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Is Bigger Better? How Art Museum Expansions Impact Institutional Mission

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IS BIGGER BETTER?
How Art Museum Expansions
Impact Institutional Mission

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master's Degree in Museum Professions
Seton Hall University
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L INTRODUCTION

A soaring structure, resembling a bird taking flight is rising on Lake Michigan's shores, where it has become a wing of the Milwaukee Art Museum, designed by Santiago Calatravo, adding 125,000 square feet at a cost of \$100 million. Then, there is a trio of gallery pavilions, costing \$90 million that will "float" above a reflecting pond at the new Museum of Modern Art of Fort Worth, designed by Tadao Ando. The Denver Art Museum's expansion, designed by Daniel Libeskind, plans for a new 146,000 square foot \$110 million building, the first major expansion since 1971. The Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, the oldest art museum in the United States is embarking on its first expansion in 30 years, designed by Ben Van Berkel and Caroline Bos. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston has added an \$83 million new building, designed by Rafael Moneo, making the institution the country's 6th largest art museum in the United States, a leap from its previous place as 30th. The Museum of Modern Art's \$650 million expansion designed by Toshio Taniguchi will increase museum space to about 630,000 square feet and a \$678 million shimmering Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim is being planned for the waterfront on lower Manhattan. The 40 story, 550,000-square-foot museum would be ten times the size of the museum's upper east side headquarters, designed by the other Frank.

Any which way they can, American art museums are expanding. Play the proverbial dart game with a map of the United States and, chances are, you'll land near a city whose museum has expanded, is expanding or plans to expand. In the constant chase for money, and status, museums across the nation are striving to grow. A wide but no means complete survey by the New York Times discovered nearly 50 museums across the

United States are engaged in designing, fund-raising for or constructing new wings, or structures. The cost of all these projects is around three billion dollars. Naturally, the boom in the economy of the past decade has propelled these projects, but even in the current shakier climate, most museums say their plans are going forward, and new ones keep being announced. Malcolm Rodgers, the director of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston remarks, "If you're not changing or expanding, you're standing still."¹

Expansion, in general, has become a rather contentious issue. In many if not all cases, the notion "bigger is better," has been applied to the art museum. Forcing the issue of scale has very real architectural, spatial, and experimental implications exacerbating the museum's need for flexibility. Will private contemplation and reverie still be possible? How does one prevent the large museum from resembling an airport, where "flow management" and security are the foremost priorities?

Bursting at the seams, museums, today, occupy a more imposing position in the community than they have in the past, socially and economically as well as culturally. As an urban cure-all, art museums have insinuated themselves into local economies by attracting tourists.

Much like a suburban mall, the museum has evolved into a place not just to see but a place to be seen. As architectural historian Victoria Newhouse proclaimed: "Shopping, eating, performances, along with fund-raising and urban renewal now vie with preservation and exhibition as museum mandates."²

Attracting larger audiences, museums are increasing their capacity to provide both education and entertainment as they compete with the “Edutainment” centers and theme parks created by major corporations like Disney and Sony. Toppling art from its pedestal and making it more accessible has had far-reaching repercussions as culture now shares space with commerce. Institutions find themselves forced to reconcile the competing functions of marketing and mission. One result has been the transformation of the museum’s functional design, its physical presence—a transformation of museum architecture itself. Newspaper reporters inform readers that more people go to museums than to sports events. Museums have recorded an increase of almost two hundred million visitors in ten years—an estimated 870 million in 2000. The latest architectural plans reflect how radically museums have changed since the 1890s, when the core experience was a contemplative one, between the viewer and a work of art.

What makes museums so popular? Is it the spectacle of their often dramatic architecture? Or is it their seemingly anachronistic quality of dealing exclusively with the physical reality of objects at a time when we have become obsessed with the ephemeral nature of virtual reality?

The 21st-century museum reflects our more pluralistic, democratic, questioning freer society, that is market driven and capitalistic. Today’s increasingly visitor-filled museums have become more and more bottom line oriented and more dependent on bringing in larger audiences. Will the need to draw people in to fill these expansions, at any cost, result in neglect of the core mission? How much will the art museum’s rush to modernize itself threaten its scholarly mission? When the new skylights go in, will the

mission fly out the window? Or will the new architecture of these expanded settings, creating environments which offer gains in public access, comfort, and flexible spaces in exhibition, empower it to fulfill its mission, and enable it to respond to new ideas and opportunities?

The demands of leisure-time mass audiences have transformed museum architecture. In the 1930s, architect Philip Johnson envisioned the museum as

“the most beautiful and useless building in the world, small galleries, dark, cool, and gorgeous...I mean a lot of wasted space. One should enter a museum up steps and...be impressed and rather afraid to enter.”³

If in the past the architect could approach museum design as a chance to make monumental statements, market forces now contest this activity. The new leisure museums are multi-functional, multi-tasking spaces accommodating varied consumer needs. Today’s architects are called on to develop a new architecture that assimilates and composes the museum’s multiplying personalities. These priorities not only challenge museum architects, they challenge the core identity of the museum itself.

II. FROM AESTHETIC MONUMENT TO THE NEW MUSEUM:

Museums, at least as we know them, are primarily a creation of the late 18th-century, although the term, *museum* harks back to the Hellenistic origin of the institution as the abode of the muses, a place of learning and inspiration. The notion of the museum, of course, stands in stark contrast to the *Kunstkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities, of the Renaissance, where odd and wondrous rarities were jumbled together on the walls and ceilings, cupboards and drawers of one or two rooms. Their purpose was to surprise and delight.

Duty began to outweigh delight with the creation of the public museum, a product of the Enlightenment's self-imposed obligation to instruct. Specialization and classification brought a didactic approach to art, which was newly expected to instruct rather than primarily to please. Together with a faith in art's ability to improve humankind, they developed a sense of public entitlement to culture. Among the first of many rulers throughout Europe to open their collections were the electors of Saxony. In Paris in 1750 part of the royal collections was made available to the citizenry for three hours twice a week in rooms arranged for this purpose in the Luxembourg Palace. Plans had been under discussion for several years to transform the Louvre's Grand Galerie into a public museum. The Revolution allowed the project to be realized, and in 1793 the Louvre became the world's first national collection.

Napoleon made Paris the cultural center of his empire by robbing other countries of their art. His museum held masterworks collected as war booty with the claim that the countries of their origin were past their prime.

Napoleon's museum became such an attraction for all of Europe, that the states of the alliance demanded the return of their stolen treasures to exhibit in their own public museums. The Prussian monarch, Frederick William III decided to make funds available for the construction of the Altes Museum designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, built opposite the monarch's residence and opened to the public in 1829. Schinkel's columned foyer was interpreted as an invitation by the donor for all to enter. The monarch transferred 348 paintings from his palaces to the museum.⁴

Making art accessible to the public in palaces adapted for it was soon standard procedure. 19th-century museums imitated the palaces for which some of the art had been made. Neoclassicism was the style of the time. Skylit galleries whose proportions, colors, wainscoting and moldings provided a complementary framework for the art on exhibition. Gradually, museums built for the worship of art replaced churches built for the worship of God.

By the second half of the 19th-century, monumental museum architecture was established across Europe. London, Berlin, Munich, Dresden and St. Petersburg. These Beaux-Arts palaces boasted grand structures built specifically for the exhibition of art with similar buildings being erected in the eastern United States.

By the second quarter of the 20th-century, the Beaux-Arts architectural model began to be replaced by the "white cube," the supposedly neutral space that grew out of and was geared to the aesthetics of modern art. The critic Brian Doherty (who as an artist uses the name Patrick Ireland) applied the label the "white cube" to spaces depriving art of an architectural context, isolating it in a timeless, limbo-like gallery. The influential

example was the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone's six-story design looked more like a small apartment building than a museum, squeezed as it was between existing buildings instead of grandly residing in a traditional park setting.

In 1939 MoMA's reconceptualization of the museum was revolutionary and perfectly timed to meet the needs of the new art of the 20th-century. Movable partitions could be tailored to fit each exhibition thereby providing a flexibility unknown in conventional galleries with fixed walls. The scale was domestic, with 12 to 14 foot high walls and relatively small rooms that were modeled on the proportions of the New York apartments for which the work was made. In their original state, many of the galleries had day-light and throughout, track lighting was a novel improvement over the lighting in other art venues.

For most of the 20th-century, there had been one way of looking at contemporary art, and that was the way the Museum of Modern Art did it—in evenly lit, shadowless spaces within highly controlled sequences of rooms.

But, the model of the “white cube” came under attack as a dead space. It's bland architecture prompted associations of the museum with a mausoleum. The “white cube,” described as a timeless limbo-like gallery, soon became a “graveyard” deplored by critics.⁵

The practical reality was that plain white rooms, like the classically proportioned Beaux Arts galleries they succeeded, were often highly functional places in which to see art.

In 1959 Frank Lloyd Wright changed museum architecture forever by creating a new building type on Fifth Avenue, the Guggenheim. It made clear to the people who ran museums that visitors would be attracted to a museum building if it were spectacular enough, regardless of whether its design was practical or even regardless of what was on view.

Since then, the “white cube” has gradually been superseded and a typical explanation for the evolution of museum design in more recent years also focuses on changes in art: because artists no longer just make paintings and sculptures, museum buildings had to adapt to these changes in art practice. The history of art museum architecture rested on the assumption that most of what would be in the museum would be painting and not mixed media and things that are gigantic. Until the 20th-century museum buildings were dictated by architectural styles.

From the time of the first purpose-built public museums, people have fought over whether the architecture should be an active or a passive container, backgrounding or foregrounding the museum’s content. The influence of the Guggenheim has been phenomenal, in which Wright’s rotunda, hypnotic vortex curved walls, and small shifts change the perception of a painting. Wolfgang Prix’s Groninger Museum of Art (1994), in Groninger, the Netherlands, offers tilted and angled walls that afford more than one way of looking at a painting.⁶

For Thomas Krens, director of the Guggenheim “scale makes the building,” but he qualifies this statement by specifying “scale that is inspiring, not overwhelming.”⁷ And the Bilbao Guggenheim’s huge space could be overwhelming if it were not for the human

dimension provided by the changes in ceiling height and details such as curved flying ceiling beams, carefully placed skylights and a balcony above the entrance which makes the space less intimidating.⁸ When Mr. Krens was director of the museum at Williams College, he was predisposed to the idea of the “white cube”. However, while working on a museum extension, he was convinced, by the late architect, Charles Moore, that varying the volume and height of space enriched the art viewer’s experience. Unpredictable changes from space to space proved more engaging than a chain of white rooms.

Architects, taking into account a shift in attitude, resisting the “white cube,” have begun to devise alternatives. Now, several architects including Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry, along with others from Europe and Japan have created what is referred to as the new museum--intended to show work by artists who are responding to the spaces or existing art that can interact with the spaces.

The late 20th-century’s explosion of art forms, such as site-specific, installation, conceptual, video and performance art necessitates a different kind of space, a different environment from the one in which paint on canvas and traditional sculpture are shown.

Charles Moore, stated that the museum is an 18th-century concept housed in a 19th-century box, an obsolete formula that must change to accommodate art’s new forms.⁹

The most talked about new museum in years is the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain. With its titanium-clad swoops of steel, and bold gallery spaces, this spectacular sculptural attraction effectively points to a new kind of museum, and asks that we examine our conceptions about what a museum should or can be. Its architect, Frank Gehry, explains that he has tried to create a sense of movement in the Bilbao Guggenheim “as a

replacement for the decorative vocabulary of cornices, moldings, and other details that architects in the 19th-century and before could rely on to humanize space.”¹⁰ A tribute to Wright by Gehry, the museum is first and foremost a work of urban revival. With \$1.5 billion for re-development, to address the problem of obsolete industrial facilities, Bilbao and the surrounding area is abandoning industry altogether in favor of technology and services, using the museum as a symbol of this change. By making culture the symbol of Bilbao’s regeneration, the government hopes to attract new business and create a tourist industry.

In contrast to traditional museums with their permanent collections, many new museums--Gehry’s Bilbao Guggenheim is one--function more as Kunsthallen for temporary exhibitions. As for its function as a container for art, Gehry’s Guggenheim is best suited to art designed specifically for it. Sol le Witt has filled one irregular, sloping room with a huge, geometric wall drawing and Richard Serra’s massive *Serpentine* occupies the center of a giant, 450-foot-long gallery. Gehry’s building is a landmark. He has devised an extraordinary new vocabulary of spaces, alternatives to the traditional box, in which to see art. Whether or not they will turn out to be useful remains a question. Meanwhile, they illustrate how the balance of authority has shifted from art to architecture. Calculating finances for the building, Basque and Guggenheim officials projected attendance over several years on the basis of the architecture alone. They assumed that visitors would come to see Mr. Gehry’s work, regardless of what, if anything, was in it.

In several ways the Bilbao Guggenheim recalls issues raised over a century and a half ago for one of the the first and most influential purpose-built museums, previously mentioned, the Altes Museum. Both museums arose from the need for a new civic image to mark the end of political and economic turmoil: the Napoleonic Wars in Prussia, on one hand, Basque terrorism and industrial decline in Bilbao, on the other hand. Both were part of a new beginning, entailing urban renewal for a historic city where a museum is the feature of a newly developed area: in Berlin a filled-in canal, in Bilbao the obsolete port facilities. And both raised the issue of container versus content.

Defending his museum's sophisticated design, Schinkel expressed his intention to "first delight, then instruct."¹¹ He fought efforts to downplay the building's architecture, insisting that it was as important as the art it would house. Like today's new museum architects, Schinkel called for a "higher unity" of art and architecture, with "as many relationships as possible."¹² The Altes Museum established unparalleled precedents for museum buildings, for 150 years after its completion; Bilbao may prove to be equally influential.

Whereas museums have always identified with their collections--the Louvre is the *Mona Lisa*, MoMA is *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*--the new museum is identified with its architecture, the dominant image is the container rather than the contents.¹³ The new museum identification is also being replaced with its high profile architects, who are producing unique forms that have become catalys for new art. It is hoped that artists will respond to the challenge of innovative architectural forms with work that relates directly to them.

III. MUSEUM EXPANSIONS:

Across the country, more than 25 major art institutions--and many smaller ones--are planning or already constructing new buildings. There have been museum building booms before but never on this scale. The Bass Museum of Art is re-opening after an \$8.4 million expansion of its building in Miami Beach. The sleek structure that Japanese architect Arata Isozaki has added to the original Art Deco facility more than doubles the museum size. The Denver Art Museum has selected the design of Berlin-based Daniel Libeskind, of the stark, zigzagging Jewish Museum in that city. The \$110 million project calls for a 146,000-square-foot wing, which will double it's size, to be completed in 2004. Architect Daniel Libeskind also presented his design plans for the new Jewish Museum in San Francisco. The shape of the 100,000-square-foot building, which encompasses the former Jesse Street Power Substation, is based on two Hebrew letters that spell *Chai*, meaning "life." The \$60 million structure contains 20,000 square feet of exhibition space, a cafe, a 275-seat theater and a museum store, as well as educational facilities and administrative offices. The Austin Museum of Art has approved the final design of its new downtown facility submitted by architect Richard Gluckman. The 141,000-square-foot, two-story building contains ten galleries, an education complex, a theater, a cafe, as well as an administrative wing. Also part of the \$65 million project is a sculpture garden, a large fountain and a rooftop terrace. Yoshio Taniguchi's design for The Museum of Modern Art's expansion solves the tricky problems of expanding on a tight urban site in an ingenious, supremely graceful way. He's tripling the gallery space, enlarging many amenities and enhancing the museum's most precious asset, its sculpture

garden. Zaha Hadid, an Iraqi-born Londoner and one of today's most innovative architects, has designed Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center—a non-collecting exhibition space. Hadid envisions a museum with a large public lobby that opens with an “urban carpet” onto the street.¹⁴ Her design cleverly reveals layers of both art and commerce through “a cluster of tubes dynamically cantilevered toward the street.”¹⁵

The museum plans for a totally transparent facade which will allow constantly changing views into various gallery spaces. The new building will offer a clear view of art on the busiest corner, downtown. Museum director Charles Kesmarais hopes the building will tempt thousands of passersby to “come in and test the art.”¹⁶ The new Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery opened at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Designed by architect, Antoine Predock the \$10.2 million, 39,000-square-foot facility features exhibition areas, a 150-seat auditorium, classrooms, and film-screening rooms.

As the Museum of American Folk Art is preparing for the opening of its new 30,000 square-foot \$34.5 million building, designed by the New York architects Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates it has recently received the biggest bonanza in its 40 year history: its chairman, Ralph Esmerian has given the bulk of his extraordinary collection to the museum. The collection, valued at \$50 million to \$60 million includes every area of folk art, from paintings and works on paper to furniture and decorative objects of all kinds. The museum plans to display the entire Esmerian collection, more than 400 pieces, when the new building opens in December. The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis unveiled its conceptual design for a \$90 million expansion and renovation, designed by the Swiss architectural firm Herzog & Meuron, this year's winner of the coveted Pritzker

Architecture Prize. It is best known for its design of the new Tate Modern in an abandoned power station in the Southwark section of London. The new expansion will nearly double the center's size. Its two-level design, connecting a new structure to the existing building, will feature galleries, education spaces and a multidisciplinary performance studio. James Polshek's \$60 million design for the Brooklyn Museum of Art will radically alter that museum's facade to make it more inviting to the neighborhood.

Museums exist in such an eclectic assortment of scales, settings, and contents: from public, to private institutions, and from categorical, to encyclopedic collections. Such diversity makes it impossible and undesirable to assign the museum a specific style of architecture. These buildings have the potential to shape the direction of architecture for the coming century.

Responsible for reflecting a diversity of outlooks, the new museum must present an architecture that is substantial and welcoming. The museum may not look like anything we already know. Its architectural boundaries might encompass an entirely new building, take the shape of an addition to an existing building, or conversion or adaptive reuse of an existing site.

NEW BUILDING: Boca Raton Museum of Art

The new and improved, Boca Raton Museum of Art opened earlier this year at a cost of \$13 million. Designed by Fort Lauderdale architect, Donald Singer, the new site is located on a sliver of land in Mizner Park, Boca Raton, Florida. It is a two-story, 44,000 square-foot facility, containing roughly five times more exhibition space than its former building, located five miles away, that had been home to the museum since 1962, when it was the Art Guild of Boca Raton.

With room for larger temporary exhibitions on the first floor and chunks of the permanent collection on the second, the museum can show off more of its roughly 4,000 objects. Only 3 percent of the collection could be exhibited at any one time in the old building, which also wasn't big enough to house some popular traveling shows. The new building also has an outdoor sculpture garden, an auditorium, children's education center, library, and a "grand hall" to host money making social events. The gift shop is considerably larger than the old small space, and it includes a possible partnership with a nearby bookstore to sell art books.

When Mr. Singer set out to design the museum's new structure, he sited pressure from City Hall, the Community Redevelopment Agency, and the private CHAMP organization, which is planning a new amphitheatre next to the museum in Mizner Park, finding that officials worshipped the ideas of a fabled '20s architect Addison Mizner. Singer included a textured facade and cast-stone trim, featuring such simple motifs as lines of molding that project outward below the windows and an intentionally Mineresque salmon and off-white color. What else would you expect for Boca?

Mr. Singer's emphasis of simplicity is found in the interior of the museum, where the galleries on each floor lead off a central "spine" or promenade. Mr. Singer placed an emphasis on keeping people flowing through the building with no single focal point, despite the Great Hall at the entrance, a 35-by-10-foot bubbling water pool at the museum's entrance, and an atrium that can be overlooked from balconies on the second floor. Art remains the focal point.

The inaugural exhibition chosen to open the museum's new headquarters was a show examining Picasso's last thirty years. Museum director George Bolge explains that the Picasso show was part of a long-term strategy--a way to establish credibility of the institution. To further this goal, he hopes to organize a series of shows, a Marc Chagall exhibition followed by a Henri Matisse exhibition, and then one devoted to Robert Rauschenberg.

The museum's permanent collection, including some works which haven't been seen in a decade, will find breathing space on the second floor, where art and seating are plentiful. Galleries are set aside for contemporary art, African tribal art, photography, prints and drawings, pre-Columbian art, and the Mayers Collection of Modern Art which includes 50 works by masters such as Braque, Degas, Matisse, and Seurat. The museum claims to be the first museum in South Florida that is showing off what the community has collected over the years. What, you might ask, is so unique about a new museum? Bolge might have the answer when he said "museums are like branch libraries. In order to judge art soundly, you need variety."¹⁷

NEW WING/ADDITION: Milwaukee Art Museum

Perched at the edge of Lake Michigan like a giant bird set to soar is the breathtaking new addition to the Milwaukee Art Museum. Designed by Santiago Calatrava, set to debut in September 2001, the new building will give the institution a substantial lift. The Spanish-born architect has designed a 142,000-square-foot addition to the original structure built in 1957 by Eero Saarinen. The new \$100 million endeavor features a one-story structure, deliberately low-lying so as not to obstruct views of Lake Michigan. The building encompasses new exhibition spaces totaling 28,000 square feet, an auditorium, a lecture hall, a lake-view restaurant, a museum store and an underground parking lot. A long pedestrian suspension bridge designed by Calatrava will connect the museum with the town center.

The focal point of the complex is an incredible apparatus, the new Quadracci Pavilion, a 90-foot-high, 200-foot-wide glass enclosed atrium that will be covered by the so-called *Burke Brise Soleil*, a moveable sunscreen canopy made of two "fins out of space-age carbon fiber, that will move like a pair of bird wings to shade the building below.

Among the inaugural exhibitions is "O'Keefe's O'Keefes: The Artist's Collection," a survey show of 75 works, co-organized by the museum director Russell Bowman and Barbara Buhler Lynes, curator of the Georgia O'Keefe Museum. Museum president Jack Pelisek and the architect recently issued a joint press statement announcing that the *brise soleil* has some engineering glitches and may not make the official opening of the museum's new space. Nevertheless, a rendering of the Quadracci Pavillion with its

unfurled fins has already been adopted by the museum as its new logo. One of these days, it may well be the art museum experience that really makes Milwaukee famous.

While each generation of museums is valid for its own time, Victoria Newhouse points out, attempts to combine generations are often unsatisfactory. The successful grafting of contemporary structures onto older buildings seems to be more difficult for museums than for any other building type. The addition of massive modern wings to the Metropolitan Museum of Art has deprived the building of its overall sense of place and procession, and the new glass and steel pyramid at the Louvre in Paris has sacrificed the elegance of a palace entrance to an anonymous commercial space.¹⁸

The rapid growth of our museum culture is not confined to new buildings and additions-- adaptive reuse, is a frequent solution to growing collections and expansions pressures. For instance, a disused multiplex discount cinema is now the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art in Arizona, an old refurbished May Company department store will add 290,000 square feet to LACMA for 3 million dollars and the Old Main Library in San Francisco is being converted into the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

CONVERSION: Jersey City Museum

Abandoned for nearly a decade, the former U.S. Postal Service garage in downtown Jersey City was a shell of an abandoned garage--the floor a series of muddy puddles. The old garage is becoming an art museum, the Jersey City Museum. The \$11 million project will move the museum out of its cramped quarters on the fourth floor of the city's public library building. The new museum will not only give a 100-year-old

institution its own home for the first time, it will also buoy the pride of the once-industrial city at the edge of the Palisades.

The conversion will create 27,500 square-foot, state-of-the-art, full-service museum with seven galleries, which will triple gallery space, allow for the regular display of art associated with Jersey City's history, provide a gallery specifically dedicated to local artists, offer gifts for sale in a museum shop, and open a 152-seat auditorium for lectures, screenings, and other events.

"This will be the jewel in the redevelopment plan for the neighborhood,"¹⁹ says director Nina Jacobs. "Just in terms of taking a vacant building and turning it into a functioning institution. This project's coming together in Jersey City at this time reflects the way that government, city planners, developers, and the business community have caught on to the fact that art is a contributing factor in the economic vitality of any community."²⁰

After years of deprivation, Jersey City, an old industrial powerhouse, is remaking itself and a new museum will be part of its regeneration. Blue-chip titans like Merrill Lynch, American Express, and Paine Webber have discovered the Jersey City waterfront with its spectacular New York City views, now, where construction is roaring up and down. Since emerging in 1993 from a recession that left a third of its office buildings dark, developers have put up three million-square feet of commercial space, 3,000 apartments and 2 hotels with two more on the way. The abandoned train yards and decaying piers have finally given way to a glimmering ribbon of marinas, riverfront promenades and glass-faced towers. Developers say there is no end in sight. In terms of

new construction, population growth and gains in per capita income, officials predict Jersey city will soon overtake Newark as the state's largest city.

Jersey City has perhaps the most dense concentration of practicing artists in New Jersey and acres of still-to-be-developed urban spaces that continue to attract artists who are being priced out of Manhattan. WALDO (Work and Live District Overlay), is a city-designated live/work district for artists. The Arts Center is the city's largest studio complex, located in a rehabbed cigarette factory.

The design of the new museum was executed by Charles Gifford of Meyer & Gifford Architects, who have handled a number of public building rehabilitations. "I can't think of an existing structure that is better suited to its new purpose than this building," says Gifford of the 100-by-100 foot limestone and yellow brick structure.²¹ "First of all, it is a long span building, so there were relatively few interior columns to support the roof, giving great flexibility in the design. And because it was a garage, one end already had a 30-foot atrium built in, to accommodate the car ramp," he continues.²² The ramp has been removed and a hole punched in the roof for a skylight. "I simply capitalized on that for a grand staircase that could be topped by a long skylight, giving you an immediate soaring public space on entering the museum."²³

Both Jacobs and Gifford say the design is meant to be populist and inviting and yet should convey some sense of the formal dignity of 19th century museums. There is no pile of granite steps or pedimented columns before the front door. The entrance is glass framed in aluminum, and the slate, glass, metal and natural maple-trimmed interior staircase has the clean lines and neutral coloring of a modern theatre. But the succession

of seven galleries on the second floor, each flowing through another, is like a conventional museum. The new building will provide the museum with state-of-the-art, climate controlled storage, something sorely needed for the Jersey City collection. With its move two blocks north, the Jersey City Museum will be transported in the 21st century.

Included in the 20,000-piece collection are a cache of old grants and other documents concerning Jersey City's history, materials detailing the industrial development of the region, and hundreds of photos, paintings, sculptures and other works of art donated by the first families of Jersey City since the museum was established in 1901. Given the city's enormous diversity and reputation as a haven for contemporary artists, the community gallery--intended not only for local professional artists, but displays by neighborhood groups and schools--promises to be one of the most interesting new spaces in the building. It will be directly above the entrance in the new atrium.

Connection to local neighborhoods and relevance to a specific community begins with a building attentive to its surroundings. The ideal museum building relates to its location and community. For the Jersey City Museum's search for a new home, which will open in the Fall of 2001, in time for the institution's 100th anniversary, at least 50 buildings were examined before the old 1920s site was selected, located in the heart of Jersey City's historic Van Vorst District. The museum rejected the idea of building on the water front. Director Nina Jacobs expressed, "It is appropriate that we save an existing building that has been in the community for a long time."²⁴ Former Mayor Bret Schundler points out, "One reason people live in a city is for its cultural vitality. This new space will be on the ground level and will invite people to come in."²⁵

The birth of the public museum in Europe revolved around the conversion of existing buildings, palaces, and stately homes into public galleries. One of the first civic museums, the Louvre Palace, was converted after the French revolution. The current twist, for at least the last twenty-five to thirty years, is for museums to inhabit not domestic building but industrial edifices: railroad stations, power stations, public schools, abandoned government structures. This is not just an American phenomenon; some of the largest museums in Europe have been created within unlikely sites, the Musee d'Orsay in Paris is a museum implanted in a glorious turn-of-the-century train station designed by Victor Laloux. The Gare d'Orsay was converted into galleries devoted to art of the 19th-century in the early 1980's by the architect Gae Aulenti. In 1998, The Hamburger Bahnhof train station in Berlin was converted into a Museum for Installation Art and Contemporary Art from the 1960's to the present. The museum is also part of urban renewal; the reinventing of a cultural capital. Train stations have been utilized as museums in the United States as well; in fact, the second largest train station in America--Union Station in Kansas City--is now "Science City," an interactive science museum.

Thomas Hoving who oversaw two huge expansions as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Temple of Dendur's glass expansion, and the Robert Lehman Wing, thinks supermarkets would make the best museums. "All those walls and the air conditioning and HVAC on the roof, easily gotten to for repairs. Also no leaks ever, because that would wipe out the inventory, so architects of them are leak specialists, which is what a museum needs."²⁶

IV. ASPECTS OF MUSEUM EXPANSIONS:

A radical shift with significant consequences has occurred in museums in the United States. Traditional sources of funding--such as deeply pocketed patrons and government agencies are having to be replaced with other sources of revenue. The museum profession has become passionately more populist. Control of the museum, formerly the exclusive domain of patron and scholar, is now shared by marketer and visitor. Today's museums are leading a double life as they seek to retain their lofty status (at least implying a kind of cultural elitism) and at the same time engage more diverse, larger, and novice audiences. Just as today's pluralistic society has expanded the goals of higher education, so too have our museums exploded into a variety of functions. In addition to exhibiting art, museums now provide places for shopping, eating, performance, and community activities; they have also become an important urban-renewal opportunity for cities. Less isolated, museums are part of a vital and growing cultural tourism and entertainment industry.

Institutions now find themselves forced to reconcile the competing functions of marketing and mission. One result has been a transformation of the museum's functional design, its physical presence--a transformation of museum architecture itself.

Not only are there more museums than ever before but also more functions for them to accommodate, more range in the kind of art they contain and more rationales to their design.

A museum building has a lengthy laundry list of technical tasks to fulfill; security and storage; crowd control and circulation for staff and visitor; fire detection and

prevention; microclimates and specialized systems; lighting, heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, plumbing, electricity, and communications for various spaces. Very often fully half of the building housing these necessary internal mechanisms is not visible to the public. The building must accommodate the objects on display, intergrating a flexible interior with a meaningful exterior.

Museum architects are called on to create attractions in which the display of art is only part of the job. This suits many current museum trustees. It is always easier to commission an architect and raise money for a building than it is to amass a first-rate collection. Collections take time to build and require taste, where as donors generally prefer to give money for building, (happier to see their names engraved in large letters in stone), rather than operations. This trend dovetails with museums' primal need for more space--their version of Manifest Destiny--to show ever-growing collections. Most museum collections remain locked away in storage for lack of exhibition gallery space. Donors of new gifts want to see them out in the open.

Avant-garde architecture is playing a leading role in marketing museums, today, both to potential benefactors and to the public at large. Architects have joined in the celebrity milieu. Winning a large museum commission is perceived as an instant claim to fame for most architects, just as a recognizable, innovative edifice becomes a useful marketing tool for the commissioning institution. As North American museums depend upon individual and corporate patrons, admissions, gift-shop income, and rental fees to survive, the building itself has become a marketable product. "When you're a museum creating a building, you may be creating the most important work of art in your

collection,” says David Levy, director of the Corcoran Museum, which has hired Gehry to add a \$120 million off-the-wall wing to its neoclassical building in downtown Washington.²⁷

Clearly, the idea of the museum has changed. The hallowed precincts of yesterday’s temples of culture are increasingly being replaced by lively environments that give equal importance to people-watching and entertainment as to the exhibits. The demands of leisure-time mass audiences have transformed museum architecture. Architects can ill afford to continue designing museums based on past models of glory.

I introduce the multi-tasking museum by comparing visitor experiences in two museums, the Altes Museum (1829) and Swiss architect Mario Botta’s San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) 1995. Schinkel’s museum embodies 19th-century debates on how to display objects in order to uplift the viewer.²⁸ His was the model for great 19th-century American buildings like the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In contrast Botta’s building exemplifies the late 20th-century struggle to define museums amidst an urban consumer culture.

The Altes Museum is ceremonial. The visitor encounters it from afar, approaching the horizontal and palatial building from a great plaza. An impressive staircase leads the visitor into the building through 18 Ionic columns. Once inside, the visitor moves toward a central circular rotunda framed by sculptures and culminating skyward in a pantheon-type dome. In Schinkel’s words: “The sight of this beautiful and exalted space must create the mood for and make one susceptible to the pleasure and judgement that the building holds in store throughout.”²⁹ Upon entering the galleries, one experiences works

of art by proceeding through an ordered and subdued series of rooms. The museum goer's experience is an often solitary, unhurried pilgrimage with the goal of quiet reflection and inspiration.

SFMOMA provides a markedly different experience. The building's site is on San Francisco's Third Street, making it a part of the hustle and bustle of the surrounding city. There are three sidewalk entry points: store, cafe, and lobby. The store generates more revenue per square foot than any other retail space in San Francisco. The cafe is usually crowded and, like the store, is open more hours than the museum galleries. The lobby entry, less than one-fifth of the total street frontage, opens immediately onto walls bearing names of donors and booths selling memberships and admission tickets. Beyond the ticket booths in the multi-story lobby, there is still no art; unlike the Altes Museum's sculptures, no objects at SFMOMA's entrance suggest what awaits the visitor. After ascending via escalator or cramped central staircase to the gallery floors above, the visitor views the art in vertically stacked, well-lit galleries of various sizes and shapes. Although Botta modeled SFMOMA on his prior church designs, the experience inside is hardly sacral.³⁰ People mill about: talking, flirting, playing on computer terminals. The experience is bright, social and urbane. It's been suggested the SFMOMA's exterior is also its logo which establishes the museum as a branded product.

The contrast illustrates the dramatic changes museums have undergone and suggests what the contemporary marketplace demands from architects. Art museums have incorporated retail as a given, allocating prime architectural space to shops, restaurants classrooms, lecture halls and gardens. Current museum priorities include

access and comfort, flexible exhibiting, and engaging the visitor. These priorities not only challenge museum architecture, they challenge the core identity of the museum itself.

Comfort, Access, Amenities, and Flexibility:

As museums reach out, access and comfort are essential to entice members of the public not only to visit, but to feel they have spent their time so wisely that they want to return and join as members or donors. The leisure-time museum demands from architects crowd-control solutions that move visitors waiting in long lines through museum spaces happily and efficiently. It also requires a balance between enough seats and benches for comfortable gallery viewing and sufficient space for maximum visitor capacity. Louis Kahn's great design for the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth made innovative use of natural light to create calm, inviting galleries.

The trend toward effortless entrances, short waits, and restrooms a plenty, joins other amenities offered by the leisure-time museum. The phenomenon of museum fatigue is now broken up by opportunities for sustenance and consumption, exemplified by the museum restaurant and store. These retail functions are essential to a museum's survival. Museums often offer themed cuisine to match exhibiton themes. A "real" Viennese cafe was part of the "Vienna 1900" exhibit at The Museum of Modern Art in 1986. Today, eating has become such a part of the museum experience that it spurs conservators' fears of potential damage to artifacts and calls on museum architects to consider the needs of kitchens, such as ventilation, cooking equipment, and food storage.

With the drive to increase retail profits, museum capital renovations call for prominently placed stores and restaurants, such as SFMOMA's street-level store and cafe.

Statistics show museum shop merchandise currently generates between \$785 million and \$1 billion annually, and the stores are so successful that museums walk a fine line between for-profit retailing and their legal nonprofit status.³¹

Today, museums require flexible spaces for the varied needs of the marketplace. Museums no longer rely on their permanent collections to build new and repeat audiences. Changing shows and traveling blockbusters are far more effective. But they require spaces that are easily and quickly altered by in-house designers to the specifics of each show. In addition to a parade of exhibits, changing programs with a variety of space needs occur in museums. These can range from educational family days, large community festivals, and performances to singles events.

Whether for museum-originated or outsider events, the demand for public space is so great that other museum operations most notably storage and office space, are sometimes moved off-site to make room for more exhibitions and revenue-generating spaces. In fact, because collections are so costly to acquire and preserve, some museums, such as the New Museum in New York City and the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art, in Lake Worth, Florida, forgo them altogether and devote their space to exhibitions, programs and functions.

Urban Renewal:

Museum architecture is capable of altering a downtown cityscape--and therefore new museums have become a powerful tool for urban regeneration and animation.

Aside from the previously mentioned Guggenheim Bilbao, one of the most architecturally significant museum buildings of the last thirty years--the Center National D'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, designed by Renzo Piano and Sir Richard Rogers, and built in 1977--was part of a large, government-driven urban revitalization scheme.

Art museums have certainly insinuated themselves into local economies by attracting tourists. Cities that were once industrial centers have now and continue to become domains of culture. Along with financial management and tourism, culture is a leading urban industry.

Many American cities have been making a comeback, as the 2000 Census figures confirm, and museums are seen as urban jump-starters, capable of attracting hordes of visitors, good press and even new business. In Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts hopes to be an agent provocateur in revitalizing the gritty Fenway neighborhood. "We need an anchor, where people can meet and come together," says the museum's director, Malcom Rogers.³² Maybe not since the 1890s have museums been so central as the cultural engines of cities.

Entertainment:

The public museum, which began with an educational impulse is now widely perceived as a vehicle for entertainment. Thomas Krens defines the art museum as “a theme park with four attractions: good architecture, a good permanent collection, prime and secondary temporary exhibitions and amenities such as shops and restaurants.”³³

What about the idea of museum as theme park? The architect, Richard Meier’s J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles (1997) recalls the theme-park format: a tram regularly transports the public to five separate pavilions. Cafes and restaurants are tucked into luxuriant landscaping, which includes a walk-in garden maze by the Californian artist Robert Irwin. The site’s spectacular mountain, city, and ocean vistas are as much an attraction as the art (as views of Paris are at the Centre Pompidou). Paris’s Centre Georges Pompidou (1977) included a renowned museum of modern art, but its architects, Renzo Piano and Sir Richard Rogers, prefer to describe the facility as “a live center of information and entertainment.”³⁴ In competing with other forms of entertainment, museums are looking to the architecture and techniques of theme parks, themselves and outgrowth of the 19th-century International Exhibitions and World’s Fairs. To think of art in terms of entertainment is simply a return to the astonishment and delight associated with the first private Renaissance museum, a thought-provoking place of discovery. The museum’s much criticized shops and restaurants have the capacity, when handled in an appropriate manner, to serve this experience—just as jugglers, acrobats, and other popular entertainers enlivened medieval religious festivals. Crass commercialism will diminishes the art experience, but entertainment can be a welcome alternative to the museum/mausoleum.

Exhibits:

The developments discussed thus far redefine the museum as a leisure-time entertainment center targeted far beyond the traditional audience or the educated elite seeking to quietly contemplate treasures. In addition to facilities that must offer comfort, access, amenities, and flexibility, the market demands that the museum's core feature--its exhibits--become more exciting. The advent of "edutainment" has created a new set of criteria for most museums. Elements of "edutainment," and particularly the use of storytelling media, have infiltrated the art museum. Synonymous with issues of architectural influence over program, the narrative environment can detract from the objects on display and distract the viewer. The quest for jazzy information design has led to a clear design hierarchy within all types of museums. Architectural elements--including gallery spaces, the exhibition display (graphics, signage, cabinetry), and accompanying interactive tools and materials--are usually designed independently. Information architects, those who design displays are beginning to enjoy as much celebrity as our architectural heroes. Ralph Appelbaum, architect and exhibit designer, believes that "Exhibits should be environments, not just furniture. Exhibits are marketplaces of ideas."³⁵

A marketplace of ideas, or a marketplace in general? At museums today, romances begin and end, gift-shop presents are purchased and relaxation are enjoyed at restaurants and cafes. Much like a suburban mall, the museum has evolved into a place not just to see but a place to be seen. Today, museums of all kinds serve as our multicultural crossroads, drawing together diverse people to admire art, artifacts, themselves and each other.

Full House:

The declining government support for the arts and humanities has encouraged museums to seek support from a larger constituency, which has lead museums to strive for big box office numbers, making it the new measure of success. And they're succeeding: last years museum visits in the United States topped 1 billion for the first time, more than double the attendance at sports events. Why are museums so popular?

Museums are now seeing the results of their efforts to reach out to local communities, key among the recommendations put forth to the field six years ago in *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimensions of Museums*, published by AAM. That report urged museums to become social and community centers and to ensure that "they are an integral part of the multifaceted human experience."³⁶

Over the last 25 years, museums have become adept at presenting their collections in ways that reach out to new and different audiences. Museums have created successful educational programs that allow an increasingly large number of people to appreciate and enjoy the art on display. This has in turn led museums to widen their range and interests. The cultural position of art museums is changing, too, as they have transformed the nature of their collections. The museum canon has broadened quite a lot. Thus, museums are adding art that reflects their region's ethnic makeup. Indeed, one of the great questions of the future will be to what extent the canons of art are enlarged or modified by the impact of more diverse audiences.

Another reason museums may be enjoying such popularity is that in our highly stimulated post-modern culture, museums play what the philosopher Andreas Huyssen

would call a compensatory role by providing authentic experiences. The direct and unmediated or at least relatively unmediated confrontation with a work of art is a powerful moment that individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds can share. It is an experience that cannot be duplicated elsewhere and is what distinguishes reality from virtual reality.³⁷

For all these reasons, along with better marketing, increased frequency of blockbuster exhibitions, and a more educated public, attendance is up at most museums.

It is increasingly old-fashioned to think of an art experience as a private encounter between a particular aesthetic object and a individual. More and more the experience is public and requires a crowd to be fully realized.

Guggenheim director Thomas Krens, who sponsored a show of motorcycles in the summer of 1999 that set attendance records, as well as the Armani retrospective, sees an art institution of the future that is not a vessel of refined and refining tastes but a mass-oriented exponent of mass culture, one that reflects the whole of society back at itself.³⁸

Social setting:

Museums have become the pre-eminent cultural institutions of our time, a symbol of power, stature, and sophistication. Museums provide a distinct kind of public space. This space, created by the relationship between the works on display, the architecture and the intellectual agenda of the museum, and the need and the interests of the public, is both an enriching educational environment and an important social one.

Awakened to newfound possibilities as centers of learning, museums are more involved in a range of public activities to help spur wider knowledge and foster deeper human understanding. For the visitor, it is the experience of simultaneously being in a social and often celebratory space while focusing on a multisensory experience that makes a museum effective. Museums are social-service providers because they are spaces belonging to the citizenry at large, expounding on ideas that inform and stir the population to contemplate. Museums offer collective history set in congregant locations which help us to remain civilized.³⁹ Societies build museums because they authenticate the social contract.⁴⁰ They are collective evidence that we were here. Museums are a place where art receives the respect it deserves, where its special qualities are acknowledged and honored.

The issue of safety in museums is a matter of no small consequence. Safety in art museums is at once visually apparent with the security guards, surveillance cameras, and other elaborate security systems that protect the collections. The provision of safe places for children is especially important today. Parents and children, having experienced a loss of wild spaces—having moved from fields to parks to front yards to neighborhood streets—are naturally concerned about safety.

V. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED OR MISSION IMPOSSIBLE:

More people look to cultural institutions to serve a wider, rather than narrow band of our citizenry, and museums have vastly diversified their activities and programs.

In their quest for attention, some say that museums are taking the path of least resistance, planning strategies that are designed to increase attendance, funding and popularity. In addition to comfort, and amenities, like restaurants and shops, the market demands that the museum's core feature--its exhibits--become more exciting. Static scholar-focused displays do not engage or satisfy today's consumer. Instead of setting standards, museums are dumbing down their exhibits, pushing to appeal to broader audiences, not just with blockbuster shows of impressionist paintings, like "*Van Gogh's Van Goghs*," but with a whole new category of populist fare: "*The Art of the Motorcycle*," "*The Art of Star Wars*."

Art museums began to change in the '60s. The power of curators waned as museum education departments grew--and government money began to flow in. Today public money is drying up and marketing is more important than ever. Museums are pushing to appeal to broader audiences. To attract mass audiences, museums mount blockbuster exhibitions. The use of the blockbuster is like a good use of retail bait and switch--once you get people in the door, they will be pleased. However, no museum can sustain its audience on blockbuster exhibitions alone and the most successful museums now and in the future will be the ones that are able to establish carefully balanced programs that also explore the work of less well-known artists, or movements--not necessarily crowd pleasers--that also explore the work of lesser known artists or

movements. Shows that earn money should pay for shows that lose money.

Mission suffers when .com and .org begin to get mixed up. Dumbing down some exhibitions to appeal to a broad audience will not result in the decline of the mission, though it is a problem, but museums that want bigger audiences for their own sake will. Therefore, museums have to make sure exhibitions are conceived by curators before monies are raised. Contributions cannot result in direct benefits to the sponsor.

In order to reach an answer of whether or not museum expansions result in the decline of the core mission, it was necessary to make a list of museum goals.

Museums Goals Check-List:

✓ **Education**

Collections are the heart of museums and education is the spirit. The commitment of educating the public, presenting objects and ideas in an informative and stimulating way is the numero uno reason for any museum to exist. An educational purpose must be central to every museum's activity. Education includes exploration, study, observation, critical thinking, contemplation, and dialogue.

✓ **Community Understanding**

Museums are open to everyone. Museums send out a beacon of light welcoming all the people in the community, local and global. Museums have the potential to be enriched by the nation's diversity. As public institutions in a democratic society, museums should achieve greater inclusiveness. Trustees, staff, and volunteers must acknowledge and respect the community's diversity in race, ethnic origin, age, gender, economic status, and education. They should attempt to reflect society's pluralism in every aspect of museum's operations and programs.

✓ **Inspiration**

Museums are uniquely qualified to provide a variety of learning experiences for peoples of all ages, interests and backgrounds. People of different cultures bring with them different meanings to the objects they come to see. Unlike schools, museum visits have no prerequisites and no sequential curriculum. Often the learning experience is a moment of reflection or a chance discovery that moves the visitor in a lasting way. Lectures, publications, docented tours all invoke wonder and reflection. Even the architectural design of a museum and the books in its library and the gifts in its museum store bring forth inspiration

- ✓ **Accessible**
 Museums enable us to see works of art "in the flesh" that would otherwise be inaccessible to us. Consistent with their missions, individual museums must ensure that they are accessible to a broad audience and that they do not intentionally or even subtly exclude anyone.
- ✓ **Psychological**
 Museum's interpretive process should revolve around a variety of cultural and intellectual perspectives and should reflect an appreciation for the diversity of the museum's public. Collections should reflect a variety of cultures and ideas. Museums must become involved with the community and inaugurate programs that are responsive to the needs and wishes of their potential constituencies.
- ✓ **Expressing/Presenting Differences/Forum of Views**
 Museums are ripe with possibilities for visitors to find personal meaning and to appreciate other cultures. Different points as well as different cultural perspectives can be given voice in the interpretive process. Controversy can stimulate a balanced interpretive message that can challenge the visitor to discover ideas and form opinions.
- ✓ **Growth Development of Collections**
 Collections rest at the center of a museum's mission and they drive the museum's programs. The pursuit of knowledge about collections by a museum should be carried out in an atmosphere of intellectual vigor. Heightened cultural sensitivity is especially important.
- ✓ **Exhibitions**
 Exhibitions provide a major source of learning potential. Through exhibitions, museums help us use our abilities to look at our surroundings on visual, verbal, and auditory levels. Exhibitions contribute to the learning process that continues throughout life.
- ✓ **Economic Improvement**
 It's important to be in collaboration with organizations, corporations and other museums that can extend the museums public dimension and enhance its ability to fulfill its educational mission. Where there is beauty and culture a community will continue to thrive.
- ✓ **Physical Safety of Objects**
 I can rest easy knowing the welfare of objects of value are being accounted for. That there is a monument where objects are housed in an individually labeled acid-free box inside a drawer of a powder-coated metal cabinet, within a climate-controlled room.

✓ **Preservation of Artifacts**

I know I'm happy, knowing there is a place where artifacts, which preserve our culture and link us to our past will be maintained and kept "alive" for future generations.

✓ **Social Setting**

Museums are forums of cultural dimensions, havens, partners, safe places in which to discuss difficult questions, places to search for identity. There are so few places left that offer a safe urban-environment, in which children can go within a city that's not too expensive, and where they can see something extraordinary. Couples can meet and spend an hour away from the hustle and bustle of daily routines and stimulate their senses.

✓ **Sharing Common Interests**

Museums have the potential to nurture an enlightened, humane community that appreciates the value of knowing about its past, is sensitively engaged in the present, and is determined to shape a future in which many experiences and many points of view are given voice. When you learn together and about each other you find you share common interests.

I believe a museum that aligns its educational programs, research, collection strengths, exhibitions and marketing and maintains inclusivity has its functions and goals in order. These goals, I believe can only be enhanced by physical expansions. Every part of a painting, sculpture, video, installation, is there to be noticed by the lover of art, who completes the experience of art. The more people who have access to this, the better. A museum that expands its size, by virtue of being more accessible, also expands its ability to fulfill its mission.

Today's museum architects are providing plans dramatically different from those of their predecessors. Their desire for these facilities to add to the quality of life, to enhance the stature of the city and the community, have become all important. Accomodating the diverse needs of visitors has created demands for new facilities. But are physical expansions the only answer? In the 1960s, many artists had difficulty finding galleries to

represent them. Responding to the needs of this period, the National Endowment for the arts allocated millions for several programs, the strongest of which "Spaces for Artists," came to be known as "alternative spaces." The Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art (1972-73) and P.S.1 in Long Island City (1976), are two examples. Located in a wide variety of existing buildings, these new initiatives flourished particularly in former industrial spaces like the large cast-iron buildings in which artists tended to live and work. Most important, the similarity of such places to the environment in which the art was created lent a connection with the artist's working conditions that was lacking in museums and conventional galleries. This set a precedent for subsequent alternative spaces like the Dia Art Foundation in New York (1987), which has recently built an expansion, converting a Nabisco factory in Beacon, N.Y. into a 300,000-square-foot Dia Center branch.

The success of these spaces has produced a new phenomenon: buildings for contemporary art with galleries designed to resemble renovated industrial architecture. Such is the case with the 12,000-square-foot Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami (1996). Designed by Gwathmey Siegel, this \$3.75 million, relatively small, low-budget museum is part of an urban renewal program for the city of North Miami. It's multicolored stucco exterior echoes other buildings in the area. More unusual are the interiors: a large main gallery, a separate art pavilion, an art storage and preparation area, offices and a gift shop. The 21-foot-high barrel vaulted main gallery is open, with movable walls; its exposed ducts, a windowed wall on one side and concrete floors resemble a vast Soho loft. The smaller art pavilion offers more formal, fixed spaces for

exhibition and installations that are limited in size. Grouped in relation to an outdoor court, the museum's different structures offer an interesting diversity of spatial options for a small museum.

Smaller-scale spaces have an associated relationship with the artwork they contain. They force the viewer to examine the surrounding interior environment. At the same time, it is the intimacy, the private quietude of these spaces, that is engaging. While perhaps highly impractical, the fragmentation of the museum--individual displays dotted throughout the city--is a seductive idea. Intimate spaces within stores or subway stations, converted buildings, or free-standing structures could have rotating exhibits devoted to one of several pieces of art. Not dissimilar to a vastly expanded public art program, new and old culturally familiar spaces could be devoted to permanent and changing exhibits. This would not preclude the need for larger museums, but it could alleviate expansion issues and certainly reinforce public art education. One can begin to daydream, imagining a scheme of temporary mobil art exhibits driving around the city from location to location, like a library bus, completely covered--like the ones with giant advertisements--featuring the image of a work on display. These miniature traveling exhibitions would have no destination, only their mobil home. This exhibit would be an explosion out of the museum envelope.

VI. CONCLUSION:

A building that aspires to cultural significance is one that takes risks, engages the public, and seriously explores a structure's role as a part of the city and social context rather than merely functioning as a box. New museum architecture cannot simply be a container; it must have content of its own. As a building in and of itself, the architecture need not compete with the art on display; in fact, it can enhance the exhibition experience. Victoria Newhouse states, "Art museums today have become entertainment palaces, like opera houses in the 19th-century and movie palaces earlier in the 20th-century."⁴¹ Recent decades have seen an immense increase in museum attendance, partly due to mass tourism, and crowded institutions have required adjustments in design which has created a vast number of ambitious expansion projects. These expansions might encompass an entirely new building, take the shape of an addition to an existing building, or recycle a pre-existing space. There are small, medium, large, and extra large museums. Each one, despite all the frenetic activity, still offers a place of inspiration. At the start of the new millenium, as the distinction between nonprofit and profit, education and entertainment, is becoming less clear, our view of institutions will inevitably change. The ability of any institution to give meaning and value to people's personal and collective lives will take on even greater importance than it has in the past. This is why American museums have so much to offer to American life. The great age of collection building in museums is over. Now is the time for the next great agenda of museum development in America. This agenda needs to take as its mission nothing less than to engage actively in the design and delivery of experiences that have the power to inspire and change the way people see both

the world and the possibility of their own lives. Now, museums must create a welcoming haven in which people, young and old alike, can have experiences that will help give value and meaning to their own lives and at the same time stretch and enlarge their perceptions of the world. Today, we are witnessing incredible opportunities that engage museums as entirely new audiences gain access to the information and ideas in their exhibitions.

Museums are working to increase their abilities to communicate with and actively engage the public. Appreciating art is a serious activity, requiring concentration, knowledge, and a certain acceptance of authority. It's not the quick fare of millions who want quick thrills. But millions of people who do want to appreciate great art are flocking to museums. And just because they can also lunch in a nice restaurant, take in a film or shop for Aunt Sadie's birthday present while they're there doesn't mean they're not looking at the paintings. Nor is it a bad thing to feel a little civic pride at strolling through a city's snazziest piece of architecture. The mission of the new multi-functional museum, with its new architecture cannot possibly share the focus they once did, unless the museum is willing to sacrifice gains in public-access, comfort, amenities, as well as visual-focused, pluralistic viewpoints in exhibits, and flexible spaces responding to new ideas and opportunities. Internationally acclaimed architects have affirmed their focus on building museums as places of knowledge and beauty; important landmarks that will contribute to civic pride and provide economic benefits to the community, creating environments which will empower institutions to fulfill their mission. The contemporary challenge is to strike a balance between the museum's artistic role and its commercial

services, like shops and restaurants. For the curators, a museum without visitors is a perfect museum. And for the services, a museum full of visitors, but without art work is also perfect. Of course I am exaggerating, but nowadays the two cannot live without each other. The museum faces the challenge of shaping places that are flexible, yet meaningful, useable yet exciting, wonderful spaces that educate, inspire, and reach the broad audience of the 21st-century.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ quoted in Judith H. Dobrzynski, "They're Building a Lot More Than Their Collections," New York Times, April 21, 1999, special section on museums, p. 3, col. 2.
- ² Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p. 11.
- ³ Philip Johnson, quoted in Alice Goldfarb Marquis, Alfred Barr, Jr.: Missionary for Modern (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), p. 169.
- ⁴ Thomas W. Gaetgens, "The Museum Island in Berlin," in Gwendolyn Wright, The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archeology (Hanover, N.H., University Press of New England, 1996) p. 56.
- ⁵ Victoria Newhouse, Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p. 49.
- ⁶ Victoria Newhouse, Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p. 203.
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- ⁸ Victoria Newhouse, Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p. 251
- ⁹ Joseph Giovannini, "More Than One Way to See Art," New York Times, November 13, 1994, p. 14, col. 5
- ¹⁰ Victoria Newhouse, "Is 'The Idea of a Museum' Possible Today?," Daedalus, (Summer 1999), p. 325.
- ¹¹ Karl Schinkel quoted by Douglas Crimp, "The End of Art and the Origin of the Museum," Art Journal, (Winter 1987), pps. 261-266
- ¹² Schinkel in Crimp, "The End of Art," p. 264
- ¹³ Victoria Newhouse, Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p. 260.
- ¹⁴ Charles Gandee, "Zaha", Talk, (April 2001), p. 168.
- ¹⁵ Charles Gandee, p. 168.
- ¹⁶ quoted in Judith H. Dobrzynski, "They're Building a Lot More Than Their Collections," New York Times, April 21, 1999, special section on museums, p. 3, col. 2.
- ¹⁷ quoted in Gary Schwan, "Hanging Up and Hanging Out in the Baco Raton's New Museum," The Palm Beach Post, January 21, 2001, p. 7J, col. 3.
- ¹⁸ Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p. 323.
- ¹⁹ Information in a letter to the author, from June 21, 1999.
- ²⁰ Information in a letter to the author, from June 21, 1999.
- ²¹ Discussion with the author, March 20, 2001.
- ²² Discussion with the author, March 20, 2001.
- ²³ Discussion with the author, March 20, 2001.
- ²⁴ Discussion with the author, March 20, 2001
- ²⁵ Discussion with the author, April 10, 2000.
- ²⁶ Information in a letter to the author, July 15, 1999.
- ²⁷ Anthony Barzilay Freund, "Spain's Reigning Superstar?," Town & Country, (November 2000), p. 173.
- ²⁸ Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins" (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), pps. 285-318.
- ²⁹ Schinkel quoted by Crimp, p. 301.
- ³⁰ Victoria Newhouse, Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), pps. 61-65.
- ³¹ Bonnie Pittman, "Muses, Museums and Memories," Daedalus (Summer 1999), p. 12.
- ³² quoted in Jane Lusaka and John Strand, "The Boom—And What To Do About It," Museum News (November/December 1998); p. 59.
- ³³ Victoria Newhouse, Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p.191.
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- ³⁵ quoted in Donald Garfield, "The Next Thing Now: Designing the 21st-Century Museum," Museum News (January/February 1996); p. 34.

³⁶ American Association of Museums, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums (Washington, D.C.; American Association of Museums, 1992), p.2.

³⁷ quoted in Glenn Lowry, "The State of the Art Museum, Ever Changing," The New York Times, January 10, 1999, p. 27, col. 3.

³⁸ Roberta Smith, "Memo to Art Museums: Don't Give Up On Art," The New York Times, December 3, 2000, p.35, co. 2.

³⁹ John Falk, "Visitors: Toward a Better Understanding of Why People Go to Museums," Museum News, (September/October, 1999), p. 38.

⁴⁰ John Falk, p. 40.

⁴¹ Towards A New Museum (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), p.11.

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