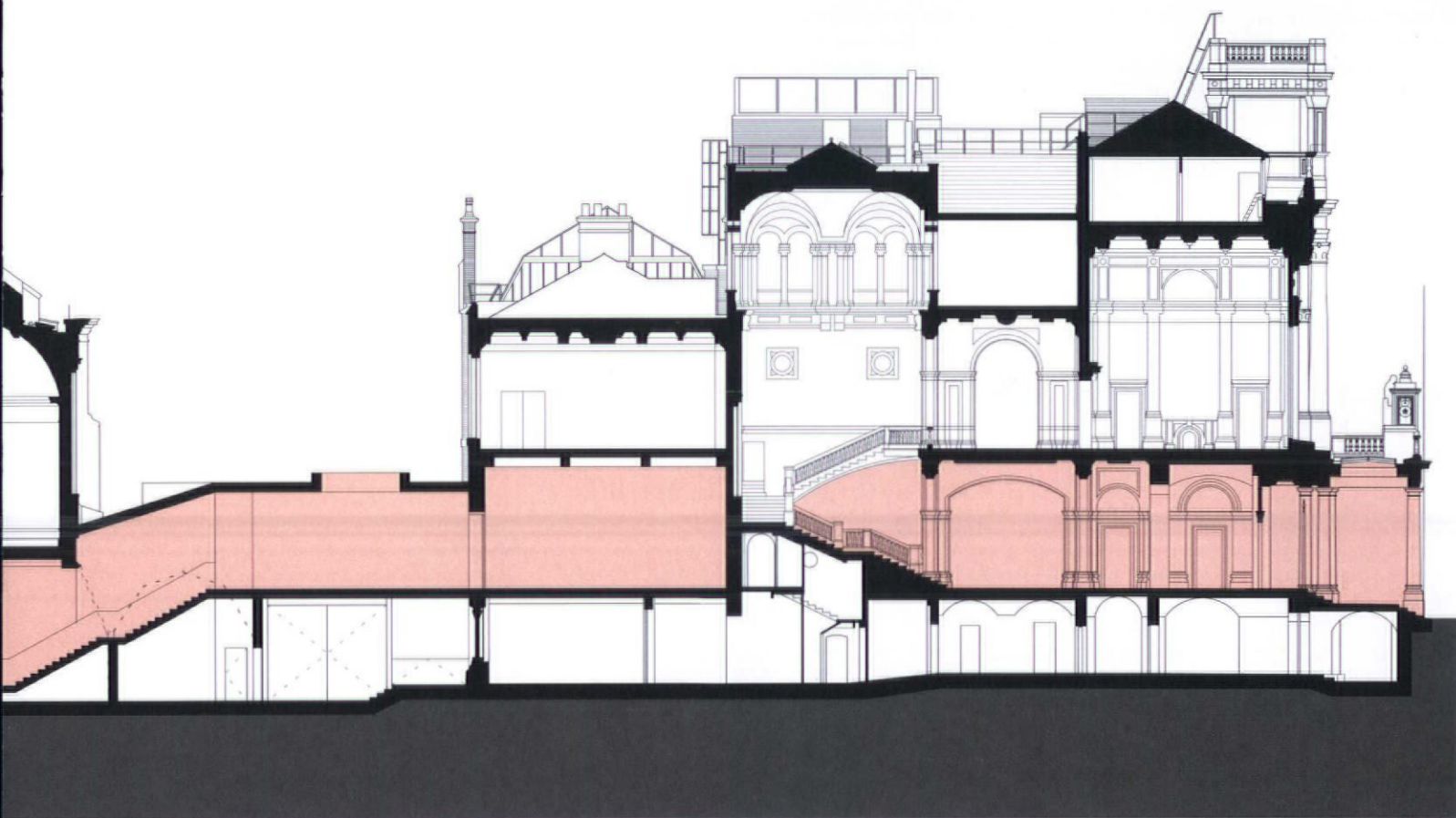
13



**Royal Academy
Remodelling,
London, UK,
David Chipperfield
Architects**



ACADEMIC EXERCISE



The Royal Academy and the former Senate House, which have stood back-to-back in sulky animosity for 150 years, are now set to be finally united by David Chipperfield

NIAL HOBHOUSE

An Academy – all Academies – exist in their own peculiar time, trapped in the present imperfect by an unending process of self-election. For the Members this helps to ease the difficult transition from young and angry to grand and old; for the rest of us, it remains often as much of a surprise to discover who isn't a Member, as who is. Above all, it leaves undefined the role that the institution should seek to play in public life.

In the case of the Royal Academy of Arts, the terms of this charged debate surfaced early in its history. Sir John Soane, in his fourth lecture as the Professor of Architecture delivered in January 1810, let slip a venomous aside about the Royal Opera House, just completed by Robert Smirke, Jr in Covent Garden. The four-year argument that ensued, fuelled equally by Soane's persecution mania and by Smirke's academician father, centred on whether a Member should criticise the production of a contemporary. In a sense, this is the contradiction in all trade associations: for the good of the public, or of the Members?

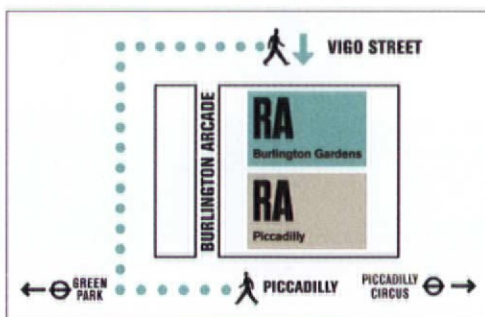
Over the last 20 years the RA has largely resolved this question, at least in relation to itself, by embracing, and not denying, its own existential contradictions; and in some ways it has come to occupy the role it has through commercial force majeure. The important point is just that cultural life in London has been the gigantic beneficiary of the Academy's determination to reach the (paying) public. As a model for a public institution it remains pretty unique, in the ambition of what it delivers, and in the strange ad hoc process by which it evolved. Remarkably, this has been achieved without the grant-in-aid that flows annually to other national institutions – a pattern set by the early insistence of the academicians to themselves pay for the construction of the complex of Galleries behind the original Burlington House.

This history is also the key to understanding the physical structure, and the pattern of growth, of the buildings on the Burlington House site. It is as though living uneasily in its skin has for the RA grown over time into a useful habit of mind. Fifteen years ago, it acquired James Pennethorne's orphaned Senate House, built for the University of London, which since 1880 has sat on the site of the former gardens of Lord Burlington's town house, fronting Burlington Gardens. Two efforts at planning an integration, by Michael Hopkins in 1998 and Colin St John Wilson from 2006, foundered. Both were equally the product of their time and of the sensibility of their creators; the first proving too grandiose (and expensive), the second too diffidently respectful. Neither in truth delivered what the Academy needed,

which was just access to more – and more flexible – programme space, and some organisational coherence for the RA Schools.

The current masterplan, won in competition by David Chipperfield Architects, is a triumph of this long process – highly specific in what it offers in terms of service and facility infrastructure and of circulation, and suitably un-prescriptive about how the uses of the building will change over time. The firm faced an architectural problem of intractable simplicity: of connecting two major classical buildings of strictly formal plan, sitting back to back to each other – although in truth neither had ever really been understood as having a back. This difficulty had been compounded over the years as the Schools had burrowed their way towards the light that filtered down into the narrow slice of unbuilt land between the two. We might note

'The proposal will make legible the very problems which it is trying to address, with a series of elegant seigneurial nods to the ghosts of the stern architectural practitioners who made the building the muddle that it is'



existing signage shows separate elements

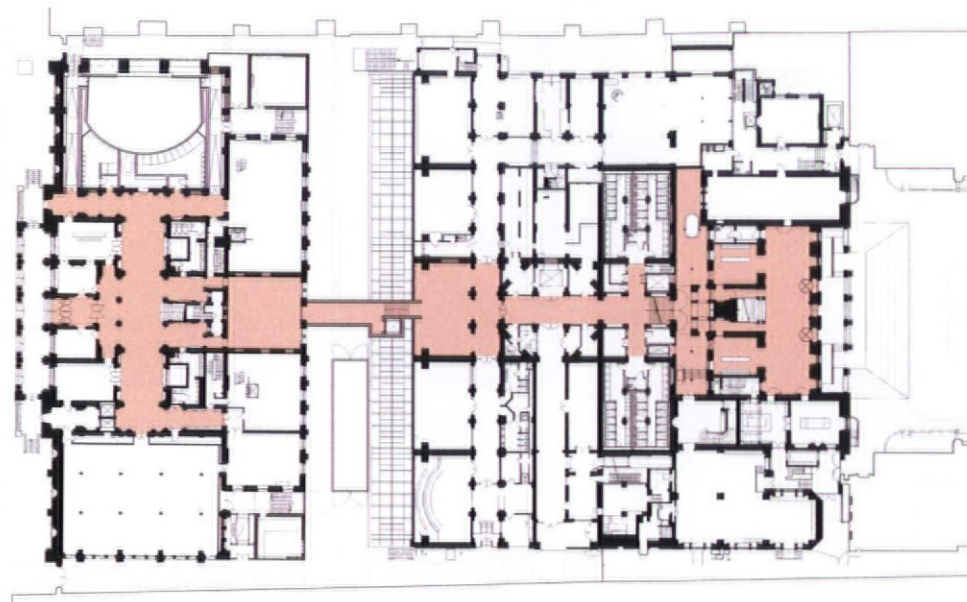


existing site plan

here that Soane's attack of two hundred years ago had been on 'sacrificing everything to one Front of a building'.

For the RA, as it addressed its own building – and in an atmosphere heavy with peer pressure – it is the strongest, most obvious, solution that has proved finally to be the most convincing. An axial central corridor is planned to link the grand central staircase halls of the two buildings, forming in itself a promenade of real architectural ambition. As it goes, it will make nicely legible the very problems it is trying to address, with a series of elegant seigneurial nods to the ghosts of the stern architectural practitioners who made the building the muddle that it is. The domestic proportions of Ware's entrance hall to the south, long a problem for visitor circulation, are eased by breaking back the walls that presently flank EM Barry's great staircase into new ticket and information areas. Beyond these, lowered sills to two of the windows of Colen Campbell's original rear facade at last make sense of the unsatisfactory ground level spaces of the Sackler Galleries by Norman Foster, above. The route then incorporates the astonishing arched spinal link (and a glimpse of the Cast Corridor) that are part of the Schools; both are by Sydney Smirke (yes, another Smirke!). Beyond this the new corridor will arch itself through a section of the studio spaces (possibly by Norman Shaw), leaving below it a yard for the use of the students, as it enters a new south-facing range to the Schools' facility, and then crosses a fine new gallery space formed where there is now a dreary mezzanine.

Eventually, it breaks its way through on either side of Pennethorne's staircase. The Burlington Gardens entrance thus becomes all at once the access to the new spaces on the north of the site (including the restored auditorium of the university building), an effective new entrance sequence to the Schools, and the start of a startling new 'urban' route. This last parallels the Albany Rope Walk to its east and Burlington Arcade to the west and, for the determined dériviste, will effectively extend Old Burlington Street as far as Piccadilly. It remains to be seen how the life of the corridor will evolve in use, but in its generosity to the city it nicely echoes the permeability of the National Gallery site, developed in masterplan by Charles Saumarez Smith, its previous Director and now Secretary of the RA. The challenge that remains, for the Academy and for the architects, is to carry forward the RA's long history of making-do, in the marketplace and in the evolution of its site, into the Burlington Gardens building. These new spaces need to stand in some contrast to the formal rooms in the original building; such a programmatic loose-fit cries out for a looser fit-out than the one we might generally expect from David Chipperfield Architects.



plan showing proposed circulation route unifying the two buildings

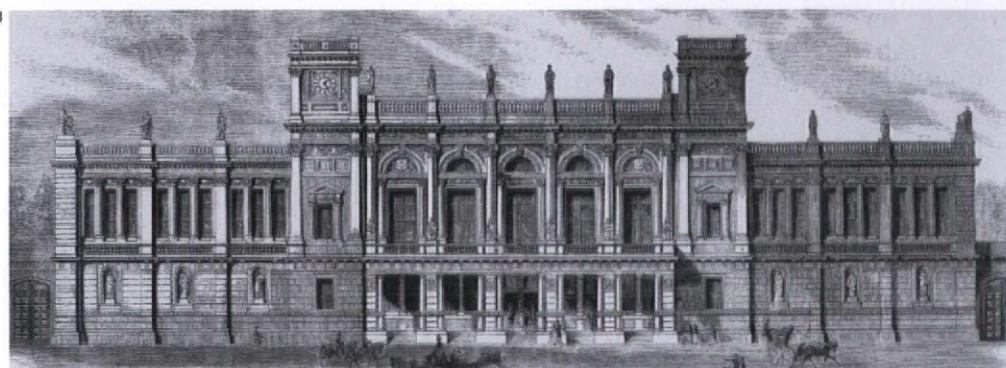
**Royal Academy
Remodelling,
London, UK,
David
Chipperfield
Architects**

1. (Previous page) long section showing the linking route between the Royal Academy and the former Senate House
2. The currently empty space between the muddled complex of buildings will be recast as a courtyard for the use of students
3. The Burlington Gardens facade of Senate House by James Pennethorne, completed in 1869
- 4 & 5. The refurbished lecture theatre promises to be an elegant modern abstraction of the blowsy grandeur of the original space

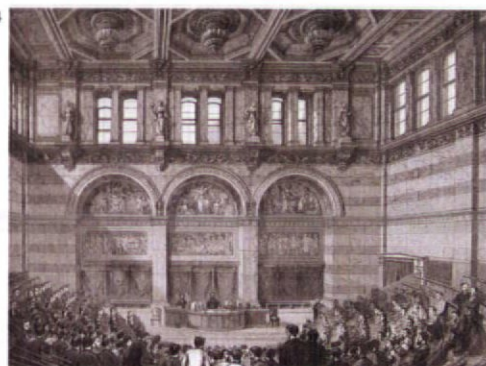
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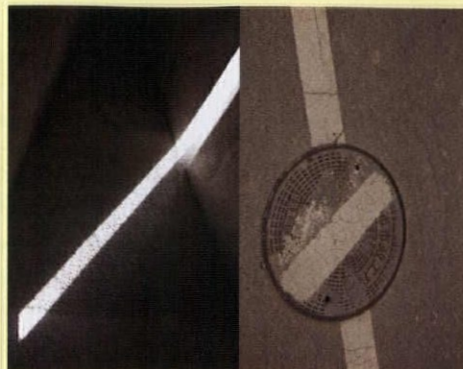


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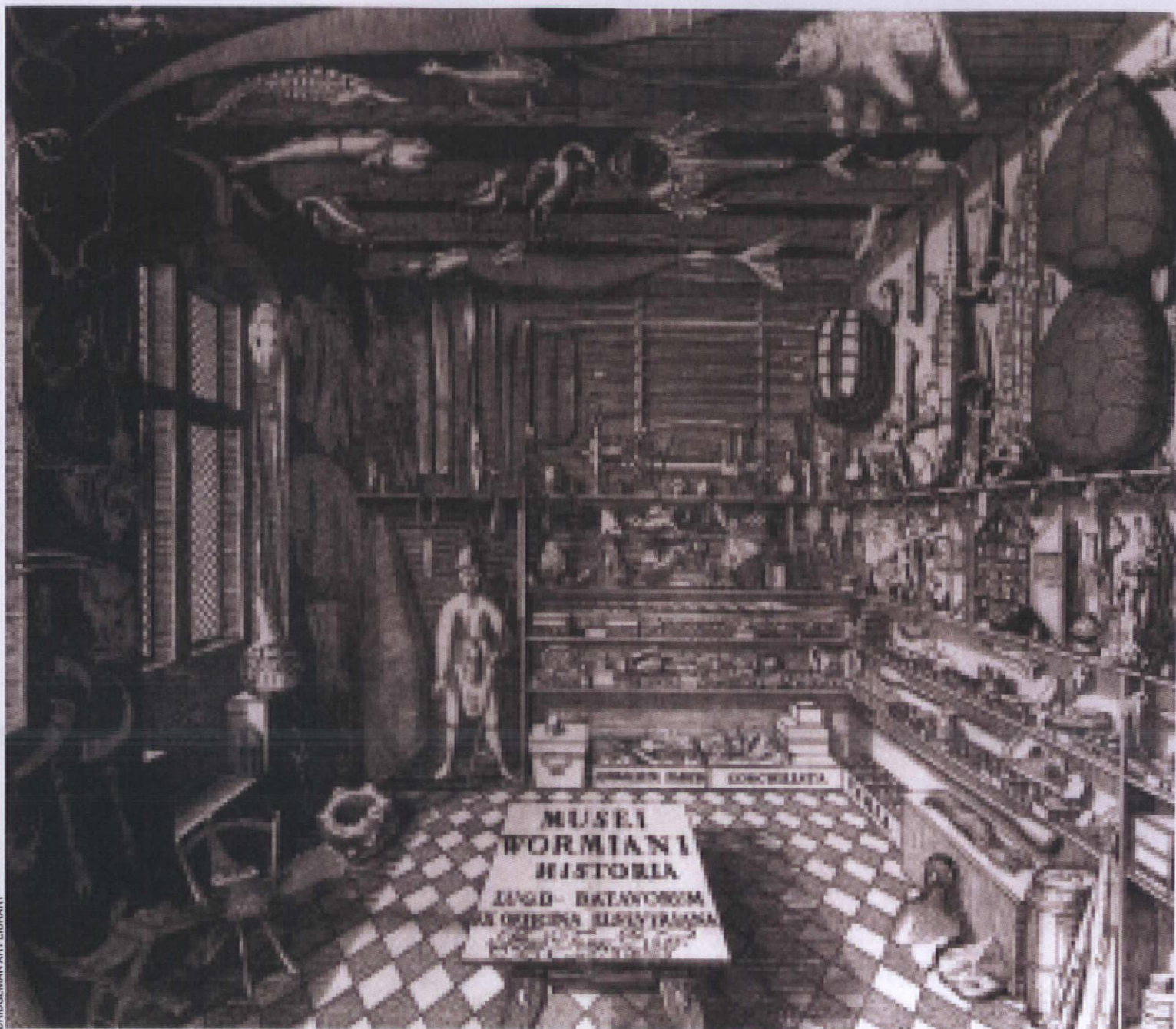
Architecture & Meaning
 Tuesday 12 March, 7pm, The V&A
 An examination of how architecture communicates meaning and why this important role for architecture has been overlooked in so much recent work. **William JR Curtis** is a leading historian, critic, photographer and author. **Richard Wentworth** is a well-known British artist and former Dean of the RCA School of Sculpture

Architecture & Beauty
 Tuesday 19 February, 7pm, The V&A
 Will Alsop and Stephen Bayley explore architecture's troubled relationship with aesthetics. **Will Alsop, OBE**, is a Stirling Prize-winning architect, artist, professor and Royal Academician. **Stephen Bayley** is one of Britain's leading cultural critics and the author of the recent bestseller *Ugly: The Aesthetics of Everything*

ARCHITECTURE & THE LONDON LECTURE SERIES TO EXPLORE ARCHITECTURE'S CRITICAL INTERSECTION WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES

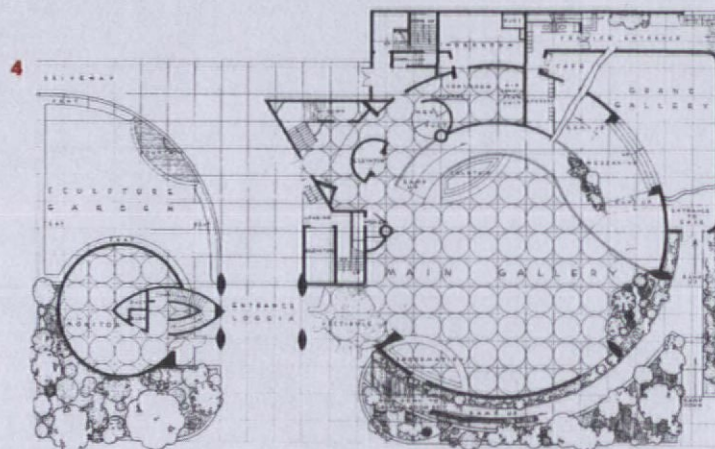
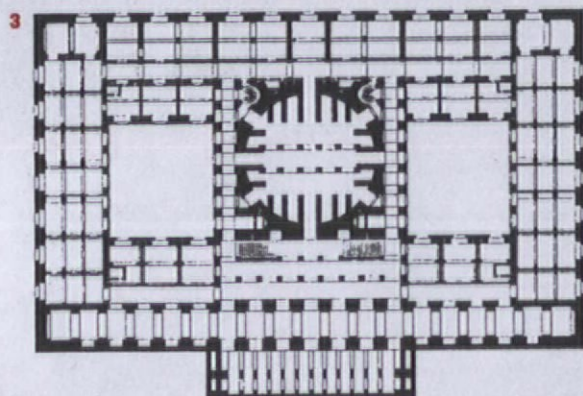
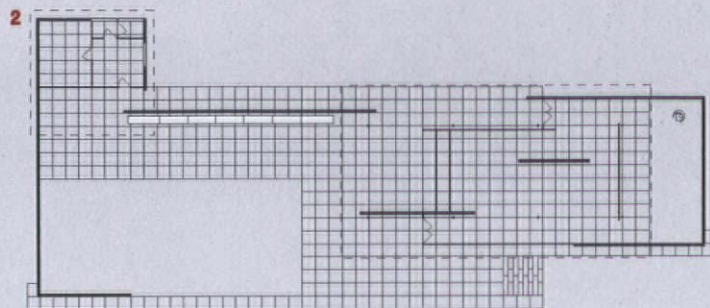
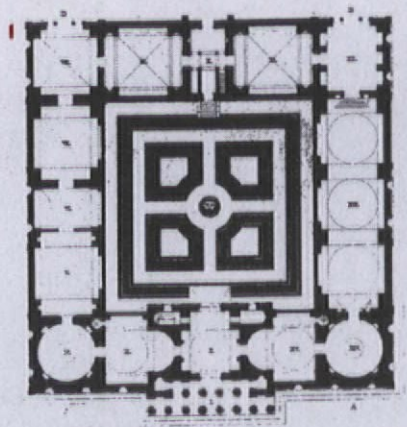
The AR has collaborated with the Royal College of Art and the Victoria & Albert Museum to produce Architecture& – a series of architectural discussions in London. The first sold-out events featured Liza Fior with Peter Wynne Rees debating Architecture & Urbanism and Rachel Armstrong with Steve Fuller considering Architecture & Ecology. The next two exciting debates look at Beauty and Meaning. Tickets are £9 full price, but a special concessionary rate of £6 is available for AR readers. To book, visit: architectural-review.com/ArchitectureAnd





TYPOLOGY QUARTERLY MUSEUMS

1. German *Wunderkammern* (wonder rooms) were brimful of curiosities. In accordance with the Baroque worldview they were arranged for effect, and thus rejected by the dry Enlightenment typologies that followed



Museums arrange the world according to the changing way we see it: from Renaissance memory theatres and Baroque cabinets of curiosity, via Enlightenment typologies, to Modernist teleologies and the current vogue for environmental contextualism

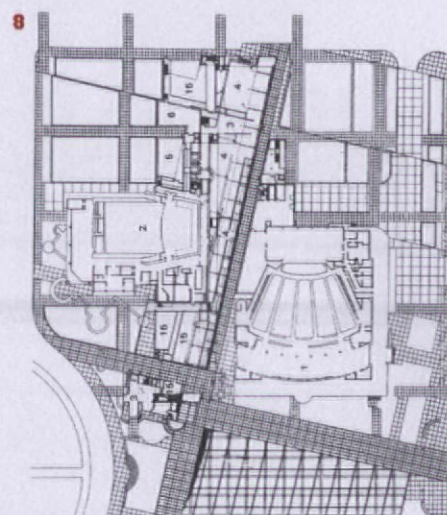
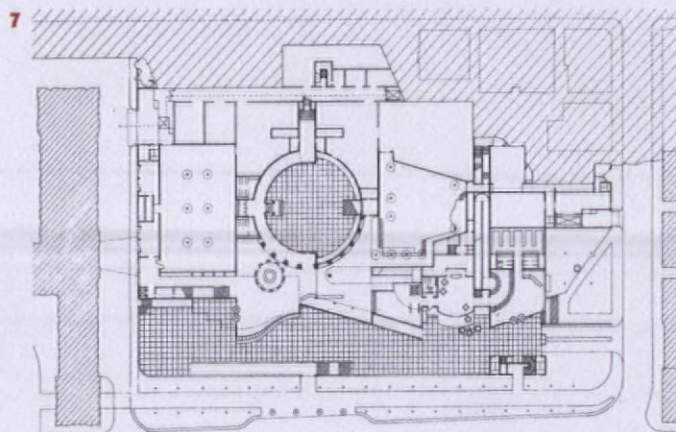
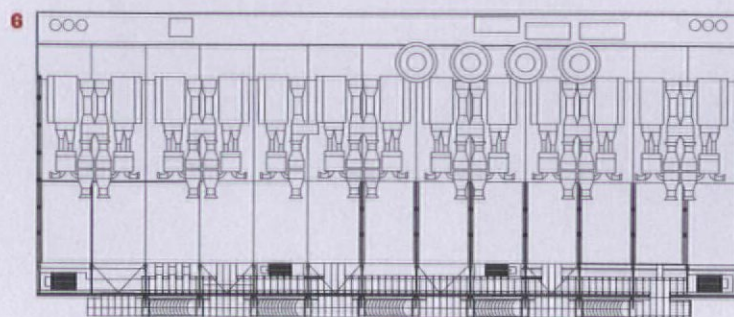
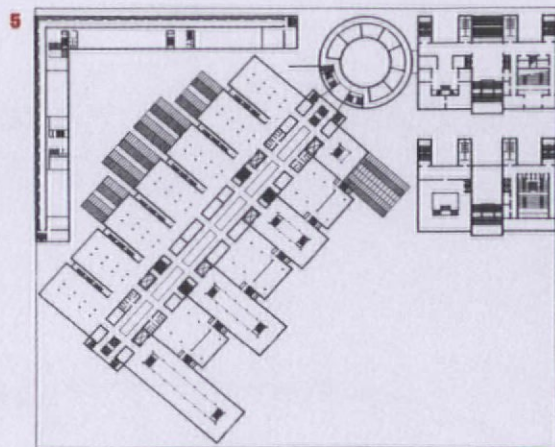
ANTONELLO MAROTTA

Creating a place for looking backwards – for preserving the history of human activity – had its origins at the dawn of history. Some of the earliest remnants of the human impulse to *remember* can be found in caves, amid rock carvings and arcane marks found there. The temples, palaces and libraries of Mesopotamia dating from the third and second millennia BC were the earliest forms of proto-museums; there the preservation and communication of knowledge began. The origin of 'museum', on the other hand, comes from ancient Egypt, where Ptolemy II Philadelphus erected a *mouseion* in Alexandria in the third century BC. It had an enormous library, a collection of works of art, and technical and scientific artefacts.

During the Renaissance, with its newly awakened interest in a golden

past, the desire to remember intensified. Thanks to the great collections of the Medici, Gonzaga and Sforza families, the museum became a repository of miscellaneous knowledge and relics as well as a place of study open to small groups of scholars. In the 16th century, the perception of the museum as a 'theatre' emerged, with two parallel strands, the 'theatre of memory' and the 'theatre of nature'.

The Italian philosopher Giulio Camillo's ambitious plans for a *theatre of memory*, outlined in his opus of the same name, was based on a system for classifying all knowledge according to mnemonic principles. The wooden structure was designed in the shape of an amphitheatre, using the seven Vitruvian orders and a grid of 49 compartments, each belonging to a



deity. In the mid-16th century another Italian, the scholar Ulisse Aldrovandi, began assembling a collection of botanical and zoological specimens, a sort of *theatre of nature*, with the intention of classifying all organic and inorganic species of the world for scientific purposes. This need systematically to arrange knowledge was prompted by the discovery of America and new plant species, and by Copernicus's scientific revelations regarding the heliocentric universe.

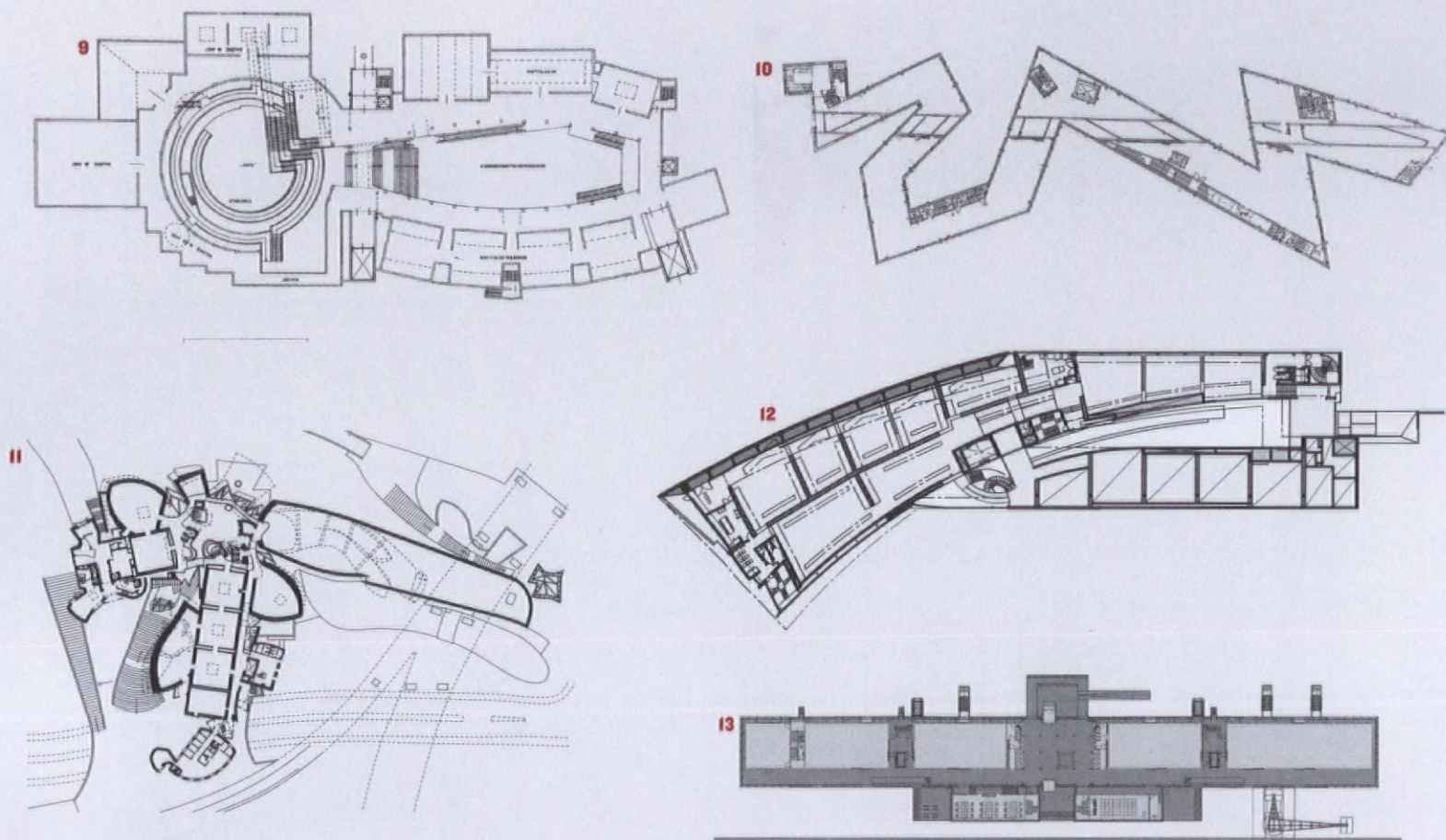
At the same time in Germany *Wunderkammern* – pre-scientific and often eccentric cabinets of curiosities – were established to house collections of all kinds. They were, as Italian architect Virgilio Vercelloni pointed out, private and subjective in contrast to the objective, ordered and systematic

theatres. The difference between the Italian 'theatre' and the German 'rooms' was one of intent: the theatres scientific in nature while the purpose of the German rooms was to surprise the visitor with rare and curious objects. Lacking a sense of order, these *Kammern*, or rooms, were more like workshops, in which all the latest curiosities and early machines were accumulated. The assemblages revealed the strong connection between creativity and instruments, natural and manmade. The *Wunderkammern* anticipated the museum as entertainment and opened the way to presentation techniques more akin to those found in many new facilities today.

In the 18th century, during the Enlightenment, Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert launched their *Encyclopédie*. Their goal was

- 1 Leo von Klenze, Glyptothek, Munich, 1830
- 2 Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona Pavilion, 1929
- 3 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Altes Museum, Berlin, 1830
- 4 Frank Lloyd Wright, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1959
- 5 Aldo Rossi, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, 1988
- 6 Renzo Piano & Richard Rogers, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1977
- 7 James Stirling, Neue Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, 1984
- 8 Peter Eisenman, Wexner Centre, Columbus, 1989

to catalogue all knowledge and give it a systematic framework, thereby putting an end to the eclectic museums of the Germans. But it was the archaeological discoveries at Herculaneum that revived the fascination with antiquity. Excavations at Paestum began in 1738 and in Pompeii around 1748. After emerging from a blanket of ash and stones in the case of Pompeii and boiling mud at Herculaneum, the discoveries, hidden and protected for centuries, provided visual evidence from the past, which was literally being resurrected before one's eyes. Johann Winckelmann, a German scholar living in Rome, was inspired by these exciting new archaeological finds to write his *History of Ancient Art* (1764), which almost single-handedly invented the discipline of 'scientific' art history.



With the French Revolution in 1789, the social outlook began to change and a demand to open museums to a wider public emerged. According to Jacobin Republicans 'the beautiful' should be available to everyone as it supported the notion of 'the good'. They revived the Greek ideal of *kalokagathia* – perfection of the body and city based on balance, justice and proportion – and believed that through the institution of the museum, a model of moral virtue would be capable of building a new society. On 18 November 1793 the halls of the Louvre, the first public museum, were opened, conveying a sense of national belonging and making knowledge a public resource.

In the 19th century, museums began to be built in the capital cities of Europe. With their Classical and

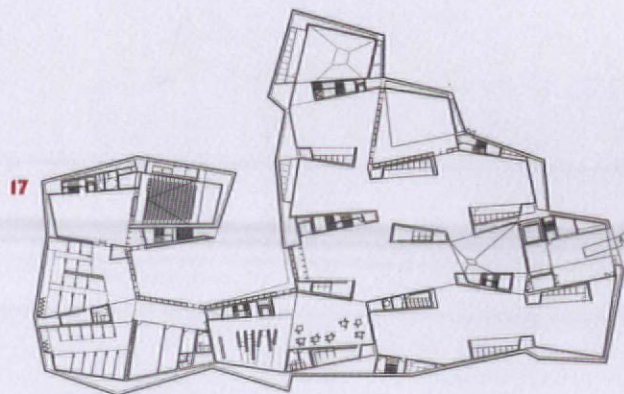
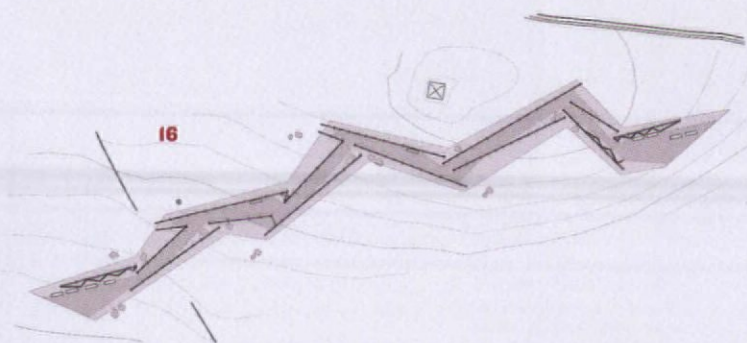
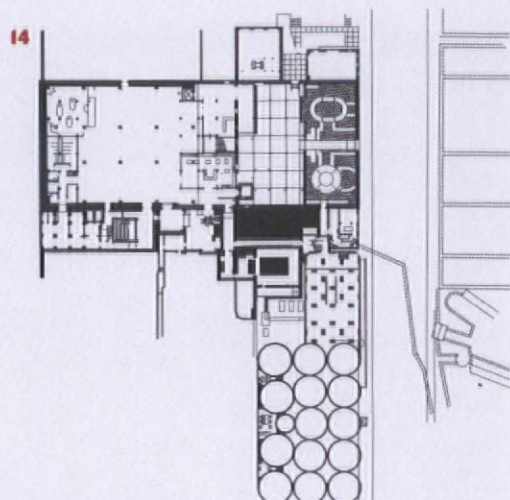
eclectic designs, the buildings themselves alluded to the past. Classical pediments, Roman pilasters, and vaults and cupolas inspired by 16th-century architecture were prevalent. So it was not only the works within the museum but the structure itself that exhibited and conserved the past.

There are many examples of the 19th-century museum. In Munich the Glyptothek was designed by Leo von Klenze as a classical temple to accommodate the intellectual framework of the Greeks in addition to its marble statuary. In Berlin, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum, isolated in its urban setting and distinguished by an arcade and an unbroken series of galleries, expresses the cultural status of the city. In 1891 Gottfried Semper completed the Kunsthistorisches

Museum in Vienna as a palace of culture, designed according to the Renaissance model of interconnecting spaces.

These *palace-museums* merged culture and power to convey an image of an idyllic past. Referential in character, they achieved a perfect unity between the works accommodated – often looted during colonial enterprises or bought by private collectors and transported from one continent to another – and architecture. Still today, entering a 19th-century museum gives one a

'It was not only the works within the museum but the structure itself that exhibited the past'



sense of awe and reverence for the objects and the cultures from which they originally came.

In the 20th century, with its wars and concomitant bomb damage, the city became the burned-out library, the wasteland and the demolished block. The rubble that remained eliminated hopes for a golden world; but disintegration also created a place from which to start again.

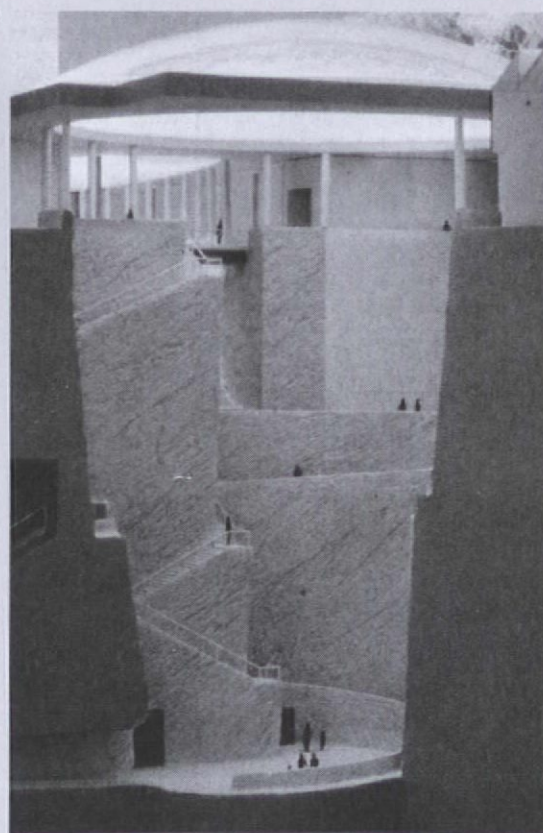
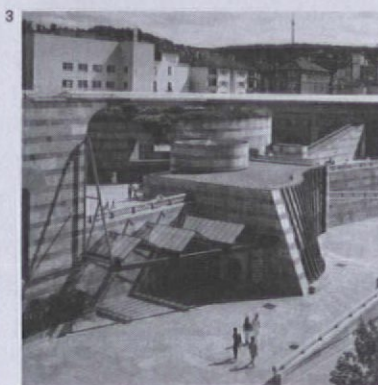
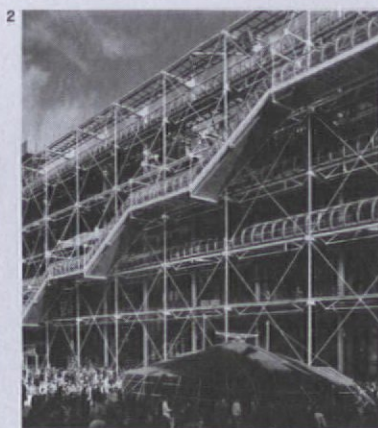
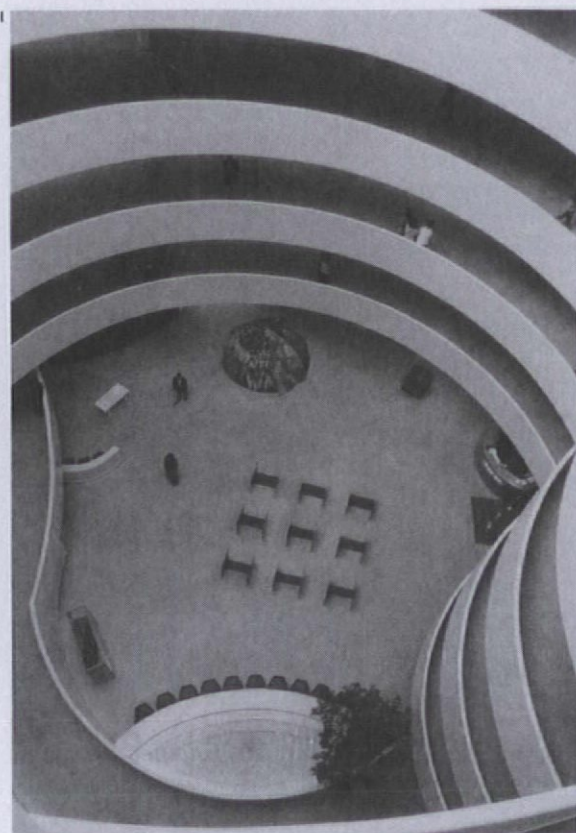
The Futurists anticipated the next change. Seeing speed as the cardinal principle of the new era and a symbol for the need to reform the static city, they believed that the institution of the museum was destined to disappear. Instead, machines such as planes and trains would provide a new perspective on the city, they claimed, and, consequently, a radical new urban and collective memory would be born.

- 9 Hans Hollein, Museum on the Mönchsberg, Salzburg, 1989
- 10 Daniel Libeskind, Jewish Museum, Berlin, 1999
- 11 Frank Gehry, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, 1999
- 12 Steven Holl, Kiasma Museum, Helsinki, 1998
- 13 Brückner & Brückner, Kulturspeicher, Würzburg, 2002
- 14 Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Mill City Museum, Minneapolis, 2004
- 15 Paulo David, Centro de Artes, Madeira, 2004
- 16 Giovanni Maciocco, Anglona Paleobotanical Park, 2008
- 17 Mansilla & Tuñón, Museum of Cantabria, 2003

At the same time, the architects of modernity were rediscovering through their travels the rationality of design from the past. In 1910-11 Le Corbusier and Auguste Klipstein undertook their *Voyage d'Orient*, a tour that took them to Central Europe, Greece, Turkey and Italy. In Athens, Le Corbusier made his famous drawings of the Acropolis, with the aim of interpreting the relationships between the sacred monument and the rocky mountain from which it seemed to emerge. When he arrived at the Villa Adriana in Tivoli, he was fascinated by the mysterious symbiosis between nature and architecture. The fragment and the whole coexisted in a play of relationships between landscape, building and natural elements and in a novel encounter between Roman architecture and

Hellenistic culture, rationalism and irrationalism, enclosure and cave.

If dissolution is found in Le Corbusier's view, Mies van der Rohe expanded Roman space in his design of the Barcelona Pavilion for the International Exposition of 1929. A museum ahead of its time, it was conceived as a fluid space. Here, the enclosure of the Roman house opens onto several vistas and nature appears as a dynamic entity, no longer secluded like the gardens of the houses at Pompeii. Mies's glass walls function as a filter between interior and exterior, creating metaphysical spatial properties. As a result of his encounters with De Stijl and Suprematist artists like Mondrian, Van Doesburg and El Lissitzky, Mies interpreted the enclosing wall as slabs that expand space.



Eschewing the imitations of 19th-century architects, the Modernists reinterpreted the act of remembering. In addition to the utopianism and abstraction in their work, they sought to reclaim influences from the past rather than its direct representation. For the 20th-century architect, history was a source of inspiration. Archaeology laid the foundation for modern design and fashioned it from the inside out.

It was not until 1959, however, that a new vision for the museum and its use of space appeared. This is the year that Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York was completed. Based on the principle of an ascending helix, as if aspiring for growth, the building breaks with conventional geometry. Wright produced a small building in the city's urban fabric, yet one that explodes on the inside.

With the Guggenheim, Wright formulated a different approach to museum design, one in which the spatial setting has an effect on the exhibitions and changes the viewer's

perception of the works on display. Rather than the compartmentalised space of the 19th century or the Modernist's white cube, Wright structured space so that the void became a prominent feature. He changed the discourse: the space of the museum now had a meaning of its own. Today this contradiction between content and container has become the rule. At the Guggenheim, memory, or the act of remembering, resides at the very intersection of resources and materials.

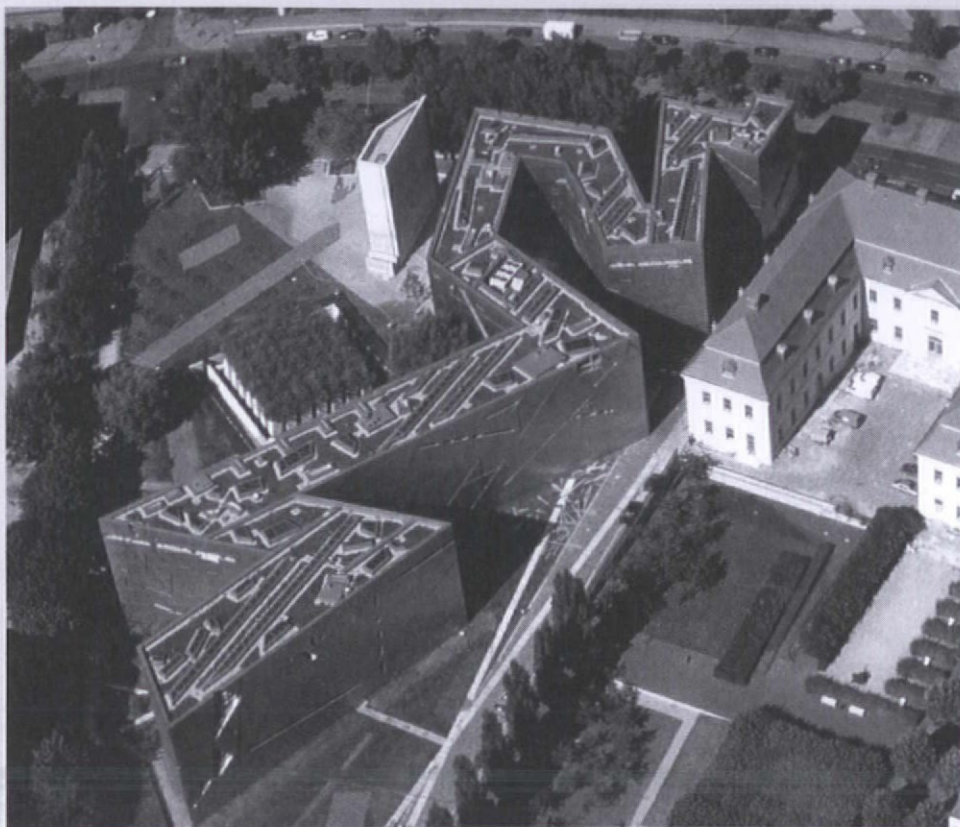
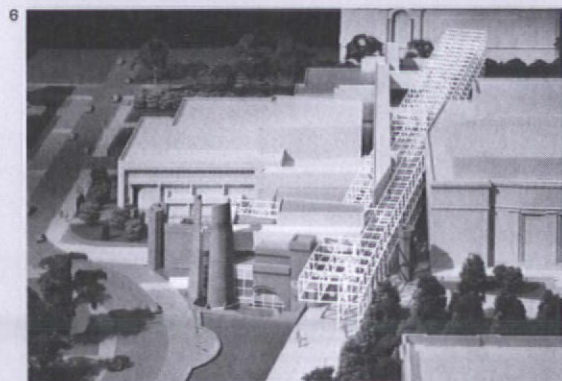
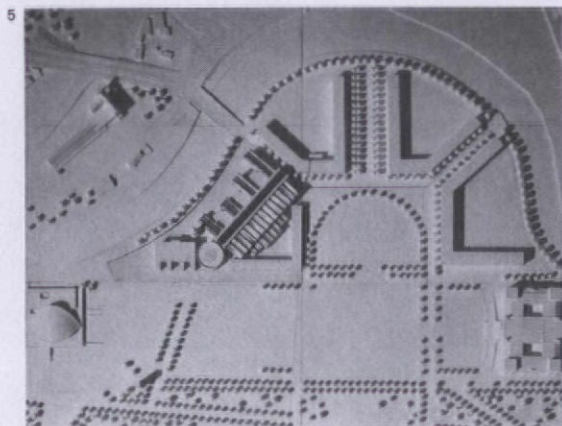
In the 1960s, new trends in architecture led to the development of the museum as a kind of kinetic, dynamic machine. The introduction of a movable skeletal structure allowed flexibility of use, as in Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers' design for the Pompidou Centre in Paris. The Beaubourg, as the museum is often referred to, is an example of an engineer's utopia. The external escalators and flexible space create a museum architecture liberated from its contents. As a container, the museum embraces the contradictions of modernity and is

1. The spiral ramp of Wright's Guggenheim presents art history as an ineluctable progression: a typical bit of control-freakery allowing the visitor less self-direction than the museum-as-palace suites of the 19th century
2. The Pompidou Centre introduces the free plan to the museum – at an impractical scale
3. Stirling's Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart fizzles with primary colours and kitsch materials: so far so Pomo, but with a decidedly Modernist asymmetry and denial of hierarchical grand entrances
4. Hans Hollein's unbuilt museum would have burrowed into the Mönchsberg, eliminating the prestigious grandstanding of the traditional museum facade once and for all

an eloquent and abstract structure, independent of its artistic contents.

In the post-modern climate of the '80s we see a transition from the *city-museum* to the *museum-city*, where the museum itself becomes a kind of citadel – a complex image of solids and voids, with components of public space included within it. A vision of the museum developed as a reverse image of the city.

James Stirling's 1984 design for the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart is one of the best examples of the principle of museum-as-urban-system. It is an articulated container that, by means of its central courtyard, directs circulation through a multilayered scheme, between inside and outside, and between history and the city. Later, Aldo Rossi proposed a scheme for the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin that is, despite remaining on paper, perhaps one of the most comprehensive of his designs. Like a collage of an ideal city, it amalgamated residential units, a Renaissance rotunda that served as a link between the parts, and



colonnades which relate the urban spaces to those of the museum.

With the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, Peter Eisenman recalled the history of the place by bringing the theme of towers to the forefront. By means of the three-dimensional structure of the frame inserted between the existing buildings, he broke the symmetrical and self-referential patterns of Postmodernism's nostalgic idioms and paved the way for the idea of deconstruction.

While many architects working in the '80s were concerned with safeguarding the image of the city, Hans Hollein published one of his most fascinating designs (unfortunately never built) for the museum on the Mönchsberg in Salzburg, which entailed an underground structure, practically without elevations. The theme of excavation was reinforced by a great circular recess leading to the underground spaces. A series of interlocking paths providing the possibility of visiting the exhibition halls according to one's own

5. Aldo Rossi's plan for the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin was shelved by the fall of the Wall; instead, the institution moved into the oldest classical building on Unter den Linden (with a later extension by IM Pei)

6. The Wexner Centre was Eisenman's first major public building: it solves an interesting architectural conundrum by following both the grid of the city and of the campus, which do not join up. Whether the resulting spaces are a success is another matter

7. Libeskind's lightning bolt Jewish Museum in Berlin was a smash hit when it first opened, its expressionistic empty spaces a harrowing memorial: filled with exhibits a year later, the effect was less convincing

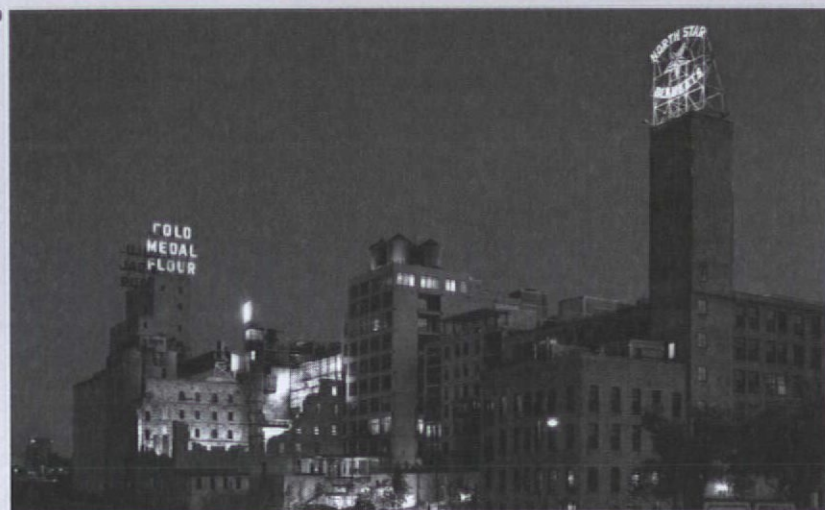
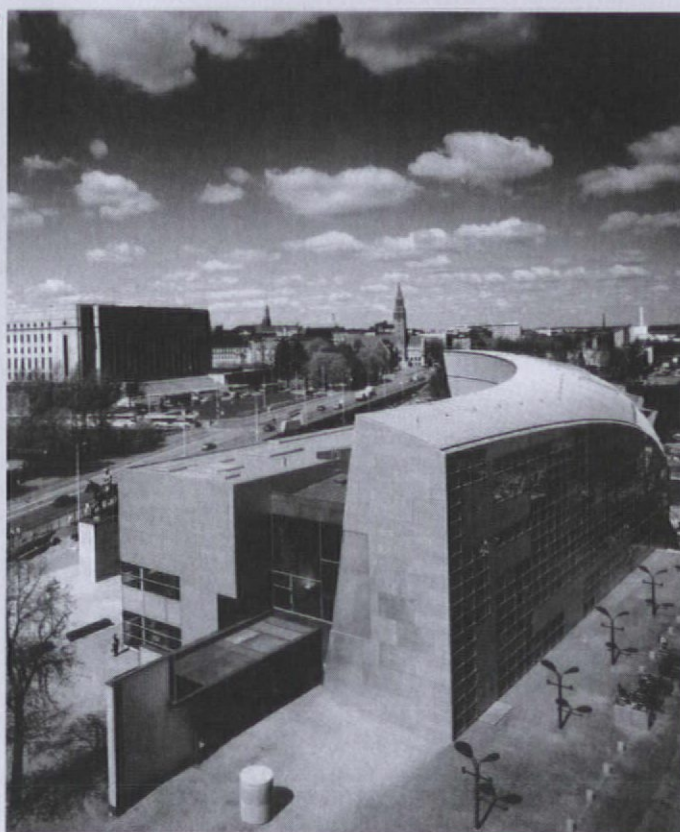
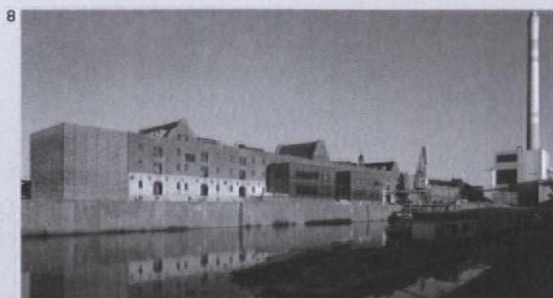
inclinations harked back to the idea of an experiential museum. But, more importantly, Hollein's design negated the idea of the museum as a projection of the city.

In 1988, when the crisis in the property market was leading intellectuals and artists to question the meaning of design, the *Deconstructivist Architecture* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York sparked new concerns about architectural composition. It was no longer the image of the historic city that was dictating the rules, but the concept of new, interstitial spaces and the philosophy of the 'between' or crossover became dominant. Leading architects in this period were Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Rem Koolhaas, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind.

The MoMA exhibition inspired a change of direction. History was no longer a complete and self-referential activity that determined the boundaries of composition, nor was it a hierarchical idea relating to

urban structure. The city was now dissected, and memory split apart and refuted. In the '80s, memory had been restored with Modernism's use of ordered Classical space while Deconstructionism was re-examining influential figures of the early decades of the 20th century, artists such as Boccioni, Balla, El Lissitzky, Duchamp, Melnikov, Tatlin, Terragni, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Part of the spirit of the period was a return to the explosive force of the Futurist, Constructivist and Russian Suprematist era along with the heroic figures of the Modernism.

This change in direction is central to understanding museums in the '90s. The museum became a work of art and a theatrical space that was more important than even the works on display. Attention had shifted from a concept that focused on the works on display, often enhanced by the neutral character of the museum that housed it, to a stereophonic one in which the museum experience itself provides the primary stimuli: work and space, memory and relationships, past and future.



Spatial and other types of relationships now took precedence; the void was more important than the solid; and the dynamics of movement replaced the linearity of 19th-century plans. The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry, the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind and the Kiasma Museum in Helsinki by Steven Holl are the most comprehensive examples of this development.

With the Jewish Museum, Libeskind addresses a painful past. His schema turned the plan of the city into a map of paths connecting the places where Jewish intellectuals, poets and artists had lived. Then he connected these lines into a drawing that became a web of memory. Into this void, the museum inscribes the trauma of the erased names. It is both space of collective relationships and a self-contained and isolated place. The visitor feels a kind of misgiving and experiences the silence. The subject of the museum is its deafening emptiness. In the nakedness of the walls and in the faint light from the thin window

8. The Kulturspeicher museum in Würzburg occupies a former riverside warehouse: one of many cultural institutions colonising the de-industrialised spaces of the West, as society shifts from production to consumption
9. Unlike many recent post-industrial museums, the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis does not whitewash the industrial past, but turns the former mill into an exhibit itself
10. The Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki swerves away from a highway, offering visitors an architectural promenade past the displays

slits lies the impossibility of rationalising the completely irrational story of the extermination of an entire people.

In Gehry's design for the Guggenheim, articulation became spectacular. The museum traces the defining lines of the city like an urban sculpture, an icon in the landscape of public domain. Finally, Holl with his Kiasma Museum created a Le Corbusier-style promenade and fashioned the linear and spiral space into a design that speaks of the cultural and social blend of our time.

We witness a transition from the *museum-city* to the *museum-implant* in the '90s. The issues addressed in those years focused on the need for action in residual or marginal areas and a concern with replacement or infill. Attention is given to reclaiming industrial areas and disused sites, preserving them and giving them a new identity and dignity. Near old town centres or on the outskirts, these sites gave the design world great opportunities for exploration through reclamation. Factories possessed an inherent beauty in their

well-worn materials, with the melancholy charm of things once used. Now the museum falls within the definition of a Foucault-style *heterotopia*, that is, it incorporates a multi-layered site that holds numerous interconnected memories.

Because industrial archaeology is less protected than ancient archaeology, interventions can have more of an impact. Industrial buildings are well suited to contemporary art, which frequently interacts with its setting, such as with site-specific pieces. As Duchamp pointed out, art is responsible for environmental relationships. In these new museums, art works, space and matter interpenetrate, making reciprocal cross-references and acquiring new meanings.

'These are the polar opposite of the neutral museums of the Modern Movement. They are full of pathos'



The failure of the museum model as traditionally understood occurred in the '60s. In 1968, when changes in society had prompted new visions of the world, the Institutional Critique movement emerged, formed by artists including Daniel Buren, Marcel Broodthaers, Michael Asher and Hans Haacke, who used a process of criticism to fight museum institutions that were no longer able to accommodate new artistic expression. A disconnect between society and institution ensued, influenced by turmoil in the world.

In recent years, due to the change in how we relate to formerly industrial buildings, they are now being given new life. Implanting is the central theme of this new concept. The idea of implanting was foreshadowed in philosophy, and the *museum-organ* concept was superseded by the *prosthetic*. The *museum-organ* concept reflects the objective ideals of modernity with its one-to-one relationship between form and function, while the *prosthetic*, as analysed by post-structuralist philosophy, is derived

from the idea of hierarchical space as dictated by static functions.

In their 1972 book *Anti-Oedipus*, Post-Structural philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari coined the phrase the 'body without organs', and reconceived the individual as a machine with desires – incoherent, schizophrenic and with no sense of belonging. Desire had replaced the needs with which Freudian psychoanalysis, and by extension the Modern era, was concerned. Some years later, cinema and science fiction started exploring the world of artificial intelligence with its androids and cyborgs, hybrids between man and machine, nature and the manmade – the human body had incorporated technological prostheses inside itself. By the end of the '70s, the film industry, too, had begun to predict the insertion of foreign bodies into humans, from video cassettes to alien beings, as, for example, in Ridley Scott's *Alien* or David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*. From this perspective, the body became vulnerable and was subject to parasites.

11. Inside Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle's Mill City Museum, the decaying brick spaces of the former mill are preserved and presented for the inspection of visitors in glass cubes, not white cubes

12. Brückner & Brückner's Granitmuseum plays a similar game, but in the landscape, by exposing granite as it occurs in nature through glass walls

These concepts eventually came to influence museum architecture. The idea of intruding into places of the past, like a parasite that changes its memory from the inside out, appeared in the mid-'90s. Today industrial areas, old factories, slaughterhouses, correctional institutions and the remains of 17th-century establishments are being transformed into incredible memory machines. These buildings are no longer secular sites or political institutions as much as they are spaces suffering from diverse identities. Like in an alien body, you enter a space that has a life of its own. This intrusion, this change to the body from within, is the most interesting phenomenon of the new museums. We are entering a new paradigm in which the typical body is no longer a homogeneous unit. This new identity includes change, occurrence, incident and chance.

Among the most interesting industrial conversions are the masterplan for the Zollverein Industrial Complex in Essen by OMA, where the visitor follows

14



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the process for producing charcoal; the former London power station transformed into Tate Modern by Herzog & de Meuron; the Kulturspeicher in Würzburg by Brückner & Brückner, a design that uses polished materials to raise awareness of the stone from the old factory; the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis by Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, a transparent machine-like structure within the fire-damaged walls of a factory; and, finally, the transformation of a submarine base at Saint-Nazaire, France by LIN Architects, a mammoth structure that is a reminder of the futility of war. These containers – contaminated, well-worn and tragic – have now been adapted to accommodate contemporary uses based on the principle of interaction between what's on display and the surrounding space. These museums are the polar opposite of the neutral museums of the Modern Movement era. They are full of pathos and permeated by the time that produced such spectacular interiors.

Finally, we come to the most recent developments in museum typology, the *museum-landscape*. Paul Valéry, the French poet and philosopher, wrote on 'The Problem with Museums' in 1923. In it he found the logic that separates an object from its original historical and geographical setting to be senseless, and took issue with the idea of the museum as a space to house dead matter. At the same time Valéry was expressing these ideas, there emerged a transformation in the way certain artists related to the concept of landscape. They started depicting the world within a two-dimensional, intellectual framework, as in the abstract paintings of artists like Kandinsky and Klee, Mondrian and Albers, El Lissitzky and Malevich. The avant-garde of the time paved the way for understanding the inextricable relationship between interior and exterior, between nature and the manmade, and between museum and landscape. Kandinsky's compositions were based on the triad of point, line and surface – the three conceptual, physical and vectorial

13. The original steel frame is on show at the Mill City Museum, Minneapolis: architecture itself becomes a historical exhibit
14. Overlooking the wild Atlantic, Paulo David's Art Centre at Casa das Mudas becomes a manmade cliff-top on the island of Madeira

structures or forces that trigger action. It was Klee, though, who viewed the landscape as a projection of real and imaginary lines, made of textures and fabric.

Today, thanks to abstraction, the relationship between a museum and its context is translated into formal and figural principles, which interpret the landscape as an unveiling project. The idea that connects the museum to landscape originated when environmental protection issues became pressing as a result of land exploitation, technological accidents, pollution of the natural environment by oil tankers and the destruction of the 'green lungs' of the Amazon. And, even more importantly, it is the Land Art movement that grew up in America in the '60s and '70s to which we owe a new vision of the landscape.

'To design the museum-landscape means making the environment central'

15



If we look more closely at these developments, we can gain an understanding of certain lines of research that came together in contemporary museum architecture.

Work by Richard Long, such as *A Line Made by Walking*, or Robert Smithson's *Broken Circle/Spiral Hill* re-established contact with traces of ancient civilisations. From these approaches, we glimpse the seeds of a new way to mediate the memory of places through the use of routes and incidental signs, in a way that is procedural and bound up with nature's infinite time. Although many Land Artists came from Minimalism, Land Art opposed Minimalism's emphasis on serial, geometric monolithic forms. Land artists reclaimed both materials and processes from the land to produce their work. Just as the artist left the studio to work outdoors, so the museum left the confinement of walls for the natural environment.

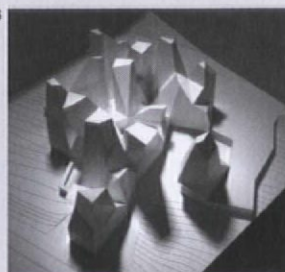
If in the '80s it was the interpretation of a site that prevailed, in the '90s context was understood as a palimpsest, as a

15. Another wild and far-flung location (Sardinia, this time) suggests a sensitive, self-effacing profile for Giovanni Maciocco's Paleobotanical Park

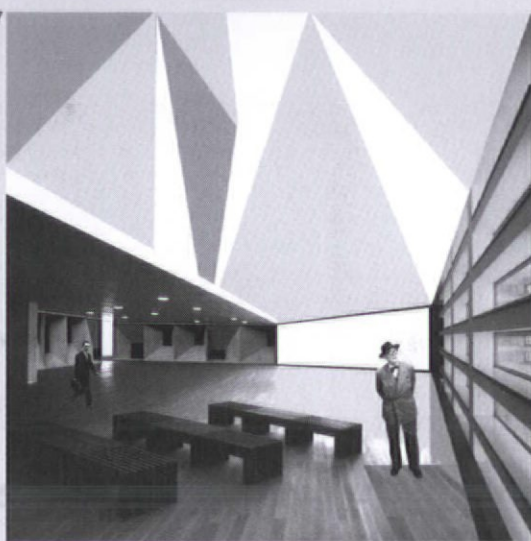
16. Mansilla & Tuñón proposed a group of interrelated crystalline pavilions for their Museum of Cantabria competition entry
17. Inside, the complex geometry of the spires becomes more practical in the display spaces at podium level

place of layers from which followed the interpretation of the museum and the land as being inseparable. This new way of conceptualising context stemmed from Christian Norberg-Schulz's theories of the *genius loci* in which identity lays the foundations of memory and the deity of place stamps a definite character on a place. In this concept, nature is no longer understood as a benign source of contemplation but is, rather, a dynamic space of disequilibrium. To design the *museum-landscape* means making the environment central again. Quarries, mines, bunkers and archaeological sites provide new opportunities for creating places in which memory is understood not just as a cultural product, but as revealed through nature itself. Exemplary are: Brückner & Brückner's Granitmuseum Bayerischer Wald; Paulo David's Arts Centre – Casa Das Mudaz; Tezuka Architects' Matsunoyama Natural Science Museum; Giovanni Maciocco's Anglona Paleobotanical Park; and Mansilla + Tuñón's Museum of Cantabria competition design.

16



17



Excavation is returning as a process of investigation into the origin of life. The archaic remnants in Egypt, houses excavated in northern China, subtractive buildings in Göreme, Turkey that Bernard Rudofsky documented in his book *Architecture without Architects*, are all part of a new aesthetic that links nature with the manmade, memory and landscape. We find a renewed interest in the stone architecture of the past, in erosion and in the construction of dwellings in rock. The idea of the *museum-landscape* addresses a double paradigm: the transformation of abstract signs and environmental art and a reinterpretation of rocky landscapes as evidence of a brooding nature that resists time. The museum now includes the landscape as a fundamental subject that deserves protection in order to correct the mistakes of industrial and military history. It helps us reappraise the environment and to see it as the new challenge for the future.

Translator: Russell Jones
Editor: Carol Raphael

REVIEWS

Playboy mansions

PAUL DAVIES

Playboy Architecture, 1953-79, NAIM/Bureau Europa, Maastricht, until 10 February

Beatriz Colomina has made her name in finding the sex in buildings that others missed, where sexual motivation was thoroughly under wraps. What does she have to say about a whole genre suffused with the stuff? Where sex seems ubiquitous, obligatory, the very subject. There's an exhibition on in Maastricht that tells us.

The subject is *Playboy*. While most of us think *Playboy* is/was (at least originally) about pictures of naked girls, in an interesting reversal Colomina and her research students present *Playboy* as about architecture. *Playboy* propounded an architectural taste that was as essential to the new American male as cologne or TEAC stereos, and this is why I'm asked to go, and perhaps why I'll pick up a *Playboy* kitchen wall clock in the process.

I remember being particularly disappointed by the comparative lack of girls (something its successors would soon put to rights – the market would differentiate) in *Playboy*. It was a more generalist manifesto than you might think. Colomina says almost every architect read it, and she correctly sees a great deal of architecture in it, padding the 'climax' of the centrefold (her term) with those reel-to-reel tape recorders, adverts for cardigans, essays on John Updike and so on. In short, each classic edition ('50s-'70s) is to us, now, both long and dull.

But this exhibition is nicely put together. It is as sharp and neat as Shoreditch SCP. It's put together in predictable zones but there are also difficulties. How should you show old copies of *Playboy*? What exactly should we look at or unscramble?



Above: 'ideologically rather than practically round beds' were the order of the day in *Playboy's* teenage fantasy interiors. Tellingly, here's Hugh Hefner using his for work (note the now obsolete lightbox), rather than the more usual amatory activity

Is it the ads for record decks and Charles Atlas; is it the tan lines on Miss September's torso? Should we just savour the cover art? These days we don't collect ads, we are somehow assimilated into them, and we don't have tan lines – we have Brazilians. Do we save this ephemera whole, preserve it in the museo-monastery, or should we strew it all over the floor and dance naked? When we do either, what's it actually worth?

Thankfully the research trawl is highly engaging (you can download it). We are presented with a variety of digs, duplexes and pads; exotic, rustic or even lunar in character, some of which are caves, some castles, and some cosmopolitan while others are merely inflatable. Some are real, some imaginary and sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. All the time *Playboy* authenticated a swinging lifestyle of crocheted lanterns, fondue and wafting camisoles; there seems always a timbre of back to the earth riches. Buildings can be orange or puce or bright green, but they all have

cocktail cabinets. Some have legs, and ideologically rather than practically round beds.

Playboy aficionados divide roughly into three groups, the disappointed (like me), the furious and those who have thought of *Playboy* as some kind of cultural manifesto. Colomina would have it I'm one of the disappointed because I was stuck outside, for Hef's is the world of the interior, the sanctum, and I wasn't a part of it any more than I was a Rolling Stone (who, of course, reclused best in the Chicago mansion while I rocked, imaginatively, in my suburban bedroom). The lair was the lure.

Colomina's reading makes her part of the second and third critical group, but helpfully so, with only an undercurrent of scolding. She makes strong sense when we understand the girls as wallpaper. One of the annoying things about *Playboy* was clearly and precisely the lack of sexuality offered in its imagery. A second might be that those exhibiting such

sexuality commercially are still almost always vilified. So *Playboy* is/was a con on almost every level – and the disappointed can join with the furious.

So where does that leave your old style enthusiast, those hopeful or established hedonists? Conveniently it leaves Reyner Banham, Tom Wolfe and the whole raft of male American literati (probably even Truman Capote) out in the cold. For the problem with *Playboy* is that it perpetuated an adolescent imagination which is forever let down by encounter with the real thing. It represented the wildest hopes that were inevitably dashed by sense, or the world of the heroic 12-year-old trapped in a Desmond Bagley novel. *Playboy* may have represented a crushing commodification, but most of all it exacerbated tropes embedded in a nascent neoliberal Protestantism consequent of utopian organicism, and fuelled by blatant consumerism.

This was a remarkable achievement, and if you agree with the above paragraph, absolutely reasonable too. The exhibition cannot say very much that is radical as a consequence without upsetting the whole caboose, since this political mix has been inherent to America since the revolution to the point of almost defining it. Our exemplar should be John Lautner's Elrod House (1968). The architect eulogises nature; his work is essence, it's real, it's certainly not a 'style sat on a rock'. But by the time it reaches the pages of *Playboy*, if you squint a little, it looks like the first-class lounge of an international airport full of sex kittens, and it finally ends up as home of Bambi and Thumper in James Bond. There is clearly an opportunity here for a further reversal, that it was not *Playboy*, but the architects who were talking rubbish.

Playboy is now consumed as a retro trinket. It is quaint. What is dismaying, what is radical of course,

is that *Playboy* was a springboard. Hedonism is now a holiday resort. I'm not sure about my *Playboy* kitchen wall light, it's the size of a hub cap, it's plastic chrome, it's pink, and you know what, my first thought is it would be perfect for my 12-year-old niece's bedroom. But while my wife suggests that thought is totally 'inappropriate', she at the same time squeals with joy, she loves it!

So how should we place the academic hyperbole? Perhaps it's that *Playboy* represented some last cultural manifesto before some diaspora, before we all camel-toed it to the properly mucky marketplace.

Through a glass, brightly

WILLIAM JR CURTIS

Carlo Scarpa Venini 1932-1947, Le Stanze del Vetro, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, until 6 January

It is hard to beat Venice in the late autumn with the shadowy silhouettes of Palladio's churches floating in the mist like ghostly ships. The last day of the Biennale was relatively quiet so you could get around quickly. The theme of 'common ground' did not

inspire much architectural invention but amid the usual mediocrity some things stood out, starting with Alvaro Siza's zigzag walls around some trees at the far end of the Arsenale and finishing with Toshiko Mori's beautifully understated installation comparing her own architectural details with those of major architects' works she has accompanied with pavilions, not least the Martin House in Buffalo, NY, by Frank Lloyd Wright, for which she designed the transparent visitors' centre. The Italian Pavilion was one of the few to actually make an exhibition into a coherent space, while a quiet show of black and white photographs by Hélène Binet of Hawksmoor's London churches (curated by Mohsen Mostafavi) introduced a welcome historical perspective. Sverre Fehn's Nordic Pavilion, now half a century old, with its slender concrete beams floating in light over a void, never lets you down, and is a silent reproach to the trends which come and go. Maybe the next Biennale should just be devoted to timeless and beautiful buildings for a change?

More substantial and durable than the sprawling show of the Biennale is a compact and exquisite

Below: the sculptural silhouettes of Carlo Scarpa's glass vessels reveal a very modern sensibility, expressed through an ancient technique



exhibition just across the water in the newly inaugurated Stanze del Vetro or 'Rooms for Glass' of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, just behind the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore. This is devoted to glassware designed by Carlo Scarpa between 1932 and 1947 when he was director of the Venini glassworks in Murano. There are around 300 pieces in all: some one-off creations, others prototypes for more extensive production. They are grouped around 80 different types and techniques so that you can appreciate the difference between lustrous red curved surfaces and aqueous green volumes which are slightly 'corroded' in the process of fabrication in a manner suggesting ancient Roman glass that has been under the sea for centuries. Scarpa had an eye for ornament and precious materials, but was also inspired by nature, and certain of the pieces even resemble exotic marine creatures such as jellyfish speckled with dots. This was an artist with a liquid imagination who could capture light in transparent lenses or in mirrors resembling fragments of mosaic. Some of the pieces are like microcosms distilling Venetian memories.

Beyond matters of decoration and technique, are questions of form, and here Scarpa reveals his mastery of volume, silhouette, profile, line and detail. The glass objects themselves are accompanied in some cases by the artist's sketches which capture the essential spirit of each design usually by evoking the profile. Some of them are jewel-like and opulent, others are classic and restrained in geometry. For his epitaph, Scarpa chose to describe himself as 'a man of Byzantium who came to Venice by way of Greece'. This exhibition of plates, vases, bottles, flasks and pitchers in different colours and forms, suggests that Scarpa was also inspired by the ceramics and pottery of ancient China and Japan. Beyond individual works he aspired to pure types. Working with a style of his own, he sought out timeless shapes. Glass stands between the mineral and liquid worlds and is fused in fire. There is something alchemical about this process which in the Veneto is rooted in traditions lost in the mists of time. As in his architecture, so in his design of objects, Scarpa attempted to tap the underlying streams of the past but in forms of haunting modern abstraction.

Radiant city

GWEN WEBBER

Modernist Planning & the Foundations of Urban Violence in Latin America, lecture by Diane Davis, Professor of Urbanism and Development, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 5 November 2012

During this year's Open House at Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD), one lecture stood out for its bold proposition that Modernist urban planning is responsible for the chronic urban violence in Latin America. As well as approaching a somewhat unpalatable subject, the lecture by Diane Davis, who starts her tenure as Professor of Urbanism and Development this year, also marks a shift in direction for the school itself (which has become increasingly interdisciplinary under Department Head, Rahul Mehrotra).

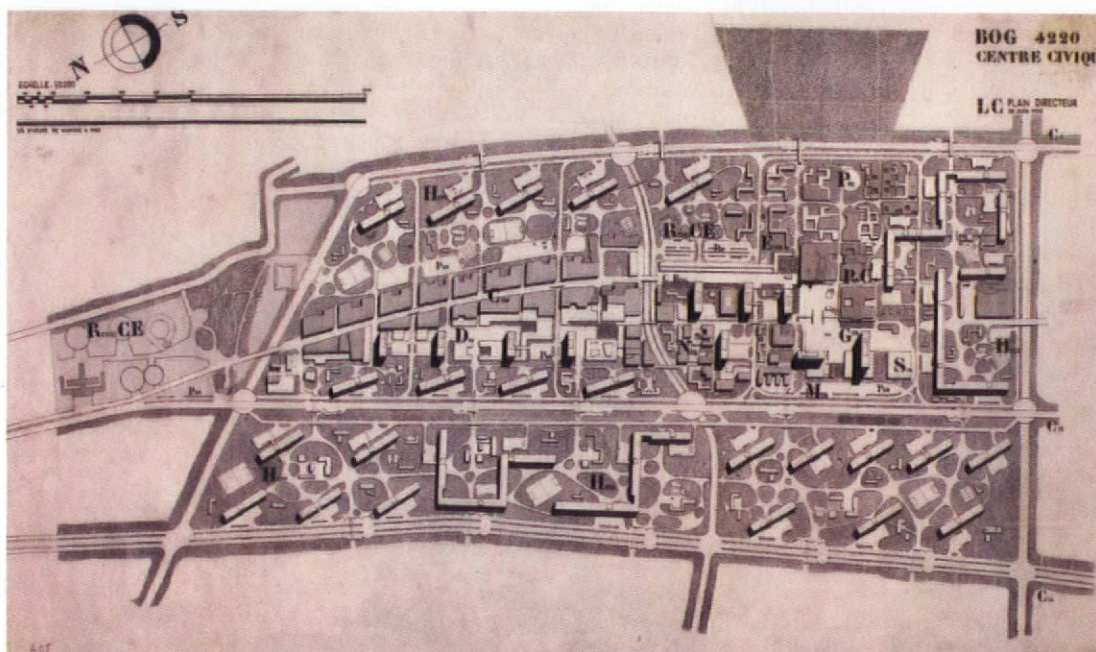
Unravelling the borders between history, anthropology and urbanism, Davis's approach is fundamentally humanitarian and calls for what Josep Lluís Sert might define as life practice: a new model of urban planning that takes into account all facets of society. A sociologist by training, her research builds on the 20 years she has spent investigating urban violence and its link with the increased regulation of space in informal settlements. The most recent case of urban violence in Latin America is the city of Juárez, Mexico, where disorder stems from vigilante



Above: Juárez, Mexico, suffers from perpetual violence and mob rule: a consequence, Diane Davis asserts, of failed Modernist planning
Below: Le Corbusier's unbuilt masterplan for a civic centre in Bogotá is a telling example of dehumanising planning

rule and where, in 2009, the UN was called on to facilitate a peace process originally designed for wartime. There are, however, a number of such conflicts unfolding around cities in countries that industrialised quickly and callously. The exponential growth of informal settlements – in some Latin American countries these make up a third of the urban area – that we have come to accept as part of the landscape of developing cities is, according to Davis, an inadvertent outcome of the implementation of Modernist urban planning during the 1920s through to the 1970s.

Her focus on spatial and social causality speaks to a specific type of Modernism, characterised by efficiency and rationalisation evolved in Europe in the first half of the 20th century by the likes of Le Corbusier,



Paul Lester Wiener and Sert of Town Planning Associates (TPA), and also in the principles laid down by CIAM (International Congress of Modern Architecture). Davis argues that the colonisation of urban space in Latin American cities such as São Paulo, Caracas, Mexico City and Medellín, was driven by the belief that Modernism was a force for social and economic change and a fitting symbol of progress. The creation of identifiable urban zones within existing cities as well as the consumption of untamed areas to build integrative infrastructure as part of a larger project of employment, instead marginalised people and forcibly displaced the poorer groups in society. Where the government failed to offer security and represent all its constituents, the regulation of space was replaced with profiteers, corrupt police and drug rings.

Davis's assertion that this is an unintended fall-out of Modernism is an important distinction as it underscores the significance of social, political and economic factors in the development of urban environments relevant to today's budding architects and planners. Although ostensibly calling out Modernism's heroes, in actuality her work lays part of the responsibility of contemporary concerns of urban conflict and violence firmly at the feet of a variety of actors; decision-makers, commercial stakeholders and the government.

As Davis posits, the ideas that had been occupying the minds and sketchpads of European architects at the time were yet to be tested at this large scale. 'You have to have a sensibility of every dimension, not just [a place's] culture and topography, but also its institution and economy,' said Davis. 'You can have the best ideas but if you don't understand how to implement them, they fall.' One such example is TPA's Medellín Masterplan, during the 1950s, which was the city's second notable planning effort of the century and was largely abandoned due to the repercussions of political and financial instability.

Suggesting an uncompromising critique, Davis's position on Modernism is far from black and white, however. Citing Sert's cultural heritage as a defining factor in his relatively sensitive approach to urban design, Davis concludes that cultural nuance is vital to the future

of cities and an understanding of a place's socio-political fabric and economy provides a canvas for flexibility, relevance and progress. Davis's challenge to students and practitioners, as premised in the course she has begun to teach at Harvard, is to learn from the flaws in Modernism's best-laid plans, not just gild them in gold.

George's pet Goth

JOSEPH RYKWERT

James Wyatt, 1746-1813; Architect to George III, John Martin Robinson, Yale University Press, £50

In popular memory, Wyatt is the first British architect to die in a traffic accident. Besides that, he is remembered for the legendary burning of his first major building, the Oxford Street Pantheon, only 20 years after its very successful completion, as well as the collapse of another masterpiece, the wild Gothic folly, William Beckford's Fonthill 'Abbey' a few years after his death.

In deconstructing the myth, John Martin Robinson has attempted to reinstate James Wyatt not only as the architect to George III – which the subtitle of the book proclaims him – and the King's cosseted favourite, even friend, but also as the great architect of the generation between the Chambers/Adam and the Nash/Soane one.

The Wyatts were respectable, upper-yeoman Staffordshire, though James moved easily into noble company as a teenager and was taken to Italy where he spent six years – first in Venice, in Consul Smith's neo-Palladian circle, then in Rome where he fell under the spell of Piranesi. The older man seems to have been charmed by the affable, talented – already accomplished – Englishman. To that personal charm of his and to his generosity there are many witnesses (including the King) on whom Robinson can draw.

That combination of personal attraction and precocious ability allowed him a triumphant return to Britain to an instant, fabulous commission, the design of that Oxford Street Pantheon, which – as long as it stood – was London's most fashionable assembly, the winter surrogate (it opened in January, 1772) for Vauxhall and Ranelagh. The project was instantly celebrated and

the drawings exhibited at the Royal Academy before the building opened and Wyatt was elected an ARA. That success even prompted the Empress Catherine, always agog with the latest fashions, to invite him to St Petersburg: however, a number of notables (including three Dukes), worried in case Catherine did not allow him back, offered him an annuity to refuse the invitation while at the same time surfeiting him with prestigious commissions.

This led to an inevitable conflict, since the architects who dominated fashionable London at the time were the Adam brothers. James's elder brother Samuel – builder, engineer, contractor – who may have been the go-between in getting his brother the Pantheon commission, had earlier been employed by the Adam brothers, notably at Kedleston. He insinuated his younger sibling into the work, and to inveigle some of the craftsmen whom the Adams had assembled and trained to work for him on the Pantheon. Moreover, by his election to the Academy, Wyatt took his place in Sir William Chambers' camp against the Adams whom Chambers had always managed to keep out of that institution.

The Adams reciprocated. In the publication of their *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, they accused an anonymous contemporary of plagiarism in the process of refuting a similar slur on themselves. And it is here, I think, that Robinson's partisanship leads him a little astray in maintaining his hero's superiority to those rivals. They came into direct contrast and even conflict in Portman Square, where Wyatt, who was doing a number of houses nearby, was

Below: Wyatt's Oxford Street Pantheon was a smash hit in its day, lauded by Walpole as 'the most beautiful edifice in England'. Turner's watercolour shows the aftermath of the fire that destroyed it in 1792, only 20 years after opening





Left: Wyatt's gigantic edifice for author, exile and recluse William Beckford. Fonthill Abbey collapsed several times during construction and was later demolished
Below: Wyatt was as rascally as his client was reclusive, and overstretched his considerable talents

commissioned to do a substantial one for Lady Home while the Pantheon was being finished. She was, by all accounts, a disagreeable enough lady; Wyatt may have reacted by an early display of the characteristics that were to be the bane of his career: he was unreliable, unpunctual, dilatory. Miffed, Lady Home went back to the Adams, who (perhaps stimulated, as Robinson suggests, by the rivalry) produced one of the most splendid interiors of their career, an arrangement of a subtlety and ingenuity which Wyatt would never rival. And indeed, the garden facade of the house, which Robinson – rightly, I think – attributes to Wyatt, seems (to me, at any rate) flabby, diffused and quite unworthy of the interiors.

The Home House fiasco first shows the disadvantages under which Wyatt laboured all his life: he was not only disorganised but had a short attention span. Although a fanatically hard worker – he even had a desk installed in his coach so that he could go on working while travelling (though that was not the coach in which he was killed, as I had once fondly imagined) – he would start enthusiastically on a project and then lose interest. He kept clients waiting – even the King on some occasions. He was a hopeless manager of his business, so that although he died bankrupt (and a subscription had to be raised at once to tide his wife over the worst), he was in fact owed £20,000 in disputed and unpaid accounts.

Several of these were institutional. By the time he died, Wyatt had accumulated a vast number of official appointments. He was Surveyor-General of the Office of Works,

to Somerset House and Westminster Abbey, Deputy Surveyor to Woods and Forests, Architect to the Ordnance – which produced perhaps the most buildings: Sandhurst, Woolwich Barracks and Military Academy – and much else; very briefly and quite disastrously, he was President of the Royal Academy.

All these activities would not fit easily into any narrative. The author has treated them half-thematically, half-chronologically: origins and the Italian stay, the Pantheon, rivalry with the Adams (which gets a whole chapter of its own), Wyatt's establishment and working methods, the Early English houses, the Irish practice (by correspondence), industry and design (the most original chapter – particularly in its detailed working of the connection with Matthew Boulton and Mrs Coade of the artificial stone), furniture, mausoleums and churches, Oxford, Classic (which Wyatt himself called Grecian – Classic had not yet assumed its 'modern' meaning), and Gothic; then, separately, Gothic country houses and cathedrals, Royal and public works, the Regency style and the – sad – end. The structure does not really help Robinson to tell his tale fluently – and occasionally prompts him into redundancy.

In Oxford, where so many academics held informed architectural views and opinions, Wyatt built his most 'Grecian' work, the Radcliffe Observatory, an emulation of the recently published Tower of the Winds in Athens, arguably his most refined and antiquarian project. And it was in Oxford, too, that work on the chapel of New College introduced him to the problem of restoring Gothic

buildings and this led to further activity on castles and on cathedrals – Windsor and Salisbury most prominently – which earned him much (and some of it quite undeserved) opprobrium in the generations which followed. But it also introduced him to designing in the Gothic manner or style, in which he quickly became an expert, and in which he was abetted by the prime 'Goth', Horace Walpole, who had long been an admirer. He built a number of Gothic houses: Wycombe Abbey, Lee Priory, Norris Castle on the Isle of Wight, and others.

A little disappointingly Fonthill and William Beckford, its patron, are treated as a Gothic byway. Beckford was a brilliant, polyglot collector and man of letters, the heir to a vast fortune built on Caribbean sugar and the slave trade. Wyatt had worked for William's father on his opulent Georgian mansion, which (against his advice) William had pulled down to replace it with a 330-foot cruciform Gothic pile dominated by a central octagonal lantern, 130 feet high (which collapsed for a first time during construction – 'the crash and the loss sound magnificent in the Newspaper', Beckford wrote: 'I neither heard the one nor feel the other'), but his fortune did decline in the wars and with the fall in the price of sugar. He sold the old house and the gems of his collection and in 1822 had to sell Fonthill. The defective foundations of the tower collapsed finally three years later (the carelessly supervised builder confessed on his deathbed – just before the event) and Fonthill has been a ruin ever since. But by then Wyatt had been dead for some years and his end had been, as I suggested earlier, brutal. Returning from a site visit with a satisfied client, their carriage overturned in a traffic jam. Wyatt's head struck the roof and he was killed instantly.

His many merits and his varied achievements outweigh his many faults and Robinson seems determined to be just about both – which is just as well, since his Wyatt will certainly be the Wyatt for his generation and some following ones as well – and he is an eloquent advocate. Perhaps it is a good friend of Wyatt's who should have the last word: Samuel Pepys Cockerell said of him that 'he possessed infinite taste and ingenuity – but he did not think'.



Rearranging the deckchairs

LYNDA RELPH-KNIGHT

Dr Susan Weber Gallery,
Victoria & Albert Museum, London

It's hard to believe it has taken the V&A 160 years to launch a gallery dedicated to furniture, given its origins in William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. But the end of 2012 saw the opening of the Dr Susan Weber Gallery – named after its sponsor – with a focus on furniture-making techniques.

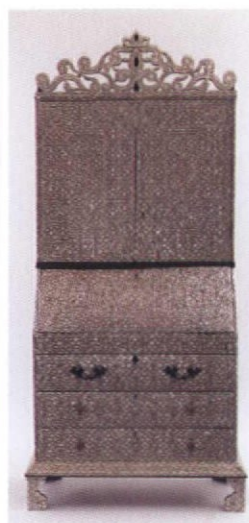
You'd have to be a serious furniture fan to trek up to the sixth floor of Aston Webb's 1909 building where the long narrow gallery is tucked away at the end of the museum's extensive ceramics section. Nor is the space, designed by architects NORD as a monochrome backdrop to the exhibits, a place of pilgrimage for contemporary design buffs. It doesn't offer the catalogue of creative celebrity you might find in a gallery in Milan, or at a design art fair. Curators Nick Humphrey and Leela Meinertas

have instead addressed processes of furniture-making over the ages.

So, while the gallery features tiny 'cameos' of acknowledged stars like Frank Lloyd Wright and Eileen Gray, the less familiar Orkney joiner David Kirkness, who blended straw and wood in his Arts and Crafts pieces, gets equal billing. Balancing the crafty charm of Kirkness is exquisite mechanical furniture by 18th-century German makers Abraham and David Roentgen, who currently also have a retrospective at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, among specialists in lacquering and the like.

Most exhibits are set around the perimeter of the gallery in 16 sections categorised by fabrication techniques: for example, Veneering, Marquetry and Inlay; Cutting Sheet (Jane Atfield's 1992 RCP2 chair made of recycled plastic bottles); and Casting Liquids (Verner Panton's 1960 Stacking chair). The centrepiece is a fairly random chronological display along the spine of gallery.

All exhibits are from the museum's collection and haven't been shown publicly at the V&A before, which means many obvious designers and



pieces are missing. So the gallery will more likely inspire furniture designers and makers than attract members of the public in droves.

That said, there are pieces by 20th-century Italian design giants like Gio Ponti and Joe Colombo, alongside more recent work by British stars Jasper Morrison and Matthew Hilton and London-based Ron Arad. And, in the spirit of evolving process, there is a section given over to digital making, represented by Industrial Facility's conventional-looking Branca chair, 2010, by robots, and the Fractal table by Platform Wertel Oberfell, 2007 – an early triumph for 3D printing.

There is also a horseshoe-shaped piece by London-based German designer Gitta Gschwendtner, entitled Chair Bench and playfully honouring six seminal chairs in the gallery. But the overall impression is one of traditional, crafted furniture dating back to the 15th century.

That is particularly so if you enter the gallery via the ceramics section. Facing you is the 18th-century carved mahogany Master's Chair from the Joiners' Company. By contrast, if you enter from the other end you walk in on Wooden Heap, a walnut storage unit created this year by Swiss designer Boris Dennler to resemble a pile of wooden strips.

The gallery's emphasis on process is in line with the curatorial thinking behind the V&A's hugely successful *The Power of Making* and *Heatherwick Studio* shows over the past year. It is also attuned to the attitude of the new wave of makers in Hackney whose experimentation with materials and form is broadening the scope of UK design and will be a valuable resource for them as they update traditional crafts.

For the rest of us, though, the real breakthrough has little directly to do with furniture. It is the use of digital technology to enrich visitors' knowledge and experience through interactive Materials Tables and exhibit descriptors. Created by digital agency All of Us, these are a welcome departure for the V&A, which has used technology successfully for one-off shows – such as Cosgrove Hall animations for the 2006 Leonardo da Vinci show designed by Stanton Williams – but been slow to adopt it to explain its permanent collection.

The V&A plans to evolve the furniture gallery. Let's hope it means more focus on newer technologies not just in how things are made, but in how they are presented.



Above: mother-of-pearl inlay adorns this intricate 18th-century cabinet originally crafted in either the Philippines or Mexico
Left: manmade and modular, a storage unit by the Eames brings a functional sensibility to modern furniture design

PEDAGOGY

University of Bath, UK

MATTHEW BARAC

Although still early evening, it feels like midnight. The winter sun retreated hours ago, and the Alison and Peter Smithson-designed Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering is, along with much of the university campus on a hill above Bath, shrouded in cloud. The call has gone out to the studios and the bar – where final year undergraduates are rubbing tired eyes while treating themselves to some well-earned refreshment – inviting students back to the crit room for the jury's verdict. It is the culmination of the eight-week Basil Spence competition in which architecture and engineering students join forces to design, in groups of up to five, a small public building. The competition

endeavours to promote teamwork and problem-solving, and to test the design, as it evolves, through the rigorous application of criticism.

'Too often, criticism of what you've done is conflated with criticism of who you are. At Bath what we teach is that you are not your work,' explains Alex Wright, Head of Architecture. The school, well-known for producing graduates equipped to address the matter-of-fact reality of making buildings, champions a pedagogical approach that draws inspiration from Karl Popper's critical rationalism. Popper's evolutionary model of scientific method has been applied, notably by the late Michael Brawne – a professor at Bath for more than a decade – to architectural design. The cyclical process of generating a design follows three key stages: problem formulation which may be translated as defining the brief,

I&2. Inspired by sculptor Elisabeth Frink's wish to have her work displayed in natural light and changing weather, the student team of Ashby, Smith, Cranfield, Peck and Hughes devised a vertical sculpture park. An outdoor pathway of terraces staggers around the tower, offering gradual retreat from the city. A central core offers more direct routes to the gallery spaces. This scheme won the Basil Spence competition in which Bath's architecture and engineering students join forces to design a building

tentative theories or initial sketches, and finally the application of criticism in order to test trial solutions, arming the designer with findings that can be used to iteratively refine the brief.

But if criticism is to be useful then it must be constructive: constructively given and constructively received. As many argue, the crit tradition encourages students to become thick skinned and take a position, often a defensive one. Architecture students everywhere are known for their enthusiasm and commitment. And while passion is important, Wright argues, it does not assure excellence: 'When you throw yourself into your work, you make yourself vulnerable; this vulnerability can undermine a student's capacity for objectivity.'

Interdisciplinary group work offers opportunities to negotiate boundaries between professions



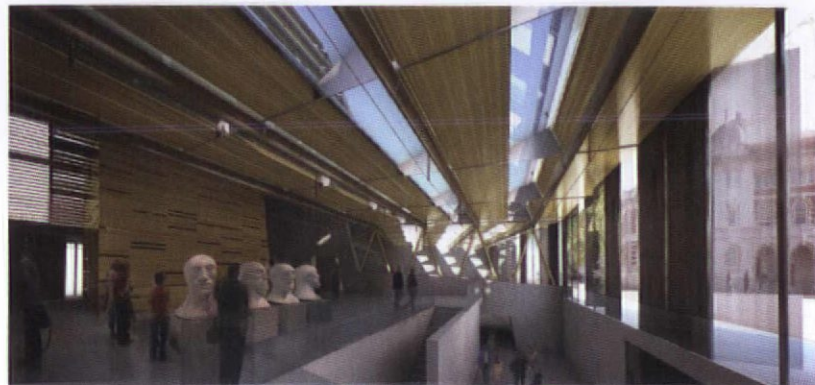
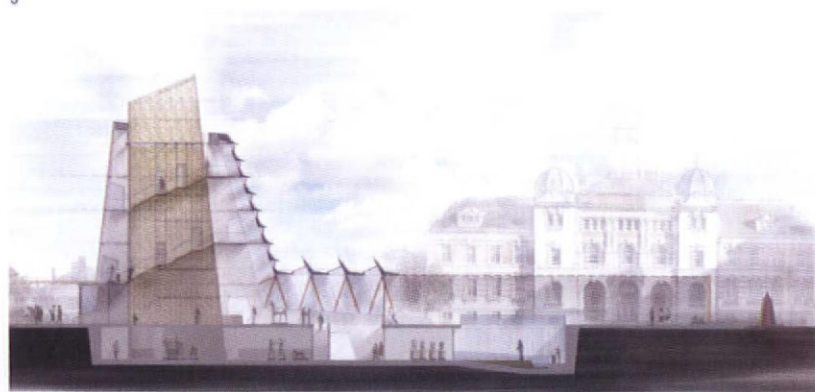
while collectively conceptualising a project. Tutorial input, from engineers and architects, acousticians and landscape designers, provides students with sounding boards against which to test their capacity to be constructively critical members of a design team. Together, the BSc and MArch (RIBA Parts 1 and 2) combine academic and practice-based learning across a 'thin sandwich' course lasting six years. Six-month placements, in years two, three and five, build on the first year in which architecture and engineering students are taught together. For Martin Gledhill, who leads the fourth year studio, dialogue between disciplines is vital. 'It demystifies the false divide between abstract and technical thinking.'

In the last cycle of the Basil Spence competition students were invited to design a gallery for the work of British artist Elisabeth

3&4. In Balmer, Buckingham, Evans and Hopkins' Basil Spence submission, the practical functions of the gallery are expressed in the relationship between a performative envelope and a central timber core, which acts both as storage and a protective transporter of art works to gallery spaces. The louvred facade controls light, air and temperature

Frink, perhaps best known for her bronze horses. The winning team – Zara Ashby, Toby Smith, Mark Cranfield, Thomas Peck and Saleema Hughes – proposed a vertical sculpture park, a twisting stack of external terraces balanced one on top of another. A meandering Escher-esque staircase winds up the structurally adventurous tower; a more direct ascent is offered by a lift that is in itself an exhibition space, displaying lithographs and prints. The students benefited from both the problem-solving logic of the learning model and the disciplinary mix of the team. An initial concept, driven by environmental and poetic responses to Frink's wish for her work to be viewed under natural light and in changing weather, led to structural and architectural challenges: how to hold up a tower of terraced landscapes, and plan access and circulation around it.

Integration of the practicalities of making into the creative process is at the heart of a design by Charlotte Balmer, Philip Buckingham, Lloyd Evans and Matthew Hopkins whose gallery aims to preserve and display Frink's legacy. The cross section, which positions a soaring timber-clad box within a performative envelope, acknowledges environmental and structural concerns. A roof with giant spans is articulated by louvres and screens that modify the light and, by regulating solar gain and airflow, control the ambient temperature. Gledhill counters the suggestion that this project, or any other, prioritises technical competence over poetic inspiration. 'We encourage purposeful engagement with aesthetic concerns, but not at the cost of separating the artistry of design from its material, structural, and environmental dimensions.'



REPUTATIONS

Aldo van Eyck

HANS IBELINGS

Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck would probably have disagreed with this characterisation, but he was in many ways a contrarian (in that sense he was in good company with Team X, whose other members were not exactly the most accommodating personalities either).

A big part of his life was going against the grain, being in opposition to the mainstream, whatever that was: mainstream Modernism, mainstream CIAM, mainstream Team X or mainstream Postmodernism (the latter most famously in his Rats, Posts and Other Pests rant at the RIBA in 1981). The last time I spoke with him on the phone, about a year before he died, typifies his contrarian character. He complained about an article on one of his latest works, the Court of Audit in The Hague, written by a then-colleague of mine. Van Eyck contended that if every single sentence of this article was reversed, it would have been closer to reality, adding that he very well understood that someone could claim that Copenhagen was the capital of Germany but that did not mean it was true. He reiterated his opinion in a lengthy letter to the magazine that had published it, *Archis*, which was fun to read – if not for my colleague.

Van Eyck's oppositional nature can be seen in the light of his lifelong architectural interest in relativity, reciprocity and what he called dual phenomena, which could only exist with their opposite 'without resorting to the arbitrary accentuation of either one at the expense of the other'. While in his architecture he carefully avoided the one-directional, the centralised, and the definite – he had a deep aversion to monumentality – his rhetorical power was such that he tended to make rather absolute statements,

if not for their own sake, then to oppose equally absolute ideas of others.

Van Eyck built little and wrote much. As with many architects that write, his work is very much judged by the criteria and standards he formulated himself (even in a supposedly illiterate culture such as architecture, words clearly do have power). It would be unfair to say he was a better writer than architect. However, the richness of his ideas, his erudition and even his artistic worldview are more easily conveyed and appreciated through his written work than in his architecture. His designs seem somehow underwhelming compared with his vivid, lucid and poetic writing, which even 30 to 60 years later is still strikingly relevant. While some of the early texts have a preachy side, with all the desperation and hope for salvation connected to sermons, many of his later lectures and articles are more polemical, sharp and witty.

It is not accidental that there is an impressive biography of Van Eyck, written by Francis Strauven, who pays more attention to his life and his ideas than to his designs and buildings, and that there is an equally impressive tome of Van Eyck's written work, *Writings: Collected Articles and Other Writings*, edited by Strauven and Vincent Ligtelijn. What's missing, though, is a comprehensive monograph of his architecture, and one could wonder, bearing the preeminence of his writing in mind, if it is likely to appear soon.

Like many well-known architects, Van Eyck's reputation as a designer is mainly based on an early masterpiece, the Municipal Orphanage in Amsterdam (1955-60), built near the 1928 Olympic Stadium. Completed during his Team X years, the building is a programmatic complex of interrelated structures: an ideal city in microcosm. Early works of architects often have a novelty that

'Aldo van Eyck was always going against the grain, opposing the mainstream, whatever that was'

later works evidently lack. And since those later works cannot reproduce a similar shock of the new, they often fail to attract the same attention from colleagues and architectural critics, who are always on the look out for novelty. Moreover in architectural criticism and historiography there is often a process of repetition at work that reaffirms the importance of what is already considered important and hence leads to an overvaluation of early works, because they will be mentioned over and over again (just as is happening here, by the way).

But it could be contended that the early works of Van Eyck are by far the most interesting. Next to the Orphanage stands one of his later projects, a speculative office building from the 1990s, which is the outcome of complex negotiation. In the mid-'80s the Orphanage was threatened with demolition but eventually preserved thanks to a successful international protest, initiated by Herman Hertzberger. As a result, the building was saved, and to compensate the developer, he got permission to build on the adjacent plot. The Van Eycks – in later years Aldo's wife Hannie was credited as designer as well – got the commission for both the renovation of the Orphanage, and for the new Tripolis office building (which has recently undergone an elegant interior renovation by Moriko Kira). The constraints of commercial real estate make it difficult for any architect to excel in this field, but even if that is taken into consideration, Tripolis obviously doesn't give the same thrill as the Orphanage. The colourful facades of Tripolis – which follow Van Eyck's adage that the rainbow is his favourite colour – cannot hide that it is less rich than the brownish-greyish Orphanage that reveals the power of place and occasion Van Eyck's early work had to offer. Even the many playgrounds he designed while working for the Amsterdam

Aldo van Eyck 1918-1999

Education

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich

Key buildings

Municipal Orphanage, Amsterdam (1955-60)

Pastoor van Ars church, The Hague (1963-69)

Sonsbeek sculpture pavilion, Arnhem (1965-66)

Quote

'Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more'



PETER STRAIN

municipality in the immediate postwar years, before he got the commission for the Orphanage, show his architectural poetry, although these projects are almost without any built substance.

Many of Van Eyck's most exciting projects stem from his younger years, from the playgrounds in the 1940s, to his two other masterpieces from the mid-1960s: a pavilion for a 1966 sculpture exhibition in Arnhem (recently reconstructed in the gardens of the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo), and a church that is both spatially and liturgically the most spectacular 20th-century ecclesiastical building in the Netherlands, the Pastoor van Ars church in the Hague (1963-69). His later work has never surpassed the evocative force of the work he produced in this period.

During the construction of this church Van Eyck started teaching at the Delft Technical University, where he remained until the early '80s. He inspired a whole generation of Dutch architects with his convincing pleas to counter the dominant functionalist Modernism of the 1960s with a humane alternative of small-scale, labyrinthine intimacy, and to challenge the arid rationalism by a more imaginative approach.

At the end of his life he witnessed a revival, with a large presentation, mainly of his early work, in the 1997 Kassel Documenta X. The exhibition, which he designed, was shown a year later in the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam. For its opening there he wrote a statement which reveals the tragic fate of the long shadow cast by his early work: 'My position has not changed since the '60s, '70s and '80s, nor for that matter has the overall situation, other than that it has worsened. So falling back on the past was all right with me – in Kassel as it is here in Rotterdam. The truth is that the entire world of art and architecture has failed to contribute in any substantial way since, let's say 1968.'



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Product review



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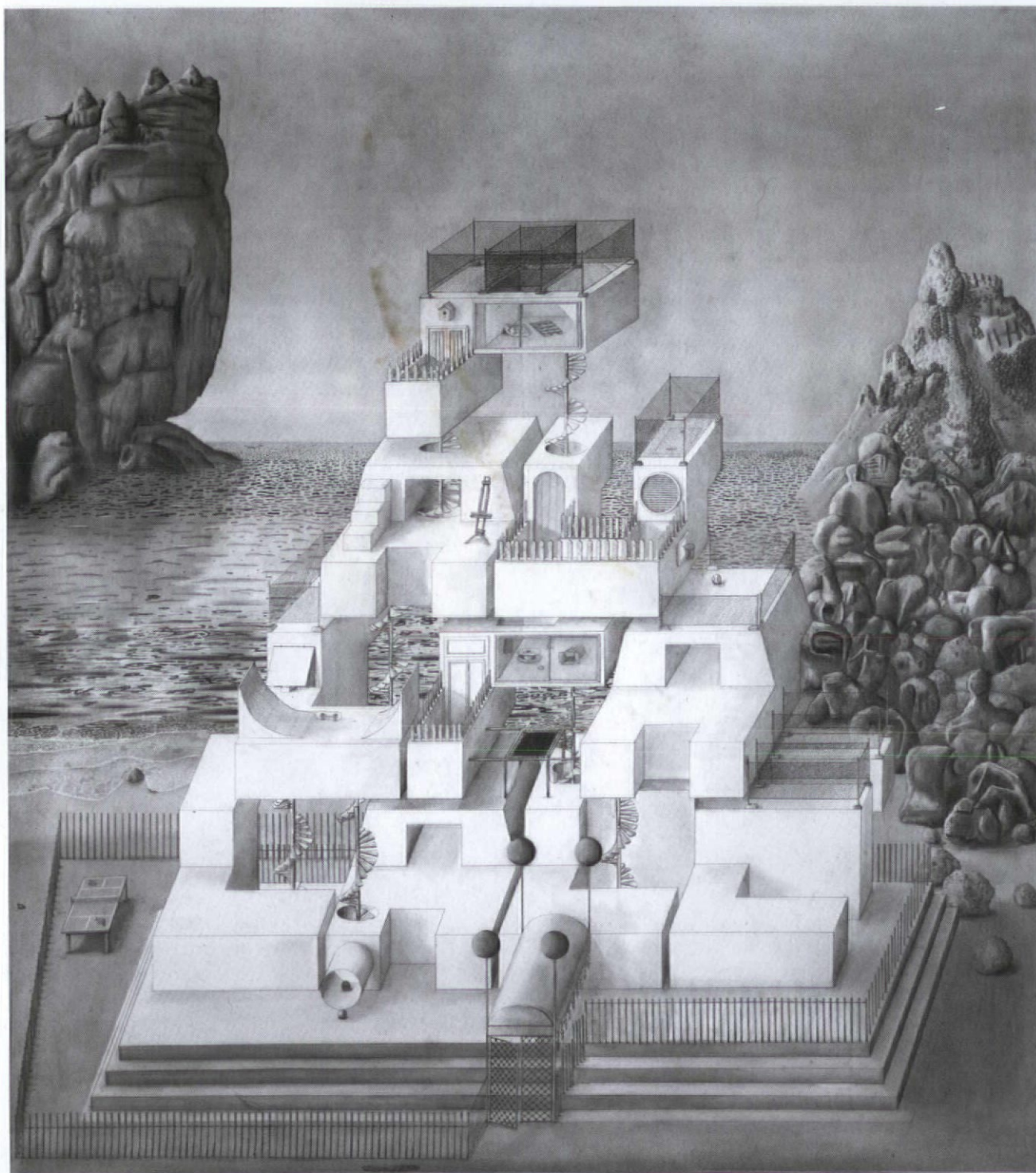
generates custom designs according to the specific needs of architects and interior designers for both residential and commercial projects. The range includes pendants, chandeliers and wall fixtures, as well as floor, table, shelf and desk lamps. All products and designs are compatible with European Harmonised Standards. www.kozo-lamp.com



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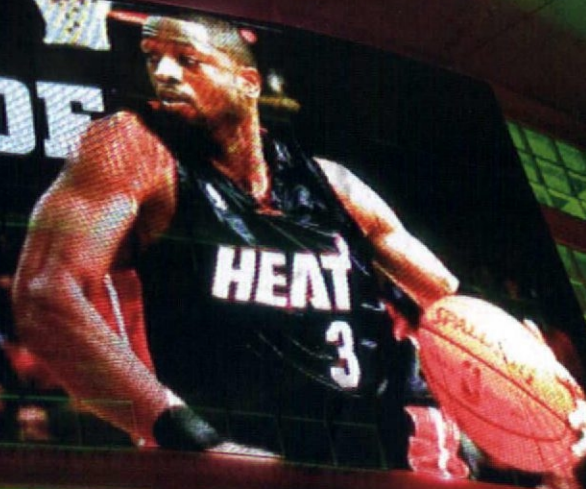


Detail of *Paul's Palace* (1996) by Turner Prize nominee Paul Noble. The artist's house is visualised as a grimly antisocial gated palace in the fictional Nobson Newtown. Plug-in elements spell out the title, their chilly Escherian geometry contrasting with the Ernst-style rocks

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